



**Association for Tourism  
and Leisure Education**

## **Mass tourism vs. niche tourism**

### **ATLAS Reflections 2010**

**November 2010**

**Edited by:  
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## Introduction

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Dear colleagues,

This has been my fifth year as co-ordinator of ATLAS and it has been a good year for ATLAS overall, especially in terms of the organisation and hosting of conferences and Special Interest Group events. Thank you as always to our administrators Leontine, Jantien and Linda for their ongoing hard work on the day-to-day management and administration of ATLAS, as well as support for all our events. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Co-ordinators of ATLAS Africa (John Akama), ATLAS Europe (Anya Diekmann) and Asia Pacific (Florence Ian and Malcolm Cooper) for their work for ATLAS in the regions. Some of their regional reports can be found here in Reflections and reflect the ongoing success of ATLAS and its members in many parts of the world.

Last year's annual conference in Aalborg in Denmark was a great success. The event was very well organised thanks to Henrik Halkier and his colleagues. The delegates enjoyed debating the highly topical theme of 'experience' as well as engaging in a number of memorable social activities in this lovely city.

We are very much looking forward to this year's conference in Cyprus on the subject of *Mass Tourism versus Niche Tourism*. This is such an important theme for anyone working in tourism, and although many of us (myself included) tend to focus on niche forms of tourism in our research, it is vital not to lose sight of the 'bread and butter' of the tourism industry and the preferred forms of tourism for the vast majority of tourists!

The ATLAS Africa conference in Gabarone in Botswana took place from July 1st -3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 with the theme *Tourism for Development: Environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and empowering communities*. There were over 100 delegates and it was by all accounts very successful and enjoyable for all involved. A full report can be found later in Reflections. Many thanks to the organisers for their hard work on this event.

There was also an ATLAS Winter University in Portorose, Slovenia in February 2010 which was very much enjoyed by students and participating staff alike.

There were several SIG meetings this year, for example, for the Religious Tourism Group in Nazaré, Portugal in November 2009; Business Tourism in Liverpool, UK in November 2009; the Volunteer Tourism Group in April 2010 in Crete and Santorini, Greece; the Independent Travel Research Group met in September 2010 in Hermanus, South Africa, and the Tourism Geographies Group in Tarragona in Spain in October 2010. Many more are planned for the forthcoming year, details of which

can be found here in Reflections. A big thank you to all of the SIG Co-ordinators and SIG members for hosting these events and continuing their excellent research and publications. In many ways, the SIGs have become a major highlight of the work of ATLAS as it enables smaller groups of researchers, academics and practitioners to focus on themes that they are knowledgeable and passionate about. The newest SIG will focus on Events, a very topical theme currently. This group will be co-ordinated by Greg Richards, who most of us know as the founder of and inspiration behind ATLAS.

ATLAS has a wide range of publications which are available to all members for very reasonable prices. Please check out our list on the website and see the end of Reflections for some updated information about new publications.

We do hope that all of our members continue to enjoy their participation in ATLAS activities. If you would like to get more involved in ATLAS or to initiate a project or host an event, please do let us know. Otherwise, I wish you a good year and look forward to meeting many of you in Cyprus.

With very best wishes,

Melanie Smith  
Co-ordinator of ATLAS

## **Mass vs. niche tourism**

### **A keynote presentation for the 2010 ATLAS Conference**

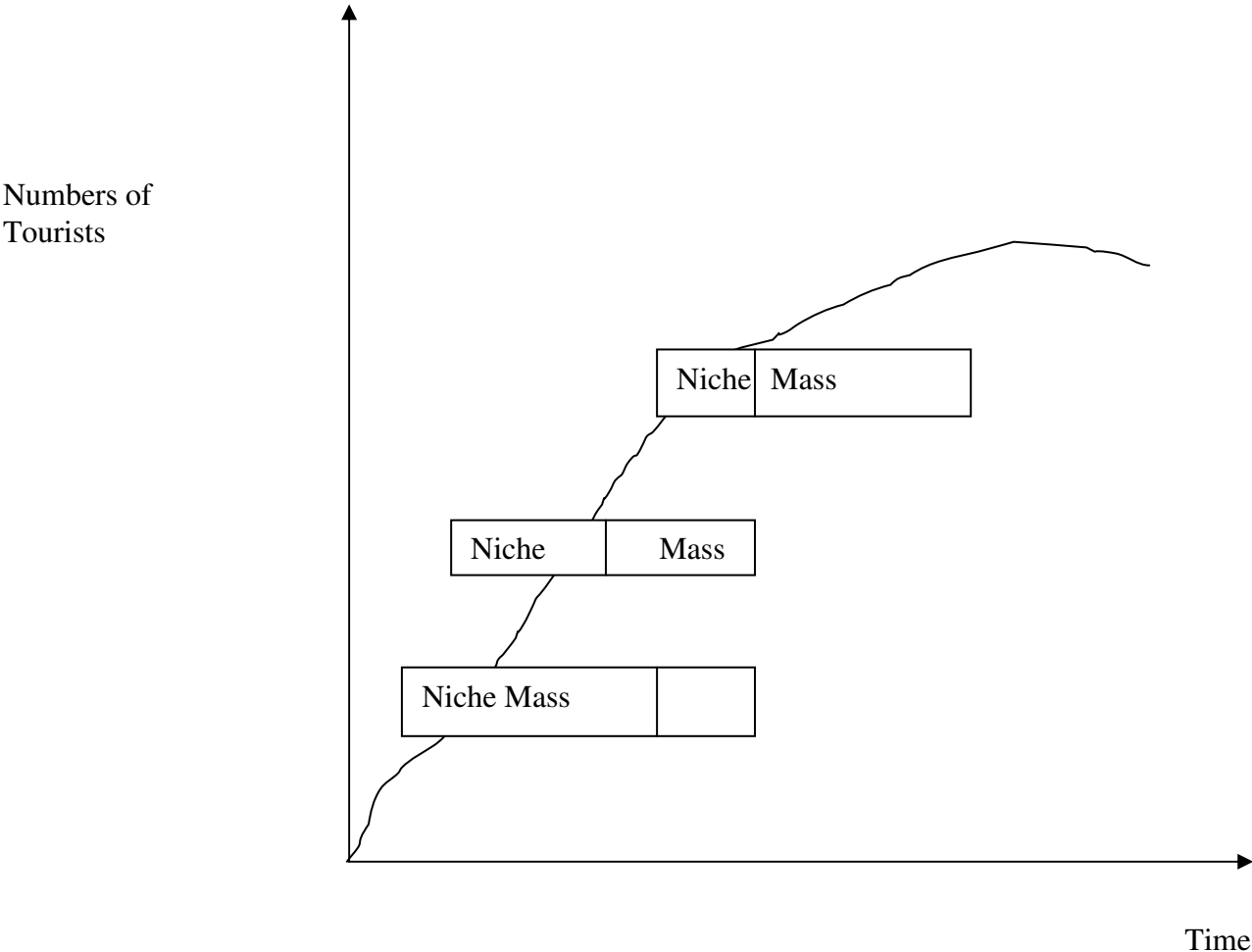
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To set the context for my presentation I want first to share some observations from my own research. I also want through personal stories to introduce a sense of historical perspective to the debate, and to turn the debate forward as to what may be the factors that will shape tourism, both mass and niche, in the future. I will also want to draw upon my more recent research in China and Dubai. I will, from the outset cheerfully concede that the presentation does not present a complete model of issues – rather its objective is far more limited. Simply put, I want to bring to the fore some thoughts based on my recent research that we need to reconsider what is ‘mass’ and what is ‘niche’ in the light of emergent Chinese and Indian markets, and, with reference to that famed niche of eco-tourism, whether we should not be both aware of a need to exclude tourists from some areas but recreate ‘natural environments’ in other sites able to absorb tourist numbers.

To my mind, the subject matter of mass versus niche tourism reminds me of an earlier age when, three decades ago I was teaching with Brian Wheeler at Nottingham. As you probably know, Brian coined the phrase ‘ego-tourist’ when discussing the issue of eco-tourism (Wheeler, 1993). He certainly influenced my thinking when, in 1991 in my book, *Recreational Tourism* (Ryan, 1991), I likened ecotourism to a plague spreading out across the surface of the globe, destroying the previously unspoilt areas in the name of an environmentally sensitive tourist. As Brian himself observed, it always seemed paradoxical, that the solution to mass tourism would be to duplicate large numbers of smaller operations that would simply consume far more of the previously unspoilt areas of the world.

To Brian’s observation we can also add the concept of the Butlerian tourist area life cycle, and can characterise it as shown in Figure One. This shows that in the early exploration stage the conventional wisdom is that the destination attracts a niche market of exploring, allocentric tourists drawn by the fact that the destination is not developed and retains a primarily non-tourist oriented infrastructure. However, over time, the ratio between the niche and the mass tourist changes, although factors such as seasonality may mean that any physical sharing of the place may be limited. This concept has been used in a number of instances, particularly in wildlife based and eco-tourism as for example, by Duffus and Dearden (1990, 2009) and Higham (1998).

**Figure 1: The mass and niche tourist as the destination develops**



Anyway, to revert back to my time with Brian Wheeler, I am still much of the same opinion, and indeed would go further and say that at times, as academics, we fail to recognize certain truths about the very subject that we propose to study, and our research reflects our own interests and not the realities of a wider market place. As I sometimes say to my own students, if you truly wish to understand tourism, then switch on your satellite television stations and watch programmes such as *Greece Uncovered* or *Ibiza Uncovered*, and watch the antics of those in their early 20s clubbing, getting drunk, and generally having what they regard as a good time. It seems ironic that we spend so much time studying small components of tourism, niche tourism, such as heritage tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and ecotourism, and spend very little time studying how people spend their time in purpose-built resorts, drinking, relaxing and if not discovering what we might deem to be the authenticity of place, certainly discovering the authenticity of pleasure with



like-minded individuals. I think we tend at times to under-estimate the authenticity of a *sharing* experience – possibly because so much of the researcher’s time is spent in a solitary pursuit as we think, write and calculate – and that may be one reason why we enjoy conferences so much – because then we can party with like-minded people.

Additionally, I have a jaundiced view of the niche tourist in the light of my experiences in the Northern Territory of Australia. In one of my papers written on Fogg Dam (Ryan, Hughes, and Hughes, 2000), I report findings of a study into self defined eco-tourists. What did I find? They arrived in their air-conditioned, four-wheel drive vehicles, marvelled at the sight of nature (which was, I admit, truly wonderful with egrets scattered as confetti across the landscape), told me about how they felt in tune with nature, while I observed that they gazed on nature in a particular frame created by the Park authorities whereby they were protected from the harshness of the sun, with gaze directed from hides (oh – what mixed metaphors) towards the truly spectacular parts of that locale. Additionally I observed that many of them, after 20 minutes, would then climb back into their air-conditioned vehicles, and drive away oblivious to the fact that far from being in tune with nature they were actually being protected against nature. The truth of the matter, in the Northern Territory, is that nature is hot, uncomfortable and full of flying insects such as mosquitoes that can kill you with Japanese encephalitis, Ross River Fever, and other diseases. Being myself, somewhat stupid, I actually took walks in the same area along mangrove swamps that took me to places where I could see sea eagles capturing snakes from the river, while taking care to use insect repellent, wearing a wide brimmed hat, and certainly taking a litre of water to drink. These trips, I thought were well worth while, but they ended with me being sweaty, sticky, and hoping that the insects that pick-nicked on my flesh would drop dead of alcoholic poisoning from my previous night out at the Causuarina Club in Darwin.

