

AN INTRODUCTION TO **TOURISM**



■ **Robert W. Wyllie**

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Robert W. Wyllie
Simon Fraser University



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For Cathy

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PREFACE

Tourism represents the greatest mass migration in human history, and it is one of the most significant social, economic, and cultural phenomena of our times. Wars, military coups, political unrest, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, disease epidemics, and recessions all prove to be temporary setbacks as tourism continues to grow and extend its outreach to all parts of the globe and beyond, as civilian space travel enters its pioneering phase. And tourists keep on traveling, shrugging off criticisms leveled at them by serious travel writers and other anti-tourists, disregarding Hollywood's ridicule and the postmodernist claim that tourism has become "ordinary" and offers little in the way of novel experiences.

Despite its importance and resilience, tourism is still considered to be a somewhat suspect, not-quite-proper subject for academic research in many universities. Those who pursue research interests in this area often find traditional university departments to be uncongenial settings, and they drift off to form special tourism units, or join schools of hospitality and travel, or departments of recreation and outdoor leisure. Their numbers are increasing, as are the numbers of publication outlets and professional associations available to them. They frequently acknowledge these signs of growth in size, if not in prestige, with references to the "tourism academy" or "community of tourism scholars." But they have yet to muster the chutzpah shown by criminologists and adopt the term "tourology" to describe their field, preferring the comfort and safety of more self-effacing labels, such as "tourism" or "tourism studies." It is generally accepted that tourism is not a discipline, and probably never will be, but the main reason for avoiding the term "tourology" is probably a fear of ridicule for a subject that is already short on academic credibility. I have no doubt that the name will be adopted at some time in the future, when it will raise no more eyebrows than other well-established imposters such as sociology—my own discipline.

My aim in this book is to offer an introduction to tourism that will be accessible and interesting for those who are unfamiliar with the subject.

It is not designed as a training manual for students contemplating a career in tourism and hospitality, although it is written in the conviction that those who do enter such careers need to have a broad understanding of tourism's multidimensional character and its increasingly important place in society. The organization of chapters follows a fairly conventional pattern and thereby runs the risk of compartmentalizing tourism into discrete bits and pieces. This has been done as a matter of convenience, both for me and for the reader, for tourism's economic, social, cultural, political, and moral dimensions are closely intertwined in ways that may not be obvious from this artificial arrangement. Hopefully, these connections will become clearer as the reader moves through the book.

Many people have helped with this book, and I can thank only a few of them here. I am grateful to Geoffrey Godbey of Venture Publishing for his constant encouragement and support, and to Richard Yocum and the staff at that publishing house for seeing the book through to publication. Jon Matsuoka at the University of Hawaii was extremely helpful with advice and information on tourism developments on Lanai. Former students Victor Ametewee and Francis Adu-Febiri provided invaluable assistance in connection with my research in Ghana. Suzanne LaFont, Lynn Meisch, Sheila Jeffreys, and Deborah Pruitt all made helpful suggestions regarding female sex/romance tourism, for which I am most grateful. At the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (U.S.A.), Helen Marano provided details of the history and functions of that organization, and Raymond Spurr of the University of New South Wales gave me the benefit of his expert knowledge of Tourism Satellite Accounts. At Simon Fraser University, Ann Travers provided a timely, positive nudge when I first mentioned that I was thinking about writing an introductory text on tourism. I am also grateful to Simon Fraser University graduate student Megan Humphrey for her helpful comments on some recently published studies. From his redoubt in Braveheart Country, Alex Bean kept me informed and entertained with regular reports on Britain's social and cultural malaise, besides making available his extensive knowledge of the history of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders regiment.

Lastly, I have to acknowledge the huge debt of gratitude I owe to my wife Cathy, whose knowledge of Stirling's heritage sites was of great help in my discussion of these in chapter 5. During research and writing, she listened patiently to my constant fretting over difficulties experienced in accessing information, or in overcoming writer's block. Moreover, her pragmatic outlook made her an invaluable sounding board during the writing of the book. For her patience, understanding, and constant support, I am deeply grateful.

Chapter 1

TOURISM AND TOURISTS

Some 30 years ago, I pestered colleagues in our joint sociology and anthropology department to include a course on the sociology of leisure among our undergraduate offerings. Although the department had a tradition of innovation and my colleagues were all forward-thinking academics, it was obvious they were not overly impressed by my pro-leisure arguments. My pestering did succeed, but this was due almost entirely to the spirit of collegiality and mutual forbearance that characterized the department then, as now, and not from some mass conversion to the cause of promoting leisure sociology. Leisure was seen as something peripheral to life's main concerns, such as working, forming and raising a family, struggling for status or power, dealing with large, impersonal organizations, and so on. The sociology of leisure course was an immediate success and attracted strong student enrollment. Some of this was probably fueled by an expectation (misplaced as it turned out) that it would be an "easy" course, but the main reason was that students were greatly interested in leisure and popular culture. They felt that the course addressed matters they could easily relate to and that were for the most part pleasant and enjoyable.

