Economies

Introduction

The relations between the tourist gaze and those industries that develop to meet that gaze are complex. Most tourist services are delivered at the time and place at which they are produced, although there are a few exceptions to this. Thus the quality of the social interaction between the provider of the service, such as the waiter, flight attendant, tour rep or hotel receptionist, and the consumers is part of the ‘product’ purchased by tourists. If aspects of that social interaction are unsatisfactory (the off-hand waiter, the unsmiling flight attendant, or the rude receptionist), then what is purchased is in effect a different service product. One major problem results from how the production of such consumer services is not entirely carried out backstage, away from the gaze of tourists who cannot help seeing some aspects of the industry which is attempting to serve them. But furthermore, tourists tend to have high expectations of what they should receive since ‘going away’ is normally endowed with significance and anticipated through advertising and marketing undertaken by tourist organizations. People are looking for the extraordinary and hence will be critical of services appearing to undermine such quality. These expectations of service quality are especially pronounced in the case of international business travellers (see Beaverstock et al., 2010).

One consequence of this is that services cannot be provided anywhere; they have to be produced and consumed within specific places. Part of what is consumed is, in effect, the place in which the service producers are located. If the particular place does not convey appropriate cultural meanings and display memorable visual features, the quality of the specific service may be tarnished. There is therefore a crucial ‘spatial fixity’ about tourist services. In recent years there has been enormously heightened competition to attract tourists. So while the producers are to a significant extent spatially fixed, in that they have to provide particular services in particular places, consumers are mobile, able to consume tourist services to some degree on a global basis. The industry is inevitably competitive since almost every place in the world could well act as an object of the tourist gaze. There is also a crucial temporal fix to some services. Many services (such as a hot meal) need to arrive at a very specific time, and each service encounter is always a ‘moment of truth’. Services are performances of the here-and-now (see Chapter 4). A service that does not arrive at the right time is very likely to be perceived as a poor service. And yet services have an unpredictable ‘afterlife’; bad and good services can stick in the memory and ‘travel the world’ through travel talk and reviews on the internet. Any moment of poor service may come back to haunt that place in the future.

The emphasis on the quality of the social interaction between producers and consumers of tourist services means that tourist developments are not simply explicable in terms of ‘economic’ determinants. As shown later it is also necessary to examine a range of social and cultural changes which transform people’s expectations about what they wish to gaze upon, what significance should be attached to that gaze, and what effects this has upon the providers of relevant tourist services. This industry has normally necessitated considerable levels of public involvement and investment, and in recent years this has increased as all sorts of places attempt to construct or reinforce their position as favoured objects of the tourist gaze. The economics of tourism cannot be understood separately from the analysis of cultural, management and policy developments found later in this book, just as work in tourist industries cannot be understood separately from the social expectations that surround the complex delivery of services. Work relationships in tourist industries are significantly socially defined.

In this chapter attention will be directed to some developments in the changing political and cultural economy of the tourism. We trace a shift from Fordism to post-Fordism during the last decades and then exemplify this through recent discussions of the related notions of the ‘Experience Economy’, ‘McDonaldization’, and ‘Disneyfication’.

SAGE Books - Economies
Fordism and Post-Fordism

We begin with Campbell's classic analysis of the character of consumption (1987). He argues that covert daydreaming and anticipation are central to modern consumerism. Individuals do not seek satisfaction simply from products, from their selection, purchase and actual use. Rather, satisfaction stems from anticipation, from imaginative pleasure-seeking. People's basic motivation for consumption is not simply materialistic. Rather, people seek to experience 'in reality' the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination. However, since 'reality' rarely provides the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to the longing for ever-new products and services. There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the very heart of contemporary consumerism.

Campbell seems to view 'imaginative hedonism' as a relatively autonomous characteristic of modern societies and separate from specific institutional arrangements, such as advertising or particular modes of social emulation (1987: 88–95). Both claims, though, are dubious in general but particularly so with regard to tourism. It is hard to envisage the nature of contemporary tourism without seeing how such activities are constructed in people's imagination through advertising and the media, and through competition between different social groups employing different kinds of capital (see Selwyn, 1996, on tourism images). If Campbell is right in arguing that contemporary consumerism involves imaginative pleasure-seeking, then tourism is surely the paradigm case. Tourism necessarily involves daydreaming and anticipation of new or different experiences from those normally encountered in everyday life. But such daydreams are not autonomous; they involve working over advertising and other media-generated sets of signs, many of which relate to complex processes of social emulation, as we show later.

One further problem in Campbell's otherwise useful analysis is that he treats modern consumerism as though it is historically fixed. He thus fails to address the changing character of consumption and the possible parallel transformations in the nature of capitalist production (consumption is used here in the sense of 'purchase' and does not imply there is no 'production' within households). However, many writers argue that a sea-change took place within contemporary societies, involving the shift from organised to disorganised capitalism (Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994). Other writers have characterised this as a move from Fordism to post-Fordism, and in particular from mass consumption to more individuated patterns of consumption (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Harvey, 1989; Poon, 1989, 1993).

But this consumption side of the analysis is undeveloped, indicating the 'productivist' bias of much literature here. In order to deal with this we now set out two ideal types of Fordist mass consumption and post-Fordist differentiated consumption.

**Mass consumption**: this involves the purchase of commodities produced under conditions of mass production; a high and growing rate of expenditure on consumer products; individual producers tending to dominate particular industrial markets; producers rather than consumers as dominant; commodities being little differentiated from each other by fashion, season and specific market segments; and relatively limited choice – what there is tends to reflect producer interests whether private or public. Such a system was set in motion by Thomas Cook, who historically popularised tourism through mass consumption, or what we might term Cookism rather than Fordism. Thomas Cook realised that 'mass tourism' had to be socially and materially invented and organised through producer expertise. As a result of various system innovations, Cook turned expensive, risky, unpredictable and time-consuming individual travel into a highly organised, systematised and predictable social activity for the masses, based upon expert knowledge. Cook's early innovations included systems of ticketing, guiding, conducted tours, block bookings, the railway coupon and the organised collection and delivery of luggage (Brendon, 1991).

**Post-Fordist consumption**: this involves consumption rather than production as dominant with consumer expenditure increasing as a proportion of national income; new forms of credit permitting consumer expenditure to rise with high levels of indebtedness; very many aspects of social life are com-
modified; much greater differentiation of purchasing patterns by different market segments; more
difficulty of consumer preferences; the growth of a consumer movement and the ‘politicising’ of con-
sumption; the reaction of consumers against being part of a ‘mass’ and the need for producers to be
more consumer-driven, especially in the case of service industries; developing more products, each
having a shorter life; new kinds of commodity which are more specialised and based upon non-mass
forms of production (‘natural’ products, for example); and much attention paid to developing sign-
value and ‘branding’.

