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**Paper:**

**Reworking student understanding of tourism mobility: experiences of migration and exchange on a field trip.**

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**Reworking student understanding of tourism mobility: experiences of migration and exchange on a field trip.**

**Abstract**

This paper examines experiences of tourism students engaged in a learning activity based on a visit to a migrant processing centre on the outskirts of Valetta, the capital of the Mediterranean island of Malta. This pedagogical exercise aims to problematize students understanding of mobility and exchange in the tourism context. Field trips to tourism destinations are an important part of the internationalisation of a tourism curriculum, allowing students to see the industry in practice. However, it is also important to ensure that students embed critical thinking in their reflections on the industry, for example access to mobility. As one of the most southerly members of the European Union, Malta has been subject to proportionally significant numbers of arrivals of asylum seekers since accession in 2004. Student reflections are examined through a focus group methodology and material from reflective journals, reporting discomfort but valuable learning outcomes, particularly in the degree of caring about others forced into alternative forms of mobility. Whilst an uncomfortable visit for many students, we have found this a useful discussion exercise against a backdrop of increasing migration controls, and an important contrast in relation to unfettered tourist mobility. We also highlight the importance of exchanges between students, teachers, hosts and others in alternative economic and educational discourse.

**Introduction**

Most contemporary descriptions of tourism include mobility as a defining pillar, with students of tourism familiar with binary concepts such as home and away; hosts and guests (Smith, 2012). However, as we are beginning to belatedly realise 'tourism is (only) one dimension of our "connections" with the world ranging across many different localities' (Cooper et al., 2008, p. 12). Indeed, we would argue that the structures of modern tourism have created a deliberate blindness to other forms of mobility and exchange. Most tourists are whisked from home to away and back again, without any experience of more challenging forms of human mobility (save perhaps the odd mischievous volcano or failing neoliberal low cost airline). Yet we seem to accept tourism, and particularly the migratory component, as a static and unproblematic concept. Further, there has been a dominance of perspectives which understand tourism purely as a process of monetised exchange. Both migration and travel involve human interactions that go far beyond those based within the formal economy, and arguably are shaped more by these alternative transactions. In parallel, moves to monetise education in recent decades have sought to divert from similar processes of exchange, themselves the foundation of knowledge production.

This paper seeks to illustrate the understanding of mobility in tourism through a student teaching exercise on an international field trip to Malta. Much like other Mediterranean destinations, the island has long been part of the 'pleasure periphery' for tourists from northern Europe. However, in recent years, southern Europe has also seen unprecedented levels of irregular migration from Africa and the Middle East, resulting in the so called 'migrant crisis'. Occasionally these two migrant bodies consciously or unconsciously overlap, for example on the island of Kos in Greece in 2015. Here the gutter press ran stories focusing on the negative impact that the refugees had on British tourist holiday experiences with the headline 'Hol on Earth- Brits caught up in Kos migrant nightmare' (the Sun, 13/08/2015). Somewhat ironically, the high levels of migration have actually been beneficial for tourism in the western Mediterranean in particular. Political uncertainty in Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey, and high levels of migration to the eastern Mediterranean have driven increased tourism further west in Malta, Spain and Portugal in recent years for example.

Seeking to discuss alternative forms of mobility and exchange on a student field course, and challenge student perceptions regarding the rights of tourists over the rights of migrants, we visit a migration centre on Malta in parallel to visits to key tourism attractions on the island. Student reflection through reflective journals and a focus group is used as an illustration of awareness of issues and how to frame mobility critically in relation to tourism and migration.

