



TOURISM
THEORIES,
CONCEPTS
AND
MODELS

BOB McKERCHER
AND BRUCE PRIDEAUX



Tourism Theories, Concepts and Models

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We started at a time when tourism scholarship was undergoing unprecedented growth. Most of the new programmes were situated in business schools or commerce departments, while most of the tourism scholars came from non-business, social science backgrounds. Our knowledge was based on the first generation of scholars who began to explore this area of study beginning in the 1970s. Their work provided the foundation for how we think about tourism the way we think about it today. The works of those pioneering scholars form the basis of this book. We, and indeed, all of tourism academics, owe a debt of gratitude to them.

In addition, we have to thank the many thousands of students we have taught over the years for challenging us, forcing us to rethink much of what was accepted to be true about tourism, yet had little real supporting evidence, and for being sounding boards for us to bounce ideas on them.

At a more prosaic level, special thanks need to go to Professors Chris Cooper and Alan Fyall along with Drs. Vincent Tung, Aaron Yankholmes and Patrick L'Espoir Decosta for providing valuable feedback on various drafts of this manuscript. And, of course we have to thank the people at Goodfellows Publishers for their support and encouragement.

While many people can share rightfully in any success the book may have, the two authors take full responsibility for any of its deficiencies.

Preface

What is tourism? Simple question. Difficult to answer. How you define tourism lies within the eyes of the beholder. We all know it exists. We all know or think we know what is definitely tourism, who tourists are and what the tourism industry is. We also all know, or think we know, what is definitely not tourism, is not a tourist and what business sectors fall outside of the tourism industry. But tourism is neither absolute nor exclusive. Instead, it is classified by vague and fuzzy boundaries. That is what makes it such an exciting field of study, on the one hand, and such an exasperating phenomenon to study on the other hand.

The situation is complicated further by the traditional disciplinary silos that have influenced tourism studies, where academics have worked narrowly, within their own disciplines, often with little or no input from other disciplines. As a result, discrete sets of rules, guidelines and regulations have evolved. They begin at the most basic level about how each discipline even defines tourism or the tourist. Indeed, it seems fantastical that no single agreed upon definition of tourism has been developed, in spite of 70 years or more of academic enquiry. Maybe it is not so surprising, given the vast array of disciplines and fields of study that have explored this phenomenon.

And, the situation is only going to get more confusing as we move inexorably to the trend of increasing adjectification of tourism. It began in the late 1980s with the rise of the anti-tourism or alternative tourism movement, accelerated rapidly in the 1990s with the emergence of ecotourism and the alleged shattering of the mass market into a series of special interest tourism markets until it seems today 'tourism' no longer exists. Instead, we have to deal with golf tourism, ski tourism, film tourism, dark tourism, and almost any other descriptor. As we will discuss in the book, the lack of common terminology is something that affects all aspects of tourism studies. Not only do we not agree on a definition, but the ideas of a destination, product, attraction and even sustainability are beset by confusion, conflation and value judgements.

As a result, much of what we think we know about tourism is well-known but not necessarily known well. Most topics are covered in tourism texts or cited frequently in the academic literature. But, the core ideas that drive how we think about tourism are often condensed into a short paragraph, a few sentences, or simply included as one of a series of references to illustrate a point. Knowledge for many comes from these brief summations and not from the foundational works themselves. We are hoping that through this text, people can reflect more on how we think about tourism and what epistemological and ontological processes we have followed to think the way we think.

This observation led to the genesis of the need for a book of this type. It has a rather ambitious aim of trying to pull together some of the vast array of literature conceptualizing the tourism phenomenon into a single body of work. The title recognizes that tourism is not and can never be a singular, unified field of study, for the frameworks and models have been developed to explore the discrete component parts of tourism come from diverse sources. This book examines the core theories, models, frameworks and concepts that lead to our understanding of each of the component elements of tourism in an attempt to develop a common, cross disciplinary understanding. It then seeks to show the linkages, forward and backward, between each of these elements and the other constituent components of the tourism system.