Although some consumption patterns cross-cut this division, western societies have been broadly moving
from the former ideal type to the latter. This shift is reflected in the changing character of contemporary
tourism (see Poon, 1993; Urry, 1995a). For example, in Britain the holiday camp was the quintessential ex-
ample of Fordist holidaymaking. In the move to post-Fordism such camps have been renamed ‘centres’ or
‘holiday-worlds’ and now present themselves as places of ‘choice’, ‘independence’ and ‘freedom’. We show
in later chapters how many other changes are occurring in contemporary holidaymaking of a broadly ‘post-
Fordist’ sort. These changes have been characterised by Poon as the shift from ‘old tourism’, which involves
packaging and standardisation, to ‘new tourism’, which is segmented, flexible and customised (1993). Some
such changes are also transforming relations between tourism and other cultural practices. In Chapter 5 we
consider ‘postmodernism’, a significant feature of which is the importance placed on play, pleasure and them-
ing. Later in this chapter we consider how ‘globalisation’ produces further shifts in the production and con-
sumption of tourism sites – especially through the emergence of global brands and the Web 2.0 revolution of
the internet.

First, though, we discuss two influential contemporary theories of post-industrial production and consumption:
the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and Disneyization (Bryman, 2004). Both concepts highlight
how extraordinary personalised experiences are key in the post-Fordist consumption economy.

The distinctive feature of the experience economy is that services need to be more than just mere ‘services’,
which can seem boring to the increasingly thrill-seeking consumer. Services need to be somehow pleasurable
and memorable; they must be ‘experiences’, ‘revealed over a duration’. Pine and Gilmore coined the term ‘ex-
perience economy’ in 1999 and argued that the service economy is turning into an experience economy. Rev-
ue derives from staging and enacting memorable, exciting and engaging experiences, rather than providing
services on demand as cheaply as possible. This is a largely consumer-driven transformation as consumers
are said to desire extraordinary services. In a post-Fordist economy businesses need to think of themselves
as ‘theatres’ with their staff as performing artists in order to engage with consumers (Pine and Gilmore, 1999:
104). Places of service encounters need to be imagined and staged as affective venues of atmosphere and
eventness where memorable experiences come to be ‘revealed over time’. Service producers must thus learn
to perform, play, enact and stage – not unlike actors in a theatre. They are no longer providers of benefits but
stagers of sensations.

Pine and Gilmore interestingly introduce theatre metaphors to management and design as well as arguing
that the rest of the economy ought to learn from Walt Disney and other entertainment businesses where ex-
periences have always been at their heart (1999: 98). In a fully-fledged experience economy, customers fly
with, eat and shop at, and book into with those businesses that not only meet basic needs and functions in
the here-and-now, but turn them into personal and memorable experiences that remain in the memory (Pine

Pine and Gilmore's ideas have rapidly spread into policy and commercial fields as part of a wider interest in
developing a new ‘cultural economy’ (Löfgren, 2003; Gibson and Kong, 2005; O'Dell and Billing, 2005). Pol-
cy makers, urban planners and architects, who are seeking to revitalise decaying places and commercialise
cultural institutions such as theatres and museums, increasingly turn into ‘experience-scapes’ (Hayes and
MacLeod, 2007). Tourism and hospitality managers also adopt Pine and Gilmore's ideas so as to develop
innovative approaches to service performance (Landry, 2006; Bell, 2007).
The notion of Disneyization has similarities with the experience economy. This is because Disney theme parks are the metaphor and lead model within the notion of an experience economy. According to Bryman, ‘Disneyization connects with a post-Fordist world of variety and choice in which consumers reign supreme’ (2004: 5). This is an economy where consumer variety and choice is delivered through the spectacular ‘theming’ of servicescapes and by turning service encounters into events where performative workers simultaneously entertain and treat consumers as ‘kings’. Disneyization is a strategy through which businesses seek to increase the value of goods and services by transforming them into differentiated experiences, ‘magically’ making the ordinary extraordinary.

This notion of Disneyization differs from Ritzer’s McDonaldization thesis (2008). The latter emphasises how consumption is homogenised and standardised across the world, that is, Fordist. McDonaldization suggests that tourists crave for experiences and services that are predictable, standardised, risk-free and calculable – just like the Big Mac no matter where it is served. According to Bryman, ‘Disneyization seeks to create variety and difference, where McDonaldization wreaks likeness and similarity. It exchanges the mundane blandness of homogenised consumption experiences with frequently spectacular experiences’ (2004: 4; see Chapter 4 on Disney parks).

However, Bryman also brings out that some services and leisure spaces contain elements of both McDonaldization and Disneyization. Many tourism sites, such as all-inclusive resort hotels (Edensor, 1998), package tours (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010), cruises (Weaver, 2005) and theme parks (Lukacs, 2008), combine the predictable and standardised together with the personal and experiential. Moreover, a more general McDonaldization of the wider society has made the need to McDonaldize holidays less important. Thus if we consider standardized meals:

In the past, one reason that tour operators had to offer standardized meals was that the food available at any given tourist site was like to prove too unusual and unpredictable and therefore unpalatable for many tourists. However, now tourists can safely be left on their own at most locales since those that want standardized meals can almost undoubtedly find them readily available at a local McDonald's, or at an outlet of some other international chain of fast-food restaurants. (Ritzer and Liska, 1997: 98)

Globalisation

The English seaside resort examined in the previous chapter went into at least relative decline in the mid-1960s, at the moment when mass tourism, at least in Europe, started to internationalise. This internationalisation means that tourist patterns in a particular society cannot be explained without examining developments taking place in most other countries. Through internationalisation, tourist sites can be compared with those located at home and abroad, especially via the internet. So when people visit somewhere in their own country they are in effect choosing not to visit somewhere abroad. All potential objects of the tourist gaze can be located on a scale and compared with each other, often now more or less instantaneously via television and the internet.

One consequence of such globalisation is that different countries, or different places within a country, come to specialise in providing particular kinds of objects to be gazed upon. An international division of tourist sites has emerged in the last two or three decades. Britain came to specialise in history and heritage, and this affects both what overseas visitors expect to gaze upon and what attracts British residents to spend time holidaymaking within Britain. Moreover, this internationalisation is more developed in Britain than in some other countries. This is partly because of the early and innovative development of the package or inclusive holiday in Britain, and partly because there were already many historical sites to attract significant numbers of overseas tourists. Just as the UK economy in general is an open economy, so this is also true of tourism.
Tour operators based in Britain have sold their inclusive or package holidays at cheaper prices than comparable European countries. In the 1980s, in most hotels in Spain, Portugal and Greece, it was the British-based tour operators that offered the lowest price; British-based companies were effective at reducing unit costs and generating a huge market for international travel in the UK. There are now about 19 million package holidays sold each year (compared with 8 million in 1983; http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/budgettravel/5130485/Return-of-the-package-holiday.html; accessed 31.03.10). Inclusive holidays had such an impact in Britain because of the early emergence of integrated companies, the tour operators, who combined together the developing technologies of jet transport and computerised booking systems from the 1960s onwards.