In teaching the sociology of leisure, I always devoted a few weeks to the topic of travel and tourism and found that it was among the more popular segments. At the urging of some students in this course, I engaged in a second round of pestering, this time to permit the introduction of a spin-off course on the sociology and anthropology of tourism. This too came into being and was offered three times a year, accounting for a healthy chunk of the department's undergraduate enrollment. It would be gratifying to report that leisure and tourism have now come to occupy an important place in the department's teaching and research activities, but, sadly, this has not been the case. This situation is not an

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unusual or exceptional one, and is replicated in many similar departments throughout North America. Sociological interest in leisure and tourism has certainly grown in recent years, but in North America, it is mainly the geographers we have to thank for keeping the study of tourism alive in traditional university departments. Otherwise, it has found a more welcoming home in schools of tourism and hospitality, or leisure and recreation.

Why is it important to study tourism? The immediate and obvious answer to this question is that it is a global activity of major proportions and huge economic significance, and we shall discuss this in chapter 4. But tourism is worth studying for reasons other than its size and economic significance. The temporary displacement of millions of people worldwide has social, cultural, and political consequences that should not be ignored, and we will be looking at some of these in later chapters. This will involve consideration of humanistic or interpretive understandings of tourism, as well as positivist, statistical, and empirical approaches to the subject. The study of tourism, especially in its international form, also directs our attention to major processes such as globalization and transnationalism. And we can also assert with some confidence that, through an examination of tourism, we can learn a good deal about ourselves and the times in which we live.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The scholarly literature on tourism has increased enormously during the past five decades, as tourism itself has become a global phenomenon of staggering proportions. The vast majority of books and journal articles on the subject are aimed at fellow academics, university graduate students, policy-makers, or persons engaged in tourism management. Much of this work could be labeled “tourism without tourists,” for in it we seldom encounter a real live tourist, and the concepts and theories presented are often quite abstract and divorced from our own travel experiences. This, together with the use of a rarified language and unfamiliar terminology (or familiar terminology that turns out to mean something different than we imagined), can make for some difficult reading. Finding a navigable route through the extensive body of tourism research studies, commentaries, interpretations, and theoretical contributions can be a daunting task for beginning students and others confronting the subject for the first time. This book is written with these readers uppermost in mind. It does not attempt to break new theoretical ground, but has the more modest aim

of offering a basic and necessarily selective guide to academic studies of tourism and the main problems and issues these deal with. It does not pretend to offer a comprehensive review of the field, for such a task would obviously require several lengthy volumes.

In considering some of the published work on tourism, I attempt an even-handed approach and try to achieve a balance between the critical and defensive viewpoints expressed therein. The term “attempt” is used advisedly, for I am aware that it is not always easy to set aside personal views or ensure that one’s ideological cover is not blown when discussing contentious tourism issues. Apart from my youthful cycling tours, European wanderings as a student, and later sociological and anthropological field trips as an academic, most of my traveling has been done as a mass tourist. As a frequent visitor to Waikiki, Las Vegas, and Mexico’s coastal resorts, I have developed a good deal of sympathy for mass tourists and feel they have often been misunderstood and unfairly maligned by travel writers, filmmakers, and tourism scholars. I am suspicious of explanations of tourist behavior that appear to be conjured up without much regard for what tourists themselves say or think. Although this book deals mainly with the findings of others, I also introduce data and observations from my own experience as both tourist and tourism researcher to illustrate or amplify certain points. When discussing tourism-related problems and issues, I try to employ fairly straightforward, nontechnical language wherever possible.

Each chapter ends with a list of Review Questions that are meant as an aid to understanding the main points and arguments. I also include a list of Discussion Topics suitable for small group or seminar sessions. And there are also some questions designed to help the reader connect personally with the chapter contents, something I believe can be helpful in deepening the reader’s understanding of the subject. In the hope that readers will be encouraged to delve further into the study of tourism, a number of titles are suggested at the end of this book, together with the names of some important tourism journals and useful tourism websites.

TOURISM AND TOURISTS

A SLIPPERY SUBJECT

Some basic definitions of tourism and tourists are offered in a set of guidelines developed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). These were meant to standardize the collection of tourism information by the national tourism administrations of UNWTO member countries:

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1. **Tourism**—The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes.
2. **Visitor**—Any person visiting a country other than his or her normal place of residence, for a period not exceeding 12 months, and whose main purpose of the visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited.
3. **Tourist**—Any visitor staying at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited.
4. **Same-Day Visitor**—Any visitor who does not stay at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited.

While the above definition of tourism is broad, and includes business and other activities engaged in by visitors, it fails to include the activities of those who serve tourists, such as travel agents, airlines, cruise lines, hotels, restaurants, shops, and so on. This is a major oversight, for the interaction between visitors and hosts has been a primary focus of much anthropological research, and the commercialized or industrialized nature of contemporary tourism is widely recognized. The definition of “visitor” was later modified to accommodate domestic or intra-national travel, where people make visits to places within their countries of residence. The UNWTO definition of tourist would seem to embrace vastly different kinds of travelers, such as the New York businessperson in Tokyo to explore sales possibilities, the Princeton University professor attending a three-day conference in Miami, and the Seattle holidaymaker in Waikiki for two weeks of fun and relaxation. Although each of these visitors spends more than one night outside the normal place of residence and none is engaged in employment remunerated at the destination, wide motivational and behavioral differences exist between them. From a “common sense” perspective, the visitor to Hawaii looks much more like a tourist than does either the businessperson or the university professor.

