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A Book Review:
Archipelago Tourism: Policies and Practices*

Islands have long captured the interest of tourism researchers; their very insularity makes them ideal ‘laboratories’ through which to study the impacts and implications of visitor industry development. Unfortunately, however, there is a tendency to view islands in isolation - removed from the broader archipelagic context that often characterises them. This edited volume provides a timely reminder of the fact that tourism in archipelagos exhibits its own set of dynamics, and that these need to be reflected in both policy and practice.

The opening two chapters of the book provide the context and setting for the case based discussions that follow. In presenting underlying themes and providing key definitions, these initial chapters lay the necessary ground work for the reader. The inclusion of an engaging series of anecdotes and personal experiences make for a lively and accessible start to the volume.

Embracing a geographical rather than thematic structure, the book is organised according to the bodies of water in which the respective archipelago cases are located: Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific and Indian. The diversity of the case locations is matched by the range of their socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental characteristics. The cases cover, for example, developed and developing economies and include regions, independent nations and archipelagos that represent just small parts of larger national systems.

While the diversity of archipelago case studies could potentially lead to a lack of coherence, the editor does a good job in bringing out from his contributors a range of cross cutting themes. The importance of transport links in developing and sustaining tourism and related economic activity is highlighted in the Aegean Archipelago, the Azores, the Faroe Islands and the Caribbean. In each instance the reader is reminded of the critical inter-related issues of transport costs, reliability and the importance of effective collaboration and communication between stakeholders.

The balance of power between the core and periphery within archipelagos is a theme that features in many of the case studies. Relationships of domination and sub-ordination characterise, for example, decisions over transport development (super ferries in Hawaii) and also broader marketing, branding and product development initiatives and strategies (Malta/Goza).

The dangers and disadvantages of pursuing long term unbalanced tourism development in archipelagic settings are highlighted in several cases, including Cape Verde and the Maldives. Rather than presenting a homogenous image and concentrating development in one or two settings, it is vital to spread tourism's benefits, where appropriate, by presenting the points of difference and unique sense of place that characterise each 'link' within an island chain. Such an approach can enhance the ability of broader national marketing campaigns to mesh with the needs and desires of local communities, while also opening up a more diverse range of experiences to the visitor.

The Maldives case shows the need to focus on cultural identity and diversity as part of a multiple-island visitor experience, an approach that can also encourage the maintenance and even resurgence of traditional traits and skills. The broader value of being able to offer multiple and contiguous island destinations in the same visitor experience is also highlighted in the diverse cases of the Channel Islands and Fiji. The latter case features the Mamanuca and Yasawa Groups in order to make a particularly important point about the value that inter and intra-archipelagic collaboration can add to local economic development processes.

The book concludes with a clarion call for a greater recognition and understanding of the regional imbalances that characterise many of the world's archipelagos. While an overarching theme of 'mainstreaming territorial injustice' is raised, it would have been good to see a little more discussion earlier in the volume about how such a lofty aim might be achieved in practical policy terms, and to see stronger links in this respect to the individual case material.

Overall this edited volume represents a fascinating read that opens new perspectives on island tourism. The mixture of first-hand academic research and experience, combined with a real passion for the subject matter that shines through in all the contributions, makes this book both accessible and valuable to university researchers, policy makers and practitioners. As a reader I was left feeling largely satisfied by the diverse array of information provided, the only thing I would have perhaps liked to see is a greater focus on the demand side, in other words a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the benefits that tourists associate with multi-island archipelagic experiences. One hopes that this may be a topic that the editor will address in a follow up volume.

*Baldacchino, Godfrey (ed.). (2015). *Archipelago Tourism: Policies and Practices*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd (xxiii + 260 pp.). ISBN: 978-1-4724-2430-3 [hbk]