

## CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL PATTERN OF TOURISM

Tourism is one of the most important global industries, accounting for 30% of the world's exports of services and generating US\$856 bn in 2007. It has expanded dramatically over the past 50 years, achieving an average annual growth rate of 6.5% between 1950 and 2005. The growth rate has slowed over the last 10 years as a result of economic recessions in 2001–2003 and again since mid-2008. In 2008 international tourist arrivals rose by 1.7% to reach 924 million, with a total of 1.6 billion forecast for 2020 (Figure 1).

The value of tourism, especially in LEDCs which have few alternative ways of earning foreign exchange, is the boost that it gives to the national economy. As an **invisible export** it can make a significant contribution to a country's balance of payments, as well as creating jobs in what is a very labour intensive industry. Tourism provides opportunities for small businesses in holiday accommodation, food supply, building, transport, retailing, entertainment and informal services, all of which help to raise living standards for local people. It can also attract substantial inward investment to create new holiday facilities and supporting infrastructure.

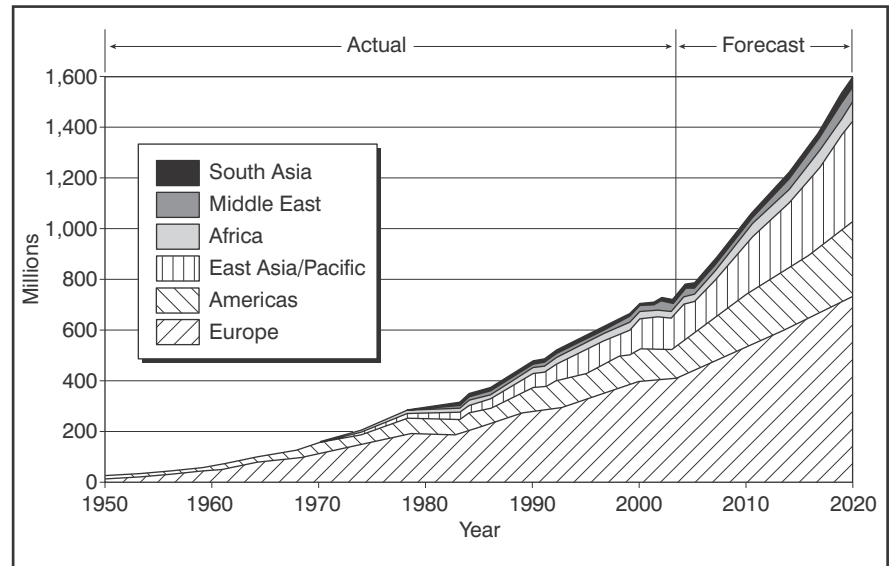
### Definitions of tourism

Three main categories of tourism can be identified:

- Leisure tourism:** when people go away for recreational reasons, including relaxation, sightseeing, entertainment, cultural experiences, sporting activities and special events.
- Business tourism:** when travel is associated with a person's work and involves activities such as business meetings or conferences.
- Visiting friends and relatives (VFR):** an increasingly important element of tourism as migration has increased and long distance travel has become more common.

A wide range of other, more specialised, reasons for tourism may be identified such as education, religious pilgrimages, charity fundraising and gap year project work.

Figure 1: Growth in international arrivals by world region, 1950–2020



Source: UNWTO *World Tourism Barometer*, April 2009; www.unwto.org  
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Figure 2: Top 10 countries for international visitor arrivals and tourism receipts, 2006

Top 10 countries	Visitor arrivals (million)	Top 10 countries	Receipts (\$ bn)
France	79.1	USA	85.7
Spain	58.5	Spain	51.8
USA	51.1	France	46.3
China	49.6	Italy	38.1
Italy	41.1	China	33.9
UK	30.1	UK	33.5
Germany	23.6	Germany	32.8
Mexico	21.4	Australia	17.8
Austria	20.3	Turkey	16.9
Russia	20.2	Austria	16.7

Source: Michael Raw, *AS Geography* (Philip Allan Updates, ISBN 978-0-340-94795-1: p. 317 Table 8.1)

Tourism is classified as **domestic** when the trip or holiday takes place within a person's home country. If a holidaymaker crosses one or more national borders, this becomes **international tourism** and they will be classified as an **international arrival** in their destination country. An American citizen flying from New York to Paris would be an **outbound tourist** from the USA and an **incoming tourist** to France. International tourist arrivals and international tourist receipts are the most commonly accepted measures of a country's international tourism industry (Figure 2).