The distinction between tourist and same-day visitor, which hinges upon length of stay at the destination, also has limited value for researchers interested primarily in the behavioral aspects of tourism. If cruise ship passengers are same-day visitors when they spend a few hours ashore in Puerto Vallarta or Cabo San Lucas, what behavioral features might distinguish them from those tourists who may be spending two weeks vacationing at these Mexican resorts? We would probably observe more concentrated forms of sightseeing, shopping, and so on among the former,

but little that would justify treating them as something other than tourists. The distinction becomes even more hazy when we consider the situation of the passengers while they are actually cruising onboard the ship, which is a floating hotel and entertainment center, as well as a means of transportation. Indeed, it might be suggested that most cruises represent a special form of escapist mass tourism, one in which travelers are encapsulated in luxury, insulated from the destination cultures, and periodically taken on scheduled forays ashore for superficial encounters with the locals. We see then, that the UNWTO approach is not especially helpful in providing a sociological or anthropological focus for tourism research. We should bear in mind, however, that this was never the purpose of these definitions in the first place. They are useful as a basis for assembling the kind of standardized statistical data on tourism that allow us to see its size, scale, geographical distribution, and direction-flows, among other things. These statistics also provide a valuable starting point for the measurement of tourism's economic dimensions. And as we will suggest later in this chapter, the statistics can be useful in alerting us to some potentially misleading emphases in the tourism literature.

Sociologists and anthropologists have traditionally viewed tourism in the context of work-leisure relationships. For anthropologists especially, the encounter between working hosts and leisured tourists has usually been viewed as the core of any tourism system. In this way, tourism is regarded as the activities of those who temporarily leave home while free of primary obligations (for example, gainful employment, study, family, and community responsibilities) and of those who serve them, whether at home (for example, travel agents), during the journey (for example, airline staff), or at the destination (for example, hotel and restaurant staff). A broadly similar approach was taken by sociologists, whose discussions of tourism were typically organized around the conceptual opposition of work and leisure. This dichotomy was a key feature of an important attempt to identify certain "minimal characteristics" or common features of tourism in all its past and present forms:

1. Tourism is a leisure activity presupposing its opposite, that is, regulated and organized work.
2. Tourist relationships arise from the movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations.
3. The journey and stay are to, and in, sites outside the normal place of residence and work. There is a clear intention to return home within a relatively short period of time.

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4. The purposes of the visits are not directly connected with paid work, and the visits normally offer some distinctive contrasts with work.
5. In order to cope with the mass character of modern tourism, new socialized (that is, organized group) forms of provision are developed. These distinguish tourism from individual travel.
6. Anticipation of pleasure from the visits is constructed and sustained through a variety of practices, such as film, television, magazines, or videos.
7. The tourist “gaze” is directed to things felt to be in some ways out of the ordinary. They are lingered over and often visually objectified and captured in photographs and postcards. By these means, the gaze can be endlessly recaptured and reproduced.
8. The tourist collects “signs” (for example, a small English village becomes a sign for “real olde England”).
9. Tourist professionals emerge to reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze.¹

While most of these minimal characteristics are fairly straightforward, the fifth—tourism as group activity distinct from individual travel—is more problematic. It equates tourism with organized, mass leisure travel and excludes the lone, individual traveler from tourism’s orbit. This may be a morally satisfying distinction for those who travel and do not wish to be mistaken for tourists, but even lone “travelers” can hardly avoid comingling with “tourists” and sharing with them mass transportation, accommodation, and other facilities. As an invidious distinction, it is one that is frequently implicit in the travel narratives of writers who resent tourists and who are among tourism’s sharpest protagonists. Critics have also expressed some reservations concerning the concept of the “tourist gaze” as outlined above, which seems to place undue emphasis upon the visual, casual, and passive aspects of tourist experience. To the contrary, it has been argued that tourists are physically and sensually active producers in the negotiation and creation of their experiences. From this perspective, the tourist does not simply “acquire” a tourist experience as a result of fleeting exposure to objects and sights presented by tourism producers, but actively helps create it in performing the role of tourist in relation to others and the tourism environment.² In addition, writers influenced by postmodernist perspectives claim there is now scant justification for thinking of tourism as involving “out of the ordinary” experiences, or of being sharply differentiated from everyday life. De-differentiation and

mobility are viewed as pervasive aspects of postmodern lifestyles, and we are now able to travel in our imaginations at theme parks, malls, and in our living rooms as we watch television. Tourism and everyday life are thus seen to be intertwined as we live in a world characterized by flux and mobility.³ Later in this chapter we will argue that, at the level of tourists' awareness, de-differentiation hardly exists and the blending of tourism and everyday life is not usually recognized or acknowledged. This is a major reason why tourists still travel.

