

Book review

Space Tourism. The Elusive Dream

Edited by Erik Cohen and Sam Spector 2019

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Authenticity (Rickly, 2019) and environment sustainability (Pulido-Fernandez et al., 2019) are both key contributors of tourism growth. *Space Tourism. The Elusive Dream* presents an authentic and still to be explored form of tourism. That said, space tourism, because of its cost, is currently accessible to a very limited number of tourists. Space tourism falls under the category of special interest tourism (SIT). SIT occurs “when the traveller’s motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings” (Trauer, 2006, p. 186).

The design of the book is particularly suitable for tourism students and futurologists specialising in travel and tourism, as it contributes to the growth in research and discussions in tourism futures and takes a broad and multi-disciplinary approach to the future. One of the best features of *Space Tourism. The Elusive Dream* is the different perspectives of analysis (historic, sociological, economic and legal) of space tourism. This book is also a “one-stop-shop”, as it is one of the very few and recent existing research on this niche topic. The structure of the book and the chosen titles for the different parts are the main limitations of the book, as some chapters are not always a good fit with the section that they have been put under. The following paragraphs are suggesting a different structure.

The introduction provides a good overview of what the book is about. Firstly, it provides a background explanation regarding the elusive dream of mankind to expand into outer space. Secondly, it introduces space tourism as: a challenge (economic, environmental and social); an elite form of tourism, as only accessible to the ultra-rich; an extreme adventure form of tourism, because it is high risk; and a passive form of tourism, as no interaction is possible with the surroundings. Finally, the introduction explains that, as a type of tourism, space tourism is led by American and Asian companies.

Over 50 pages, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are providing a very detailed presentation of the history of space exploration and space tourism. Combined, these chapters are offering a good historic perspective to this book, which is essential to understand the topic of space tourism. As for Chapters 10 and 11, they present a more sociological presentation of this niche form of tourism. This part of the book could be entitled: history of space exploration and space tourism.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are mainly exploring the pull factors related to space tourism. Among these are: finding out if there is any other form of life in the cosmos; contemporary films and games; and virtual reality technologies. These motivators are what Gartner (1993) refers to as autonomous agents. They are, according to him, the most powerful ones, as they have a quick impact on the way people perceive things. As for Chapter 6, it is a follow up of the three previous chapters as it completes the list of factors (risk

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taking, thrill seeking, challenge, curiosity, spirituality, nostalgia, distinction and desire to motivate and assist others) motivating individuals to want to explore space.

Chapters 7 to 9 are discussing the state and limitations of space tourism. Chapters 7 and 8 are highlighting a void left with the development of space of tourism in terms of lack of suitable infrastructure (training space for future space tourists, connecting with air traffic control system, etc.) and regulations (air law, space law, private spaceflight activities) to frame this form of tourism. Space tourism presents limitations (Chapter 9) that are mainly health and safety related (owing to microgravity, exposure to radiation, etc.).

This book is of importance because most research in travel and tourism are based on well-established forms of tourism. This book is offering a

different perspective by focussing to some extent on the “unknown”.

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