### The development of tourism

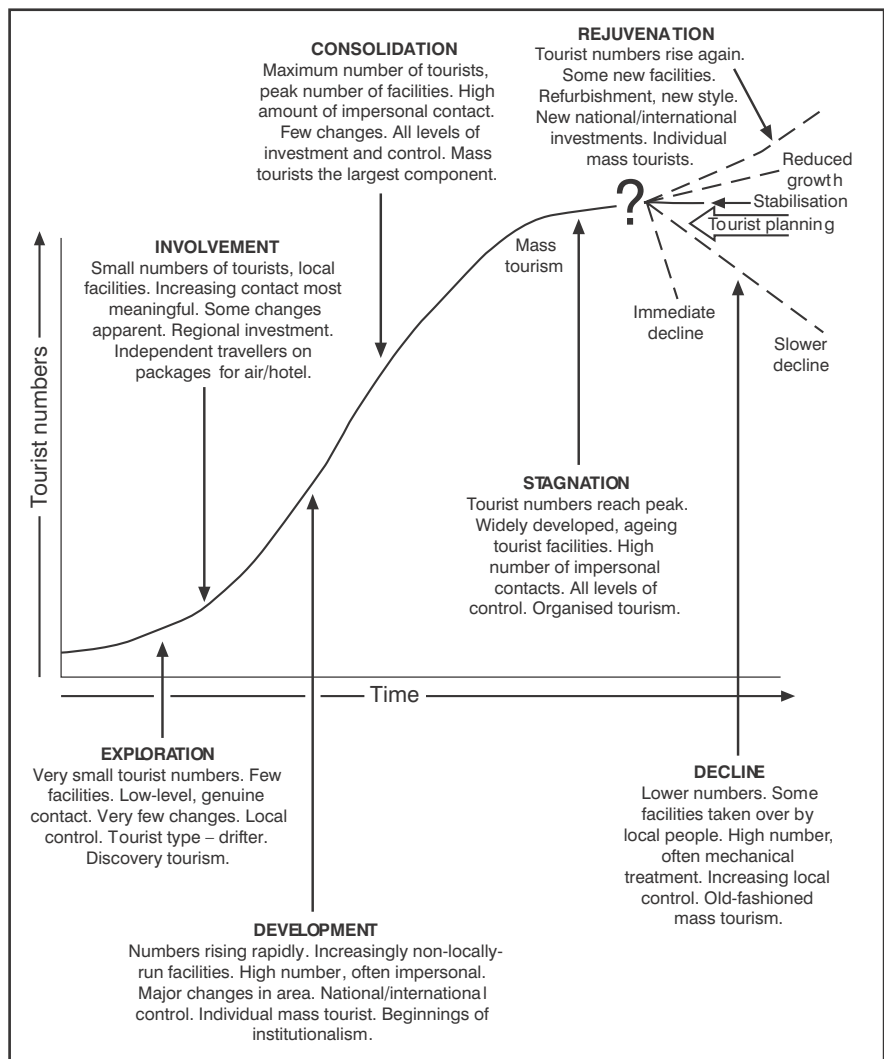
Although the wealthy have travelled for business and leisure since ancient times, mass tourism has its origins in the UK's nineteenth century industrialisation. Before then, ordinary people rarely left their local area. In the eighteenth century, young British aristocrats would embark on a 'Grand Tour' to experience the art and culture of major European cities. Georgian times also saw a fashion for sea bathing at resorts like Scarborough and Brighton, and 'taking the waters' in spa towns such as Bath or Buxton. However, the construction of the railways made it possible for

working families to visit the seaside on excursions and public holidays. With increasing affluence, coastal resorts which were accessible from the main urban centres grew rapidly, for example Blackpool, Skegness and Llandudno. Once established, Britain's seaside resorts thrived throughout the first half of the twentieth century, reaching their peak of popularity in the 1950s. As road transport improved mobility, and paid holiday entitlement was introduced, all classes could enjoy a 'traditional British holiday' by the sea. Holiday camps, such as Butlins and Pontins, attracted those on lower incomes, offering cheap, all-inclusive stays that catered for family members of all ages.

