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Key Concepts in Tourist Studies

MELANIE SMITH, NICOLA MACLEOD
AND MARGARET HART ROBERTSON

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MELANIE SMITH, NICOLA MACLEOD and
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Key Concepts in Tourist Studies



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
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Thank you all for continually moving the field of tourism studies forward and for keeping us all on our toes!

Introduction:

Why do we need another book on tourist studies?

The field of tourist studies has come of age with new and highly specialised texts being produced on a regular basis. Where once, in the early days of the discipline, the field was dominated by generic tourism planning and management handbooks, we now have texts covering such diverse tourism related topics as sex tourism, tea tourism, battle-field tourism, Olympic tourism, marine tourism and extreme tourism, to name just a few. How does *Key Concepts in Tourist Studies* fit into this growing literature?

The objective of this book is to present what the authors feel are the key concepts within our discipline in a concise and user-friendly manner. Each of the 40 concepts begins with a simple definition and provides a succinct and well-referenced overview of the topic with illustrative examples drawn from a wide international field. The concepts end with suggestions for further reading, should the user wish to pursue a particular topic in more detail. Useful web resources are provided where appropriate. Throughout, there is cross-referencing between the Key Concepts (given in the text in bold) as tourism studies is a multi-disciplinary field and none of our key concepts is an island.

We hope that this book will be used in a variety of ways. Students of tourism studies/management and those of associated disciplines such as leisure management, events management, countryside management or geography will find it a useful reference text to consult when they need to check up on particular topics (perhaps when beginning an essay or preparing for a tutorial). But the book can also usefully be read from start to finish as a good introduction to the field of study. We have tried to keep our Key Concepts as current as possible, including new topics such as e-Tourism, the Experience Economy, and Health and Wellness Tourism. We have also ensured that the references we cite and the further readings that we suggest are up to date.

We, the authors, have many years of experience in teaching tourism at both undergraduate and postgraduate level in the UK and further afield (e.g. Spain and Hungary) and have approached the writing of this book with our students, past and present, in mind. Tourism is an increasingly global industry which touches more and more people and places as it continues its expansion. The study of this industry touches on a number of other fields of academic study, such as cultural theory, planning, geography, economics, environmental studies, anthropology, marketing, politics and many more. To become conversant with such a wide range of disciplines and their literature is not possible for a student (or indeed for a university lecturer!) but our academic backgrounds and research interests have brought us in touch with a range of subject fields which have allowed us to explore the interdisciplinary nature of tourist studies and, hopefully, contextualise it in a useful way in this book.

One of the common questions for a book of this nature is how were the Key Concepts chosen, and how is it possible to reflect the diversity of a field like tourist studies in only 40 concepts? Our choices were reflected on at great length, including discussions with our publisher and taking into consideration the views of our colleagues and reviewers. Of course, no such book could hope to be fully comprehensive. The choices will also inevitably be contentious for many other academics, and maybe students too. Why did we choose to exclude concepts and topics which seem to be important for others?

Our choices take into consideration a range of factors, including the past, present and future of tourist studies. Some of the concepts are quite well-established now within the academic literature, such as Authenticity, Planning Tourism, Sustainable Tourism and the Tourist Gaze. However, they may be new and unfamiliar to students, or the literature may be so vast or complex that it is difficult to synthesise. Also, as the nature of tourism and society changes rapidly, many of the concepts need to be revisited regularly (e.g. Authenticity in the light of the Experience Economy; the Tourist Gaze in relation to globalization; Sustainable Tourism in connection with climate change; Planning Tourism at a time of Crisis Management, etc.).

Some of the concepts relate to the disciplinary frameworks which can help us to understand tourist studies better, for example Anthropology, Sociology, Economics and Geography. Of course, we could have added to this list Political Economy, Cultural Studies, or Environmental Studies, among others. However, we decided instead to allude to these disciplinary frameworks in the context of other concepts (e.g. Ethical Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Ecotourism).

Many of the concepts are what we might describe as typologies of tourism. This was a deliberate decision, as it is often the case that a student needs a concise summary of a typology of tourism when choosing an appropriate and interesting essay or dissertation subject. Lecturers may also require such material for course outlines and introductory lectures. Therefore, we refer to many typologies of tourism, such as Arts, Business, Cultural, Eco, Festivals and Events, Film and TV, Gastronomic, Health and Wellness, Heritage, Literary, Spiritual and Religious, Rural, Sports and Adventure, and Urban. Many of these are also categorised generically under Special Interest Tourism. Of course, we could have included Space Tourism and other even newer typologies, but it is assumed that tourism will continue to move forward and products will constantly be relabelled and repackaged. For example, Geotourism (discussed under Geography of Tourism) seems to be a combination of Eco and Cultural Tourism rather than a truly new form of tourism.