They were also solitary walks for the most part – which gave rein to my own ‘Wordsworthian’ fancies of a romantic liaison with nature. On such walks it seemed that very few of the ‘eco-tourists’ wanted to experience nature and walk along the board walks through the swamps that required a degree of awareness about the famed ‘saltie’ (*crocodylus porosus*) that could patiently lie in wait – after all, why else was the path so carefully constructed?. I was therefore very far from surprised when I subsequently undertook research at Kakadu National Park and found that many of the tourists who one could designate as eco-tourists in the light of their responses to the New Environmental Paradigm, engaged in behaviours that replicated those of the mass tourists, and indeed were arguably even more insensitive in their demands of their private or at best small group viewing of nature (Ryan, 2000). Many seemed unaware that if they had what they desired, the very number of such groups would have more significant intrusion effects upon the wildlife than the less frequent, but a larger boat, that took the mass tourists along the Yellow Waters.

From these observations I think some general themes can be discerned. First, many of the tourists whom we may classify as belonging to a particular niche remain but tourists. The greater majority are NOT, say, in the case of eco-tourism products lay botanists or biologists, but rather people with an interest in nature, but that interest is based on seeking to see the unusual, learn a little about nature, but primarily still motivated by a wish for a relaxing, entertaining, and an experience different to that

which can be found at home. Second, their behaviour is therefore not uncommonly like those of the mass tourist, but with perhaps the distinguishing feature of being the wish to stay in small groups, although having paid a higher price to make a tourist operation financially feasible. What they pay for is for a sense of privilege. Third, I think as academics we may emphasise too much the motive to learn. Our cultural tourists, heritage tourists - those tourists seeking sites of historic importance - for the most part they may well be seeking to see the places they have seen on the Discovery Channel or History Channel. Hence they seek not the unfamiliar, but places made familiar to them via other media, so they may share their experience of being there with others. For all of the literature which says that a given form of niche tourism is the fastest growing area of tourism, we must be careful that the mere fact of visitation does not become the basis of the classification of a motive. Certainly in the field of cultural tourism, with reference to visitors to Hong Kong, Bob Mc Kercher and Hilary De Cros (2002) have shown that about only 10% of visitors was serious in their motives and wanting to immerse themselves in the cultural location. Fourth, I think these classifications describe roles rather than types of tourists, and so today I may be a culture seeking tourist, tomorrow, having exhausted myself climbing over the historic remnants, I wish to relax by the side of the swimming pool and become a sun seeking tourist, and then having relaxed, I may then seek to become a hedonist enjoying the delights of the nightclub (e.g. Gibson and Yiannakis 2002). The tourist can therefore adopt different roles dependent upon their whims, the people they are with, the depth of their wallets, and their energy. We have to also admit that at times the tourist does not understand what it is that they see. In November 2009 I was the keynote speaker at the Asia Heritage Management conference in Macau. Surrounded by those interested in interpretation, many with experience of interesting UNESCO World Heritage sites, I had the temerity to suggest that for many tourists the incomprehensibility of the venue, the lack of understanding, was itself an authentic experience, which reinforced the feeling of being somewhere different and perhaps, therefore, we should not always seek to dispel that feeling (Ryan, 2009).

For much of the last six years my research has been in China, and in a country of 1.6 billion people, one's understanding of what is 'mass', and that which is 'niche', is very severely challenged. Some of you may be aware of the UNESCO world sites of Xidi and Hungcun (Gu and Ryan, 2009, in press), or indeed may listen to the paper that I will give later at this conference on tourism at Mt Qiyun (Ryan, Gu, Sai and He, 2010). At Hungcun, a small mediaeval town of approximately 140 households surrounded by the remnants of city walls, primarily accessible by crossing on a small narrow footpath across a moat, one finds a place that has a totally changed economic status as today, over 600,000 visitors tread its streets each year. The appeal of the place lays in its architecture, the historic nature of what the Chinese would call its vernacular style, its ability to evoke a very recent rural past, and it has taken on its role as a place in a portfolio of products that the Anhui tourism authorities have been able to develop with the view of retaining the tourist from more than one night in the area around Huangshan (Gu and Ryan, 2009). Thus that, which, in a Western context, would probably have been marketed as a place of historic or cultural tourism, can only be said to be a place of mass tourism. The rationale for this is simply economic – after all, when you have been labouring hard to live on less than US\$2 a day, to make money so easily from tourists is so much easier. From an aesthetic perspective it is easy to question or rue the impact of mass tourism, but from not only the view of now enjoying a higher income, but of being able to provide

greater opportunities for one's children, I personally find it difficult to criticise the fact of such mass tourism. What can be challenged, however, is the *management* of that tourism, a point to which I will return later.

The Chinese context of what is specialised or niche tourism can only be deemed to be different to that which we find in the West. The numbers of people are simply so different to that which we are used. There is also a difference in attitude. In 2007 I was invited by the Shenzhen Provincial Government and Guangdong Tourism Association, Shenzhen, to speak about tourism. My hosts very kindly arranged for me to see, along with other conference delegates, a traditional Chinese show. What I did not expect was to be taken into a theatre capable of holding several hundreds, to be entertained by a laser light show that involved a cast of at least 200, in a spectacular that would have had Cecil B. DeMille green with envy. This was the *traditional* show. Within the Chinese mindset the story is indeed traditional, the costumes evoke a traditional and past way of life, but one gives honour to the masters from the past by portraying their work, stories and legends in the best way possible. If, therefore, one has the technology, then indeed it is appropriate to use that technology. Again, for example, in New Zealand, there is a tension at the biennial Maori performing arts festival between traditionalists and those who would want to use the multimedia theatre techniques that performing groups can use rather than be confined to the basic capabilities of the human body. It is said that a culture that is frozen is a culture that will die. If we believe that tourists are primarily interested in being entertained, or if we argue that tourists wish to learn, but could learn about the past and the contemporary using current communication means, then it seems to me that the niche tourism product that offers a stylized pastiche of the past in what purports to be a traditional manner – quite simply fails. It fails in many ways, and is itself a compromise. For the most part it is designed to create a performance in a period of time designed to fit the schedule of the coach party, and in showing a past does little for the culture of the people that it seeks to portray.

This, of course, is a very conventional view, and the antecedents lie in the original work of Valene Smith (1977) and Davydd Greenwood (1972) in the 1970s. It is also, arguably, a contested view. In some of my own writings I have described how performing groups of Maori belonging to the Te Arawa people of Rotorua have created for themselves a tradition of performance that helps define their own image, and many are proud to trace a genealogical linkage between themselves and their predecessors as performers (Ryan and Crofts, 1977). In the Chinese context different traditions of collectivism, and appreciation of the economic opportunities that are created by tourism, combined with, I believe, a higher tolerance of the larger numbers of people, create attitudes that while we might associate them with the early stages of Doxey's Irridex (Doxey, 1975), out-last the initial stages of tourist exploration. In short mass tourism can continue to be welcomed and is not seen as inconsistent with community values. In passing, it is of interest to me to note that Greenwood himself in 2004 stated that he had totally underestimated the complexity of the constructed tourist performance in the case of the Alarde when first writing in 1972. For the peoples previously marginalised, whether socially or economically, there is little doubt that tourism enables them to enter into the mainstream of economic, social, and political life, even though such entries give rise to new tensions as a fusion between the traditional and the new is sought that has meaning for those who perform and the communities within which they live.

So where does this leave the relationship between mass tourism and niche tourism? Jackie Clarke provided an answer for us in 1997 when she argued that the dichotomy between mass and ecotourism was false, and following the arguments of George Herbert Mead (1934), we are facing the emergence of new paradigms of sustainability as fusions between old and new social phenomena occur. Mass tourism can and indeed does take on many of the aspects of sustainability, whether it is in the construction of hotel buildings, or in the greening of resorts, as was evidenced by the Mallorcan experiment of the early 20th-century. Although operational practicalities of sustainability continue to challenge us, the principles behind such actions are increasingly being accepted by the tourism industry worldwide. For example, I am currently engaged, with Chinese colleagues, in a study of corporate social responsibility in Chinese hotels (Gu and Ryan, 2011). We are finding that Chinese hotel managers are aware of the concepts and management of such operational issues as gray water systems, the use of solar panels for electricity generation, the role of corporate social responsibility in human resource management whereby staff are to be seen as members of the team, and, perhaps under the pressures of globalisation and the need to replicate the best practices of multinational hotel chains, are seeking to adopt such approaches. This is not to say such processes are easy and immediate for there is a Chinese tradition of respect toward senior staff that can sometimes inhibit the question in of decisions, and the processes of *guanxi* may at times lead to practices that may be seen as corrupt. But already examples of changed practices can be discerned, and it is to be noted that such changes have occurred within relatively short periods of time.

I began by saying that the topic of mass vs. niche tourism took me back some 30 years and in that sense perhaps we should beware of looking backwards too much, and instead should be looking forwards. If we are to look forwards then we need to be aware of scenarios that may create a world very different to that of the 1970s when we commenced a discussion of what was mass and what represented niche tourism. It seems to me that there are quite clearly significant trends and it is easy to list these. Amongst them are:

- a) a growing and ageing population;
- b) the potential impacts of information technology;
- c) changes in the world's climate;
- d) questions over the world's energy supply;
- e) the growing importance of urbanisation and the emergence of the world city;
- f) the changing geo-political balance based on the emergence of China, India, Brazil and Russia as new economic forces. Added to this, at least in the intermediate period, are the challenges to scientific rationalism based on alternative world view associated an emergence of Islamic identities often characterised by what its adherents may claim as fundamental religious principles.

**Figure 2:**

## Passenger Traffic 2008 FINAL

Last update: July 28 2009

Rank	City (Airport)	Total Passengers	% Change
1	ATLANTA GA (ATL)	90 039 280	0.7
2	CHICAGO IL (ORD)	69 353 876	( 9.0)
3	LONDON (LHR)	67 056 379	( 1.5)
4	TOKYO (HND)	66 754 829	( 0.2)
5	PARIS (CDG)	60 874 681	1.6
6	LOS ANGELES CA (LAX)	59 497 539	( 4.7)
7	DALLAS/FORT WORTH TX (DFW)	57 093 187	( 4.5)
8	BEIJING (PEK)	55 937 289	4.4
9	FRANKFURT (FRA)	53 467 450	( 1.3)
10	DENVER CO (DEN)	51 245 334	2.8
11	MADRID (MAD)	50 824 435	( 2.4)
12	HONG KONG (HKG)	47 857 746	1.7
13	NEW YORK NY (JFK)	47 807 816	0.2
14	AMSTERDAM (AMS)	47 430 019	( 0.8)
15	LAS VEGAS NV (LAS)	43 208 724	( 8.0)
16	HOUSTON TX (IAH)	41 709 389	( 3.0)
17	PHOENIX AZ (PHX)	39 891 193	( 5.4)
18	BANGKOK (BKK)	38 603 490	( 6.3)
19	SINGAPORE (SIN)	37 694 824	2.7
20	DUBAI (DXB)	37 441 440	9.0
21	SAN FRANCISCO CA (SFO)	37 234 592	4.7
22	ORLANDO FL (MCO)	35 660 742	( 2.3)
23	NEWARK NJ (EWR)	35 360 848	( 2.8)
24	DETROIT MI (DTW)	35 135 828	( 2.4)
25	ROME (FCO)	35 132 224	6.9
26	CHARLOTTE NC (CLT)	34 739 020	4.7
27	MUNICH (MUC)	34 530 593	1.7
28	LONDON (LGW)	34 214 740	( 2.9)
29	MIAMI FL (MIA)	34 063 531	1.0
30	MINNEAPOLIS MN (MSP)	34 056 443	( 3.0)

Airports participating in the ACI annual traffic statistics collection.

