

Reseña de Publicaciones

Turismo y Patrimonio en la Quebrada de Humahuaca. Lugar, actores y conflictos en la definición de un destino turístico.

Claudia Troncoso. Tenerife: Pasos Edita (2012)

ISBN 978-84-88429-20-9

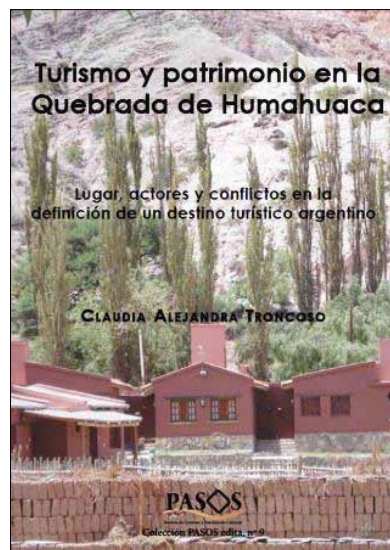
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Following the financial collapse of 2001, Argentina experienced a rapid boost in its economy. In this process, tourism plays a vital role as a strategic unit of business for generating valid incomes to local economies. This was the case for the Quebrada de Humahuaca, small town situated in the province of Jujuy, Argentina. La Quebrada is one of the most beautiful attractions of the country, and received recently the designation of heritage site by UNESCO. As this backdrop, Claudia Troncoso presents her book *Turismo y Patrimonio en la Quebrada de Humahuaca*, edited by Pasos, Spain, as a valuable platform to discuss the connection of patrimony, heritage and globalization to create tourist destinations.

Some spaces are commoditized others are undermined. She argues convincingly that tourism growth, since the XXth century, has been on the agenda of the Argentine government simply because it represents a fertile ground for fresh incomes. The book is formed by seven chapters which explore not only the consequences of tourism in local communities, like the Quebrada de Humahuaca, but the practices and behaviors these places generate. What this book discusses is to what an extent the concept of patrimony delineates the attractiveness of places, while ignoring others. Methodically speaking, the research is based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, which ranges from documents produced by tourism related organizations, towards solid statistics respecting to the tourism promotion. Additionally, journals, newspapers and other sources are used to guide the investigation of the research's fieldwork. The gap generated by the lack of information was fulfilled by personal interviews to key persons between 2007 and 2009.

Chapter 1 is fully dedicated to understand how tourist attractiveness is constructed. Though at some extent, heritage confers certain value to territory, Troncoso adds, local stakeholders change their own behavior adopting a new identity according to that imposed heritage. Chapter 2 is a description of Quebrada de Humahuaca and its diverse patrimonial characteristics. This is the weakest chapter of the



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book, or the more naive. From chapter III to VII, Troncoso redefines the concept of patrimonialization. If tourism was for the community a vital aspect for the generation of economic resources, the inclusion of Quebrada within the UNESCO world heritage list, coupled with specific policies of developments taking into consideration the limitation of the assumptions of what is undeveloped or developed country. In view of that, the outcome of the research is contrasted to the specialized bibliography to adequate new alternative view-points.