Some of the concepts refer to types or market segments and not just typologies, for example Backpacking, Ethical Tourism, Gay Tourism, Mature Tourism, Post-Tourism and Sex Tourism. It is often difficult to pin down these 'market segments' and define typical activities and motivations, as they are either so diverse (e.g. Backpacking, Mature Tourism) or covert (e.g. Sex Tourism, Gay Tourism). It is also sometimes difficult to define what is meant by an 'ethical' or a 'post' tourist. Therefore, these issues are discussed in some depth to help clarify these concepts.

Controversies and sensitivities abound in tourist studies and we have referred to many concepts which are the subject of ongoing and unresolved debate. These include Dark Tourism, Identity, Neo-colonialism, and Self and Other. Although these have been the subject of academic discussion for many years, the structure and politics of the world change constantly and so new issues need to be negotiated on an ongoing basis. For example, many countries are now in an era of transition (e.g. post-socialist countries), and are thus seeking new identities, often through tourism. Indigenous and tribal groups are slowly gaining some ground in asserting their true identities through tourism and countering the process of 'othering'. Decisions are still being made about how to deal with the legacies of imperialism and colonialism around the world. Dark tourist sites are being created all the time, one of the latest being Ground Zero in New York. Interpretation of dark heritage also changes constantly as time and space create a distance between events, their victims and their perpetrators.

A few of the concepts are especially topical right now, such as Crisis Management, Destination Management, e-Tourism, the Experience

Economy, Mobility and Regeneration. In several years, other issues may become more prevalent or the terminology will change. However, the impact of tourism on the planet and its people is likely to be an enduring subject (we chose to discuss the impacts of tourism under Planning Tourism). Natural disasters are likely to increase and cause more and more crises for destinations. Terrorism, however, may become less of a threat depending on political negotiations. Mobility will no doubt increase, unless climate change and fuel depletion radically affect the transport industry. Tourism destinations will always need a form of Destination Management, but may also stagnate, decline and regenerate in the meantime. Tourism has arguably always been about experiences, therefore the Experience Economy will continue to be a major theme, however it is labelled.

This all means that whatever concepts we choose to focus on, they may largely be variations of already existing issues in tourism, perhaps just repackaged or relabelled today or in the future. The past, present and future of tourist studies are clearly inextricably connected. We hope that our work reflects this, while presenting some fresh views of concepts which may be incredibly familiar or somewhat new. Whatever your view of our choices, we hope you find this work useful, interesting and thought-provoking.

Melanie Smith, Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary

Nicola MacLeod, University of Greenwich, London, UK

Margaret Hart Robertson, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria,
Spain

Anthropology of Tourism

Anthropology of tourism is concerned with the social and cultural nature of tourism and the behaviour of tourists.

The anthropology of tourism offers an insight into the socio-cultural dimensions of tourism, such as the behaviours of cultures and societies. International tourists in the second half of the twentieth century started to visit those locations in which many anthropologists had carried out their fieldwork. The interaction between tourists and local people provided a new source of anthropological enquiry (Holden, 2005). Therefore, traditionally in tourism studies, anthropology tended to deal with the impacts of tourism on the lifestyles, traditions and cultures of local people, residents or 'hosts'. Over the past few decades, anthropologists have started to shift their focus from largely negative ethnographic critiques of the cultural impacts of tourism to a more balanced discussion of travel and tourism as a social and cultural phenomenon.

The anthropology of tourism has strong connections to sociology, development studies and behavioural psychology. Anthropology and **sociology of tourism** are two sides of the same coin. Both study the qualitative aspects of the experience of tourism, the former at the individual level of perceptions and aspirations, and the latter at the level of social community analysis. Both anthropology and sociology study identity, differentiation and sense of place. In addition, they focus on the tourist's motivations, attitudes, reactions, relations, interaction with the locals and socio-economic and cultural impact on a resort and its people. As reflected in other Key Concepts (e.g. **self and other, identity**), the anthropology and sociology of tourism look at questions of acculturation, authenticity, identity construction and consumption theory as applied to the tourism industry and activities. Perhaps where anthropology, sociology and economics show potential overlap is in marketing studies, branding, image and consumer psychology. However, the economic focus is on the industrial perspective of scale economies

and profit margins, whereas the anthropological/sociological focus is on the social and cultural changes and impacts produced, for example by globalisation. However, anthropology has its own specific characteristics, and tends to be more focused than sociology, which often examines general social phenomena rather than specific ones relating to individual communities or tribes.