The introduction of commercial jet aircraft in the 1950s made longer distance travel more affordable so that during the 1960s, larger numbers of people could consider taking foreign holidays. When the wide-bodied 'jumbo jet' entered service in 1970 this allowed cheap **charter flights** to become more widely available. This was paralleled by the growth in **package holidays**, which offered customers air flights, airport transfers plus accommodation in hotels or self-catering apartments for an all-inclusive price. Big tour operators could negotiate low prices with airlines and hotel chains to make their package holiday deals highly attractive and competitive. At this time most people buying budget packages travelled to resorts bordering the Mediterranean Sea, with the Spanish **costas** the most popular destination. Package holidays remained the dominant form of international tourism for over 30 years, although their importance has now waned and after 2003 they accounted for less than half of all trips booked.

The model proposed by Butler summarises the life cycle that a tourist area might move through in the course of its development over time (Figure 3). The model could be applied to a destination such as the Costa del Sol in Southern Spain. Following a decline in the fortunes of its main resorts (e.g. Marbella, Torremolinos) in the 1990s, tourism was realigned to emphasise higher quality facilities and to encourage tourists to explore the historical/cultural heritage of the Andalusian interior, focusing on cities like Granada, Seville and Cordoba.

Figure 3: Butler's model of the development of tourist areas



Source: Sue Warn, *Recreation and Tourism* (Nelson Thornes, ISBN 0-7487-4418-5: p. 11, Fig. 1.5)

### Types of tourism

A basic distinction is made between **mass tourism** and **alternative tourism** (Figure 4). The former is highly organised and involves large numbers travelling to mainstream destinations where they are concentrated in well-developed resorts. The attractions are likely to be beaches and sunshine, or snow in the case of winter sports. There is little contact with local communities and the scale of operations will be environmentally damaging and unsustainable. Alternative tourism, on the other hand, incorporates a range of specialised small group activities which engage more closely with the indigenous people and their culture. The impact on the natural environment should be considerably lower, though the ecosystem may be more fragile, and the pace of tourist development will be slower, smaller-scale and sensitive to the needs of the inhabitants. Alternative tourism, however, cannot be regarded as truly

sustainable, because it often relies on the same basic infrastructure as its mass counterpart. **Ecotourism** and **green tourism** aim to provide access to protected natural areas for economic gain through natural resource preservation. Experience shows that this can easily be compromised if a scheme becomes too successful, or yields to tourists' demands for greater comfort.

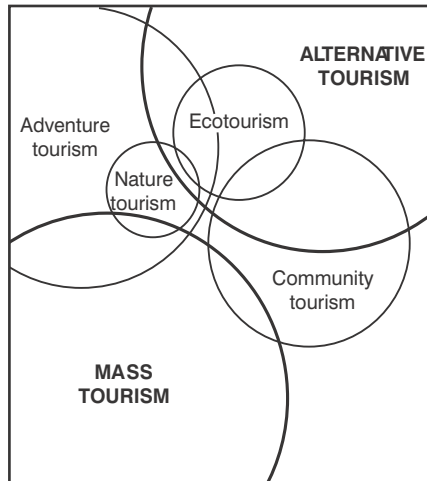
### New types of tourism

Changes in the types of tourism people prefer have encouraged **niche marketing**, in which tour operators offer specialised holidays catering for specific requirements. These focus on interests and activities which appeal to a particular sector of the tourist market.

Examples would include:

- adventure holidays, such as trekking in jungles (e.g. Borneo) or mountains (e.g. Nepal)
- wilderness trips that provide

Figure 4: Venn diagram of types of tourism



Source: Sue Warn, *Recreation and Tourism* (Nelson Thornes, ISBN 0-7487-4418-5: p. 8, Fig. 1.4)

experience of unspoilt natural environments and their wildlife (e.g. Amazonia or Antarctica)

- cruises, traditionally favoured by older holidaymakers, and now being adapted to appeal to younger people
- heritage tours visiting historical and cultural sites, often in cities (e.g. Florence and Venice)
- religious journeys to centres like Jerusalem, Lourdes and Mecca
- sports holidays, such as following a cricket or rugby team in a competition abroad or attending a foreign Formula 1 grand prix
- family resorts that give access to a range of theme parks and entertainment facilities, Florida probably being the best known location
- spa resorts which offer health therapy and beauty treatments in luxurious, relaxing surroundings
- medical packages which offer cheaper general or cosmetic surgery abroad, followed by a period of recuperation
- trips to the locations of former conflicts, such as battlefields (e.g. D-day landing beaches in Normandy) or WW2 concentration camps (e.g. Auschwitz, Dachau).

