Review of Partnerships: Machines of Possibility by Niels Akerstrom Anderson

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explored, either in terms of attendance at the actual events or in relation to the role that Games are expected to play in raising the tourism profile of destination cities. This is a theme more substantively covered in the context of the Commonwealth Games by Lockstone and Baum (forthcoming) and is one that merits consideration in a (hopefully) third edition of this book. Indeed, the sporting and off-track events of the recent Beijing Olympics will also provide ample fuel for further debate from a variety of social science perspectives. In particular, the predominantly westernised paradigm that has dominated discourse relating to the Olympics was substantially challenged in China’s handling of issues such as political rights, press freedom and the rights of communities within the host city. A balanced discussion of these themes will certainly be of value in future iterations of this book.

Overall, this book is a really valuable addition to the literature on sports and events and provides legitimate evidence for the value of the study of these areas from a range of social science perspectives.

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Partnerships: machines of possibility, by Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, Bristol, Policy Press, 2008, 176 pp., £52.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781847420268

In today’s global exchange environment, the hallmark of success stems from the ability to foster and perpetuate relationships. Social networking is an inherent aspect of any community, business or otherwise. Promises and tangible and intangible contracts between parties are the characteristics of long-term relationship building.

Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen has created an insightful work into the complexity of partnerships or relationship building. He argues the delicate creative process that over-shadows dynamic exchange. His work hopes ‘to transform partnerships from a loose metaphor into a binding concept ...’ (Andersen, 2008, p. 1). He postulates five key themes to direct the book. They are:

1. **Partnerships are a ‘functional equivalent to contracts (p. 4)’ taking over when normal, tangible contracts fail.** This highlights the nature of promises in that they have intangible volatile elements that expound the concrete contractual form.

2. **Partnerships represent second-ordered contracts (p. 4).** Contractual agreements, by their nature, continue long after the initial signed agreement.
Interaction promotes on-going development of promises.

(3) **Partnerships extend beyond the boundaries of the primary parties into the social networks of second and third parties.** As the author puts forward, there is a delicate and complex ‘coupling (p. 5)’ of inter-related direct and indirect stakeholders.

(4) **Partnerships are formulated and constructed across non-normative political, economic and social states, private and public.** This constitutes an alignment, both negative and positive, of community resources to benefit, or not, society.

(5) **Partnerships are, by their nature, in a constant state of flux.** The author denotes that the language and formation of the different aspects of partnership should be examined and understood. Contracts are just one concrete form of the creative process. In contrast, partnerships have a holistic nature. They are constantly changing with interaction with both infinite and finite characteristics.

At the heart of Andersen’s work is the rhetoric of interaction. The creative process of partnership development is symbolised by the infrastructure of exchange. Andersen predicates that partnerships are not just a concrete means to an end but may exist as an elusive, untouchable agreement between individuals and groups. His work sets an initial foundation in the historical evolution of partnership development and subsequently, establishes a present modern implication. His main argument is to view partnerships in their holistic form. Partnerships, as the author stipulates, are comprised of articulate and unspoken rules of engagement in the dynamic world.

Andersen’s work is seminal. He threads the intricate nature of past and current constructs in relationship management and partnership into a simple dialect for the reader. He takes the reader on a journey into the legal, productive, intrinsic and extrinsic realm of collaboration. The author predicates that collaboration does not end with a signed contract but a host of continued promises beyond the initial establishment of contact. He also stipulates that a host of internal and external forces, other parties, will ingratiate themselves in the process at varying points. As Andersen suggests, it is not a smooth path to conclusion. There are both positive and negative road bumps to integrate in the coupling and communication process. He gives a greater insight into the dynamic world, the interesting and the un-interesting type of partnerships.

Yet, a minor shortfall of the book is the incorporation of online communities. Andersen does little to address social partnerships that are initiated in an online environment. With today’s economic crisis and the future stability of the global markets in question, how will this venue of exchange influence business networking? Online communities may be the first line of converting interest to actual use. Online exchange extends the physical and concrete into intangible discourse and sound bytes. The legal ramifications, both negative and positive, are not as transparent as that in a tangible world. Is there a difference in the development and creative process of contractual agreements and partnership development in the online world than in face-to-face interaction? Is there a greater degree of subtle cues of expectations in an online collaboration? Perhaps this online exchange environment could be the next avenue for examination by the author.

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If you are interested in policy research by implication you ought to be interested in how research is conducted. There are many offerings that address the conduct of research. Researching Social Life by Nigel Gilbert’s collective at the University of Surrey is a good one. The contributions range through ‘conceptualising social life’ to ‘writing about social research’ and include ways of thinking, research techniques and methods of analysis that reflect different styles of research, mixing the qualitative with the quantitative.

The book might be particularly useful to students on the courses we teach as it does not try to avoid the significance of theory. Gilbert wants to distinguish social research from ‘fact gathering’ (I’m naturally suspicious of anything masquerading as fact in social research anyway). At the same time the emphasis is on doing research. As Gilbert says on one of the mysteriously unnumbered pages at the beginning, ‘it is difficult to become a good researcher simply by reading about research; you need to have a go yourself’.

