

9

Leisure, sport and tourism

The geography of tourism, sport and recreation.

Outline

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Education and Indoctrination



The terms used in leisure studies are not always clear. Before proceeding too deeply into this topic, it is recommended that you become familiar with the definitions at the top of the next page.

Defining Leisure

Tourism is now the world's largest industry. Indeed, if 'tourism' were a country whose wealth was being measured by its gross domestic product (GDP), then tourism would be the third richest country in the world.

In MEDCs, sport is becoming increasingly commercialised and profit-driven. When we consider tourism and sport together, perhaps under the broad label of 'leisure', we are looking at a significant and rapidly expanding global economic sector. However, like all economic activities, the wealth within the leisure industry is not evenly distributed.

In this chapter, we will look at many aspects of tourism and sport, including the distribution and diversity of leisure activities, their increasing popularity and their impact on environments, cultures and economies at a variety of scales.

Leisure at the International Scale — Tourism

Changes in the Demand and Supply of Tourism

Tourism can be thought of as the short-term circular migration of people to places outside their normal place of work or residence for the purpose of leisure. People have always travelled, and indeed much of the early interest in Geography arose from the fascination people have with other places that are different (figure 9.1). The growth that has seen tourism emerge as the world's biggest

>> Some Useful Definitions

Carrying capacity — the maximum number of visitors/participants that a site/event can satisfy at one time. It is customary to distinguish between **environmental carrying capacity** (the maximum number before the local environment becomes damaged) and **perceptual carrying capacity** (the maximum number before a specific group of visitors considers the level of impact, such as noise, to be excessive). For example, young mountain bikers may be more crowd-tolerant than elderly walkers.

Leisure — any freely chosen activity or experience that takes place in non-work time.

Primary tourist / recreational resources — the pre-existing attractions for tourism or recreation (that is, those not built specifically for the purpose), including climate, scenery, wildlife, indigenous people, cultural and heritage sites. These are distinguished from **secondary tourist / recreational resources**, which include accommodation, catering, entertainment and shopping.

Recreation — a leisure-time activity undertaken voluntarily and for enjoyment. It includes individual pursuits, organised outings and events, and non-paid (non-professional) sports.

Resort — a settlement where the primary function is tourism. This includes a hotel complex.

Sport — a physical activity involving events and competitions at the national and international scale with professional participants.

Tourism — travel away from home for at least one night for the purpose of leisure. Note that this definition excludes day-trippers. There are many possible subdivisions of tourism. Subgroups include **ecotourism** — tourism focusing on the natural environment and local communities; **heritage tourism** — tourism based on an historic legacy (landscape feature, historic building or event) as its major attraction; **sustainable tourism** — tourism that conserves primary tourist resources and supports the livelihoods and culture of local people.



9.1 In the 1800s, tourism was enjoyed only by a privileged few. Maymyo (now Pyin Oo Lwin) in Myanmar was a 'hill station' where British soldiers and administrators took their holidays to escape the lowland tropical heat of what was then colonial Burma. Many buildings in Pyin Oo Lwin are relics of the privileges of the colonial era.

industry has only occurred in the last half-century or so. Between 1950 and 1990, annual world tourist arrivals increased from about 25 million to 455 million (table 9.1). In 2000, international annual tourism arrivals reached 682 million, and despite temporary slow-downs following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US and the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the figure had reached almost 900 million by 2007, almost 15% of the world's population. In addition to these figures, there are even larger numbers of domes-

tic tourists who travel within their own countries. Travel, once a luxury for the privileged few, now appeals to a mass market.

Despite factors such as international terrorism, economic stagnation in More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs), and worsening of poverty in some Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDs), international tourism is expected to grow strongly in the future. It is estimated by 2010, 1,018 million people will travel internationally.



9.2 The USA is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, with over 40 million tourist arrivals each year. Although many visitors are attracted by spectacular scenery or family reunions, others are attracted by the country's many famous theme parks, such as Disneyland near Los Angeles which is shown here.

Table 9.1

International Tourist Arrivals, 1950 - 2009

Year	Tourist Arrivals (millions)
1950	25
1960	69
1965	113
1970	166
1975	222
1980	288
1985	330
1990	455
1995	534
1996	570
1997	594
1998	611
1999	634
2000	682
2001	682
2002	702
2003	691
2004	761
2005	801
2006	846
2007	900
2008	919
2009	880

Source: World Tourism Organisation

Among the MEDCs, the top tourist destinations are France, Spain, the United States and Italy (figure 9.2). Other MEDCs with a significant share of the world tourism market are the United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Austria, Germany and Russia. Some MEDCs are concerned about the loss of tourism income to LEDCs as their people travel overseas, and have actively promoted domestic tourism to their residents.

