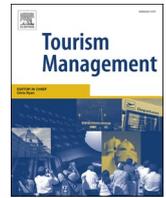




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Book Review

A Research Agenda for Creative Tourism, N. Duxbury, G. Richards (Eds.). Edward Elgar, Cheltenham (2019). p. 199 pp (Pbk.), £21.60 eISBN: 9781788110723, (Hbk.), £76.50 ISBN: 9781788110716

A Research Agenda for Creative Tourism is a timely book that discusses the evolution, themes and challenges of creative tourism nearly two decades after the first definition of the term by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond. Duxbury and Richards draw on their comprehensive expertise to shape a research agenda on this emergent field that meets the demands of a tourist segment enthusiastic to develop creativity and learning through active and immersive cultural experiences, while addressing contemporary goals of destinations concerning sustainable tourism development by focusing on people, local identity and culture.

This volume comprises 14 chapters that explore creative tourism with regard to contemporary research strand, such as community-based tourism, placemaking, tourism design and the experiential approach to tourism. Theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions are illustrated with international case studies in diverse settings including Malaysia, Bali, Thailand, Canada, Russia, Finland, Korea, United States, Croatia and Brazil. Moreover, topics such as authenticity, collaborative platforms and networks, and sustainability are debated around creative tourism in small cities and rural areas. In the introduction, the editors trace the development of the concept of creative tourism in the context of societal transformations and introduce the challenges in balancing the bottom-up approach with complementary governance frameworks. The complexity and dynamic nature of creative tourism is captured in diverse geographical and cultural realities, whilst the challenges around the development of creative tourism as a tool to mitigate negative impacts of tourism and promote the well-being of local communities are acknowledged. Against this background, a framework is presented to depict and understand the connections between some of the main elements involved in creative tourism development and research. Here, the editors walk the reader through all chapters by offering a substantial summary and a direct link to the agenda objectives in a systematic fashion.

Contributions from both academic and pragmatic-based perspectives are structured in four sections. Whilst the first part of this volume is dedicated to components involved in the process of designing the tourist creative experience, the second section is devoted to the outlook of different forms of creative tourism by concentrating on how interactions between culture, people, places, as well as local dynamics, inform this niche tourism area. The third part of the book examines development models and processes by exploring case studies to discuss concerns related to the evaluation and monitoring of creative tourism impacts in local development. The final part reflects on preliminary international findings on the practices of creative tourism networks and platforms, and closes with a thematic research agenda.

Links to contemporary research debates are drawn along the flow of

chapters. Specifically, the concept of authenticity, which has been set in literature as pivotal in tourism experiences, is critically discussed in the chapter by Blapp and Mitos in the context of creative and community-based tourism. The authors review different perspectives and acknowledge the need to approach the construct in a flexible manner due to the particularities and complexities involving different cultural contexts. Inasmuch as the perception of authenticity changes over time, the authors discuss relevant managerial implications of a more flexible approach to authenticity for creative tourism development in rural contexts. In this vein, arguments and findings presented throughout this book stress the utmost importance of approaching authenticity in a way that is in accordance with the current debates around the principles of responsible management, which prioritise cultural heritage conservation and local communities' well-being.

A focus on experiences is also visible in this research agenda. The experiential approach to tourism is a contemporary strand of research addressing elements considered pivotal to the design of the tourist experience. This approach is supported by disciplines such as Psychology, which stresses that encounters with environmental stimuli can trigger emotional responses and result in memorable experiences. This idea is especially evinced in the chapter by Jelinčić and Senkić, who draw attention to how experiential marketing can creatively focus on cultural resources. To examine tourists' emotional responses when visiting the Museum of Broken Relationships in Croatia, the researchers analyse the visitor book where tourists wrote their personal experiences in the context of this exhibition. The findings highlight the role of consistently managing multisensory elements for actively and emotionally engaging visitors while showing how visitor experiences in a designed setting can result in the perception of self-healing and personal transformation. Additionally, Miettinen and colleagues discuss the importance of the surrounding landscape in Lapland for designing tourist experiences that can be individually perceived as distinct and meaningful, by focusing on spatial design and artistic collaboration. Hence, this agenda sets a strong link with current research in tourism that places the science of experience design as central to the design of tourism and placemaking.

Furthermore, this agenda addresses a crucial stage in tourism management, which is often under-researched – the process of monitoring and evaluation. In this regard, an integrated monitoring system to assess local impacts of creative tourism industries is presented by Wisansing and Vongvisitsin. Apart from being community-led, this tool combines a set of indicators informed by the three pillars of sustainability (economic, sociocultural and environmental). Additionally, Remoaldo and colleagues offer a list of areas where regional, national or international platforms and networks of creative tourism can improve their performance. The authors found that institutions with more recent projects are mainly concentrated in mature destinations in southern Europe, which seem to be focused on diversifying their tourism offer and attracting new audiences.

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Whilst this volume stresses insightful findings within creative tourism, there are still some research gaps and pragmatic challenges that this research agenda contributes to outline and inspire to address in the future. Whilst Tan and Tan discuss what nurtures creative tourists as *prosumers*, particularly in heritage sites, and what the role of the different stakeholders is in addressing this niche market, one of the biggest gaps still lies in the depth of understanding the profile(s) and motivations of the creative tourist. Further research on this topic would allow to strengthening the links between creative tourism and other forms of tourism. How new technologies can aid the processes involved in creative industries development and ensuring more inclusive experiences both for locals and tourists while catering for new audiences, such as Generation Z, are contemporary issues that could be further explored within this stream of research. While this book concentrates on the dynamics of creative tourism in rural areas and small cities, future studies could also further examine the potential of creative tourism in

larger urban destinations that are facing challenges related to the negative effects of tourism. Overall, this research agenda contributes to the understanding of creative tourism, its applications and its research potential of multidisciplinary nature. By doing so, it offers valuable insights not only for researchers in tourism but also for tourism policy-makers and creative tourism practitioners internationally. This agenda achieves its objectives and reflects well the needs of this young and dynamic field by leaving the readership with a final chapter wrapping up the different contributions in the form of a supported synthesis of recommended future research themes on creative tourism.

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