

## BOOK REVIEW

### **The Study of Tourism: foundations from psychology**

*Philip L. Pearce, editor (2011). Emerald*

One of the typical signs of the maturity of a discipline, such as tourism studies, is the publication of memoirs written by the "founding fathers", who reflect on the evolution of their academic field, as well as their own long and productive careers. Indeed, *The Study of Tourism: foundations from psychology* is a second collection of autobiographies authored by prominent tourism scholars, following *The Study of Tourism: anthropological and sociological beginnings* (2007, edited by Dennison Nash). As implied from the titles, while the former book focused on the contribution of anthropology and sociology scholars who played a momentous role in the formation and progress of the multidisciplinary tourism social science, the current book presents the personal account of scholars whose academic perspective originated from psychology and other related fields. Specifically, ten selected researchers from North America (John D. Hunt, Stanley C. Plog, Abraham Pizam, Seppo E. Iso-Ahola, Joseph T. O'Leary and John C. Crofts), Europe (Josef A. Mazanec and Ton van Egmond) and Australasia (Philip L. Pearce and Chris Ryan) outline their career histories, from their early days as young students to their current established and prestigious status as influential figures in tourism scholarship.

The captivating autobiographies presented in the book are rich in detail regarding the scholars' long academic journey, as well as the lessons which each contributor derived from his experience. Many of these accounts include highly personal tales and anecdotes, which stress the dominant factors leading to a successful academic career, such as the vital role of mentors and the support from significant others and colleagues. In addition, the autobiographies consist of numerous insights with regards to the design of a successful tourism academic career. For instance, sabbaticals turned out as making a notable contribution to many of the scholars, as it provided them with opportunities to be exposed to other academic institutions and scholars, thereby broadening their perspective on tourism and allowing them to gain an interest in unfamiliar



areas of inquiry within the realm of tourism. More broadly, it appears from the accounts that in order to sustain a high level of productivity and creativity throughout a prolonged career, a tourism scholar must remain curious and enthusiastic about tourism: the scholar ought to see him/herself as an "eternal student"; i.e. to constantly learn and educate him/herself about the field of study, including understanding innovative research methodologies and familiarizing him/herself with recent developments in the industry.

First and foremost, the paper is likely to attract the attention of researchers who wish to track the career history of well-known scholars who have made unique contributions to their field of study. In this regard, the autobiographies help humanizing "names" (as was accurately phrased by the editor) that appeared on so many groundbreaking academic articles and books within the tourism literature. There is a natural curiosity to learn about the long, challenging and often circuitous route taken by the scholars who were among the few who founded the rising field of tourism studies. It is particularly intriguing for "Generation T" scholars (i.e., those who graduated from tourism programs or other related fields) to hear the stories of those whose academic journey originated in traditional disciplines, such as psychology. Understanding the many pitfalls and barriers those early founders encountered in their pioneering pathway as tourism scholars, especially in their efforts to establish tourism studies as a legitimate academic field of study, is likely to arouse feelings of appreciation among those who are growing as part of the current respectful state of the discipline of tourism.

Another interest group that might find this book useful is graduate students, who are considering an academic career as tourism scholars. The detailed autobiographies and the unique perspective of their authors allow students to reflect about the suitability of such a career, with all its advantages and drawbacks, to their personal aspirations and prospects for the future. Those who wish to pursue such a distinctive career will find in the book numerous valuable suggestions on how to become an effective tourism researcher. To name a few examples, nurturing professional relationships with other researchers around the world, as well as creating tight cooperation with the tourism industry and governmental agencies in research and consulting projects, clearly emerged from the autobiographies as playing critical roles towards accomplishing academic career goals. Interestingly, being a devoted tourist yourself – constantly becoming familiar with diverse geographical regions, people and cultures – was also pointed out in some accounts as an essential source of intellectual inspiration and "replenishment".

Overall, the editor designed an effective collection of autobiographical chapters that provide the readers with the opportunity to take an unusual look at the academic (an in many cases also the private) life of some of the prominent founders of the discipline of tourism studies. As one would expect, despite its merits the book has its limitations. For instance, as was openly acknowledged by the editor, the absence of women scholars in the current compilation is a shortcoming that prevents the readers from gaining a possibly unique female perspective on having a tourism academic career. Nonetheless, the autobiographies stimulate great interest, and in many cases constitute a valuable source of practical wisdom for tourism scholars at different stages of their academic careers.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that the book raises some fundamental questions as to the future of the field of tourism studies: are the present "Generation T" scholars, who hold a growing number of positions in academic tourism departments, likely to have a similar impact and reach similar achievements in tourism scholarship as those whose academic career originated in long established disciplines, such as psychology? Or could it be that their lack of educational experience in a deep-rooted traditional field of study might prevent them from significantly advancing tourism studies further by developing innovative concepts and ideas? Perhaps these questions can be satisfactorily examined once "Generation T" scholars contribute their own accounts in a future compilation of autobiographical stories. In any case, as noted by Abe Pizam in his chapter, the ultimate contemporary challenge faced by tourism scholars from all backgrounds, is to establish a respectful independent discipline in which innovative theories, concepts and methodologies are developed within, rather than borrowed from traditional disciplines and simply applied to tourism settings. Owing to the pathway paved by the pioneering tourism scholars, this task seems within reach today more than ever.

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