There are very few LEDCs that are not seeking to develop tourism because of the potential to earn foreign income that it brings. In general, LEDCs try to encourage wealthier tourists from MEDCs because of the extra money they spend. LEDCs with well-developed tourism industries include Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand and Tunisia.

The rapid growth of tourism since 1950 has been caused by several factors. Important causes include the increased mobility and affluence of many people in MEDCs, stimulation of demand by advertising and greater media coverage of exotic tourist destinations, organisation of mass tourism by transnational companies, and improvements to facilities and infrastructure for tourists, especially in LEDCs. Another important factor has been the reduction in cost of travel due to technological developments in mass transport (figures 9.3 and 9.4).

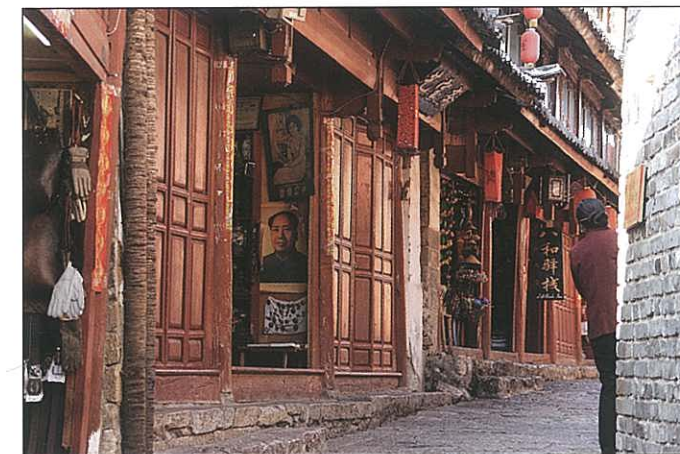


9.3 The development of wide-bodied airliners reduced the costs per seat of air transport to the point where it became affordable by large numbers of people.



9.4 Large cruise ships have increased the appeal of mass travel, but they have not reduced costs to the same extent as large aircraft because they take longer to complete each journey and thus passenger turnover is slower. This cruise ship is visiting the Icelandic port of Akureyri.

Tourism can be classified according to the purpose of the travel and the way in which it is organised. **Group tours** tend to be cheaper than individual travel because a common set of arrangements is made for a number of people simultaneously (figure 9.5). Groups travel together, stay together and eat together. This works well if everyone in the group has common interests in the tour program. Some destinations, such as North Korea, require tourists to travel in a group at all times. A variation on group tours is the **packaged tour**. Packaged tours also tend to be cheaper than individual travel because travel agents make bulk purchases of airline seats and hotel rooms,



9.5 Lijiang (China) attracts visitors who are interested in exploring China's cultural heritage..



9.6 Recreational travel can take many forms, but it usually involves a change of scenery and lifestyle from normal. At its best, it also educates the traveller, such as here where tourists are learning about Europe's largest valley glacier, the Skeidarársandur, in south-east Iceland.

gaining preferential rates because of the large volume of advance purchases made. Of course, tourists do not gain all the benefits of these savings because the travel agent takes a commission from the saving.

Individual travel is favoured by more experienced travellers, by those wanting a unique travel experience, and by the more adventurous. Individual travel can be very cheap when backpacking, and it can open the way to destinations that may not be able to handle the larger numbers of group and package travellers. Much individual tourism is for family reasons, such as visiting relatives and reunions. Other purposes for tourism include recreation, cultural enrichment, adventure, religious pilgrimages and sightseeing (figures 9.5 to 9.9).

