

Book review

David Harrison, *Tourism, Tradition, and Culture: A Reflection on their Role in Development* (CABI, Wallingford, UK 2021) 309 pp.

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Over time, tradition and culture have seamlessly intertwined with tourism and have emerged as significant contributors to the content of tourism experiences (Richards 2020). Besides, traditions involve a blend of elements that have the capacity to evoke collective memories and identities, and then promote social cohesion (Presenza et al. 2019). *Tourism, Tradition, and Culture: A Reflection on their role in Development* guides readers on an interesting journey through the complicated intersections of tourism, tradition, and culture, exploring their collective impacts in the context of development and international tourism development. This insightful book results from Professor David Harrison's extensive international experience, and provides a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary critical overview of the importance of tradition and concepts such as pro-poor tourism, sustainable tourism, world heritage, and mass tourism, among others.

This book is divided into 22 chapters, with Chapter 1 including a summary of the volume. Chapter 2 critically examines the link between tourism and tradition, illustrating the commercialization of authentic cultures using examples from Turkey and Spain. Chapter 3 analyzes the case of Swaziland, where the monarchy's support for tourism paradoxically fuels modernization, risking the exoticization and erosion of its foundational traditional legitimacy. Further delving into Swaziland's historical prostitution, Chapter 4 emphasizes the crucial role of understanding broader social and political contexts for effectively analyzing potential negative impacts linked to tourism.

In Chapter 5, the author explores the social impacts of tourism development in developing and less-developed countries, and particularly refers to the physical environment, institutions, family structures, interactions, value systems, commoditization, and uneven opportunities. Chapter 6 emphasizes the social and cultural complexities of sustainable tourism, highlighting the significance of context-specific approaches. Chapter 7 explores the general potential for Eastern Europe to learn from the experience of the Old South in terms of tourism development. Chapter 8 discusses tourism trends and social impacts within a plural society, namely Fiji. In doing so, Harrison refers to the demonstration effects and acculturation, and conflict between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Chapter 9 draws attention to the role of films, guidebooks, and brochures in shaping the image of islands as desirable holiday destinations. Chapter 10 explains patterns and constraints of tourism development in the Pacific Islands, including sustainability, human resources, land ownership, poor accessibility, and so on. Chapter 11 mainly

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discusses the authentic experience of visiting ‘heritage’ sites, but also offers a critical assessment of the subjective and political aspects involved in the process of World Heritage listing. In Chapter 12, the focus moves to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, where pro-poor tourism policies are supported by international organizations and ecotourism projects. Chapter 13 then critically examines the concept of pro-poor tourism, discusses its criteria for success, and presents both conceptual and substantive critiques. Chapter 14 highlights the impact of tourism on economics, living standards, and (turtle) conservation in Grande Riviere, northeast Trinidad. Chapter 15 focuses on tourism culture in hospitality spaces, particularly in developing countries, and explores perspectives that can help us understand this aspect of tourism culture.

Chapter 16 proposes a framework for socially analyzing tourism, focusing on global systems, social and economic structures and institutions, and interactional processes. Chapter 17 provides a historical overview of tourism and development theories, highlights key paradigms, and discusses the challenges and trends in assessing the role of tourism for development. Chapter 18 aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical development of mass tourism in the West in comparison to the growth of tourism in East Asia. Chapter 19 challenges the exclusive focus on small-scale, sustainable tourism projects, advocating for a more comprehensive understanding of mass tourism within the context of globalized capitalism. Chapter 20 emphasizes the importance of commensurability and the ability of different theoretical perspectives to coexist within tourism studies. Chapter 21 presents contrasting attitudes and the role of anthropologists in development projects, particularly in the context of tourism in developing countries. In the concluding chapter, titled ‘Looking Ahead’, the focus is on examining the impacts and potential transformations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic across various sectors of tourism.

This book stands out for its avoidance of purely theoretical discussions. It draws extensively on the author’s practical work experience and incorporates global evidence of tourism development, spanning various examples to highlight tourism’s social and cultural impacts. Especially in the initial chapters, the content employs metaphors, adding a layer of intrigue and making the text significantly more engaging. The content of this book strongly evidences that tourism is a field of study that is both inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary. It seamlessly integrates elements from sociology, anthropology, marketing, the environment, economics, politics, and management, demonstrating a comprehensive blend that extends beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Generally, the author, as a sociologist/anthropologist, contends that a thorough analysis of immoralities and the negative socio-cultural impacts derived from tourism growth necessitate a retrospective exploration of a destination’s political, social, and developmental background.

While the book has its positive aspects, it also comes with certain limitations. First, the chapters lack uniformity in structure. Some consist of an introduction, summary, or conclusion, while others may lack these parts. Second, there is overlap between the content of Chapters 3 and 4, Chapters 12 and 13, and Chapters 18 and 19, leading to an increase in the book’s page count. For instance, Tables 18.1 and 19.1 present the same information regarding international tourists. While the author had published these as papers beforehand and separately, it was expected that, for publication in a monograph, there would be more coherence and continuity between them. Moreover, most of the chapters were written in the 1990s. Consequently, the book includes some information (including tourism trends) that require a thorough review to provide more up-to-date information. Finally, Chapter 19 discusses the structure of a volume in

which this chapter was initially included, a detail that might potentially cause confusion for readers distinguishing it from the current book.

Nevertheless, the book provides valuable insights into the complexities of sustainable tourism, success criteria for pro-poor tourism projects, tourism culture in hospitality contexts, global tourism trends, criticisms of mass tourism within a globalized and capitalist system, social analysis frameworks, tourism and development theories, island tourism development, and the contributions of anthropologists in tourism. It further provides evidence of how sustainable development through tourism is possible when considering the inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary nature of tourism.

REFERENCES

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