Total Passengers: total passengers enplaned and deplaned, passengers in transit counted

I do not pretend that this is an exhaustive list but it is sufficient for us to be reflect on what might be the future of tourism within the next couple of decades, and whether, within this process we want to talk of a continuation of past patterns of mass or niche tourism in the way in which we have come to understand these terms.

At a personal level I have had a career unknown to my parents and grandparents of past generations. I have worked in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the United States and been resident in New Zealand over 12 years. I acquire my air

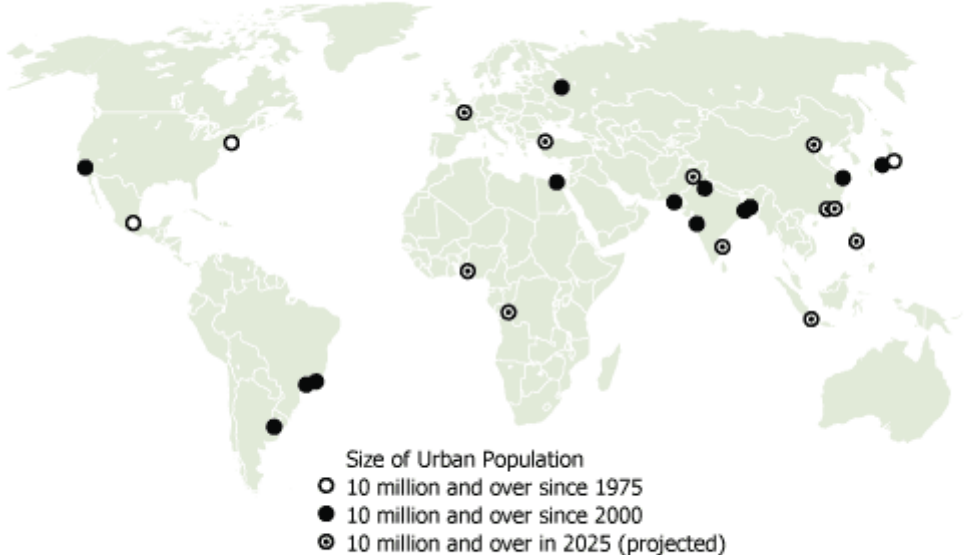
points and travel frequently around the world. I have indicated to you that for much of the last six years my research has primarily been in China. My son, who graduates next year with a master's degree in economics and finance, is envisaging a career where he goes first to Australia and then perhaps the United States, London or the financial centres of Hong Kong, Shanghai or Singapore. Increasingly professional, young people might be deemed to be a global citizen working any one of a number of the major world cities. Already about 10 of the cities dominate world tourism movements as can be seen in Figure Two. That shows that these 10 cities in 2008 had over 500 million passenger movements (but please note they include domestic as well as international passengers). People envisage a stay of three years in one city, four years in another and while there, are they really at home or are they a tourist? If a tourist destination is the place that we temporarily call home, what then is a tourist? These world cities are multifunctional. They are financial centres, IT centres, retail, conference, sports and leisure, economic and political centres and are not simply tourism cities. They are cities like Paris where tourism is important – but where tourism is a small part of the economic functions of the city.

The year 2010 was a significant year in human history because it is in this year that over half of the world's population were living in urban centres. In 1900 it is estimated that just 14 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas. By 2000 it was 47 percent and it is forecast to grow to 61 percent by 2030 (United Nations, 2007). I have often argued that tourism is part of a wider entertainment and leisure industry, but if the city of the future can offer entertainment and leisure that fits within the fuzzy boundaries of changing work/leisure patterns where for many work is a source of not only identity but also relaxation, one begins to question whether the holiday as a source of relaxation is so important. Perhaps the future function of the holiday for a young professional worker is as a means by which motivations other than leisure are met. Under this scenario the future lies with the niche, or at least a profitable part of tourism's future lies with the niche. This type of thinking also means that we cannot think of tourism as separate from other land use activities, but have to locate tourism with recreation, leisure and sport in the context of city planning and the developing urban scape.

But there are counter movements. It is thought that within a decade there will be 40 million Chinese able to afford and willing to go on overseas holidays. My current observation of the Chinese outbound market is that it is still immature. Decisions as to where to go, and with what travel agent or tour operator, are still often based upon price. For many Chinese a \$1000 product that takes you to four places is seen as better value than \$1000 tour that takes you to only two or three. The qualitative reality between these tours is, of course, different. And it is this qualitative difference that has given rise to the practices of tour guides being dependent upon retail commissions, and stories of, for example, disgruntled tourists beating up guides because they are quite simply, fed up, being taken to yet another retail store as the tour guide seeks to eke out a living based on retailers' commissions, as widely reported in the Chinese press in December 2007 after rioting in Macau (English Global Voices, 2007). In New Zealand the Ministry of Tourism has had to take over the accreditation of inbound Chinese tour operators to ensure the quality of the product that Chinese tourists experience, and China is now our fourth-largest market. This is not a new problem. We have seen it in the past with Korea and Taiwan. It is a stage in the evolution of markets. What has happened in the case of China will

continue to be the case in some time yet come, and may well be the case for India for a longer future.

**Figure 3: Cities with over 10 million population**  
Largest Urban Agglomerations, 1975, 2000, 2025



Source: United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision*.

So we have a complex world, where in the advanced economies and amongst the well qualified who are conversant with the ways of IT, research, finance, indeed the hospitality industry, we can envisage a growing demand for the niche tourism product from young professionals and other groups (e.g. divorced women), while on the other hand there will be the price sensitive new mass markets of India and China, perhaps to be followed by those of Russia and the South American nations. Now you may object that this is nothing new. Within a UK context of the 1960s the upper classes continued to travel in what may be regarded as a privileged niche market, but simultaneously there was the emergence of the mass package holiday market to the Mediterranean. The principle may not be new therefore, but the numbers will very definitely be different, as will the experiences sought.

Can these numbers be sustained? One of the concerns of course is that of global climate change. In one respect I am optimistic. I think that the alternatives to the petrol combustion engine are beginning to emerge more rapidly and land transport will be available. Whilst I support in principle the development of public mass transport systems within cities, I am of the view there will still be a need for motorways for at least a couple of decades. There are significant gains in air transport and carbon emissions per passenger kilometre will decline with improvements in aircraft engine design and in the longer term there are signs of new alternatives in terms of both biofuels and different engine designs so that by the end of the 21st century the problems associated with greenhouse gases resulting from air transport may well be overcome.

I will not go through each of the alternative scenarios in turn as I am sure you are quite capable of devising these for yourself. But let me return to the issue of the quality of the experiences being sought. First, with reference to the young professional market, one might conceive that they will travel less frequently through a number of reasons. These include the fact that they are working in cities that are entertainment and leisure centres on a scale we have not previously seen. Second, they will derive much of their leisure from the convergence of television, computer games, 3-D and holographic representations. While the promise of virtual reality has not yet been fully delivered, we may expect to see significant developments in this direction within the next couple of decades. Third, because of their work patterns they will have less time for taking extended periods away from work, but such periods may well be longer than the previously traditional one or two weeks holiday, because they may well be holidays taken in interim periods between changing jobs. Such a market will be experienced, affluent and have high expectations. This has immediate implications for the quality of service, the quality of staff, their education and training, and the quality of management for those supplying accommodation and tourist activities. For the older age groups, they too will be more experienced and have high expectations based on past holiday experiences. It is certainly true that the 60-year-old of today has different expectations to a 60-year-old of, say 1990, much less 1970. They do not feel old! However, contrary to concepts of an empty nester market popularised by Kotler in his early marketing books 40 years ago in 1967, many in this group may not be as affluent as once was thought. Personal wealth may well have been limited by processes of past divorce, second families, children staying at home much longer than in the past, and the need possibly to have supported aged parents as the state retreats from the care of older people as that generation lives longer. We already see governments responding to these pressures in changes being made to superannuation and the ages of retirement. This market will therefore be driven by a need for value for money, be price sensitive, but also be prepared to trade up and down the portfolio of properties and activities, at times seeking luxury, and at others switching to extend stays at a destination or participation in an activity by trading down the scale of accommodation. In New Zealand the backpacker hostel operators call this market the ageing adolescents market. It is also possible that many of these people will have, through their past business associations or over the Internet, a network of friends and relatives scattered around the globe who will provide accommodation. They therefore may be seeking activities and rich experiences, and still regard themselves as active even if working within relatively constrained budgets. We already see signs of mass markets based upon the recognition of individuality emerging as is demonstrated by the cruise market, small-scale cruises and bus tours was, and expeditions based on higher degrees of comfort and stay and savour the activities as older people have the time to explore all what were once previously an exotic destinations. Such operations are price competitive because they can ally the economies of scale derive from large numbers of bookings with small groups to generate the type of product that this market segment desires.

In that sense we are can forecast a growing number of small group tours simply because of market trends, and the question may arise, does this constitute an environmental threat? Again, I'm tempted to say your answer will be determined by whether you are an optimist or a pessimist. I have already indicated that I think carbon emissions associated with transport is an issue that can be solved over the next couple of decades. In many cases the threat to the environment and to the



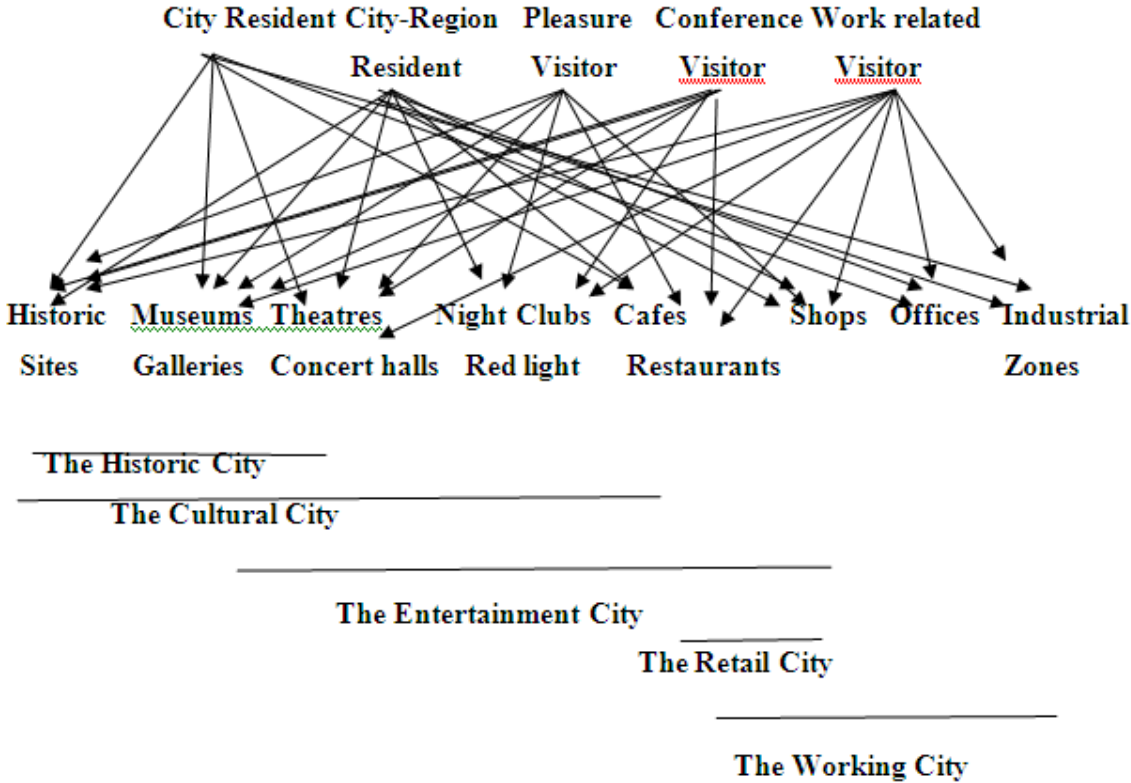
scenery and landscapes that form the basis of many tourism products is derived more from agricultural and industrial practices than any problem that tourism generates. It may be argued that the problems associated with tourism are more social, psychological and community-based than environmental. Even here we must be careful not to overstate the problem. Host societies not only receive tourists, but increasingly receive images and messages from the wider world through their television sets and the Internet and are thus exposed to cultural and social challenges from many means other than simply tourism. Coming back to research in China, what one observes is that whilst we may say that tourism can create negative impacts because of congestion, litter and noise, one must also note that the Chinese themselves demand more cars, more cafes and restaurants, and increasingly the residents behave in ways similar to the tourists in terms of their leisure pursuits.

