

Burnet, Louis. *Villégiature et Tourisme sur les côtes de France*.
Bibliothèque des Guides Bleus, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1963.

Jean Lundgren

Volume 11, Number 22, 1967

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/020704ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/020704ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département de géographie de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0007-9766 (print)

1708-8968 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Lundgren, J. (1967). Review of [Burnet, Louis. *Villégiature et Tourisme sur les côtes de France*. Bibliothèque des Guides Bleus, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1963.] *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, 11(22), 142–144.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/020704ar>

listes parmi les tenants de cette discipline. Et on ne voit pas pourquoi on refuserait au géographe de transposer dans l'ordre de l'espace ce que l'économiste, par exemple, conçoit dans celui des chiffres lorsqu'il procède à de la planification sectorielle.

Une série de faits, dont la prise de conscience est récente, ne permet plus aujourd'hui de se contenter d'une science gratuite. La connaissance des mécanismes et des processus doit être mise au service de l'avenir. Qu'il s'agisse de l'augmentation de la population mondiale, les 6 ou 7 milliards d'hommes que l'on attend ou que l'on redoute pour l'an 2,000 ; qu'il s'agisse des mutations surgies dans le domaine des moyens de transport et des changements d'échelle ainsi amenés ; qu'il s'agisse encore des nouveaux modes de production et d'utilisation de l'énergie, ces faits nouveaux et leurs implications n'autorisent plus une géographie du laisser-faire. Ils imposent, au contraire, une utilisation à la fois intensive et prudente de toutes les ressources de la planète et, pour mieux y parvenir, ils impliquent une organisation concertée de l'espace.

Ces thèmes fondamentaux de la géographie active sont étayés, dans le présent ouvrage, par une multitude d'exemples concrets. On ne sait ce qu'il faut le plus admirer, chez l'auteur, de la richesse de l'information ou de l'habileté à dégager de chaque fait l'idée fondamentale et le principe d'action.

Dans une première partie sont passés en revue quelques-uns des thèmes majeurs de la planification spatiale. Le premier chapitre est consacré à la maîtrise de l'eau et au contrôle du bilan hydraulique. Les aspects techniques et les aspects humains de la bonification agricole font l'objet du 2^e chapitre. Sous le titre de désenclavement, l'auteur étudie l'évolution et l'adaptation des modes de transport dans une perspective de planification spatiale. Autre thème de réflexion : l'industrialisation, avec ses implications géographiques de situation, de site, de structures fonctionnelles et spatiales. La première partie se termine par deux chapitres importants, comptant plus de 110 pages, consacrés à l'un des problèmes majeurs de notre époque : l'urbanisation, tant dans les aspects de croissance urbaine que dans ceux de structure urbaine.

Après un examen thématique du sujet, la seconde partie traite explicitement de la politique de l'espace. Dans un premier chapitre, l'auteur tente de formuler les objectifs généraux de la planification spatiale. Qui dit planification spatiale dit aussi définition des cadres territoriaux dans lesquels l'insérer. D'où un 2^e chapitre consacré moins au millième examen du concept de région qu'à l'étude du processus de régionalisation et à son rôle dans la détermination des unités d'aménagement. La tension ville-campagne, la compétition pour le sol et l'harmonisation de ces milieux aux vertus complémentaires font l'objet d'un 3^e chapitre. L'ouvrage se termine par l'analyse de quelques types et exemples de politiques spatiales. Les uns se sont développés en espace ouvert, avec un esprit pionnier qui les marque, malgré les divergences des options fondamentales : les États-Unis et l'U.R.S.S. Les autres exemples ont été choisis dans un espace fini et que l'on aurait pu croire figé par le poids de l'histoire : les Pays-Bas, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Italie et la France.

Ce n'est point figure de style que de prétendre qu'un pareil ouvrage ne se résume pas. Une sèche énumération des têtes de chapitres ne rend justice ni à sa richesse, ni à sa densité, ni à sa clarté. L'intérêt de la lecture ne se dément pas un instant. Des notes fréquentes, en bas de page, et une orientation bibliographique à la fin de chaque chapitre satisferont le lecteur mis en appétit. On s'en voudrait de ne pas souligner la pertinence d'une iconographie remarquable. Il n'est pas douteux que tous les géographes avertis feront de cet ouvrage un de leurs livres de chevet. Et on se plaît à espérer qu'ils seront imités par tous ceux qui portent la responsabilité de préparer le monde de demain.

Jacques DENIS

BURNET, Louis. **Villégiature et Tourisme sur les côtes de France.** Bibliothèque des Guides Bleus, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1963.

It is a well known fact that the modern world is entering a phase in its development in which leisure and recreation in general will play a great role for the individual. In fact, this is resulting in increasing interest on the part of official planning agencies when it comes to organizing leisure on a scale hitherto unknown.

Human geography has demonstrated some reluctance to approach the topic recreation in a methodological way, mainly because the data on this topic always has been elusive and tourism as such has been difficult to define. It is therefore valuable that a French geographer has approached the subject and covered the coastal tourism in France, contemplating its origin, evolution and structure.

Mr. Burnet's study, 475 pages long, is divided into 4 main sections and conclusions. The introductory section deals with tourism as a new field of study in human geography. Mr. Burnet introduces the terms « villégiature » as a complement to tourism ; by « villégiature » is meant the seasonal habitat people make of their holidays, by spending the time at a seaside resort or an Alpine village. « Villégiature » indicates location, something static, whereas tourism emphasizes movement in general. Or in other words : « villégiature » is only a type of tourism.

