
Book Review

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Tourism Crisis and Disaster Management in the Asia-Pacific

by: B. Ritchie and K. Campiranon (Eds.)

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Tourists and tourism dependent communities can be particularly vulnerable to the disruption caused by 'natural' hazards and political crisis; this is particularly true for international tourism. Tourists are often in unfamiliar surroundings far from their support networks. International tourists can also easily forsake an international tourism destination that has been hit by a hurricane or political unrest and instead choose to spend their vacation in another destination where they need not worry about disruptions or uncertainties. Yet, international tourism almost seems to tempt disaster and crisis. Beautiful coastal and mountain resorts are beautiful because they are the product of extremely high energy natural processes. Thus, events like hurricanes and earthquakes should not be surprising. On the political side, international tourists can make convenient targets for terrorists hoping to garner international news coverage. Of course, international tourism requires an incredible amount of cross border flying, which is an activity that allows viruses to spread across the globe at an unprecedented rate. Considering the importance of tourism to the global economy, there is a need for books that focus on managing crises and disasters in the tourism sector. Ritchie and Campiranon's edited volume aims to contribute to filling this need.

While there are many interesting and useful parts of this book, its primary shortcoming is that it takes too expansive of an approach to the topic by including a wide array of crises and disasters, such as rampant crime, the outbreak of war, epidemics like SARS, typhoons, tsunamis, economic collapse, inland flooding, earthquakes, and political terrorism. Although natural hazards are the focus of the largest number of chapters (6), this a book that seeks to cover types of threats that are not normally grouped together but it does not explicitly enough connect the dots. For instance, what can people who are concerned about potential pandemics learn from people who are worried about tropical cyclones? The title suggests that the scope of the book has been limited geographically to the Asia-Pacific region, a region which is not clearly or consistently defined. Moreover, any definition of the region would include a huge portion of the world's geography, population, and economies, as well as a vast range of cultural and environmental diversity. Thus, the geographic scope does not seem to do much to tie the independent chapters together.

So what is supposed to unite this diverse collection of chapters? The editors stated intention is to contribute to 'a much deeper understanding of crisis and disaster management' in tourism studies. The editors find prior works on the topic lacking in multiple respects. For example, they feel that tourism crisis and management research has too frequently focused on the aftermath and recovery phases and not enough on preparedness and prevention. Quite importantly, they also assert that prior work has typically lacked a theoretical or conceptual framework. Consequently, the editors asked the contributing authors to ground their work in theories from the fields of management and marketing and to focus on a specific stage of the disaster management cycle. Thus, the chapters are grouped into three sections: planning and preparedness; response and recovery; and resolution, learning and feedback. Response and recovery still gets the most attention; however, planning and preparation is given almost equal time. Of the 14 substantive chapters, only two fall within the resolution, learning and feedback section. While all of the chapters do utilise theoretical frameworks, the book is not organised based upon theoretical approaches. Moreover, the chapters largely ignore theoretical work from the broader field of disaster management.

Even though the book is not a well integrated collection where chapters closely complement or build upon each other, readers who are interested in disaster and crisis management in tourism will nonetheless find chapters that are interesting and useful. However, I suspect that readers will choose to focus on the chapters that pertain to problem areas in which they are most interested (e.g., natural hazards or political instability). That said, there are important themes that do reoccur in many of the chapters and in all three sections of the book. For instance, after the introduction, the next chapter deals with organisational resilience. With respect to this topic, resilience can be understood as the ability to make adjustments to allow organisational functions to continue during or recover following a major disruption. Clearly, destination management organisations need to be resilient if they are going to survive or play a meaningful role in a time of crisis. The authors of this chapter argue that resiliency requires an organisation to be flexible and adaptable while maintaining essential functions under unusual and extreme conditions. Even if other contributing authors do not use the term resilience, they are discussing factors that can lead to greater organisational resilience. For example, another chapter discusses the need to address an organisation's culture in order to develop an organisation-wide commitment to crisis planning and preparedness. The organisation's culture influences how seriously employees take disaster planning. If disaster planning is taken seriously, this increases the perceived need to take disaster preparedness seriously. In other words, organisational culture can encourage employees to spend more time thinking about, planning for, and preparing for low probability/high consequence events, which will lead to a more resilient organisation. Several chapters stress the need for well developed crisis management plans, and more than one argues that simulation drills should be incorporated into preparedness procedures. Both of these measures would help to solidify an organisational culture that increases resiliency.