Tourist destinations can be classified in many ways. In the United States, the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Committee (ORRRC) classifies recreation resources into six broad categories:

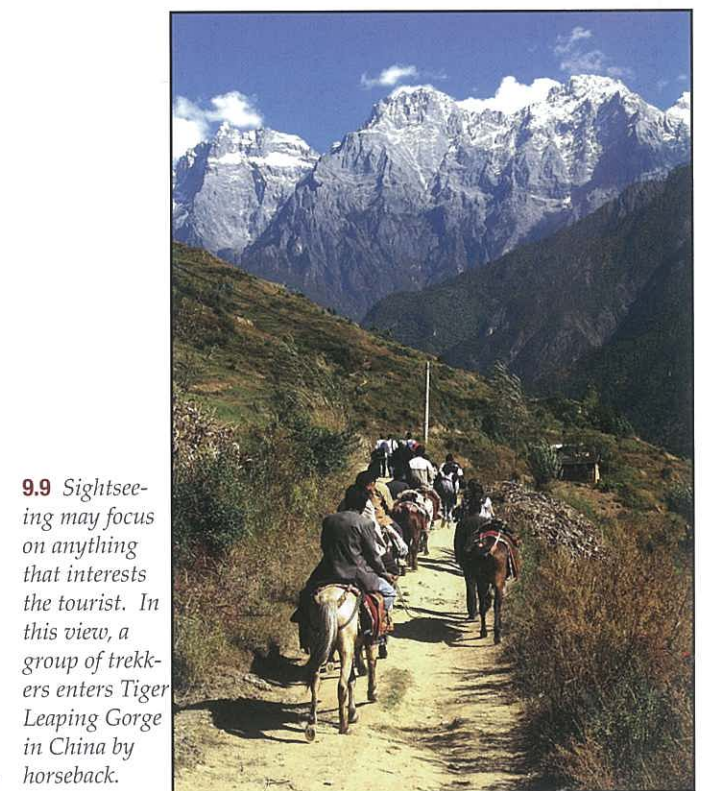
1. **High density recreation areas.** These are areas where there is a variety of tourist attractions in a small area that use most of the local available resources. They are



9.7 Beaches are an important tourist attraction in warmer climates, such as here at Tamarindo in Costa Rica.



9.8 The hill at Medjugorje (in Bosnia-Herzegovina) where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared on many occasions to give a message of peace and love. Medjugorje is the focus of pilgrimage for many Catholic Christians.



9.9 Sightseeing may focus on anything that interests the tourist. In this view, a group of trekkers enters Tiger Leaping Gorge in China by horseback.

characterised by intensive development of resort hotels and facilities managed for maximum visitor usage, such as Disneyland, beaches on the Mediterranean coast of Spain or Greece, and Club Med resorts (figures 9.10 and 9.11).

- General outdoor recreational areas.** These are characterised by a wide variety of tourist attractions (though not as many as high density recreation areas), with substantial development. They tend to offer a wide choice of activities (figure 9.12). Resorts tend to be some distance from main population centres, and examples include ski resorts and sailing centres.
- Natural environment areas.** These are areas with multiple types of land use with a variety of activities available depending upon the nature of the area. National Parks are good examples of this type of recreation resource.
- Unique natural areas.** These are areas of outstanding natural beauty or scenic grandeur, where the main activity is sightseeing. Examples include the Grand Canyon in the United States, Victoria Falls on the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe, and Geysir in Iceland.
- Primitive areas.** These include undisturbed wilderness and areas with no roads where natural wild conditions can still be found. Tourist activities in these areas would include trekking in the Sahara Desert or exploring the Highlands of Irian Jaya or the jungles of the Amazon Basin.
- Historic and cultural sites.** These are places of significance at a local, regional, national or international scale. Examples may include places of pilgrimage, buildings, archaeological sites and places associated with important historical events. For example, the Pyramids in Egypt, the Taj Mahal in India and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, among many others.

QUESTION BLOCK 9A

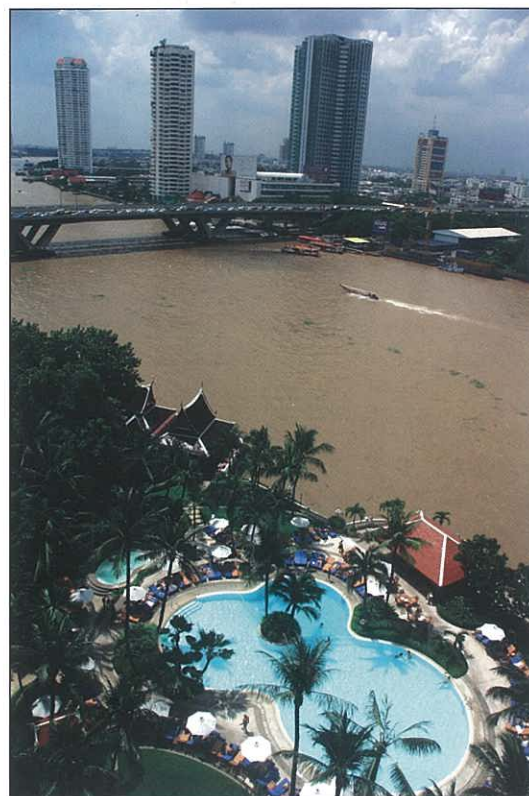
- Show the data in table 9.1 as a line graph, making sure that you show the time intervals between each statistic correctly.
- Suggest reasons why each of the following MEDCs has a large share of the world's tourism market: France, Spain, the United States and Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Austria, Germany and Russia.
- Suggest reasons why each of the following LEDCs has a large share of the world's tourism market: Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand and Tunisia.
- Explain why international tourism has grown so much since 1950.



