Tourism Research: A 20-20 Vision

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Tourism and development: looking back and looking ahead - more of the same?

David Harrison

Introduction

Since the Second World War, mass international tourism has become immensely significant to the world economy and is now established globally as a tool for development, making a major contribution to the world economy, especially to developing countries, even though they take but a small proportion of the world's tourists, and most particularly small states and island societies (UNWTO, 2008: 1). As a consequence, mass international tourism has increasingly attracted the attention not only of governments and a plethora of aid agencies and national and other international institutions, but also of scholars of 'development'. Indeed, while social change and 'progress' have been the major concern of social science since the Enlightenment, 'development' as a separate concept, along with 'development studies' as a self-conscious sub-discipline, emerged only after 1945, and it was thus inevitable that, from the beginnings of mass international tourism, it would be linked with development, and would reflect the changing priorities of development studies.

From the 1960s until the 1980s, the trajectory of tourism in developing countries was largely conceptualised through the competing lenses of pro-capitalist Modernisation (bourgeois) Theory (MT) or anti-capitalist Underdevelopment (UDT) (Neo-Marxist, Dependency or World Systems) Theory (Telfer, 2002). In so far as these represented different 'paradigms', they tended to focus, respectively, on the advantages and disadvantages of tourism as a form of development, as purportedly seen from the perspective of the developing countries.

However, by the 1980s (especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall) the positions occupied by adherents of these competing perspectives were no longer considered theoretically adequate, empirically justified or politically appropriate in a world where old ideologies were being subjected to new questioning and found wanting. Globalisation theory emerged, denoting a process where 'constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding' (Waters, 1995: 3). Although divisions between

those favouring state intervention (statists) and others wishing to give a free rein to the market (neo-liberals) continued, globalisation theory incorporated the internal economic and socio-cultural factors prioritised by MT and the external and systemic linkages of UDT, along with the increasingly pressing concerns of environmentalism.

Inevitably, such changes in theoretical perspectives were reflected in approaches to tourism, development, and over the last decade tourism scholars have started to focus on tourism's role in the interplay of local destinations with global processes (Sofield, 2001; Wahab and Cooper, 2001; Munar, 2007; Sharpley, 2009). And with the decline of the old ideologies and 'grand theories' of tourism's role in development came a more pragmatic, empirical focus on what was happening 'on the ground'. It was less important to know who (and of what persuasion) said what, than to know if there was empirical evidence for their assertions.

In the context of this new and more empirically-orientated environment, the focus of this chapter is, first, the current state of tourism development studies, its descriptive and prescriptive elements, and the role of international organisations. It then moves to the need for further empirical research on the role of the state, and the ways different economic institutions, including TNCs and SMEs, and different kinds of tourism, including domestic tourism, influence tourism development. Finally, a brief agenda for the future is suggested, focusing on: the theoretical understanding of tourism's role in the context of climate change; closer relationships with, and understanding of, other stakeholders involved in using tourism as a development tool; comparative studies of tourism development in developing societies and developed societies and, finally, the impacts of different kinds of tourism in reducing poverty and bringing about 'development'.

The current state of tourism development studies

The less ideological approach just described enables and entails a greater element of cross-disciplinary co-operation. Geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, history and social psychology, for example, can all legitimately add the suffix 'of tourism development', as can a raft of physical sciences, which together contribute to our understanding of the tourism 'system'. Such a notion, which is neither new nor subject to consensus (Hall, 2008: 76-80), is a conceptual construct that recognises tourism occurs in a highly complex global, biophysical, social, cultural and economic environment. As conceived here (Figure 4.1), the tourist 'system' is similar to the 'Comprehensive Tourism System' of Farrell and Twining-Ward (2003: 279), which 'includes significant social, economic, geological and ecological components'. The system's processes, viewable from a variety of perspectives, are geared to the movement of tourists to and from generating societies in a shifting international context, continuously linking the changing cultures and

Tourist motivation and types of tourist

Motivations for travel; needs analysis; image of destinations; stereotypes; life cycle issues;

International & domestic; mass & alternative; backpackers, cruise ships, pilgrims, special interest (sports, home stay, B&B, gambling); second homes/retirement, urban/rural, alternative/ nature/sustainable/ecotourism; timeshare, etc.

