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## The Future of Tourism

### Introduction

For the past 50 years or so, tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon has been steadily growing, despite what can be seen today as temporary blips in which growth has slowed or numbers have actually fallen for a short period. Some of these factors leading to a decline or a slowing in growth have been as a result of natural causes and others have occurred following human induced changes. Looking to the future, there are a number of factors that can assist in the further growth and development of tourism and yet other factors that can restrict development and even turn growth into decline. This chapter considers future developments in tourism.

### Key perspectives

Some of the factors that will affect the future of tourism are external to the industry. The most important of these, as noted in Chapter 11, is global climate change. One major result of global warming will be melting of the polar ice caps; the rise in sea level that occurs will cause flooding along low lying coastal areas and in particular will affect a number of islands where tourism is important such as the Maldives and Seychelles. Mountain areas will also be affected by global warming which will disrupt any type of snow-based tourism. Climate change will have dramatic impacts on how, where and when people travel, assuming that they are able to, and will reshape the tourism industry over time (Foundation for the Future, 2009).

As noted in Chapter 12, natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis may have an effect in particular locations; diseases such as SARS may re-occur, new diseases may break out and in either case, be spread around the world by tourists. Terrorism is a relatively recent phenomenon affecting tourism, and in some locations has greatly altered tourist behaviour and motivation to visit, although these changes in tourism do not appear to be permanent.

Other factors that may affect future tourism are internal and will probably include changes in demand for particular types of tourism experience. Changes in demand are likely to occur if prices for holidays and other tourism activities

increase in relation to, for example, higher fuel costs. As tourism is in some ways a 'fashion industry' (see Prosser, 1998) new locations and activities will be sought by future tourists, compared with those participated in today.

By the mid-2020s, the UN expects the world population to grow to 8 billion. That's an additional 1.3 billion people, who will place dramatic new demands on the planet as well put pressure on the finite resources for tourism. The growth of the middle classes in countries like China and India has the potential to reshape global tourism flows dramatically. In the current situation, many more tourists visit these countries from the rest of the world than travel in the opposite direction. In the next 30 years or so, movement of tourists from China and India to the rest of the world will greatly increase.

For many commentators conditions are already bad and the following case study indicates for some tourism has already reached a point where drastic action needs to be taken to change tourism.

### Case study: 'Mass Tourism is at a tipping point – but we are all part of the problem'

During August 2017, *The Guardian* newspaper published two very critical commentaries on tourism. Extracts from one of them, written by journalist Martin Kettle, are presented below.

Kettle indicates that about 30 years ago, he was researching to write on global population pressures, and interviewed the zoologist Desmond Morris. During that interview, Morris said something that was hard to forget Kettle indicated. "We have to recognise," he said, "that human beings may be becoming an infestation on the planet".

Those words came back to Kettle as reports were arriving during the 2017 summer about the increasing reaction in several parts of Europe to mass tourism. Kettle noted that very different places, including the Mediterranean coast and the Isle of Skye, were complaining more or less simultaneously about the sheer pressure of tourist numbers in their streets and beauty spots. His reaction was to feel as if the uneasy balance between the visited and the visitors had gone beyond a tipping point.

As he wrote: 'Pictures of a wall in Barcelona saying, "Tourist Go Home"; or of protesters in Palma saying, "Tourism Kills Mallorca" should touch an uneasy nerve in anyone whose summer getaway has taken them to places such as San Sebastián, Dubrovnik, Florence, Venice and – further afield – New Orleans and Thailand. For all of these have either taken, or are considering measures to limit the relentless pressure from mass tourism by people like you and me.'

Part of his report focused on Venice, (discussed in Chapter 12). He wrote: "Predictably, Venice is one of the most agonisingly pressured of all. It embodies the increasingly irreconcilable forces of vernacular life, tourism and sustainability in historic parts of Europe.

But that doesn't stop the millions arriving all the time – 28 million this year, in a city with a population of 55,000, many disembarking from monstrous cruise ships that dwarf the ancient city as they approach the Grand Canal. Each day in summer is a humiliation of most of the things the world treasures about Venice. Not surprisingly, many locals have had enough”.

Kettle goes on to argue that far from being unusual, what is happening in Europe during the summer of 2017 is occurring in many parts of not just Europe, but around the world. Kettle suggests that anarchists in Barcelona captured the headlines by holding up tourist buses in protest against the cost of living that they say is inflicted by tourism, especially by short-term-let companies such as Airbnb, which drive up housing costs. He states that the tourism problem is global as human beings across the world make more than a billion foreign trips a year, and this is twice as many as 20 years ago. In Britain, 45 million foreign holidays were taken in 2016, a 68% increase on 1996. He added: “And foreign trips cut both ways. Many of those who were interviewed in the media when the narrow road to Glen Brittle on Skye became jammed with traffic this week were European visitors, attracted not just by the scenery but by the advantageous exchange rate”.

Kettle argued that the problem is related to both supply and demand, and claimed that: “There isn't enough room for the many to walk through the centre of Dubrovnik, or enough public loos on Skye for the visitors”. But of particular concern to Kettle is that the number of people wanting to visit such places has been rising for many years, fed by greater global prosperity, cheaper air travel and an increased supply of hotels worldwide. The result Kettle indicated is that: “Tourism is now the largest employer on the planet. One in every 11 people relies on the industry for work”. But he believes this is why the problem is particularly worrying and suggests: “Unsurprisingly, few governments want to put a squeeze on such a source of wealth”.

Kettle also believes that governments are not solely to blame, and that consumers have to take some responsibility. As he argues: “We all want to go to places such as Venice. And we are mostly all willing to submit to the indignities and embarrassments that are involved in doing so – whether it's irksome but necessary security checks or overcrowded departure lounges, no-frills flight regulations, car hire price-gouging and all the rest of it... but few are seriously deterred”. So, he contends, all of us are part of this problem, not the solution.

He moves on to consider possible solutions: “Can anything be done to get the visited and visiting into a more sustainable balance? It is tempting to fall back on Morris-like pessimism and to suspect that it can't, that the issues are unmanageable”. He suggests that there are many extremely difficult aspects to the problem, and argues: “The biggest, in a global sense, is the rise of Chinese tourism”, but that no-one should be in a position to deny Chinese people the rewards of travel. Another issue he raises is to do with air travel and indicates: “The tourism industry's carbon footprint is equally problematic. But if people want to take the planes, and the planes are available, who is to say that this