

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Tourism in Turbulent Times- Towards Safe Experiences for Visitors**

*Wilks, J., Pendergast, D. & Leggat, P., editors (2006). Elsevier  
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Amsterdam*

This volume represents a growing academic interest in one of the most evident concerns of the global tourism industry – the issue of safety and security of tourists and tourist destinations. Apparently, there is also growing concern about personal safety and security by potential tourists who tend to put (mainly after September 11, 2001) more emphasis on safety and risk considerations when looking at their preferred type, mode and place of tourism on their next holiday trip. The various book chapters and its layout reflect on this dual concern both theoretically and practically. Moreover, they challenge the lack of success risk management stories in the literature. Most of the body of knowledge written on tourism and security only documents risk and threats on tourism, while avoiding practical information on how to eliminate, or at least mitigate them. Thus, as indicated by one of the Editors, Jeff Wilks, the industry still faces lack of adequate risk reduction policies based on cooperation, partnerships, pre-defined plans and proper management programs (p. 12-15).

The first section is dedicated to various aspects of health risk and its relation to travel and tourism. Thus, P. Leggat defines the field of travel medicine and the main issues to be discussed under this title. This is followed by a far less discussed issue but no less important – the aspect of travel insurance (by Leggat & Aitken). This highly practical chapter is an excellent guide to those unfamiliar with the importance of travel insurance, should travelers run into trouble. Wilder-Smith's chapter which follows, zooms into the story of the SARS pandemic which started in 2002 and which caused a severe health-induced global tourism crisis. The section concludes with a chapter (by Schmierer & Jackson) on



impacts of health problems on a local level. Using the case of Victoria, Australia, the authors show how intensity of tourist activities and seasonality is linked with the level of application for local health services by tourists staying in this small resort town.

The second section deals with general topics concerning safety and security. The first two chapters in this section (by Tarlow) deal in a very descriptive and theoretical manner with the issues of terrorism and crime. Being largely theoretical in nature, the author's review of the literature is very limited and far from contributing new insights into the issues of risk management and risk reduction (as the editors promise to do in their introductory chapter). The subsequent chapter on travel and tourism legal issues (by Grant, Mason, Khan & Davis) is much more in line with the book's aim and a real asset to the body of knowledge. Not much has been written on this aspect, and as we know, many countries lack adequate legislation coverage of services provided by the tourist industry, which aim to protect the safety and security of travelers. Specht's chapter on natural disaster management is a concise summary of most of the relevant issues to be discussed under this title. It is a pity, though, that only towards the end of the chapter is the discussion directed towards the implications of natural disasters on the tourism industry. Chapter ten portrays another less discussed risk issue within tourism, safety and security literature – food safety and hygiene. In an in depth and comprehensive review (by Pendergast) the chapter explains how vulnerable tourists are with regard to the food they consume while on holiday. The chapter does not leave the reader with theories only, and goes into practical recommendations and management solutions on how to mitigate this kind of risk. Using the case of New Zealand's and Scotland's adventure tourism Chapter eleven (Bently & Page) zooms into the issue of tourists' injuries by looking at its characteristics, magnitude, and management implications.

The third section looks into safety issues related to adventure tourism from various perspectives. It starts in Chapter twelve with a concise general review of the interplay between outdoor adventure tourism and risk management (Morgan and Dimmock). It then provides, in Chapter thirteen, a US Park Ranger's review of this interplay in US National Parks (Heggie). The next two chapters deal with safety in water based adventure activities – diving tourism (Coxon) and surfing (Morgan). Both portray the major challenges facing all stakeholders in these activities with respect to safety and risk management.

Section four, which concludes this volume, adds an interesting dimension by dealing with organizational efforts to educate, manage and

regulate tourism safety through international, government and industry initiatives. Thus, Chapter sixteen shows the ongoing commitment and involvement of the UNWTO to safety and security in tourism (Wilks & Handszuh). Chapter seventeen (Wilks & Al-Mubarak) takes the organizational and institutional aspects of tourism safety to a country level. The authors indicate how the government of Saudi Arabia developed a framework for tourism safety and security based on partnership across public and private sectors. As happened in the case of Saudi Arabia, the following two chapters deal with event-induced projects and initiatives to guarantee tourists risk free holidays. Thus, Chapter eighteen (Yates) discusses the ramifications of the SARS epidemic and how PATA through "Project Phoenix" made efforts to regain consumers' confidence in the health safety of PATA's destinations. Chapter nineteen (Roach & Kemish), following the bombings in Bali, shows and assesses how Australia dealt with this crisis from organizational and functional perspectives. Chapter twenty (Parfitt) takes the case of the Public Liability Crisis in Queensland, Australia and shows how insurance issues are related to risk, safety and to consequent tourism crisis. Chapter twenty one (Beirman) also discusses the issue of travel insurance, but from a different perspective and with relation to the role and impact of travel advisories on both the industry and tourists' perception of risk.

Chapter twenty two, which concludes this volume (Wilks), wraps up the major lessons from this book. These are that safety and security in tourism should be regarded as part of the tourist product quality; that the responsibility for tourists' safety should be a shared one between public and private sectors; that partnerships are a key factor in enhancing safety and security for tourists; risk management should be further developed to better facilitate crisis management if a major catastrophe takes place.

There is no doubt that this comprehensive and in-depth review of a large variety of case studies and perspectives included in this book makes it a valuable contribution to the study of tourism and safety. This volume shows once more the centrality of safety and risk considerations both among consumers and through all levels of providers of the tourist product. Consequently, this book is an important reference and highly recommended source for academics, students and practitioners alike.

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