Interaction at destinations

Attitudes of tourist and resident; Stereotypes of interaction of resident with resident, tourist with tourist, residents, tourists & guides. Communitas

Figure 4.1: Theoretical perspectives informing approaches to tourism and development

social and economic structures of generating and destination regions according to external and local factors, including the numerous resources in destination areas described by Sharpley (2009: 159) as 'tourism destination capitals'. These sociocultural and economic processes both affect and are affected by wider environmental considerations, as seen, for example, in the debate about tourism's relationship to climate change (Becken and Hay, 2007).

Not surprisingly, such a framework incorporates research on a wide variety of topics, including tourist motivation, geographies of tourist movement over time and space, the rise and fall of tourism destinations, and the images associated with them, tourism organisations, carrying capacity and detailed case studies of what occurs at specific destinations, and the local, national, regional and international significance of tourism and the processes that link changes in developed societies to what is going on in developing societies.

The breadth of approaches in tourism is also reflected in the emergence of subsectors of tourism studies which, though often concentrated on developed societies, are equally relevant to developing societies. Studies of events and festivals, their significance and impact, or of varieties of heritage tourism, for example, are not restricted to urban areas in the West; they are equally relevant to developing societies, which continually seek new attractions, even new 'traditions', to bring people to their destinations.

Such interest, fuelled and sustained by the growth of tourism and awareness of its many impacts, has led to a burgeoning of academic courses and the expansion of tourism studies into planning, management and marketing of what is now a major global 'industry'. Debates continue over the extent to which 'tourism studies' is a discipline in its own right (Tribe, 2000), but 'it' is undoubtedly being studied and practised the world over.

Any review of tourism development studies is unavoidably selective, and at least partly dependent on the disciplinary orientation of the analyst, but some features of tourism development studies over the period under review seem especially noteworthy.

First, with the growth of international tourism, simply describing what is happening (and changing) in international tourism, and dealing with the ramifications on a day-to-day basis, is a major task for everyone with a stake in the travel and tourism 'industry'. In particular, though, the role of the UNWTO in compiling and correlating statistics and reports has become crucial in quantifying tourism's significance to the global economy.

Second, there is a general consensus that tourism brings economic benefits (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997). There may be qualifying caveats from some quarters, but nowhere has there been a serious move to reverse the process. There is also widespread agreement, among academics and practitioners alike, that it also has social and cultural effects, but - and it is an important caveat - there is major disagreement about what these are and how they should be assessed (Harrison, 1992: 19-34). Indeed, since MacCannell first suggested that tourists from developed countries

sought authenticity (1976), and Greenwood accused tourism authorities in Spain of selling tourism 'by the pound' ([1978]1989), the linked topics of authenticity and commoditisation have been ubiquitous in discussions of tourism's impacts, though extensive studies of tourist motivation and wide recognition that authenticity is an emergent and negotiated property have made these debates largely redundant (Wang, 2000). Similarly, wrangles about tourism's alleged 'demonstration effects', especially on apparently vulnerable women and youth, and the linked accusation that tourism has untoward effects on (apparently static) 'tradition' (McKean, 1978; Fisher, 2004) have probably been the subject of increasingly diminishing returns (Cohen, 1988; Kim and Jamal, 2007). In fact, over the decades numerous lists of tourism's negative and positive impacts have been produced, reflecting, as Wood suggests (1993: 48-49), not so much any available empirical evidence, or even the perceptions of residents in tourist destination areas, as the prejudices of the writer.

Nevertheless, in the 1980s, disillusionment with mass tourism, coupled with the general shift in development studies, led to increasing support for types of tourism that were perceived to be more beneficial to communities in destination areas (Fennell, 1999; Telfer, 2002). Alternative tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism and 'pro-poor tourism' were added to already-extensive tourist typologies and became a major focus of academic research. In addition, they were enthusiastically adopted by many international organisations, including the United Nations, where the key tourism player is the UNWTO. While its main role is to promote tourism generally, it has a specific 'development' focus through its Sustainable Tourism - End Poverty (ST-EP) Initiative, which is linked to the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Other UN organisations, for example, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP and UNEP, while not having tourism as their central concern, also play major roles in funding and promoting tourism development, as even a cursory search at their respective websites reveals. UNEP's tourism programme, for example, links tourism to the environment, often cooperating with other partners from the UN, including UNWTO and UNESCO (where there is a mutual interest in world heritage) and with such non-profit-making organisations as the International Ecotourism Society and the Rainforest Alliance (www.unep.fr/pc/tourism: accessed on 6 August 2007).