We hope to foster an ethics of care (Dredge at al, 2015) in the educational experience, and get students to consider issues of agency and responsibility for both individuals and states, highlighted in the introduction to this special issue. In particular we aimed to develop a learning activity similar to the photo essay developed by Williams (2015:7) that:

"offers an alternative means of locating the EU's borders and studying their effects; one that complicates catchall statements about 'Europe's Mediterranean migration crisis', encourages disaggregation of otherwise sweeping generalisations about migrants' experiences of that 'crisis', and demands closer attention to individual understandings and their vernacular expression in historical, geographical, and material contexts"

## Migration, mobility and exchange

Human migration, predating tourism by many millennia, has arguably shaped the structures of the modern world more than any other process (author, forthcoming). It is also a phenomenon based fundamentally on exchange, of people, places and time; furthermore much of this is on a non-monetary basis. Thus, whilst we would not want to argue against the importance of place, so central to tourism, migration is fundamental to the human condition. As Chatwin (1987) and many others have noted, nomadism is part of our historical and biological makeup, despite sitting uncomfortably in a world of militarised border controls and insular politics (witness the renaming of the UK border agency to border *force* in 2012, and similar moves in Australia in 2015). Nevertheless migration itself has long been a controversial issue, frequently framed around fear of the other (Moisi, 2009). Pervasive global media, itself one of the many connections alluded to above, has heightened the debate around migration. Yet discourses are often used to enflame chauvinistic attitudes. Ironically this illustrates a contradiction in neoliberal discourse, for the overwhelming narrative is about migrants 'taking jobs' of citizens, rather than sustaining economic growth. History shows us that nations experiencing economic growth (the darling of the neoliberal agenda) also experience significant immigration. Whilst these factors are not causal, correlation does demonstrate the positive effects that migration can have on economies. Indeed, in a tourism context, the UNWTO (itself noted for espousing a neoliberal development agenda (Hall, 2008)), promotes a positive view on migration, as it 'makes important social and economic contributions to destination countries, culturally enriching their societies, enhancing tourism products and providing labour for the travel, tourism, hospitality and catering sectors. (UNWTO, 2018). Further many migrants go on to develop tourism businesses, with migrant waves often developing alternatives in the tourism economy (Cave, 2007). Of course the high levels of

migration currently being experienced are still not open to all, with perhaps less than a third of us able to travel.

There is well founded concern in the academy that tourism education often fails to make students aware of such 'larger regional structures and societal processes' (Portegies et al, 2011:103) that are at work both within and beyond the industry. Despite the pressures of creating 'job ready' graduates, Tribe (2002) has noted the importance of creating 'philosophic practitioners' in our curriculum space. These students should be able to develop the four equally important domains of vocational and liberal approaches to both action and reflection, which is not always the case. In particular we must make room in the curriculum for liberal reflection which 'encourages professionals to be sceptical about given truths, sensitive to hidden ideology and power, and to reflect about what constitutes 'the good life' in the wider world affected by their work' (Tribe, 2015:374). Questions of ethics and morality become increasingly important in this space, for as Portegies et al (2011) note, in tourism education 'discussions are impregnated with hidden moral and existential questions', yet 'these types of questions are rarely dealt with in education, business, and academic contexts (105). In this particular pedagogical exercise we hoped to challenge this trend and develop a tourism curriculum that is mindful of non-monetised forms of mobility, such as those issues of exchange surrounding migration.

A more balanced tourism curriculum is likely to include the opportunity for critically oriented field visits, relying heavily on experiential exchange relationships between staff, students, hosts, tourists and others. Experiential learning has been shown to have greater transformational impact than more traditional forms of education. The well cited Kolb (1984) experiential learning cycle model of effective learning is seen when a student progresses through a cycle of four stages: of (1) having a concrete experience followed by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then (4) used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences. Experiential learning also allows students to access higher levels of cognitive development as defined by Blooms taxonomy (Bloom et al 1956). By taking elements of Knowledge and Comprehension developed in the classroom, field experiences facilitate Application and Analysis, which can be further developed in reflective practice to Synthesis and Evaluation. Indeed Portegies et al. (2014) point out the importance of contextual learning, as a 'best practice for knowledge production in the field of tourism' (Portegies et al. (2011:112). Furthermore these experiences also boost self-reflection as 'the

awareness of students of their own contexts increase significantly while living and researching in another context' (Portegies et al, 2011:105).

