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Drivers of Change

Introduction

At first glance, it would appear that tourism is ubiquitous; it is 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'. As such, tourism has traditionally been engaged in by those who are from prosperous countries, who have higher incomes and stable and secure societies (Todd, 2001: 12). International tourism is dominated by the 'wealthier, industrialised world' (Sharpley, 2018: 50), with the major tourism flows occurring between the more developed countries or from developed countries to developing countries. In recent years some new destinations such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have emerged (Weaver and Lawton, 2014), challenging the dominance of the traditional generating and receiving countries. However, the majority of travel is still undertaken by tourists from traditional tourism generating regions of Europe, North America and parts of South East Asia (Sharpley, 2018: 50).

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: 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: 15). But the question remains, what will happen to tourism in the future?

Predicting the future

Tourism and leisure forecasting has been described as being more similar to 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: 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: 512). Sharpley (2018: 52) suggests that the future is both easy and difficult to predict because it is impossible to know if a prediction is accurate until 'the future becomes the present'. On the other hand, it is impossible to know which factors might influence the future of tourism as they can range from technological innovation to political or economic events.

For tourism to occur an individual has to have the time, money and means to travel (Weaver and 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 4. 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: 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 spread evenly throughout the year allows stressed workers to get away from their work to rest and recover.

It is difficult to predict whether individuals in developed countries will have more or less leisure time in the future because in some countries, the retirement age will rise and for others it will fall (Veal *et al.*, 2001). For wealthier retirees, leisure time is abundant and there is an increasing proportion of people aged over 60 years who are 'retiring earlier, fitter and with wide leisure interests' (Clark, 2001: 76). This ageing population has an interest in travel and tourism leading to an opportunity for tourism operators to cater for this growing market sector. Consequently there has been growing demand for 'health tourism and wellness activities' (Sharpley, 2018: 54) as discussed further in Chapter 9 of this volume.

Competition in the world economy and increased life expectancy means that some governments are reducing pensions and raising the retirement age. The affected population require increased pension contributions and more savings for their retirement. This leads to employees becoming worried about employment security and their income which could force them to remain in the workforce longer 'rather than thinking about long holidays' (Clarke 2001: 77). An increase in the retirement age may reflect the so-called 'dependency ratio', which is a measure of the number of economically inactive people (such as children, retired, unemployed), relative to those in the work-force. This can place unsustainable demands on public finances resulting in lower pensions, higher taxes, and people working longer. As a consequence, the younger and older generations in Western countries by the mid-21st century may have 'much lower disposable income and, hence, spend less on tourism' (Sharpley, 2018: 54). In effect, the leisure and tourism market are becoming increasingly segmented into those people who have money but are time-poor, and those who have less money but are time-rich. The time-poor tourists are likely to seek products that are tailored for a tight schedule to make the most of their limited leisure time. They may buy upmarket packages which allow them to be pampered, are exotic and fashionable but are for a shorter period of time. In contrast, time-rich tourists who are free of time constraints and with less disposable income may be 'open to enjoying several holidays each year', or extended trips which are inexpensive and more affordable (Clark, 2001: 79). The development of high-speed trains and further growth in low-cost airline operations will allow shorter breaks and excursions, as well as city tourism to become increasingly popular (Sharpley, 2018).

An alternative view on leisure is presented in West's book on the future of work (2018: 84). He suggests that one of the benefits of the way that work