One of the key questions with subsequent editions of a book is the extent to which it differs from its predecessor. Seven chapters (of the 24) are new to this third edition. Most of these are concerned with the groundings of research – existing literature, grounded theory, participatory approaches and mixed methods – plus later chapters on the internet, narrative analysis and conversation/discourse analysis. On the other hand, five chapters from the second edition have been dropped (including all three of the chapters presented as ‘exemplars’), and Patrick Sturgis has replaced Sara Arber as the author of the shortened chapter on Designing Samples. Sadly, that chapter no longer addresses qualitative sampling, though there are some observations on sample selection in the chapter on Focus Groups. Some chapters have been substantially overhauled while others, like the one on Analysing Survey Data, are unchanged. Despite this being a new edition, there are some sections that betray their age either in the examples given or more subtly in the way that topics are addressed.

As is now quite common, each chapter begins with a box containing the key points of the chapter and ends with two further boxes: points for discussion; and related resources (essentially further reading). In my own book on research methods (Long, 2007), I drew attention to one of the resources Gilbert has made available on the web (a simulation that allows you to explore the effect of using different sample sizes and different sampling procedures) so I was keen to examine how he had put together the web-based resources that accompany this book. The resources for students comprise:

- Readings in support of each chapter that are available on line with a single click
- Relevant web sites associated with each chapter
- Projects to encourage ‘having a go’ on a small scale – most are in the book
- Glossary – there is a generic one in the book, but the one on the web is organised by chapter

There is a problem in that the chapters are numbered differently in the book and on the web (strange that no one has yet picked that up and rearranged the web site). Unfortunately the teaching resources are only accessible once you have formally adopted the book for one of your courses.
The book is designed for undergraduate (and postgraduate) students, and for the most part I found it accessible. Of course, some chapters are more interesting or better constructed than others – it’s a collection. The book covers an impressive range; contributors have wrestled with how much is enough and provided good introductions to their assigned topics.

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The aim of this book is 'to illustrate the diversity of manifestations of tourism in Asia, the motivation and preferences of Asian tourists, and the complexity of the processes that shape the industry, its dichotomies and challenges'. Cochrane and the collective authors are to be commended in achieving this goal. Thirty-one edited papers are presented, two thirds of which are the outcome of a conference on Asian tourism in 2006. Compiling a book of this nature is a challenging undertaking given both the diversity of Asia, and the dearth of research into tourism from the perspective of Asian tourists. It therefore makes a valuable contribution to understanding the importance of intra-regional travel in world tourism trends.

A key strength is the presentation of three distinct sections, each preceded by a detailed introduction by Cochrane and other noted academics. These provide useful overviews of forthcoming content, the implications for industry and research understanding, and additional analytical insights. The first section details 'the politics and policies of Asian Tourism' and includes papers on regional collaborative initiatives, alongside destination cases. These show the influence of political agendas on tourism development, and lead well into the second section which examines 'market demand and supplier responses'. These papers illustrate the need for public and private sector engagement in development strategies which reflect the characteristics and motivations of increasingly dominant regional and domestic markets. The final section details 'destinations, industry and forces of change', and the papers primarily consider the roles of differing stakeholders in the changes brought about by tourism.

The nature of collective contributions inevitably means that chapter sequencing and linkages are limited, but the introductory sections go some way to overcoming this. Given the diversity and breadth of the book, Cochrane rightly asserts that 'inevitably, there is far more to say about the subject than could be presented in a single volume'. However, it would have been useful if more exploration was provided of the similarities and differences across regions, and more consistent comparison of the findings and recommendations of contributions examining similar topics from varying perspectives. The extent of contributions provides geographically wide-ranging cases,
although most relate to South and Southeast Asia. It is also notable that many chapters relate to China and administrative regions, but this is unsurprising when considering its growing market dominance, and active research in the region.

Each chapter is presented in a consistent and academically rigorous style, although there are inevitable differences in theoretical or empirical groundings. While a minority of chapters are rather descriptive, these are more than compensated for by some outstanding contributions which question existing assumptions, provide clear policy recommendations and set out important research agendas. Wall (Chapter 3) highlights the challenge of core-periphery relationships in stimulating equitable growth, and how they can be overcome through regional collaboration between peripheral areas. Cambridge and Whitelegg (Chapter 10) discuss the growth of aviation in Asia, including the gradual introduction of ‘open skies’ agreements and the growth of low-cost airlines, although it would be of interest if greater focus was given to the role airlines play in stimulating destination growth patterns.

Hitchcock and Darma Putra (Chapter 17) set out the differing motivations of visitors in Bali, and the challenges for destination businesses in either trying to respond to particular segments, or providing more general products. This makes for an interesting comparison with the later contribution by Fallon (Chapter 28) on the need for Indonesia to capitalise upon the growing Chinese market by developing targeted products. Although the editorial introductions might go further in comparing and contrasting content across the book, the range of contributions provides the reader with many opportunities for such analysis. For instance, Thomson and Matheson (Chapter 19) discuss the motivations of overseas and local visitors and the need for market segmentation in the context of cultural authenticity at Mongolia’s key sporting event festival. This compares to Porananond and Robinson’s (Chapter 25) illustration of how a Thai festival’s continuing success is based in a process of modernisation around increased touristic interest.

Readers are provided with a rich overview of the diversity of Asian tourism, in-depth analyses of stakeholder roles in shaping industry growth, and the inherent challenges of managing inbound and outbound tourism growth in Asia. By adopting a practical, policy-oriented approach, the book is successful in advancing understanding of the travel motivations, and social and political dimensions of Asian outbound markets and intra-regional travel. As a well-presented hardback book, with some attractive illustrative material and supporting data and maps where appropriate, it is to be recommended for researchers, practitioners and policymakers. The analytical insights and diverse case material will also provide a useful textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate students seeking an awareness of Asian tourism.

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