**The context**

   Malta, as a small island state (316 km²) in the middle of the Mediterranean has found itself on the frontline in the so called 'migrant crisis'. Since accession to the European Union in 2004, Malta has become one of the southern most points of the organisation, and therefore has been viewed as a natural entry point. As a result Malta has seen steady flows of irregular migrants, particularly from North Africa, since 2002. These peaked in 2008 with some 2,775 arrivals (IOM, 2015), and also significant numbers during the Libyan crisis after 2011. Since then, the actual numbers of arrivals to Malta have been decreasing, primarily as a result of more coordinated action from Italy and the EU to rescue boat migrants before they reach shore. Thus, the numbers of migrants to Malta in 2015 were dwarfed by the flows of migrants in the Eastern Mediterranean (up to a million), or indeed those reaching Italy (some 200,000) (BBC, 2016). However, with a population of almost half a million, Malta is also the most densely populated Member State of the European Union and one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Thus the small size and population of Malta makes this influx proportionally significant, with 430 asylum applications per 100,000 population in 2015, well above the EU average of 260 (BBC, 2016). Arguably the significant sea crossing makes the journey much more dangerous, and an estimated one in 35 migrants have drowned on this route in 2017 (UNHCR, 2017).

   Migration is not a foreign concept to the islands, indeed its central position has created a culture and history that has had many influences. The Maltese language, whilst using a Romanic script, is closely related to Arabic. It is not only the human world, as the island is also an important stopping point for many migratory bird species. This also continues to be a controversial issue as when EU habitat protection has sought to control the popularity of bird hunting in the islands (Guardian, 2016). Many Maltese migrated outwards to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America in the latter half of the 20th century, with the former receiving over 86,000 individuals between 1946 and 1996, equivalent to a fifth of Malta's current population (IOM, 2015). However, in recent years Malta has changed from a country of net emigration to immigration, with the largest proportion of legal migrants to the islands being from the UK. In 2015 there were over 10,000 people living in Malta who had been born in the UK, making up roughly a third of all

migrants to the country (IOM, 2015). In contrast the largest origin of irregular migrants was Somalia, but these make up only 3% of migrants as a whole.

Nevertheless, Maltese society is Catholic and highly conservative, so strategies for dealing with asylum seekers have been somewhat controversial. Malta is alone in the EU in employing mandatory detention of refugees for up to six months, under a removal order issued to all 'irregular' migrants arriving on the island (Williams, 2015). Under the EU Returns Directive this detention may be extended to 18 months whilst asylum claims are being processed. Refugees are housed in seven open detention centres, one of which is located in the port area of Marsa, across the Grand Harbour from the Maltese capital, Valetta. The Marsa Open Centre for Refugees and Asylum Seekers houses some 400 male refugees from 18-34 years of age. It has a range of facilities including shops, restaurants, cinema, mosque, and hairdressing salon (Williams, 2015) and there are a number of establishments catering to this population immediately outside the centre.

**Methods**

The present study seeks to problematize the notion of tourism with undergraduate students by examining other forms of mobility, in this case migrants arriving in Malta. The case is one of a number of activities explored during a week-long study tour of the islands, which forms one module as part of a degree. Field trips to tourism destinations are an important part of the internationalisation of a tourism curriculum, allowing students to see the industry in practice. As Davis notes, 'while the work involved in preparing to teach in non-traditional settings is frequently substantial, the rewards are equally large' (2002:251). Students are able to see how class theory translates into practice, meet a range of tourism stakeholders and experience the good and bad sides of tourism development.

One day of the tour is spent examining the history of the islands and visiting the capital, Valetta, to examine heritage preservation and redevelopment of the walled city which dates to the sixteenth century. Students experience the city and the Grand Harbour, and the notable cruise ship facilities that have been built by the authorities to facilitate large numbers of tourist visitors to the world heritage site. Following completion of this tour students are driven the short distance to the southern end of the harbour to the Marsa complex described above. Consideration of risks to students means that the learning activity takes place only within vehicles as we drive around the area. Attempts to organise a formal visit through the Maltese authorities have been rejected. We have been incorporating this activity since 2011 with over 100 students over the period. Students are also given a short graphic novel which explores

some of the issues, originally published in the Guardian newspaper in 2010 called *Not in my Country,* prompted by controversies over how to deal with the migrant issue (Sacco, 2010).