The conceptualization of tourism as leisure travel is clearly tourist-centered or "demand side." The tourist is the central actor, with tourism being viewed as the activities of tourists and, by extension, of those who cater to tourists' needs. Defining tourism as an industry, or an aggregation of the various service providers mentioned earlier, presents a number of difficulties that do not arise in the case of more conventional industrial activities. Economists consider that industries are best defined by the products or services they provide, and not by the characteristics of those who consume them. However, this "supply-side" approach runs into difficulties when applied to tourism, for the goods and services of many businesses such as restaurants, clothing stores, taxi services, or golf courses are consumed by both tourists and non-tourists. Only when tourists consume a product can it be considered a tourism product, and the same product is not a tourism product when it is consumed by non-tourists. In other words, a pure supply side approach to tourism as an industry simply does not work, for it is the demand-side actions of tourist consumers that define tourism products.

From the above discussion it will be obvious that difficulties exist in determining which businesses, or parts of businesses, should be regarded as comprising the tourism industry. Further complicating matters are its highly fragmented nature, the diverse range of goods and services, and the lack of systematic coordination between its constituent parts. Tourism appears too amorphous and heterogeneous to be regarded as a single industry, and the terms "tourism industries" and "tourism sector" are probably more accurate descriptions. We will take up this issue again in chapter 4.

THE STUDY OF TOURISM

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY FIELD

Although my research interests are primarily sociological and anthropological, it would be impossible to do justice to the subject if we focused exclusively on sociological and anthropological aspects of tourism. Even

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a cursory scan of the literature shows that tourism is a subject of interest for many other academic disciplines. Major tourism journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourist Studies*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Tourism Management*, and *Tourism Recreation Research* publish articles on anthropological, ecological, economic, educational, geographic, historical, political, psychological, and sociological aspects of tourism. It would appear, therefore, that tourism is a multidisciplinary field of study, rather than a discipline in its own right. This field may be regarded as having two broad subdivisions. One of these is primarily concerned with what we might call the “business end” of tourism and looks at how it is produced, promoted, and practiced by tourism organizations, firms, and agencies of various kinds. The other is the domain of researchers whose interests are more academic in nature and who are interested in such things as the historical development of tourism, as well as its economic, political, social, and cultural significance in different societies. It should be noted, however, that the boundary between these two divisions is not entirely clear-cut and that they overlap in the work of some researchers.

One writer, noting the multiplicity of tourism research “tribes” and the absence of any overarching theoretical paradigm, describes tourism as an “indiscipline.”⁴ On the other hand, there are those who believe that tourism is emerging as a distinct and autonomous discipline, as evidenced by such things as the growing number of tourism books and journals, the establishment of tourism programs in colleges and universities, the formation of professional associations for tourism researchers, as well as a greater interest in conducting interdisciplinary research on tourism.⁵ More and more we find writers referring to “the tourism academy,” thus recognizing the commonalities that connect researchers exploring the subject from various perspectives. Tourism may never become an autonomous discipline like economics or psychology, but it can be viewed as a large and growing area of academic research and teaching that engages people from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. A close parallel may be found in criminology, a field of study that is explored and developed by various disciplines and has no overarching theoretical paradigm at its disposal. Its practitioners rarely, if ever, speak of “criminal studies” but unselfconsciously refer to their subject as “criminology,” a term denoting the systematic study of various aspects of criminality. In a similar fashion, the term “tourology” would be an appropriate description for the systematic study of various aspects of tourism. This may appear pretentious, but it is quite justifiable and less tentative than the more commonly used “tourism studies.” However the tourism academy is not quite ready at present to make this leap. The debate over the status of tourism studies

is not simply a case of academic squabbling. Those who hope for the recognition of tourism as a special discipline believe this would lead to more effective coordination of tourism research, enhance the academic reputation of tourism studies, and thereby increase funding for research and teaching programs in this area.

Much of the pioneering work on tourism was done by cultural geographers who were concerned with its effects on resource use and local amenities, as well as the changing cultural landscape of tourist destinations. They are still among the acknowledged leaders in tourism research today, and we will be referring to some of their research in this book. Economists and economic geographers have also played important roles in making tourism the subject of serious academic inquiry. Their work has dealt mainly with tourism's economic costs and benefits, market characteristics and trends, and its role in economic development. These and related matters are discussed in chapter 4, where we take a look at some of tourism's important economic dimensions. While the realms of holidays and politics might at first appear to be poles apart, we will see in chapter 7 that this is far from being the case. Power and politics in one form or another can affect tourism in a variety of important ways, by helping to shape its social and cultural forms, by influencing our travel decisions, and by promoting as well as impeding its business operations. Power is a central fact of life, and power struggles have often been waged in the context of tourism projects and developments. With only a few distinguished exceptions, political scientists have not engaged seriously with the research possibilities and challenges presented by tourism, a neglect that has been noted with mounting concern for some time.⁶

Psychological approaches to tourism are evident in a large number of tourism studies, including those by researchers who are not themselves psychologists. In exploring such matters as tourist motivation and experience, anthropologists, sociologists, and writers from other disciplines often rely quite heavily on psychological concepts, explanations, and theories. Sometimes attempts to get "inside the heads" of tourists rely heavily on inference and speculation rather than interviews, questionnaires, and the rigorous application of scientific, psychological methods of analysis. We may be told that tourists confronting staged authenticity or simulations often do so in a spirit of playful irony or self-deception, although evidence for this is weak, and few tourists are likely to describe their moods in this way.⁷ Occasionally, the conclusions are expressed in convoluted terms verging on psychobabble and would probably baffle and amuse most heritage and nature tourists:

