

Part 5 – Tourism Impacts and Sustainability

Tourism has alternately been portrayed as either a benign 'smokestack-free' activity that produces limited adverse impacts or as a major source of social, cultural and ecological impacts. Part 5 explores this issue in greater detail.

Chapter 13 examines the origins of many of the concerns over the social impacts of tourism and how much of these concerns have been placed within a conflict paradigm. It examines the two core origins of this concept, by Doxey (1975) and Budowski (1976). The chapter concludes by arguing most impacts are, in reality, a function of place change and residents' ability or inability to cope with it.

Chapter 14 develops this theme more by examining how concerns over tourism's impacts led to the emergence of sustainable tourism. It discusses the dilemma for sustainable development, and in particular, how the same words can be used by different stakeholders to espouse contradictory ideologies. It then looks at various models of sustainability.

Chapter 15 discusses the issues of climate change, resilience and the challenges of transitioning to a carbon-neutral economy. In doing so, it progresses the idea of how we can move to a more sustainable tourism future.

Chapter 16 discusses the challenges of planning for a sustainable tourism sector. A number of models are discussed, as are the difficulties in applying a one size fits all approach to tourism planning.

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Impacts – Conflict over Place Change

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Describe Doxey's Irridex
- Analyse how impacts are caused by place change
- Evaluate Budowski's relationships between tourism and the environment
- Understand how conflict theory underlies early attempts to assess social and environmental impacts of tourism.

Introduction

Concerns about unsustainable tourism practices have been a subject of academic inquiry since the earliest days of tourism scholarship. Indeed, it seems that a majority of the papers published in the first editions of *Annals of Tourism Research* documented adverse social and cultural impacts of tourism. As McKercher and Prideaux (2014: 21) noted:

“Wenkman (1975) documented the adverse environmental impacts of tourism on Hawaii. UNESCO (1976) published a literature review of the adverse social consequences of tourism. Rodenburg (1980) condemned large scale tourism in Bali and argued that small, community based tourism is preferred. Farrell (1979) documented adverse host-guest interactions. Jafari (1974) wrote a lengthy article documenting explicitly focusing on the costs, and not benefits of tourism.”

Since then, a range of topics has emerged with the sophistication of the research evolving as our understanding of the causes of impacts and possible mitigation strategies have matured. Yet, to a large extent, many of the critical issues remain

unresolved, in spite of the emergence of sustainable tourism as a dominant paradigm, as discussed in the next chapter.

Hundreds, if not thousands of academic papers have been published examining the impacts of tourism on host communities (Nunkoo, Smith and Ramkissoon, 2013). Deery, Jago and Fredline (2012: 65), though, note that much of this work is derivative, leading them to conclude “research into the social impacts of tourism appears to be in a state of ‘arrested development,’ [where] there is a sense that the advances in understanding the impacts of tourists on host communities is incremental at best, or potentially circular.” The reasons are manifold. Far too much of this research is descriptive in nature, and is typified by a ‘fill in the blank study – Understanding social impacts/community attitudes of tourism in _____ destination.’ Many papers as well use the same metrics to measure attitudes, and therefore, unsurprisingly, come to the same conclusions. A third issue is that much of this research is of the self-fulfilling prophecy kind, where if one structures the study to look for adverse impacts, they can be found. A fourth and more critical issue is the lack of theoretical basis for most of the research, something identified by Ap (1990) 30 years ago that is still relevant today.

This chapter explores some of the challenges in the conceptual discussion of tourism impacts. It begins with quest for theory and then reviews the foundational models by Doxey (1975) and Budowski (1976) that framed unsustainable practices within a conflict paradigm. It then looks at such issues as impacts as a function of place change.

Impact research - A quest for a unifying ‘theory’

Deery et al. (2012) identified four stages in the development of social impact research. The first stage began with the identification of definitions and parameters of the debate. This occurred in the 1970s. Shortly thereafter, incipient models were developed, with Doxey’s (1975) and Budowski’s (1976) models, discussed below, being the two most commonly cited ones. Stage three then looked at ways to operationalise these models, with Ap and Crompton’s (1998) work being among the most respected studies, for it developed rigorous questionnaires and study methods. The fourth stage represented instrument refinement.

Three issues confront social impact research. The first is that there is no such thing as a single community, when one measures community attitudes. Instead, geographic spaces are comprised of multiple communities that react to tourism in different ways. Some may feel they benefit from tourism, others are adversely affected, other still feel tourism has no impact and others yet have a complicated relation to tourism, seeing both benefits and costs. This observation leads to the