### Factors driving change

The global tourism industry is influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external, to which it responds by adapting its operating methods and range of products. These factors can have an impact at all scales, from global to local, and can affect a wide range of 'stakeholders'.

(1) **Consumer demand** reflects the wishes of people taking holidays, where they want to travel and what they want to do there. The media play a role in shaping demand by informing consumers about tourist locations and products on offer. Recent changes in the behaviour of tourists have been a willingness to travel further in search of new destinations, an expectation of taking several holidays a year by adding shorter breaks to their main trip, and a growing sophistication in seeking high-quality experiences combined with good value.

(2) **Socio-economic factors** also relate to changes in the types of consumer. The ageing population profile of many developed countries has led to a surge in 'grey tourists': affluent middle-aged and retired people who may already be experienced travellers and see no reason to stop as long as they are fit and able. The trend for later marriage and childbirth, as well as higher divorce rates, has seen a growth in holidays targeted at single people, childless couples and single parents with their children. The prevailing economic climate determines the size of disposable incomes and therefore the amount that people can decide to spend on tourism. Unfavourable sterling exchange rates against currencies like the euro and US dollar may persuade more British citizens to take holidays in the UK.

(3) **Product development** refers to innovations in how the tourist industry operates. One of the most far-reaching developments since the 1990s has been the growth of budget airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair. These 'no frills' carriers have made it much cheaper to travel to European destinations. The ease with which individuals can now organise their own trips has led to increased 'self-packaging', giving tourists the confidence to travel independently and more frequently.

(4) **Technological change** has had the most impact in transport system developments and improved telecommunications. The Airbus A380 is the first 'super jumbo' aircraft, capable of carrying over 800 passengers on its two decks, while the latest cruise ships are also getting much larger, with accommodation for up to 5,000 guests and an

unprecedented level of on-board facilities. High speed train networks now link much of Western Europe, including the Eurostar service from its new London St Pancras terminal through the Channel Tunnel to Paris and Brussels. ICT developments have revolutionised the travel industry, through internet booking firms like Expedia and websites ranging from major travel agencies to individual hotels and tourist attractions. Sophisticated mobile handsets have given travellers highly flexible communications and comprehensive access to information worldwide.

(5) **Political factors** are capable of exerting a sudden and profound influence on the tourist trade. The outbreak of armed conflicts or insurrections, for example in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, will create a security crisis that can damage tourism for years after the immediate danger has passed. The threat of terrorist attacks, such as the Bali bombings, can have a similar effect. Repressive regimes, as in Myanmar, may deter people from visiting the country because they do not want to support its military rulers.

(6) **Environmental considerations** have assumed greater importance in the way tourists choose their holiday destinations and modes of travel. Protest groups like 'Plane Stupid' have focused attention on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arising from air travel and the contribution this makes to global warming. Direct action has been taken against plans to build extra runways at Heathrow and Stansted to cope with forecast increases in air traffic, also reflecting concerns over further noise pollution and the loss of land. Air transport has allowed the spread of infectious diseases such as SARS from China and, more recently, swine flu from Mexico. Natural disasters, including volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes and floods, can also harm tourist destinations. The devastating Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 caused severe damage to hotels and infrastructure at resorts on Thailand's west coast.

### Recent patterns of change

The geographical expansion of tourism has led to more destination countries taking a share of the

market, with many of the newer additions being LEDCs. Europe is still the dominant region, but it has declined in relative terms as other regions have grown, notably Asia-Pacific (particularly China), North Africa and the Middle East. Future prospects are difficult to predict in the face of the current recession.

### The impact of the recession

Tourism tends to suffer proportionately more during an economic downturn. The IMF anticipated a decline in world GDP of over 1% in 2009. With rapidly rising unemployment, reduced disposable incomes and uncertainty about the future, it is clear that the short-term prospects for tourism are bleak.

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) adopted a three-tier strategy for dealing with the deepening crisis:

- (i) It set up a Tourism Resilience Committee to advise on policy and draw up a **Roadmap for Recovery** to be presented at UNWTO General Assembly in Kazakhstan in October 2009.
- (ii) It urged governments to place tourism at the centre of economic stimulus packages, because of the potential contribution the industry could make to economic recovery and employment.
- (iii) It proposed that tourism must be at the forefront of the transformation to the Green economy, by contributing carbon-clean operations, jobs in environment management and energy-efficient building.

