

Reseña de Publicaciones

Turismo y Territorio: del diagnóstico a la proposición del desarrollo turístico a propósito de la Provincia de Buenos Aires

Juan Carlos Mantero (eds). Mar Del Plata: Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (2010)

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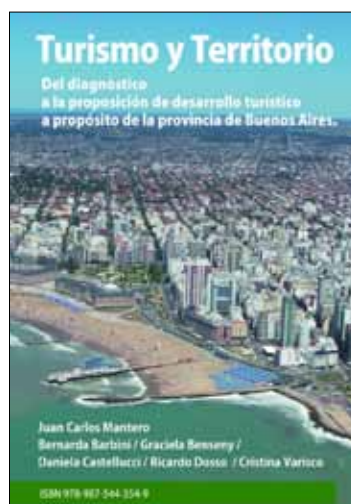
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The urban growth waxed and waned according to the development of tourism. This doctrine, enrooted originally in the economy, has been adopted widely by Senior scholars in Latin America. This book, edited by Juan Carlos Mantero, is based on fifteen years of fieldwork throughout the “Provincia de Buenos Aires, in Argentina”. Following my own concern to bring into the Anglo-world those projects which deserve the time to be discussed, this short essay-review concentrates efforts to place Mantero’s thesis under the lens of scrutiny. To be honest, in a review is almost impossible to discuss critically more than 300 pages. Also I will delineate the main points where the dialectic of coasts and its hinterlands evidences some conceptual problems.

Beyond the power of Mantero’s rhetoric, tourism is conceived as a “planned activity”, enrooted in a specific territory in view of a pleasurable economy of production socially determined by subjective agents. Understood by its incidence given by the logic of capital, tourism confers not only a specific meaning but also value to human practices. The economic dynamic produced by this industry subordinates the state which often legitimates what has been previously agreed by stakeholders. In view of that, it is important the tourist-development appeals to create added-value protecting the introduction of private sector to offer opportunities to workforce and other local voices. The efficiency to grant the sustainability of tourism depends on the material and human resources mobilized to achieve the “rational” goals of planification. This opens the dialectic between the dynamic that introduces the rules, with the social behaviour which selectively adopts or rejects the meaning of that rules. The governmental policies that do not take seriously the local perspective are doomed to a hopeless failure. The synergy of globalization and the gravitation of local units create asymmetries at the destinations. The complexity of these new forms of production suggests the application of innovative courses of action.

However, this begs a more than interesting question, how may we define the success in terms of tourism industry?. Throughout this book, Mantero would overtly acknowledge that the activity looks to transform a disorganized territory into a self-organized where social cohesion produces “developed subjects”. In doing so, the concept of attractiveness plays a vital role drawing and captivating the fluxes,



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from a source to a destination. However, the allegory of sign preserves the functionality of the system building the circuits where passengers, migrants and tourists go and come back.

As the previous argument given, the fantasy of liberty relates with tourism. The roots of fantasy result from the disciplinary mechanisms to reproduce the social solidarity. The state commoditizes the experience through the sublimation of tradition and heritage. To reconcile the vertical and horizontal axis of development, Mantero adds, the diagnosis should discern the best underlying policies to ensure the harmony between the subjective views of sightseers with governmental policies of intervention. Though chapters conforming this text are based on different researches and view-points, they anyway support Montero's diagnosis discussed above. The belief in the progress of development needs from tourism as the primary, or at least, the promising socio economic improvement of nations. Following this, tourism industry revitalizes the local economies alternating sustainable plans to enhance the potentiality of destinations. Even though destinations possess their own image, structure and symbolism, the encounter of demands and supply still remain the key factor that triggers the success of wider sustainable model of consumption. By the planification of territory, the policy-makers may rationally infer in those threatening aspects that affect the functionality of the destination. Conserving the Environment, tourism needs to activate the sustainable model of production, use and consumption.

