

EXERCISE 6.1

TOURISTS, TRAVELLERS AND CONSUMPTION

This exercise is intended to help you think about how tourism behaviour relates to everyday behaviour at home for different groups of people visiting Prague.

- (1) Discuss which categories from Erik Cohen's (2004) typology of different sorts of tourist best describe the case studies outlined below.
- (2) Can you think of any ways in which the typology might be modified? Does it capture all possibilities?
- (3) Look at the four models of tourist consumption below. How do these relate to the case studies and to Cohen's typology? Are there other understandings of consumption that might be more appropriate?

Tourist types

- **The organised mass tourist** – books a package holiday and participates in a pre-defined itinerary
- **The individual mass tourist** – rarely leaves the bubble of the travel agency booked vacation, but more adventurous than the organised mass tourist
- **The explorer** – enjoys travelling off the beaten track as long as an element of home comforts remains easily reachable. Makes own travel arrangements
- **The drifter** – shuns fixed itineraries and the established tourist infrastructure. Seeks authentic experiences and desires to go native

Models of tourist consumption

- **The quest for authenticity** – seeking the genuine manifestations of the cultural traditions and heritage of unique and/or pristine cultural groups and peoples
- **Escape** – attempting to escape the routines and restrictions of everyday life at home
- **Serious leisure** – enjoying travel as a way to experience intensified periods of engaging in leisure pursuits also pursued at home
- **Consumption of the familiar** – seeking to consume ideas, images and experiences familiar from reading, learning, talking to others, etc

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Case studies: Visitors to Prague

Colin and Maria McPherson: Married couple, late 50s, from Boston, USA. Colin works as a bank manager and Maria is a homemaker. They have previously visited Budapest, Venice and Paris. Will visit all the major tourist sites and have a particular interest in Socialist history. Their interests at home include book groups, antique fairs and watching documentaries on television.

Billy Campbell : Single man, aged 29, from Edinburgh, Scotland, and on a visit with five other male friends to experience the night-time economy. Is currently studying for a fine art degree and has previously holidayed in Ibiza and Faliraki.

Zhang Ting : Single woman, an architect, aged 39, from Beijing, China. On her first trip to Europe and also hoping to take in Rome, Prague, Ljubljana and Zagreb. Has previously visited Singapore, Thailand and Australia. Interests include architecture, socialising and dining with friends.

Jacques Sassoon : French academic, aged 42, has visited Prague many times before and has an established holiday routine involving pilgrimages to sites relating to Franz Kafka, churches and restaurants. On this visit, Jacques is participating in a creative writing workshop for amateur writers from around Europe.

Fritz and Ulli Mahler : Married couple, both aged 30, from Austria. Fritz is a third-generation Czech and is keen to introduce Ulli to Prague and the Czech culture. Both are employed in the creative industries and enjoy visiting art galleries.

George Bayo : Kenyan artist, aged 62. George has recently retired from the construction industry and has taken up watercolour painting. Is visiting Prague to make sketches for painting at home. Has previously travelled extensively in east Africa and Europe, but he has never been to Prague.

Cultural capital and serious leisure are about the building of a biography. Using an example of any relevant city or other destination, describe what places, sights, experiences, cultural events or artefacts would be relevant for a cultural tourist.

Making use of what you have learned from discussing the models of consumption, the case studies and the original typology of tourists, produce your own typology and explain the characteristic motivations and activities of each kind of tourist.