9.10 An example of a well developed tourist area — Punta del Este on the coast of Uruguay.



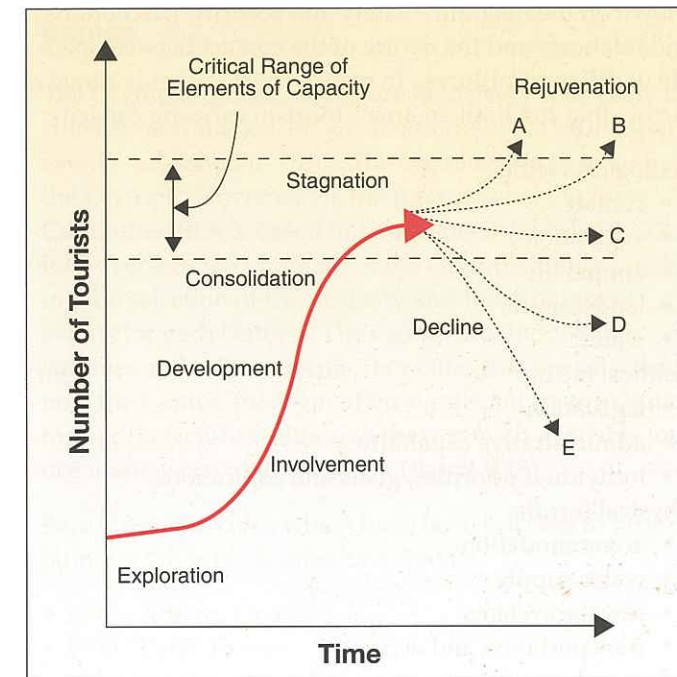
9.11 At Vouliagmeni (Greece), the high density of tourism is an attraction to some, although others might be repelled by such tourism.



9.12 Outdoor recreational facilities at a hotel in Bangkok in Thailand, overlooking the brown waters of the Chao Phraya River.

Stages of Tourism

Several geographers have attempted to describe the processes and the impacts of tourism by developing models. One of the best known is the **Butler Model**, which attempts to describe the cycle of evolution of a tourism area (figure 9.13).



9.13 Butler's model of the evolution of a tourist destination.

The model identifies seven stages of tourism development over time:

Exploration: A small number of tourists independently explore a new location for reasons such as personal adventure or to experience new cultures. At this stage, the economic, social and environmental impacts are virtually zero (figure 9.14).



9.14 Very basic tourist facilities characterise the 'exploration' stage of tourism, such as this accommodation facility at Turmi in southern Ethiopia.

Involvement: As acceptance of tourists by the locals increases, the destination becomes better known and more popular. Travel and accommodation facilities are improved, and some local people become more



9.15 A typical scene in an emerging area of tourism. Tiger Leaping Gorge in China's south-western province of Yunnan is a relatively remote and undeveloped tourist destination that appeals to limited numbers of adventurous trekkers. Accommodation in the Gorge is provided by local people of the Naxi ethnic group, typically in guest houses like this one, included as part of the family compound.

involved in the emerging tourist industry (figure 9.15).

Development: Investment by outsiders begins to flow in to the area, and local people become more involved, attracting more visitors. The area begins to emerge as a well-known tourist destination, pitched towards a defined market. In LEDCs, control often passes from local people to organisations based in MEDCs. This leads to more package holidays, increasing tourist numbers and less local involvement (figure 9.16).



9.16 In contrast to the scene shown in figure 9.15, this view shows the next stage of tourism when local people are employed by overseas companies in lower order jobs such as cleaning and waiting. This view shows part of a resort hotel in Tamarindo (Costa Rica) that is owned by a Spanish company.