So what of the new markets? The Chinese outbound market can be classified into different segments. On the one hand there are the counterparts to the younger western professionals and these are confident in speaking English, and have a global perspective. However the new affluence is also creating a market for whom Mandarin is their only language, and who wish to travel in groups from both reasons of personal safety, for avoiding potentially embarrassing situations because they neither speak the host's language, like the food, nor are familiar with the customs of the place that they visit. The motive travel may not only be a wish to see new places but also to acquire prestige and status amongst the peer groups back home in China. They will, in many cases, wish to visit the iconic places of the world and hence will be found at the Sydney Opera House, the Tower of London, Disneyland and similar locations. In these locations they will also find the affluent young professionals and the experienced older travellers previously described. So the management of such locations have to deal not only with increased numbers but with a greater heterogeneity of tourists based not only on ethnicity, culture and socio-demographics, but also psychometrics. In addition to the tourists they may also be local residents who are simply enjoying these places as centres of recreation and leisure in the cities in which they live. We can therefore see the destination management will take on added responsibilities if we are to retain their character.

Now this may have seemed to have been a rambling discourse wherein the mass and the niche have only occasional met, so let me try to synthesis what has been said. Possibly a few charts and diagrams may help.

I have indicated that increasingly life patterns and flows of people will be dominated by growing urbanisation, but as shown in Figure Four, these cities are multi-functional.

**Figure 4: The multi-functional city**



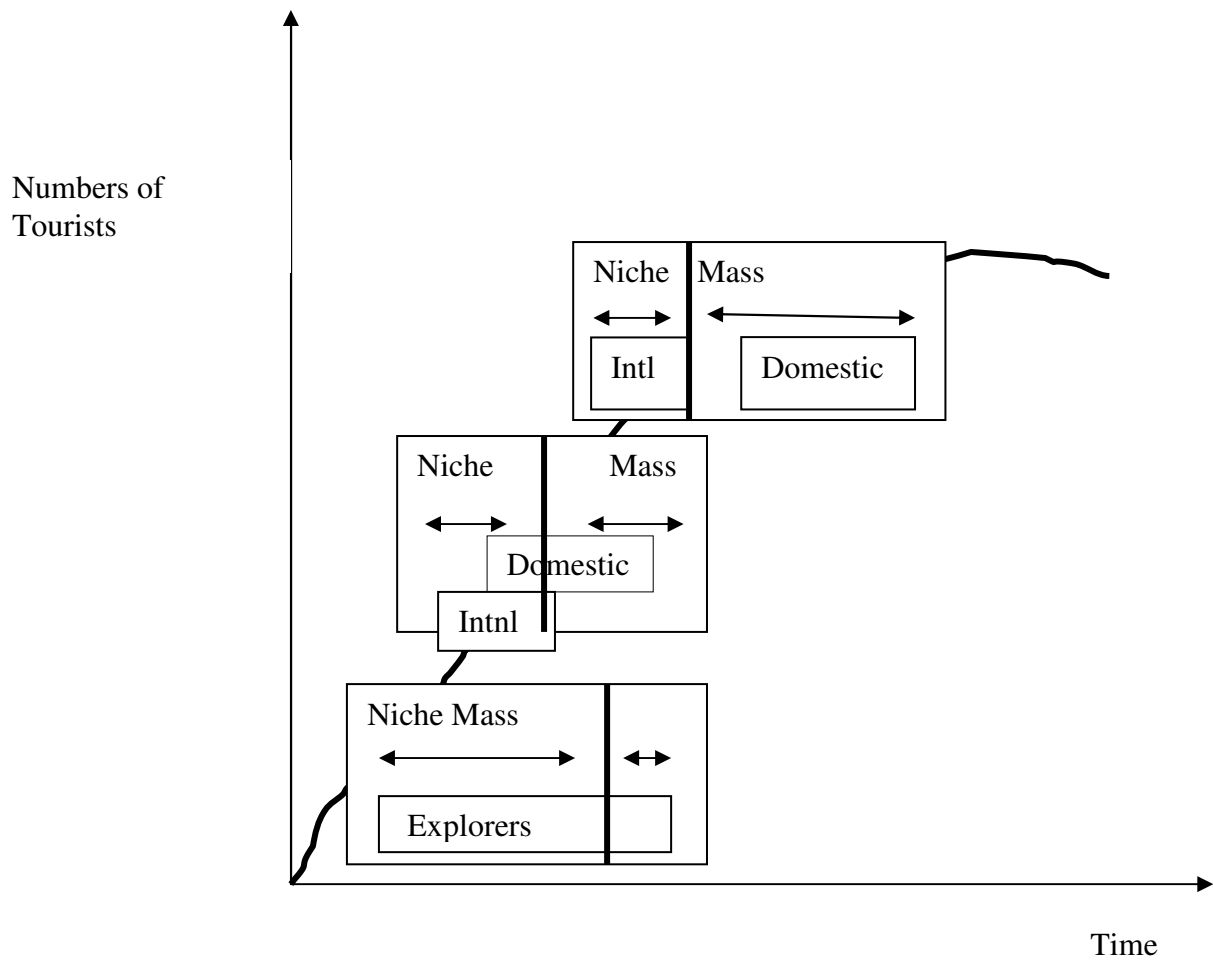
These cities can thus act as a place where both mass and niche tourists patronise a wide range of events, in many instances with residents. Growing urbanisation also may create a demand for natural areas – but we are moving into a generation more used to urban settings and for whom the call of natural areas may be less than in the past. For the emergent markets of China and Asia groups are not simply means of safe travel – but also collective sharing.

**Table 2: Below attempts a summary of what I have said**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Implication</b>
The mass vs. niche tourism dichotomy	In the future there continues: Niche Tourism Mass tourism But the greater numbers of tourists create – more demand for niche – greater opportunity for financial feasibility
The emergence of fusion tourism	This is characterised by Niche and mass tourists at the same location Niche tourists and mass tourists have overlaps in typologies (see McKercher and Du Cros groupings) The emergent Asian niche market adds numbers to the existing niche market to create a larger 'mini-mass' market. And is there the emergence of a mega market?
Growing role of cities	Places for niche tourists (history, culture), mass tourists (entertainment) and residents (work and leisure)
Emergent markets	Markets culturally based on collective shared experience, Creates mass demand and economies of scale for transport etc Makes increasingly viable smaller sized operations as permits more frequent use of assets Creates places for greater mix of ethnic and socio-demographic groups
Changing determinants of demands	Ageing of advanced economies Non-empty nesters Different perceptions of age Different life experiences cf. past generations More mobile in life/work patterns MORE FLEXIBLE IN ROLE ADOPTION
Destination Management issues – urban	Tourism increasingly a role to be considered in town and urban planning. Tourism is not distinct from other activities
Destination Management issues – rural	Sustainability may only be able to operate through exclusion of tourists Sustainability is aided by reconstructing eco-tourism product – making the natural out of the un-natural – Ras Al Kohr and Al Maha in UAE.

I will not reiterate (at least in text) the above arguments, but I do think this has implications for the first figure with which I began, and hence I think it is possible to modify it as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: The modified mass vs. niche praxis**



At the commencement of the Butler exploration stage, things are much as before, with the explorers being ‘explorers’ and the key distinguishing factor being a psychometric measure of acceptance – indeed seeking – of the unfamiliar, unstructured and new. The ‘mass’ component may be represented by those who patronise specialist niche tour operators and thus utilise the same space as the explorers, but perhaps for less duration of time. However, in this diagram horizontal arrows have been introduced – and these represent degrees of heterogeneity in the market place. For example, the explorers may be young drifters – or ageing adolescents, or the newly divorced reinventing their lives, the newly retired rediscovering the wanderlust of their youth, or the mid-aged successful professional now turning his or her back upon that life for, having made money, they now wish to discover ‘life’. As the destination matures and grows, the ratio of mass and niche changes as before, and the degrees of heterogeneity may also grow, and contributing to that heterogeneity is the growing number of international tourists that also come from emergent markets. The niche exploring Korean discovers the comfortable inn of the western tourist who patronises the wares of the specialist culturally friendly tour agent – and both watch the adventure seeking, sports loving kite surfer who forms part of the bay they gaze upon while sharing the local bars with local people. And thus the more complex pattern continues as into destination

maturity while the ludic playing Urry (2000) type tourist enjoys the hedonistic role as a recovery from their more adventurous holiday in the hinterland as he or she come to the end of a three year work stay and so take a month break – perhaps their first for 18 months, as the family group strolls by and the packaged Chinese tourists write their post cards home about the strange habits of a Mediterranean life style.

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# Mass, niche and masquerading

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## Introduction

According to Robinson and Novelli “the way niche tourism has been frequently referred to in tourism policy and strategy documents over recent years, in opposition to mass tourism, almost provides it with a moral legitimacy” (2005: 6). It apparently attracts discerning and therefore sensitive markets, and is therefore more beneficial to the host communities compared to traditional forms of mass tourism. In this paper I will explore how far this is true and how far it can be said that “the niche tourism approach appears to offer greater opportunities and a tourism that is more sustainable” (Robinson and Novelli 2005). I will use the example of villa tourism in South East Bali, based on research under-taken in July 2010, as a lens with which to examine this “moral legitimacy”.