With the formation of a single European market, tour operators in Europe increasingly operate in each of the major countries. This has increased competition and reduced the level of concentration within a single country, as well as increasing cross-border takeovers and mergers. This has also raised the level of vertical integration, with the operators also owning travel agencies, hotels and airlines (Chandler, 2000: D5–9).

It seems that with increased leisure time people, especially young people, are increasingly moving away from the standardised package holiday and seeking many more forms of leisure activity, including independent travel (Desforges, 1998). There has been a marked increase in seats-only flights, partly because of the demand for more flexibility and partly because of the growth in overseas property ownership (until the Great Crash of 2008 with its decline in holiday-making and some rise, it seems, in packaged holidays). Only about one-tenth of overseas visitors to Britain are on inclusive holidays.

Barrett also suggests that some switching to independent travel ‘is partly a reaction to the “naffness” of package holidays’, that indeed even in the 1980s they were no longer viewed as fashionable or smart (1989b). Between 2003 and 2007, independently booked holidays rose from 21.7 million to 27.2 million, while package holidays stagnated at around the 19 million mark (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/budgettravel/5130485/Return-of-the-package-holiday.html; accessed 31.03.10). This has been further developed by the popularity of low-budget airlines such as Ryanair and easyJet operating with a different business model, as discussed below.

Furthermore, new technologies, in particular ICTs, are especially important because of the immense informational and communication problems involved in planning and coordinating actions at a distance. We now consider the major impact the internet has upon the political economy of tourism, particularly with so-called Web 2.0. Since the early days of the internet, tourism industries, travel agencies, tour operators and airlines used the internet for internal and external management, planning, logistics and communication, on the one hand, and issuing tickets, promoting destinations, developing appropriate tourist gazes and place myths on websites to tourists, on the other (Buhalis and Law, 2008). While ‘shopping’ on the internet is not yet widespread, except for specific products such as books, booking hotels and air tickets is now commonly undertaken online (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006; Xiang and Gretzel, 2009). Over half of Danes surveyed in 2008 regularly buy air tickets and/or book hotel rooms online (http://www.dst.dk/nytudg/14530; accessed 04.05.10).

Schmallegger and Carson highlight how the internet is significant for tourism within promotion, product distribution, communication, management and research (2008). Overall, the internet makes possible a ‘networked economy’ where tourism suppliers can more easily operate on a global scale, are less reliant on traditional intermediaries such as travel agents, tour operators and check-in staff, and can make the tourism ‘product’ more individual and flexible.

The exceptional growth of cheap airlines illustrates these processes. Such companies cut flight prices through online booking on their websites and thereby selling directly to passengers without the expense of travel agents. Budget airlines provide financial incentives for self-booking online and do not issue paper tickets (like most other airlines now). At one time, playing on the British Airways’ slogan ‘the world's favourite airline’, easyJet branded itself ‘the web's favourite airline’. In 2001 Ryanair's website handled 75 per cent of all their bookings. Today 97 per cent of Ryanair's passengers book online and 75 per cent use the internet to check
in and Ryanair closed all its airport check-in desks on the 1st October 2009 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7903656.stm; accessed 31.03.10). In airport terminals tourists are increasingly interacting with faceless ‘internet screens’ rather than the more or less human faces of the tourism industry. Much service provision is increasingly becoming, we can say, ‘face-to-interface’ rather than ‘face-to-face’.

A further indicator of the networked nature of tourism economies is the proliferation of international internet-based reservation websites, such as http://Hotels.com, http://Expedia.com and http://Cheapflights.com. These are very visible on the internet when browsing for cheap air tickets or hotels around the world. Such ‘search engines have become a powerful interface that serves as the “gateway” to travel-related information as well as an important marketing channel through which destinations and tourism enterprises can reach and persuade potential visitors’ (Xiang and Gretzel, 2009: 179). http://Hotels.com is an American-based Hotel Reservations Network (HRN) offering consumers discounted hotel rooms in major cities around the world. At http://Expedia.com it is possible to compare prices for airline tickets, hotel reservations, car rentals, cruises, vacation packages and various attractions at particular destinations across much of the world. As http://Expedia.com says:

Expedia delivers consumers everything they need for researching, planning, and purchasing a whole trip. The company provides direct access to one of the broadest selections of travel products and services through its North American Web site, localized versions throughout Europe, and extensive partnerships in Asia. Serving many different consumer segments — from families booking a summer vacation to individuals arranging a quick weekend getaway, Expedia provides travelers with the ability to research, plan, and book their comprehensive travel needs. Expedia-branded Web sites feature airline tickets, hotel reservations, car rental, cruises, and many other in-destination services from a broad selection of partners. (http://www.expedia.com/default.asp; accessed 02.05.10)

At http://Hotels.com and http://Expedia.com travellers purchase the service directly through the websites without having contact with the actual provider of the service. At http://Cheapflights.com the site redirects customers to the websites of the service providers themselves.

While tourism industries are less dependent upon traditional intermediaries, the power and presence of these virtual reservation networks mean that hotels and airlines have to be linked up to such hubs. There is a new widespread dependence upon all-pervasive technical intermediaries or systems that are themselves very significant global internet brands.

Consumers find such sites attractive. First, they are time-effective if they work, since customers only need to consult one such ‘site’ (hub) rather than Google-ing for and visiting several sites. Second, they create transparency, comparability and informed choice in a virtual world of many choices and disparate sites, something that has characterised the internet since its inception. Each search for a given service (say, a hotel in Warsaw at a particular weekend) will produce a list of available hotels, listing amenities and including photographs, the specific price for those nights, and a star ranking based upon both ‘traditional stars’ and customer reviews. Third, they allow for more flexible and individualised travel patterns. Systems affected through the internet permit customers to ‘self-serve’ themselves with airline tickets and other standardised products. Consumers can put together more flexible packages, a kind of holiday ‘mix ‘n’ match’ or what the industry terms ‘Free and Independent Travel’ or FITs. Expert systems developments enable the prospective traveller to provide some parameters of intended travel and then allow the computer to generate related consumer products.

Until recently the tourism industries largely controlled information flows since tourists could not interact with this information or contribute their own content. This changed with Web 2.0 as the internet became in some ways more open, collaborative and participatory. It affords an open online participatory culture where connected individuals not only surf but can make things through editing, updating, blogging, remixing, posting, responding, sharing, exhibiting, tagging and so on. Web 2.0 highlights how consumers have become part of the production process. Perhaps the key defining feature of Web 2.0 is that users are involved in processes
of production and consumption as they generate and browse online content, as they tag and blog, post and share. This has seen the ‘consumer’ taking a more active role in the ‘production’ of commodities. Indeed, it is the mundane personal details posted on profiles and the connections made with online ‘friends’ that become the commodities of Web 2.0. It is the profile, the informational archive of everyday lives, that draws people into the network and encourages individuals to make ‘friends’ (Beer and Burrows, 2007: 3.3).

