
Book Review

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Tourism and Climate Change. Risk and Opportunities

by: Susanne Becken and John E. Hay

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This book examines the complex world of risk and tourism as well as the multiple interactions between technology and climate. Tourism brings many benefits to local environments; this point has been widely studied by many scholars. Nonetheless, tourism must not be in progress unless policy makers take into consideration all variables involving weather conditions. It is important to note that climate poses serious risks to communities as hurricanes, floods or disasters of other nature. The advance in transport and GHG's emissions has been increased in last years; in this context, tourism not only can affect green house effects but may be transformed by climate change.

Structured in nine chapters that convoke the contributions of many authors, this work emphasises on the needs of mitigations responses to intervene in the factors that can impact on environment. The theory of climate change is being discussed to what an extent this problem can be accelerated or reduced if states intervene directly on the market and transport system. To some extent, this book deals with the problem and opportunity (a paradox) tourism represents for climate change.

Basically, Becken and Hay admit that if reduction of gases is done tomorrow, this does not warrant climate change stops. Besides, climate change will still happen anyway. Under this conjuncture, tourism should adapt to the effects of risks. Providing several examples how states should install disaster reduction programmes, this research illustrates how a efficient plan for controlling risks may reducing the adverse effects by maximising the destination's opportunities.

Secondly, Becken and Hay argue convincingly that tourism should be seen as a system in interaction with other sub-system, environment. One of the limitations of recent studies in climate change has not resolved seems to be the study of tourism in isolation with other components. From this view, tourism and local economies involve intangible factors as experiences, emotions, enjoyments and relaxations. The protection of planet not only is significant for preserving tourism industry but for revitalising the continuance of the activity in the passing of years.

The main thesis of this valuable research is that tourism developed a great resiliency to disasters and adversities because of two main reasons. First and foremost, tourism is a chaotic system whose components work in considerable indendendecy. Although the chaotic systems are very hard to interpret or even to predict but possibly models based on

the study of patterns can be adopted. Their flexibility respecting to disasters facilitate a rapid adaptative response later. On another hand, the impacts produced by disasters in international tourist destinations allow to recycle the old structures leading community to a complete reorganisation.

Last but not least, investigation in tourism fields should recognise not only the forms tourism structures, but also gain knowledge to be adapted in interpreting and preventing the effects of climate change. What today concerns Becken and Hay is the lack of predictability in policy makers and absolute accuracy to intervene and formulate efficient policies in destinations. As the previous argument given, researchers have to overcome the existent degree of uncertainty producing projections (not forecasts) as reasonable models to explain the variance of climate in next years. Humankind should learn from the shifts occurred in the past.

After discussing much other earlier research and cases in this issue, the book presents alternatives to expand the current understanding in the connection between tourism, non-linear models and global warming. What seems to be important to remind is that the application of appropriate strategies to reduce risk of global warming may not be enough if we start from the premise that linear systems are obsolete. Further, scholars concerned in these types of issues should prioritise adaptation rather than intervention. Tourism has developed many alternatives to be perpetuated in spite of natural disasters that whipped the world in last decades. "The complexities and non linearity in the tourism – climate system also result in a propensity for abrupt and pervasive change, including surprises. These have been observed in the past, for the two subsystems as well as the collectively. Such abrupt changes are particularly challenging for those who seek an orderly evolution of tourism, at national or business enterprise levels" (p.34). We have to alter our perceptual senses paying further attention to the new forms tourism before to the change of environment. This approach opens a good point of entry in the discussion of climate change and transport industry as well as provides with fresh alternatives to expand the complexity between tourism and recovery processes after disasters. With the benefits of hindsight, likely one of the conceptual limitations this book is unable to solve is related to the definitions of tourism. From our mind, it is acceptable to think that tourism adapts to adversities but not for being a chaotic system. Tourism, in part, is one of social mechanisms applied in contexts of emergency to revitalise the process of recovery. It somehow can be interpreted as a subtype of resiliency, proper of any society. However, this seems to be a much deep-seated issue that merits to be continued in other moment.