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THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

‘Should we have stayed at home and thought of here? Where should we be today? Is it right to be watching strangers in a play in this strangest of theatres?’

E. Bishop, 1968: 32

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you will understand:

- the different socio-cultural impacts tourism can have, both positive and negative, on the destination and the tourists themselves
- the factors that influence how destinations, and the individual members of the host community, are affected by the socio-cultural impacts of tourism
- the underlying views and theories that influence how one sees the role and responsibilities of the tourism industry and the tourist with regard to socio-cultural impacts
- a range of strategies that can be used to manage the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on destinations.
INTRODUCTION

Of the three main types of impact, the socio-cultural consequences of tourism are the least obvious and hardest to measure. While the economic impacts of tourism are often the main objective of tourism development in destinations, and its environmental impacts are often visible, the impacts of tourism on the host community and culture emerge more slowly, affect each destination and individuals within it in different ways, and are difficult to isolate from other causes.

Although the social and cultural impacts of tourism are often discussed together, there are certain differences between the two. Social impacts usually refer to interpersonal relations, social conduct, crime, safety, religion, language and health. Cultural impacts usually refer to material and non-material forms of culture (e.g. heritage and religious buildings, artefacts, rituals) and processes of cultural change (Wall and Mathieson, 2006). A body of literature regarding the socio-cultural impacts of tourism has developed since the 1970s, with key scholars such as Cohen, Mathieson and Wall, Piznam, Pearce and Moscardo.

Like all impacts, tourism’s social and cultural impacts may be positive or negative. Major claims have been made for tourism as a force for peace and greater understanding between communities, but the experience of tourism in host communities in many destinations shows that, in reality, tourism can be a force for rapid and undesirable social change.

In this chapter we identify the potential positive and negative social and cultural impacts that are linked to tourism development and consider the factors that determine
the extent of these impacts. We conclude the chapter by discussing how the social and cultural impacts can be managed effectively to ensure that tourism development adheres to the principles of sustainability.

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON HOST COMMUNITIES**

Tourism can be seen as a form of meeting: between people from different places, between cultures and between lifestyles. In tourism the nature and quality of personal contact between tourists and the host community form an important part of the tourists’ experience of a destination and many destinations promote the friendliness of the community as an attraction. For example:

- ‘Tajikistan: Feel the friendship’
- ‘Amazing Thailand: It begins with the people’
- ‘The Gambia: The smiling coast of Africa’
- ‘Taiwan wears a smile’

These slogans imply that the host community is welcoming to tourists and supportive of tourism development, and that the encounters between tourists and members of the host community will be positive. Tourism can bring people together, foster friendships and enable contacts between people from all around the world. However, in many cases, the contacts between hosts and tourists are superficial and formalised. For example, tourists who do not venture outside of the ‘tourist bubble’ may only encounter the local community in their role of employees or in commercial transactions. The duration of a tourist’s visit may limit the opportunity to have close contact with members of the host community, and the opportunity to communicate may be restricted by language or cultural barriers. These factors can limit deep, meaningful contacts between hosts and tourists. The contact that the two groups have can lead to social and cultural impacts on both sides, which can be positive as well as negative.

**POSITIVE IMPACTS**

Potential positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism for host communities include:

- A better understanding between cultures.
- Revival of culture.
- Improved standard of living.

**BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CULTURES**

The UNWTO names the ‘contribution of tourism to the mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies’ as the first article in its Global Code of Ethics (UNWTO, n.d.). Tourism can be seen as a chance to understand unfamiliar people, places and cultures. From this can grow a deeper understanding, tolerance and respect for different religious, and moral and philosophical beliefs. This, however, is only possible if the different stakeholders in tourism are accepting and appreciative of these differences and needs to be supported by tourists’ sensitivity to the cultural and social norms of the destination.
A better understanding between cultures can potentially lead to the breaking down of negative stereotypes. Mark Twain, the nineteenth-century American author, said: ‘Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime’ (Twain, 1869: 129). By increasing the cultural awareness between hosts and visitors, tourism can contribute to reducing stereotypes and prejudices about nationalities, religions and cultures. Prejudices are often inaccurate and tend to emphasise the negative attributes, whereas the positive attributes are ignored. They may lead to discrimination or rude and hostile behaviour (Reisinger, 2009).

Tourism has not only been claimed to encourage a better understanding between cultures, it has also been described as a force for peace. The link between tourism and peace dates back to the 1980s. The year 1986 was the UN Year of Peace, an initiative that followed several severe instances of terrorism around the world, many of which were aimed at tourism. Many scholars have since argued that tourism can achieve an attitudinal change in tourists and promote cross-cultural understanding (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006a). In 2016, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) published a report in collaboration with the Institute of Economics and Peace, highlighting that countries with a more sustainable and open tourism sector tend to be more peaceful. Tourism can help support peace by ‘putting pressure on governments to cease fighting or establish harmonious relationships between citizens in order to attract tourists. This is particularly important if tourism is an important sector for the economy’ (WTTC, 2016: 2). Examples provided in the report include Rwanda, where efforts to clear land mines were in part driven by increasing gorilla tourism, and Kashmir, where cross-border tourism is a significant factor in reducing friction between India and Pakistan in the disputed territory.

REVIVAL OF CULTURE

The admiration of tourists for local culture, arts, traditions or customs can increase the cultural pride of the local community and revive aspects of this culture that might have been declining. Certain art forms or traditions, for example, can be mainly kept alive by an older generation: the positive attention of tourists can encourage young people in the host community to become actively involved as well.

SNAPSHOT 8.1

Tourism in Nunavut, Arctic Canada

Nunavut, or ‘Our Land’ in Inuktitut, is the Northernmost territory of Canada. It encompasses over 2 million km² and has a population of 35,944 residents (2016 census), approximately 85 per cent of whom are Inuit. Tourism development in this remote region is relatively recent, but arrivals show an upward trend, particularly in cruise tourism (Insignia, 2015). The region is known for its pristine natural beauty, but is beset by economic difficulties,
such as low educational achievement and high levels of unemployment: 20 per cent of Inuit residents were unemployed in 2016 (Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, n.d.).

While the natural environment is a large part of Nunavut’s appeal, Inuit culture and arts are also top attractions. Tourism Nunavut claims that the destination has more artists per capita than any other region in the world. While Inuit art tends to be most famous for its carvings in stone, ivory, antler and bone, print making, weaving and clothing are also art forms commonly practised (Nunavut Tourism, 2017). Tourists on organised tours tend to visit craft studios and tours, and participate in native culture exhibitions including traditional ceremonies, throat singing, Arctic games and a drum dance (Okrant and Larsen, 2016).

Proponents of tourism in Nunavut highlight that these cultural expressions, even if they are staged for tourists, can be of importance to younger generations in Nunavut, and give them an opportunity to learn more about their own culture. As Nunavut has the youngest population in Canada – in 2016, with a median age of 27.7 (Statistics Canada, 2017b) – this may be a particular benefit of tourism in the region: the preservation of their culture is in their hands. However, Okrant and Larsen (2016) raise concerns about the limited planning that has accompanied the expansion in the region, which may lead to commodification of the Inuit’s culture.

