

Tourism and national parks: international perspectives on development, histories and change

Georgette Leah Burns

Environmental Futures Centre and Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University

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I have to confess I like an edited book that has a conclusion. Too often, a collection of chapters such as this ends abruptly with no attempt to draw together an overarching summary of the topic. That is where this book is different.

A further difference emerges as the reader delves into the richness of the many and varied case studies included in this volume. Despite claims of occupying a 'distinct niche', it may initially appear to be just another text entitled 'tourism and national parks'. Books on this topic have been common in the last decade (for example, Butler and Boyd 2000; Eagles and McCool 2002), along with the near synonymous topic of 'tourism and protected areas' (Bushell and Eagles 2007; Eagles, McCool, and Haynes 2002). Clearly though, research in this area is broad, necessarily encompassing many perspectives and of intellectual and practical interest enough to support this book and more like it.

This book's niche lies in its promise of an international perspective. It lives up to that promise by taking a comparative approach which focuses on recognizing the separate evolutionary process of national parks globally and seeing them as a series of models, with clear similarities but also important differences (p. 11). This is achieved through 21 chapters, thematically ordered into six parts, and the breadth of topics covered ensures this is not an academically superficial undertaking.

Part I introduces the national park concept, and discusses national park establishment, evolution and relationships with tourism. The five chapters encompassed here are all written by Frost and Hall, and

focus on parks as an American invention that has spread and evolved internationally. These chapters serve as a lengthy introduction, as well as a substantial section in their own right, by the editors and effectively set the scene for the remainder of the book's content.

Part II covers New World perspectives, in contrast to Part III's Old World perspectives. Of the five chapters in Part II, two cases come from American national parks (Mark, and Mark and Hall), one from the Canadian park system (Boyd and Butler) and two from Australia (White and King, and Young). The five chapters in Part III include two from England (Sharpley, and Crouch, Marson, Shirt, Tresidder and Wiltshier), one from Spain (Medina) and two from Sweden (Reinius, and Fredman and Sandell). These 10 chapters work well together to provide a very comprehensive picture of the state of national parks in the Western world.

Moving away from Eurocentric national parks, Part IV delves into parks in the developing world, with the three excellent examples here coming from parks in Indonesia (Cochrane), China (Honggang and Chaozhi) and South Africa (Carruthers). I would like to have seen more non-Western examples included, to balance the international perspective that is a highlight of this book. The paucity of such cases supports a call for further research in these regions.

The two chapters in Part V take a different perspective of national parks as more than just nature-focused phenomena. Here Zeppel, in chapter 19, explores parks globally as cultural landscapes that necessarily incorporate the desires of indigenous people as well tourism and conservation ideals. Daniels, Harmon, Park and Brayley, in chapter 20, take us back to North America to the symbolic world of the National Mall in Washington.

Part VI is the authors' concluding chapter and, having said at the outset that I like a good conclusion, I would have enjoyed this section more if there had been further integration of the chapters preceding it. An ambitious undertaking, I know, but it would have added welcome richness to the icing on what is already a very substantial and impressive cake.

Part of a series by Routledge on 'contemporary geographies of leisure, tourism and mobility', this book has obvious appeal to a wide audience of scholars interested in national parks, and tourism,

and their overlaps. It also offers data of substance for those researching peripheral topics such as recreation and leisure studies, and environmental conservation. The book is a very welcome addition to a popular field of inquiry.

References

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3. Eagles, P. and McCool, S. 2002. Tourism in national parks and protected areas: Planning and management, New York: CABI Publishing.
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