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A Book Review:
Challenges in Tourism Research *

Tourism is very often viewed as either a “golden duck” or a “scapegoat”. The first expression suggests that tourism is often used for showing its economic potential when referred to as one of the largest industries in the world that brings numerous benefits to the host communities and where businesses, firms, services and workforce engage in serving tourists. It is commonly viewed as a primary source for sustainable development and well-being of communities, but also a means of personal growth for those who indulge in travelling and exploring the world outside their home environment. On the other hand, tourism it is often blamed for various negative impacts that come along with tourism development, such as environmental damage, seasonality burden, obstruction of cultural tradition and heritage, issues connected to carrying capacities etc.

This book will provide the reader with an interesting insight into various tourism challenges. These are united under the umbrella of 11 theme-based chapters, which are discussed and debated across a total of 40 papers. The titles of the themes very well reflect some of the key issues of the multidisciplinary nature of tourism research. The editor, Tej Vir Singh, explains that “the early chapters take into account the need of the freshers and the beginners of tourism studies, while latter chapters discuss the challenges of borrowed concepts that refuse to translate into practice” (p. 3). Although the editor is right in acknowledging that the first chapters are more appropriate for those at the beginning of their tourism careers (being either academic- or business-oriented), I would like to add that these are a must-read also for established researchers and practitioners, since here and then we all need to be reminded of the origin of the concepts we usually take for granted.

Certain drawbacks in the majority of edited books are usually connected to the reader’s inability to adapt to each author’s style of writing. This is not the case in this book. Here, the editor blended together the authors’ understanding of the issues and their styles in a way giving the reader the impression that they were all in one room, debating on a specific topic, and their words were later transcribed into this book, which is simply marvellous. For

example, Moscardo was the first author to discuss tourist motivation within the topic of tourism being the quest for the “self” or the “other”, for which she set a multidisciplinary framework that is sociological and psychological in nature. Her discussion was followed by Dann and McKercher, where the former disagrees with taking a psychological needs approach to explain the motivation to travel, whereas the latter provides substantial evidence for his simple suggestion that travelling is all about being selfish. As this was merely an example, the reader is in a position to look at the overall debate from different perspectives and to “pick the side” in favour of the ideas offered to address the challenging questions which are fundamental to tourism research.

Moreover, at the beginning of each chapter the editor provided Context to explain the rationale for the upcoming tourism challenge. Following the debate presented in the papers, the editor finished the chapter with some Concluding Remarks, Discussion Questions and lists of References and Further Reading suggestions. With this kind of structure, the book is also suitable for discussions within classrooms of postgraduate students in order to provide future tourism scholars and practitioners with the knowledge of critical reflection upon various issues and problems.

Overall, the editor succeeded to stimulate the debate among 37 leading scholars about carefully selected tourism paradoxes. In the following years, it would be very interesting to observe how the paradoxes will be chosen by researchers from various disciplines and in which direction future debates will be oriented.

*Singh, Tej Vir (ed.) (2015). *Challenges in Tourism Research*. Channel View Publications (xviii + 373 pp.). ISBN: 987-1-84541-533-4 [hbk]; ISBN: 987-1-84541-532-7 [pbk]