Web 2.0 also impacts upon tourism businesses and how tourists plan their journeys. They not only ‘post’ ‘travel tales’ to significant others, but also to ‘strangers’ in user-generated social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace), photo communities (e.g. Flickr, Photobucket) and travel communities (e.g. Virtualtourist, TripAdvisor). Users produce web content as well as consuming it. Web 2.0 provides tourists with opportunities to publish their recommendations, reviews and photographs on reservation websites (such as http://Hotels.com and http://Expedia.com) and travel websites (such as http://Tripadvisor.com and http://Virtualtourist.com) to other tourists who can thus plan their journeys without necessarily consulting the tourism industry’s brochures and home pages.

These travel-community websites featuring user-contributed travel reviews are conceived as being more sincere than the always glossy brochures and home pages of the tourism industry. http://Tripadvisor.com claims to host ‘more than 30 million trusted traveler reviews and opinions’. Such ‘reviews and opinions’ from other tourists who have experienced the service of a particular hotel can powerfully debunk an expensive four or five star hotel or upgrade a cheaper two or three star hotel. This is a new economy where tourism services are continually ‘shamed’ or ‘recommended’ on a global virtual stage with millions of daily visitors. While word-of-mouth recommendations always have been a crucial factor in triggering journeys to particular places, they were traditionally confined to a small world of friends, family members and co-workers. ‘Electronic word-of-mouth’ does not know such a restricted world since it is global in scope (albeit highly unequal around the world). Given that tourists rely more on such search engines to locate and compare travel information, it is unsurprising that research shows that favourable recommendations, or electronic word-of-mouth, are good for business, whereas bad recommendations can have fatal consequences, especially for smaller or less known companies or brands (Litvin et al., 2008).

Thus, such travel community websites are ‘powerful’ in that they can support or harm, be in line with or out of touch with, for instance, a city’s official brand or a hotel’s assigned stars (see Pan et al., 2007; Ek et al., 2008). Place branding and star-reviewing is no longer in the hands of the tourism industries; tourists are now part of that place-making and experience evaluating process. This also means that a moment of poor service at one moment in time can haunt that place if the tourist goes on to share that experience.

The sincerity of user-generated material is also recognised by many tourist organisations. For instance, VisitBritain, the official website for travel and tourism in the UK, asks tourists to upload comments, photos and videos: ‘This is your chance to share what you love about Britain with the world! Browse the reviews to see what other travellers remember about their holiday in England, London, Scotland or Wales and check out photos, videos and comments’ (http://www.visitorreview.com/visitbritain; accessed 31.03.10). So user-generated content not only creates problems for tourism managers. It also affords new ways of communicating directly with costumers, the cheap and specialised promotion of places and services, insight into the rating of one’s own and competitors’ services and so on (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). It helps to extend and ‘democratise’ the tourist gaze.

In the next section we consider the organisation of the tourist industry more generally through examining some aspects of the social relations between hosts and guests.

Social Relations

We saw in Chapter 1 how there can be complex relationships between tourists and the local populations of
those places where tourists gaze. There are various determinants of the social relations between such 'hosts' and 'guests', as Smith (1989) and others elaborate. These determinants are set out and developed below:

1. The number of tourists visiting a place in relationship to the size of the host population and to the scale of the objects being gazed upon. For example, the geographical size of New Zealand would permit more tourists to visit without environmental damage (except for climate change) or undesirable social effects. By contrast the physical smallness of Singapore means that extra tourists cannot easily be accommodated except by even more hotel building which would only be possible by demolishing the remaining few Chinese shophouses which are one of the main objects of the tourist gaze. Similarly, the medieval city of Dubrovnik has an absolute physical carrying capacity determined both by the city walls and the population of over 4,000 people currently living within its walls.

2. The predominant object of the tourist gaze, whether it is a landscape, a townscape, an ethnic group, a lifestyle, historical artefacts or buildings, or simply sand, sun and sea. Those tourist practices that involve the observation of physical objects are less intrusive than those that involve observing individuals and groups. Moreover, within the latter, the observation of the private lives of host groups will produce the greatest social conflict. Examples here include Eskimos or the Masai, who responded to the gaze by charging a '£ for car' for visits to their huts. By contrast, where what is observed is more of a public ritual then social conflict will be less pronounced and wider participation may be positively favoured, as in various Balinese rituals (see Smith, 1989: 7; see Chapter 8 below).

3. The character of the gaze involved and the resulting spatial and temporal 'packing' of visitors. For example, the gaze may be something that can take place more or less instantaneously (seeing/photographing New Zealand's highest mountain, Mount Cook), or it may require prolonged exposure (seeing/experiencing the 'romance' of Paris). In the case of the former, Japanese tourists can be flown in for a visit lasting just a few hours, while the romance of Paris necessitates a longer and 'deeper' immersion.

4. The organisation of the industry that develops to service the mass gaze: whether it is private or publicly owned and financed; whether it is locally owned or involves significant overseas interests; whether the capital involved is predominantly small- or large-scale; whether the staff is local or from elsewhere; and whether there are conflicts between the local population and the emergent tourist industry. Such conflicts can occur around many issues: conservation as opposed to commercial development, the wages to be paid to locally and nonlocally recruited employees, the effects of development on local customs and family life, what one might call the 'trinketisation' of local crafts, and how to compensate for the seasonality of work available. Moreover, 'hosts' are not a uniform group since those benefiting from tourism financially are less critical of 'guests' than those that do not, such as Venetian residents (Quinn, 2007).

5. The effects of tourism upon the pre-existing agricultural and industrial activities. These may range from the destruction of those activities (much agriculture in Corfu); to their gradual undermining as labour and capital are drawn into tourism (much of Spain); to their preservation as efforts are made to save pre-existing activities as further objects to be gazed upon (cattle farming and gazing upon grazing in the Norfolk Broads).

6. The economic, social and ethnic differences between visitors and most hosts. In northern Europe and North America, tourism creates fewer social conflicts since many 'hosts' will themselves be 'guests' on other occasions. It may be that in a rather inchoate way tourism develops 'international understanding' or a cosmopolitan attitude (Szczerszynskii and Urry, 2002, 2006; Verstraete, 2010). Elsewhere, however, there are usually large inequalities between the visitors and the indigenous population, most of whom could not envisage having the income or time to be tourists themselves. These inequalities are even more marked when visitors are international business travellers (Beaverstock et al., 2010). Such differences can be reinforced in many developing countries by the nature of tourist
development, which appears exceptionally opulent and highly capitalised, as with many hotels and resorts in India, China, Singapore and North Africa, partly because there are few service facilities otherwise available to visitors let alone to the host population.