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By becoming childlike and by being born again, tourists can once more experience primitive and pastoral delights currently denied them in the name of progress and urban renewal. However, we also noted that a return to the past establishes a dependency on the ubiquitous maternal figure whose omnipresence can be just as stifling as life outside the womb. In other words, if regression implies a myopic fixation with Mother, the quest for liberation becomes illusory.⁸

Anthropologists and sociologists were somewhat slow in recognizing tourism as a potentially important area of inquiry, and the position of anthropologists in this regard is especially interesting. Temporary visitors were often present in the less-developed societies anthropologists studied, but the “other cultures” orientation of anthropology usually resulted in the filtering out of non-natives during field research. In the attempt to portray these societies in what is often described as the “ethnographic present,” tourists suffered from anthropological neglect in much the same way as did resident expatriates, such as missionaries, colonial administrators, traders, medical officers, and teachers. With the growth of tourism in Third World countries after 1960, the presence and effects of tourists in these societies became harder to ignore. Nonetheless, one leading anthropologist believes that some of his colleagues still regard tourists as intruders in their territory and continue to omit them from field reports, preferring instead to write in what he terms the “touristic nonpresent.”⁹

The anthropological study of tourism has rapidly gained ground as part of a more wide-ranging inquiry into the relationship between tourism and processes of economic development and modernization. By 1980, anthropological investigations in this area had reached a point where the editors of *Annals of Tourism Research* felt it useful to produce a special issue on the subject.¹⁰ Some of the earlier anthropological writings on tourism were what we might term “hindsight studies,” that is, retrospective derivatives of fieldwork conducted for purposes other than the examination of tourism. From the 1980s onward, these kinds of studies have been replaced by accounts of host-tourist relations and of tourism’s social, cultural, economic, and political effects in destination communities. One of anthropology’s most important contributions to the study of tourism has been the application of its traditional techniques of direct-participant observation. These methods need to be mastered and used by more tourism researchers in other disciplines, for there is still a relative scarcity of studies of tourists in situ. We can probably learn more about tourists and those they interact with by studying them in their “natural habitats” than we can from distant viewing and speculative armchair theorizing.

At the beginning of this chapter, I commented on the sociological perception of leisure and tourism as being somewhat peripheral activities. This blinkered sociological “gaze” positioned tourism in the distant background, a location that reflected popular assumptions about tourists as shallow, escapist pleasure-seekers, and that made studying them seem an especially trivial pursuit. The growth of sociological interest in tourism was sparked by the burgeoning of mass tourism in the decades following World War II. This led to a keener appreciation of its economic significance and of its political implications internationally. In 1984, a special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research* dealt exclusively with the sociology of tourism and later reviews and commentaries followed.¹¹ Changes within the discipline itself, most notably the growing influence of cultural studies, also brought tourism into sharper sociological focus, particularly in Britain. There was a discernible shift from positivist, empirical studies of the structures and statistics of tourism to more interpretive attempts at comprehending its meaning as a major form of social and cultural production. A landmark study of tourism by MacCannell, whose ideas we take up towards the close of this chapter, brought the subject to the attention of a wider sociological audience and stimulated extensive analysis and vigorous debate.¹² Out of this mix there emerged what one writer has called a “New Wave” in tourism research. Besides rejecting previously popular tourism dichotomies such as “work-leisure” and “ordinary-extraordinary,” New Wave proponents emphasize the physical, active, and “performative” character of tourism.¹³

PERSPECTIVES AND CAUTIONARY NOTES

Given the multidisciplinary character of tourism studies, it is little wonder there is no single theoretical paradigm framing the research landscape. An ambitious attempt to analyze much of the English-language literature on tourism led to the identification of four main “platforms,” or research perspectives, in this literature:

The Advocacy Platform—This emphasizes the economic importance and benefits of tourism and its positive role in national development. This perspective informed most of the writing on tourism during the 1950s and 1960s and is still influential in the “business end” field mentioned earlier.

The Cautionary Platform—Stressing the often hidden economic costs and unforeseen negative sociocultural consequences of tourism, this perspective gained prominence in the 1970s as researchers began to question the claims made by advocacy platform writers.

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The Adaptancy Platform—This platform became increasingly popular in the 1980s, directing attention to alternatives to mass tourism (for example, nature tourism, homestay tourism, community-sensitive tourism, volunteer tourism, and the like).

The Knowledge-Based Platform—This perspective aims at the establishment of a scientific, holistic body of knowledge on tourism, while maintaining links with the other three platforms.¹⁴

This classification is useful in outlining the general direction taken in tourism research in the second half of the 20th century. It should be noted, however, that the Advocacy, Cautionary and Adaptancy platforms have all held their respective grounds, and the establishment of a holistic or integrated body of knowledge on tourism is far from complete at present. Some of the difficulties involved in such an enterprise can be imagined from what we have already seen of the multidisciplinary nature of tourism studies. Moreover, the need for a platform that emphasizes the “scientific” nature of tourism knowledge may be viewed as less important or attractive for a growing number of researchers whose work has been greatly affected by the so-called “cultural turn” in the social sciences. Under the influence of cultural studies and feminist theories in particular, greater attention is now being paid to subjectivity, experience, and negotiated meanings in tourism.