### Conclusion

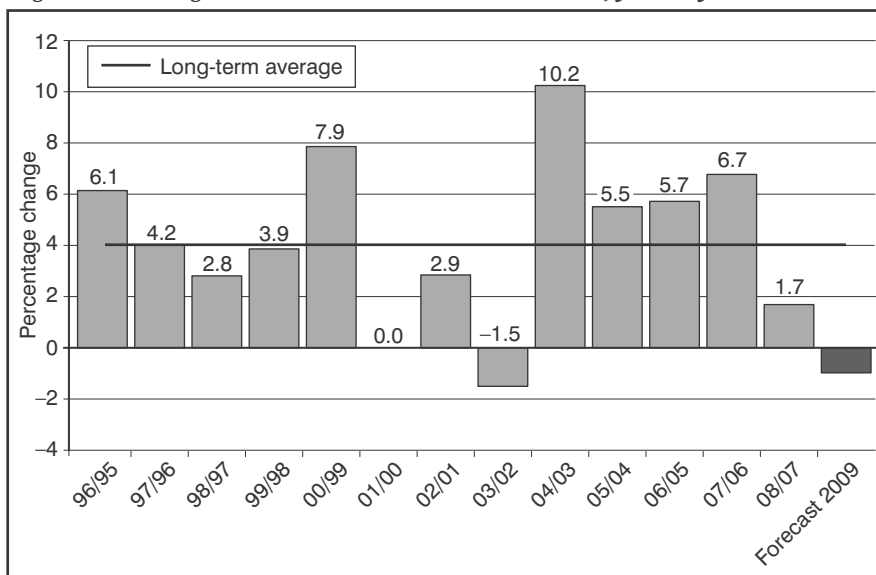
Tourism will retain its economic importance for many countries. It has been the basis of development in some regions. As the variety of forms of tourism increases, we must always be aware of its impacts.

Figure 5: International tourist arrivals by (sub)region, 2000-2008

	Full year Share					Change	
	2000	2005	2007	2008	2008	07/06	08/07
	(million)				(%)	(%)	
World	683.0	806.0	908.0	924.0	100.0	6.7	1.7
Europe	392.4	441.6	487.2	487.5	52.8	5.0	0.0
Northern Europe	43.7	52.8	58.0	56.7	6.1	2.7	-2.3
Western Europe	139.7	142.6	154.9	153.2	16.6	3.5	-1.1
Central/Eastern Europe	69.2	87.5	96.5	93.7	10.7	5.5	23.0
Southern/Mediterranean Eu.	139.8	158.7	177.9	178.9	19.4	6.9	0.6
Asia and the Pacific	109.7	154.7	184.7	187.0	20.2	10.1	1.2
North-East Asia	58.3	87.5	104.3	104.6	11.3	10.6	0.4
South-East Asia	36.1	48.5	59.7	61.4	6.6	12.3	3.0
Oceania	92.0	10.5	10.7	10.6	1.2	1.7	-0.9
South Asia	6.1	8.1	10.1	10.4	1.1	2.6	2.6
Americas	128.2	133.3	142.8	147.1	15.9	5.2	3.0
North America	91.5	89.9	95.3	97.8	10.6	5.2	2.6
Caribbean	17.1	18.8	19.8	19.9	2.2	1.5	0.8
Central America	4.3	6.3	7.8	8.3	0.9	12.0	7.1
South America	15.3	18.3	20.0	21.1	2.3	6.5	5.1
Africa	27.9	37.3	44.9	46.5	5.0	8.4	3.5
North Africa	10.2	13.9	16.3	17.2	1.9	8.5	5.4
Subsaharan Africa	17.6	23.4	28.6	29.3	3.2	8.4	2.5
Middle East	24.9	38.8	48.7	55.8	6.0	14.5	14.4

Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, April 2009; www.unwto.org  
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Figure 6: % change in world international tourist arrivals, year on year 1996-2008



Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, April 2009; www.unwto.org  
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## FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. For a tourist location you have studied or visited, estimate its position on the Butler model (Figure 3) and provide evidence to justify your choice.
2. With reference to a named LEDC, assess its suitability for the development of an international tourist industry and consider the factors which might influence its degree of success.
3. Describe and suggest reasons for the variations in international tourist arrivals between major world regions shown in Figure 5.