During the study tour, students are asked to complete reflective journals as an assessment item. Journals are a useful tool for students to engage in critical reflection, both on theoretical material covered in lectures and readings, but also on individual experiences. As well as being central to stages of reflection and analysis identified in Bloom et al (1956) and Kolb (1984), this promotes self-awareness as well as the ability to communicate these thoughts clearly (see also Portegies et al, 2011). Kallaith and Coghlan highlight the benefits of journals to students learning, which include 'greater self-knowledge, integration of models, increased ability to apply models to real life situations, increased motivation to learn, and greater confidence in becoming independent learners' (2001:61). Nevertheless, there are some issues with their implementation, notably encouraging students to move beyond descriptive accounts of activities, which may be exacerbated as 'the step from academic writing to personalised writing is a difficult transition for most students' (Kallaith and Coghlan 2001:64). However, more than a decades experience from one of the authors in their use (Cater, 2006), notes that benefits are to be gained by encouraging a wide variety of styles in journal keeping. The work of Raffan (n.d.) has been helpful in guiding more creative entries 'knowing how to say ideas in words is central to our experience, but don't exclude other ways of knowing- <u>write</u> in your journal, but let your imagination go too- <u>draw</u>, <u>wonder</u>, <u>explore</u>, <u>record</u>, <u>analyse</u>' Raffan (n.d.,1). Such initiatives reflect a balanced approach to the contemporary tourism curriculum, encouraging the development of the 'philosophic practitioners' capable in multiple learning domains (Tribe, 2002).

Following the visit to the detention centre, the authors conducted a focus group with the students to debrief aspects of the learning activity. The focus group technique has significant application in tourism studies (Cater and Low, 2012), particularly for its ability to capture a variety of views on a particular topic. Indeed, the dynamic nature of focus groups is grounded in an interactionist tradition which pays attention to the intersubjective ways in which people understand their lived experience (Cloke et al., 1991). Ironically focus group techniques were originally developed for market research, and have come under some critique for their Fordist approach to data collection, particularly where they were used in support of business and commercial pursuits (Bosco and Herman, 2010). However, more recently critical studies have recognised the value of having 'conversations' in the research process. Here the goal of focus groups is not to create one single meaning, but to develop multiple meanings from shared

discussion (Finn et al., 2000). They therefore rely inherently on principles of exchange between all participants and can themselves be seen as an alternative, non-monetised process.

Focus groups therefore are a collaborative research method, as the outcome is dependent on the interactions of group members as well as interactions with the facilitator. However, this should be seen as a strength, not a weakness, as interviewers are themselves implicated in the construction of meanings with their interviewees. Such intertextuality is crucial and unavoidable, and the data which results is essentially collaborative (Cloke, 2004). Rather, 'the opportunity to revise and re-work theories and concepts from the ground up, together with participants, provides a more transparent lens to knowledge construction' (Cater and Low 2012:361). Indeed, experience suggests that respondents tend to enjoy focus groups as they feel that they are part of the project, assisting in collaborative and generative enquiry.
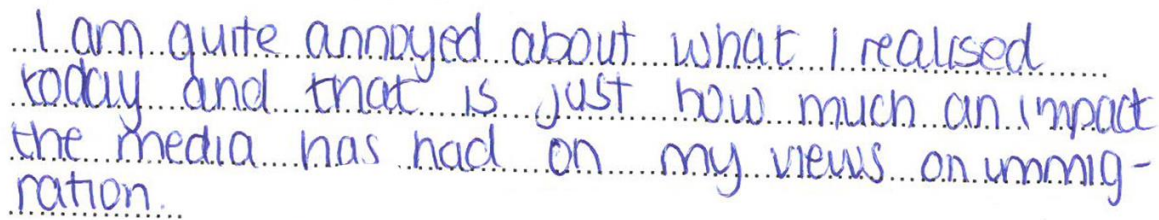
Given the other demands made on the focus group facilitators, it is problematic for them to attempt to record the discussion on paper at the same time (Cater and Low, 2012), so in 2016 and 2017, this focus group was recorded with the permission of the students. Discussion was led by staff, but the emphasis was on allowing 'the respondents to impart their own reality, cataloguing the socially constructed knowledge of informants rather than the hypothesising of the investigator' (Riley, 1995, p. 636). Students were aged between 20 and 30 and were from either the UK or Eastern Europe and had varying degrees of travel experience. There is often concern that power dynamics and existing hierarchies erode the usefulness of focus groups. Whilst some students naturally contributed more to the discussion than others, it was possible to ensure that this was not dominated by one or two vociferous members of the group (Veal, 2006), and all of the students did take part. The use of the personal journals, in which students were free to express their individual perspectives, was felt to ameliorate dominance of any one voice. We present some of the student material as original quotes (denoted J for journal and FG for focus group), allowing multiple voices to elucidate the findings of the paper. Where possible, and easily legible, we have also included hand written excerpts from student journals, as this brings us closer to the meanings that students derived from the exercise.

