

**Sustainable Tourism:
Theory and Practice**

By David Weaver. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann (Linacre House, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8DP 30, UK) 2006, xiii + 240 (figures, tables, bibliography, index), US\$82.50 pbk, ISBN 075066438X

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PUBLICATIONS IN REVIEW

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An undergraduate teaching text in style and structure, but with scholarly reference to recent research, David Weaver's well-tested lecture notes on sustainable tourism are now available in paperback. Each chapter includes a list of teaching objectives, a summary, weblinks, reading suggestions, a case study, exercises relying solely on material in the book itself, and exercises requiring additional reading. The text is written in short student-friendly chunks with conspicuous headings.

The volume opens with a history of sustainable tourism in theory and practice, followed by conceptual issues such as sustainability indicators. There is a small side-step into "alternative" tourism: church groups, volunteers, educational tours, backpacking and farm tourism. Ecotourism, however, is presented separately as the conscience of the tourism industry, the endpoint of sustainable tourism. Mainstream mass tourism is introduced using aspects such as corporate ethics and green consumers. Travel agents, outbound packagers and transport, including cruise ships, are grouped as facilitating sectors; and theme parks, casinos, ski resorts and golf courses as attractions. A chapter on quality control covers codes of conduct, ecolabels and award schemes. There are three chapters on destinations. One describes Weaver's typology of circumstantial versus deliberate alternative tourism and sustainable versus unsustainable mass tourism. The next takes a spatial perspective: zoning, carrying capacity, front and backcountry. The third covers visitor management tools: caps, quotas, education, demarketing.

The content is well presented at an undergraduate level. It includes extensive, though not comprehensive, citations of research publications up to 2004. The review of ski resorts, for example, seems incomplete. The selections for additional readings are rather idiosyncratic but can easily be adjusted by individual lecturers.

It is a strong and useful book, but with a few weaknesses. First, some materials are presented uncritically. A section on the private, profit-driven certification scheme Green Globe 21 (pp 118-122), is reproduced largely from that company's own marketing materials, with barely a dozen lines in critique. Critical issues such as credibility, deficiencies in technical criteria, and the poor take-up rate of the system by industry are mentioned only in passing. Green Globe 21 is also cited incorrectly (p. 183) as the source of the *Green Guide* series of minimal-impact guides for outdoor tour operators. The book largely ignores the outdoor tourism sector. There is no chapter on activities, only one on attractions. As Weaver notes, however, it is technology and management in high-volume mass tourism sectors that are most critical for sustainability. A single cruise ship, for example, can produce five megalitres of sewage and sullage each week.

Weaver deserves credit as a prolific source of new ideas and insights in tourism research, and this contribution is no exception. Some of his proposals, however, may be debatable. Figure 3.1 (p 41) places types of alternative tourism within a triangle with apices labelled as attraction, accommodation and motivation/market orientation. Triangle diagrams, however, are only meaningful if the three scales are mutually exclusive fractions of a fixed total, so this particular application does not work well. Likewise, the author's use of the term "ecotourism" (p. 205), to describe potential symbioses between tourism and conservation probably will not catch on, valid though the concept is. The most intriguing vignette is a tale of the Vieux Carré in New Orleans, put forward as a "classic example of inner city tourism-related districting" (p. 1670). It is not just a line in a song made famous by Linda Ronstadt (Zevon 1973).

But there are quibbles and quips. This is an excellent book. It will likely become a standard teaching text throughout the Anglophone world. Published by Elsevier, it is assured wide distribution. While not cheap, it is within the price range of students at most Western universities.

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REFERENCES

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