7 The degree to which the mass of visitors demand particular standards of accommodation and service, that they should be enclosed in an environmental bubble to provide protection from many features of the host society (Edensor, 1998; see Chapter 6). This demand is most marked among international business travellers and inclusive tour visitors, who not only expect western standards of accommodation and food, but also bilingual staff and well-orchestrated arrangements. Many tourists rarely leave the security of the western tourist bubble and to some degree are treated as dependent ‘children’ by tourist professionals (Smith, 1989: 10–11; Edensor, 1998). In some cases, the culture actually is dangerous, as in some major cities, global slums and areas of warlordism and terrorism. This expectation is less pronounced among individual exploring ‘travellers’, repeat tourists, poorer tourists such as students, and those visitors for whom ‘roughing it’ and ‘danger’ is part of the ‘experience’ (see Edensor, 1998, on backpacker tourism; Freire-Medeiros, 2011, on favela tourism).

8 The degree to which tourists demand the right to gaze at hosts, to use and move through their everyday spaces and gaze upon them with curiosity and to photograph them close hand or secretly at a distance. One study of an American folk community shows that 75 per cent of the locals regard tourist photography as having a ‘negative impact’ upon their life (Chhabra, 2010: 10). This can create feelings of being constantly watched, being objectified by the tourist gaze and living within a tourist honey pot (Maoz; 2006; Quin, 2007; see Chapter 8). Jordan and Aitchison show how many female tourists (especially those on their own) are subject to the sexualised and controlling gaze of local men (2008). Bodies themselves are especially subject to the gaze, especially with the marked racial and gender inequalities that are involved. McClintock describes the extraordinary intertwining of male power with both colonised nature and the female body in the history of travel into and across the ‘virgin’ territories of Empire (1995).

9 The degree to which the state in a given country actively promotes tourism or tries to prevent it. There are countless examples of the former, where large numbers of tourists are part of the ‘scenery’ (Smith, 1989). By contrast, some oil states had for moral and social reasons explicitly restricted tourism (Saudi Arabia), although Dubai has turned itself into one of the most exceptional tourist destinations since its oil began to run out some decades back (Elliott and Urry, 2010; see Chapter 9). During the Cultural Revolution in China in the late 1960s the state sought to prevent the growth of tourism. When this changed in the mid-1970s, western visitors were so unusual that they were often applauded as celebrities. But by 2020 China is forecasted to be the world’s leading tourist destination and tourist-generating country.

10 The extent to which tourists can be identified and scapegoated for supposedly undesirable economic, social and cultural developments. This is more common when visitors are economically and/or culturally and/or ethnically distinct from the host population (see Saldanha, 2002, for frictions between ‘raving tourists’ and locals in Goa, India). It is also more common when the host population is experiencing rapid economic and social change. It is also common in places where tourists more or less outnumber locals and invade their everyday spaces. Venetian residents blame tourists for overcrowding public transport, slowing down their everyday mobility, increasing prices for goods and services, generating waste, and so on (Quinn, 2007: 467–9). However, such change is often not simply the outcome of ‘tourism’. And it is much easier to blame the ‘nameless, faceless foreigner’ for local problems of economic and social inequality (Smith, 1989). Moreover, some objections to tourism are objections to ‘modernity’ itself: to mobility and change, to new kinds of personal relationships, to a reduced role of family and tradition, and to different cultural configurations (see the ‘Global Code of Ethics for Tourism’: http://www.tourismpart-
The relational gazes of hosts and guests. The tourist gaze is ‘mutual’ where the eyes of guests and hosts intersect, however briefly, each time the tourist gaze is performed (see Chapter 8). While much research stresses the power of guests in objectifying hosts as scenery (or eyesores) and treating places as their ‘oyster’, hosts also exercise power and objectify through what the ‘local gaze’ (Maoz, 2006; see also Cheong and Miller, 2000; Chan, 2006).

The social impact of tourism practices thus depends upon the intersection of many processes. We stress throughout this book that distinctions between hosts and guests are increasingly fluid in mobile societies where there is much travel for work and pleasure, and places are globally connected with wide-reaching cultural, social and economic networks. Tourist places are not unique, bounded and fixed ‘islands’ that are subject to external forces producing impacts. They come into existence through relationships. Places float around within mobile, transnational networks of humans, technologies, objects, risks and images that continuously connect and disconnect them to other places (Urry, 2007: 42). Massey says that what gives a place its specificity is not some long history but how it is constructed out of the ‘constellation of relations articulated together at a particular locus’ (1994: 217).

We briefly examine a few such places to demonstrate how some of these processes intersect. First, there is the Mediterranean basin where the growth of tourism has been one of the most significant economic and social developments. Tourism is a striking symbol of post-war reconstruction, generating the world's largest destination with more than 275 million international tourists a year, accounting for around 30 per cent of international tourist arrivals (http://www.planbleu.org/publications/SoED2009_EN.pdf, p. 100; accessed 19.03.10; see Pons et al., 2008). As incomes grew in post-war West Germany, France, Scandinavia, the Low Countries and Britain, so there was a more than corresponding increase in demand for overseas travel. In response, southern Europe developed enormous tourist industries. And those industries have been particularly cost-effective, which in turn lowered the real cost of overseas travel and led to further expansion. Spain was the first and has remained the largest Mediterranean destination. Other major destinations are France (the world's most visited country), Italy, Greece, Portugal, Malta, Cyprus and Turkey. Overall, tourism generates a net distribution of wealth from northern to southern Europe.

Some of the effects of extensive tourist practices in parts of these countries are well known. These stem from the huge number of tourists and their seasonal demand for services, the deleterious social effects particularly resulting from the gendered work, the geographical concentration of visitors, the lack of concerted policy response, the cultural differences between hosts and guests, and the demand by some visitors to be enclosed in expensive ‘environmental bubbles’.

One place said to be ‘overrun’ by tourists is Florence, where the resident population of some 400,000 accommodates 7 million visitors each year. This led to the 1980s plan to remove the city’s academic, commercial and industrial functions from the centre and to turn Florence entirely over to tourism. It would have meant, according to critics, the ‘Disneyfication of Florence’ (Vulliamy, 1988: 25).

