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Book review

Lifestyle Mobilities: Intersections of Travel, Leisure and Migration, T. Duncan, S.A. Cohen, M. Thulemark (Eds.). Ashgate, Farnham (2013). £65 Hardback, ISBN: 9781472407054

This edited collection seeks to bring together research that challenges the way in which travel, leisure and migration have been understood. It develops 'lifestyle mobilities' as a heuristic through which to understand what the editors describe as the 'grey zone' between temporary mobility and permanent migration. The book covers an ambitious number of lifestyle mobilities topics, encompassing a variety of forms of movement including hitchhiking, rock climbing, sailing, rallying, canoeing. The book also looks at mobilities for leisure, looking at tourism through the lens of belly dancing and storm watching; travelling and mobility as work through the practices of artists. These different studies are loosely arranged into four themes. First, the book explores mobile identities, focusing on how identity is performed through mobile practices. Second, the book considers mobile methods, how different methods can be applied to capture a sense of movement at a variety of scales and temporalities. Third, the book revisits questions of home and identity, looking at how place can be re-conceptualised within studies of mobility that challenge place as the organiser of the social. Fourth, the book looks at the role that mobility takes within lifestyles, exploring lifestyle migration and the complexities involved in understanding the identities of those who engage in what can be considered as environmentally questionable mobile practices.

The book therefore provides a good overview of how lifestyle mobilities can be differently understood and entangled within the increasingly burgeoning field of mobilities. It usefully avoids the discussions of the newness of mobilities as a field, instead focussing on how the theoretical understandings that underpin mobilities — a focus on movement rather than place — can advance our understanding of tourism, migration and lifestyles. However, as is perhaps inevitable with any edited collection, some chapters of the book fit the remit of mobilities better than others with some more interested in the motivations for or the 'after-effects' of mobility. The chapters that engage with mobilities focus on the role of the journey in constituting lifestyles, such as in artistic practices, hitchhiking, rock climbing, caneoscapes, cosmopolitanism, rally driving and the imagined worlds of lifestyle migration.

The book's main contribution is through providing a wealth of empirical examples that support Tim Cresswell's (2010) argument that we can understand mobility as a fact of physical movement, a representation of movement that gives it meaning and an embodied and experienced practice. The chapters in the book at times separate these understandings, or follow Cresswell in illustrating how they are interlinked. Two points in relation to this stand out.

First, research in mobilities in looking at the physical act of movement has tended to focus on the automobile as a technology of movement. By focusing on lifestyle mobilities, the book provides a number of examples of how the car can be engaged with differently, for example, as an escape through hitchhiking. However, the book also engages with a number of other technologies of movement such as the canoe, a minibus with children and the sailboat. This encourages us to think about the many different ways in and through which mobilities are constituted.

Second, by focusing on mobilities, the book questions what and how lifestyles are constituted on the move. Although the book includes chapters that explore lifestyle migration from a mobilities perspective, it usefully highlights other forms of movement that give lifestyles names and meaning. Whether it is the collective practices of hitchhiking or 'dirt-bags' (rock climbers) as alternative lifestyles, or rally driving and sailing as lifestyle practices, the book illustrates how journeys are an often constituent part of leisure and identity, in both the emotional and physical sense.

Overall, then, the book provides a useful overview of existing research on lifestyle mobilities. By bringing together such disparate research on what can be considered as lifestyle mobilities, it helps prompt questions about where we can take this type of research in the future.

Reference

Cresswell, T., 2010. Towards a politics of mobility. Environ. Planning D: Soc. Space 28 (1), 17–31.

Sophie Cranston
Institute of Geography and the Lived Environment, University of Edinburgh, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9XP, United Kingdom
E-mail address: sophie.cranston@ed.ac.uk

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