

Landscapes of Leisure: space, place and identities; Sean Gammon & Sam Elkington (Eds); Palgrave Macmillan, London; 2015; £65 ; 978-1-137-31032-3 (hardback)

Sport tourism writings often comment upon the magic triangle of people, activity and place first coined by Weed and Bull in 2009, but considerations of place experience within the field are disparate and there has been much critique of contributions to the study of sport and tourism which fail to theoretically underpin their work. Geographical approaches offer enormous possibilities for sport tourism research, evidenced none more so than by the publication 'Landscapes of Leisure: space, place and identities'.

With a focus on landscapes as a setting for the exploration of identity, this collection offers an important contribution to the growing body of work which recognises the significance of space and place to the performance of leisure; not just as a setting, but as a constituent of meaning. The authors seek to move beyond the separate treatment of bounded and distinct spaces and places to consider the complexities of the relationships between them in their many and varied forms. The book adopts a transdisciplinary approach to the study of leisure with contributions from renowned international scholars providing a rich discussion on the spacing of leisure and identities. Conceptualising landscapes as a collection of spaces and places for both immersive encounters, and/or to be gazed upon from afar, it offers a different perspective on the geographies of leisure than previous works.

The first chapter of the book contains an excellent introduction to the approach taken, and this crucial positioning continues into the second chapter which provides an important conceptualisation of space and landscape and their relationship with the doing of leisure and the making of identity. This sophisticated discussion sets the scene for all further contributions to consider these ideas in relation to more specific, but hugely diverse examples.

The real strength of this book is the attention given to marginal and under-researched spaces largely absent from mainstream tourism literature and thus it is a hugely exciting and thought provoking read. For example urban spaces are the focus of both chapter 3 and 5, yet both approach these through an alternative lens considering the everyday, the mundane, and the 'dead' spaces within cities which can be transformed through the experience of leisure and indeed tourism practices in them. In chapter 6 attention is turned to cemeteries as visitor attractions and in chapter 16 to place making in the 'blogosphere'. The book also captures a multiplicity of human perspectives on their experiences of them such as those of young people, of second home owners and local residents, extreme sports enthusiasts and outdoor recreationists but also offers alternative perspectives on how they are experienced – phenomenologically, as zombies, as something to be savoured, or spiritually.

The book makes a number of key contributions to the study of sport and tourism, the first of which is its considerations of the expressions of power and politics

which accompany the interaction between tourist visitors and local communities; an issue of great importance to sport tourism writings to date. The 'leisure' perspective encourages the consideration of the place experience by a range of local and visiting stakeholders involved in the management, enjoyment or residence of 'tourism' environments.

The significance of this publication for sport and tourism is also in its recognition of how the movement and practices of people can alter the meanings of places. It recognises the influence of globalisation as a process that can stimulate both placelessness and disconnect, and a stronger sense of sense of localism simultaneously. In either case the authors argue that the increasing connectedness and mobility which accompanies a global world are crucial to the way in which we understand how places are defined.

The most notable contribution to the study of sport tourism comes from Sean Gammon in his chapter entitled Sport Tourism finding its place? This chapter gives a useful synopsis of previous work in the field which has considered place relationships. There is an over emphasis on events and stadium experiences in the examples and more attention could be given to the work exploring participant place relationships formed through active sport tourism. Nevertheless, it argues for a consideration of the interrelationship between and within sport tourism places which provides an interesting musing for future work in the area.

A less obvious example, but one which offers an interesting commentary on issues of importance to the conceptualisation of sport tourism is chapter 14's consideration of the role of distance in the experience of leisure. Sport tourism is predicated on the notion of travel and this chapter draws attention to the mental transition which can occur when moving to a space of leisure, and to the journey itself. Whilst acknowledging there is not always a spatial separation between leisure and non leisure activities, the chapter considers how leisure time may be more easily consumed with distance, and as such offers an interesting perspective for studies of sport tourism experiences in particular.

In summary, Landscapes of Leisure is an exciting contribution to the field of leisure and tourism studies. Whilst undoubtedly lacking in sport tourism specific content, the overarching message of the importance of geographies to the experience of leisure and the framing of identities is of great significance to the field.