

Walls and gateways: Contested heritage in Dubrovnik, by C. Motzfeldt Loades, Berghahn, New York (2022). 368 pp., (Hbk.), £107.00, ISBN: 9781800733541

Book Review

Walls and gateways: Contested heritage in Dubrovnik, by Celine Motzfeldt Loades, is a new edition to the Berghahn Series 'Explorations in Heritage Studies'. This book is presented in 6 chapters, plus an introduction, conclusion and epilogue, which together form a comprehensive illustration of the historical processes and events that have influenced Dubrovnik's World Heritage site and status. With a particular focus on local perspectives, this book succeeds in providing unique insights into the value of heritage and heritage tourism in Dubrovnik.

Through a robust review of how heritage and heritage tourism are both valued and managed in Dubrovnik, this book paints a necessary picture of a love-hate relationship between locals and tourism activities. To understand this situation, the book opens with a historical framing that highlights the underpinning tensions between locals and decision-making officials, and the discontent among locals relating to what history is remembered and how their heritage portrayed. Such tensions and discontent are linked to dark histories of war (dating back to WWII), political neglect and cultural marginalisation, which the author effectively describes as a shadow cast over Dubrovnican memory and intensifying local perceptions of being culturally distinct in a national context. Yet, this culturally distinct identity is not wholly unified, as the ethnographic study undertaken reveals divisions between Dubrovnicans relating to religion, ethnicity, and feelings of resentment towards those who left the city during the Croatian War of Independence. Stories of intolerance linked to family lineage reveals one's identity is determined not by what they choose, but by their family's make-up and past. These divisions, or rather 'perceptions of Otherness and cultural borders', are reminiscent of bygone days not unlike medieval feudal times. Further in the divide, the author reveals generational differences as younger people argue their frustrations and sadness over post-war issues and intolerance that continue to haunt the society.

The tensions between Dubrovnicans and frustrations with the wider Croatian community are shown to be further exacerbated by the management of the heritage tourism infrastructure. Proclaimed as being 'fully restored' from the impacts of war and deemed safe for tourists to return for sun, sand, and sea holidays, the author presents a well-rounded depiction of Dubrovnik's whitewashed image, which does not extend to the local memories that tell a very different tale. Despite the lingering post-war issues of identity discourse and socio-economic challenges, Dubrovnik is now seen as an all-year tourism destination, offering a wide range of tourism activities set against a romantic medieval backdrop, which enhances its growing presence as a preferred location for international business and tourism conferences. Yet, this image, carefully curated by tourism officials, is in stark contrast to the image of Dubrovnicans and their perceived quality of life. In fact, the high-level mass tourism system, particularly marketing efforts and film-induced activities, are revealed to have become so invasive that many locals feel alienated and that their history and cultural heritage have become distorted in favour of a commercial agenda.

While this book is impactful and ignites cross-disciplinary discourse about the uses and abuses of tourism activities in a particular destination, its inclusion of local voices is the ultimate feature. The author's poetic-like descriptions of Dubrovnicans and their struggle to maintain a valued presence in a city that is slowly pushing them out in favour of commercial endeavours are intensified by local accounts that describe Dubrovnik as a 'lifeless museum'. Locals' descriptions of Dubrovnik as being defined by a 'tourist time', when the city is overrun

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by outsiders, in contrast to a 'local time', when tourists leave and they can breathe again, illustrates their love-hate relationship with the tourism infrastructure. Such sentiments echo those of other historic cities, like Venice and Edinburgh, which too have become economically dependent on tourism activities but suffer in terms of social and environmental sustainability. Although steps are being taken to improve the Dubrovnik's sustainability, the final pages of this book make clear demonstrations that the negative impacts of tourism developments are masked by the positive impacts.

This book allows for critical and deep conversations about the use and management of heritage for tourism purposes, as well as the value of cultural heritage for creating a sense of place and authenticity. It provides space for reflection and consideration for how such findings might be transferred to other historic cities that rely heavily on tourism activities. This book extends current research relating to heritage and tourism management within historic places and provides valuable insights to both academics and practitioners. Finally, this is a recommended case study for students exploring challenges in managing heritage tourism in line with the Triple Bottom Line and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

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