



Book Review

Human Rights Issues in Tourism

Hashimoto, A., Härkönen, E., & Nkyi, E. (2021). Routledge. ISBN: 9781138491038 (cloth) US\$128.00; ISBN: 9781138491069 (paper) US\$37.56; ISBN: 9781351033862 (e-book) US\$37.56. 444 pages.

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Human Rights Issues in Tourism is a book that pushes people to think about the justice implications of travel, leisure, entertainment, and tourism. The purpose of this book is to advocate for more justice agencies and organizations to think of tourism as an issue that intersects with their own mandates. Hashimoto, Härkönen and Nkyi examine social justice, environmental justice, and Indigenous justice over 14 chapters. The introduction familiarizes the reader with the idea of human rights, including the existence of human rights organizations, the evolution of human rights as a concept, and core international human rights instruments such as the UN Charter and The International Bill of Rights, among other pieces of international law (p. 10). The authors argue these laws face the challenge of negotiating a line between the universalism of law and cultural specificities and relativism, which is an important subject that recurs throughout the book. In an interesting conceptual discussion, the authors differentiate between human rights, civil rights, and civil liberties (p. 18). They also provide context by elaborating on the challenge of navigating international law when it contrasts with domestic or national law.

The next few chapters continue to address conceptual issues. In Chapter 2, the authors consider the relationship between tourism enterprises and human rights by examining the evolution of human rights guidelines for corporations and state agencies. They argue that while human rights are somewhat legally enforceable, the jurisdiction for who is responsible for human rights can sometimes be a bit messy. In Chapter 3, the authors situate the issue of

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human rights in relation to sustainable development and sustainability, arguing there is a link between the protection of human rights and the discourse of various policies on sustainability (p. 65). The authors do not simply consider these matters from a human-centred point of view but also take the environment into consideration.

In Chapter 4, the authors suggest these matters are made more complex by the political dimension of tourism and policy. Nation-states often have laws that run counter to human rights, norms, and guidelines. The question of whether tourism is ethical or abides by human rights in a particular country always needs to be empirically situated. For example, one could consider tourism boycotts as a response to domestic or state policies or laws running against human rights trends (p. 91). These are difficult facets of the political landscape for tourism operators to navigate.

Then, beginning with Chapter 5, Hashimoto, Härkönen, and Nkyi begin to examine specific human rights issues emerging in relation to tourism. In Chapter 5, this takes the form of a focus on human security in relation to human rights and tourism, suggesting there are a number of ongoing security issues and conflicts in numerous tourism regions that perhaps contravene UN resolutions and reports, and yet tourism continues. This raises questions about whether a country should advocate against said tourism or whether tourists should make an ethical choice to avoid such locations (p. 124), which raises the question of whether responses to human rights issues should be individual or collective. In Chapter 6, the authors consider the issue of the right to privacy in relation to tourism, which pertains to the information that tourists share when they do travel, who they share it with, and to whom that information is then circulated. The authors suggest the issue of privacy is related to human rights (p. 143), although this argument is underdeveloped in the book.

In Chapter 7, the authors consider the issue of displacement in tourism, or how people are made to be mobile or removed from their homelands for tourist enterprise. For example, mega-events such as the Olympics often displace local people and create more inequality through gentrification (p. 164). Given that such events may have no regard for issues of equality, traveling to them has ethical and human rights implications that many tourists ignore. Another example could be Airbnb, which has become a part of tourism networks. One could argue that Airbnb is not good for local businesses (decreasing available long-term housing in rental markets, driving up costs of living in general). In some places, neighborhoods have organized against Airbnb or gentrification, and even adopted anti-tourism discourses and practices, recognizing the justice implications of these issues in ways that perhaps tourists do not. These practices also have a colonial dimension, as the authors note, insofar as travel and tourism have long been associated with colonialism and the imperialist tendencies of colonial countries. Another sort of displacement is a cultural displacement that occurs through the

globalization of capitalist commodities. All of these aspects of displacement raise important questions about justice.