## What is Niche Tourism?

Before discussing villa tourism in Bali and if Niche tourism has moral legitimacy or is more sustainable and better than mass tourism, let us first remind ourselves what niche tourism is or is believed to be. From reading a specialist text on the subject one might be forgiven for wondering what is the difference between niche and special interest tourism. Robinson and Novelli (2005) do not define niche tourism, but in their diagrammatic representation niche tourism is sub-texted as “special interests, culture and or other activity based tourism involving a small number of tourists in authentic setting”. I won’t go into the authenticity debate here, and as “small number” is a fairly meaningless statement, we are left with special interest and activity based tourism – i.e. special interest tourism as discussed by Weiler and Hall back in 1982. Robinson and Novelli do remind us that Niche tourism came from marketing (who borrowed it from ecology) and that it is a specific product tailed to the needs or a particular audience or market segment. The term is rooted in competitiveness and a niche is distinct for the competitive advantage that it brings. A niche market is essentially a market segment but that is recognised by the consumers that derive status from being associated with the product being marketed. As Lew (2008) discusses it is a form of new tourism in which the post-tourist seeks quality, efficiency and predictability. Forms of niche tourism largely use internet based marketing.

Niche tourism is a product that is highly desired by a relatively small segment of the population. As it offers a distinction both recognised and valued by consumers it can command a higher price (Roberts and Hall 2003). The special individualised services and products can attract high spend tourists. But are high spend tourists more discerning? Are they more sensitive and do they provide greater benefits to the local community?

## **Villa tourism in Bali**

### *What is Villa Tourism in Bali?*

It is very hard to define what a villa is in Bali. The image of a villa as a private house, with its own grounds, fits some, but far from all Villas in Bali. The Bali Villa Association is trying to define the criteria for a villa and has suggested that it must have a minimum number of rooms, and staff, its own private swimming pool, as well as minimum litres of water and electricity per person, and even tries to define minimum bathroom furnishings and equipment. In reality a villa is defined by the person marketing it. My research in July revealed such a range of what was called “villa” as to be almost impossible to describe or define what was meant. My own villa was an ex warehouse, no pool, no bathroom niceties, limited air conditioning, and no staff. While one of the villa’s was the home of a French artist rented out while he was away, set in the most exotic of gardens and staffed by six full time personal house staff, another of them had 70 rooms, each with its own plunge pool, but no individual kitchen or dining rooms.

It is also difficult to define the market segment, beyond a willingness to spend a lot on accommodation (normally US\$750- US\$1500 per unit per night), but includes honeymooners, family gatherings, expatriates living in Singapore and Malaysia, and *nouveau riche* Australians. Villa’s attract high spend (on their accommodation) tourists who want quality service, efficiency and predictability and are attracted by “luxury in paradise” marketing.

### *Why a Villa?*

The number of villa’s in Bali is unknown, but there are over 750 in the southern Regency of Badung alone. The reason that almost any tourist accommodation can and does call itself a Villa is no accident. On the one hand, with the correct marketing you can command a very high price and on the other, being a villa conveys a number of other advantages. Villas form part of the informal or unregulated side of Bali’s tourism. Villas masquerade as private houses rented occasionally as the name originally suggested. A villa will pay less for piped water, and will not be investigated for well water, which should be paid for in the case of a commercial venture. A villa can avoid a range of taxes paid by other accommodation sectors. They can employ staff on their own terms, in many cases breaking employment law. Some villas are registered for tax purposes, have a higher staff to guest ratio than 5 star hotels (2.25 staff per bedroom), pay their staff fairly, share the service tax, provide health and pension protection; and have registered wells and pay for their water; but far from all.

### *Villa Tourism and Sustainability*

Of the villas in Badung, approximately 75% are owned by foreigners, so villa tourism is not locally owned and controlled –one of the defining features of more sustainable tourism. Many of the tourists staying in villas cater for themselves. The “Canggu Deli” is typical of the shops recommended to a villa tourist – bright, friendly, and familiar and full of Australian Beef and Wine, Kellogg’s cereals, olives, apples from New Zealand, Nescafe coffee etc. Even some of the vegetables were imported! So the



economic multiplier would be small and the leakages great – again a far cry from what we know as sustainable tourism.

From a marketing perspective villa tourism in Bali is marketed, as Robinson and Novelli (2005) suggest “employing information technology almost as a form of ‘cottage industry’”. However, the cottage industry marketing outfit visited during the research was one of the most exploitative aspects of the villa industry we came across. Initially when my Balinese assistant tried to visit the Bali Villa Network the door was slammed in her face, Balinese rarely have villas to rent and she may have been a tax inspector, or someone who could blow the whistle of what was happening inside. When I, masquerading as a villa owner, seeking help with marketing my Villa, the door opened on a tiny, stuffy room, with exhausted looking girls squeezed up to computer screens; I was offered coverage a number of different websites, 24 hour answers to emails and help with how to make my villa appeal.

In the case of villas that are in reality hotels, they are avoiding laws in Bali that set a moratorium of the development of any further four and five star hotels. Furthermore, their use of water is worse than the multinational mass tourism hotels such as the Hilton’s Hyatt’s and Sheraton’s. Our research revealed only one registered well in the sample of over 20 “villas” in the pilot village. A complex of 70 villas each with their own plunge pool, plus a 35m communal pool and numerous water features would be using the water resources of Bali for free. Furthermore the research revealed that the owners, managers and engineers in the villas had little or no knowledge of water conservation. Hardly any recycled any waste water and many broke the 40:60 building/garden regulations resulting in poor rainwater catchment and high levels of run-off. All this is an island facing a looming water crisis (JICA 2005), where the local population face frequent water shortages, increasingly polluted water supplies, and rising costs of drinking water.

## **Conclusion**

Villa tourism is a new form of rapidly growing self directed tourism in Bali that appeals to post tourist sensibilities to experience “luxury in paradise”. The sophisticated marketing offers them quality service, efficiency and predictability. They are provided with special, ‘beyond hotel’, individualised accommodation and thus this new tourism fits with the ideas of niche tourism. However, I agree with Roberts and Hall (2003) that “the linguistic sophistry inherent in the term niche not only confuses marketing practice but influences perceptions”. As with the rural tourism investigated by Roberts and Hall, the implications in the term niche as small scale, low impact, more value added, and more benign are also not born- out by the reality of villa tourism in Bali.

Niche tourism it would seem is more about marketing than about sustainability. To conflate a marketing concept which is based on competitive advantage and extrapolate that there is morality, sustainability or improved local benefit is to miss the reality on the ground. Consumers who are prepared to pay a higher price for their version of paradise are not necessarily any more discerning; and if Bali is anything to go by, are often staying in establishments that are more, rather than less, harmful.

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## In defence of the masses (on holiday)

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Holidays have long been seen as harbingers of environmental destruction and cultural levelling by a host of critics. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Cook was castigated for his part in extending leisure mobility to the masses. Victorian gentleman Sir Lesley Stephens openly referred to the lower orders on their holidays as a 'swarm of intrusive insects'<sup>1</sup>. Wordsworth opposed the extension of the railways to Windermere, fearing the desecration of nature by day-trippers.

The period since 1945 has witnessed a boom in the package holiday abroad. Yet the simple pleasures of the package holiday are most often the target for tourism's critics. Jonathan Porritt, in his foreword to *Preserve or Destroy: Tourism and the Environment* paints a grim picture of the destruction wrought by pleasure seekers<sup>2</sup>. The notion that somewhere between preservation and destruction lies the possibility of changing things for the better is never entertained. Similarly today, the package holiday is associated with being crude, thoughtless and generally dumb by the ethical travel lobby. For *Guardian* ethical living columnist Leo Hickman, package tourists are 'just passive lumps of flesh and bone'<sup>3</sup>. His book is apocalyptically titled *The Final Call: Searching for the True Cost of our Holidays*.

In the universities, historically associated with free and critical thinking, it also seems fashionable to casually label the masses on holiday as pretty thick. According to one popular account, mass tourism is characterised by being 'consumed *en masse* in a similar, robot like and routine manner, with a lack of consideration for the norms, culture and environment of the host country visited.'<sup>4</sup> By contrast, new ethical niches comprising of thoughtful, discerning tourists, sensitised to and supportive of cultural differences (even when these differences are a product of gross material inequality) are talked up.

The package holiday is well worth defending from its detractors. In the decades after the Second World War, it ultimately represented a democratisation of travel. It opened up opportunities to many people whose only prior experience of foreign shores was likely to have been fighting wars. The ability to travel more easily for leisure, relaxation, fun, inspiration or enlightenment is certainly progress. It has proved popular amongst those able to partake, regardless of their background or

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Feifer M. (1985.) *Going Places: the ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day*. London: Macmillan, p.179.

<sup>2</sup> Croall J. (1995). *Preserve or Destroy: Tourism and the Environment*. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Hickman L. (2007). *The Final Call: In Search of the True Cost of Our Holidays*. London: Eden Project Books, p.xv.

<sup>4</sup> Poon A. (1993). *Tourism, Technology and Competitive Strategy*. Wallingford: CABI, p.4.

culture. Pro-globalisation marketing guru Theodore Levitt put it well: 'No place and nobody is insulated from the alluring fruits of modernity.'<sup>5</sup>

The jet engine was a key technological innovation shaping the industry at this time. Aircraft linked the generating markets of the cold north to the warm Mediterranean. Jets could carry larger aircraft, and larger aircraft meant greater scope for economies of scale and cheaper travel. Independent charter airlines, boosted by capital from the shipping industry, pioneered the 'back to back' charter (itself seen as innovative in its time) in the 1960s. A week on the French Riviera, the Costas, the Balearics, Rimini or a Greek island became closer to the cost of a week in Blackpool. For many, the former proved preferable. The economic and social transformation of poor fishing villages in southern Spain into the convivial resorts of the Costa del Sol was one result. Host and tourist benefitted.

Liberation through the jet age is viewed rather more circumspectly these days. Jet aircraft emit CO<sub>2</sub> and are hence under the spotlight for their contribution to man made global warming. Yet the legacy of tourism development in the Mediterranean is a positive one in so many ways.

Niche tourism has come into vogue, not just in terms of new products, but also in terms of identity and new forms of agency. Novelli has 19 niches covered in her edited volume on the subject, a few of which are really attempts at establishing moral superiority over the aforementioned package tourists, whilst others are exciting new opportunities. Ironically, these new opportunities are made possible or affordable by the Fordist methods pioneered by the package tour companies in the first place.

Environmentalist critic of the package holiday Harold Goodwin coined the term 'Responsible Tourism' (and even named a University course after it). This is indicative of the attempts to talk up new niches or tourism types as more ethical than regular *tourism-without-a-prefix*. Responsible tourism turns out to be tourism that celebrates localism and organic agriculture. The latter is an intensely political issue – many would argue that GM crops are ethical, responsible and very necessary in today's world. The former, too, is a matter for political debate, not moral proscription through the etiquette of 'responsible' or 'ethical' tourism.

Another fan of localism, Prince Charles, owns a 40 year old Aston Martin that runs on bioethanol made entirely from wine. He recently announced his 'Start' environment campaign to promote certain lifestyle changes, including holidaying closer to home.<sup>6</sup> Environmentalists in the USA have extended the '100 mile meal'- eating on the basis of what is fairly local - to the '100 mile vacation'. Tourists are encouraged to think about what is close to hand, to improve the self sufficiency of different localities and reduce their carbon footprints.

An alternative view was put by Levitt in 1983 in the *Harvard Business Review*: Technology and wealth were 'shrinking the world' and making the global village an inspiring reality for many.<sup>7</sup> He noted the positive aspects of expanded leisure time

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<sup>5</sup> Levitt T. (1983). 'The Globalization of Markets' *Harvard Business Review*. May-June.