IMPROVED STANDARD OF LIVING

Tourism development often requires infrastructural improvements that improve the host community’s standard of living if the resources that tourists use are shared with them. These improvements include: better accessibility through the provision of new roads, new services or new transit routes; the provision of new amenities and attractions that may also be used or enjoyed by the host community, for example cultural, sport or entertainment events, or the construction of facilities for cultural, sport or leisure activities; the redevelopment or improvement of neglected buildings and areas; and the improved provision of water and electricity supplies.

Tourism development may also bring new employment opportunities to the destination for the local population – these are discussed in more depth in Chapter 7. Finally, tourism development can support the conservation and enhancement of the local environment, thus improving the quality of life of the local residents (see Chapter 9).

Although tourism can thus be linked to a range of socio-cultural benefits, it is not always a positive socio-cultural force. We will now review the potential negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism for host communities.

SNAPSHOT 8.2

Tourism and standard of living in Guizhou, China

Guizhou province is located in southwest China, and is characterised by its tranquil mountains and traditional rural villages. Until fairly recently, it was rarely visited: until 2000, Guizhou attracted less than 300,000 overseas tourists (Donaldson, 2007). However, this changed with the opening of superhighways spanning nearly 3,200 miles of the province, connecting remote villages with progressive cities like Guiyang, the capital.
The expressways are engineering marvels that compete with the spectacular scenery, traversing hundreds of long tunnels and towering bridges (including the world’s highest). In 2014, the trip across the province from Guangzhou to Guiyang was cut from 20 hours to 5 hours. Thanks to the new roads, tourism in Guizhou grew by 50 per cent in 2016, much of it due to domestic visitors (Leatherman, 2017).

What is interesting about tourism development in Guizhou, however, is not just how fast tourism developed, but where it developed. Historically, Guizhou’s most popular sites, including nationally sponsored tourist sites, ethnic minority villages and other popular sites, are primarily located in rural areas designated as poor counties, helping spread the economic benefits of tourism directly to poor rural residents (Donaldson, 2007: 341). While Guizhou remains one of China’s poorest provinces, and faces problems that tourism alone cannot fix, household incomes in tourism villages grew sharply: in these villages, tourism enabled residents to improve their standard of living. A study showed that compared to tourism development in other Chinese provinces like Yunnan, the benefits of Guizhou’s tourism were more evenly spread, reaching more poor areas and reducing poverty to a much greater extent, despite the relative lack of economic growth (Donaldson, 2007: 345).

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Potential negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism for host communities include:

- conflict of interests
- pressure on limited resources
- resentment
- loss of cultural pride
- staged authenticity
- demonstration effect
- commodification – trinketisation – Cocacolonisation
- displacement
- crime and prostitution
- begging by children and child labour.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Relations between tourists and the host community are not always problem-free. Tourists may see the destination as a place of rest, relaxation and enjoyable activities, but for many locals it is a place of work and this can cause tensions between the two groups. Tourists enjoying a beach holiday may complain about noise created by fishermen when they bring in their catch in the early morning, or may be deterred by a new farm building erected in a rural landscape. The conflict here is that many of the things tourists enjoy in a destination, such as the beach, the sea, the landscape or the view, are not actually owned by tourism suppliers. (Private beaches and gardens are notable exceptions here.) This implies that the tourist sector has little control over these resources and has to compete for them with other industries. Often the economic importance of the industry to the local community is therefore a key factor. Especially
when these resources are limited, this can cause conflict and negative social impacts. It is usually the task of governmental bodies in charge of tourism planning to address these conflicts of interest (Gunn and Var, 2002).

In 2017, around 2,000 people staged an ‘occupation’ of the Rambla, Barcelona’s famous boulevard, to protest against the city’s continuous growth in visitor numbers. Around 18 million tourists visited Barcelona in 2016 – the city has a population of only 1.6 million (Statista, 2017). Tourism makes up about 12 per cent of Barcelona’s economy — up from less than 2 per cent before the 1992 Olympic Games. But tourism revenue is not shared equitably, and not all residents see its benefits. Short-term rental accommodations and hotels are driving up rents and displacing businesses. Overcrowding, and some tourists’ rowdy behaviour, also lead to resentment and resistance from the local population. After the protest, Barcelona City Council took action and implemented a new law, limiting the number of beds available and prohibiting new hotels in certain city zones. The new law is expected to take effect in 2019, and other cities, like Venice, have expressed an interest in exploring similar options. The Barcelona Hotel Association and the Council of Trade, Service and Tourism, however, have argued that the new law will do little to stem the flow of day visitors, who cause significant overcrowding and tend to contribute less to the local economy (The Local, 2017).

PRESSURE ON LIMITED RESOURCES

Tourists put extra pressure on local resources such as public transport, parking facilities, waste collection and hospitals, particularly during periods of peak demand. In large cities these extra pressures are often more easily dealt with than in small coastal or rural destinations or historic towns where local residents may experience delays and inconvenience when going about their daily activities.

In developing countries, where resources may be scarce, the pressure from tourism can be very significant. A common example is the development of golf tourism in climates with limited rainfall. Golf courses in these places require constant irrigation to keep the fairways and greens up to standard. It is estimated that an 18-hole golf course can consume more than 2.3 million litres of water per day. This means that an average golf course in a tropical country such as Thailand uses as much water as 60,000 rural villagers (UNEP, 2008). Luxury resorts and swimming pools also put great pressure on the water supply. Tourism Concern (2012) highlights that in Goa, India, tourism has proliferated in an unregulated way, which has made access to water dependent on the ability to pay, not human need. Hotels and resorts have either attached large pipes to the main supply, or have dug boreholes: both practices reduce the availability of (piped and ground) water for local communities.

RESENTMENT

The negative social impacts of tourism can cause a feeling of resentment against the tourist within the host community. The Irridex model, discussed later in this chapter (p. 207), illustrates how resentment can build up, especially when the economic impacts do not benefit the host community directly. Where it is felt that the benefits brought by tourism do not outweigh the social costs, the local community may become frustrated and dissatisfied with tourism and express this in their relations with the tourists. In areas that are dependent on tourism and where the economy relies on the income derived from it, negative attitudes of the host community towards tourists can
undermine the quality of the tourists’ experience and the success of the destination. This resentment can also be increased by possible racial tensions if the tourists and the host population are from different racial backgrounds.

