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**A Book Review:**  
**Tourism, Recreation and Regional Development,**  
**Perspectives from France and Abroad\***

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This is an edited book that offers interesting insights into tourism development in France, the longstanding top destination for tourism worldwide. The focus here is on the rural regions, which shows that even in this most visited country, neither is the tourist entirely ubiquitous nor is tourism development a straight forward win win situation.

It is a rare treat to have such a comprehensive overview in English about tourism development in various French regions. While there is robust scholarship and a vibrant tourism discourse going on in French, the non-French speaking part of the tourism world is not very well aware of it. Which is our loss as there is ample experience and quality research to learn from. So this book is very welcome and will be of interest to students of tourism, researchers and tourism developers.

It is comprised of 15 short chapters, most of them cases of tourism development in France where description and analysis is based on new research. The book contains three parts or themes based on studies of tourism in rural France: Tourism and recreation: Here and not somewhere else; At the heart of destinations: Users and stakeholders; Tourism and recreation: Opportunities for places? These sections of the book form together the case of tourism and regional development in France. For international context and comparison three chapters in the concluding section Spain, the British Isles and North America are presented as cases. The titles of the themes reflect very well some key issues in the role of tourism in regional development, first illustration of the issue of destination uniqueness, secondly addressing the human factor and the complexity of interests and logically leading to a significant but seldomly asked question; namely, whether tourism is an opportunity for places. It is all too often blindly assumed in tourism discourse that developing into „a destination“ is an opportunity for „a place“.

The chapters are well written, their structure simple and the aims clearly stated as research questions and hypotheses. The cases are clearly described with maps and images where appropriate. Research methods and limitations of the research projects are discussed, which helps the reader make an informed judgement about the applicability of the results to generalization beyond the case in question. Each chapter has a reference list, references are up to date ranging from classic works to newly published research and relevant statistical and marketing materials. This makes it easy to use single chapters as student reading. The index covers both keywords and names.

Relevant mention is made of how tourism policies at the national level have impacted or related to the cases described. For rural tourism the emphasis on the industry in regional development policies in France the 1990s is of interest and comparison with other countries adopting similar policies is valuable. For those interested in theoretical frameworks this one doesn't disappoint either. Bourdieu's social capital legacy looms large and, the cultural turn, localized tourism system, tourism led growth and the economy of conventions are applied to mention a few of the frameworks in which these cases are analysed and discussed. Novel turns of phrase such as „local alchemy“ (p. 50) to describe the ethos of tourism places expand our thinking beyond convention.

As this is an edited book the chapters are not uniform in quality but I will definitely be using these cases in my lecturing on rural tourism and the impact of tourism on regional development. For my master's students it is a very good example of research writing with industry relevance.

\* Dissart, Jean-Christophe, Jeffrey Dehez and Jean-Bernard Marsat (eds.) (2015). *Tourism, recreation and regional development. Perspectives from France and abroad*. Ashgate. (267 pages) ISBN 978-1-4724-1622-3