Another important theme that appears in many of the chapters is that destination management organisations need to develop the ability to partner with organisations with which they do not normally interact, but which will be essential partners for preparedness and response. Potential partners include different levels of government (local, regional and national) and the media. Of course, a number of the authors also point out that the

tourism industry is composed of an immense variety of organisations, ranging from multinational corporations to micro businesses. Larger organisations will have more resources to devote to planning and preparedness than small operators. Thus, some partnerships might involve large tourism operators jointly planning and preparing with government agencies, while other partnerships might involve government agencies providing planning and preparedness expertise to small tourism operators who lack the resources of large corporations.

Obviously, crises and disasters can cross international boundaries, and international tourist destinations are filled with visitors from many countries. Consequently, multiple authors discuss the need to create organisational partnerships that extend beyond national boundaries. For example, one chapter includes a case study of an international partnership: the Pacific Asia Travel Association's Rapid Response Task Force (RRTF). The RRTF works with other international organisations, such as APEC and ASEAN, to build capacity for planning and preparedness and, quite importantly, to build the networks that will facilitate a rapid response across international boundaries.

The editors repeatedly state that the literature on crisis and disaster management in tourism studies is highly fragmented. However, by taking on such a wide array of disasters and crises and tourism settings, this book does not seem to further the goal of unity as much as it intends. That said, this is still an interesting and insightful collection of essays. I suspect that many readers will just read the chapters that most closely match their area of risk management, but they will find those chapters well worth reading. Moreover, if the reader looks beyond her or his immediate area of interest, the reader can find crosscutting themes that are not initially apparent from the book's organisation.

Book Review

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Travel and Transformation

by: Garth Lean, Russell Staiff and Emma Waterton (Eds.)

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Travel and Transformation is an edited compilation that aims to relate the complexity of transformation “in the context of contemporary corporeal travel” (p.11) through a multi-disciplinary and multi-epistemological critical discussion of travel within a mobilities’ paradigm. Transformation through travel is considered a continuum of discovery opportunities, both at the individual and social levels, distinct from the notion of transformation as outcome and/or finalised state. Mobility as a reflection of travel movement is more than just physical, as it embraces in its other representations the virtual, the imaginative, the sensual and the emotional. It is within the problematic lack of “rigorous re-theorisation” (p.12) of a portrayal of transformation, which until now has been “overly positive” (p.13), that this book finds its *raison-d’être* by giving voice to a more balanced panoply of diverse critical and contested representations of transformative travel at the individual, social, cultural and international levels.

To that end, and for “a semblance of an organisational structure” (p.18), the book takes us on a four-part transformative journey.

Part 1 first considers (chapter 2) the impact of the travel experience on the self when ‘lifestyle travellers’ realise their identities at the intersection of the “tensions between external mobility and internal reconciliation” (p.18). To Jon Anderson and Kathryn Erskine, personal transformation is enhanced by the individual’s love of change and mobility, i.e., *tropophilia*. In fact, in the case of lifestyle travel, the individual’s experiences with a diverse and dynamic place define the transformative dynamism of the individual’s selfhood. To Drew Ninnis (Chapter 3), however, such transformation of the self through travel may be illusory. By applying the Foucauldian analytical lens of heretopia to the travel reflections of Colin Thubron, the author argues that the individual’s mind cannot readily grasp the refinement of the transformation of the self, because in some particular types of travel the individual’s existence at home is confronted by completely different “modes of being” (p.45). In chapter 4, Fiona Allon and Maria Kotleth explore the internal confrontation and tensions faced by Australian volunteer tourists in their self-transformation journeys. Indeed, in their quest to ‘do good’ and through their movements ‘in-between space’, volunteer tourists become diverse

others such that their ongoing transformation is situated in multiplicity and deprives them of feeling one and total.

