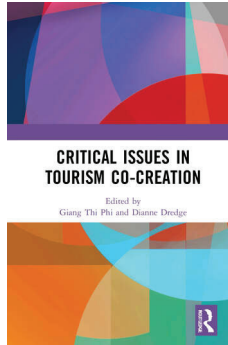


## BOOK REVIEW



### **Critical Issues in Tourism Co-Creation First Edition**

**Edited by Giang Thi Phi and Dianne Dredge**

(2021), Routledge, Oxon OX14 4RN, UK. 115 Pages.

The term “co-creation” seems to be very popular, swamping relevant tourism-related journals and books and emerging in almost every sphere of life. In tourism, co-creation is used in everyday creation and by all its actors.

The first edition of the book *Critical Issues in Tourism Co-Creation* is edited by Giang Thi Phi and Dianne Dredge. This book is written in the English language, on 115 pages.

Giang Thi Phi has Vietnamese origins and holds a PhD in Tourism Management from Griffith University, Australia and, until recently, worked as an assistant professor at Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark. Currently holding the position of researcher at the Hospitality and Tourism Institute, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Duy Tan University, Danang, Vietnam, Phi possesses a unique background blending industry, INGO and academic experiences that enable her to develop unique insights and practical approaches to development, mission-driven entrepreneurship and sustainability. Having lived and worked in four countries across three continents, Phi now focuses on bringing her expertise in the field of global tourism and entrepreneurship to drive positive changes through impactful teaching, research and community services. Her career is mostly attached to Academia.

Dianne Dredge has Australian origins and is Professor and Director of the Tourism Co-Lab, a tourism and design thinking agency based in Brisbane, Australia. She holds guest professorships at Lund University, Sweden and Federation University, Australia, and is an elected member of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism, Past Chair of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative, and an international advisor to the World Tourism Forum Institute. Originally trained as an urban and environmental planner, and with a PhD in policy and tourism organizational design, Dredge is a systems thinker, researcher and change agent with over 180 publications and 6 books. Her career has included periods working in both the private and the public sector.

The first seven chapters of this book were originally published in *Tourism Recreation Research*, volume 44, issue 3 (2019), while Chapter 8 was originally published in volume 40, issue 3 (2015) of the same journal. In its eight chapters, this book explains the co-creation situations in tourism, but from different perspectives. The purpose of this book is to provide a better understanding of the concept and process of co-creation and to increase knowledge about co-creation and its possible applications. Altogether, eighteen authors from various countries have contributed to this book, including the editors who wrote the introduction.

Written by the editors, the Introduction and the first chapter introduce the reader to the term “co-creation” in tourism. The second chapter provides an interesting and innovative point of view for co-creation. In their research on wildlife tourism, Bertella, Fumagalli and Williams-Grey suggest that wild animals could potentially become actors in the co-creation of knowledge. As part of their research, they developed a likely dialogue between a human, enjoying a tour, and a dolphin, as the non-human co-creator of the tour. Using such an approach, they raise the issue of how co-creation can actually be disruptive to the daily life of wildlife. The authors place the welfare of the wild animal at the center of the research, not that of humans, as is common with the modern anthropocentric viewpoint.

The next three chapters go in a different direction. Although still about tourism, the authors of these three chapters explore the possibilities of using co-creation in a way that helps solve a problem. Wengel, McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten introduce the Ketso method, a tool that can be helpful in a situation where one has to collaborate with a group of people but wants to hear everyone’s opinion. In the next chapter, Boluk, Muldoon and Johnson explore Integrated Curriculum Design and conduct research involving academics and practitioners. The chapter by Jernsand deals with co-creation in “student living labs”, as places where students can recreate and co-create real-life situations and expand their knowledge about sustainable tourism.

In the last three chapters, the reader can learn more about co-creation in small firms and about tour guides as co-creators. Garcia-Rosell, Haanpää and Janhunen explore co-creation in the sustainable environment of small hotels in Sweden – Icehotel and Treehotel. Tomassini examines small Italian tourism firms which have no intention of expanding but rather seek to maintain or, if possible, improve their quality. In the last chapter, Weiler and Black introduce the role of tourist guides as co-creators of tourist experiences and explain how the role of tourist guides is changing because tourists and their needs are also changing.

This book offers a critical approach to co-creation by exploring the term, questioning it and pointing out the negative effects that co-creation can have. The researchers have adopted a critical lens and while some of the articles/chapters are conceptual, others use interviews to gather data.

The book is easy to read and each article/chapter opens a door to something worth exploring. The reader comes to realize that the qualitative methods used in the studies required a large amount of patience and time on the part of the researchers.

This book can be used by practitioners and students as well as scholars. Practitioners can reach out to this book and gain a better understanding of the concept of co-creation. In addition, they can get an insight into the process, and learn more about the possible negative consequences of the co-creation process, as too often practitioners only think of positive outcomes. The book also connects the concepts of co-creation and sustainability, giving practitioners a better idea of how they can be more sustainable in the co-creation process.

Students can find this book useful because it gives them definitions of the concepts of co-creation and examples of it. If they are not already familiar with the concept and examples, this book provides them with an excellent introduction. In addition, this book provides excellent examples of the methodology used in the research. Hence, in these articles, students can find instructive examples of quantitative methods and cited literature that made the research possible.

Scholars can also benefit from this book. Assuming they are already well-acquainted with the concept of co-creation and have knowledge of the methodology, and if they are interested in research that focuses on the co-creation process, they may gain ideas for possible new research from the parts of articles/chapters relating to study limitations which suggest directions for further research. If they are not familiar with the critical approach to co-creation, they will gain better insight into the concept by reading this book.

In conclusion, practitioners, students and scholars interested in how to enrich the tourist experience and activate local tourism resources should read this book to become more familiar with the concept of co-creation and find useful guidelines on how to co-create an innovative tourism product for a particular local setting. To take full advantage of this, one should move beyond conventional approaches to tourism product design and critically observe all development options. Moreover, this book will be particularly valuable to readers who do not necessarily take a positivist approach to tourism development “best” practices and will be able to criticize actual tourism policies by providing valid evidence that supports new co-creation practice. Those readers are sure to enjoy reading this book.

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