

2050—TOMORROW’S TOURISM

By Ian Yeoman, with Rebecca Tan Li Yu, Michelle Mars, and Mariska Wouters. Channel View Publications <www.channel-viewpublications.com> 2012, xvi + 258 pp. (figures, chapter learning points, bibliography, index), \$49.95 Pbk. ISBN: 978 18 4541301 9

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Scenarios contemplating the future of tourism in 2050 are center stage in this publication. The authors position this endeavor within the academic research field of futures studies from which they apply the scenario method of narrative stories with a science fiction paradigm for futures thinking. Having 2050 as the scope for this, Ian Yeoman makes a giant leap into a longer term future. As many tourism decisions require a long timeframe to make them a reality, there is a strong argument in favor of looking so far ahead. Surprisingly, tourism futures research is under-represented within the field, although the future of tourism is of increasing interest to theorists and practitioners.

Identifying drivers of change is pivotal to scenario development and planning. The authors give a predominant role to them in the book’s content and structure. The key question is, “can humankind adapt to the forthcoming drivers of ageing populations, peak oil, or climate change and what does this all mean for tourism” (p. 4)? To address this and other questions concerning tourism in 2050, 12 chapters present scenarios written to “evoke thinking and debate, in which readers draw their own conclusions” (p. 8). The authors structure the book in three parts: wealth, technology, and resources. Wealth is seen as one of the key determinants of tourism and three chapters present scenarios, statistics, and trends that will shape the future of tourism demand, markets, and consumption. Technological changes that affect tourism are considered by presenting scenarios related to tourism already of prominence in a destination, such as rugby in New Zealand, sex tourism in Amsterdam, or the meetings industry in Singapore. In the final theme, the future of resources integral to tourism—food, water, oil, and the environment are considered. The scenarios presented focus on four aspects of tourism supply and three further city case studies: climate change for urban metropolis Los Angeles, food tourism in Seoul, hotel design in Shanghai, and transportation.

The breadth of coverage is a major strength of the book in terms of geographic settings and aspects of tourism integral to both supply and demand perspectives. Some overlap among the themes is acknowledged (Figure 1.1, p. 8), but structurally this could have been emphasized with more use of cross-referencing across themes and chapters. With the limited cross-referencing provided and some index listings not as comprehensive as one may desire, the reader may notice and even be irritated by the repetition of some content.

Scenario planning, with a foundation of drivers of change, is an appropriate method for exploring the future of tourism, but there are many different methods for conducting scenario planning. The technique is applied here with some variation. Sometimes it is a single-point narrative; in other instances, multiple scenarios

are developed around pessimistic and optimistic circumstances. On rare occasions, the scenarios contradict such as whether the middle classes that have been a driving force of economic growth in many destinations will disappear or increase. Other drivers are strongly argued and convincingly presented such as a new world order of a global shift in consumer behavior powers from West to East. Within the analysis, some readers may consider the lack of tourism theory another limitation as only two consumer behavior-related theories are cited—Maslow's (1998) hierarchy of needs and Plog's (1974) typology of tourists.

These quibbles aside, the authors identify drivers of change and construct scenarios with considerable authority and a wealth of supporting evidence. We are not left in an abstract world. Rather, scenarios and the drivers of change are presented as a marriage of knowledge from academia and industry. This is then overlaid with futures thinking from the science fiction genre of selected Hollywood films and television programs, used here for making the conceptual leaps into a future 40 years hence.

The book is principally addressed to the reader as a user. It presents knowledge and scenarios about the future of tourism in 2050 that, from the outset, are intended to challenge and provoke the reader. Readers are invited to be users, form their own conclusions, and build their own scenarios. Hence the extent, to which the purpose of the book is achieved, will be determined by the reader. Effective scenarios, according to the book's authors, "must have meaning and relevance to the key players... [and] be plausible to stakeholders... [while] at the same time... challenge the minds of these same members" (pp. 7–8). For each reader though, there will be places where the analysis falls short, or the scenario does not register as fully believable for one or more reasons. This should not be considered a shortcoming of the book. Rather, scenario-planning questions that have been asked elsewhere suggest this is to be expected. Schoemaker (1995) asks, do scenarios work? and whether one can benefit from scenarios without actively participating in their development? In answering these questions, he concludes that scenarios developed by others may have more surprise value or learning value, but perhaps lower credibility.

The intended audience for this book, according to the authors, is anyone interested in the future. More specifically one could say this book is recommended for anyone interested in tourism futures from an integrated supply and demand perspective, and especially those interested in using scenario planning as a method for contemplating the future of tourism.

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