Robert Graves similarly decried the tourist transformation of Majorca, an island which many consider has exceeded its carrying capacity:

the old Palma has long ceased to exist; its centre eaten away by restaurants, bars, souvenir shops, travel agencies and the like. … Huge new conurbations have sprung up along the neighbouring coast. … The main use of olive trees seems to be their conversion into … salad bowls and boxes for sale to the tourists. But, as a Majorcan wag remarked, once they are all cut down we will have to erect plastic ones for the tourists to admire from their bus windows. (1965: 51; see Heidegger, 2005: 56, on how tourism is obliterating the possibility of the ‘sojourn’)
Turkey is a more recent country to develop as a major destination. The immediate attraction for local investors in Turkey is that most revenue comes in the form of foreign exchange. Turkish tourism has so far involved the ongoing proliferation of some ugly unplanned developments of large-scale hotels and holiday apartments, such as those in Bodrum, Marmara and Alanya, which may indeed be demolished. As early as 1988, one specialist operator, Simply Turkey, withdrew from selling holidays in Gumbet because it was ‘No longer small and pretty, it is a sprawling building site, noisy and dusty, with a beach not large enough to cater for its rapid development’ (quoted in Whitaker, 1988: 15). The impact of rapid tourism growth is particularly contested because south-west Turkey has attracted considerable numbers of individual ‘travellers’ seeking out its antiques. Turkey is hence poised between the conflicting interests of mass tourism and a more socially select tourism, between collective and romantic tourist gazes (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010, on the Danish tourist invasion of Alanya in Turkey).

Many argue that there is a very serious environmental threat to the Mediterranean and especially the coastline, where most tourists visit and increasingly where much of the population live. It is suggested that the number of visitors to the Mediterranean could increase from what was around 100 million in the 1980s to 637 million by 2025 (http://www.watermonitoringalliance.net/index.php?id=2052&L=2%2F%2Finclude; accessed 19.03.10). This will place a huge strain upon food, water and human resources, and have major implications for climate change. There is an increasing development of ‘desertification’, with 30 per cent of Greece and 60 per cent of Portugal facing a moderate risk. Some consider that there is a long-term possibility of the Sahara desert extending north of the Mediterranean if climates continue to change.

The second most important area of tourism is that of North America. Developments are different from Europe in that the car, the highway, the view through the windscreen and the commercial strip are central. Jäkle talks of how, in the post-war period, cities, towns and rural areas were all remade in the ‘universal highway order’ (1985: ch. 9). There was a rapid improvement of the quality of the road system, to engender faster travel and higher traffic volumes. In post-war USA certain landscapes were substantially altered so as to produce a gaze: ‘pleasing to the motorist … using the land in a way that would “make an attractive picture from the Parkway”’ (Wilson, 1988, 1992: 35, our italics). The state, according to Wilson, turned nature into something ‘to be appreciated by the eyes alone’ (1992: 37). The view through the car windscreen means that: ‘the faster we drive, the flatter the earth looks’ (Wilson, 1992: 33).

More generally, Baudrillard suggests that deserts in the USA constitute a metaphor of endless futurity, the obliteration of the past and the triumph of instantaneous time (1988: 6). Driving across the desert involves leaving one's past behind, driving on and on and seeing the ever-disappearing emptiness framed through the shape of the windscreen (Kaplan, 1996: 68–85). These empty landscapes of the desert are experienced through driving huge distances, travel involving a ‘line of flight’ into the disappearing future. Roads came to be built for the convenience of driving, not for the patterns of human life that might be engendered. The ubiquity of the radio and CD players and to some extent of air conditioning in American cars insulates passengers from most aspects of the environment except the mobile tourist glance through the windscreen (Larsen, 2001; Urry, 2007). And this view reveals almost nothing because townscapes consist of commercial strips, the casual eradication of distinctive places and the generation of a standardised landscape. Jäkle terms this the production of ‘commonplaceness’ (1985) while Augé speaks of non-places (1995). The commercial strips lack the ambiguities and complexities that generally make places interesting. They are ‘unfunctional landscapes’ which became even more uniform in appearance as large corporations operate chains of look-alike and standardised establishments (McDonald’s, Howard Johnson, KFC, Holiday Inn and so on). The automobile journey has become an icon of post-war America, reflected in Kerouac’s On the Road (1957) or the film Easy Rider (1969). While in Lolita (1962) Humbert Humbert concludes: ‘We have been everywhere. We have seen nothing’ (quoted in Jäkle, 1985: 198).

One exemplary tourist site in North America is Niagara Falls. Reaction to it has always involved superlatives, framed within discourses of the sublime (see Shields, 1990). Observers reported themselves lost for words. It was an exotic wonder; it had an immense aura. Thus in the eighteenth century the Falls were an object of
intense natural aura; in the nineteenth century they functioned as a liminal zone gazed upon and experienced by courting couples; but in the later twentieth century they became another ‘place’ collected by the mobile visitor for whom the gaze at the Falls stands for spectacle, sex and commerce. All the emphasis at the Falls is placed on the props, on honeymoon suites and heart-shaped ‘luv tubs’. The Falls now stand for kitsch, sex and commercial spectacle. It is as though the Falls are no longer there as such and can only be seen as spectacle. Thus the same entity in a physical sense has been transformed by various tourism interests.

Related to this is the growth of ‘sex-tourism’, bodies as objects of the tourist gaze in certain south-east Asian societies as well as in most major cities throughout the world (Oppermann, 1999). In South Korea this has been specifically encouraged by the state. Its main form consists of the kisaeng tour specifically geared to Japanese businessmen (Mitter, 1986: 64–7). Many Japanese companies reward their outstanding male staff with all-expenses tours of kisaeng brothels and parties, and many Japanese tourist agencies have encouraged and provided such sex services (Leheny, 1995: 375). South Korean ministers have congratulated the ‘girls’ for their contribution to their country’s economic development.

Other countries with a similarly developed sex industry are the Philippines and Thailand. In the case of the former the state encourages the use of ‘hospitality girls’ in tourism, and the Ministry of Tourism recommends various brothels (Mitter, 1986: 65). Package tours organised with a Manila agent include pre-selected ‘hospitality girls’. Of the money earned, only about 7–8 per cent is retained by the women sex-workers. These social practices have been generated by exceptionally strong patriarchal practices which cast women as either ‘madonna/virgin’ or ‘whore’; the belief among men from affluent countries that women of colour are sexually available, submissive and willing to be bought; the high rate of incest and domestic violence by fathers/husbands in some such societies; rural depopulation which draws people into the cities looking for any possible work; and the growth of ‘specialist’ tour companies and websites devoted to facilitating travel for groups of male ‘sex-tourists’ (see Enloe, 1989, on attempts to organise to protect prostitutes; Leheny, 1995; Clift and Carter, 1999). Since the mid-1990s the Thai government has tried to restrain the sex industry and promote other forms of tourism. This is in part because of the growing threat of AIDS and in part because new types of tourists, including women and young families, find offensive such sexualised gazes and bodies (Leheny, 1995).