Themes for analysis were identified collaboratively between the authors based on participation in the focus group, and these form the structure of the discussion below. Burgess (1996, p. 133) emphasizes the importance of a 'debrief' session with facilitators after the focus group to discuss and record 'what was going on, how individuals responded, the themes and topics that came up (or did not come up), or initial ideas about the significance of particular issues'. Being on a residential trip facilitated a debrief session among the researchers immediately after the focus group which highlighted salient themes. Double marking of student

journals confirmed themes that were also present in the students personal reflection. This methodological triangulation allowed us to identify how students viewed the intersection of tourism and migration, and highlight possible 'openings' towards alternative, more caring mobility economies.

**A 'Real TV'/Reality check**

Although the visit was undeniably limited and cannot be said to give a deep insight into the realities of migration in the contemporary era, students nevertheless found the experience confrontational and were noticeably muted when touring the camp. Many commented on how the experience challenged their current thinking, particularly what they had gleaned from the media. In the journals and focus groups they demonstrated higher levels of critical evaluation identified in both Bloom and Kolb models. Given the importance of the media in sustaining particular discourses regarding migration described above, it is notable that this activity occasionally reinforced, but more often challenged, what students had previously accepted as truth.

> ..I am quite annoyed about what I realised today and that is just how much an impact the media has had on my views on ummigration..

Figure 1: "I am quite annoyed about what I realised today and that is how much an impact the media has had on my views on immigration" J

*"It was weird and I have always watched it on the news but have never seen it in real life" J*

In particular this challenge also jarred with the students understanding of tourism mobility as one related to the pursuit of happiness. Tourism largely relies on a carefully constructed image of paradise, where both guests and hosts are engaged in a ritual of pleasure. Yet this exercise exposes a less pleasurable window on mobility, barely a stones throw from the historical and modern pleasure palaces of Valetta.

*"For me it has really made me **have** to look at it.. to **have** to see it… otherwise I wouldn't have even thought about that in Malta. It seems like… when I was in Turkey last year I didn't think about it… it's made it more at the forefront of your mind over just the other touristy lovely things" FG*

Surprisingly, it was notable that students made no mention of colour or ethnicity of either themselves or migrants in journals or focus groups, which one would hope is evidence of a greater global citizenship. However, to some degree this quote does highlight the invisibility of these frequently marginalised groups, despite the fact that many end up working in low paid service industry jobs. Of course, there has been much written on the negative sides to tourism employment, particularly in hospitality (McIntosh & Harris, 2012). It must also be acknowledged that travel, even for those fortunate to have access to hypermobile lives, can have damaging consequences for both self and others (Cohen and Gossling, 2015). Notwithstanding the lack of discussion of colour, there is still a certain degree of othering that is evident in student discourse, undeniably founded on an embedded Eurocentric, colonial mentality. The media sources discussed above undeniably have a large part to play in this othering which has reached a new zenith according to Moisi (2009:20); for 'in the age of globalization, the relationship with the 'Other' has become more fundamental than ever'.