Resentment within the local community can also be caused by the behaviour of the tourist, which can be seen as inappropriate or in breach of local customs and traditions. In Zanzibar, for example, an island in the Indian Ocean off the Tanzanian coast, the cultural values of predominantly Western tourists do not always match the predominantly Islamic and Swahili culture of the island. The consumption of alcohol in public, for example, and the tourists who stroll around the town in shorts and bikini tops, can cause offence to the people of the local community and put a strain on relations between hosts and tourists. Even though many tour operators advise tourists to cover up and respect local customs not all tourists follow these guidelines, which can then lead to discontent within the host community. This is the case, for example, in Muscat, Oman – a destination that has recently started promoting itself for tourism. Compared to nearby Dubai, Muscat is more traditional, with most men wearing white dishdashas and women black veils. In the hotels, bikinis, shorts and T-shirts are accepted, but when going into the town, tourists are advised to wear respectful clothing and cover their legs and shoulders (Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

**LOSS OF CULTURAL PRIDE**

It has already been highlighted that tourism can increase local cultural pride, but tourism can also have the reverse effect and cause a feeling of inferiority in the host population. This is often the case when there is a big difference between the financial power of the tourist and the host community. Local residents may feel that they are objectified in front of the camera and that their culture is overly commercialised (Cole, 2008). A contributing factor to this loss of cultural pride may be that the local population does not feel a part of tourism development and does not share in the benefits it brings: tourism development may be in the hands of foreign investors or large corporations, or the policy makers may not have consulted the locals in their decision making. To encourage a feeling of ownership and pride through tourism development, community participation should be a key element of socially sustainable development.

**STAGED AUTHENTICITY**

Many tourists are attracted by what is called the authenticity of other cultures: they want to see and experience events, customs, traditions and other aspects of culture that they perceive as genuine, real and meaningful. Often these events, customs and traditions will be different from what the tourist is used to at home. Cultures in less developed countries may be seen as more ‘primitive’ and ‘pure’ and representing certain values that the tourist might feel are lost in the home society.

When tourism is developed, however, culture becomes a selling point for many destinations. This means aspects of culture might be commercialised and lose their true meaning: for example events that used to take place annually may be performed weekly for the benefit of the tourist; or local delicacies that are only cooked at certain times of the year may be made available all year around. In many cases the tourist still experiences the core of an authentic aspect of culture, but it may have been adapted to some extent so that it becomes more easily ‘consumable’.
The staged authenticity of many Polynesian cultural experiences is also referred to as ‘the Bali syndrome’. In these mature tourist destinations, resorts have developed that protect the tourist from unpleasant encounters with beggars and street sellers, and instead offer an enclave that is seen as pure and unspoilt. In those enclaves, tourists typically experience artificial cultural experiences and stylised representations of local people, which do not necessarily match reality. Rosenbaum and Wong (2008) argue that, in reality, contemporary locals in Polynesia are quite similar to people in Western urbanised areas. The cultural experience that is sold in the tourist enclaves does not always respond to actual culture, but rather to tourists’ romanticised expectations of that culture. The tourism sector responds to this by providing a cultural product that itself is a form of staged authenticity.

Another example is the Paduang tribe in Northern Thailand: this tribe is famous for its tradition of beautifying women by elongating their necks. This is achieved through adding brass rings to a girl’s neck from the age of 5, pressing down the collarbone and ribs, and pushing up the chin. This traditional custom is now mainly practised for commercial reasons: each girl who decides to wear the rings is paid by the tourist boat operators (Keyte, 2016).

Authenticity is an issue not only for intangible aspects of culture such as cultural customs and norms, but also for tangible aspects of culture. The development of cultural sites, such as heritage sites, for tourism needs to balance commercial interests with the conservation of the authenticity of the site, and those two objectives
may be in conflict with each other. Over-commercialisation may reduce the authen-
ticity of the visitor experience. In 2009, a plan was proposed to develop the Taj
Mahal site in India with a Ferris wheel, a suspension bridge and cable cars. This
plan met with a lot of opposition, as many were concerned that the original sig-
nificance and meaning of the site would be lost. The Taj Mahal was built by the
grieving Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife, Mumtaz, who had died
in childbirth. Its white marble minarets, dome, jewel-inlaid mosaics and classical
Persian garden took thousands of craftsmen from 1632 to 1652 to complete. It is
protected from surrounding development by a 500-metre conservation zone. The
development of the tourist park was proposed at a distance of 800 metres from
the site. In 2008 about 3 million people visited the Taj Mahal, but officials hoped
to increase the figure by linking it to neighbouring historic buildings and adding
the Agra Eye – a Ferris wheel modelled on the London Eye. Cable cars between
the Taj Mahal and other attractions were expected to increase tourist spending at
each. Conservationists and other activists, however, strongly opposed the plans,
arguing that the development would not be in keeping with the ambience of the
attraction (Kerr, 2009).

DEMONSTRATION EFFECT

Originally this was a term used in sociology and economics when describing the
effects on behaviour from observing other people’s actions. In tourism, it is used to
refer to the copying of tourists’ behaviours, dress codes or preferences by the host
community. An example could be that younger generations stop wearing traditional
dress and adopt the clothing style of visitors.

In contemporary society, the power of tourism as a medium for the demonstration
effect must not be overestimated. Television and the Internet are now much more
likely to contribute to the changing tastes and behaviours of host populations than
tourists alone. Only a few destinations and host communities (e.g. primitive tribes)
mainly have contact with the wider world via tourism – now that technology is more
common and widespread, tourism is only likely to be a contributing factor, if that,
to the demonstration effect. Even tribes that do not tend to have contact with tour-
ists can still be exposed to different cultures via TV researchers and film crews. The
BBC programme Tribe, for example, focused on some of the most isolated peoples in
the world. The presenter of the programme, Bruce Parry, lived with each tribe and
explored their cultural traditions and way of life. Even though great care was taken
not to cause any negative socio-cultural effects on the participating tribes, they were
still exposed to technological equipment, cultural habits and artefacts they were not
accustomed to.

COMMODIFICATION – TRINKETISATION – COCACOLONISATION

‘Commodification’ means that a value, a cultural aspect or an artefact is turned into
a commodity: in other words, that it is commercialised. This can cause changes or
mutations in those values or cultural aspects and may lead to staged authenticity (see
p. 196). Another consequence of commodification may be standardisation: this means
that everything becomes consumable and thus similar and familiar. A clear example
of standardisation can be seen in popular souvenirs: in many tourist destinations the
same souvenirs are sold and only the name of the destination differs. Think of T-shirts with ‘My girlfriend went to … and all I got was this lousy T-shirt’, or black bags with the name of the destination printed on them in colourful letters.

‘Trinketisation’ is a term that refers to the commercialisation and trivialisation of culture. Cultural motives and traditions are still recognisable, but they are no longer linked to their history and meaning. Artefacts and crafts that are supposed to be the expression of a destination’s rich cultural heritage may, for example, be mass-produced and sold as mere trinkets. Fake native American dream catchers may have been produced in a factory in India, and the Murano glass a tourist brings home from a trip to Venice might have been made in China.

The commodification and trinketisation of culture can also be linked to a process of ‘Cocacolonisation’ (also referred to as ‘McDonaldisation’ or ‘Disneyfication’). In the field of tourism, these terms refer to the spreading of Western cultures and values throughout the world: just as these brands are present everywhere, so are Western cultural values increasing their influence worldwide. These values often represent (over-)consumption and the free market, materialistic wants, homogeneity and a distancing from nature and the natural environment. ‘Disneyfication’ additionally refers to the sanitising of environments into clean and safe places, removing all risk, until these places feel like a Disney theme park. Although safety and cleanliness are no doubt positive attributes for a destination, the term is used negatively to refer to the modification of what is authentic and complex into easily understandable and consumable chunks.

