



*Worldwide Destinations: The Geography of Travel and Tourism*, 4th edn, Brian Boniface & Chris Cooper, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 2005. x + 518pp., tables, figs, index. ISBN 0 7506 5997 1

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Boniface and Cooper's latest edition of *Worldwide Destinations* is produced as two volumes, the first (which I shall refer to as the text) an update of material from previous editions, including a comprehensive coverage of the basic elements of tourism geography for 'every country in the world'. The second, the casebook, is just that, providing a series of case studies of issues and places that characterise the process of tourism generally as well as country-focused studies that add depth to the material in the main book. The two books together are firmly marketed to the introductory undergraduate end of tertiary learning and add to the wealth of material upon which course coordinators, tutors and students in tourism studies can draw. The geographical emphasis sets the work apart from what is a relatively crowded educational resource environment and reflects an ongoing compartmentalisation of the field.

The books are formatted in the contemporary popular style of introductory texts, with heavy use of bullets, boxes, tables and easily accessible bite-sized chunks of information. As such they lend themselves to students grazing upon topics in a kind of 'fast food' approach to tourism knowledge. A distinction needs to be made here between texts that attempt to foster some sense of contextual understanding and those that supply resource information. The texts under review fall into the latter category but to my mind this style of text will always be a substitute for 'the real thing'.

The text in particular suffers from an excessive breadth at the expense of depth. The authors take a singularly spatial approach to geography and its touristic context with a focus on places, transport and climate as significant elements of geographical analysis. Given the tourism focus this would seem logical but the absence of cultural, social and political geographies is immediately apparent. Geography is of course the



broadest of disciplines yet the spatial and functional interpretation given in these books emphasises the 'what' and 'where' questions of tourism rather than the more important 'how' and 'why'. In my opinion students need to develop a sense of how to tackle the second series of questions more than they do the first. As Butler (1980) has demonstrated time and again, places are always changing but the tourism process remains largely the same. Unfortunately the 'all embracing framework' the authors attempt to present falls short on a number of levels.

The text is divided into two parts, the first of which, the 'Elements of the Geography of Travel and Tourism', focuses on measures, spatialities and types of tourism, following a fairly conventional supply and demand approach dominated by modernist interpretations of the development context. The focus is very firmly on 'tourism', as you would expect, but what also needs to be discussed is the way tourism reflects a range of wider processes that operate around and through it. This is a common problem characteristic of contemporary tourism texts, as if the authors are wary of delving into the context too deeply for fear that their subject will become secondary to other disciplinary perspectives. The shape and nature of tourism in the developing world, for example, has more to do with historical and contemporary processes of global economic and political power than it does with climate, demographics and topography. Students will need to search elsewhere to develop this understanding.

Other topics covered in the opening chapter include typologies of tourism resources, interpretations of various forms of demand, transportation developments and a brief introduction to planning issues such as carrying capacity and classification of resources. The coverage, as noted earlier, is admirable for its breadth but lacks any real depth. In Part one, for example, heritage tourism receives but one paragraph, as also does the issue of resource conflict.

Aside from these deficiencies the chapters would do well to include references to key material that will encourage students' skills in secondary research and wider reading, rather than implying that understanding can be developed in the confines of a 'one stop shop'. The imperative for illustrating issues by case studies at the end of each chapter is to some



extent obviated by the provision of a casebook but surprisingly, there are no references to the case studies that should logically correspond. The casebook's introductory comment emphasises the relationship between itself and the main text but nowhere are there the sort of linkages that would marry the two. The two-book style, we are told, is an attempt to manage the wealth of material emerging from an issue/case approach but at present the separation leaves the first book lacking in examples and the second lacking in context.

Part two of the main text is a destination-based series of country profiles providing basic information on the characteristics of tourism attractions, markets and other developments. Often a supply–demand format is adopted for each although the structure is moulded to the destination under study. The book's preface notes a Eurocentrism to earlier editions and no doubt the 'every country' coverage is an attempt to deflect some of this criticism. Britain and its various parts are given around 50 of the 400 or so pages of Part two, and Britain and Western Europe combined account for around 150 pages. This suggests that perhaps that part of the world is a target market for the text, but also can be seen to focus attention where touristic activity is highest. The focus on 'tourism' per se can be seen, for example, in the profile of Finland, which identifies forests and lakes as significant tourism resources together with the development of the Santa Claus village but nowhere mentions the complementary role tourism plays in the economy next to communications technology industries largely driven by Nokia. At the same time, the Northern focus leaves other highly significant tourism destinations looking somewhat underrepresented, Thailand for example receiving two pages of coverage, Cambodia, fifteen lines. Readers in the South Pacific (Pacific islands appear in the Australasia section) are reminded of the fact that the region receives a mere 0.15% of global tourism arrivals by the two sentences given to Tonga and a single paragraph to Fiji. One has to wonder what value the text is trying to deliver when such token coverage is rendered virtually meaningless by its superficial treatment. The earlier comment about processes being more important elements of learning than places is most apparent here.



The casebook at first glance appears to offer all that is missing from the main text. Although there are some initial cases on selective tourism issues such as consumer change and the emergence of 'new tourists', the place-based emphasis remains dominant. The casebook, which incidentally has no Pacific case studies, features discussion points and questions, which will prove useful for both group and individual learning environments. That these case studies allow additional depth sets the casebook apart from the main text, yet again there is an underlying suggestion that the reader should consider the cases as distinct and necessarily separated from each other, rather than consider processes that run across and through the various destinations. This is where the art of geography is to be found, a perspective that finds its natural 'destination' in the study of tourism. Overall the casebook is definitely the more meaningful of the two volumes and could offer some real value to student learning if given appropriate support by teachers and courses, a level of support the first book struggles to deliver.

Despite these caveats, together the books should make useful *supplementary* resource material for those needing basic information about a number of destinations. In this context the geographical aspect could provide a ready if limited complement to other social science, business or technical tourism studies. To their credit, the volumes are well indexed by topic and place and include a useful list of up to date resources including international agency reports, websites and organisations.

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### Reference

Butler, R, 1980, 'The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: implications for management of resources', *Canadian Geographer* 24:5-12.

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Stephen Doorne  
*University of the South Pacific*

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