Other international organisations involved in tourism development projects include the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and IMF (Mowforth and Munt, 2003: 263; Hawkins and Mann, 2007), regional development banks, regional trading blocs, and government departments, or their agents, that fund overseas aid programmes with a tourism component. Invariably, the focus of all these international organisations has been 'alternative' tourism. Indeed, from 1990 until 2007 the UNDP alone funded more than 700 such projects, all of which could be somewhat vaguely categorised as ecotourism or community-based tourism (http://sgp.undp.org/index: accessed on 6 August 2007).

Over four decades, then, academic studies of tourism have established a major body of literature, including numerous journals devoted to aspects of travel and tourism (Law et al., 2006), at which anyone first studying tourism as a tool for development in (say) the 1970s can only marvel. Furthermore - and worryingly for anyone reviewing the state of tourism development studies - many of those making major contributions would not be generally considered as writing on tourism and development, but of focusing primarily on what is happening in developed societies (Mac-Cannell, 1976, 1989, 1992; Urry, 1990, 1992; Rojek and Urry, 1997). It is grounds for suggesting that, as at the start of Western social science, any study of social change is ultimately about 'development'.

More of the same...?

Again, suggestions as to where existing literature can be improved upon are selective and subjective, but perhaps the major criticism that can be made of how tourism development studies has developed is that there has been a dearth of consistency. Like development studies generally, it has succumbed to the vagaries of academic fashion; as a consequence, there has almost invariably been a failure to substantiate theories and/or findings over time and place.

Take, for example, the role of the state in tourism development (Harrison, 2001: 23-46). Adherents of all theoretical perspectives have examined its role, though, inevitably their emphasis varies. For political scientists favouring UDT, it is an agent (or mediator) of capitalist development, often prioritising transnational over local capital, and ensuring that the former is a beneficiary of tourism development plans (Britton, 1989; Bianchi, 2002). By contrast, those implicitly or explicitly taking a modernisation perspective focus on the extent to which government is active or passive in promoting specific forms of tourism development (Jenkins and Henry, 1982).

However, the state's success in carrying out any of these functions is conditioned by external influences, as well as political, economic and cultural realities (Bianchi, 2002: 289). In the Caribbean, for example, promoting international tourism has long been a racially sensitive issue (Mitchell, 1972; Crick, 2002; McDavid and Ramajeesingh, 2003), whereas institutions geared at environmental protection and cultural heritage promotion in Greece were facilitated by local awareness of environmental issues (Tsartas, 2003: 126). However, there are few detailed empirical studies of the role of any actual state in promoting tourism development (Clancy, 2001), the extent to which it is efficient in doing so, or (perhaps more important) the degree it is actually committed to furthering the welfare of its citizens. As Lockwood (2005) notes, if such a commitment is absent, development is not going to occur.

A similar point can be made about our understanding of the major economic actors in tourism development (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997: 58-94). Transnational companies (TNCs), for example, are frequently portrayed as the 'bad guys' of tourism capitalist development by neo-Marxists (oddly, though, more in developing than developed societies), who accuse them, inter alia, of perpetuating uneven development and neo-colonialism, incurring high leakages and producing correspondingly low income multipliers; distorting economies through concentration and seasonality; reducing control over local resources; exacerbating social inequality; prompting alienation; increasing crime rates; keeping workers in servile positions, and polluting and destroying the environment (Dunning and McQueen, 1982; Britton, 1987; Brohman, 1996).

However, the case against TNCs is far from proven (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997: 124-142). Statistics of high leakages and low multipliers are misleading (Mitchell and Ashley, 2007); poor linkages with other sectors, especially agriculture, are hardly unique to international hotels, and little account is taken of a region's natural and human resources. Despite relatively high leakages, TNCs attract more tourists than smaller, independent operators, bring in more foreign exchange, create more capital and jobs than smaller establishments, and offer a higher range of facilities and services (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997: 137; Meyer, 2003: 58), which explains why governments of developing societies want more rather than less TNC participation in tourism (Endo, 2006: 601). They are also more likely to pay better than local companies, have better training schemes and working conditions, and support, albeit for publicity purposes, many local charities and community causes.

In the face of such differing interpretations, the natural recourse is to seek the evidence in from detailed studies of specific tourism TNCs. However, these are not to be found!