One of the more obvious features of the academic literature on tourism is the preponderance of studies dealing with international tourism. This is where UNWTO statistical data suggest a cautionary note may be in order, for the emphasis on international tourism is at odds with the global realities of tourism. The UNWTO estimates that domestic tourist arrivals globally exceed those of international ones by a ratio of approximately 10 to 1 and that domestic tourists’ expenditure exceeds that of international tourists by a ratio of about 7 to 1. Reasons for the research emphasis on international tourism are not hard to find. A leading tourism scholar who has pleaded for more research on domestic tourism suggests that international tourism has pride of place for two main reasons: its foreign exchange-earning potential for tourism destinations, and the promise it holds for enhancing understanding between peoples of different cultures.¹⁵ Among other reasons for the imbalance, we might suggest the following: a) domestic tourism presents certain methodological problems that tend to discourage systematic inquiry—it is usually more difficult to obtain accurate and reliable statistical information on domestic tourists’ movements than it is for international tourists, whose comings and goings are recorded at national points of entry and exit; and b) for sociologists and anthropologists especially, domestic tourism offers few of the research

attractions of international tourism, such as encounters between people of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, or the influence of foreign visitors and foreign ideas on host societies or cultures.

This emphasis on international tourism, while justifiable on several counts, has a number of important consequences for the study of tourism generally. One of these is a tendency on the part of some writers to generalize about tourism from a position reflecting their own particular research focus or interest. It is clear, for example, that in the sociology and anthropology of tourism, the concept of “tourist,” as well as most discussions of tourist types, host-tourist encounters, and the various consequences of tourism, have been fashioned mainly from observations and analyses of international tourism situations. This particular research “gaze” can also inadvertently lead to distortion by some writers when offering characterizations of tourism in general.

“Being among people who use a different language, eat different foods, and behave in different ways is at the very heart of tourism.”¹⁶ This may very well be true of much international or cross-cultural tourism, and it should certainly lead us to question the postmodernist view that tourism and the everyday are so de-differentiated that separating them is virtually impossible. But the reality is that most tourists happen to be people who are visiting places within their own countries and probably share similar cultural backgrounds with the residents of such places. In drawing attention to the research emphasis on international tourism, we do not imply that this is misplaced. We are simply suggesting that readers exercise caution when confronted with tourism concepts and broad generalizations that may turn out to have more limited applications.

At first glance, the size and scale of domestic tourism would appear to support the view that tourism is now such a commonplace feature of contemporary life that it is no longer appropriate to regard tourist activity as being “out of the ordinary” or easily distinguished from normal, everyday life. This may well be how things seem to some tourism researchers, but it is doubtful if tourists themselves have fully embraced this notion of the merging of tourism and everyday life, and it does not seem to have quenched their thirst for holidays. Tourist talk is full of expressions such as “needed a break,” “needed a change,” or “felt like getting away for a spell.” It has been suggested that tourist talk of holidays, planned or experienced, is part of everyday, mundane, “at home” conversation, and is therefore somehow indicative of tourism’s “ordinariness” and its embeddedness in everyday life. But this hardly helps to explain why people still want to travel, especially when we learn that mundane travel talk frequently opens with the question, “Have you been away?”¹⁷

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If the de-differentiation of tourism and everyday life has indeed proceeded apace, so that we can all now enjoy virtual travel at theme parks, shopping malls, cinemas, and on television, and if holidays are becoming increasingly work-like, one must ask why millions of people still spend time and money taking holidays. There are several possible explanations:

1. Tourists are idiots—They don't realize they are wasting time and money traveling when what they want is all around them, and that they will only experience something that is ordinary, familiar, and work-like, rather than something different. It is unlikely that many tourists fall into this category, for the very good reason that what they want (for example, warm climate, tropical beaches, five-star all-inclusive hotels, the Pyramids of Egypt, the sights of New York, London, or a walking tour along the Appalachian Trail) may not be considered ordinary activities offering ordinary experiences.
2. Tourists are spellbound—Tourism promoters have convinced them they need a vacation, although they were unable to work this out for themselves. Without discounting the persuasive power of tourism brochures, commercials, films, and documentaries, these seem more likely to influence the choice of destination rather than the decision to travel. Yet they do remind potential tourists that there really is “something different out there” that is worth temporarily leaving home for.
3. Tourists are culturally driven, and take holidays because their culture informs them that this is a desirable, worthwhile, or necessary activity. There is certainly an expectation in contemporary Western cultures that we should experience corporeal travel and not restrict ourselves to imaginary travel by means of films, television, visits to theme parks, and so on. However, cultural influences can only be effective if people actually believe there are places that are different or special enough to make them worth visiting. This appears to be the case, even if tourism critics (including some tourism researchers) would have it otherwise.
4. Tourists travel to acquire social or cultural capital. The acquisition of personal social capital from travel can be an important motive for tourists. In the holiday, it may take the form of “bonding” social capital that comes from enjoying the company of others, solidifying old friendships or making new ones, and it indicates that tourist behavior and values should not be interpreted as

