

Tourism development

by Heidi Keyser

Review by Brian Boshoff

Heidi Keyser draws on her previous experience as a lecturer in tourism development at the Cape Technikon and her current position as senior consultant with KPMG (now ATOS) Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism, to produce a valuable introduction to tourism development. Her background enables her to provide readers with numerous international best practice cases, as well as very useful statistics and case studies (global and African/Southern African). Many case studies are made more relevant in that they are based on her own interactions with various spheres of government, communities, the private sector and tourism and development professionals.

Tourism Development is also peppered with interesting quotations, which could provide food for thought for students (and tactics for practitioners!). For example, seniors are the mass market of the future (at least in the north) backpackers' daily expenditure in Cape Town is higher than that of any other tourism segment (Keiser, 2002:80-81).

The twelve chapters deal with the nature and meaning of tourism, the measurement of tourism, tourism demand, travel patterns and trends, the tourism industry, the tourism destination, tourism destination development: agents and issues, types of tourism development, tourism and economic development, the environmental impacts of tourism, social and cultural aspects of tourism and managing destinations for sustainability.

The author states that this book is intended for graduate students and practitioners, but if this is the case, one would have expected a bit more depth and more rigorous treatment of some of the relevant theory base. For example, the brief, partly metaphorical discussion on "systems theories and tourism"

(Keiser, 2002:20) doesn't explicitly mention any of the well-known planning theoreticians' insights in this regard.

Similarly, the ubiquitous, ambiguous and often contested notion of "sustainable development" is tackled in only three pages. Predictably, the 1987 Brundtland Commission's report and Agenda 21, deriving from the 1992 Rio Summit, are briefly mentioned. Then there is (just) a figure of the well-known triangle of "social", "economic" and "environmental" concerns and trade-offs, (unreferenced here, but alluded to by a host of authors, notably Scott Campbell (1996)). This is followed an extract that Clem Sunter in full has "high road/low road" cry, with future perspectives of "dead-end thinking" contrasted with "building a sustainable future". Notwithstanding the relative paucity of the theory base, Keyser does provide useful pointers for *managing* destinations for sustainability, *realizing* sustainable tourism development, the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa's concept of "responsible tourism," international examples of sustainable tourism initiatives and the charter from the 1995 "World Conference on Sustainable Tourism".

The approach of the book appears to be rather "middle of the road," but in fairness, the author does state that "the book has not been written as a comprehensive and critical treatise on tourism development in the developing world..." but does "offer a comprehensive and *conventional* theoretical knowledge base of tourism ... " (Keiser, 2002:8) (own emphasis).

Although the book is not overtly billed as a *Tourism Planning* offering *per se*, there is plenty for planners to feed on, even if only in terms of an *entrée*. The author does very well in dealing explicitly with tourism *measurement* and tourism *demand*.

Usually these are glossed over and in the case of the latter, emphasis is mostly placed on the supply side and the tourist destination. Keyser also tackles issues such as planning and administrative controls, tourism multipliers, income leakages, tourism and employment issues, input-output analysis and SDIs.

In terms of some (expected?) academic nitpicking, it is ironic that the commissioning *editor's* name is spelled differently in different places in the book. Also, it is surely unnecessary to remind graduates and practitioners what "amalgam" means: "tourism is an amalgam (combination) of interlinked activities ..."

But more glaringly, in dealing (very briefly) with "theories that explain our world," the author maintains that an example of "a general search for understanding ... is *Newton's* theory of relativity". This is a really bad hair day for Einstein!

Although this (2002) book is now slightly dated, this is an invaluable tourism development primer and also a good source of information, statistics and case studies. This book provides a sound basis for practitioners' "continuing professional development" and for courses on tourism development/planning. Lecturers would no doubt be pleased with all the chapter overviews, learning outcomes and review questions. Importantly, much of this information relates to Africa, including South and Southern Africa and an inter-disciplinary perspective prevails. We no longer have to place such reliance on northern authors for our enlightenment.

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