Núñez's 'Tourism, Tradition, and Acculturation: Weekendismo in a Mexican Village' (1963) is often credited as the earliest tourism-related article in American anthropological literature, and Valene Smith's seminal work, *Hosts and Guests* (1977/1989), was to mark the course for the anthropology of tourism to follow in the future, together with Margaret Mead's valuable work in the field of visual anthropology. In 1983, the academic journal *Annals of Tourism Research* devoted an entire issue to anthropological submissions. The work of anthropologists such as Nelson Graburn (1977) focused on tourism as a personal transformative experience, and Dennison Nash (1977) discussed tourism as a form of modern imperialism. Influential too has been the work of Victor Turner on rites of passage (1969), that is, rites that accompany the passage of a person from one social status to another in the course of his or her life. Tourism is seen as a ritual or sacred journey, and its traditional associations with pilgrimage have also been discussed. Turner (1978) describes how the ritual process involves three key stages: the first is the 'separation' stage from the routine of everyday life; the second is entry into a state of 'liminality', where the structures and order of everyday life cease to exist; and the third involves a state of 'communitas', where the normal structures of social differentiation disappear and people are brought together.

Selwyn (1996) identified three main strands within the anthropology of tourism:

- social and cultural change
- semiology of tourism
- tourism's political economy.

Social and cultural change includes the process of acculturation. Anthropologists have been studying acculturation for decades, and it is recognised that tourism is only one of many factors that can lead to permanent cultural change. It is an inevitable fact of tourism that cultural changes occur primarily to the indigenous society's traditions, customs and values, rather than to those of the tourist. This is particularly prominent in the case of tribal or **indigenous tourism**. There are fears that host

culture and identity may be assimilated into the more dominant or pervasive culture of the tourist. The homogenisation of culture is often exacerbated by tourists whose behavioural patterns are sometimes copied by local residents. Although tourism may be intermittent and seasonal in some destinations, the constant levels of visitation over time can have a considerable impact on the social and cultural fabric of the host society. Mathieson and Wall (1992) differentiate between acculturation and cultural drift, stating that cultural drift is a phenotypic change to the hosts' behaviour which takes place only when they are in contact with tourists, but which may revert back to normal once the tourists leave. Genotypic behaviour is a more permanent phenomenon whereby cultural changes are handed down from one generation to another. This is most likely to occur where tourism is non-seasonal, its influence is strongly pervasive, or local people are favourably disposed towards its development.

The semiology of tourism relates to signs and symbols. Dean MacCannell was one of the first to make an explicit application of semiotics to the study of tourism. MacCannell (1976) argues that signifiers are the first contact that a tourist has with a site, even though they are merely a representation of the site. This can include travel media, guidebooks and other information sources. The creation of myths, dreams and fantasies is also an important part of semiotics. Myth and fantasy have always been central to the tourist experience. As stated by Rojek (1997: 52), 'Mention of the mythical is unavoidable in discussions of travel and tourism', and by Tresidder (1999: 147), 'tourism at its most simplistic level is concerned with the production and consumption of dreams'. Iconic images, such as the Mona Lisa or the Taj Mahal, are common in tourism marketing. However, the reality may be somewhat disappointing compared to the representation.

The political economy of tourism studies can refer to tourism as a new form of imperialism (see **neo-colonialism**). It can relate to the power relationships in tourism, such as host–guest relations, but also core–periphery and dependency theory. Mowforth and Munt (1998) describe how Western capitalist countries have grown as a result of expropriating surpluses from developing countries, which are largely dependent on export-orientated industries. The notion of core–periphery relationships is used within dependency theory to highlight this unequal, often exploitative relationship. Economists have focused traditionally on core–periphery theory and the growth–dependency relationships between host nations and their Western 'benefactors', but this is

also a subject of interest for anthropologists. It is especially significant in neo-colonial countries and developing countries which are dependent on tourism. It is also important to consider who owns culture and in what ways it is appropriated by non-indigenous agencies.

Anthropology of tourism uses qualitative and intense participatory processes to be able to understand what makes a community work, and an individual within that community fit, through extended life histories, participant observations and personal interviews, plus content analysis. Ethnography has become an established methodology in the anthropology of tourism studies. Sociology of tourism does the same on a less subjective and more generalised level, through social and statistical surveys of populations and the reasons for their choices of movement within a determined structure.