Commodification – Britain

Source: Lynn Minnaert
Commodification – Istanbul

Source: Lynn Minnaert

Commodification – Valencia

Source: Lynn Minnaert
DISPLACEMENT

‘Displacement’ means that local residents, because of the development of tourism, are forced to move away from their homes. This may be because they have been evicted, to make way for a hotel complex for example. Another reason could be that because of the influx of tourists, property and land prices have gone up, so that local residents can no longer afford to buy or rent in the area. They might be priced out of the market by developers, or by tourists from wealthier areas looking to buy a second home.

In some cases, this may mean the local residents lose not only their homes, but also their livelihoods. Tourism Concern, a charity that fights exploitation through tourism, raises awareness of the displacement of tribes in Eastern Africa. Several tribes in Kenya and Tanzania, for example, were evicted from their homes to make way for game reserves for tourists. They received no compensation and in many places had to move with large amounts of cattle and livestock. Because the cattle are no longer allowed to graze in the new wildlife reserves, this impacts on the livelihood of the tribal community. According to Tourism Concern, ‘this is a pattern that has been repeated throughout East Africa. National parks and wildlife are being conserved at the expense of the people who have lived there and been guardians of the land and the wildlife for centuries, and who understand the bush in much more detail than Western wildlife ‘experts’ and have a low-impact, sustainable lifestyle’ (Tourism Concern, 2017).

CRIME AND PROSTITUTION

Tourism development can lead to an increase in crime in the destination community. Tourist-related crimes include theft, robberies and assaults on tourists: although these affect the tourist rather than the host directly, it can lead to an increased sense of a lack of safety within the host community. Members of the host community may also be victims of crime. Sports events, for example, are sometimes linked to an increase in crime, and football matches are sometimes blighted by hooliganism, violence and vandalism (Barker, 2004).

Although prostitution is not solely linked to tourism, in many destinations the problem gets worse as tourism increases. In some destinations, this may include child prostitution. This is mostly the case when there is a big financial divide between the tourist and the host community, and when the fact of being in another country gives the sex tourist a feeling of being ‘untouchable’. ECPAT International is a global charity that aims to protect children from sexual exploitation. Although child prostitution is mainly linked to the tourism industries of Asian (e.g. Thailand) and Latin-American countries (e.g. Costa Rica), this negative impact of tourism is now becoming noticeable in growing tourism destinations in Africa and even Europe (e.g. Estonia and the Czech Republic) (ECPAT, 2016).

BEGGING BY CHILDREN AND CHILD LABOUR

Tourism opportunities can divert children from education by encouraging them to sell souvenirs, provide street entertainment or beg for money rather than going to school. Begging by children is common in tourism destinations in developing countries – in some cases for money, in others for sweets, pens and other small items. In several countries, such as Morocco and Mexico, giving money to begging children is often frowned upon because it is seen to encourage a culture of dependence on hand-outs.
Tourism can also encourage child labour. Many children are not officially employed by the tourism industry but are working in the so-called ‘open air economy’: they derive an income from the recreational spending of the tourists. Children can earn money as street sellers, car attendants or shoe-shine boys and girls. Tourists may be more generous when they pay for their services, perhaps because it is easier for young children to win sympathy and compassion (Andriotis, 2016). Children may also be involved in prostitution and the sex industry: see above.

A child vendor in Peru

Source: Sonia Rosiers

SNAPSHOT 8.3

‘Orphan tourism’: Are You Really Helping?
One of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry – and one that affects children both positively and negatively – is ‘voluntourism’. Some of the most popular volunteer activities involve children, for example working at an orphanage or teaching them English. However, voluntourism is the subject of a heated debate. One concern is that international

(Continued)
volunteers might replace local staff or disrupt the regular work of local staff, thus hindering the sustainability and quality of the work. Another is that voluntourism makes the community dependent on receiving volunteers.

Specific concerns have, moreover, been raised with regard to volunteer tourism involving children. The fact that volunteering opportunities generate income both for the mediating agency that arranges the trip and for the project at the destination, may constitute a threat to children. In both Cambodia and South Africa, this was particularly true for volunteer placements at orphanages, where children in some cases were not orphans but children from poor families unable to provide for them. Some parents are lured into signing adoption agreements, making it very hard to reunite with the child as the family’s circumstances improve. Furthermore, sending inexperienced volunteers to look after children who may have attachment disorders for a short period of time may not be in the best interests of the child, even if it might be a ‘life-changing’ experience for the volunteer. As voluntourism tends to focus on developing countries with a lack of regulation, tourists should do careful research into the experiences on offer so that children are not harmed in the process (Schyst Resande & Fair Trade Center, 2013).

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON TOURISTS

Tourism can have profound impacts on the host communities and destinations, but travelling can also have impacts on the tourists themselves. After all, if tourism does not do the tourist any good, why do so many people travel and love to travel? Tourists may decide to travel for different reasons (see Tourist Motivations, Chapter 4), and the types of holidays they take may be very different; still, we can distinguish some general impacts on tourists. Positive impacts mostly have to do with a sense of psychological and physiological well-being, negative impacts with feelings of anxiety and disturbance.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

Many tourists will decide to go on holiday because of the positive effects of travelling on their well-being. A holiday is something we may look forward to all year, save up for and plan carefully; it can also be a source of happy memories that are treasured long after our return. Hazel (2004) discusses common positive impacts of holidays on tourists:

Rest and renewal: Holidays provide a break from routine and an escape from the daily surroundings and activities that may seem stressful or just rather boring. On holiday the tourist has a chance to relax, to take a break from it all. This allows tourists to rediscover themselves and what is most important in life (recreation is after all linked to the word re-create). On holiday, the tourist has a chance to recharge their batteries and return to the daily routine refreshed and motivated.

Mental and physical health: Rest and renewal can also be important at a mental level. Holidays have been linked to improvements in health – mainly mental health and mental strength. There is also isolated evidence that holidays can reduce the risk of stress-related illnesses such as heart disease.
Social interaction – strengthening relationships: Holidays can provide opportunities to meet new people, be it fellow tourists or people from the host community. This can increase the tourist's social support network and contribute to higher confidence levels. The tourist can also gain a better understanding of peoples and cultures he or she was not familiar with before, which may increase intercultural understanding and counteract incorrect negative stereotypes (see p. 191). Tourism can also mean spending quality time with loved ones – a partner, friends or family. Being away from the home environment and the stresses and routines it represents often encourages tourists to purposely make time for each other.

Broadening experiences: On holiday, tourists not only get the opportunity to visit a place they might not have been to before, they can also easily engage in activities that are new to them. Trying out windsurfing on holiday or picking up a few words of Italian may, for example, lead to the development of a new hobby or a new skill. The tourist may also be more inclined to try a different cuisine or take an interest in a new art form whilst on holiday. Back home, these new interests and skills may lead to increased well-being and confidence.

Developing independence: Travelling, especially for young people, can also increase independence. On holiday, tourists may be faced with new situations or unexpected problems that need to be dealt with: luggage may get lost, or the dishes on a menu will be written in a language the tourist does not understand. Dealing with these requires a certain level of independence and confidence. When a young person travels alone, he or she may develop new skills by having to be independent in a new environment.