Nevertheless the experience was emotionally challenging for students, echoing the feelings of field trip students in the study by Portegies et al (2011). Entries in the journals, where students were encouraged to reflect on their feelings, described sensations of being "*overwhelmed*" (a key element in Portegies et al, 2011), "*a little on edge*", "*harrowing and uncomfortable*", "*guilty and awkward*", "*voyeuristic*", "*humiliating*". One student noted that the whole experience was "*very difficult to take into the brain*", whilst another expressed a desire for the phenomenon to be dealt with more effectively;

"*all I wanted was for it to stop, for those immigrants to feel like home, to have home*" J
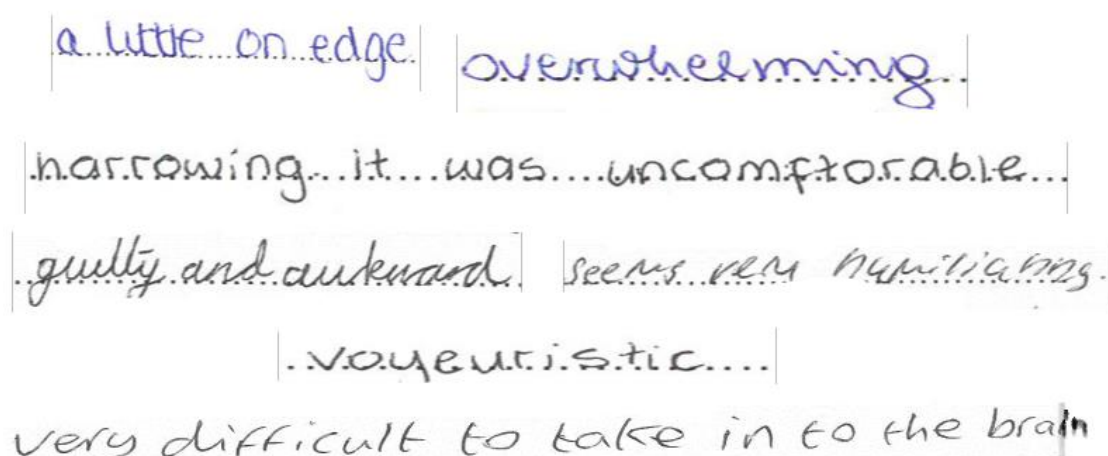


Figure 2: Student emotional responses to the exercise

These comments highlight some of the ethical issues of the exercise, not only for the migrants, but also for our students. In itself such a small learning exercise cannot hope to assist those individual migrants nor reorient the migration agenda. However, it is clear that students gained from observation and discussion of the darker side of mobility and exchange, despite the emotional hurdles. Furthermore it challenges a growing assumption that what we teach should be reduced to comfortable, useful knowledge that will facilitate employability (and thus participation in the monetised, exchange based capitalist economy). The encroaching neoliberal agenda in education has meant that we are frequently judged on meaningless concepts such as satisfaction, rather than difficult to measure aspects such as critical thinking. Indeed, it is clear that the experiences noted in figure 2 are affectual, whereby feeling underpins one of the key elements of Kolbs (1984) concrete learning experiences noted above.

**A meta-problem**

Issues surrounding migration are by their nature highly complex, resulting from a range of macro and micro factors, such as forces of globalisation, conflict, policymaking at one end and perhaps motivation, family, and personal circumstance at the other. Much like tourism, then, migration can be thought of as a meta-problem; 'complex, confusing and inherently messy' (Cater, 2012:119). In tourism planning it is vital that students are aware of metaproblems and the limitations of rational approaches. In this case students readily recognised the complexity of the issue, noting that "*it's a really difficult topic to have a simple answer to*" (FG). To some degree this generated a feeling of helplessness (although evident othering) amongst the respondents in their journal entries:

*"I feel sorry for them and want to help but it's difficult to know what to do" J*

*"How could I, my friends or my country help them, but none of my ideas seemed logical or real which made me feel a little bit upset and disappointed" J*

Whilst students cannot see easy solutions to these problems, and it is beyond the ken of the authors to even begin to offer a route out of the current crisis, the exercise did increase awareness, as well as throwing a critical light on the nature of tourism itself. It also uncovered some of the scalar problems of migration shared by tourism, highlighting that 'the emergence of 'New' policy areas such as migration and tourism are intermestic in nature, that is they are, simultaneously, profoundly and inseparably both domestic and international' in character' (Hall, 2008:183)