In Chapter 8, the authors look at the issue of discrimination against tourists, which can reveal racial and ethnic dimensions of international travel and the persistence of racism (p. 191). The authors point out that discrimination can also occur due to perceptions of sex and gender, gender identity, ability or disability, and religious orientation. This shows that power relations in the landscape of tourism are not unidimensional. In Chapter 9, the authors suggest that an important issue in tourism is mobility. They suggest it signals the exercising of some kind of right to the extent that voluntary mobility could be conceived of as a human right. The authors also point out that forced mobility could reflect the violation of human rights. This intersects with surveillance insofar as mobility requires documentation to gain access and acceptance in certain jurisdictions. The authors also raise the question of the use of migrant labour in tourism practices and how forced mobility for some may intersect with voluntary mobility for others in ways that create injustice.

Building on this discussion in Chapter 10, the authors assess labour conditions in tourism and how labour standards connect to the idea of human rights. They raise the issue of child labour, especially in the creation of tourism products or souvenirs. In doing so, they highlight the labour that goes into the production of souvenirs as a key consideration when talking about the justice implications of tourism. In Chapter 11, Hashimoto, Härkönen and Nkyi expand the scope of the book beyond the merely human to consider the environment and the issue of environmental degradation. They argue that tourism can have an impact on the natural world in ways that may contravene principles of sustainability, leading to anthropogenic climate change and loss of biodiversity. People may travel to a region to view said biodiversity and in the process end up contributing to negative environmental changes (p. 272). Thus, the environmental movement, the authors suggest, should be concerned about tourism as a potential cause of climate change and global warming. Corporations and polluters also have a responsibility to protect the environment, and perhaps tourism could be an avenue for raising awareness about pollution and politicizing pollution.

In Chapter 12, the authors look at the rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to tourism, arguing tourism can impede Indigenous rights and sovereignty. The issue of settler colonialism is front and center in this chapter as is the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Hashimoto, Härkönen and Nkyi suggest that UNDRIP is not often a major concern for tourism operators, but tourism operators could do more politically and economically to address Indigenous sovereignty and rights to promote the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, there are many forms of tourism that involve the stereotyping of Indigenous Peoples. The authors examine the ethics and power relations of these kinds of events and spectacles.

In Chapter 13, the authors investigate sex tourism, or travel to certain destinations for consumption of sexual and erotic work. The authors discuss a variety of topics related to sex, tourism, commerce, and violence. They argue that issues of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are ones tourism scholars should take seriously.

To conclude the book, the authors argue COVID-19 is raising issues regarding tourism and rights insofar as tourists and travelers may convey the virus in certain settings, in ways that are damaging to human life and lead to death and suffering (p. 357). The authors are able to show this focus on human rights and tourism is one that has a lot of resonance, as well as applicability even at the time of writing when COVID-19 emerged. These authors were able to pivot and show their focus on human rights, justice, and tourism applies even when the whole world seems like it has changed.

Human Rights Issues in Tourism is a must-read for anyone engaged in tourism studies, leisure studies, travel studies, mobility studies, or the sociologies and geographies of these issues. However, the book does have a few gaps. For example, the authors do not focus much on dark tourism or penal tourism and their ethical implications. These are forms of tourism that entail travel to sites such as places of genocide, killing fields, places of war, and battle and death, sometimes for entertainment and amusement or perhaps for education. Such places have a lot to do with human rights, from learning about human rights to enacting human rights, and even advancing the discourse of human rights. The authors have missed an opportunity here to extend their argumentation by not looking at dark tourism and penal tourism. Chapter 13 focuses on youths involved in sex tourism, which would be more accurate to frame as sexual exploitation of children. I found that Chapter 13 conflated sex tourism with child sexual exploitation (pp. 332-333), although the point that much sex tourism exploits youths is an important justice issue. I also thought the authors could have done more to look at the issue of sanctions and tourism. The focus of the book is legal or law-centric insofar as the UN and the human rights instruments they offer are the focal point. However, sanctions are used a lot in countries from Cuba to Iran, and examination of the intersection of tourism, sanctions, and justice could have been interesting and important. Canadians love going to Cuba to lay on the beach but how many of these same tourists have protested the US-led blockade and sanctions against Cuba, which has lasted for 60 years? This highlights another striking absence in this book, namely justice groups and movement organizations that engage in advocacy for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against countries like Israel over human rights violations of Palestinians, for example. This is another crucial area to explore under this umbrella of human rights and tourism.

Despite these gaps, *Human Rights Issues in Tourism* is an excellent book. There are numerous concept boxes and case study boxes that help guide the reader and show the usefulness and applicability of the book's ideas. The case study boxes bring the argumentation of the authors to life. I recommend

this book and I will definitely be using it in my research and teaching on tourism and the issue of justice.