At the stage of touristification, the process of negotiations was subject to countless conflicts and discrepancies. The territorial unit leads to think tourism from the perspective of geography, alluding to the value the space creates. Tourism and territory are inextricably intertwined. The valorization of that soil depends on the human interaction and interpretation given by the space. It may be created, elaborated and changed according to the evolution of social dynamic. At a first glance, Troncoso alludes to territory as a product of historical background and mobility which are subject to a broader context of commoditization and globalization. We have to imagine the space as something open underpinned an ongoing state of transformation. This book calls us to think of the tourist-space as a place, which is connected to much broader units of commercialization. The competence of destinations not only produces internal changes in local communities, but also new strategies of adaptation to the international demands of tourists. The current forms of consumption are broader processes of cultural valorization but class-differentiation. Following the legacy of Bourdieu, Troncoso proposes us to reconsider the roots of tourism as a unit of identity engrained in the economic system. At time, heritage sheds light on the relevant aspects of history to form a shared consciousness these construes only are valid in the tourist-delivering societies. That way, La Quebrada offers decentralized products, which incorporates heterogeneity and intercultural values, which are at odds the mass-tourism archetype including tourists who are interested for protecting local landscapes. This represents a sustainable opportunity for real development. From its consolidation, la Quebrada experienced diverse conflicts and dissonances, whereby some stakeholders struggled to impose the monopoly of meaning as well as the rights to create certain identities and ignore others. Collateral damages as real estate, a decline of quality of life, and economic asymmetries have not been corrected by rational planning. Beyond the surface of the destination, Troncoso explains, lays some cleavages which merit attention. Tourism-led scholars and students will find a polished written work that focuses on the problem of cultural tourism and gentrification in Quebrada de Humahuaca, Argentina. This site like many other else, shows serious problems resulted from the introduction of real estate. To what an extent the market respect the local voice of natives is one of the strong points of entry in Troncoso's sight.

In its diverse chapters, the book provides substantial evidence that helps reader to understand the conflicts surfaced in spaces nominated as common heritage mankind as well as gives a fresh explanation of the limitation of state to control real-estate speculation. Among the weaknesses, we found an over-valorization of authenticity ignoring the problem this concept has generated by developing countries. Methodologically, Troncoso gives too much attention to the voice of locals respecting to heritage and development ignoring its pervasive effects worldwide. Her one-sided argument only shows the tip of the iceberg. It is common to think that questionnaires or interviews are the best methodologies to understand the reality. As a result of this, others methods and perspective of research are trivialized. This represents a serious epistemological problem for tourism research because sometimes people lie, or ignore the deep emotions that determine their behaviour. The excessive interest of micro-sociology leads Troncoso to put the horse before the cart. For local community, this means that gentrification problems are not resulted from real-estate dynamics, but from a new conception of Biopolitics to understand culture. Let me explain this better in the following lines.

Is capitalism commoditizing communities enrooted in poverty?. One of the aspects that defines the success of late-capitalism to transform the social behaviour is the need of self-determination, which introduces the needs of progress in excluded aboriginal tribes and pours countries. From north to south, the globalized economies have posed cultures into a dilemma, becoming in a property for commercial exploitation or disappear. This belief, encouraged by international financial institutions as World Bank or IMF issued loans so that peripheral countries to adopt development and tourism as primary factor for progress. Of course, not only peripheral nations should accrue higher rates of interest, which lead anyone to pauperism but they were unable to develop sustainable forms of tourism in their respective economies. The concept of culture, heritage not only worked a pivotal role in this process but also paved the ways for the adoption of "ethno-merchandise". The concept of heritage has been commoditized by local and international business corporations as a private property to stimulate an unlimited consumption. In the classical market, more demand entails less supply. This does not happen with ethno-merchandise,

because the value of attractiveness (product) not only does not decline with its use, neither rises with further demand. Cultures are subject to many changes and fluctuations based on the adaptancy of humans to their Environment. For this process was success, the minorities were conferred to rights to trade off with their heritage, or history at their discretion. Culture become in business enterprises managed by aborigines (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Korstanje, 2012a; 2012b). This is exactly what Commaroff and Commaroff names "ethnicity Inc".

Conducive to its ossification, the concept of authenticity intends to homogenize the rich dynamism of human interaction. At the time a site is nominated as common-heritage mankind, diverse voices and cultural aspects of the site are molded according to the taste of an international demand. Why does patrimony trigger discrepancies among stakeholders?. The sense of independency of the community to exploit its own patrimony generates no few conflicts with nation-states (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Korstanje, 2012a; 2012b; Korstanje & George, 2012; Skoll & Korstanje, 2014; Thirkettle & Korstanje, 2013). Since the book presents some descriptive situation without an all encompassing diagnosis, Troncoso's view would be enriched in an historical exploration of the use of development and heritage would be discussed.

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Recibido: 22/05/2014
Aceptado: 03/12/2014
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