While these benefits may seem obvious, not all cultures value the positive impacts of tourism and time off equally. One example is the USA: while the majority of employers in the USA offer paid leave (for more detail, please see Snapshot 3.2), millions of vacation days go unused each year. In 2015, American workers reported taking off just 16.2 days, almost a full week less compared to the pre-2000 average. Because of this ‘work martyr’ syndrome, the USA was dubbed the ‘no vacation nation’. In response, the US Travel Association launched ‘Project: Time Off’, an initiative aimed at encouraging American workers to take a break and travel. Their research showed that taking time off is linked to better relationships, improved mental and physical health, and more positive attitudes towards work. It also showed that, beyond the personal and professional benefits, the reluctance to take days off also had economic consequences: had Americans used their vacation time, it would have resulted in $223 billion in spending for the US economy, and 1.6 million jobs (Project: Time Off, 2017).

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Tourism can also have negative socio-cultural impacts on tourists. Certain holiday situations can lead to tension, stress and anxiety instead of relaxation and well-being:

Terrorism: Tourists, because of their high visibility and their capacity to attract large amounts of worldwide media attention, can be prime targets for terrorism. Examples of destinations that have experienced terrorist attacks specifically targeting tourists are Paris, Istanbul, Berlin, Nice and London (see also Chapter 13). Tourists that have a close experience of these attacks may experience high levels
of anxiety and tension in their daily lives after their return from holiday. Bongar et al. (2007: 6) explain just how extensive the psychological effect of terrorism can be, even for persons who were not affected by an incident directly. He states that military psychologists have long known that fear, stress and exhaustion do much more damage than guns and bullets. For example, in 1995, a chemical attack in the Tokyo subway killed 12 people, but more than 4,000 non-affected individuals went to hospital afterwards with psychogenic symptoms. The long-term effect of this increased stress can be linked to lower activity rates, depression and suicide.

Crime against tourists: Several elements of the tourist destination may result in increased levels of crime. If there is a large discrepancy between the wealth and lifestyle of the tourist and the local population, for example, tourists may run an increased risk of having their belongings stolen via pick-pocketing or burglary of their holiday home. Some tourist destinations are famous for their nightlife and clubs, which may lead to an increase in alcohol-related violence during the tourist season. Tourists may also not be aware of more dangerous areas in a destination, or perhaps take more risks on holiday, and so put themselves in a more vulnerable position. Experiencing or witnessing a crime on holiday may lead to fear and anxiety, even after a tourist has returned home, and thus counter the positive impacts of the holiday.

Scams: Scams are schemes that are aimed at conning tourists out of their money. They are influenced to hand over cash voluntarily, only to find out later that they have been duped. Because many tourists are unfamiliar with the destination and its customs, they are prime targets for scams. They may, for example, be asked to hand over their passport by a fake police officer, who will subsequently disappear with it. Another famous scam is the fake holiday club, which mainly targets older tourists in the Canary Islands. The tourists are offered a scratch card, and by scratching off three equal symbols they win a luxury holiday. To get this holiday, they are asked to sit through a lengthy sales presentation, where they are offered membership to an exclusive holiday club with exclusive offers at bargain prices. After paying the expensive membership fee, they find they have only bought access to an online booking service, offering no better deals than the average travel agent. The UK National Trading Standards eCrime Team has launched a campaign to warn British tourists not to sign the contracts offered in this scam (National Trading Standards, n.d.).

FACTORS GOVERNING THE EXTENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON HOST COMMUNITIES

It has been established that tourism can have a range of positive and negative socio-cultural impacts on destinations. Not all of these impacts are present in all destinations, and in some the overall balance will be positive whilst in others the balance will be negative. A range of destination characteristics can be distinguished that determine the extent to which positive and negative socio-economic impacts of tourism will develop. Inskeep (1991) suggests that these mainly depend on the magnitude of the differences between the hosts and the tourists in terms of:

- basic value and logic systems
- religious beliefs
- traditions
• customs
• lifestyles
• behavioural patterns
• dress codes
• sense of time budgeting
• attitudes towards strangers.

Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) developed an alternative model and divided the factors that would determine the extent of socio-cultural impacts of tourism on destinations into two groups. On the one hand there are factors that apply to the host community as a whole, as an homogeneous group. But destinations are made up of individuals and within communities different groups might experience tourism in different ways. This means that on the other hand there are factors that apply to some individual members of the host community, but not to others.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DESTINATIONS

Whereas Inskeep (1991) focuses mainly on the differences between the hosts and the tourists in his model, Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) have extended this to include a range of characteristics of the host destination. These characteristics are the stage of development of the destination, the tourist type it attracts, the pace of development, the dominance of tourism, the relationships between hosts and guests, the ratio of tourists to residents, and the level of seasonality.

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

The intensity of certain socio-cultural impacts can be linked to the stage of development of the destination. The tourist area life cycle model (the TALC; see Chapter 10) is a representation of how resorts may develop: starting with low visitation and limited tourism development, the destination becomes more and more established until it reaches a peak in tourist numbers, after which it either declines or rejuvenates via further investment.

Many of the negative socio-cultural impacts, such as commodification of culture, staged authenticity and displacement, will only appear when tourist numbers and the level of development have become significant. In the earliest stages of development, the number of tourists, their impacts and their visibility may be low. In further stages of development these negative impacts may become ever clearer, and it is important that the host community is protected from them via effective policy and destination management.

TOURIST TYPE

The type and level of socio-cultural impacts of tourism on destinations are often linked to the type of visitor to those destinations. Here the Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) model is similar to Inskeep’s (1991) model as it examines the magnitude of the cultural differences between the host community and tourists, and how far tourists are willing to adapt to the host culture. The type of tourist the destination attracts is therefore important from the perspective of these cultural similarities/differences.
A range of tourist typologies exists (see Chapter 4). A typology that is helpful to estimate the level of socio-cultural impacts of tourism on host communities addresses such questions as: are the visitors very different from the host population in terms of wealth, race, religion, or cultural background? Are the visitors adapting to the culture of the destination, or do they want that culture to adapt to them? Valene Smith’s (1977) model specifically focused on the socio-cultural impacts of different tourist groups to the destination. For every tourist type, the model links the number and visibility of the tourists to their willingness to adapt to the local culture. The further down the model, the more pressing negative socio-cultural impacts may become, and the higher the need for effective policies and management (see Table 8.1).

### Table 8.1  Tourist types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist type</th>
<th>Visibility/pressure</th>
<th>Attitude towards local culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>Very limited</td>
<td>Adapts fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Rarely seen</td>
<td>Adapts fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-beat</td>
<td>Uncommon but seen</td>
<td>Adapts well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Adapts somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incipient mass</td>
<td>Steady flow</td>
<td>Seeks familiar amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Continuous influx</td>
<td>Expects familiar amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>Massive arrivals</td>
<td>Demands familiar amenities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Smith (1977). Reprinted with permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

### Pace of Development

The pace of development is another factor that influences the level of socio-cultural impacts. If tourism develops slowly and gradually, the local community is given the opportunity to develop policies and management strategies to deal with the socio-cultural impacts, maximising the positive impacts and minimising the negative impacts. If the development of tourism is sudden and fast (e.g. if an investor is allowed to build a big hotel complex in a small and little-developed destination), it may be more difficult for the local community to consider effective ways to deal with the influx of visitors.