However, there was also a recognition of some of the problems of integration experienced by both societies and migrants. In particular an association of migration with

people trafficking and failed states seemed to highlight a perception of criminality amongst a proportion of migrants. In the focus group in particular there was discussion of the need to still have border controls to ensure that undesirable elements were excluded. There was also recognition of the associated burden on the welfare state and third sector in receiving countries. One student expressed that migrants should feel grateful for help received in a host country:

*"It's sad but at the same time…if they are fleeing the war, they come to my country and they are not happy because the government isn't giving them enough money or they don't like the food, they don't like the weather. If you are running from the war you should be happy with what you get, not complaining that you don't like it." FG*

Despite this argument, there was a clear sentiment among the group of the benefits of migration to destinations. Whilst it was important to preserve sense of place, migration added a richness to place, allowing people to exchange elements of culture, as noted in Cave (2007); *"you have got to accept the culture and norms of where we are living but if everything was the same and we didn't bring in different cultures and foods and traditions and customs, we wouldn't be the society we are today" FG*

It is important to recognise that many of the students involved in this exercise have experienced some degree of migration themselves, either within the UK or from neighbouring European countries. They are therefore more likely to be sympathetic to cultural richness resulting from human displacement.

**Reciprocity and Exchange**

One of the most powerful quotes for the researchers was one from a student from Northern Ireland who was able to draw distinct parallels in the discourse used in the current migrant crisis to Irish migration to the UK in the 1970s:

*"Something I had seen…it was an article from the Sun from years ago and it was basically like the way you get articles today about immigrants and stuff in cities and they are homeless and they cause problems and there was an article from about the 1970s, and it was basically the same sort of thing but it was about Irish people… so that really affected me… basically at the end it was like "why can't they just go to Dublin and do the same thing?" And being Irish… everything that happened was before me… but it's my daddy's generation… that kinda makes you see it from a perspective, like if people could treat me like that, and I'm a normal person, or treat my daddy like that and he was a normal person… I couldn't do that to someone else" FG*

Here students were cognisant of the fact that the migrants were human beings just like themselves. This highlighted a desire for equality and reciprocity in how migrants are treated which was fairly universal amongst the student group.

*"People need to respect others and be treated equally" J*

*"Treat others as you want to be treated" FG*

*"they can't just be (allowed) to be happy and get on with their lives. I think that is quite upsetting because they are normal people" J*

Researchers have suggested that young people in the west are 'healthiest and most cared for generation' and one which perceives itself as 'global' (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 76 and 46). For example, an overwhelming majority of those under 24 voted to remain in the European Union in the 2016 UK referendum. Arguably the European project advanced the core values of the young- 'freedom, flexibility and choice' (Huntley, 2006, p. 18), which can be observed in their attitudes towards migration. However, somewhat paradoxically, perhaps as a result of our inability to effectively counter the corrosive forces of neoliberalism, they also 'accept that living in today's world means dealing with uncertainty' (Jennings et al 2010:59). Thus reciprocity also extended to an uncertain future for future exchanges, whether voluntary (touristic) or forced (migration):

*"That could easily be us one day… you never know what might happen in the future. We might want to go over there and they might be like "you didn't treat us like…well" FG*

Irrespective the students were highly critical of the approach taken by the Maltese authorities:

*"I find it strange and wrong how they "imprison" migrants here in Malta" J*

Debate over detention policy has been controversial for many countries dealing with migration, for example 'Australia's current refugee policy (which) involves offshore isolation and indefinite detention of a kind that contravenes international law and has resulted in widespread vilification' (Morgan, 2017:122).


**The right to travel**

Debate on migration frequently turned to discussion on the right to travel, and the degree to which this is enshrined in the universal declaration of human rights (UN, 1948). Article 13 is specifically concerned with mobility; as '(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; and (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country'. Whilst this declaration has certain caveats regarding international migration, students were clear that if tourism was to be accepted, then migration must also be, especially when safety was at stake:

Figure 3: Student reflective journal

Students were aware from foundation lectures that tourism had emerged out of a further human right, that described in Article 24, '*Everyone has the right to rest and leisure'*. Despite concerns that students did not fully appreciate that tourism was something only available to a minority of the global population,  it was of interest that students of tourism were able to articulate that the activity itself was not a right, demoting the status of travel for pleasure well below that of migration:

*"I don't think a holiday, in terms of travel for holidays is something that we should technically have a right to… it's a luxury... but in terms of freedom of movement, people should have a right to (that)"* FG

Rather, the students were keen to point out that migration was something fundamental to the human condition, and again echoing the importance of reciprocity.

