



Community-building and amenity migration in community-based tourism development. An approach from southwest Spain



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HIGHLIGHTS

- A more dynamic, process-based, operational and flexible notion of community is provided.
- Community-based tourism and community building are inherently linked processes.
- Amenity migration is a key factor to understanding many experiences of CBT.

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ABSTRACT

Many of the localities that promote community-based tourism (CBT) are subject to processes of openness, mobility and amenity migration that: (1) call into question the concept of community required to understand CBT; and (2) foster the existence of 'outsider' residents who are increasingly playing prominent roles in the development of CBT. This paper uses an ethnographic case study to analyze the participation of amenity migrants in the development of CBT and the effect this has on community building. To this end, the bonding relations that link and structure the local tourist sector are examined. The findings invite us from a theoretical and practical perspective to: (1) take into consideration the participation of amenity migrants in the development of CBT; (2) reflect on an appropriate concept of community to study or promote CBT experiences; and (3) consider that the development of CBT and community building are inherently and recursively linked processes.

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1. Introduction

Many localities that foster community-based tourism (CBT) in both developed countries and developing countries are subject to the process of increasing openness and mobility (Boyle & Halfacree, 1998; Kayser, 1990; Marsden, 2009; Oliva, 2010; Rivera & Mormont, 2007; Urry, 2006; Woods, 2007). Amenity migration, which is part of this openness, is migration "to places that people perceive as having greater environmental quality and differentiated culture" (Moss, 2006:3). Thus, villages are increasingly becoming home to "cosmopolitan locals" (Iorio & Wall, 2012) and amenity migrants (Abrams, Gosnell, Gilc, & Klepeis, 2012; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Moss, 2006), which catalyses substantial changes in their social foundations. This phenomenon has not yet been studied in

sufficient depth in relation to the development of CBT, and its effects have yet to be assessed.

The role of amenity migrants together with locals in the development of CBT may be more important than previously supposed (Cortes-Vázquez, 2014; Müller, 2006) and could even call into question the endogenous and markedly local nature of CBT. When examining the issue from this perspective, the very concept of community applied to the study of CBT must be reviewed, as amenity migrants not only impact the development of CBT but also affect the development of community life, understood as a distinctly dynamic and open system.

This paper analyses the participation of amenity migrants in the development of CBT and its effect on local society using a case study conducted in Alájar (South West Spain). Alájar is a small village that possesses many of the characteristics typical of CBT experiences in developed countries: it is located in a marginal rural area within a natural protected space, it has been the object of public policies aimed at fostering rural development and it has clearly been

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influenced by the process of openness and mobility that affects the rural world. This case study is deemed to be significant enough for an analytical, exploratory examination of the following issues: (1) the participation of amenity migrants in the development of CBT; (2) finding an appropriate concept of community to study or promote experiences of CBT in heterogeneous local societies; and (3) the links between CBT and community-building processes. This will enhance theoretical understanding of CBT and thereby contribute to the development of more useful strategies to promote this type of tourism.

First, a brief discussion is provided on a useful concept of community in relation to CBT and the presence of amenity migrants. The case study is then presented and the research methodology described. The subsequent section provides an analysis of CBT development in Alájar and examines the role played by amenity migrants. Finally, the conclusions are described.

2. Amenity migration, community-based tourism and community

Amenity migration is a complex phenomenon that is central to understanding the growing global migratory flow that has no particular economic or political motivation, but is instead linked to the search for quality of life (Abrams et al., 2012; Glorioso & Moss 2007; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Moss, 2006) and/or the practice of alternative lifestyles (neo-rurality) (Chevalier, 1981). In this regard, the reason these migrants are motivated to move is explicitly linked to nature and culture. At the same time, environmental quality and cultural differentiation attract tourists to those same places, fostering, in some cases, the development of community-based tourism.

