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Research Themes for Tourism

Research Themes for Tourism is targeted towards students studying at an undergraduate or Masters level and as a guide for tourism practitioners. It aims to assist readers to become familiar with a wider range of tourism topics at a foundational level. It is an ideal text for students who are considering which direction they wish to take their Masters research or in which area(s) of tourism they may specialise in. As I progressed through the book, I found myself thinking how this book expertly opens up the fascinating world that is tourism. Through illustrating the many diverse and interesting themes, debates, considerations and challenges within the tourism industry, *Research Themes for Tourism* acts as an engaging and motivating resource for students, or professionals who wish to engage in research and study. Students and practitioners will find 20 chapters relating to many popular research topics including heritage, culture, sustainability, adventure, sport and consumer behaviour. Discussion is brought alive by the detailed case studies contained within each chapter, and set questions provided at the end of each chapter challenges students and practitioners to think deeper about issues important to that particular topic; it would thus serve as an excellent textbook to be used in undergraduate tourism courses.

Importantly, the reader is introduced to different worldviews and challenged to think critically about different perspectives within tourism and their own influence on the research process; often within foundational level texts, the dominant Western research paradigm is promoted with little consideration towards alternative views. *Research Themes for Tourism* thus contributes to the growing body of literature advocating the importance of reflexivity

within tourism research. Readers are also taught about many of the ethical considerations associated with tourism, such as the issues associated with the management of dark tourism destinations. The book also provides excellent discussion that illustrates how tourism research has developed throughout history and challenges the reader to consider which research paradigm will best inform their research. Niche research subjects such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), slow and medical tourism are introduced and a number of important contemporary debates occurring within tourism studies, such as the classification of tourism as a field of studies, and issues of authenticity and representation are clearly detailed. Many of the debates and case studies offer excellent practical advice to individuals working within the tourism industry; for example, through exploring sustainable tourism development in Ghana, practitioners are given insight into best practice which they can apply to their business or destination.

Importantly also, concepts are transferred between chapters and the point is made that tourism rarely fits perfectly into ‘themes’. When progressing through the chapters, the experienced tourism researcher will notice that many of the concepts and discussion contained within the book are foundational concepts that they learnt in introductory courses. Nevertheless, for the early researcher and practitioner new to the field, discussion focusing on, for example, the tourist gaze and the multiplier effect will reinforce their learning and may be important underpinning concepts for their research. *Research Themes for Tourism*, while not seeking to be the definitive source of information for the themes presented within, is designed to “inspire and guide research projects among students and provide practitioners with an introduction to a host of topics that can be adopted in tourism practice” (p.xiii).

Through professional presentation and fascinating discussion which challenges and inspires the reader to think critically and engage further with the presented themes, *Research Themes*

for Tourism wholly achieves these aims. It would make an ideal addition to any university or personal library.

Research Themes for Tourism. P. Robinson, S. Heitmann, P. Dieke (Editors). (2011).
Cambridge, MA: CABI. Pp.300.