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BOOK REVIEW

Luigi Fusco Girard and Peter Nijkamp (Eds.), *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development* – Ashgate, 2009

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At present cultural tourism strategies and policies have to find new ways to respond the current challenges regarding not only environmental but also cultural sustainability so as to ensure a correct approach to the complex relationship between sustainable development and tourist industry.

The book entitled *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development* represents a valuable response to these challenges, aiming at offering a novel overview of various issues involved with the evaluation of cultural tourism and sustainable development in tourist destinations.

The editors – Professor Luigi Fusco Girard from the University of Naples “Federico II” and Professor Peter Nijkamp from the Free University of Amsterdam, prominent scholars in the world’s regional science have attracted in this project a series of researchers from North America and Europe who have provided a great collection of studies at the interface of tourism and culture in cities.

The book has four parts, addressing “Tourism Development as a Sustainable Strategy” (Part I), followed by “Policies on Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Tourism” (Part II), “Case Studies” (Part III) and “New Departures for Evolution” (Part IV).

The first chapter in Part I, entitled “Tourism, Heritage and Cultural Sustainability: Three ‘Golden Rules’” and written by **David Throsby** reveals the principles that provide the framework for developing management strategies and policies. These rules emphasize the need for right values, right sustainability principles and right analytical methods.

Geoffrey Wall, in “Tourism and Development: Towards Sustainable Outcomes” points out the economic, environmental, socio-cultural, institutional and political dimensions of heritage and heritage tourism and suggests several means for narrowing the gap between policy and planning and the practice of tourism planning. They refer to the setting of appropriate goals and objectives, the specification of proper concepts of sustainable development, the use of measurable indicators and a monitoring system as well as the participation of stakeholders.

The next chapter, “Sustainable Development and Tourism: Opportunities and Threats to Cultural Heritage from Tourism”, signed by **Harry Coccossis** approaches tourism as a complex of economic activities, with multiple linkages to other activities but also with many impacts o economy, society

and environment. The author identifies as one of the most challenging and demanding tasks the mobilization of societies within tourist destinations to review the course of development pursued and to steer it towards desirable patterns.

The final chapter in Part I, “Valuing Urban Cultural Heritage” is authored by **Patrizia Riganti and Peter Nijkamp**, who discuss the meaning and nature of urban cultural heritage and the currently available methods for its valuation in the context of sustainable city development. The authors propose a broader use of learning mechanisms based on comparative analysis and meta-analysis as a way of improving the existing analytical apparatus.

The first chapter in Part II, “Towards an Operational Framework for Policy and Planning”, written by **Christian Ost**, brings into discussion cultural economics, which covers most analytical or empirical heritage-related works, being developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century. These works can help to identify the best practices able to solve the problems pertaining to tourism policies.

In the next chapter **Giuliana Di Fiore** focuses on “Juridical and Political Tools for a Sustainable Development of Tourism”, supporting the idea that different sectors and actors, including social, economic and cultural ones, should be coordinated in order to avoid an increase in environmental degradation and a loss of local identity due to global comprehensive forces.

Antonio Saturniano discusses in his chapter “Cultural Heritage, Sustainable Tourism and Economic Development: A Proposal for Southern Italy” the role of tourism as a driving force for development. A case study from Southern Italy is proposed, examining the consistency and spatial distribution of cultural heritage and other infrastructures for tourism valorization.

In the last chapter of Part II, entitled “Sustainable Tourism, Renewable Energy and Transportation”, **Maria Giaoutzi, Christos Dionelis and Anastasia Stratigea** address the question of applying clean energy technologies in the tourist sector, followed by the role of transportation as means for reaching the goal of energy sustainable local tourism development.

Part III proposes a series of case studies revealing the importance of identifying and applying best practices in tourism management.