But there is more to sex-tourism than prostitution. First, the tourism industry has long made use of ‘sex’ in its marketing (Cohen, 1995; Dann, 1996b; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). Idealised and attractive female bodies are endlessly exhibited in brochures and on postcards. The following is how the Jamaican Tourist Board scripts the Caribbean Island of Negril as a male, heterosexual and white Garden of Eden:

Rugged cliffs give way to pure white beaches, making a luscious mixture of seductiveness and innocence. The sun is so warm it’s almost sinful. As it melts into the tranquil Caribbean sea, tempting sunsets appear as girls with cinnamon-coloured skin walk the beach wearing bikinis the size of butterflies. This is your Eden. Welcome to the Negril. (Quoted in Morgan and Pritchard, 2000a: 127)

Thus sexualised ‘place-myths’ are inscribed into those places especially where the sun holds sway.

Second, sexual desire energises much tourism. Littlewood shows that the unofficial story of the noble ‘Grand Tour’ was a long string of sexual adventures, although ‘letters home commonly tell of the churches visited, not the brothels’ (2001: 4). He argues that sexual fantasies are an integral part of cultural tourism as such, not a perverted deviation from it (2001; see also Ryan and Hall, 2001). Hot sun and sexual pleasure go hand in hand according to Littlewood (2001: 1–7). In the northern imagination, (semi-)exposed bodies and ‘sultry climates’ stimulate sexual desire and practice. Oscar Wilde, the champion of hedonism, said: ‘I no longer want to worship anything but the sun. Have you noticed that the sun detests thought’ (quoted in Littlewood, 2001: 190). When white tourists strip off their clothes within liminal spaces such as pools and beaches, they simultaneously disrobe their workaday selves and perform in order to be gazed upon by other tourists. Moreover, getting a tan inscribes a kind of ‘savage’ sexuality on to the body. The bronzed body is still a powerful
sexualised sign, reflecting a western tradition of equating sexual potency and availability with ‘dark skin’. The sensuous experience of the sun touching one's naked, sweating skin can in itself be sensual, having ‘sex with the sun’, as Littlewood puts it (2001: 194). Third, a further important sexualised space is the hotel:

Hotels occupy a fascinating place in the social imagination of the West, in many ways they are synonymous with sex, romance and adventure – linked in popular culture with clandestine meetings of spies and lovers, with wedding nights, honeymoons and illicit or transitory assignations. (Pritchard and Morgan, 2006: 765)

It is no coincidence that red-light districts largely comprise hotels and in-migrating prostitutes and strippers that ‘service’ tourists, and in particular those visitors who are doing business in financial services (Elliott and Urry, 2010: ch. 6).

We now examine further some ways in which tourism services and experiences are divided by class, gender and ethnicity. In Chapter 2 we emphasised the importance of social-class divisions in structuring how tourist developments occurred in different ways in different places. The effects include the resulting respective social tone of different resorts and the patterns of landholding; the importance of the aristocratic connection in constructing the fashionability of certain places; the growth of the middle-class family holiday and the development of the bungalow as a specialised building form by the seaside; the importance of the ‘romantic gaze’ and its role in constructing nature as an absolutely central positional good; the character of the ‘collective’ gaze and the role of others like oneself in constituting the attraction of certain places; and in Chapter 5 we discuss the enhanced cultural capital of the service class and its heightening of the appeal of rural and industrial heritage and of the postmodern.

But gazing is also inflected by divisions of gender and ethnicity. These interconnections are important in forming the preferences that different social groupings develop about where to visit and in structuring the effects of such visits upon host populations and the fashionability of different sites. There are two key issues here: the social composition of fellow tourists and the social composition of those who are living in the places visited. These are important because most tourist practices involve movement into and through various sorts of public space – such as theme parks, shopping malls, beaches, restaurants, hotels, pump rooms, promenades, airports, swimming pools and squares. In such spaces people both gaze at and are gazed upon by others (and are photographed and photograph others). Complex preferences have come to develop for the range of appropriate others that different social groups expect to look at and photograph in different places; and in turn different expectations are held by different social groups about who are appropriate others to gaze at oneself. Part of what is involved in tourism is the purchase of a particular themed experience, and this depends upon a specifiable composition of the others with whom that experience is being shared (see discussion in Chapter 8).

The combination of gender and ethnic subordination in south-east Asia has colluded to construct young Asian women as objects of a tourist/sexual gaze for male visitors from other societies, visitors who are ethnically dominant. We have seen how the resulting tourist patterns cannot be analysed separately from relations of gender and racial subordination (Hall, 1994; Kinnaird and Hall, 1994).

The importance of gender inequalities can be seen in another way. In almost all societies men have enjoyed a higher standard of living and ‘leisure freedom’ than women. This relates in an important way to the development of holidays. Until the nineteenth century access to travel was largely the preserve of men. But this changed a little with the development of ‘Victorian lady travellers’, some of whom visited countries considered at the time ‘uncivilised’ and ‘uncharted’, especially for women (Enloe, 1989: ch. 2). Other women took advantage of Cook’s tours. As one woman wrote: ‘We would venture anywhere with such a guide and guardian as Mr Cook’ (quoted in Enloe, 1989: 29). From then onwards access to holidays has been less unequally distributed as compared with some other forms of leisure.
The early forms of mass tourism were based around heterosexual couples. Indeed, during the course of the nineteenth century the holiday unit increasingly comprised such a couple plus their children (as recorded in innumerable photographs; see Chapter 7). And by the inter-war period in much of Europe the family holiday had become much more child-centred. This was given a significant boost by the development of the holiday camp in the 1930s, in which child-based activities were central. From that time on much tourism revolves around performing a loving family life within an extraordinary place. Tourism is not only a way of practising or consuming (new) places, but also an emotional geography of sociability, of being together with close friends and family members away from home (Larsen, 2008b).

Most holidaymaking marketing involves a ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ with pictures of actual couples, with or without children, or potential couples. In the brochures produced by tour operators there are three predominant images. These are the ‘family holiday’, a couple with two or three healthy school-age children; the ‘romantic holiday’, that is, a heterosexual couple on their own gazing at the sunset (indeed, the sunset is a signifier for romance); and the ‘fun holiday’, that is same-sex groups each looking for other-sex partners for ‘fun’. There is also, as we have noted, the ‘sex holiday’ for men. Social groups that do not fall into any of these particular visual categories are poorly served by the tourist industry. Many criticisms have been made of how difficult holidaymaking is for single people, single-parent families, those who are disabled and until recently gay couples or groups. Recently, however, the growth of some ‘gay tourism’ is said to be one ‘of the fastest growing niche markets in the international travel industry’ (Casey, 2009: 158). In the UK, for example, the Visit Britain Tourist Board has undertaken a campaign to target gay and lesbian tourists from overseas.

Another social group often excluded from conventional holiday-making and marketing material are non-white social groups such as black Britons. The advertising material produced by holiday companies shows that tourists are white; there are few black faces among the holiday-makers. Indeed, if there are any non-white faces in the photographs it would be presumed that they are the ‘exotic natives’ who are being gazed upon. The same process would seem to occur in those areas in Britain that attract large numbers of foreign tourists. If black or Asian people are seen there, it would be presumed that they were visitors from overseas, or service workers, but not British residents themselves on holiday. The countryside is particularly constructed as ‘white’, as Taylor shows with regard to typically dominant photographic images (1994; see also Winter et al., 2009, on the tanned body within Asia).