*"Since people have been on the planet, everybody has moved, people have migrated here, people from Africa have been to the middle east, all over the world basically, and I think that should still be a right now really. We should have the right and the freedom to move around our planet. Yes we have borders and countries, but we are still human beings, it's still our home in a sense. It should be one of our responsibilities as well to help one another, and in a time like this I think we should be helping other people"* FG

Thus we would also hope that this pedagogical exercise was one that further reflected some of the aims of the declaration, notably part of Article 26; '(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms'. In this sense we see this exercise as unlocking the value of education, alternative world views and perspectives, and other non-monetised benefits. It also unlocks the gift economy in terms of the gifting from dedicated teachers to receiving students, and gifting of students their thoughts and feelings to those teachers and now to the wider academy.

**Conclusion**

The alternative tourism education exercise detailed in this paper sought to problematize student understanding of mobility and exchange through an examination of irregular migration to Malta. It challenges the dominance of educational visits that are focused solely on the industry itself, which rarely move beyond a 'rather sterile listing of positive impacts on the one hand and negative impacts on the other' (Portegies et al, 2011:114). Rather, this kind of social/cultural exchange sits on top of and coalesces with the traditional economic logics of taking students to a destination and all the monetised transactions taking place. It also overturns the invisibility of such migrants experienced by most tourists to Malta. Although students were clearly aware of the 'migrant crisis', their understanding of alternative forms of mobility to tourism was relatively static prior to the visit. Following discussion and reflection it was apparent that they were able to articulate a much more dynamic, nuanced and complex understanding of tourism, exchange and migration. Such an approach to the latter follows that advocated by Williams (2015) in the introduction. In summary students were able to articulate: a challenge to prevailing discourses; complexity; reciprocity; and human rights considerations, demonstrating that the nature of exchange in tourism cannot be reduced to the monetised tourism system. As future professionals who may be involved in planning for tourism they are able to comprehend mobility and exchange as meta-problems which are inherently messy and intermestic, but reliant on alternative economic transactions.

Clearly there are significant limitations in the approach taken, particularly in its failure to truly exchange voices with migrants themselves on this occasion. However the institutional barriers to a more interactive and sustained exchange in this case are worth noting as we seek to promote alternative exchanges. As a consequence, the degree of change in attitudes or behaviour that can be expected may be limited, but the narratives included in this paper show that there was a degree of transformation in the educational experience in line with educational models. Whilst the exercise is both logistically and emotionally challenging, the benefits far outweigh the costs, and highlight the importance of disruptive educational techniques for facilitating critical thinking. If we desire to advance alternative and diverse economies, we must take a pedagogical stance that is not afraid of taking risks, for 'learning and gaining insight are not just possible side effects… they are integral parts' of such approaches (Weber, 2001: 362). Methodologically the use of reflective journals and focus groups, themselves founded on exchange between students and teachers, provided an open learning environment and encourage a skill set based as much on stewardship as employability.

Whilst we were unable to facilitate a face to face interaction between the students of tourism and migrants in this case, we were able to nurture an ethics of care amongst students, allowing them to consider issues of agency, exchange responsibility. Although we have advocated the importance of contextual education (Portegies et al, 2011), there is no reason why students could not be encouraged to have informal or formal exchanges with migrants in a campus setting to facilitate a broader understanding of mobility. Indeed, the foundation for values of exchange inherent in more self-aware forms of tourism are present in the reciprocal narrative advocated by many of the students. Therefore there is also potential to move such exercises out of a formal educational environment to offer alternative tourist experiences that challenge corrosive and insular approaches to migration. Managers of places could then take advantage of and leverage the value of the diversity of monetised and non-monetised exchanges in creating more sustainable communities. Such 'mindful tourism' would have greater awareness of its impacts and responsibilities, as well as the myriad challenges faced by those forced into alternative forms of mobility.

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