

book review

'Understanding Tourism - A Critical Introduction'

The authors of the book 'Understanding Tourism – A Critical Introduction' are Kevin Hannam and Dan Knox. Kevin Hannam is Professor of Tourism Development at the University of Sunderland and Dan Knox is Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Leisure Management at Liverpool John Moores University. The purpose of the book is to help students to understand tourism as a spatial, social, cultural and economic phenomenon as well as stimulate and strengthen their interests in critical tourism studies. The book is published on 2010 by SAGE Publications Ltd, on 220 pages, and consists of 11 chapters. Each chapter describes specific theme related to diverse aspects of tourism.

Chapter 1, Understanding tourism: An Introduction, discusses the processes of globalization and mediatization and introduces the conceptualization of power relations in tourism. The authors demonstrate the need to develop a more critical study of tourism.

In Chapter 2, Regulating tourism, authors examine how regulations impact on the practices of tourism and tourist. Tourism development can be perceived as an opportunity or as a problem. This chapter evaluates tourism policies and planning to establish a broad framework of tourism system.

Chapter 3, Commodifying tourism, deals with issue of commodification and the role of consumer culture in tourism. The authors argue that the production and consumption of tourism commodities are, besides transfer of capital, also the transfer of meanings, sentiments and emotions. These values are given to tourist commodities by producers or consumers.

Chapter 4, Embodying tourism, discusses how the body is inscribed by various social divisions and categorizations, and how these can lead to segmented tourism practices. This issue is related to the issues of power and representation that arise as a result of the encounters of people of different ethnic and social backgrounds in tourism production, promotion and consumption.

In Chapter 5, Performing tourism, authors examine notion of tourism performance and performativity. The idea is to explore the ways in which representations and actions work together aiming to create tourist attractions and destinations.

The Chapter 6, Tourism and everyday life, deals with specific relationships between tourism and everyday life as well as tourism and leisure practices. The authors emphasize the numerous

intersections between consumption patterns at home and away and examine trend in domestic tourism and the tourist aesthetics of contemporary lives.

Chapter 7, Tourism and the other, is focused on the tourist imagination in the context of the representation. The question is how people and place identities are represented by tourism. The authors deal with post-colonial theory and try to examine how the dissemination of stories and images can reflect or challenge dominant power relation. The examples from developing countries are presented as exotic tourist paradise as well as place of poverty at the same time.

Chapter 8, Tourism and the environment, focuses on the idea of sustainable tourism development. At the beginning of the chapter authors bring critical review on the development of natural heritage in the form of protected area. In this chapter the 'ecotourism' as tourism product and consumer desire is considered. At the chapter end authors discuss how increasing consumer demand for sustainable tourism impacts on tourist behavior.

Chapter 9, Tourism and the past, deals with 'heritage tourism'. At the beginning authors provide critical overview of heritage industry. Afterward attention is paid to the importance of heritage interpretation and how this leads to the attaching of particular stories about particular times to particular places.

Chapter 10, focuses on the tourism motilities. The authors point out the need to focus attention on the spaces and places that tourists pass through to their destinations in order to understand the experience of travel and the regulation of the self at a micro-scale.

The final Chapter 11, Researching tourism is about the practices and processes of doing research projects from choosing a topic to the final presentation and guide students in the design and conduct research project in tourism studies.

The valuable parts of this book are some suggestions of additional reading and the exercises at the end of each chapter. Exercises could help students to think practically about some topics and how some ideas can be applied to real-world situations.

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