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TOURISM ANALYSIS

BOOK REVIEW

The sociology of tourism: European origins and development

Graham M.S. Dann and Giuli Liebman Parinello (eds) (North America, Japan, India, Malaysia and China: Emerald, 2009, 427pp., Hardcover, £84.95, \$144.95, ISBN 978 1 84663 988 3)

A book about the sociological origins and development of tourism theory in Europe has long been forthcoming. The practicalities of such a venture, including the recruitment of suitable contributors, the editing process and the definition of purpose and scope cannot be dismissed: although Anglo-Saxon contributions to the consolidation of tourism as an academic field are indisputable, culturally specific articulations of theory in different European countries as well as tourism's interdisciplinary (multidisciplinary for some) nature and multi-polarity as a 'total social phenomenon' (Lanfant in this volume) guaranteed fragmentation in the field and lack of peer communication. The present volume promises to both debate the continental roots of tourism sociology and explore its national articulations. The editors, Giuli Liebman Parinello (Università Roma Tre, Italy) and Graham M.S. Dann (Finmark University College, Norway), are internationally known contributors in the field. The authors of individual chapters are established scholars in the respective national fields and include: Hasso Spode (chapter 2, Germany), Marie-Françoise Lanfant (chapter 3, France), Asterio Savelli (Chapter 4, Italy), Krzysztof Przeclawski, Julian Bystrzanowski and Dorota Ujma (chapter 5, Poland), Boris Vukonić (chapter 6, Yugoslavia), Jens Kr. Steen Jacobsen (chapter 7, Scandinavia), Julio Aramberri (chapter 8, Spain), Jaap Lengkeek (chapter 9, Belgium and the Netherlands) and Paris Tsatras and Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi (chapter 10, Greece).

Due to the wealth of knowledge presented in this work, it is practically impossible to present the book's content chapter by chapter. Individual chapters proceed to outline the emergence and development of tourism social theory in the debated country, while simultaneously attempting to relate it to the history of sociological knowledge in Europe at large (with the occasional reference to

American social theory and anthropology, as is the case with the chapters on Poland and Greece). Thus, it becomes evident that German analyses of tourism borrowed more from Georg Simmel's formalism and Max Weber's sociology, whereas their French equivalent had Emile Durkheim's and Marcel Mauss' functionalism as starting point, as opposed to the impact of symbolic interactionist sociology in Poland. Cross-national fertilisations are also highlighted however, as is the case with Scandinavian, Belgian and Dutch sociologies of tourism, which were evidently influenced by French sociological or social science thinkers. Implicitly, the volume explores the European preference for mobility concerns, encapsulated in continuations and disjunctures between scholarly understandings of 'society' and 'culture'. The 'social' debate that runs through a number of contributions in the volume is concerned with overlaps, borrowings or 'cannibalisations' of leisure and tourism studies, with the former's earlier primacy giving way to the domination of the latter in more recent decades. A subsequent merger of the two fields is connected to the industrialisation of European countries, which ignited a class-based analysis of work (overwhelmingly Marxist) and leisure (closer related to Thorstein Veblen's consumption theory) in sociology. The history of this theoretical divide, which has been crucial for the consolidation of universally adopted definitions of tourism, is blended with the Simmel's highly influential conception of the 'stranger' (1908), more popular in Germanophone sociology. *Fremdenverkehr* (stranger traffic) and *Tourismus* (tourism) bestowed the European sociology of tourism with a 'cultural' dimension that forged transatlantic links in some national traditions, as the case with Polish theorists Przeclawski and Zaniecki, who borrowed from American symbolic interactionism.

One of the strengths of this volume is the contributors' adoption of a diachronic method of analysis, which places emphasis on the histories of national traditions. The prevalence of theoretical reflections in Western (France, Britain, Netherlands, Belgium) and Central European (Poland, Germany) countries was not matched in the discussed Mediterranean countries' academic milieus. Contributing scholars from the Mediterranean region (Spain, Italy and Greece) highlight this gap,

which is reflected in different ways in individual traditions. A common denominator in these traditions is their focus on the social and economic effects of tourism growth that within a developmental framework correspond to these countries' hierarchical place in global economies. Regional theory developed within the premises of specific national mentalities: thus, studies of tourism in Greece were conducted primarily by Greek scholars, with few exceptions (e.g. Stott, 1973 and 1979) and mirrored specific cultural narratives (e.g. family and kinship). It is a shame that the introduction has not highlighted however how these national narratives of social structure re-emerged in markedly different cultural *and sociological contexts* (see for example Jacobsen, p. 233 in the book on Norwegian and Danish research on vacation travel and snapshots. For other Mediterranean connections see Aramberi in the book, p. 251). The Italian contributor (Savelli) characterises his country's economy as 'passive' and 'receptive' (of tourists), proceeding to explain how this propelled studies of hospitality models and types rather than tourism motivations and histories. Nevertheless, his observations on Sgroi's work regarding the role of the tourist as a sort of 'poacher' of local 'icons' (e.g. a place's history) is symmetrical to other interdisciplinary studies of leisure consumption applied to tourism in Northern European contexts (Jacobsen, *ibid*; see also Fiske, 1989 and Jenkins, 1992 in Tzanelli, 2007, p. 11, p. 20, p. 60). The application of systems theory in Italian sociologies of tourism also gestures towards national inflections of Germanophone analyses, even if it is applied to tourist products (instead of relations). Finally, the neo-colonial model adopted by Spanish thinkers (e.g. Gaviria) is comparable to the French Marxist sociology of tourist production (e.g. Lanfant in the book). Such 'hidden' similarities support the crypto-political rationale of the book, which was produced to foster international collaborations and a universal social scientific vocabulary (produced in the global *lingua franca*, English).

The volume is the first of its kind as an attempt to bring forth the unity of a distinctively European sociological tradition, but also an ambitious starter project, inviting emulation by colleagues in tourism studies or neighbouring fields (e.g. leisure, consumption, mobility studies). It is suitable for

postgraduate students and scholars, as well as practitioners in the field. Regardless of any limitations (imposed by space and time on its dedicated contributors), it comprises a truly innovative Foucaultian 'archaeology of knowledge' that extends beyond mere references to the 'Grand Tour' (an admittedly overused temporal referent in the history of travel and tourism) and into a Mannheimian and Weberian excursus on academic ideologies. As the editors state in the introduction when they comment on Lanfant's take on reflexivity: 'in the philosophy of knowledge as expounded by Weber and Mannheim, idea systems are the expression of certain vested interests. Following this reasoning, so-called scientific objectivity and value freedom should also be ideological' (p. 23). In this respect *The Sociology of Tourism* is an exponent of a 'sociological imagination' (Mills, 1977) still monopolised by overwhelmingly *westernised* European paradigms and scientific tools; by analogy to Dann's (2002, pp.1-17) *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, the book's contributors figure as cosmopolitan exponents of their specialist area.

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