An interesting issue is whether members of ethnic minorities undertake western-type holidays. Aspects of the western holiday, in which one travels elsewhere because of the sun, hotel or scenery, form a cultural practice that is idiosyncratic at least to some recent migrants to Britain (see Ahmed, 2000, on the ambiguities of the sun tan). Some migrants at least would consider that travel should have a more serious purpose than this: to look for work, to join the rest of one’s family, to visit relatives, or to participate in diasporic travel.

There has been, more generally, a recent increase in such VFR-tourism (visiting friends and relatives). In 2007 there were almost as many visitors coming to the UK to visit friends and relatives as for conventional holidays (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk=1391; accessed 10.10.06). This increase in VFR trips stems from what Boden and Molotch call a ‘compulsion to proximity’, the desire to be physically co-present with other people even if this involves significant inconvenient travel (1994).

Various research shows how migration and tourism are complexly folded into each other (Larsen et al., 2006) ‘The migration process appears to require a return, a journey back to the point of departure’ (Goulborne, 1999: 193). This is particularly the case with members of diasporas. While these traditionally entail a desire for a permanent return, today’s migrants can fulfil their compulsion to proximity with their homeland and heritage through occasional visits. Mason demonstrates how British people with Pakistani ancestors regularly visit Pakistan to be co-present with their kin, to keep their family networks ‘alive’ and to show their children their ‘origins’ (2004). Moreover, for many cultures much travel entails crossing national frontiers. Households in developing countries develop extensive mobility patterns when their incomes increase. The proliferation of ‘global diasporas’ extends the range, extent and significance of all forms of travel for far-flung families and
households. It is said in Trinidad that one can really only be a ‘Trini’ by going abroad. Around 60 per cent of nuclear families have at least one member living abroad (Miller and Slater, 2000: 12, 36). Ong and Nonini also show the importance of mobility across borders in the case of the massive Chinese diaspora that is thought to be between 25 million and 45 million in size (1997). Clifford summarises how:

Dispersed peoples, once separated from homelands by vast oceans and political barriers, increasingly find themselves in border relations with the old country thanks to a to-and-fro made possible by modern technologies of transport, communication, and labour migration. Airplanes, telephones, tape cassettes, camcorders, and mobile job markets reduce distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world's places. (1997: 247)

Such diasporic travel is also rather open-ended in terms of its temporality. Unlike conventional tourism that is based upon a clear distinction of periods of ‘home’ and of ‘away’, the diasporic traveller often has no clear temporal boundaries as one activity tends to flow into the other, as Cwerner shows in the case of Brazilians living in London for quite indeterminate periods of time (2001).

Yet many tourist developments will exclude many ethnic groups, such as the heritage industry discussed in Chapter 6. Here we note that white faces overwhelmingly populate such a heritage. Ethnic groups are important in the British tourist industry, though, and in some respects play a key role. They are employed in those enterprises concerned with servicing visitors, especially in major cities. We return to this issue in the next chapter.

Furthermore, certain ethnic groups have come to be constructed as part of the ‘attraction’ or ‘theme’ of some places. This is most common in the case of Asian groups. In Manchester this occurred around its collection of Chinese restaurants in a small area, and resulted from the internationalisation of British culinary taste in the post-war period (see Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989: 199–201). By the 1980s city planners were committed to a new vision of ‘Chinatown’, reconstructed and conserved as a now desirable object of the tourist gaze. Further analysis of this would need to explore the social effects for those of Asian origin becoming constructed as an exotic object and whether this distorts patterns of economic and political development. It would also be interesting to consider the effects on the white population of coming to view those of Asian origin as not so much threatening or even inferior but as exotic, as curiously different and possessing a rich and in part attractive culture. Such debates are developing in the context of many cultures taken to be exotically different, as such cultures become themed, photographed and displayed around the world.

Tourism as Strategy

The effects of tourism are complex and contradictory. There has been much discussion about the desirability of tourism as a strategy for economic development in so-called developing societies. This raises various difficult issues.

The growth of tourism in developing countries, such as ‘game tourism’ in Kenya, ‘ethnic tourism’ in Mexico, gambling in Macao and so on, does not derive from processes only internal to those societies. Such development results from external transformations: technological changes such as cheap air travel and internet booking systems; developments in capital, including the growth of worldwide hotel groups (Ramada), travel agencies (Thomas Cook) and personal finance organisations such as credit cards (American Express); the widespread growth of the ‘romantic’ gaze so that more people wish to isolate themselves from existing patterns of mass tourism; the increased fascination of the developed world with the cultural practices of less developed societies; the development of tourists as a ‘collector’ of places often gazed upon and experienced on the surface; and the emergence of a powerful interests promoting the view that tourism has major development potential. The last of these is most dramatically seen in China over the past thirty years which has gone from hugely restricted internal migration and tourism to becoming, in a way, the world's most significant
centre of global tourism in this new century (see Nyíri, 2010).

However, the benefits from tourism are often less than anticipated. Much tourist investment is undertaken by large-scale companies based in North America or western Europe, and the bulk of tourist expenditure is retained by the transnational companies involved; often only 20–60 per cent of the price remains in the host country. Most of the foreign exchange earned from tourism is repatriated to companies based elsewhere. This repatriation is more likely with the high level of vertical integration in the industry in poorer societies.

A further problem occurs where tourism accounts for an exceptionally high proportion of the national income of the country. Some Caribbean islands experience this (Sheller, 2003). It means that if anything undermines tourist demand, an enormous loss of national income results. This happened in Fiji in 1987 following military coups (see Lea, 1988: 32–6, on advertising needed to restore consumer confidence).

It must also be asked: development for whom? Many of the facilities (airports, golf courses, luxury hotels and so on) will be of little benefit to most of the local population. Likewise much indigenous wealth generated will be highly unequally distributed and so most of the population will gain little benefit. This does of course depend on patterns of local ownership. Finally, much employment generated in tourist-related services is relatively low-skilled and may reproduce the servile character of previous colonial regimes, what one critic termed ‘flunkey training’ (quoted in Crick, 1988: 46).

However, it should also be asked whether many developing countries have much alternative to tourism as a development strategy. Although there are serious economic costs, as well as social costs we have not fully considered here, it is difficult in the absence of viable alternatives to see that developing societies have a great deal of choice but to develop their attractiveness as objects of the tourist gaze, particularly for visitors from North America, western Europe and increasingly from parts of Asia and especially the Chinese middle class.

- tourism
- tourist gaze
- holidays
- disneyization
- hotels
- Fordism
- travelers

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