

Author: Dr Constantia Anastasiadou

Post: Lecturer in Tourism

Affiliation: School of Marketing, Tourism and Languages
Craiglockhart Campus
219 Colinton Road
Edinburgh Napier University
Edinburgh EH14 1DJ
Tel: 44 (0) 131 455 4635
Fax: 44 (0) 131 455 4540
Email: c.anastasiadou@napier.ac.uk

Title: Exploring the interrelationships between regional consciousness, migration and tourism in regional integration schemes.

Keywords: mobility, migration, barrier, border, deregulation, regional consciousness

Introduction

In a highly globalised world, mobility has become a central resource; the circulation of people generates a high degree of social complexity and raises political challenges that cannot be ignored (Pécoud & de Guchteneire, 2007). Tourism involves movement across space- between countries, over boundaries and across borders- and is the perfect example of increasing economic and cultural globalisation. Regional integration is a component of political globalisation and its emphasis on the removal of barriers has important implications for all aspects of human mobility including tourism.

Tourism, migration and mobility are interrelated concepts and increasingly there is a blurring between leisure and work, migration and tourism (Williams and Hall, 2002) which necessitates examining tourism mobility within the context of international migration.

Although tourism mobility has been the focus of study in the past (see, Feng and Page, 2000; Prideaux, 2005; Timothy, 2006; Williams and Hall, 2002), the relationship between regional integration and tourism mobility has received very limited attention.

The purpose of this paper is first, to explore the interrelationships between tourism, migration and mobility, and secondly, to establish how regional integration might affect tourism mobility.

Method

This conceptual paper is based on the systematic review and analysis of relevant literature from the fields of geography, European studies, political science and tourism. Information is also taken from government sources and official publications of regional integration schemes from across the globe.

In particular, the conceptualisation of border, migration and mobility in the tourism literature is reviewed. In addition, tourism as a form of temporary migration is also considered before

the discussion focuses on regional integration, its typologies and characteristics. Finally, the effects on borders and barriers of regional integration are appraised before the treatment of tourism in such schemes is assessed.

Findings/Discussion

Although the importance of removing barriers to the movement of people was acknowledged in all the examples that were discussed, concrete action was limited and there was unwillingness to fully implement protocols and agreements. In fact, the treatment of tourists in regional schemes in Europe, Asia and Latin America can be described as asymmetrical. Inter-regional tourists are more likely to enjoy greater freedom of movement than the residents of the integrated area.

Due to the absence of common migration policies in integrated areas, intra-regional tourism mobility in particular has been impeded. Most regional schemes have shied away from promoting freedom of movement because of safety concerns, fears of human trafficking and illegal immigration among other reasons.

The findings highlight that the relationship between tourism, migration and mobility is multifaceted and directly influenced by regional integration processes. Although previous studies on tourism mobility and regional integration are limited, it becomes evident that such schemes have great impact on human mobility.

The analysis also demonstrated the importance of regional identity (or regional consciousness) in establishing cross-border relationships. This is a novel concept in tourism studies which is worthy of further investigation within the contexts of cross-cultural exchange and social distance. Improving cross border relations is fundamental for the success of regional integration efforts. Tourism is conditioned by the existence of political, economic, physical and psychological barriers (Timothy, 2001) and regional identity could help explain why psychological barriers might persist when political, economic and physical barriers have been removed. In addition, the potential contribution tourism could make in the reduction of psychological distance and the development of a regional identity would also be worthy areas of further study.

Conclusions

It is concluded that tourism mobility has been positively affected by the removal of legal, political and physical barriers within integrated regions but some barriers to human mobility still persist. The deregulation of tourist movement is little more than wishful thinking for many schemes because of the inability to surpass certain political barriers. However, regional integration has also provided some opportunities for bilateral agreements between member states and the easing of some border restrictions on human mobility.

The relationship between migration and tourism is thus affected by a wider host of factors than has been discussed in the tourism literature. Certainly, acknowledging the impact of regional integration policies on migration could go some way towards unveiling part of this complex relationship.

Furthermore, it is suggested that regional integration schemes should take specific actions that support intra-regional tourism mobility. Travelling across the regional integration area could increase awareness of the similarities that might exist across borders and help with the construction of a regional identity. In this way, a mutual relationship of support between tourism mobility and regional integration can be formed.

Cross border tourism development should thus be further studied within the context of political institutions and regional arrangements.

Finally it is concluded that regional integration schemes simultaneously remove and increase the barrier effect of borders and are often creating temporary, asymmetrical and uni-directional mobilities.

Key References

Feng and Page, 2000 K. Feng, and S.J. Page, An exploratory study of the tourism migration-immigration nexus: Travel experiences of Chinese residents in New Zealand, *Current Issues in Tourism*, **3**, (3) (2000) pp. 246-281.

Paasi, 2002 A. Paasi, Bounded spaces in the mobile world: deconstructing regional identity, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, **93**, (1) (2002), pp.137-148.

Pécoud, A., and de Guchteneire, 2007 A. Pécoud, and de P. Guchteneire, Introduction. In: A. Pécoud and P. de Guchteneire, Editors, *Migration Without Borders Essays on the Free Movement of People*, UNESCO and Berghahn Books, Paris and New York (2007), pp. 1-30.

Timothy, 2001 D.J. Timothy, *Tourism and Political Boundaries*, Routledge, London (2001).

Timothy, 2006 D.J. Timothy, Relationships between tourism and international boundaries. In: H. Wachowiak , Editor, *Tourism and Borders Contemporary Issues, Policies and International Research*, Ashgate, Aldershot (2006), pp. 9-18.

Prideaux, 2005, B. Prideaux, Factors affecting bilateral tourism flows. *Annals of Tourism Research*, **32**, (3) pp. 780-801.

Williams and Hall, 2002 A.M. Williams, and C.M. Hall, Tourism, migration, circulation and mobility: The contingencies of time and place. In: A.M. Williams and C.M. Hall, Editors, *Tourism and Migration New Relationships between Production and Consumption*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, pp. 1-52.

Social Science used: Geography, Political Science