Similarly, relatively little is known about tourism SMEs that occupy the lower end of the economic spectrum in the formal and informal sectors of developing societies. They contribute to poverty reduction and help reduce unemployment and leakages (Go and Appelman, 2001; Harrison and Schipani, 2007) but, again, much will depend on the level of tourism development at a destination. Intensive capital investment could reduce the number of SMEs, though marginal enterprises may continue to offer products and services of no commercial interest to international companies, or provide goods and services as dependent partners of the bigger tourism players (Dahles, 1999: 1-19).

Available evidence suggests some patterns. First, colonial and post-colonial tourism development tends to mirror pre-tourism structures, enabling an established capitalist class to exploit new opportunities (Bianchi, 2004: 503; Harrison, 2003: 5-7). Second, tourism opens up new opportunities for women and young people, increasing their independence, with important and often deep effects on family structures (Peake, 1989: 210-220; Apostolopoulos et al., 2001). Third, entrepreneurs may occupy structurally marginal positions (Nunez, 1989: 268-270) and in some cases are ethnic minorities, unhampered by constraining norms and values of other residents (Harrison, 1992: 23) and, fourth, some are known to have been former employees of international hotels (Ghodsee, 2005: 115-150). Finally, some entrepreneurs may be less concerned with financial profitability than with expanding their social capital (de Burlo, 2003: 76; Harrison, 2003: 19). In such cases, financial 'failure' may be offset by social success, a situation possibly widespread even in developed societies.

An equally important topic is the economic and socio-cultural impacts of different kinds of tourism. Even at the level of common sense, it is evident that cruise ship visitors, retirees, backpackers, hotel guests patronising differently starred establishments, sex tourists of various types, conference delegates and 'special interest' tourists - to name but a few - will have radically different impacts at both interactional and institutional levels in destination societies. And yet, as Cohen (1984: 379) noted two decades ago, despite decades of studies of tourism and development, and a plethora of typologies of tourists, except for some work in Indonesia (Hampton, 2005) few efforts have been made to document the economic and other impacts of different types of tourists, including the wide variety of alternative tourists in developing society destinations.

In the case of TNCs, entrepreneurs and the differential impact of types of tourist, then, much work remains to be done. The same might also be said for domestic tourism, the importance of which has been consistently underrated. Accurate statistics are scarce, but in 1995 domestic tourism was estimated to be ten times international tourism (Gee and Fayos-Solá, 1997: 24), and the ratio is unlikely to have changed since then. In some parts of Europe, for example, it contributes more than international tourism to GDP (Schmidt, 2002: 2). Less data exist for developing countries, but if 'domestic tourism' is considered to include pilgrimages and visits to religious and other festivals, as well as VFR (which is almost impossible to estimate), it is vastly in excess of international tourism (Ghimire, 2001: 1-29). In China in 2002, for example, there were an estimated 878 million domestic tourists, accounting for 90 per cent of tourist movement and 70 per cent of revenue from tourism in China (JustChina, 2004). And yet, despite its importance, it has been subject to very little research.

More generally, while there has been a relatively recent tendency to discuss tourism's role in globalisation (Sofield, 2001), as both cause and effect, there have been few efforts to theorise or empirically compare local responses to globalisation processes. Indeed, as MacNaught (1982) noted a while ago, tourism's critics often assume that cultures in developing country destinations are helpless and hapless in the face of tourist incursions. However, such an assumption is unwarranted while, at the opposite end of the spectrum, there has been no research at all on outward acculturation, which refers to cultural changes in tourists and their home countries that result from the tourist experience.

Looking ahead...

So far, I have suggested that 'balance sheets' of tourism's impacts in developing societies are of doubtful value, and that more might be gained by focusing on the negotiated aspects of tourist-resident interaction and perception as it occurs over time and place. I have also argued the need for research on the impacts on destination areas of different kinds of tourist, on the role and commitment of the state in tourism in different developing societies, on the various economic actors involved

Several other priorities, of both theoretical and empirical significance, emerge as a result of this brief review. The first centres on theories of tourism. As indicated earlier, globalisation theory was less ideological than its predecessors, but as it became more comprehensive and less divisive, it arguably also led to a loss of focus. At the same time, the incorporation of the physical environment into globalisation theory made its scope even wider, and arguably exacerbated the process. Yet climate change is a pressing issue of theoretical and practical relevance, and tourism is a key player in the global system (Viner, 2006; Becken and Hay, 2007). This has been recognised by Farrell and Twining-Ward (2005: 119), who call for a renewed and wider focus on 'complex adaptive systems, natural ecosystems, co-evolution, a more inclusive tourism system, integrated social-ecological systems, and non-linear science'. Such a clarion summons, necessitated by the dominant challenge of our time, might not be popular, but they may be right.