Dubai is a typical example of a tourist destination that has developed very rapidly. Dubai is one of the seven autonomous sheikhdoms in the United Arab Emirates. Since the 1990s it has started to develop tourism in response to fluctuating oil prices and revenues. Since then, it has become one of the fastest growing tourism destinations worldwide. The main markets are other Gulf States, Europe and Africa. From 2003, earnings from tourism have surpassed those from oil in most years. In 2020, Dubai will be hosting the World Exhibition: more developments, such as theme parks and museums, are fast developing in anticipation for this event. Even though rapid tourism development is undeniably linked to economic benefits, it has also caused a degeneration of the urban environment and negative social impacts. The influx of tourists has caused congestion, pollution and noise. The futuristic new developments push
emblems of traditional culture, such as the Persian wind towers, into the background (Henderson, 2006). Therefore the negative impacts in this case are inconvenience and Westernisation.

DOMINANCE OF TOURISM

Destinations can also experience different levels of socio-cultural impacts depending on the dominance of tourism as a source of income. If the area is economically largely dependent on tourism, it may become more difficult to slow down tourist development, even if it is seen to bring negative impacts to the local area.

The example of Dubai can again apply here: due to over-construction of accommodation, prices in many older hotels have recently fallen. The cruise terminal, built to attract stopover tourism, is under-utilised during the summer. By becoming more and more dependent on tourism instead of oil, the tourism industry is now of vital importance as a source of revenue and employment: this may mean that the need for economic benefit could override socio-cultural concerns in the future (Henderson, 2006).

HOST–TOURIST RELATIONS (IRRIDEX)

Doxey (1975) proposed a model to describe the different community reactions to tourism. He suggested that as tourism develops and the industry becomes bigger, the attitude of the local population is expected to become more negative (see Figure 8.1).

Doxey suggested that when tourism first develops (in the earliest stages of the TALC), the host community is likely to welcome the positive impacts this has on the area, and the relationship between hosts and visitors will be positive (Euphoria). As the tourism industry becomes more established and the local population gets used to the visitors, this positive relationship may be transformed into a state of Apathy. If the tourist industry then develops even further and more negative impacts start to become clear, the local attitude towards visitors may turn into Annoyance, or in the most extreme cases Antagonism (e.g. violence against tourists).

Doxey’s model applies most to destinations where the impacts of tourism are not managed. It can be seen as pessimistic because it seems to indicate that tourism development will necessarily lead to antagonism within the host community. Still, this does not have to be the case: with careful planning and management in the destination (see Chapters 12 and 13), it is possible to foster positive relationships between hosts and visitors.
IMPACTS OF TOURISM

THE RATIO OF TOURISTS TO RESIDENTS

This ratio refers to the number of tourists versus the number of local residents in a destination. In a large city like London, Tokyo or New York, this ratio is much lower than in a small seaside or island resort with a small population. If the ratio is high, it becomes more likely that the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the destination will be more pronounced.

In 2015, Iceland had an overnight tourist ratio of 0.039: this meant that for every Icelandic resident, the country received 3.9 overnight tourists (Statistics Estonia, 2017). This is a relatively low number compared to Hawaii: here, the tourist ratio in 2015 was 0.062. This means that in 2015, the destination welcomed 6 tourists for every resident. Unless the tourists are carefully managed, the chance of negative impacts occurring is substantial.

SEASONALITY

If tourism in the destination has a distinct seasonal pattern such as, for example, in beach or ski resorts, the impacts on the community will be accentuated during peak periods. The destination may become congested, it may become more difficult for the local community to carry out daily tasks or worship, and feelings of resentment may grow.

Tourism in Spain is highly seasonal and geographically concentrated, which causes a particular set of social problems. The main season is from June to September, when tourism employment levels are high and a lot of the bed space is likely to be occupied (Hudman and Jackson, 2002). In response to this seasonality, the Spanish government supports a social tourism programme called IMSERSO: this programme allows older people to travel off-peak, via special grants, to destinations that would otherwise be under-visited. The programme provides holidaymakers with a grant of 30 per cent of the total cost of the holiday. This achieves the social aim of increasing the mobility of older people and supports out-of-season employment. Because this means that the government has to pay less unemployment benefit and receives income via taxes, the scheme has directly or indirectly generated more than 30,000 jobs in the tourist sector alone (Minnaert et al., 2010).

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL HOST RESIDENTS

This section refers to the characteristics of individual members of the host population. These may influence how they perceive the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the destination. The section highlights that even though some characteristics will apply to the destination as a whole, this does not mean that all members of a host community will have the same views of tourism development and its impacts. Ap (1992) has described this as an adaptation of the ‘social exchange theory’: he sees the relationships between hosts and tourists as a trade-off between positive and negative impacts, and how far an individual benefits or suffers from tourism development will determine his or her attitude towards tourism and tourists.

Involvement in tourism: If persons in the host community are dependent on tourism for their livelihood – if they are employed in the tourism industry or if they operate a tourism business themselves – they are more likely to be more accepting of the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism. For them the benefits of tourism often outweigh the costs, meaning the social exchange is positive.
**Period of residence**: Depending on the destination, the period of residence may be a positive or negative factor in determining the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on residents. If individuals move to the destination because they seek peace and tranquillity, the development of tourism there may seem rather threatening. However, if the tourism destination is rather developed already, new residents are often aware of the impacts of tourism before they move, so they may be more prepared to accept these than the residents who have lived there longer.

**Residential proximity to tourist centre**: This characteristic refers to how far from the tourist centre the resident lives his or her daily life. If the resident lives far away and has limited contact with tourists, he or she may experience fewer impacts of tourism development. Residents who live and/or work in the tourist centre and have frequent interactions with tourists are likely to experience the impacts of tourism more acutely.

**Socio-economic characteristics**: This characteristic is mainly applicable to tourism in developing countries, where the socio-economic gap between the visitors and the hosts can influence the relationships between the two groups. More educated and affluent groups in the destination may, for example, experience more positive contacts and impacts whereas more disadvantaged groups in the destination might mainly experience negative impacts.

**UNDERLYING THEORIES**

Cultures and societies are complex entities and tourism is just one factor that influences them. This is why tourism and its impacts do not operate independently from the ideas and ideologies that shape the rest of our social worlds. Tourism, as a relatively new industry, can be seen as an expression of ideas and theories that have influenced society for much longer – tourism researchers have thus frequently looked towards other disciplines such as history, sociology and ethics to frame the moral and philosophical aspects of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Sometimes this leads to opposing views of how tourism affects/should affect host communities and tourists – two examples are discussed here.