<sup>6</sup> Start, The Prince Charities Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> Levitt T. (1983). 'The Globalization of Markets' *Harvard Business Review*. May-June.

and spending power for the masses. He pointed out that tastes historically associated with only a small elite, including the desire to travel for leisure, were becoming universal. Levitt was optimistic about the impact of wealth and technology in bringing the world closer together.

Regardless, the reality is that more people are joining the travelling classes. Budget airlines have spread from Europe to Asia. China and India will generate and receive ever more tourists. In the UK, people want to get away if they can. Trips abroad from the UK this year have steadied following last year's slump and many are trading down rather than staying at home.

In spite of the attendant problems and issues, travel has never been more seamless, fast and efficient. Trains, boats, planes and the much maligned motor car have opened up opportunities for travel to see relatives, snow capped mountains, sun soaked beaches and cultural icons that previous generations wouldn't have imagined.

That is progress by any measure. As Thomas Cook, the father of the package holiday put it:

These are the days of the millions [who can] o'erleap the bounds of their own narrow circle, rub off rust and prejudice by contact with others, and expand their sails and invigorate their bodies by an exploration of some of nature's finest scenes.<sup>8</sup>

The real ethical issue, then, is how to extend these advantages to more people. A positive assessment of the legacy of mass tourism would contribute to that.

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<sup>8</sup> Cited in Feifer M. (1985.) *Going Places: the ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day*. London: Macmillan, p.179.



## **Dark tourism in Amsterdam, an option for destination marketing?**

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The impacts of tourism on people and the environment are well documented. Yet the controversies in tourism remain undocumented. One such controversy exists between the proponents and opponents of mass and niche tourism. The 2010 ATLAS conference aims to examine and give answers to two highly controversial and compelling questions:

Niche tourism, on the other hand, has emerged in response to the changing tastes of consumers who are travelling more frequently, and are becoming more experienced and more discerning. This has given rise to a number of apparently new forms of tourism which are undertaken by limited numbers of tourists with special interests or hobbies and the finances to back them up (niche tourism is notoriously expensive compared to mass tourism). However, as all forms of tourism grow in popularity, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain at which point niche tourism becomes mass tourism. Cultural tourism in historic cities is a good case in point. It is interesting to debate where we can draw the line between mass and niche tourism and whether we can differentiate between tourist profiles, motivations and behaviours (for example, it is naturally assumed that niche tourists are 'good' and mass tourists are 'bad'). Such simplistic assumptions need to be challenged.

### **Dark tourism in Amsterdam, an option for destination marketing?**

The ATLAS Congress in Cyprus theme Mass Tourism vs. Niche Tourism offers ample opportunities to discuss the impacts of these two types of tourism and explore some apparently new forms of tourism that are attracting tourists with specific interests. Although firmly rooted in history and part of the larger phenomenon of cultural tourism, dark tourism seems to be one of these new types of tourism. Also referred to as Thanatourism and connected to concepts such as funerary tourism, grief tourism and holocaust tourism, to name but a few, it has become the object of research of quite a few social scientists. More often than not they have directed their focus on the so-called 'dark' resources and less so on the motivations of the visitors. Research on visitors' motivation therefore not only offers academics and students new opportunities, but can also shed light on ethical aspects that are connected with this type of tourism. It seems that Dark Tourism has not been picked up yet by the tourism industry as a niche market. After an introduction to the concept this paper offers the results of two case studies in Amsterdam on the motivation of dark tourists and presents a first inventory of the opinions of different stakeholders involved with 'dark resources' when confronted with this type of niche tourism.

## **Introduction**

When one of Holland's most popular columnists died last winter his grave became an instant tourist attraction, this to the amazement of the cemetery's caretakers. Even more amazing was the fact that this recent grave was visited mostly by women who had no relation with the deceased and who only came as sightseers to 'have a look' at the grave (Het Parool, 2009). This phenomenon however is not typically Dutch and can be observed worldwide. The cemetery of Pere Lachaise in Paris can even be considered an international tourism attraction and is featured in many travel guidebooks. It has gained its fame not only because of the many illustrious representatives of French culture, but also because of the American singer Jim Morrison who died in 1971. His grave is considered one of the more popular destinations of this cemetery, even with people who were not even born when he celebrated his greatest successes (Luijters, 2004).

So why do they visit his grave? Is it because of his music, or is it because of the rebellious image of this establishment-bashing singer songwriter? Or are there other reasons still and is a visit to this grave seen as a way to get closer to this cult-hero?

During my work as a travel guide and tour manager I've encountered locations worldwide that were closely connected to death or dying, but were still considered foremost as tourist attractions. Preliminary desk research showed that this phenomenon was nothing recent, but that it had a long history dating back to the classical age and was not limited to western culture (Feifer, 1986). These findings only raised further questions. Are we, as tourists, always looking further for new attractions even when these could be considered morbid? Or are we, as human creatures curious for examples that confirm the finiteness of our being? Or do we just want to see those things that actually frighten us? (Aries, 1997). Obviously these questions are not that easy to answer and tourism as an academic discipline does not pretend to come up with solutions. As an international business however, tourism does see opportunities to market these resources as (part of) a tourism product, even when they could be considered as morbid. Not everybody agrees with such a commercial approach and obviously questions about the ethical aspects of this type of tourism can be raised (Tarlow, 2005). However, a visit to a location that is connected with death or dying will probably have a different meaning for different visitors. A true fan of Elvis Presley standing at the grave of his hero will undergo different emotions than someone including Graceland on a more general American roundtrip.

## **Tourism and death, an unexpected combination**

Over the last years the concept of Dark Tourism has become a widely known phenomenon amongst academics interested in tourism and has led to a variety of articles and other publications. Dark Tourism as a concept was first coined and used by Lennon and Foley in 1995 after extensive research in Berlin, Dallas, Cyprus and the battlefields of the First World War. They saw dark tourism as a specific type of cultural tourism influenced by the speed and influence of modern means of communication and media appealing to the feelings of uncertainty and doubt of a post-modern society. They also indicated that some dark tourism locations showed all the signs and characteristics of commodification and commercialization. They



defined this type of tourism as: “....*the act of travel and visitation to sites, attractions and exhibitions which have real or recreated death, suffering or the seemingly macabre as the main theme*” (Lennon & Foley, 2004).

In 1996 A.V. Seaton introduced the concept of Thanatourism, linking this type of tourism to the older European tradition of Thanatopsis, the contemplation of death, which had been part of a larger framework of Judeo-Christian values. He also specifically indicated the developments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when those who could afford it engaged in making a trip to several European cities, the so-called Grand Tour, for their cultural self-development or to extend their nobility network (Seaton, 1996). Some entrepreneurs of this period succeeded fairly well in institutionalizing elements of death and horror on behalf of the demands of commerce and leisure. The Chamber of Horrors of Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum being the best known example of this type of exploitation.

But London wasn't the only destination that offered visitors the opportunity to indulge in macabre entertainment. In eighteenth century Amsterdam it was common to entertain visitors by taking them along to one of the prisons, where they could look at the convicts and even abuse them (Mak, 1995). And in early nineteenth century Paris a visit to the morgue or the catacombs with its remains of more than 6 million of its former inhabitants was a must-see (MacCannell, 1976).

According to Seaton the phenomenon of Dark Tourism can be divided in the following five categories:

1. Travel to witness public enactments of death, such as executions and public hangings.
2. Travel to see the sites of mass or individual deaths after they have occurred, such as the Coliseum in Rome or mass destruction sites as Auschwitz.
3. Travel to internment sites of, and memorials to, the dead which includes visits to graveyards, catacombs and war memorials.
4. Travel to view the material evidence, or symbolic representations of death, in locations unconnected with their occurrence which includes a.o. museums and the aforementioned Madam Tussaud's.
5. Travel for re-enactments or simulation of death which varies from the Passion play in Oberammergau restaging the death of Christ, to the re-enactment of famous battles or even participating in so-called 'murder-weekends' (Seaton, 1996).

The approach of Stone emphasizes the locations or attractions as resources as Seaton does, but he has a special interest in the motivation of the visitors and the involvement of different stakeholders as 'producers' of tourism attractions. In his article on Dark Tourism he introduces a dark tourism spectrum of perceived product features ranging from 'lightest' to 'darkest'. He discerns the following categories:

1. Dark Fun Factories, such as the London Dungeon aimed at entertaining visitors.
2. Dark Exhibitions, where elements of education are present, such as the Body World Exhibition touring the world.
3. Dark Dungeons which include medieval gaols, but also more recent prisons such as Robben Island.
4. Dark Resting Places, including cemeteries visited for the cultural historic or artistic values, but also the 'Dearly Departed Tours' offered to tourists in Hollywood.

5. Dark Shrines which are often constructed formally or informally close to the site of death and sometimes become a more permanent presence such as Ground Zero.
6. Dark Conflict Sites which revolve around war and battlefield sites and which have an educational and commemorative focus.
7. Dark Camps of Genocide represent the darkest side of Dark Tourism and include the destruction camps of the Second World War (Stone,2006).

This last category is also known as Holocaust tourism and not restricted to the Second World War, but used to indicate locations such as the infamous Killing Fields of Cambodia and Rwanda as well (Hitchcott, 2009). The English language has more options when it comes to dark tourism and concepts like Grief Tourism, Morbid Tourism, Funerary Tourism, Cemetery Tourism, Prison Tourism, Slavery Tourism, Battlefield Tourism and Disaster Tourism are encountered in several publications (Bristow, 2004; Holguin, 2005; Turnell-Read, 2009). Only Disaster Tourism has a Dutch equivalent in the word “Rampen-toerisme”, but this is mostly used to indicate ‘rubbernecking’ at traffic accidents and not for true touristic purposes.

### **The dark sites of Amsterdam**

It might have become obvious that dark tourism has been the subject of some interesting studies focussing on the categorization or classification of the phenomenon, but less so on the opportunities for the tourism industry. It is still not clear if dark tourism attractions can contribute in a positive manner to the total proposition, or even be the main reason for a visit to a destination.

It’s obvious that there are (amateur) historians who will visit the battlefields of the First World War, just as there are people interested in cultural and art history who will travel to famous cemeteries. (Weil, 1992) The motivation of visitors certainly deserves further research, but that is not the subject of this paragraph which wants to offer a first inventarisation of the dark resources of the city of Amsterdam.

The city is traditionally famous for its canals, internationally renowned museums and last but not least its tolerant atmosphere. By comparing some of its attractions with Stone’s spectrum it might be possible to judge this city for its Dark Tourism character and maybe even make some recommendations about the future use of these attractions in its tourism promotion.

During preliminary desk and field research it became clear that Amsterdam offers enough opportunities for dark entertainment, and also exhibitions dedicated to death and the macabre. The city also offers sufficient cemeteries and memorials referring to famous inhabitants or recent disasters. Although there are many monuments related to the Second World War, there are no locations that could be considered the object of battlefield tourism or dark camps of genocide as described by Seaton and Stone. There are however quite a few monuments that refer directly to the Holocaust, with Anne Frank’s House as it most visited representation.

The penitentiary institutions of Amsterdam are not open to the public, except on the so-called “Open Days” which should not be classified as a tourism activity, since they aim at informing the general public about jurisdiction. Older prisons, not in use as such anymore might still be interesting because of their history or heritage.

