



Book Review

Tourism and Sustainability: Development, Globalisation and New Tourism in the Third World, M. Mowforth, I. Munt, 4th Edition. . Routledge, London and New York (2016). 455 pp., (Pbk.), £37.99 ISBN: 9781138 013261, (Hbk.) £84 ISBN: 9781138013254

The conflicting relationship between tourism and the notion of sustainability has received increasing attention in tourism studies and management practice. However, few academic works can match the in-depth, critical analysis of ‘new’ forms of tourism and approaches towards tourism development within the wider context of the sustainability debate that is provided by Mowforth and Munt in *Tourism and Sustainability*. Its fourth edition continues to provide scholars, students and practitioners alike with an accessible overview of the role of different stakeholders in promoting alternatives to the much-maligned traditional mass tourism, embedded in a wider critique of the links between tourism, development and globalisation.

The first part of the book, consisting of Chapters 1 to 4, presents the overall multi-disciplinary approach applied by the authors and outlines the conceptual framework that informs the ensuing discussion. Among the key themes introduced in this section are sustainability, power, globalisation and unequal development. For readers less familiar with development theories and discourses, these chapters provide a useful introduction and context regarding the main argument developed by Mowforth and Munt.

The second part focuses on the intentions and actions of different stakeholders in the quest for sustainable tourism practice. Chapter 5 scrutinises the underlying motivations of tourists seeking alternative experiences, presenting the ‘new’ tourists primarily as middle-class individuals originating in the First World. The following chapter examines the role of socio-environmental organisations and the links between sustainable tourism and environmentalism discourse. In Chapter 7, the focus of the analysis shifts to the tourism industry and its attempts to adapt to the ‘new’ (sustainable) tourism agenda. The authors’ general verdict appears to be largely summarised by the chapter title itself (‘The industry: lies, damned lies and sustainability’). Subsequently, the discussion focuses on the impacts of ‘new’ tourism approaches on ‘host’ communities and the participation (or lack thereof) of local stakeholders in sustainable tourism development processes. The final set of stakeholders considered in the analysis consists of governments and supranational institutions whose adoption of a sustainability discourse is critically examined.

The third part of *Tourism and Sustainability* is dedicated to the discussion of three themes that the authors believe to be of wider significance for development and sustainability at a global stage. Chapter 10, focusing on the issue of climate change, represents a timely addition compared to previous editions of the book. Outlining the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the context of global tourism, Mowforth and Munt set out the

paradox of alternative forms of tourism relying on long haul air travel and thus contributing to an increase in carbon emissions. The second key theme, poverty and deprivation, is discussed in Chapter 11, with particular emphasis being placed on the emergence of the pro-poor tourism approach. Reference is also made to the links between tourism and the Millennium Development Goals, even though the latter were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Perhaps a potential future edition of the book could critically evaluate the World Tourism Organization’s efforts to promote sustainable tourism as part of the post-2015 development agenda. Chapter 12, dealing with the phenomenon of urbanisation, assesses the sustainability credentials of cultural heritage tourism and discusses the ethical challenges of slum tourism. The latter, having become more and more prominent in metropolises of developing countries, is seen by some as a voyeuristic enterprise, while others point to its potential for empowering the urban poor.

Overall, *Tourism and Sustainability* focuses on unpacking the reality of alternative tourism approaches beyond their sustainability rhetoric. One of its main contributions is the use of the concept of power throughout its analysis – not limiting it to an indictment of the inequalities inherent in global mass tourism but also unmasking power relations in the context of new tourism. In the words of the authors, ‘[...] the central argument is that the emergence of new forms of tourism has the potential to supplement and reinforce, if in a considerably more nuanced way, the relationships of power already transmitted and circulated’ (p. 402). As such, the book does not seek to present specific solutions to the sustainability conundrum in tourism by highlighting best practices or listing required features of ‘real’ sustainable tourism. Instead, it urges the reader to critically engage with alternative forms of tourism instead of viewing them as potential magic bullets in countering the negative impacts of more traditional approaches of tourism development.

In terms of the scope of their analysis, the authors recognise the ‘tightrope’ they had to walk: being ‘mindful that too global an analysis ignores local lessons and too local an analysis ignores global questions’ (p. 71). In general, most of their analysis centres on the inequality inherent in the relationship between institutions (tourism companies, socio-environmental organisations, supranational bodies etc.) representing what the authors refer to as the ‘First World’ and those involved in or affected by tourism development in the ‘Third World’. By focusing on the global power imbalance, however, there is a risk that inequality and power relations at the local level are overlooked or their significance is underestimated. While chapter eight acknowledges the problem posed by elite capture of local tourism initiatives, the book could have made more specific reference to different vectors of social difference and how they relate to power inequalities both at a global and a local level. For example, the issues of gender representation

in tourism and power differentials in gender relations seem pertinent to the wider questions addressed by *Tourism and Sustainability*. Existing studies have highlighted the role of gender in alternative tourism ventures at a local level, examining their potential for empowering women while also pointing to a reinforcement of existing power relations and gender stereotypes.

This omission, notwithstanding, the book is recommended to tourism scholars and students who are interested in the links between tourism and key contemporary challenges that humanity faces. The argument is presented in an accessible way, drawing on a wide range of evidence, including scholarly work and

non-academic sources, and illustrated by numerous case studies. An effort has been made to update sources and examples compared to previous editions, while preserving the main line of argument and conceptual underpinning. In short, the book represents an important reference source for readers seeking to deepen their understanding of tourism's complex relationship with discourses and practices relating to globalisation, sustainability and development.

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