



CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIES  
OF LEISURE, TOURISM AND MOBILITY

IN TOURISM

JENNY PHILLMORE AND LISA GOODSON  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN TOURISM  
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**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN TOURISM**  
ONTOLOGIES, EPISTEMOLOGIES AND  
METHODOLOGIES EDITED BY JENNY  
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# Qualitative Research in Tourism

While qualitative approaches are beginning to be more commonly used and accepted in tourism, discussions of research methods have rarely moved beyond practical considerations. To date there has been limited attention given to the underlying philosophical and theoretical underpinnings that influence the research process. This book links the theory with research practice, to offer a more holistic account of how qualitative research can be used in tourism.

*Qualitative Research in Tourism* is the first book to focus solely upon this subject. It combines discussions of the philosophies underpinning qualitative research, with chapters written in a reflexive style that demonstrate the ways in which the techniques can be used. The book is based on a range of empirical tourism studies set in the context of theoretical discussion. It demonstrates the benefits of using a range of qualitative approaches to research tourism, and the text explores the ways in which a number of techniques, including participant observation, memory-work, biographical diaries and focus groups, have been adopted by researchers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds to undertake empirical research in tourism.

The book offers a range of case studies written by leading scholars from the United Kingdom, France, America, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia. The book makes clear the ways in which these pieces of research have been informed by the authors' ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoint. *Qualitative Research in Tourism* will be indispensable to any final-year undergraduates, masters' and PhD students embarking on research in the field, and also academics with an interest in either tourism research or qualitative methodology.

**Jenny Phillimore** is a Lecturer and **Lisa Goodson** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, The University of Birmingham.

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# **Qualitative Research in Tourism**

Ontologies, epistemologies and  
methodologies

**Edited by Jenny Phillimore  
and Lisa Goodson**

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**Jenny Phillimore** completed her PhD, an ethnographic study of women's employment in rural tourism in the United Kingdom, in 1998, and since then has been Lecturer at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham. She co-directs the Post-Graduate Qualitative Research Programme at the university and works very closely with Lisa Goodson on a range of different initiatives. These include running seminars on qualitative research and inclusivity for public service professionals and undertaking a wide range of qualitative research projects largely concerned with involving excluded communities in regeneration initiatives and increasing the employability of hard-to-reach groups. Their work has included the development of an innovative Peer Research Programme which trains excluded individuals to become co-researchers. Beneficiaries of this programme have included offenders, homeless young people, and asylum seekers and refugees. She is currently leading a number of substantial research projects looking at the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom, wherein she has called upon a wide range of qualitative as well as quantitative research methods.

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John has spent his career in education in both the USA and the

United Kingdom. His teaching has focused on economics, strategy and education aspects of leisure and tourism, and he has authored two textbooks in these areas, one of which is translated into Spanish. His research interests are focused on education and sustainability issues. He has published widely in these two areas in books and journal articles and has accepted invitations to give conference papers across Europe. He has directed two major European research projects: TOURFOR (Sustainable Tourism in Forests) and THEME (Tourism Curriculum Development in Moldova). He also writes occasional articles for *The Times* and the *Guardian* newspapers. John's professional interests include leisure and tourism economics; leisure and tourism strategy; higher education in leisure and tourism; and sustainability in leisure and tourism.

# Foreword

This is a compelling book, to be read and thoughtfully considered by every serious researcher involved in tourism at the planning and management level.

The linguist Wick Miller once observed that no one has ever written an ethnography of academia – their goals, their methods and their behaviours. This unique volume might be the catalyst to prompt such a study. Dating to Aristotle, scholars in every discipline have diligently sought ‘the truth’ but their philosophies and products have varied according to the dictates of the individual field of study.

The global importance of tourism has generated the need for answers to problems such as economic development, social impact, stakeholder conflicts, environmental degradation and political control. These questions all seek ‘the truth’ but the orientation is different. The business world wants to know ‘who, what, when and where’ for that is their ‘bottom line’. Their approach is essentially quantitative, and statistically oriented for forecasting. By contrast, researchers involved in heritage, habitat and history quest for ‘why’: what roles did or do these elements play in human society and its survival? To what degree have they changed, and how should they be interpreted now? What is appropriate authenticity?

As the editors point out, a resurgent interest in the qualitative methodology as it applies to the study of tourism surfaced a little over a decade ago but lacked a substantive base. Here, in this first-of-a-kind compendium, a body of recognised scholars have outlined diverse research techniques and illustrated them with case studies. Culture, as a set of human survival customs, may be a collective noun but the behaviours of individuals operating within their respective ethnic bonds can seldom be ranked on a scale of 1 to 10.

The phenomenal growth of tourism in the past five decades has dramatically changed global lifestyles to include tourism, and the impetus for still greater growth is rooted in globalisation and the expanding economies of Asia. We in the West have much to learn about these future ‘new’ tourists who will have discretionary income, leisure time, and even government



sanctions (as a balance of trade factor) to visit Europe and the Americas in the next decade.

The great merits of this book are its new paths for studying tourism as a societal institution, as we once learned to study the family, the factory and world view as cultural components of a survival system. The case studies open wide opportunities for testing and theoretical validation. This is a *must read*.

Valene L. Smith  
Chico, California

# Acknowledgements

Some three years ago we decided that a book about qualitative research in tourism would make a useful contribution to the field as we had both had to rely heavily on qualitative methodology books from outside tourism when developing ideas for our PhDs. We put together a tentative proposal and sent it to Routledge for their consideration. Since that time the scope of the project has widened considerably. With the encouragement of Routledge and anonymous reviewers we approached a number of established tourism researchers around the world and asked them to make specific contributions exploring key social science research concepts in relation to the study of tourism. We are grateful for the enthusiasm with which the majority of them accepted the challenge offered them.

The successful completion of this project and its metamorphosis from an edited book of accounts of qualitative tourism research in the United Kingdom, to a collection of contributions considering the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative tourism research and how the theory is applied in practice in the field, is in no small part due to the efforts of a range of individuals. First and foremost, our contributors, to whom thanks are due for their thought-provoking contributions and passion for the project. Second to Routledge for being prepared to take on such a groundbreaking project and take a risk on two relatively unknown writers. Third to the reviewers, with whom we have not always agreed but who have provided us with extremely useful guidance on turning what was originally a disparate collection of papers to what we now hope is a coherent book. Finally, thanks are due to friends, family and colleagues, who have given us encouragement and support throughout the whole process.

