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Drivers of Change

Introduction

At first glance, tourism appears to be ubiquitous; it is often viewed as a global activity that is experienced in all countries, with every country having an equal stake. However, this is misleading as it has been demonstrated that international tourism is *'dominated by relatively few countries'*, with tourism being described as an activity *'open to an elite only'* (Todd, 2001, p. 12). As such, tourism has traditionally been engaged in by those who are from prosperous, more developed, countries, who have higher incomes and live in stable and secure societies. In the mid-2010s some new destinations, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, emerged (Weaver & Lawton, 2014), challenging the dominance of the traditional generating and receiving countries. However, most travel is still undertaken by tourists from the traditional tourism generating regions of Europe, North America and parts of South-East Asia (Sharpley, 2018, p. 50). This is reflected in the creation of the top 100 city destinations by Euromonitor International (2023) who determined a city's overall attractiveness by comparing 55 metrics across 100 city destinations using six key pillars, namely: economic and business performance; tourism performance; tourism infrastructure; tourism policy and attractiveness; health and safety; and sustainability. From this they reported that the top city destinations for 2023 were: Paris, France; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Madrid, Spain; Tokyo, Japan; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Berlin, Germany; Rome, Italy; New York, United States of America; Barcelona, Spain; and London, United Kingdom.

Despite this concentration of tourist origins, many countries around the world are interested in receiving tourists for the economic benefits including local employment and foreign currency. Todd (2001, p. 14) suggests that if every country in the world had *'peace with its neighbours and a rational approach to development'*, they could see tourism play its part in developing their economies. From a demand side perspective, *'rising real incomes, expanding discretionary spending, increasing leisure time, faster and cheaper transport and the spread of global awareness through the printed and broadcast media and ... through the internet'* fuel tourism growth (Todd, 2001, p. 15). But the question remains, what will happen to tourism in the future?

Predicting the future

Tourism and leisure forecasting has been described as more like economic forecasting than to weather forecasting because it involves a human element. As such, this makes attempting to foresee the future in tourism *'highly speculative'* (Veal *et al.*, 2015, p. 512). However, a good way to start any examination of future travel is to reflect on our understanding of the past and the present as this can help us to speculate on the future based on a *'dispassionate viewing of recent trends'* (Veal *et al.*, 2015, p. 512). Sharpley (2018, p. 52) suggests that the future is both simple and challenging to predict due to it being impossible to determine if a prediction is correct until *'the future becomes the present'*. It is also impossible to recognise key factors which might shape the future of tourism as they can be broad ranging *'from technological innovation to political or economic events'*.

For tourism to occur, an individual needs to have the time, money and means to travel (Weaver & Lawton, 2014). As society develops, a larger proportion of the world's population has access to leisure time and a higher disposable income. There is also increased awareness of tourist attractions and destinations which people seek to visit (Morrison, 2019). Couple this with relatively cheap airfares and these are the perfect conditions for tourism to grow, as illustrated in the last 50 years (Page, 2019). It can also be expected there will be corresponding increases in hospitality, as outlined in Chapter 5. Similarly, the frequency and variety of events staged across the world has increased and contributed to the growth of tourism (Getz, 2008). A networked global economy, driven by *'rapid and largely unrestricted flows of information, ideas, cultural values, capital, goods and services, and people (for example globalisation)'* (Dwyer, 2012, p. 531), has ensured that citizens will seek to visit and experience attractions and destinations.

Leisure time

There are many, and often contradictory, arguments used to predict the future of tourism based on the relationship between work and leisure. This is because, in this post-industrial world where rigid patterns of work have been challenged, leisure time and availability to engage in tourism has changed. Such a blurring of work and leisure time reflects the diversified location of the workplace, the expansion of part-time and casual work and the flexibility in working hours changing career opportunities. As a result, people no longer necessarily regard the weekend as a time of rest and relaxation; weekend shopping is now the norm, and people fit their leisure and tourism activities around the seven-day week, 24-hour economy (Veal *et al.*, 2001). These shorter, more frequent and more intensive periods of leisure