

# Book review

## Demystifying Theories in Tourism Research

*Edited by Kelly Bricker and Holly Donohoe*  
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This book published by CABI is designed to explore the theoretical frameworks applied in tourism research. The book is organised in five parts. The editors have included the 15 chapters devoted to theoretical perspectives on tourism planning and management, theoretical perspectives on tourism marketing and communications, theoretical perspectives on host communities and guest, and a variety of other related subjects. Unsurprisingly, the focus of the book is clearly centred on describing and analysing the current state of theories used in a tourism research. In the introduction part, the editors open a debate on the use of the theories in tourism studies and highlight the uncertainties in this field. The opening argument of the book is that due to the complexities of the tourism research field, some researchers believe in the existence of “tourism research theories” and others borrow theories from other disciplines.

At the beginning of the book, the editors elucidate that this book “attempts” to “demystify” theories and models which guide inquiry and analysis in tourism studies through the provision of a range of topics relative to tourism studies that have applied various theories or conceptual frameworks to address tourism problems and issues. Each chapter describes a research project and illustrates the theory(ies) applied to address the issues related to the project. Chapters begin with a real-life scenario, which outlines some of the issues, challenges or ideas that can provide context for developing a research question or idea in the tourism field. Following, underpinned by the theory the research context of the particular project is explained. Then, the author(s) engages in the

discussion of theory(ies) relevant for each particular case. Finally, each chapter concludes with a look at the future with respect to the theory or theoretical frameworks discussed in the chapter.

The book provides useful explanations and definitions of the different terminologies and concepts related to theories in tourism research. Individual authors elaborated on many theories from various disciplines throughout the book. This book definitely offers a broad range of theoretical perspectives and frameworks which could be used to study, investigate and research various issues in tourism. This book introduces readers to the theories and helps to establish ways of thinking or lenses for interpretation of what is happening or the issues related to tourism phenomena. Some of the authors suggest that it is important to establish theoretical links to other disciplines as tourism activity has strong ties with economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues in the society. Thus, tourism research can not exist in isolation.

In terms of the focus of this journal, that of future related issues, in each chapter the book provides a comprehensive outlook on the future of the tourism research field with respect to the theory or theoretical frameworks discussed in the chapter. Additionally, Part 5 – Conclusion summarises key themes and findings with a view to the future and the new opportunities for tourism researchers. This book also introduces novel approaches to the tourism industry, such as innovation theory, which may help to address innovation in the context of destinations, sustainability, product development, stakeholder and actor networks as well as visitor behaviour.

The advantage of this book is that it offers a very useful oversight of the complexities of theories in tourism studies and provides a broad category of knowledge domains of the tourism field. Most importantly, this edited text is delivered in a clear and consistent style appropriate for an introductory level. The layout of each chapter is interesting and visually engaging, the uniform layout through

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each chapter makes understanding complex issues easier. In terms of the benefits for students, each chapter of the book starts with the objectives and finishes with thought-provoking questions that make readers feeling not bored after reading it. Throughout the book chapters contain helpful diagrams and pictures, relevant case studies provide concrete examples and a chapter's suggestion on future use of particular theory, all aid student comprehension. As with many edited books with multiple authors, in order to help the reader understand the connections across the chapters, an index of the topics covered is very helpful. Furthermore, in the appendix, this book offers brief reviews of the additional theories that have been applied in the context of tourism.

The criticisms of the book are all relatively minor. Overall, the book presents separate research projects, and after reading a book as a whole there is an impression of lack of integrity and coherence between chapters. However, depending on the use of the book this disadvantage may not be crucial for a reader. The book also gives the impression that the authors mainly were involved in mainstream business-related tourism research projects and have neglected the critical aspects of tourism, core for tourism studies (Ateljevic *et al.*, 2012; Ateljevic *et al.*, 2007).

Finally, in terms of a final recommendation, the book should prove to be useful for those tourism students who are interested in the understanding tourism research theories in general, but also for those academics and practitioners who are interested in adopting a particular theoretical framework into another context relevant for their tourism project.

Including pedagogical features throughout, this book is an accessible approach to a range of controversial and complex issues of tourism theories and an excellent supplementary reading with practical case studies examples for any research methods book.

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### **About the reviewer**

Yana Wengel is a PhD Candidate at The University of Waikato. As a Teaching Fellow, Yana has taught Tourism and the Environment course and contributed as a Guest Lecturer in research methods courses. Her doctoral research investigates the social construction of experiences in world wide opportunities on organic farms programme. She is interested in the areas of volunteer and non-profit tourism, social constructionism, creative methodologies and research methods. As a certified Facilitator, Yana has pioneered LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology in tourism studies. Yana Wengel can be contacted at: wengel.yana@gmail.com