

Foreword

For several years, I have lived within the shadow of one of Sweden's major ski resorts, a community boasting just over 3,000 permanent inhabitants. This destination attracts both domestic and international visitors, most of whom arrive during the winter months. To be sure, the situation we encounter in this popular Swedish mountain resort plays out in numerous small communities worldwide, whose geographical assets have transformed them into popular destinations. Such places, including seaside and lakeside resorts, mountain settlements and gateway communities to national parks regularly suffer from a host of seasonality-related problems.

Given their small populations and narrow employment base, these resort communities rely heavily on temporary workforces made up of individuals from other places. Often, these workers are international migrants. In the case of the Swedish resort, some workers are those with few options for employment such as recent migrants to the country who are granted temporary work placements. These individuals usually work behind the scenes, performing low skill tasks such as room cleaning or dishwashing. The type of work they perform means that they rarely, if ever, come into direct contact with the visitors. Meanwhile, the same destination also attracts its fair share of lifestyle migrants, namely Swedes and others who are drawn to the destination, primarily because they wish to participate in their favorite activity such as winter sports. To them, working in the destination is a means to an end; it enables them to participate in a pursuit they enjoy, such as mountain biking or cross-country skiing. Among these lifestyle workers, we encounter Canadian and Italian ski instructors who work there for part of the year. When the winter season is over, some of them take up temporary assignments at winter sport destinations in the southern hemisphere (e.g., New Zealand).

Topics such as the mobility of tourism work and workers have long grabbed my own attention as a researcher who, in recent years, has been focusing increasingly on issues revolving around the social equity dimension of sustainable development. One thing I have noticed in my own investigations is that, despite the emergence of the subdiscipline of labor geographies in Human Geography, to this day, few scholars have chosen to examine the spatial dimensions of tourism work and workers. Indeed, the by-now-sizeable volume of literature on tourism work and workers focuses mostly on themes such as the quality of jobs, narratives concerning the poor skills and wages related to this employment sector, labor turnover, calculations of employment multiplier effects to name but a few.

I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised to see this impressive contribution by William Terry, a scholar who in recent years has emerged as one of the leading voices in the field of the labor geographies of tourism workers. In this well-woven volume, Terry once more highlights his skills as a researcher and writer, traits he displayed in his earlier pathbreaking examinations of the geographies of Filipino cruise ship workers. Specifically, he offers us a theoretically and empirically rich study of

temporary foreign guestworkers who are employed in numerous seasonal resorts around the United States. His aim is to describe how such places that often offer few options for economic growth other than tourism must depend more and more on these guestworkers. What are the implications of this dependence?

To answer these questions, Terry has invested much time and energy collecting data from various parts of the United States. Other than digging deep to identify how the various temporary work visa programs function he interviewed an array of actors, ranging from human resource directors and managers of hotels and resorts, employment recruitment agents and other intermediaries, advocacy and volunteer groups, participants in the summer work program but also many workers. The result is a fascinating comprehensive account of, on the one hand, why short-term work programs have occurred and are still going strong in the first place and how and why their significance for the American tourism industry grew over time, especially in communities where gentrification forces have led to a significant local labor force reduction. On the other hand, we gain a clear depiction into the lives of guestworkers, the challenges they face and the unanticipated disappointments they encounter.

It is truly rare to find an academic book on any topic that is also an excellent and compelling read. In this volume, Terry has delivered an academic masterclass by producing an excellent piece of scholarship, which surely should be a must on any labor geographer's bookshelf. Certainly, this is a must read for anyone interested in matters relating to tourism work and workers.

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