

Reseña de Publicaciones

Tourism Research Frontiers: Beyond the boundaries of knowledge.

Donna Chambers , Tijana Rakić (ed.), (Tourism Social Science Series, Volume 20).

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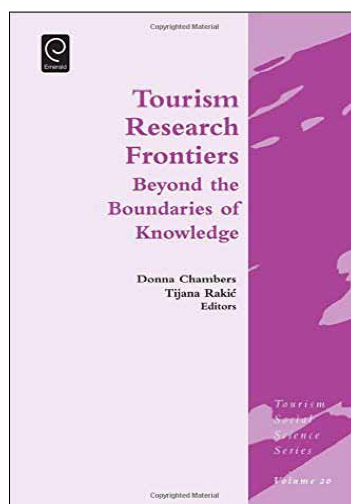
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In only eight chapters, totaling 165 pages, this book discusses the needs of new themes of investigations for tourism research in a globalized world, where new paradigms and social institutions surfaced over the last decades. Not only is public opinion subject to the rise of new risks, which led towards new trends in how tourism evolved, but in a radical criticism on its maturation in the academic circles. As a part of prestigious Emerald Series (tourism social science sub-themes), Chambers and Rakić call the attention for orchestrating multidisciplinary research to expand the current understanding of tourism. Taking their original cue from Jafar Jafari editors gather some pungent studies dispersed in their argument but organized into the share-common thread the much knowledge produced across the world should be re-channeled into an all-encompassing model.

In the first chapter, editors introduce the concept of frontiers as the fringe between the known and unknown. The fieldwork suggests that at time we shed light on some issues others else remain unchecked. Speaking of any research-frontier means that there are previous contours that explain why some disciplines have legitimacy while others do not. These frontiers are being changed in history according to social contexts. Though tourism-research has been consolidated as a promising academic option in the most important educational establishments, dotted with Ph D and over-seas programs, the fact is that a much deeper radical turn has placed the specialized literature under the lens of scrutiny. The dominant understanding of classical tourism sets the pace to a new radical critique which denoted racial policies or allegories borrowed from colonial order in the way “the Other” is portrayed. Instead of proclaiming the dismantling of epistemological borders of tourism, editors suggest that a shift offering a fertile ground to shore up new paradigms.

Through the second chapter, Gyimothy et al, discusses the ebbs and flows of popculture tourism which represents an extension of cultural behaviour in a globalized and multiculturalist universe. In chapter 3, Mondoca presents a study case based on the relationships of stakeholders in Ilha do Grande, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). Those communities which adopt tourism as a primary option monopolize a “system of values” that in some conditions re-organizes the individual practices of actors. In this respect, she coins the neologism “tourisimization” as a powerful socio-economic process that subordinates other economic forms of subsistence once adopted. Creating substantial changes in the social institutions, tourism recycles traditional and tribal



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system of beliefs into new modern secularized cosmology. Rather, Chapter 4 authored by Donna Chambers claims that scholars who were concerned on religious tourism not only misjudged the potentiality of festivals to revitalize the social capital, but misunderstood the complex nature of festival spaces. It is important not to lose the sight one might distinguish religion from spirituality, as Robledo in chapter 5 did. Spirituality and not religion, seems to be a key factor to boost attractiveness in tourist destinations. Tourists who visit shrines or cathedrals are seeking something else than an authentic experience, they look for a spiritual growth.

As the previous argument given, other less-investigated areas correspond to the connection between elections and tourism. In the chapter 6, Charles and Chambers explore in democratic societies which are based on the fundamental freedom of peoples, campaigns and politicians often incorporate tourism in their discourses as well as the reactions in voters. For some reasons, political science has much to say in tourism literature. This is what motivates Feighery to continue Charles and Chambers' concern. Undoubtedly, tourism and politics are inextricably intertwined. The discourse of fear against aliens is encouraged by some actors in order to strengthen an efficient disciplinary mechanism of control over public opinion (Chapter 7). The restant chapters are dedicated to the problems of sustainability and networking dynamic within tourist system. Because of some limitations in time and space, this review only highlight some of the salient ideas and thoughts tapped from the reading of this book.

Although this edited project offers an innovative platform to discuss new themes in tourism research, it is unfortunate that it does say nothing new. As the forewords indicate, tourism would be a good source towards epistemological discussions which may be useful for tourism researchers. Far from achieving the promised goal, Chambers and Rakic propose as something original, themes which were already investigated in other disciplines or even in other languages. Most certainly, this can be explained by the myopia suffered by tourism scholars that prevented a real dialogue with other social disciplines as anthropology, or political science. Instead of approaching to the nature of tourism, or what a tourist is, Chambers and Rakic depart from some naïve hypotheses, abstract ideas and personal beliefs that rest on shaky foundations. At some extent, they are more interested in looking for something original, than correcting the epistemological problems of produced knowledge. As others voiced claimed, far from being consolidated as a mature discipline, one of the problems of tourism consists in their indiscipline and lack of consistency respecting to what is produced (Tribe, 2000; 2010; Korstanje, 2015). Third, though the book received contributions from international scholars, much cited works are in English only, which represents serious barriers. To propose new themes, one might explore a real state of the art in almost 5 languages. The supremacy of English in tourism studies not only limited the understanding of other ancient forms of tourism which were studied in ancient history where Italians, Spanish or Latin is needed, but placed fieldworkers into the fallacy, tourism arose by the combination of technological factors and working conditions relief amidst XXth century. At some extent, tourism was the maiden of empires. Romans developed the term *feriae* to give a leave of three months to those citizens who had worked hard during one year. Today some European languages as German and Portuguese refer to holidays as *Ferien* and *Ferias* respectively. This represents a valid proof how other ancient civilizations developed similar escape-goat mechanisms for a smooth functioning of social fabric. Last but not least, in earlier works as Korstanje observed that more interested in profits or with commercial-oriented perspectives, current tourism research has serious problems to delineate the epistemological contours of the discipline simply because epistemologists ignore the roots of tourism (Thirkettle & Korstanje, 2013). Instead of deepening on tourism as a rite of passage, comparable with other tribal rites to obtain a type of periodic table, tourism-scholars try to adopt a "multidisciplinary" perspective that obscures more than it clarifies. Besides their flaws, the attempts of Chambers and Rakic in a moment where discipline faces a crisis of meaning should be valorized, but this begs a more than interesting question, is it appropriate to build up a next floor if the house rests on shaky grounds?.

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