



Book Review

Tourism and Resilience, R.W. Butler. CABI, Wallingford (2017). 230 pp pp., (Hbk.), £70.00
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This is a particularly good edited book. Over the last five years there have been a growing number of texts and journal articles that focus on tourism resilience and related subject areas. However, as a start point for an immersion into core knowledge and understanding *Tourism and Resilience* stands alongside the best contributions.

The book is organised into five parts. In Part 1 (Introduction) Chapter 1, the editor Richard Butler succinctly argues that concepts such as carrying capacity are largely discredited and that the sustainable development of mass tourism is not taking place. As Butler states, ‘... what is needed is a means of improving the ability of tourism destinations to withstand the effects of tourism or, in other words, to make them more resilient ...’ (p. 5). Two other chapters complete Part 1. In Chapter 2, *The Development of Resilience Thinking*, Marta Berbés-Blázquez and Daniel Scott review how resilience thinking has spread from engineering and ecology into social science. An informative summary table engages with different definitions and the particular emphases of varying types of resilience (socio-ecological, socio-economic, community and so on). The accompanying explanation distinguishes between resilience types that have a pure systems focus (to understand a system) and those with a normative dimension ‘infused with a clear sense of what is desirable and undesirable’ (p.11). Resilience in a tourism context is most often focussed on a normative stance as a means to withstand undesired change. The point is made that with so many sub-divisions of resilience (tourism or otherwise) it is imperative to specify resilience ‘of what’ and ‘to what’ (e.g. of residents and community to tourist-based AirBnB). Berbés-Blázquez and Scott observe that the popularity of the resilience concept stems from its intuitive edge drawn from ecology. However, even though they include a very useful set of principles for building resilience, heavily reliant on ecological terminology, they also stress that such a heuristic creates its own tensions and blind spots. In Chapter 3, *Community Tourism Resilience*, Alan A. Lew et al. initially offer their own succinct review of resilience thinking, including that applied to tourism. They suggest that sustainability and resilience are not mutually incompatible concepts, viewing sustainability as conservation plus restoration and viewing resilience as adaptation plus innovation. They then introduce two models based on scale, change and resilience (SCR 1 & SCR2) applied to rural tourism communities in Taiwan and conclude with a call for further case studies.

Taken together, the chapters in Part 1 provide a very solid base for the remainder of the book. Although the degree of scepticism with sustainability of Lew et al. seems less than Butler, both Lew et al. and also Berbés-Blázquez and Scott challenge the reader to think critically. Moreover, it is evident that Lew et al. are aware of the details covered by fellow contributors. For example, they comment on what elements of resilience raised by Scott are not covered in their SCR 1 & SCR2 model. Such awareness is rare indeed in an edited book.

In Part 2 (Socio-Ecological Resilience) Esteban Ruiz-Ballesteros’ chapter focuses on how community based tourism can help socio-ecological resilience. He draws on a similar knowledge base as Berbés-Blázquez and Scott, suggesting that there are three catalysts of socio-ecological resilience namely community building, commons development (meaning, for example, common understandings based on common objectives) and multi-level governance. Such catalysts provide the framework within which operate various drivers (physical, biological, economic or social) alongside events and critical turning points and, finally, productive (tourism) activities. Chapters 5 & 6, both researched by Valerie A Sheppard, consider resilience and destination governance within the resort destination of Whistler, British Columbia. There is a coherent outline of resilience enhancing factors from a governance and community perspective that builds on a framework of socio-ecological resilience published in *Tourism Management* (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). Eight factors are perceived by participants as contributing to resilience: strong and effective governance; shared vision values and single-mindedness; strong partnerships, collaboration and community involvement; community and corporate memory; taking care of social issues; well-resourced community; sense of place and connectedness; and passion, pride and can-do attitude. Whilst details of such research are available in journal form it is very useful to read a variant of such work in a coherent, edited book.

Part 3 (Resilience and Response to Disasters) introduces an additional angle on resilience. In Chapter 7, *Sri Lankan Tourism Development and Implications for Resilience*, Jeremy Buultjens et al. give a less theoretical and more descriptive account than preceding chapters on the resilience of the Sri Lankan tourism industry in the context of the 2004 tsunami, a protracted civil war, rapid growth post 2009, climate change and (very briefly) human rights. In Chapter 8 *Resilience Tourism and Disasters* Susanne Becken and Bijan Khazai attempt a distinction between vulnerability, resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and describe an initiative to devise a hotel resilience standard. However, Chapter 9 *Resilience and Perception of Problems in Alpine Regions* by Bruno Abegg, Robert Steiger and Lisa Trawöger seems like a rare aberration in the book. There is no mention of resilience in the introduction and the chapter’s focus is on the science-industry gap related to climate change. That is interesting but an overt connection to resilience needed to be developed through the chapter not just in the concluding statement.

The contribution of Part 4 revolves around resilience in protected natural areas and island locations. In Chapter 10, *Tourism Resilience in UK National Parks*, Janet Cochrane suggests five features that help a destination to recover from disturbances and adapt to threats: market responsiveness; existence of tourism networks with strong cooperation; public sector leadership; benefits for local communities and, finally, environmental support in the form of programmes and schemes for visitor and business engagement. Arguably, Cochrane places insufficient emphasis on the type of visitor as a means to enhance resilience. However, that is not the case in Chapter 12 in which Arjen Alberts and Godfrey Baldacchino contend that small island tourism economies (specifically the three Caribbean islands of Aruba, Sint

Maarten and US Virgin Islands) have better socio-economic resilience because of their high proportion of timeshare owners and repeat visitors who are not especially reactive to negative incidents. Additionally, resilience is enhanced by macro level and micro level effects. At a macro level, tourism sheds or grows jobs in response to external shocks through a reliance on regional migration whilst, at a micro level, individuals find and combine concurrent jobs that enable them to cope with shocks or stressors. As the authors point out the small island tourism economies that they observe do not spawn generalizable conclusions. However, the attempt to argue a case and stimulate counterthought is typical of many chapters throughout the book.

Part 5 sweeps up other strands related to tourism and resilience. Chapter 14 by Harold Goodwin distinguishes resilience, sustainability and responsibility, returning to themes from earlier in the book. A more distinct read is Chapter 15, *Resilience as New Political Reality*, by Jonathan Pugh which sets the 'resilience turn' in a wider context. Resilience is viewed as an active response to the limitation of government intervention and the complexity of modern life. Resilience in a tourism setting relies on a response from a community, not a large scale institution (nation state or otherwise). In sum, the collective community

voice needs to say something like 'OK. Tourism is here. How can we adapt, adjust and be prepared for the complexity it introduces?' Therein is a common refrain from most examples outlined by the various authors of *Tourism and Resilience*.

In the conclusion, Richard Butler provides a final overview and the book comes full circle. He warns that tourism resilience should not become as indistinct as tourism sustainability, applied as it is to all manner of situations. Somehow, one doubts whether his warning will be heeded but *Tourism and Resilience* stands as a marker for those interested in its study and practice.

Reference

Ruiz-Ballesteros, E. (2011). Social-ecological resilience and community-based tourism. An approach from Aqua Blanca, Ecuador. *Tourism Management*, 32(3), 655–666.

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