Part 2 approaches transformation and travel by employing literary narratives and stories. In chapter 5, Bianca Leggett delves into pilgrimage literature through the postmodern works of Geoff Dyer to explore transformation as articulated through the paradoxes of the travel experience in the periphery. In chapter 6, Rehnuma Sazzad illustrates an ongoing (as opposed to emerging) transformation through the lens and narratives of exile (and the longing of homecoming) of Palestinian author Mahmoud Darwish. Similarly, chapter 7 by Shannon Walsh relies on a documentary film, *Jeppé on a Friday*, to demonstrate the four emerging voices of the nomad, the refugee, the developer and the migrant, from movements in spaces that evoke the past and present realities of South African political struggles. In Sazzad's study, transformation reveals the ambiguities of the placing of 'home' in one's mind, while Walsh's four voices ascribe spatial affections of historical and modern political contestation to movements.

Part 3 is variegated motion in cruising mode over time and across diverse expanses of land and seas. In chapter 8, Leila Dawney uses self-writing as material support for memory to shepherd readers through her travails of her 'self' as triggered along the walking trails of the South West Coast Path National Trail in England. To the author, walking as a 'body practice' calls for a re-articulation of a constantly transforming self that produces subjectivities at transitional cultural spaces of imaginaries, which in turn make such 'pilgrimages' secular. Chapter 9 explores the diverging representations of cultural liminality in which refugees intrinsically find themselves when fleeing to a new territory and culture. Using the Foucauldian lens of heterotopia to analyse narratives of primarily Baltic refugees on a 1948 sea voyage from Sweden to Canada, Lynda Mannik argues that this type of forced travel experience causes enduring identity shifts, which not only makes self-representation ambiguous when compared to collective representation, but also finds rationale in invaluable memories of a lifetime's experience of both heroic nationalism and traumatic victimisation.

The transformative effects of liminality are examined in chapter 10, where Amie Matthews views travel as an experience of ontological shift, a 'rite of passage', toward the transformation of young backpackers. Such transformation is accomplished in behaviours, feelings and experiences at different stages of travel, or transitional liminoid spaces of travel, away from home and from fixed social spaces and structures. On the premise that travel is movement in "search for what we cannot find at home" (p.173), Sara Rodigari, in the final chapter (11) of part 3, delves into the complexities of transformation by applying the analytical lens of "sympathetic magic" (p.174) to understand and share the transformation she experienced in a six-week performative walk from Melbourne to Sydney through exchange narratives on internet-based media.

Part 4, entitled 'marking transformation', discusses literal physical markers in the physical transformation experienced on a journey of cosmetic surgery (chapter 12), as well as a combination of both physical and experiential markers in a 'third space', the abode of lives of souvenirs and the ambiguous space 'in between' home and away (Chapter 13). Through the examination of journey narratives on cosmetic surgery in online communities, the authors in chapter 12 argue that the literal physical transformation that occurs is simultaneously accompanied by an emotional transformation that is nurtured and supported by a sense of community provided by the online structure. Chapter 13 by Kimberly Peters closes this section with biographical reflections on how souvenirs and reminders from travel journeys take on different and

new meanings upon returning home. Not only are souvenirs the physical embodiment at home of the stories of transformation during travel; they are also recipients of changes due to transformation undergone over time at home.

The book concludes with some inspiring reflections by the editors on the direction of further inquiries, such as an exploration of different and broader methodologies and epistemologies in the critical space of movement and transformation. The perspectives are quite simple, ranging from the individual self to the more systemic structures of families, homes and work, including processes therein as expressed in routines and extraordinary actions.

Overall, there is much to be admired in this volume on *Travel and Transformation*, edited by Garth Lean, Russell Staiff and Emma Waterton. The diversity of narratives and heterogeneous methodologies, together with the varied spatio-temporal journeys upon which this collection of perspectives rests, provide an appropriate balance of intense descriptions with deeply critical and yet coherent inquiries that more than adequately address the trope of the transformational journey. This effort must be applauded. This compilation is a useful and rich contribution by researchers and scholars from different disciplines to the corpus of social scientific foray in its distillation of the potent transformative role of travel in diverse contexts of human society. The consistency in the quality of the linguistic articulation of scholarship may mean that this book is appropriate for an erudite readership but perhaps not suitable for the layman.