Book review

Tourism and Development Concepts and Issues

One of the recurring themes in tourism studies is the notion that tourism is a vehicle for economic development. This edited book makes a valuable contribution by exploring the important concepts and issues that are linked with the perception that tourism can be a vehicle for leading countries out of poverty. While edited volumes, in my opinion, are not usually the most readable or useful types of books, this edited volume is thorough and extensive, giving anyone who is interested in the issue of tourism and economic development issues a great deal to read through.

The book is divided into three different parts. Part 1 deals with the conceptual perspectives of the relationship between tourism and development. This first part is composed of only two chapters, one exploring the relationship between tourism and development and the other exploring the evolution of development theory and tourism. Part 2 is composed of seven chapters and deals with the relationship between development and tourism. Part 3 is also composed of seven chapters and deals with barriers and challenges to tourism development. In addition, there is an introduction, explaining the intention of the book and explaining the logic of the delineation of the book into three different parts. The last chapter, one chapter in Part 3, is a conclusion authored by the editors, explaining a great deal about the need for this second edition, mentioning the improvements to the new edition, and highlighted how this book contributes to the discussion of tourism and development.

The book has many of the features one would expect, such as biographical information about the 14 contributors to the book as well as an index and extensive reference list. For those who would like an extensive list of resources on the topic of development and tourism, this 71-page long reference list may be in and of itself a helpful resource. The 16 chapters contain 21 figures and 21 tables, adding to the visual information that breaks up the monotony of the prose in the chapters and summarizes a great deal of information or illustrates a point in an easy-to-understand way. In addition, the front cover is attractive, dominated by green and blue with what appears to be a stock photo of several cruise ships.

There are some definite strengths to this book. First, it is a very thorough book that includes the perspectives of many respective researchers in the field. Anyone doing serious research in the field would recognize many of the names that appear as authors, including Richard Sharpley, Dallen Timothy, and C. Michael Hall, just to name a few. To have these respected and accomplished authors to contribute to the book is nothing to sneeze at. In addition, by having so many different authors look into the relationship between tourism and development in a very mature and deep way and from different perspectives is quite helpful. For example, the chapter on human rights and tourism development could be used as a good primer on human rights, explaining the concept of human rights and then going on to explain the relationship between human rights and tourism development. There are several of the chapters that contain information that would make the chapter serve as a useful primer for other topics such as international studies or development studies, since it is presumes that most of us who research tourism do not have a background in international relations, development, or human rights.

There are some critical comments that could be made about this book but they tend not to be very deep. One thing that seems to be missing is a chapter that would deal with the history of tourism as a vehicle for development. While the book does have chapters that occasionally deal with this, the book mostly looks at tourism and

development from a theoretical perspective. In addition, I am not sure what the cover photo has to do with the topic of the book and I feel that a more relevant cover photo would have been a better choice. Although it is pleasant to see cruise ships and blue skies, I am not sure what this has to do with the topic and would imagine that there would be a better way to convey the concept of the book in a visual way. Also, the decision to place references at the end of the work in one large reference section rather than have references at the end of each chapter is sometimes a bit inconvenient for readers such as myself, as I prefer to look at a shorter list that is more compact in terms of subject matter covered and is only a few pages long rather than 71 pages long.

All-in-all, the book has a great deal of value, although I would think that it would only be accessible to a fairly limited audience. For those of us interested in the future, it is hard to get a great deal of value out of this book, as the frame of reference is largely historical and theoretical, although the value of this is somewhat rectified by the fact that the content gives thorough and intelligent background information for the many political and ecological things that we are concerned about in the future (poverty, environment, climate change, and sustainability). While many of the chapters are wonderful introductions to subject matter that most people in the field know little to nothing about, the complexity of the language and depth of discussion would make it hard for most people who have not completed a bachelor's level education to comprehend. As such, though, it would be a very useful and helpful book for those teaching in related issues at the MA level or PhD level. If I were teaching a course at the post-graduate level in tourism and development, I would want this and would use it as a central text, as deals with such issues as human rights, sustainability, and poverty reduction in a sophisticated and intelligent manner, appropriate for that level. However, the language and sophistication of the concepts would likely make the book inaccessible for most people. This is not light reading. But it is a nifty and thorough reference book containing primers on topics/ areas of study in which most in the field do not have a strong background.

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