**TOURISM AS AN ‘INDUSTRY’ VERSUS TOURISM AS A ‘SOCIAL FORCE’**

Higgins-Desbiolles (2006b) argues that since the 1960s, tourism has increasingly been seen as an ‘industry’, a phenomenon that is created and governed by the private sector and driven by profit. As such, tourism is industrialised, and just like many other industries it is normal that damage to the environment and culture will occur in its development. Tourism is seen as a discretionary activity: in other words, an activity we will choose to engage in if we are willing to pay the price for it. Tourism can therefore be seen as a commodity and in this sense it is no different from a car or a luxury handbag.

According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2006b), tourism can have other impacts than just income generation. Tourism can be seen as a way to gain human enrichment and education, and as a stimulus for a better understanding between cultures and a better society. Tourism can even be seen as a human right: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, n.d.) mentions the right to leave and return to one’s own country.
IMPACTS OF TOURISM

(Article 13.2) and the right to leisure and recreation (Article 24). In this paradigm, tourism is not private sector-led, but led by the public sector and community organisations. It emphasises the potential of tourism to bring a multitude of benefits to the tourist and the host community. It does not see tourism as a commodity, but rather as a social force with transformative capacities.

NEO-COLONIALISM VERSUS TOURISM AS A ‘SACRED JOURNEY’

Tourism for some can be seen as a ‘sacred journey’, as a means to find oneself and make meaningful connections with places and people in other parts of the world. Researchers like MacCannell and Graburn link the origins of tourism to pilgrimages and argue that current forms of tourism are modern interpretations of these religious quests (Cohen, 1984). If tourism is seen this way, it should be able to bring positive impacts to both the tourist and the host community: the tourist gains a meaningful experience and visits the destination with respect, looking for a better way of life. The focus in this interpretation is on a search for meaning and truth, and the belief that these may be found in the destination culture.

It would seem that in some destinations, mostly in developing countries, this balance is not always retained. It often seems as if the tourists come to a destination and use and enjoy all that is good about it with little regard to the negative impacts of tourism: they then go again, leaving the destination to pick up the pieces. The power balance is often in favour of foreign developers and tourist dollars, forcing the local community into a subservient role. Tourism can also be considered a way to spread Western culture, consumption patterns and behaviours around the world: Western eating habits and products find their way around the globe via tourism. The globalisation of the tourism industry also plays a role here: the increased bargaining power of multinational tour operators means they can pressurise local providers to charge the lowest possible price. They may block-book a large amount of rooms to sell to their customer base, which gives them great power over the local accommodation provider. On the basis of this, tourism and the tourist industry have been compared to a form of neo-colonialism or imperialism: the focus is on the role of tourism in creating dependencies between tourism-generating, ‘metropolitan’ countries and tourism-receiving, ‘peripheral’ nations that replicate colonial or ‘imperialist’ forms of domination and structural underdevelopment. This was first argued by researchers such as Nash and Matthews (in Cohen, 1984) and is still prominent in tourism studies today.

An example of a destination where tourism could be seen as a neo-colonial force is Cyprus. The great majority of tourists travel to Cyprus on inclusive tour (package) arrangements: in 2013, for example, 58 per cent of international tourists travelled on a package tour, while 42 per cent of international tourists travelled independently. Cyprus tourism is heavily reliant on three markets, the UK, Scandinavia and Germany, where large tour operators TUI and Thomas Cook have a market share of 50 per cent. Because of an over-supply of accommodations, these large tour operators can negotiate, or even dictate, high discounts with the majority of accommodations, leading to a downward pressure on the agreed prices (Karyopouli, 2016). Although there is no immediate cultural conflict between tourists and local residents, resentment can be the result of this type of development, as the local community is faced with the negative impacts of tourism whereas the bulk of the revenue goes to multinational companies.
MANAGING SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS

Tourism development in a destination should aim to minimise the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism and maximise the positive socio-cultural impacts – in other words, it should aim to be sustainable. Different stakeholders are involved in this process. The public sector, through planning and policy, often plays an important role. The public sector is not out to make a profit, and their responsibility is to represent the views of different groups in the destination. The private sector, for example accommodation providers, service providers and tour operators, can also have an influence over how impacts are managed. Although these businesses are profit-driven, there are ways for them to reduce their negative impacts. In areas where drinking water is scarce for example, hotels may decide to fill pools with sea water so as not to put an excessive strain on resources. The host community is another stakeholder. Already it has been discussed that a host community is not an homogeneous group (see p. 205) – some residents will experience more positive or negative impacts than others. The final stakeholder is the tourist, who influences the destination socio-culturally via his or her behaviour and consumption pattern.

SNAPSHOT 8.4

Travel+SocialGood
As this chapter has shown, managing the socio-cultural impacts of tourism so that they benefit the different stakeholder groups in tourism is a complex task. It requires creative and innovative collaborations between professionals in tourism, business, technology and policy. Travel+SocialGood, launched in the spring of 2013 in partnership with the UN Foundation’s +SocialGood network, aims to build the travel industry of the future: one in which sustainable travel acts as the catalyst for a more equitable society. The organisation hosts a yearly summit, and has over 20 hubs around the world, which bring together thought leaders, entrepreneurs and travel professionals who are passionate about transforming their cities into capitals of sustainable travel. Hubs host events that are focused on education, advocacy and building a community. Through projects with local government, lecture series, community days and other unique endeavors, each hub engages with destination stakeholders to create a positive impact. Travel+SocialGood also has a media network: an alliance of journalists, content creators and social media influencers around the world, passionate about sustainable tourism in order to promote awareness and positive change within the industry (Travel+SocialGood, 2017).

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Visitor management aims to minimise the negative impacts of tourism in three ways: controlling the number of visitors at a given place or time; modifying the way tourists behave; and adapting tourist resources to cope with visitor numbers (Mason, 2008).

Diversifying the product offer of a destination can be a first strategy to spread the numbers of tourists more evenly throughout the year, week or day. This could be achieved, for example, by promoting the destination in the off-peak season, by offering price promotions during these periods, or by staging events. Business events such as conventions, conferences, trade exhibitions and consumer fairs, for example, often run
outside the leisure tourist season. By focusing on the segment of the business traveller, destinations may also avoid certain negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Seeing that business travellers often stay indoors for most of the day, they are less visible and less likely to cause congestion than leisure travellers, for example. Visitor numbers can also be regulated via pricing strategies and advance-booking systems. These ensure that the number of tourists does not exceed the attraction’s or destination’s carrying capacity (see Chapters 9 and 12 for a full exploration of this concept).

A second visitor management strategy can be to modify the way tourists behave. This aim can be achieved in different ways. Education and information provision to the tourist is a first strategy: making visitors aware of their negative impacts makes it more likely that they change the behaviours that cause them. Positioning the destination to a different visitor type is another strategy: by replacing clubs and bars with more family-friendly facilities, for example, a destination can reduce the number of tourists who come to party and may cause a disturbance.

A third visitor management strategy could be to adapt tourism resources to minimise damage: certain areas of historic sites may be cordoned off, for example, or replicas may be provided to protect the original attraction. Wardens and guides may also be put in place to stop unruly behaviour.

For a full exploration of visitor management concepts and techniques, see Chapter 12.