This book becomes increasingly important as the nature of tourism studies shifts from a discipline-focused approach that uses tourism as a means to explore the core disciplines and/or uses core disciplines to explain tourism, to the emergence of the dominant business studies/training orientation adopted increasingly in higher educational institutions. The emergence of stand-alone business tourism schools/departments or the emergence of stand-alone tourism specialisms within business schools provides an enhanced range of career opportunities for students. But these benefits come at the risk of students receiving a selective, cursory overview of the role social science research has played in our understanding of tourism, our beliefs about how tourism works and, importantly, our grounding in an understanding of how the social sciences explain much of the business of tourism. As a result, we are at risk of producing technically competent individuals who often know very little about tourism as a social, human phenomenon. *Tourism Theories, Concepts and Models* hopes to fill the void that exists in our collective knowledge base. It explains why we think about tourism the way we do through a series of detailed chapters that review key concepts, models and theories.

The book is divided into five sections. Part 1 sets the stage for the rest of the book. It begins with a review of what theory is and how models and concepts fit into this broad paradigm. In particular, the first chapter looks at how the term 'theory' has been misused in much academia and identifies seven different types of 'theory' used in tourism. A discussion of the challenge of defining tourism follows with a review of various models that describe the structure of tourism.

Part 2 examines the key features that explain how tourism works. Successful tourism is a function of both attractions, access, politics and various supply and demand functions. This section begins with a detailed discussion of what attractions are and how they drive tourism. Because the term 'attraction' is one of the most misused in tourism academia, a conceptual taxonomy of attractions is developed as a means of adding some structure to the topic. The issue of access is discussed next looking at the valuation of time and how both market access

and physical access influence tourism flows. The following chapter looks at international tourism and the role the World Trade Organisation, and other global bodies, play in facilitating or inhibiting travel. Finally, various supply/demand and economic models are discussed.

Part 3 looks at the evolution of tourism. A critical review of Butler's and Plog's lifecycle models is undertaken highlighting the conceptual strengths and limitations of each one. It also discusses unrecognized subtleties of the models. An alternate lifecycle model using complexity theory is then discussed. We argue it is a more reliable way to document destination evolution as its dynamic nature allows for multiple factors to play a role in influencing change.

Part 4 focusses on sociological and psychological investigation of the tourism. Here various foundation works by Erik Cohen, Jafar Jafari, Graham Dann, Philip Pearce, John Crompton and others are discussed. This part of the book begins with a discussion of the evolution of motivation theory from Maslow's hierarchy through push-pull theory to the current state of the art of the travel career pattern. The following chapters look at sociological and anthropological aspect of tourism before we embark on a discussion of tourism and the individual and various barriers and opportunities to travel

Part 5 examines various issues relating to tourism impacts, sustainability, climate change and matters relating to the development of sustainable planning. It begins with a historic review of impacts framed within a conflict paradigm and then argues that most impacts are a function of place change. The various historical and contemporary concepts of sustainability and sustainable tourism are discussed next, before moving onto the most pressing global issue of climate change. This section concludes with a review of various planning models and how they must fit within a sustainability context.

The Epilogue presents a table that shows the interlinkages between and among the more than 50 theories, concepts and models discussed throughout the book. Here, the authors call for tourism academics to appreciate the multidisciplinary nature of tourism studies

We hope you enjoy the book and that it makes you think about what tourism is and how it works.

Bob and Bruce.

About the authors

Prof Bob McKercher has been a tourism academic since 1990. Prior to that he worked in the Canadian tourism industry in a variety of advocacy and operational roles. He has broad ranging interest in tourism. He is a Fellow of the International Academic for the Study of Tourism, the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education and the International Academy of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research.



Prof Bruce Prideaux commenced his academic career in 1992 at the University of Queensland where he later obtained a PhD. He began his professional life as a high school teacher and later moved to the public service where he worked as a transport analyst. His pre academia wanderings through Africa, Europe and Asia played a large part in developing his interest in tourism as both a traveller and later as a scholar. He has a wide range of research interests including sustainability issues, climate change, transition to carbon-neutrality, drive tourism, protected area tourism, rural tourism, remote area tourism and crisis management



To our families for putting up with us.