signs of social pathology or malaise.¹⁸ Cultural capital can be gained by visiting out-of-the-way places, or through ego-tourist travel behavior that seeks to express individuality and dissociation from other kinds of tourists.¹⁹ Some tourists will go to great lengths (literally) to acquire cultural capital, and I was reminded of this in conversation with a British tourist in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. A warehouse machine operator, he had arrived at the all-inclusive hotel after an 11-hour flight from Manchester, England, pleased that a tailwind had shortened the trip by two hours and rendered unnecessary a scheduled refueling stop in Cancun. I asked why he chose to come all this way for a holiday, when there were surely attractive places within just a few hours flying time of Britain. With disarming candor, he admitted this was so, but said he had never been to Mexico before, nor had any of his friends at home, so this was something he could brag about when the holiday was over. He often skipped the hotel's excellent à la carte meals, preferring instead to walk to a nearby McDonald's for a hamburger and fries. In doing so, it appeared he was not interested in accumulating cultural capital on-site for display to fellow tourists. This was clearly something he had already obtained just by coming to Puerto Vallarta, and it would be cashed in once he returned home.

5. Tourists actually feel they want a holiday, a break, a change, an escape, an adventure, a rest, new knowledge, something different, and so on. This seems the most likely of the possible explanations outlined. Most tourists do not use terms like “the de-differentiation of tourism and everyday life” and seem to be blissfully unaware of its existence. Holidays still offer them situations and experiences that are sufficiently different from those of everyday life to make them seem worthwhile. To an external observer whose senses are finely tuned to pick up signs of de-differentiation or the merging of tourism and work, lines at the hotel buffet may resemble “clocking-in” queues at the factory, and the food on display may signal mass production and delivery techniques. To a tourist relieved from workplace or household worries, however, the scene may look very different—a bountiful array of foods, all prepared by someone else, and with no clearing-up or dishes to wash at the end. It cannot be denied that opportunities for travel and holidays are more widely available than ever before, or that tourism has become highly organized

and subject to techniques of mass production. But holidays are not so work-like, humdrum, or taken-for-granted as to have become fully integrated into the realm of the ordinary. As an analytical concept, de-differentiation has very limited value in explaining tourist behavior and experience.

In the literature on international tourism, a large number of studies focus on the economic, social, and cultural significance of tourism for less-developed or Third World countries. This growth of interest in what is sometimes called “North-South” or “Third World” tourism parallels the expansion of international tourism outward from well-established centers in Europe and North America, to the Caribbean, Central America, Asia, and Africa. It also reflects the keen interest in tourism’s role in processes of development and modernization, as well as concerns over its potentially disruptive effects on traditional societies. While the study of Third World tourism requires little justification, the large volume of published work on this subject can be somewhat misleading. It should be remembered that this kind of tourism as yet represents a relatively small component of worldwide tourism, accounting for between 25% and 30% of all international tourist arrivals (ITAs). Europe and North America accounted for almost 63% of ITAs and international tourism receipts in 2009.²⁰ Given Third World tourism’s current place in the global tourism picture, it would be unsafe to generalize about tourism—or even international tourism for that matter—from this basis alone. The popular stereotype of the ugly, arrogant, insensitive tourist (usually American!) is based mainly on the misconception that international tourists are typically people who stomp around the Third World. We need to remember that most of the stomping by international tourists is done in countries like France, the United States, and Spain, the three leading international destinations as far as ITAs are concerned.²¹

We have already noted that explanations of tourism and tourist behavior often involve making qualitative assessments. This has become more evident since the “cultural turn” moved analyses towards interpretation and the search for meaning in social and cultural situations. But qualitative evaluations and judgments have been part and parcel of tourism research for some time, especially in the work of anthropologists and sociologists. This is hardly surprising, since assessments of such things as host-tourist encounters, or the sociocultural consequences of tourism, cannot be adequately expressed by quantitative measures alone. In general, these assessments have tended to be negative or critical, pointing out various social, cultural, or environmental costs that have to be weighed against more easily measurable economic benefits, and they are characteristic of the “Cautionary Platform” described earlier. This emphasis on the sociocultural

and environmental downside was especially pronounced in many earlier anthropological studies of tourism in less-developed countries. It was, perhaps, an understandable reaction to a situation in which tourism was being evaluated primarily in terms of economic factors, while its broader social and cultural dimensions were being overlooked or downplayed. The negative cast of these anthropological studies may also have stemmed, in part, from the conservatism and aversion to modernization that once characterized anthropological thinking and is not entirely absent from it at present.

The influx of tourists into a community being studied by a field-working anthropologist inevitably means that it begins to lose some of its traditional anthropological credentials as a pristine, remote, and exotic place. This loss tends to undermine the traditional anthropological justifications for studying the particular community in the first place. It begins to resemble many other places in the modern world. The arrival of tourists in the anthropologist's territory can also pose a threat to the anthropologist's privileged position. As a temporary guest in the local community, the anthropologist was the stranger who tried to belong, and who sought an intimate understanding of the people and their culture—an understanding that would be conveyed through books, articles, documentary films, and talks to the world outside. The arrival of untrained, unqualified observers in the form of tourists who could also convey their impressions to others poses a challenge to the quasi-monopolistic position of the anthropologist.