To my end, Montero and his colleagues strongly believe that correction should be implemented when the effects of activity jeopardizes the necessary resources to protect the basis of exploitation. Landscapes, human resources, heritage, tradition are pondered as resources that determine the attractiveness of products. Not only cultures, but also people are commoditized by being visually consumed according to an international demand. The paradigm of sustainability is aimed at granting the proper operation of tourist-machinery excepting the ethics of exploited agents. Zygmunt Bauman explains brilliantly that one of the aspects that characterize the late-modernity is the consumption of workforce jointly to the re-design of geographical landscapes. In industrial societies, workers devote time and effort in producing merchandises which were often sold and exchanged at the market. Now, the labor market has vulnerabilized the conditions of work to the extent people are swamped as commodities (Bauman, 2001). Mantero's diagnosis not only misunderstands the roots of globalization and capitalism but also proposes a conceptual model where the agent is subject to the value. In other terms, problems of development are not given by the effects to mitigate as Mantero precludes, but to the question why some countries were success while other failed in consolidating the process of development. In earlier studies M Korstanje has explained that as a theory coined by West, development follows the rational patterns of control and exclusion. In 1948, Truman's discourse emphasized on the needs of US to expand models to develop the world. After this, thousand of financial programs issued in favor of Third world were implemented to improve the condition of life and work in peripheral nations. Not only the theory of development failed to cement stable economies in Latin America, Asia and Africa, but also it generated a strong financial dependency. Poor countries accepted loans issued by international financial banks as IMF, or World Bank with higher interests almost impossible to accrue. To be criticized by claims of under-developed countries, which defied the paradigm, the policy-makers and analysts employed the metaphor of cultural incompatibility to explain what unexplainable is. E. De Kadt, among other else, considered the culture played a vital role leading a nation towards the rationality. Those countries with past of slavery created social pathologies such as civil wars or corruption which stagnated the stages of development (Korstanje, 2011; 2012). Comaroff & Comaroff (2012) exert a brilliant criticism to the culture of empowerment that transforms cultures into merchandises. The archetype of development and conversation introduced a new paradigm to create self-organizations which sometimes may triggers conflict. Offering their own culture to sightseers, today natives conduct a profitable enterprise achieving a great independency respecting to classical power, but entering in discrepancy with state. Not surprisingly, the doctrine of sustainability as it has been formulated by West brings bloody genocides and ethnic cleansing. The exploitation of difference and tourism seems to be inextricably intertwined. To what extent tourism may be useful in mitigating the global warming's effects?.

Last but not least, the belief that intervention helps in preserving Environment rests on shaky foundations. The capitalism, as more than an economic project, has enthralled in the style of life of Western societies changing many of their primary institutions. The first ideological fallacy imposed by capitalism was the separateness between humans and non-humans, work and leisure, men and women. The modern world is organized in basis of a set of binomials that facilitate the techniques of control. Unlike hunters and gatherers who see the world from the relational-perspective, modern cosmology conceives the Environment from the "dwelling perspective". What is the difference?.

The relational-perspective alludes to see the nature as part of human life. Animals, which are considered sacred entities, provide to humans the food to survive. They serve as protectors as long as hunters do not kill

more than needed. That way, the principle of wealth accumulation is banned in hunter/gatherers economies. Since the concept of surplus is not valorized by the relational perspective, speculation is an unknown value. The relational perspective conceals the territory as finely-ingrained to perception. Travelers not only do not need maps or GPS to remind the landscapes, they are integrated to their memories by means of experience. In their cosmology, the conceptual separation between humans and non-humans simply does not apply.

Rather, the dwelling perspective conceives that the space as something which can be filled by the human presence. In doing so, the mankind directly intervenes to take possession of nature. Since environment is perceived as a dangerous place to prosper, further adaptive techniques are needed. The culture is conducive to discipline the hostile Environment into a much friendly one. The Cartesian dualism, as it has been historically formulated embraced rapid innovations in technology, division of labor, market, tourism industry and science by many reasons. It conferred to medieval thought the concept of objectivity. The study of causes and effects in the physical world implied the separateness of objects and subjects. More beneficial for European science, this viewpoint opened a gap between human and the Environment, which today produced the “global warming”. If ecological concerns devote attention to the preservation of resources, they exclude the human presence. Even the most radical eco-friendly projects have problems to understand “the human”. National parks and natural reservoirs have prospered as shelters without the settlement of “homo-sapiens”. May be possible to orchestrate a sustainable policy without the presence of the most important of specie?.

The original separateness legitimated by dwelling perspective, alludes to found conservative measures to exert intervention into the “great Garden”. The logic of submission given by this doctrine not only was recently imported by modernism but misjudged the nature of work.

The British anthropologist, Ingold (2011) acknowledges that the dichotomy between leisure and work as introduced by capital-owners was conducive to the production of profits. At the time the work-force was benefited by the promises of leisure and tourism, he adds, its incomes (wages) were absorbed by the capital-system. Forging the myth that leisure liberates workers from oppression, the ideology of capitalism reserved the right to mark not only goods, but also workers. Paradoxically, their free-time was fulfilled by the needs of consuming what they produced in their working time (Ingold, 2000).

The great paradox of whole tourism studies consists in valorizing the attempt “the technique” as a valid instrument to reverse the effects created by the same ideology that caused the problem. To what extent, West may mitigate the negative consequences of what its ideology accelerated, is the main dilemma which may be further discussed in next years (Korstanje & George, 2012). Of course, since Mantero is an “emeritus professor” we will extend the umbrella of piety as a sign of respect and honesty. Our criticism, therefore, will be limited only to the conceptual problems of his argument avoiding other misunderstanding or grammar failures/misspellings on the text which would be easily fixed by screening a duly proof-reading process.

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