See also: *authenticity, identity, indigenous tourism, neo-colonialism, self and other, sociology of tourism, tourist gaze*

FURTHER READING

Apart from Valene Smith's classic, *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977 and the updated version 1989), the work of Dennison Nash, Nelson Graburn, Tom Selwyn and Peter Burns, to name but a few, has been valuable towards the consolidation of the field of study.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Burns, P. (1999) *An Introduction to Tourism and Anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Nash, D. (1996) *Anthropology of Tourism*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Nash, D. (2006) *The Study of Tourism: Anthropological and Sociological Beginnings*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Smith, V.L. (1989) *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Arts Tourism

Arts tourism refers to travel which is motivated by an interest in the performing and visual arts including opera, ballet, music and arts festivals.

Arts tourism is a sub-set of **cultural tourism** and **heritage tourism** and is also closely related to **special interest tourism**. The arts have long been a key motivator for travel with the early Grand Tourists, from the sixteenth century onwards, being keen to experience the theatres, opera houses, concert halls and festivals that Europe had to offer. The buildings were as much a draw as the performances that went on within them and many of these venues still form the basis for arts tourism itineraries today. Including a visit to an arts venue is a popular holiday activity and, typically, arts tourism is generally thought to refer to tourists' visits to the following types of venues:

Type of venue	Examples
Art galleries	Uffizi, Florence; Prado, Madrid
Opera houses	La Scala, Milan; Sydney Opera House
Theatre	Broadway, New York; Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon
Ballet	Sadlers' Wells, London; Bolshoi Ballet, Moscow
Classical music	Vienna Konzerthaus; Symphony Hall, Boston
Arts festivals	Edinburgh Festival; Venice Carnival

Wider definitions have, however, recently been suggested which also encompass popular entertainment, contemporary music/pop festivals and ethnic arts (Hughes, 2000; Smith, 2003). As with all aspects of culture, there are definitional problems when looking at arts tourism and its relationship to both popular culture and the wider cultural tourism sector. Should popular seaside entertainment (enjoyed by

many as part of their holiday experience) be included? Are pop festivals (a major motivator for youth travel) a rightful part of the arts tourism sector? Could the many art galleries which house historic art collections perhaps be considered to be part of the heritage tourism sector rather than arts tourism attractions? Despite this lack of clarity, arts tourism is certainly seen as an attractive option for many tourists, for the industries that have developed a range of arts tourism products and for regions and cities that either promote their existing arts scene or have pursued arts-led tourism development and urban regeneration strategies (Evans, 2001).

The demand for arts tourism has increased in tandem with a greater maturing of the tourism market. This maturation process has included a greater interest in individualised special interest holidays and the search for deeper experiences, meaning and identity through tourism activities, all of which suggest a greater interest in artistic encounters. It is also true to say that the supply of arts tourism sites and experiences has grown in recent years, with many new arts festivals and flagship arts venues such as the Tate Modern in London and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao proving themselves to be very popular tourist attractions. The Tate Modern was the fourth most popular free visitor attraction in England in 2007 with over 5 million visitors (VisitBritain, 2008). Increasing numbers of short-break tour operators sell weekend accommodation and theatre ticket packages in major cities, and specialist arts tourism operators provide packages which offer personalised itineraries and additional benefits such as back-stage tours and talks with directors. Some of these companies, such as Prospect Tours, which has been in business for over 25 years, have specialised to the point of offering single-artform packages to discerning and high-spending arts tourists often travelling in very small groups (Prospect Tours, 2009).

However, despite these examples, recent research carried out by ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education) in 2007 suggested that arts tourism is significantly less popular than heritage tourism, with over 65 per cent of tourists surveyed stating that they had visited a museum, 52 per cent a historic site but only 24 per cent stating that they had been to an art gallery, 12 per cent to the theatre and 5 per cent to a classical music event (ATLAS, 2007). This may be explained by the fact that heritage sites are usually highly place-specific and are considered to be part of the process of getting to know a destination, while arts performances are often more global in scope. Visitors may consider that historic sites offer them more spontaneity

and freedom than a performing arts venue and there is often a language barrier associated with the arts. Of course, heritage and the arts are not mutually exclusive activities and it is often the case that visitors will enjoy historic sites during the day and experience the arts in the evening (Hughes, 2000: 70).