Following Stone's Spectrum an inventory of the Amsterdam Dark Tourism proposition offers the following attractions:

Dark Fun Factories. First of all there's The Amsterdam Dungeon, a local copy of the Merlin-operated brand which introduces visitors to the more horrid periods of Amsterdam's history such as the Blood Trial and ends with a small roller coaster ride through a former chapel. Another example of dark fun is the Torture Museum, opposite the famous flower market. Here visitors can see (replicas of) torture instruments and learn about methods to extract confessions from those who were condemned. Furthermore Amsterdam, just like many other cities offers its visitors the possibility to participate in Ghostwalks or Twilight Tours, but special to the city is the so-called Liquidation Tour. During this tour participants can dress in a bulletproof vest and travel on foot or by bike to the locations where well-known criminals were recently shot.

Dark Exhibitions. Since 2008 Amsterdam houses a funerary museum dedicated to funerary history and rituals and located on a cemetery which is still being used. The museum, named "Until So Far" introduces its visitors to different funerary themes and also offers special exhibitions. After a visit to the museum visitors can participate in an audio-tour of the cemetery along some of the more remarkable graves (Enklaar, 2007).

A completely different dark exhibition can be found in the Vrolik museum which is housed in de Academic Medical Center in south-eastern Amsterdam. The exhibition consists of the largest collection of human anatomy preparations in Europe, some dating back to the nineteenth century and collected by father and son Vrolik (Los, 1990).

Dark Dungeons. As mentioned earlier, it is mostly the older and former prisons that could be of interest to the modern visitor, although a strong imagination might be requested. At the street named Heilige Weg (Holy Road) one can still find the entrance gate to the old 17<sup>th</sup> century male prison. Behind the gate with its impressive and foreboding sculpture nowadays a new shopping center has been opened. The entrance gate is also the last reminder of the 17<sup>th</sup> century female prison at the Oudezijds Achterburgwal (canal) which is close to the Red Light District.

Near the central railway station and the harbour the Lloyds Hotel, formerly a prison under the same name for youthful criminals, has now become a real and indeed trendy hotel catering to the demands of the creative class. Another former prison is found near the Leidseplein, one of Amsterdam's entertainment centers. Nowadays a theater called "De Balie", it was actually the first prison in the Netherlands to use individual cell blocks and, although hardly known today, the prison where Anne Frank was incarcerated before she was transported towards Poland.

(<http://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl>)

One needs less imagination when visiting the Torensuis (Tower Locks) and the Singel canal. In this oldest bridge of Amsterdam one can still see the old dungeons, one of them inhabited by one of Madame Tussauds creations during the tourist season. Finally there's the Jury Room at the second floor of the Royal Palace at Dam Square. Here death sentences were passed to criminals who would be hanged later.

Dark Resting Places. In and around Amsterdam there are some 30 cemeteries that are or were in use. All of them have something to offer for those with a specific interest in funerary history and culture, or well-known Dutch persons. Some of them can also be of interest to the international visitor such as Zorgvlied at the Amstel River and known locally as the Pere Lachaise of Amsterdam. The New Eastern cemetery (Nieuwe Ooster), where the funerary museum is located is especially known as the last resting place of many famous deceased inhabitants of Amsterdam. One of the oldest and internationally known cemeteries is the Jewish cemetery of Beth Haim in the nearby village of Ouderkerk. It has been in use since the 17<sup>th</sup> century when many of Amsterdam's Spanish and Portuguese Jews were buried there. Especially the beautifully decorated tombstones dating back to this period attracted visitors and artists, like the famous Salomon van Ruysdael whose painting "Jewish Cemetery in Ouderkerk" was commented upon by Goethe. (Hoek, 1994 ; de Cock, 2006; Raak, 1995; Roever et al, 2004).

Other cemeteries that are no longer functioning can still be recognized by their entrance gates decorated with sculptured skulls and skeletons. Some of the more interesting ones in the old centre of town are the former Southern Graveyard near the Southern church and that of the Chapel of St. Olof, now the entrance of a hotel and congress centre. In the New Church at Dam Square the only true monumental grave in Amsterdam can be found. It belongs to Michiel de Ruyter, admiral of the Dutch navy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and hero of Chatham (Beerman et al. 1994).

Dark Shrines. Amsterdam has several monuments that could be designated as formal dark shrines. Two of them relate to airplane crashes, the other one to a murder that attracted international attention. The first monument can be found at Westgaarde cemetery in the western part of town and is dedicated to the memory of the more than 200 Dutch people who died at the Tenerife air crash in 1977. The second monument is found in the south-eastern part of the city and known as 'the tree that saw everything'. This tree survived the El Al crash on this part of the city in 1992 and became a place of commemoration for relatives and neighbours. The initial informal monument eventually became a formal place of remembrance.

Finally there's "The Shout", the monument in the Ooster Park dedicated to the movie director Theo van Gogh who was murdered in 2007 by a Muslim fanatic. His murder made international headlines since it sharpened the contradistinction between the Dutch and Muslim immigrants, and questioned Dutch society as open and tolerant. In the same park there's also a monument dedicated to the commemoration of the victims of the Dutch slave-trade which was abolished in 1863. Although this is the official monument, many representatives of the Dutch Caribbean community as the descendants of former victims prefer the monument that was erected at Suriname-square in the western part of town (Volkskrant, 2010).

6 and 7. Dark Conflict Sites and Dark Camps of Genocide are not found in Amsterdam, but the city has some 180 monuments dedicated to certain persons, groups and occurrences and the Second World War. These include grave monuments, tablets and sculptures spread out over the city, all telling their specific story. To the better known monuments belong the National Monument (Cenotaph) at Dam square and the sculpture of the Harbour Labourer commemorating the national strike of 1941. Of all Second World War related monuments, the Anne Frank House

at Prinsengracht is probably the best known and most visited. However, the administration of this monument rejects any reference to Holocaust- or Dark Tourism and sees itself as an institute that warns the world for the evil consequences of racism and fascism.

More in line with exhibitions such as shown at the Holocaust display in the Imperial War Museum are those at the Hollandsche Schouwburg (Holland Theatre) and the Verzetsmuseum (Resistance Museum). The first building was used in the Second World War to detain Jews prior to their transport to the destruction sites in Poland and functions as a museum and place of remembrance. The second one is a prize-winning museum focussing on the resistance against the German and Japanese occupancy between 1940 and 1945 and showing artefacts from that period.

### **The case studies**

Obviously Amsterdam has enough sites and attractions that fit in the categories as provided by Stone. In fact there's even a few more that could be of interest to Dark Tourists, such as the House with the Bloodstains or some of the old alleys in the center with names like Blood-alley (Bloedsteeg) or Ghost-alley (Spooksteeg).

But is it really possible to discern a group of tourists as real dark tourists? In marketing jargon, is there such a niche market? And if so, is it wise for a destination to target this group? And should all stakeholders be involved and in agreement with the chosen approach?

To answer these questions it is necessary to do initial research on the motivations of the visitors to several of these dark tourism attractions. Stone's (2006) and Seatons' (1996) categories are very useful for defining dark attractions, but as such offer little support for those involved in destination marketing considering a dark tourism proposition.

Bearing these things in mind students of INHolland University have undertaken visitor research, using the Interactive Experience Model of Falk & Dierking and the Media Mediator Model of Yuill at two of the sites mentioned above, the Amsterdam Dungeon and the Funerary Museum (Falk & Dierking, 1995; Yuill, 2003). Although these two attractions differ in their content and appeal to visitors, they are still to be considered dark according to the categories of Stone and Seaton. Before presenting the findings of the research it has to be mentioned that the Dungeon is located within Amsterdam's tourism district and is part of the Merlin international entertainment group, offering information in several languages and hosting a multi-lingual website. The Funerary Museum lies outside the centre of Amsterdam and provides information only in Dutch and hosts a Dutch-language website. Apart from this the Dungeon is present by brochures in many of Amsterdam's hotels and on posters in the city-center offering a reduced combination entrance fee with Madame Tussaud's. The Funerary Museum has a very limited budget for marketing and public relations and only communicates with possible visitors through local newspapers. There's also a difference in the amount of visitors. The Dungeon attracts some 160.000 visitors a year, the Funerary Museum a modest 6000.

During the first research period (September – December 2009) 151 visitors participated in the inquiry at the Amsterdam Dungeon. The location was visited by almost the same amount of female and male visitors in the age group between 18 and 35 years. Dutch visitors mainly came from the provinces of North Holland, South Holland and Utrecht, most of the international visitors came from Belgium and the UK. More often than not the Dutch visitors arrived in a party and saw the visit to the Dungeon as their main reason to come to Amsterdam. They had often heard about the Dungeon from friends or relatives. There were hardly any repeat visitors. Most international visitors combine a visit to the Dungeon with other tourist activities in the city.

Before their visit, the visitors expected to be frightened but also entertained. When asked to describe their experiences they were positive. However, those visitors that also visited Dungeons in other towns remarked that Amsterdam is lagging behind a bit. When asked about their motives for visiting the Dungeon, most of them said they were looking for entertainment and spooky thrills. This coincides with two elements in Yuill's model. Looking for Entertainment can be considered as a Pull-factor, and looking for Spooky Thrills as a Push-factor. The other elements seemed rather irrelevant and were hardly mentioned (history) or not at all. When the outcome of the research was compared with Falk and Dierking's model the answers indicated a more prominent role for the social context, a slightly lesser one for the physical context and no reference to the personal context.

Most of the visitors had never heard of the concept of Dark Tourism before, so they were introduced to the concept to enable them to answer some of the questions. In general they could hardly link the concept of Dark Tourism to Amsterdam and those who did automatically mentioned the Dungeon. Most of them did not visit any of the other Dark Tourism sites in the city, with the exception of the House of Anne Frank and the Torture Museum. They did agree with the concept of Dark Tourism when applied to the Dungeon and some of them indicated their interest in visiting some other Dark Tourism sites. However, most of them also stated they would not come to Amsterdam just for Dark Tourism sites, but combine these with the other attractions of the city.

The research period at the Funerary Museum lasted from January to May 2010. Here 234 visitors participated in the inquiry and an additional 8 stakeholders of Dark Tourism attractions were interviewed.

The largest group of visitors was female and belonged to the age group between 18 to 26. Almost all visitors had Dutch nationality and lived in Amsterdam, more often than not their educational level was higher vocational and they were employed in healthcare. There were hardly any repeaters and most visitors were accompanied by their partners or came with an educational or school group. Their sources of information before visiting the museum were friends, relatives or articles in the local newspapers.

Their main motivation for visiting the museum was to acquire information about death and dying. Compared to Yuill's model there was a clear indication that Death & Dying was the most prominent Push-factor, followed by Curiosity. Education, Remembrance and to a lesser extent Artefacts were the main Pull-factors. Within the

framework of Falk & Dierking's model a visit to the Funerary Museum every context seemed relevant. Most visitors were accompanied by others (the social context), had a specific interest in funerary culture or were employed in the health or related sectors (personal context), and came to see the specific artefacts and the location, combining their visit to the museum with a tour of the cemetery (physical context).

When confronted with the concept of Dark Tourism some reacted rather upset and considered this phenomenon as unfitting for this museum, others associated the concept with disasters and only one respondent referred to the funerary museum.

When asked what other Dark Tourism attractions they would visit or had visited, most of them came up with the Anne Frank House, the Resistance Museum or some cemeteries in Amsterdam. However most of them also indicated they were not really interested in attractions that promote themselves as Dark Tourism locations or visit Amsterdam when a Dark Tourism proposition is offered. The stakeholders that were interviewed, representing the funerary museum and some cemeteries in and around Amsterdam did not see cooperation with attractions that could be considered as less dark and entertaining as an option within a wider Dark Tourism framework for the city. Cooperation with cultural, historical and educational attractions, such as the Anne Frank House or Body Worlds could be a future option.

