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Book review

Blanco-Romero, A., Blázquez-Salom, M. (2023). Spanish Tourism Geographies. Geographies of Tourism and Global Change. Springer, Cham. 480p.
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The Book Spanish Tourism Geographies, edited by Blanco-Romero and Blázquez-Salom is part of the effort of Springers collection Tourism Geographies and global change to give access to English-speaking scholars to non-English tourism geographies works and traditions. Following, 2021 Mathis Stock's Progress in French Geographies, Spanish Tourism Geographies is a collection of works mainly from Spanish and Catalan scholars. Where Stock's (2021) collection focused on giving access to English readers to French Language main currents of research, regardless of the geographical areas where they are working, Spanish Tourism Geographies is moving further into the Spanish dimension of the geographical scholarship.

Indeed, three levels are at play in the edited collection. First to look at the tourism geographies of Spain, as a major tourism area in the global tourism phenomenon. Second, to present this tourism geographies through the lens of mostly Spain-based tourism scholars and last, but not least, to challenge the hegemonic Anglo-Saxon scholarship in referring mostly to other Spain based scholars and Spanish language research. This thorough effort to refer to work done in Spain, about Spain and in Spanish language is positioning this book beyond the plate glass exposure of a research tradition to hegemonic English-speaking science system, it is an open door to a research tradition that reaches a level of maturity to self-sustain its paradigm, conceptual constructions and identity. This exercise could have been a way to validate within Anglo-Saxon scholarship the work done in Spain on tourism, but Blanco-Romero and Blázquez-Salom are not seeking validations, they are giving access to the richness of Spanish tourism geographies and build an invitation into this body of work that would make it hard to ignore its deep relevance for the global geographies of tourism.

The book is articulated in two sections aimed at exposing the width of the Spanish tourism geographies scholarship in terms of territorial diversity and diversity of approach, the whole book is cross by the geographical paradox of Spanish tourism, between high intensity tourism coastal areas and "empty" rural tourism areas. While the critical perspective that informed the work of the two editors is ingrained through the whole book, it is so in different ways. First directly in referring to critical scholarly work like Britton, Fletcher, Bianchi, Mosedale, Harvey, Fraser, to name just a few, second in publishing work from scholars who position their work within a critical perspective, Cañada, Murray, Yrigoy, Russo and so forth, but also in the critical reappraisal of concepts like Smart's tourism, destination management, rural tourism, sustainable tourism, and so forth.

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One of the concepts that is lingering all along the chapters of this book is the concept of overtourism. The concept, mostly defined through the UNWTO (2018) institutionalized understanding of it but also with other works, like the ones of Claudio Milano (2017;2018). While coastal Spain has become, with Venice, one of the symbols of overtourism, therefore justifying its uses in the book, it is mostly associated with undertourism, as a mirror concept, leaving a feeling of a possible “right” amount of tourism in between. This search of the “right” amount of tourism is exemplified by the Chapter of Hidalgo-Geralt, looking at indicators of overtourism in a risk perspective. While not challenging the relevance of this over/under tourism, it would have gained in strength and criticality to put in perspective with other concepts around the issue of tourism use of space and place.

Paradoxically, overtourism become presented as a fact, a situation that drives a need to revise the model, but what the model is resumed at first as a commercial, neoliberal and extraterritorial tourism development. While no chapters directly tackle what is the model, except for the introduction which describes it with large strokes in creating a thorough picture of the book, several chapters draw the contour of the model. Chapter 10 by Blázquez-Salom & Murray expose the social production of mass tourism in the coastal area, while Chapter 17 by Macias Mendoza & Russo deconstructs the model for urban spaces. Chapter 3 by Díaz-Soria et al. expose the dynamics of Inland Spain in a system mostly built for coastal development, chapter 4, by Muller & Blázquez-Salom, add the nature conservation place and roles in the model, exposing its continuity within the development of a mass tourism while being presented by the authority as some sort of rupture. Finally, in chapter 18 Gonzalez-Perez & Yrigoy expose the two faces of tourism mobilities, mobility for leisure and mobility for work, as part of a segregating process in place and space. While being scattered around the book, those chapters once linked together situate the reach and functions of the model at work in Spain, which is a strong contribution for understanding what is happening in Spain, but also in tourism areas that bear similarities. In terms of methods, the case studies are the main methods in the contribution of the book, with some comparative studies, between Spanish cases. So, if a reader is looking at materials to assess how tourism in Spain is ranking compared to other international destinations, this book might not be the right one for them. Although, it offers a good picture of the situation for readers who already have similar assessment of other tourism areas.

Contextually, it is important to recall that the book was made through the COVID-19 pandemic. The ghost of COVID-19 is breathing through the book with 21 chapters out of 24 chapters mentioning the pandemic. This topic is inevitable considering the impacts COVID-19 had on the global tourism system (Brouder et al. 2020) and the moment of the book production. Although, we can argue that the historical distance is not there to really assess the transformations that the pandemic had on tourism in Spain, and in Spain as a society, it is also a strong testimony on how the core of the model is still quite intact in Spain, but also have the potential to be a historical testimony on how shortly after the bulk of the pandemic, tourism scholars made sense of this historical event.

It is also important to underline the contribution of Ernest Cañada on tourism workforce, especially the chambermaid work in Spain. Indeed, the work of Cañada is keeping on exposing the invisible part of the tourism industry, and give voices to the mostly silent, mostly feminine and racialized workforce that keep the industry going while not receiving a

fair share of its revenues. In its review of the literature on the topic, Cañada goes back to the 70's to offer a comprehensive description of the condition of women working as chambermaids in Spain, and the evolution of the precarity associated with those jobs. He also calls for more research and attention to that dimension of tourism industry that is mostly overlooked by tourism studies.

While this whole book is an important contribution to tourism geographies, and tourism studies, there is some shortcoming. First, its focus on tourism is leaving the reader with a partial understanding on how tourism is part of Spanish society at large. Tourism in late capitalism is highly entangled within environmental, social and political bodies (Lapointe & Muldoon, 2023). If some chapters make some links to the larger social and political context, like the introduction and also the chapter of González-Pérez & Yrigoy, a historical piece on why and how tourism was developed from the 1950s and beyond would have been an important addition, especially for readers less familiar with the historicity of tourism in Spain. Another shortcoming of the book is its important use of the word territory, and its semantic field, without engaging critically with it as a geographical concept. Indeed, while it comes up 584 times in the book, it is used either as a Westphalian understanding of the concept of territory, as the space inside the borders of a nation-state, or as an administrative division of the State. A critical engagement with the concept of territory would have been a added contribution to the geographic perspective of the books, especially that we can assume that *territorio* in Spanish-language geographies might have some nuance and differences than the English territory and the French *territoire*. Nonetheless, those two shortcomings are mostly wishes for a larger, and theoretically engaged understanding of tourism, not a reappraisal of the relevance of the contribution of the book.

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