In “Local Government and Networking Trends Supporting Sustainable Tourism: Some Empirical Evidences” **Francesco Polese** emphasizes the fact that sustainable tourism networks may represent an effective organizational form and a positive cultural approach to destination management and territorial governance. They may promote a multidimensional development, able to strengthen the relational pattern among territorial entities so as to improve the valorization of resources and to promote competitive behaviour.

The next chapter, “Cultural Tourism, Sustainability and Regional Development: Experience from Romania” is authored by **Daniela Constantin and Constantin Mitrut**. They discuss the actual state and the perspectives of cultural tourism at national and regional level, proposing a series of reflections about the possibilities to enlarge the areas covered by the corresponding policies with new directions of investigation, in line with the advances in international knowledge and experience.

In “Tourism Sustainability and Economic Efficiency: A Statistical Analysis of Italian Provinces” **Maria Francesca Cracolici, Miranda Cuffaro and Peter Nijkamp** design and test a method for assessing tourism sustainability using proper statistical measures of efficiency. Thus, by using a theoretical background based on the concept of frontier production function they develop a suitable methodology to explore how efficiently Italian provinces utilize their available tourist resources.

Next, **Donatela Cialdea**’s “Valorisation Strategies for Archaeological Sites and Settings of Environmental Value: Lessons from the Adriatic Coast” proposes the creation of a protocol for territorial analysis by means of Geographical Information System and employs it for several test areas on the Molise coast in Italy, the coast of Split region and Dalmatia in Croatia and the coast of Middle Albania.

The purpose of **Ken Willis and Naomi Kinghorn**’s chapter entitled “Utility and Visitor Preferences for Attributes of Art Galleries” is to demonstrate the application of a choice experiment to an art gallery so as to estimate visitor preferences and utility for different sections or attributes within the art gallery. The results can offer useful information to curators in art galleries.

The first chapter in Part IV, “New Departures for Evaluation”, belongs to **Luigi Fusco Girard and Francesca Torrieri** and is entitled “Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Strategic Evaluations: Towards Integrated Approaches”. The authors focus on the contribution that evaluation can have to decision-making process, especially at strategic level. Various aspects of evaluation are considered in relation to the tourism sector, starting from the assessment of attractiveness capacity as a common aspect to a set of projects, plans and programmes in a competitive context.

Next, in “A Multicriteria Decision Support System for Tourism Planning: Restoring Roadman’s Houses in Sardinia”, **Andrea De Montis** approaches evaluation methods as tools for identifying the most fertile pathways for the strategic planning and development of integrated tourist activities. The case study refers to the abandoned roadman’s houses in Sardinian countryside, proposing a decision-support information system for the restoration management.

In **Patrizia Riganti**’s chapter, “From Cultural Tourism to Cultural E-Tourism: Issues and Challenges to Economic Valuation in the Information Era” the emphasis is put on the opportunities and challenges to economic valuation in the new context created by information and communication technologies as well as on the implications for new forms of cultural tourism such as e-tourism. As a result, the economic valuation shifts from valuation to e-valuation, the paper suggesting conjoined analysis and contingent valuation as appropriate tools in this respect.

The final contribution, “Evaluating Price Effects of Historic Preservation Policies: Landmark Preservation in Chicago 1990-1999”, provided by **Douglas Noonan**, presents new evidence on the role of heritage preservation policies in the city. Chicago is pointed out as a relevant example for competing interests in policy making, which induces a complication of evaluation issues in relation with externalities and spillovers.

The volume also includes a final, critical review chapter, “Culture, Tourism and Locality: Ways Forward”, written by **Luigi Fusco Girard and Peter Nijkamp** who highlight new directions of investigation in the research and planning focused on “local cultural resources, the challenges to tourism in a mobile world and the need to achieve a high quality environment at a local level” (p.9).

The whole book displays a plethora of exciting issues, many of them presenting high novelty degree, at the same time with innovative investigation methodologies and the best practices for future cultural conservation policy.

These distinctive features recommend the book to both researchers and policy makers interested to offer timely answers to the current challenges raised by cultural tourism in relation with the sustainability question at local community level.