PROTECTING CULTURE

It has been discussed here how tourism can have profound impacts on the culture of a destination: commodification, staged authenticity and the trinketisation of culture and its expressions are some examples. To counter these impacts, a range of strategies has been developed in many host communities to protect cultures from the negative impacts of tourism. Boissevain (1996) describes these strategies as covert resistance, hiding, fencing, organised protest and aggression.

Boissevain (1996) presents covert resistance as a first, uncoordinated defence against the negative impacts of tourism on culture. Covert resistance is not direct defiance or an organised form of protest, but rather a subtle but clear message to the tourist in the host community’s behaviour. The local taxi driver might not challenge tourists directly, but may be sullen or rude towards them. The locals may gossip about or ridicule the tourists to express their feelings of discomfort or hostility.

Hiding is another strategy to protect culture and happens when certain aspects of a culture become ‘insider only’. Religious or cultural events may, for example, be purposely held before the tourists arrive or after they leave. Tourists are not informed about these events and they may function as alternatives to other events that have been expropriated by tourists.

Fencing is a more explicit strategy to protect culture. It can literally refer to fencing off certain areas of the host community to stop tourists from accessing them: restricting access to (certain parts of) a religious building, for example, or not allowing them to disturb fisherman at work. Fencing can also be used in a figurative sense, referring to preventing certain behaviours by tourists. Tourists may, for example, be discouraged from taking pictures of residents.

Organised protest mostly occurs when the negative impacts of tourism have overshadowed the positive impacts. This strategy may take the form of campaigns,
demonstrations or boycotts. In extreme cases, the feelings of frustration and anger within the host community may even lead to aggression and violence.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A further principle in the management of socio-cultural impacts is community participation in tourism. The basic idea is that if the local community are more involved in the decision-making process, tourism development will be more adapted to their needs and circumstances. The participation of the local community can take different forms, depending on how many local residents participate, whether these participants are representative of the community as a whole, and how much weight their views carry when making decisions. The community may, for example, be asked for their views in a public consultation that informs decision making, or they may be involved in the complete tourism development process.

Although extensive community participation is a theoretical ideal for equitable tourism development, there are often practical problems in destinations to achieve this. Destinations are not homogeneous groups (see p. 205) and it is not always possible to reconcile the different interests of all the community members. In destinations in developing countries, it is also possible that not all community members will have the educational skills or the confidence to participate in tourism decision making. They may be unclear about the procedures and ways to have their say, or there may be a profound distrust between the community and the decision makers. The views of stakeholders with more financial power (such as the business community and local investors) might also carry more weight than the views of members in the community who live in poverty. In certain cases, it would therefore be more useful to include community members in the tourism development process in a practical way, rather than via consultations and negotiations, to build on the involvement of the local community and make further participation possible. The example of pro-poor tourism in Case Study 8.1 is one way to achieve this.

CASE STUDY 8.1

Pro-poor Tourism

The Pro-Poor Tourism partnership (http://propoortourism.org.uk/) defines pro-poor tourism as tourism that results in increased net benefits for poor people. It is not a specific tourism product, but rather an approach to tourism management that improves the socio-economic and socio-cultural quality of life for poor people in the host community. In other words, pro-poor tourism is not a new type of holiday, but rather a way of doing business differently. It is this focus on new business strategies that makes pro-poor tourism different from many other approaches: pro-poor tourism allocates a central role to business and trade, not public sector support and interventions by voluntary organisations, to bring positive impacts to poor communities in a destination.

Pro-poor tourism strategies have economic and socio-cultural aspects. The economic impacts mostly have to do with building linkages with local suppliers (see p. 186), such as

(Continued)
sourcing food and other products locally rather than relying on imports. Another important economic aspect is job creation for the local community: employing local staff, training them and paying them a fair salary. The increased income for the local community can lead to socio-cultural improvements such as a better infrastructure and quality of life. A socio-cultural aspect of pro-poor tourism can be the development of excursions and cultural attractions in the local area, increasing the local population's opportunities for finding pride in their culture and developing their own business. This can increase positive contacts between hosts and visitors, encourage capacity building within the poor population, and improve the balance between tourism and other forms of resource use.

Ashley et al. (2001) have compiled a report for the Overseas Development Institute with guidelines for the development of pro-poor practices in the Caribbean. Examples of these guidelines include:

- Pay smaller, local suppliers regularly. Hotels often pay for goods 30 to 90 days after these have been delivered, but small producers do not always have the working capital to wait that long for payment.
- Local producers often offer goods that can be used in hotels, but the quantity, quality and reliability of the supply are often inadequate. Consider working with smaller contracts and appointing a facilitator who can inform and work with the local suppliers.
- Develop and implement a policy which encourages openness and a lack of stigma towards HIV. Educate managers as well as staff about HIV/AIDS, safety in the workplace, and working with HIV+ colleagues.
- Integrate local interaction and local shopping into existing excursions. Visiting local craft markets or workshops can enhance tourists' experience and expenditure. Offer retail space to local craftspeople and advertising space to local taxis, excursions and guides.
- Find out about the goals local people have: these may be different from what tourism operators expect. In several pro-poor tourism projects local income has been welcome, but poor people also have non-financial priorities such as training, dignity, access to natural resources, access to infrastructure, and the ability to participate in decisions.

Reflective Questions
1. Think of a place you have visited or tourism in your own country. Can you think of any examples of measures that aim to include poorer groups in society in tourism?
2. Pro-poor tourism is aimed at bringing benefits to poorer groups in the host community. Can you think of any benefits pro-poor tourism brings to the private businesses who engage in it?

SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on destinations and host communities, some of which are positive (a better understanding between cultures, a greater appreciation of the own culture) and some of which are negative (commodification of culture, prostitution, Disneyfication). It has also explained the positive and negative socio-cultural impacts tourism can have on tourists: positive
in terms of confidence, relaxation and relationships with others; negative in terms of anxiety due to violence or scams. The extent to which these impacts affect destinations can be linked to certain destination characteristics, such as how dominant tourism is, which type of tourists visit the destination, and the pace of development. Some members of the host community have also been shown to be more tolerant of these impacts than others, depending on, for example, their involvement in tourism or their proximity to the tourist centre.

The way we look at these impacts, and to what extent we see them as inherently linked to tourism, will depend on our underlying theory of tourism itself: is it an industry with unavoidable externalities? Or is it a social force, a sacred journey that affects both the tourist and the destination? The chapter has concluded by highlighting ways to manage the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, so that the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts for both the destination and tourists.

SELF-TEST QUESTIONS

1. Think about the countries you have visited, or about the tourism sector in your own country. Which of the above socio-economic impacts of tourism on destinations have you noticed? Can you give examples of these?

2. When you travel, how does that affect you as a person? How long do the effects of a holiday last after you get back home?

3. Think of a destination you have visited. Do the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism outweigh the negative socio-cultural impacts it brings?

FURTHER READING


USEFUL WEBSITES

ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net

International Institute for Peace through Tourism: www.iipt.org

Office for Fair Trading – Safe from Scams: www.safefromscams.co.uk

Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership: http://propoortourism.org.uk/

UN World Tourism Organization Code of Ethics: http://ethics.unwto.org/content/global-code-ethics-tourism