

BOOK REVIEW: Tourist Destinations: Structure and Synthesis; Douglas G. Pearce

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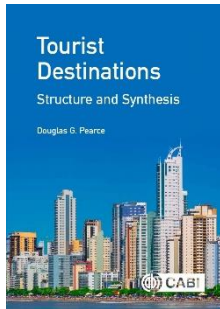
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BOOK REVIEW



Tourist Destinations: Structure and Synthesis

Douglas G. Pearce

(2021), CABI, Oxfordshire OX10 8DE, UK, 269 pp.

Destinations represent a key feature of tourism. They have been the focus of a large number of studies and have been researched from different perspectives and approaches making destination research more specialised. As a result, a need emerged for a more integrated and systematic approach on both, local and national level, all in order to better understand destinations, their structure, functions and organisation.

Douglas G. Pearce, author of the book “Tourist Destinations: Structure and Synthesis” and emeritus professor of Tourism Management at Victoria University of Wellington, offers a comprehensive and integrated approach to destination research and critically analyses a variety of international studies in an effort to provide a systematic overview of destinations and their two central aspects – spatial and organizational structure. Furthermore, the author provides many examples from all around the world to illustrate the conceptual and methodological issues relating to destination research.

The book is 269 pages long and is structured into 10 chapters. Table of contents and a list of figures and tables are featured at the very beginning. At the end of the book, the references as well as author and subject index are provided.

The first chapter introduces the topic and the aim of the book. The main intention is to compile various studies and pre-existing knowledge on destinations into one integrated volume. In this chapter, author provides a broad and comprehensive insight into destinations by focusing particularly on their spatial and organisational structure. In this respect, author provides new outlook on how destinations function which can be useful for researchers, destination management and marketers as well as for tourism planners and policy makers.

In the second chapter author defines destinations and discusses their numerous characteristics and provides examples from France and Chile. The author also analyses the use of the term ‘destination’ from a French perspective. The final sections of this chapter focus on tourists’ perspective regarding destinations and deal with destinations as functional nodes.

In the third chapter, six sets of frameworks for tourist destinations are discussed in detail including following ones: *industrial districts, clusters, networks, systems, social constructs, and assemblages*. The chapter address mentioned frameworks and their methodological issues as well as their implementation in different empirical studies. The author proceeds to explore the most important features of each framework in order to enhance understanding of the relationships between various stakeholders.

The general structure of destinations is analysed in the fourth chapter. The author underlines the difficulties in obtaining information on *economic, social, political and historical context, morphological differences, destination landscape, services and facilities for tourists*, since data on spatial and organisational structure is usually specific and does not cover all characteristics of destinations and their structure. Therefore, studies usually examine either a range of sectors from a general perspective or focus on specific ones such as accommodation, destination parts (i.e. historical core or waterfront) or on a limited range of stakeholders, most commonly firms. The key to acquiring a full coverage of the destinations' structure is taking multiple data sources into account, as a combination of qualitative and quantitative data.

The fifth chapter focuses on the national destinations structure. The chapter covers the distribution of demand and supply, tourists' travel patterns, institutional frameworks for tourism, as well as the challenges that arise from not readily available data. Furthermore, the author underlines that the relative importance of distribution of demand and supply is different in every country and usually depends on the attractiveness and accessibility of certain urban locations, coastal and mountainous areas and rural regions. At the end of the chapter, Spain and New Zealand were used as two examples of the national destination structure.

The structures of regional destinations with analyses of the framework of destination management functions is discussed in the sixth chapter. Moreover, in this chapter the regional distribution of supply, patterns of demand, organisational structures and relationships are explored. The author points out that further research in this area is needed and underlines the main obstacles scholars may face along the way, such as data limitations and methodological challenges.

In the seventh chapter, the author tackles the structure of urban destinations and explains the complex roles of cities and towns. Urban destinations and their features are described whereby, the author focuses on the accommodation as well as on the spatial structure of attractions and activities found in urban locations.

In the eight chapter, the emphasis is put on the structure of coastal resorts as well as on the great popularity such resorts enjoy. Although a lot of studies on the morphology of coastal resorts have been conducted, the author implies that there is still lack of research on their organisational structure.

The next part provides insights in particularities of ski resorts and their structure in the first section and of rural destinations and natural area locations in the second part of the ninth chapter.

The final chapter provides a general overview of the previous nine chapters and addresses the most important issues regarding perspectives, frameworks, and theories in relation to destinations on a national and regional level. Since related research has become very fragmented, the main contribution of this book lies in integration of both organisational and spatial structures through synthesizing various findings and relationships between them.

What makes this book important and of great value is the fact that it offers a systematic and all-encompassing approach to destination research on both national and local level, unlike other studies that either focus on specific features of destinations or take a generalized approach. Moreover, this book is based on literature and studies that stem from different disciplines and countries. The author takes into account the most important aspects of previous studies and tackles different aspects of destinations on various levels. He subsequently draws them together providing the reader with a deeper understanding of destinations, their structure, functions, and organisation. Based on the growing demand for interdisciplinary research, comparative research and in-depth case studies in the field of destination research, the author encourages and underline the importance of destination research and suggests directions for further exploration of this topic.

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