Anthropologists have struggled, not always successfully, to clearly distinguish themselves from tourists. One writer has argued that much of anthropology's hostile response to tourism is due to the fact that anthropologists cannot be unambiguously distinguished from tourists, and that the "identities" of anthropologists and tourists may overlap.²² Valene Smith, the editor of a groundbreaking anthropological study of tourism, notes the kinship between anthropologists and "explorer tourists." Somewhat confusingly, this same writer also tells us that explorer tourists are "by definition" not tourists.²³ We should arrive at greater clarity on this matter in chapter 3, when we discuss various types of tourists in some detail.

Finally, two further cautionary notes may be entered regarding the academic literature on tourism. The first is that it is predominantly West-centric. In other words, it is produced almost entirely by Western scholars employing methods and perspectives that have developed within Western cultures and Western scholarly traditions. These methods and perspectives may not always be the most useful or appropriate in today's changing tourism landscape, where the rise of Asian tourism has prompted calls for new, homegrown approaches and a shift away from the dominant paradigm that

places the West at the center and the East at the periphery. The second is that most tourism studies have been undertaken by men, and very often these reflect male perspectives and interests. A notable development in recent times has been the emergence of a number of feminist tourism researchers who are offering valuable new insights, mainly through their analyses of gender and power relations in tourism. They have drawn attention to the gendered representation and construction of popular tourism sites, which emphasize the achievements, actions, and preoccupations of males. Some of their contributions to the study of tourism are discussed later in this book, and especially in chapter 6, which focuses on issues concerning gender and sex in tourism.

SLINGS AND ARROWS

It is hard to imagine any leisure activity that has earned so much condemnation as tourism, or any group of people—excepting lawyers, politicians, and used-car salesmen—who have been so reviled and mocked as have tourists. This is quite remarkable, considering the huge popularity of leisure travel and the fact that most of us have been, or will be, tourists at some point in our lives—whether we care to admit it or not. Tourism has sometimes been described as an “unloved industry”—a means of providing jobs, generating foreign exchange and economic development—but also producing unwanted and undesirable social and cultural effects. If only the tourists would just stay at home and send us their money, how much better things would be. And tourists have often been portrayed in unflattering terms, including gullible, exploitative, arrogant, naïve, overbearing, frivolous, and insensitive. Conveniently, the tourist always seems to be “the other person” and not ourselves, and tourists themselves can be harsh in their criticisms of fellow tourists, as they seek to position themselves as travelers.²⁴

Anti-tourism and anti-tourist attitudes can be found in a variety of writings, but are especially evident in the narratives of travel writers. Such writers normally do not consider themselves tourists, and their books are not designed to encourage tourists to visit the places they write about. They see themselves as travelers, and seldom travel in groups. When they do, the group is more likely to be cast as a band of resourceful adventurers or interesting eccentrics, rather than a humdrum collection of package tourists. They often journey to destinations off the main tourist tracks and generally try to avoid tourists as far as possible. They prefer places that have not been popular tourist destinations, and are prone to convulsive bouts of hand-wringing on discovering signs of tourist popularity. Theroux’s complaint that English south coast towns “could look terribly *visited*” (original italics) neatly sums up the anti-tourist philosophy of many travel writers.²⁵

Given the expanding global reach of tourism, however, encounters between travel writers and tourists are almost inevitable, and the reactions of travel writers are usually negative. Commenting on the influence of Indian tourists on a worker in a small hotel in Kashmir, the writer-tourist laments:

I discovered that in a few short weeks of the tourist season, of the tourist transistors turned to Radio Ceylon, his taste had changed. He liked the commercial jingles, he liked the film songs. They were modern, an accessible part of that world beyond the mountains from which the advanced, money-laden Indian tourists came. Kashmiri music belonged to the lake and the valley; it was rude. So fragile are our fairylands.²⁶

Sometimes curiosity about tourists drives the travel writer into their midst in a form of “slumming.” In the course of his journey around Britain, Paul Theroux buys a day pass to visit a Butlin’s Holiday Camp, a type of seaside resort that was once extremely popular with British working class people before holidays abroad became cheaper and more readily available:

It combined the security and equality of prison with the vulgarity of an amusement park. I asked children what their parents were doing. Usually the father was playing billiards and the mother was shopping, but many said their parents were sleeping—having a kip. Sleeping until noon, not having to cook or mind children, and being a few steps away from the chippy, the bar, and the betting shop—it was a sleazy paradise in which people were treated more or less like animals in a zoo.²⁷

Having spent a week at a Yorkshire Butlin’s many years ago, I cannot once recall having felt like an inmate in a prison or an animal in a zoo. The holiday was my wife’s idea, for she had enjoyed Butlin’s as a child and wanted our own four children to have the same experience. They all enjoyed themselves tremendously, participating in various sports and other activities, eating everything that was set before them in the dining hall without complaint, and collapsing exhausted into bed by 9 p.m. almost every night. Our fellow “campers” were mostly working-class people who found a week at Butlin’s a welcome escape from the daily grind of eight-to-five factory work or other routinized occupations. Admittedly, there were no musical appreciation classes, or sessions on existential philosophy, or lectures from famous travel writers, but we managed to survive and have a decent time without these. In the camp pub, much of the conversation revolved around sports like football (soccer) and horseracing, but current political affairs were also discussed, usually without rancor, for it