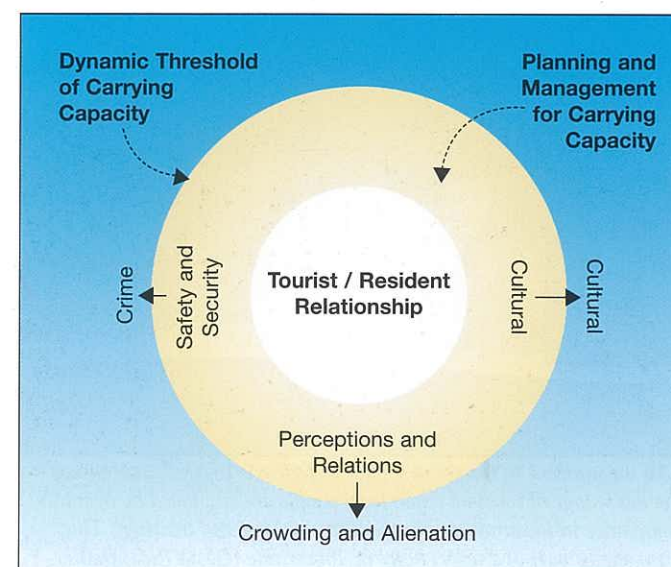
Consolidation: Tourism becomes established as an important economic and social activity. It begins to have a serious adverse impact traditional economies and lifestyles. Agricultural land is taken over for building resorts, usually without significant benefits for the local community in terms of increased wealth or employment. Resentment often occurs in the local population. Tourist numbers continue to rise, although rate of increase slows down.

Stagnation: Local opposition to tourism continues to grow, and there is a growing awareness of the environmental, social and economic problems brought by tourism. Negativity effectively stops further growth. There is a decrease in the number of tourist visits, suggesting that the original cultural and physical attractions have been lost.

Decline: The area decreases further in popularity, either severely or mildly (paths E and D in figure 9.13). Multinational tour operators move elsewhere and local involvement may increase to fill the vacuum. However, these local operators may be under-funded, leading to a further decline in the area's attractiveness to tourists.

Rejuvenation: A secondary growth spurt may occur, induced by some new factor such as new investment, falling prices or advertising (paths A, B or C in figure 9.13). The loss of original natural attractions may be compensated for by new constructed facilities. A new and different type of tourist may be attracted, perhaps with different socio-economic backgrounds or demographic profile.

Another tourism model attempts to explain the changes described in the Butler Model. The **Hawkins Model** examines the factors that affect the demand for tourism in a particular area, and the forces that may limit the carrying capacity of an area to develop a tourist industry (figure 9.17).



9.17 Hawkins model of the carrying capacity of tourism in an area.

Whereas Butler's Model describes the carrying capacity of tourism in an area when tourism is market-driven, the Hawkins Model attempts to take into account a broader set of factors. The Hawkins Model shows how the positive attitudes that may exist at first between tourists and local residents can change and become more negative as the threshold of the carrying capacity is reached.

At the centre of the model is the relationship between tourists and local residents. The outer edge of the coloured ring is the limit of tourist numbers that an area can support. The inner edge of the coloured ring is the minimum, or threshold, number of tourists in an area. The width of the coloured ring will oscillate in and out according to many variables, the most important of which are shown on the diagram – safety and security, perceptions and relations, and the nature of the contact between people of different cultures. In reality, there is a wide range of factors that can limit an area's tourism carrying capacity:

Ecological factors:

- climate
- vegetation
- animal life
- landscape
- water.

Political factors:

- legislation
- administrative capability
- individual priorities, goals and aspirations.

Physical factors:

- accommodation
- water supply
- sewage systems
- transportation and access
- visual attractiveness.

Economic factors:

- personal income
- living costs
- labour costs
- resort technology
- resort investment.

Local residents' experiences:

- invasion of privacy
- involvement in tourism
- benefits from tourism
- tourists' sensitivity and behaviour.

Visitor experiences:

- volume of people
- visitor behaviour
- levels of service
- local hospitality
- visitors' expectations.

QUESTION BLOCK 9B

1. Do you think the names of each stage in Butler's Model are adequate labels? Can you suggest better names?
2. Describe what happens during the third phase of Butler's Model (Development).
3. Using examples that you know about, explain why some resorts have declined in popularity.
4. With reference to a tourist resort that you know about, describe its attractions and its problems.