In the introduction tourism in France is discussed. Burnet discusses the method by which estimates have been done. Most data are for the year 1952-1954 and 1959-60 when many interviews were conducted. The methods and results are interesting, because they give some indication of the intensity of tourism in urban centres by class and demonstrate the « feed back » of tourism from urban areas to non-urban areas or less urban areas. 70% of the Paris region population went away on vacations compared with 80% for cities with populations higher than 100,000 ; 30% for smaller cities and towns and 6% for rural communities. This method of estimate gives a total French tourism of some 14 million people plus some 2-3 million foreign visitors.

A total of 16-17 million people largely concentrating their vacations to a 4-month period have resulted in specific geographic consequences such as the coastal tourism along all coasts of France, which is covered in three regional sections. *La zone méditerranéenne, la zone atlantique, and la zone du nord.* For each of these regional sections is given the origin of the tourism in the specific areas and the development up to the most recent years, for which data are available, 1959.

The regional monographs are very interesting reading and some unknown facts for the reviewer are worthwhile mentioning here. The role of the English in initiating many of today's most popular resort areas is well known. But what is less known is that the Côte d'Azur tourist season up to the inter-war years had its peak in the winter months, a seasonality which did not change until after 1929. The Great Depression hit very hard and in the recovery years during the 1930s the shift from winter to summer recreation occurred. In the case of Nice, the shift from winter to summer peak seasons had only a minor economic consequence. But the shift together with the Great Depression had deeper consequences for Nice, one of the most well established stations ; the last and reduced group of « type 1914 tourists » which had returned in the postwar years prior to the Great Depression never came back after 1929 ; the number of de luxe hotels declined from 12 that year to 5 in 1954. Instead hotels of lower class (1 and 2-stars) increase rapidly while the station is adapting to the influx of a new group of visitors during the 1930's and in the postwar years. Surprisingly enough, the hotel capacity in Nice has been declining since 1929. Nice developed in the years after 1929 into a station for the French and the foreign visitors never dominated since. The impact of tourism on local developments is underlined by statistics on population evolution for the individual stations from their « discovery » and up to 1961, by which the reader gets the impression of tourism as a very dynamic factor in local development. The author has never studied the figures in any detail. How much is caused by tourism and how much by general depopulation of the rural country-side?

The chapter of conclusions gives a good abstract on the main findings by the author, worthwhile mentioning here :

1. It is pointed out that one finds a tourist landscape along the coasts of France similar to the agricultural and industrial landscapes. This landscape has its most intense representation in the *zone nord* having 56% of all French coastal stations and some 34% of hotel capacity. Some of these regions have developed gradually during the last century while others have expanded from small villages to great establishments due to the increase in tourism during the last 20 years.

2. The shifts of population : this is probably one of the most formidable problems in European tourism, the concentration of vacationing to the period of 2-3 months causing considerable repercussions due to bulk, in the transport mechanism and available accommodation facilities. The other aspect on population shifts is the effect the tourist development has had on keeping

local populations in the area, by creating new job opportunities. Burnet estimates that some 500,000 people have stayed during one century of tourism development along the coasts. Furthermore, in spite of considerable depopulation during the war years the local tourist economies have revived which demonstrates their tenacity.

3. Coastal tourism in France was discovered by the English, and though the foreigners today only count for a minor share among the visitors it is still a large group, in some areas more than 60% of a considerable foreign minority. The second largest foreign group comes from the Benelux states and they mostly frequent the *zone nord* down to the Brittany stations, where they form approximately 20-25% of the foreign clientele. The North Americans have become one of the most important foreign tourist groups in France, in general, although they have never replaced the English as the largest group in numbers.

Some comments on the negative side should conclude this presentation. The difficulties to compare the regions could have been avoided by tabulating more data or having more maps. Now one has to look through the volume in order to find comparable information for different sections. An index would have improved this considerably.

The regional treatment is understandable but can be discussed. Why this regionalization? Why not a historical regionalization which would have given a different pattern altogether? The initiation of tourism in the Côte d'Azur region is the oldest one, whereas the western part of the Mediterranean shoreline was initiated later and has started to expand at a much later date; the regionalization that has been used is traditional and well known to most geographers. Is it a meaningful regionalization? The author mentions the role of transportation but never follows it up. Cannot a large part of the different coastal development be explained in terms of accessibility? Could not that aspect have been included in the description in a thematic way? The impact tourism has had locally could have been related to statistical documentation on employment at various years, by which it could have been established when places really became tourist places. Now one is left in the air when it comes to the relative importance of tourism in the different localities and regional sectors.

The author has approached a topic which is very large and consequently limitations have had to be made. Working myself on tourism geography, I found Mr. Burnet's work interesting to read. However, I would have preferred to have a more systematic and comparative treatment. Otherwise the risk to lengthy regional monography becomes tempting.

Jan LUNDGREN,
McGill University.

DICTIONNAIRE DE GÉOGRAPHIE

MONKHOUSE, F. J. **A Dictionary of Geography.** Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1965. 344 pages, maps, diagrams, analytical list of entries.

Many English-speaking geographers and those of other tongues who work in English will be interested to learn of the publication of this dictionary of geographical terms. Since the book is unilingual, it will be of less value to French-speaking geographers who merely consult the English-language literature; for in such a case one usually desires the French equivalent of an English technical term instead of, or in addition to, its definition in English. The author and the publisher hope that the book will also be of interest to the general public.

The volume under review is one of a number of books in geography put out in the last few years by the Aldine Publishing Company of Chicago, a name which was virtually unknown in the field of geography publications until rather recently. To judge from the predominance of British authors and the somewhat confusing information on the back of the title page, this company appears to be a U.S. outlet for the London firm Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd.

As the title implies, *A Dictionary of Geography* consists of concise definitions of terms commonly used in geography and allied fields. The definitions are frequently supplemented, as we are told in the blurb sheet inside the dust jacket, by specific examples, pertinent statistics, and other information. Place names, political units, and other gazetteer information are not included.