As we can see from above, arts tourists are not necessarily a homogeneous group with shared interests and behaviours. Instead, they are disparate types of visitors who range from those who have a very focused interest in particular art forms to those who are visiting an arts venue in a more casual manner. Hughes has addressed this disparity with his classification of the arts tourist by their levels of motivation and interest. According to Hughes (2000), the *arts core* tourist is one who has chosen to travel in order to see a particular arts performance and the *arts peripheral* tourist is one who will be travelling for some other purpose but will experience an arts performance as part of their trip. The *arts core* tourist can then be further classified as either a 'primary' arts-related tourist (they have made the decision to attend a performance before they leave home) or a 'multi-primary' arts-related tourist (where attending a performance is equally important as their other reasons for being in the destination). Similarly, the *arts peripheral* tourist can be further examined in terms of whether they are an 'incidental' arts-related tourist (a visitor whose interest in a performance is a secondary reason for their visit) or an 'accidental' arts-related tourist (someone who makes their decision to see a performance after they have arrived at their destination and for whom the arts are not part of their initial decision to visit). Such classifications help those involved in the arts tourism sector to understand the complex motivations and decision-making processes of the arts tourist, and this knowledge can aid arts tourism organisations to develop appropriate products and target their marketing efforts.

Arts tourism undoubtedly brings benefits to individual venues and destinations. Additional revenue can be generated through ticket sales and the higher spending that is generally associated with all culturally motivated tourists; moreover, as arts events often take place in the evening, they can encourage more overnight stays. A vibrant arts scene enhances the image of a destination, making it a more attractive place to visit, live and work and arts venues play a leading role in urban regeneration strategies. However, there are some tensions within the arts tourism sector. Those working in the arts often have very different priorities from the wider tourism industry and often

the lead times for performances and exhibitions provided by the arts sector are inadequate to allow them to be included in arts tourism holiday packages (Smith, 2003). Finally, there are often anxieties about the impact that an association with tourism can have on the arts – that it may lead to trivialisation, inauthenticity and other negative impacts on the art form itself. Hughes researched the impact that tourism has had on the output of London's Theatreland, where the dominance of tourists in audiences has led to an over-supply of musicals to the detriment of more serious theatre (Hughes, 1998).

Arts tourism, as defined above, will continue to attract relatively small but high-spending groups of visitors and will be seen as a prestigious route to tourism promotion and development in many regions and destinations. However, numerous other forms of artistic experience are enjoyed by participants and enhance the visitor experience:

the high arts ... often tend to attract audiences who are motivated partly by prestige value or social status of attending such a performance ... Compare this with the genuine and spontaneous delight that spectators and participants often take in a festival, carnival or rock concert and it is not difficult to see why certain arts events are more popular with tourists. (Smith, 2003: 139)

A wider definition of the range of arts performances that are appreciated by tourists and which contribute to the visitor economy may better reflect the scope and impact of contemporary arts tourism. There will always be a market for opera tours, theatre breaks and visits to international arts cities such as Rome, Paris and Florence, but the popular art forms, including rock festivals and light entertainment, are enjoyed by a much wider audience and deserve to be recognised as important contributors to the arts tourism sector.

See also: *cultural tourism, festivals and events, heritage tourism, regeneration, special interest tourism*

FURTHER READING

This is a rather under-researched area and Howard Hughes' book, *Arts, Entertainment and Tourism*, published in 2000, remains the most thorough and recent examination of this sector. The wider associated cultural tourism field is well covered in Melanie Smith's *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies* and in the work of Greg Richards, for example *Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives*.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Hughes, H. (2000) *Arts, Entertainment and Tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
Richards, G. (ed.) (2007) *Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives*. New York: Haworth.
Smith, M.K. (2003) *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*. London: Routledge.

Authenticity

Authenticity in tourism can be defined as the value that tourists and hosts place on the development and consumption of what are perceived to be genuine cultural events, products and experiences.

Discussions of authenticity are common in the literature of tourism studies and have been central to explorations of the social and cultural impacts of tourism since the American anthropologist Dean MacCannell first published his influential text *The Tourist* in 1976. The increasing influence of the tourism industry, the greater ease of travel and ever-widening range of visited places has increased the urgency of debates on the impacts of tourism on the authenticity of cultures. These debates focus on the ways in which tourism has impacted on the authenticity of:

- the tourists' experience of places and culture
- the culture of the hosts themselves
- the nature of the host–guest relationship
- the production of cultural objects and events consumed (but not necessarily exclusively) by tourists.

The assumption is that tourism and the presence of tourists results in a loss of genuine real culture, to be replaced by trivial, commodified events, products and experiences that debase both the producer and the consumer. Of course, what is 'authentic', 'real' or 'genuine' is difficult to