

From heritage to terrorism: regulating tourism in an age of uncertainty, by Brian Simpson and Cheryl Simpson, Abingdon, Routledge, 2011, 195 pp., £80 (hbk), ISBN 978-0-415-42559-9

This text seeks to make a critical examination of the law and its role in shaping and defining both tourism and the tourist experience. Emerging from the discipline legal studies, the text ‘...is an attempt to explore how law thinks about tourism’ and seeks to be interdisciplinary. Consequently it is a welcome addition to an interesting and important area of the literature, even though it was a challenging task for a law professor and an archaeology lecturer to attempt, especially within the confines of a short text format.

The authors embrace the position they adopt, which is to ‘... stand outside the discipline of tourism studies attempting to discern the state of play in that [intersection of Tourism and the Law]’. They then go on to establish a coherent structure for the text, in which the specific chapters are arranged within four main parts, which together form a well-considered narrative arc. As such, the reader will not be daunted by the drier topic areas, or the breadth of the authors’ ambitions, but will find it a very accessible text. As with many texts that have evolved from university courses, however, not all of the text’s stated aspirations with regard to breadth and depth are matched by the chapter contents.

Given the book’s aspirations and the nascent nature of this area of the literature, this review will benchmark the text against the expectations of critical thinking. With regard to the trustworthiness of the evidence provided, the authors have marshalled an interesting set of resources, ranging from legislation and codes of conduct, to the writings of well-respected authors and commentators. Only in the chapter on cultural tourists does a prevalence of references from the 1990s constrain the arguments being put forward. The bias towards Australian and UK legislation and policies, alongside global initiatives, is wrestled with creditably. While many readers would surely have preferred a stronger platform for transferring the exemplars and arguments to their own legal frameworks and circumstances, one must recognise the authors’ effort in providing as strong a framework as they do.

In terms of the text supporting the authors’ central arguments, the themes are fashioned with skill and communicated well. As with many texts that have evolved from courses, the central theme can appear more linear and coherent to the authors than it does to the readers, but the text is none the worse for steering a straight and steady course through complex waters. The authors address

many of the issues that students, tutors and practitioners will already have been considering and provide an effective bridge between these issues and related legislation and policy. The book ends with a focused set of the authors' conclusions, themed around such issues as the 'legal silence' and questioning the right to travel.

The authors are likely to fare less well in convincing significant elements of their readership that their evidence does not also lead to alternative interpretations and perspectives. Always a challenge in less-developed areas of the literature, it is still a potential that the authors could have taken greater care to guard against. A lengthy case study on how demolition and redevelopment impacted the built heritage of Brisbane notes that this occurs elsewhere but does not really identify what differentiates that period in that city from others. Indeed, it can be argued that other analyses have provided more insightful debates about managing the competing tensions thrown up by tectonic shifts within city spaces, or the extinction of the commercial logic for certain individual buildings. Similarly, the notion that increased surveillance '... has been accepted by the general public as a necessary tool ...' may well prompt alternative perspectives among different sections of the readership.

Finally, are other aspects of the debate omitted? Given the emphasis on visitor-resident inequality, state policies, terrorism and safety, sex tourism and urban evolution, readers might turn to such texts as Merrill (2009) or Endy (2004). The first of these, especially, offers an accessible and insightful critique of many of the tensions between tourism and the law, or state policies, playing out over several decades and across a range of countries, within a diverse global region. Merrill's approach also enables him to cover such areas as corruption (or criminal organisations and individuals), which the Simpsons do not really develop, while also focusing in on the personal realities for investors, tourists, employees and locals with a sharper focus on the broader tourism context.

Overall, the authors have identified and addressed an important area, while their marshalling of resources and structuring of the key arguments deserves recognition. More demanding readers are likely, however, to pick-over the alternative conclusions that might have been drawn; they would also surely have hoped that the interdisciplinary approach that the book adopts would have brought in works similar to Merrill (2009). Nevertheless, this is a thought-provoking text and, in combination with others, should be of benefit to most readers.

References

Endy, C, (2004) *Cold War holidays: American tourism in France*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Merrill, D. (2009) *Negotiating paradise: US tourism and empire in Twentieth-century Latin America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

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