Second, an intensely practical and political imperative, and the *major* priority for the future, is the need for closer links between academics working in tourism development studies and other tourism stakeholders, most notably international agencies, aid organisations, NGOs and consultants. Currently they operate in different and largely distinct spheres, and most published outputs (and outlets), of which there are a plethora (Mitchell and Ashley, 2007), remain solidly within their respective walls. They are indeed central to the literature on tourism and development, but they vary widely in quality and have rarely been subjected to rigorous objective review. Indeed, where outsiders *have* conducted their own assessments, the evidence has been decidedly mixed (Sofield, 2003: 189). As it stands, this division, which amounts to an academic/practitioner apartheid, is unproductive and unhealthy and needs to be broken down. Rather, for tourism to be an effective tool for development, we need to carry out detailed research on the roles of other stakeholders involved in tourism development and to be prepared to co-operate with them to ensure that tourism benefits are spread widely.

Third, there is a need to attend more to comparative histories of tourism in *developed* countries. The past *is* another country, and can demonstrate, *inter alia*, how changes in one region may directly affect another, including the social foundations of tourist motivation, and how tourism's impacts – and people's perceptions of them – change over time and place. As yet, though, few have recognised such a need (Walton, 2005, 1-2; Butler, 2006: 25-26), and there is little interchange among scholars working on tourism in developed and developing societies.

Three decades ago, de Kadt (1979) asked if tourism was a 'passport to development', a question of theoretical and practical significance, and a query as valid now as then. We also need to ask, with Seers (1977), what we mean by 'development'. If, with him, we consider it includes a reduction in poverty, unemployment, inequity

and dependence, everyone involved in tourism development, and not just advocates of 'pro-poor tourism' (Harrison, 2008), should focus not only on small-scale, donor-assisted and community-based tourism, which have little overall effect on human welfare (Goodwin, 2006), but also on *mass* tourism, which is clearly hugely influential, but which (amazingly) has been relatively ignored by tourism researchers. Only if this reorientation occurs will we really begin to understand how far tourism really is 'a tool for development'.

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5 Carrying capacity in tourism: paradox and hypocrisy?

Richard W. Butler

Introduction

Carrying capacity is a well established concept in tourism and recreation, as in many other elements of society. One might have expected, with the growth of sustainable development and the inextricable links of that concept to limits, and, by implication, the capacity of resources, that carrying capacity of tourist resources would be of increasing importance in current research and literature. In fact, somewhat the opposite is the case. In previous decades carrying capacity was a major focus in tourism and recreation research (Burton and Jackson, 1989) and a bibliography of over 3000 references on this topic (Vaske, 1992) was published. The topic is still mentioned, almost without exception, in major text books on tourism and merits specific attention in several others (e.g. Jenkins and Pigram, 2003; McCool, 2003). The concept is one of the basic foundations of the Tourism Area Life Cycle Model (Butler, 1980), the most widely used and cited model in tourism for the past three decades, and the term is found in many reports and policies relating to tourism planning and development. With this considerable pedigree, it is puzzling to note that in the 21st century this concept has virtually disappeared from the tourism research literature and is barely mentioned in the recreation resource management literature, where it was once a mainstream concept. At a meeting of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism in 1995 this author (Butler, 1997: 13) noted an earlier decline in research on this topic and argued that this trend would

serve destination areas poorly in the long run, especially those areas which are most dependent upon natural characteristics for their attractiveness and appeal, [and]... has left destination areas potentially exposed to overuse.... inevitable radical change and possibly ultimate despoliation.

Given that over the intervening decade and a half since those words were written tourist numbers have continued to rise both globally and in almost every region of the world (WTO, 2008), visitor pressure on resources and destinations has increased rather than remained stable or decreased. This has meant that because destinations are experiencing increasing numbers of visitors they are witnessing ever more severe impacts upon the destination environments, both ecological and