The notion of CBT is becoming increasingly polysemic, referring in practice to diverse forms of tourism organisation. Yet CBT always correlates with local participation in the planning, development, management and benefits of tourism (Amati, 2013; Hiwasaki, 2006; Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan, & Luloff, 2010; Okazaki, 2008; Ruiz-Ballesteros, Hernández, Coca, Cantero, & del Campo, 2008; Stone & Stone, 2011; Tosun & Timothy, 2003). Its contexts, forms and types vary greatly, however, situated on a continuum that ranges from markedly collective experiences of owning and managing tourism resources and businesses to others comprising individual/family-coordinated initiatives, to a greater or lesser extent, at the local level. Tourism is an eminently global business (demand-driven), but its organisation, management and benefits may have a distinctly local nature (supply-driven). This is when the notion of CBT comes to the fore. For the purposes of this paper, CBT involves direct local participation (collective action) in the development, management and benefits of tourism activities that are integrated into the local economy. The level of this 'local involvement' will determine whether a particular destination can be classified as CBT. The origins of CBT experiences are heterogeneous, as they can derive from explicit, strategic, planned processes, but can also develop spontaneously from individual or family initiatives that gradually become structured. Although local participation is required, however, external intervention (state, NGO) is not excluded. This local participation makes 'community' a key concept in CBT. It is essential, therefore, to use an appropriate conceptualisation of community when analysing processes of tourism and their effects on local society.

Classic and sometimes romantic visions of community (Kenny, 1966; Pitt Rivers, 1954; Redfield, 1960) present community as a homogenous and closed, inward-looking entity, drawing a clear

distinction between inside and outside. The outside is a source of conflict and anomaly, as if the internal functioning provides permanent equilibrium. The authenticity of the community is recognised precisely in that closed nature, and the main virtue of CBT would lie in the maintenance of the isolation—or at least consistent protection—of the community from the outside, with community members developing, capitalising on and controlling tourism with as little outside interference as possible. Tourism becomes a lesser evil if controlled by that closed community. However, the development of tourism in a supposedly closed community is highly improbable (Sakata & Prideaux, 2013), whilst external intervention—from, e.g., development cooperation agencies, NGOs, national and international public programmes—is a conditioning factor in the development of CBT (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2014; Hummel & van der Duim, 2012; Iorio & Corsale, 2014; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013; Ruiz et al., 2008; Zapata et al., 2011). This external influence can be found at many different levels and intensities, sometimes in subtler forms that have not yet received the same degree of attention as the more 'formal' ones and which appear to be crucial in the development of many CBT experiences.

The inhabitants of rural societies come into significant contact with the outside in multiple dimensions. An increasing number of rural communities in Europe and North America are attracting amenity migrants, but so too are countries in the global south (Cortes, Matarrita-Cascante & Rodriguez, 2014; Matarrita-Cascante & Stocks, 2013). This phenomenon encompasses the neo-rural movement (Chevalier 1981) and is part of a globalising migratory flow in rural areas (Woods 2007), moulding those areas into heterogeneous spaces, and in some cases, developing dual societies comprising locals and amenity migrants.

To work in such open, complex social contexts, the notion of community should be re-focused as an emerging social interaction generated by the capacity of individuals to pursue common goals and interests (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 1991) that fosters collective strategies and tactics (De Certau, 1990), leading to collective action. In this paper, the notion of community is understood from a process-based perspective that is eminently dynamic, shaped by collective practices and actions that are activated or deactivated, configuring a "dynamic human system that remains viable through constant adaptive responses to change, and development of the ability to thrive in environments characterized by change" (Magis, 2010:403).

Naturally, in any human collective, interests vary greatly, individual capacities for influence differ and members are segmented by virtue of particular goals, which are different from one another and which divide them. Clearly, this dynamic does not beget community. Community is built when, on the basis of different goals, interests, and groups, an interlinking mesh emerges that binds individuals in spite of their differences (Wilkinson, 1991). Without renouncing such differences, a common logic can be shaped that turns some of these more or less individual goals or interests into a collective matter because these goals are easier to achieve collectively. Thus, community basically constitutes a process of integration that, without ignoring differences, conflicts and peculiarities, brings individuals together and holds them in a type of permanent tension: it is essentially a sustained dynamic of collective action. Collective action means action taken together to achieve common objectives. In the context of this paper, collective action is closely linked to the ability to share, trust and communicate, abilities that are nourished through bonding relationships.

Obviously, such processes are not without conflict, inequality, conflicting individual interests, disputes, alienation and material or

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