Section 2: The Contemporary Tourist

3 Contemporary Tourists, Tourist Behaviour and Flows

Chapter objectives

After reading this chapter you will:

- Understand different approaches to categorising types of tourism .
- Appreciate factors that have contributed to the growth of international tourism
- Understand the significance of wildcard events that may slow or reduce tourism growth.
- Identify factors that may explain the short-term stability of tourist flows and patterns.
- Understand the roles of distance and accessibility as key factors in determining tourism flows.
- Understand the characteristics of mass and alternative tourism.
- Understand the nature of special interest tourism.
- Appreciate psychographic and motivational approaches to explaining tourist behaviour.
- Appreciate the significance of lifecourse approaches to explaining changes in tourism behaviour over the life of an individual as well as cohort value shift with respect to tourism.

Introduction

The movement of tourists with respect to both the number of people traveling and the geographic spread of where people travel has continued almost unabated at the global scale since the end of World War Two. Multiple reasons exist for the growth in international and domestic travel. Critical reasons include increases in disposal incomes and available time for travel. Yet there are also a number of other factors that determine both the generation of tourists from countries and their reception at destinations. This chapter therefore examines a range of factors that determine the patterns, flows and behaviours of contemporary tourists. These will be examined at various scales of analysis and detail.

Macro-level analyses of tourism examine the movement of people in aggregate form (Table 3.1). Descriptions of tourism at this level focus on the spatial aspects of tourism (Hall, 2012), i.e. tourist patterns and flows, and on different forms of tourism, i.e. broad accounts of tourism that have been defined on the basis of activity or cultural and social trends as well as the way the social, economic and technological structures influence how people travel and consume (Hall, 2016). Micro-level analyses of tourism often seek to explain individual tourist behaviours on the basis of theories of tourist psychology and motivation (McCabe et al., 2016) as well as growing interests in the habits of tourism consumers (Hall, 2016). Nevertheless, there is clearly a link between individual and aggregate accounts of tourism as aggregate descriptions of tourism are the sum of behaviours of large number of individuals. There is therefore a third group of analyses of tourism that may be described as mid- or meso-level accounts of tourism that seek to integrate aggregate and individual accounts of tourist behaviour, examples here include the use of time-geography techniques that chart the movement of individuals over space and time (Hall, 2005b; Coles et al., 2006; Frändberg, 2006, 2008, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2014; Shoval et al., 2015), as well as the means by which social practices and consumer culture affect tourist behaviour and consumption (Hall, 2016).

Table 3.1: Scales of analysis of tourism

Scale of analysis and description of tourism	Focus	Key concepts
Macro	Aggregate	• Distribution, Patterns, Flow • Activity • PEST (political, economic, environmental, socio-cultural and technological trends) • Socio-technical regimes (also referred to as socio-technological regimes)
Meso	Combines aggregate and individual analysis	• Mobility, trip stage, life course, travel career, socialisation, practices
Micro	Individual	• Personality, psychographics/lifestyle • Motivation, expectation, satisfaction • Habits

The first part of the chapter describes travel movements at a global scale. The second section then explains changes in tourism at a macro-level with reference to structural factors that influence tourism as well as other descriptions of different types of tourism. The third section examines tourist behaviors and demands at a micro-level by examining how individual travel preferences may be explained in terms of psychographics or personal motivations. The final section outlines a meso approach that examines how travel motivations and constraints change over an individual's life.

Global travel movement

The movement of tourists is not evenly spread around the globe. Tourism is subject to a range of influences and factors that determine its relative distribution. Flows are not random but are patterned. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 provide figures on the number of international visitor arrivals for different regions of the world and the relative growth in tourism for those regions since 1950.

Table 3.2: International tourism arrivals and forecasts 1950-2030 (millions)

Year	World	Africa	Americas	Asia & Pacific	Europe	Middle East
1950	25.3	0.5	7.5	0.2	16.8	0.2
1960	69.3	0.8	16.7	0.9	50.4	0.6
1965	112.9	1.4	23.2	2.1	83.7	2.4
1970	165.8	2.4	42.3	6.2	113.0	1.9
1975	222.3	4.7	50.0	10.2	153.9	3.5
1980	278.1	7.2	62.3	23.0	178.5	7.1
1985	320.1	9.7	65.1	32.9	204.3	8.1
1990	439.5	15.2	92.8	56.2	265.8	9.6
1995	540.6	20.4	109.0	82.4	315.0	13.7
2000	687.0	28.3	128.1	110.5	395.9	24.2
2005	799.0	34.8	133.3	153.6	440.7	36.3
2010	940.0	50.2	150.7	204.4	474.8	60.3
2015	1189.0	53.4	192.7	284.0	603.7	55.6
forecast						
2020	1360	85	199	355	620	101
2030	1809	134	248	535	744	149

Note: There is some small variance in UNWTO statistics for international arrivals between UNWTO publications. Where this occurs the statistical source closer in time to the given year is adopted.

Source: WTO 1997; UNWTO 2006, 2012, 2017

One of the immediate results of an analysis of international tourism in terms of patterns of movement is that international tourism has historically been concentrated in the more advanced economies of North America and Europe. However, over time the Asia-Pacific region is experiencing significant growth relative to Europe and the Americas because of its own substantial rate of economic develop-