Although research at just two and strongly different dark tourism attractions will not yield answers to all the questions asked and further research is needed, the outcomes do point in a certain direction when it comes to using Dark Tourism sites and attractions within destination marketing. The interviewed parties were clearly not familiar with the concept of Dark Tourism and, in the case of the visitors to the Funerary Museum there was a rather negative connotation. This negative attitude was confirmed by the stakeholders that were interviewed. Since they were representatives of the Museum itself and cemeteries the outcome might be biased, and stakeholders of the 'lighter dark' attractions might voice a different opinion.

However, it is important to note that both groups of visitors indicated that they would not purposefully travel to a destination because of its Dark Tourism proposition. Therefore, for the moment it would not seem wise for a destination to target this group or niche market, if there is such a thing as a true dark tourist.

Even when this research did not set out to answer questions of a more motivational type, comparing the outcomes with the models of Falk & Dierking and Yuill showed that the social context was most important to both visitor groups, and that Push- and Pull-factors corresponded with the character of the Dark Tourism attraction. People visiting the Amsterdam Dungeon are looking for entertainment and spooky thrills, visitors to the Funerary Museum expect to be educated and have a personal or professional interest in Death & Dying.

Knowing the creativity, flexibility and pragmatic approach of the international tourism industry however, there might still be opportunities for future development of certain Dark Tourism combinations and the targeting of a group, or groups of people that have an outspoken interest in less common attractions. Further research at a wider variety of locations and into the motivation of its visitors might shed more light on this

assumption and define the existence of such a group of tourists, or niche market that could be considered as 'dark'.

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Het Parool, June 2, 2009. En alle dames zoeken Bril (*all ladies are looking for Bril*).

# Tourism and the European Union

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'Tourism is an economic activity capable of generating growth and employment in the EU, while contributing to development and economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence. With some 1.8 million businesses, primarily SMEs, employing approximately 5.2 % of the total workforce (approximately 9.7 million jobs, with a significant proportion of young people), the European tourism industry generates over 5 % of EU GDP, a figure which is steadily rising. Tourism therefore represents the third largest socioeconomic activity in the EU after the trade and distribution and construction sectors. Taking into account the sectors linked to it, tourism's contribution to GDP is even greater; it is estimated to generate over 10 % of the European Union's GDP and provide approximately 12 % of all jobs. In this regard, observing the trend over the last ten years, growth in employment in the tourism sector has almost always been more pronounced than in the rest of the economy.

In addition, the European Union remains the world's No 1 tourist destination, with 370 million international tourist arrivals in 2008, or 40 % of arrivals around the world, 7.6 million of them from the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), a significant increase over the 4.2 million in 2004. These arrivals generated revenues of around EUR 266 billion, 75 billion of which was from tourists coming from outside the Union. As regards journeys by Europeans themselves, they are estimated at approximately 1.4 billion, some 90 % of which were within the EU. According to estimates by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals in Europe should increase significantly in the coming years.

Finally, European tourists are one of the largest groups travelling to third countries, providing an extremely important source of revenue in many countries. These elements justify providing more detail of the external dimension of EU tourism policy, in order to maintain tourist flows from third countries but also to support EU partners, particularly in the Mediterranean'. (EC, 2010)

The above quotation introduces the latest Communication on Tourism (COM 2010) from the European Commission and sets the general frame for the position of tourism in the EU. The citation of these figures shows the economic importance given to tourism and explains to some extent the renewed interest by the EU in tourism issues. Although the European Institutions were always interested in tourism, this has recently shifted from a more socio-cultural approach to an economic one. In that context it is worth mentioning that the Tourism Unit is part of the Directorate General (DG) Enterprise and Industry.

'While in the early 1990's, the EC became interested in social tourism issues as a social force and focused its efforts on the different concepts of social tourism and

compared the levels of funding in the different countries (Commission of the European Commission – D.G. XXIII – Tourism Unit, 1994), the orientation changed into a more economic focus with the Lisbon Treaty. Indeed, in 2006, the Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, Günter Verheugen presented the 'Renewed Tourism Policy' (COM, 2006), focussing broadly on the economic growth aspects of tourism as an industry. In that report the Commission acknowledges the crucial role of tourism for the EU economy, recognising also however the need for sustainable growth by declaring "making growth and jobs the immediate job goes hand in hand with promoting social and environmental objectives (COM, 2006)' (Diekmann & McCabe, forthcoming).

## **Actions**

In December 2009, the Lisbon Treaty came into being, aiming at modernizing the European institutions. The Lisbon strategy developed first by the EU in 2000 (reviewed in 2005) focused amongst other issues on increasing the competitiveness of services and the industries of the EU and aimed for the creation of 'more and better jobs through the sustainable growth of tourism in Europe and globally' (COM, 2006:4). These goals would notably be achieved through better regulations for Growth and Jobs at national and European level (COM, 2005). Also, the policies were to be coordinated within the same perspective of competitiveness. Contrary to previous treaties, tourism has become integral to the agenda and received particular attention. The treaty foresees indeed a new competence for the EU in the tourism sector, set to change the institutional context for European tourism and offers the opportunity for a political initiative from the Commission in the field of tourism in 2010. Along with the shifting of priorities for tourism issues, the Commission took several actions in the last few years. On one hand they organised expert groups to consult and advise the EU on specific tourism related issues, and on the other hand they launched calls for tenders on specific themes linked to the priorities of the EU and initiated preparatory actions. One example (in accordance with the economical positioning of European tourism) is a call for the study of Europe as a competitive and sustainable destination (COM, 2007). They furthermore organised numerous conferences and meetings on specific topics with a particular focus on sustainability and social tourism.

Social tourism is indeed an issue of major importance to the Tourism Unit. Between 2006 and 2009 the Tourism Unit organised (in collaboration with BITS) three conferences on social tourism issues. The first conference in 2006 was themed: "Tourism for all: State of the play and existing practices in the EU". For the EU the concept of TFA is an aim for social cohesion in European societies. According to the Commission's interpretation of the diversity of the 'Tourism for all' agenda, social tourism constitutes a great potential market, which deserves to be developed and encouraged. Social tourism is considered important in terms of its potential to overcome congestion and seasonality problems and that ideal provides the foundations for the current Calypso project (Diekmann & McCabe, forthcoming).

The second conference took place within the context of the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All: 2007". This initiative was based on the Lisbon strategy. According to the EC website: 'the main objective of the workshop for stakeholders on senior citizens and youths was to identify whether there exists the possibility of

extending collaboration on social tourism in different Member States that are currently less active than others in this field' (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tourism>). The last conference in 2008 was again based on the Lisbon strategy analysing 'Social Tourism in the EU: Youths and Senior Citizens'.

In 2008 social tourism stakeholders expressed the wish to initiate procedures leading to the establishment of a tourism pilot project for senior citizens that could assist in the improvement of seasonality problems of the tourism sector, initiating the preparatory action of Calypso. The Calypso program was launched in 2009 and is at present entering its second phase. The aim of Calypso is to develop an Inter-European exchange between social tourism market groups in low season and enhance employment in these periods. The European Commission committed EUR 1m to fund the research and several other activities (such as the conferences). According to the Lisbon Treaty and the economic approach explained above, the program focuses mainly on the economic rationale for investing in social tourism rather than on socio-cultural issues in the different countries. In order to develop an implementation scheme a study has been undertaken by a consortium led by Ramboll Management. The consortium provided amongst others an overview of social tourism practices in many member states. One positive outcome of the Calypso project were the numerous meetings organised by the Commission, bringing together social tourism stakeholders from many countries around one table, providing opportunities to discuss and exchange practices and knowledge. Furthermore, Calypso entered into its second phase with a new call for tender aiming at implementing exchange of social tourists within Europe to counteract seasonality issues.

Another central preparatory action since 2006 is EDEN (European Destination of Excellence). On one hand the project aims to draw attention to the diversity, values and shared characteristics of European destinations. On the other hand, it promotes destinations focusing on sustainable development integrating economic socio-cultural and environmental goals. The project is based on national competitions that take place every year and result in the selection of a tourist "destination of excellence" for each participating country. Since its beginning, EDEN developed around an annual theme, chosen by the Commission together with the relevant national tourism bodies. This theme functions as a leitmotif: so far, rural tourism, intangible heritage and protected areas have been the main EDEN themes. The selected destinations are either from the 27 Member States and/or candidate countries. The awarded destinations are generally not very well known and often characterized by their smaller size. The EDEN project helps therefore to spread sustainable practices used in the chosen destinations across the Union and to turn these places into all-year-round venues. The process thus aims to help de-congest over-visited tourist destinations (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/eden>).

Along with the preparatory actions, the Tourism Unit of the DG Enterprise and Industry launched three years ago, an annual call aimed towards the support of different types of networks. The aim is to create networks fostering exchange and collaboration either between the different tourism stakeholders, public and private and research institutes, generally focusing on sustainable tourism development and often targeted towards the SME sector. Examples would be NECSTOUR, CAST, etc.

In addition, European Heritage and cultural itineraries are integrated in the European tourism policy and actions. On the 27 September 2010, the European Tourism Day, a one-day conference was dedicated to “the role of European Heritage and cultural itineraries in the renewed European tourism policy”. The aim was to present some cross-European cultural itineraries which could be further developed into a comprehensive tourism offer, helping to combat the tourist concentration in few sites, seasonality, and to strengthen EU citizenship through the discovering of a common heritage (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism>). In that sense, the cultural itineraries are very complementary with the other aforementioned actions such as EDEN aiming at redistributing visitor flows.

A further interesting initiative of the EU is establishment of the expert group: Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) created in 2004 and composed of representative members of international bodies, member state governments, the tourism industry, environmental organisations, trade unions and research and educational bodies. In February 2007, the first TSG launched the report ‘Action for more sustainable European tourism’, emphasising specifically three major aims: 1. Economic prosperity; 2. Social equity and cohesion; 3. Environmental and cultural protection (Tourism Sustainability Group, 2007:3). A second and renewed TSG started in 2009 divided in 3 different working groups (WG) related to sustainability indicators, entrepreneurship and consumer awareness raising issues (see Atlas Europe report). The TSG functions as a sort of steering committee for the different aforementioned actions and studies funded by the EU.

## **Future**

With the new Commission, the Italian Antonio Tajani became the new Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry. He declared his central aim is to ensure that all the EU's business sectors will come out of the current economic crisis stronger and more competitive than before, and will be able to support sustainable growth in a strong social market economy.

The new Commissioner expressed his interest in the development of Tourism as an economic and social force. At the ministerial meeting in April 2010 in Madrid he announced an increase of the activities of the Tourism Unit.

Indeed the outcome of this meeting “TOWARDS A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE TOURISM MODEL” was the Madrid declaration: ‘The Lisbon Treaty acknowledges the importance of tourism outlining, for the first time, a specific competence for the European Union in this field and allowing for decisions to be taken by qualified majority (Title XXII Tourism, Art. 195). The Lisbon Treaty foresees in its article 195 a) and b) the possibility for the Union to “complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector”. By putting in place specific measures aimed at encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector and promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice, the tourism industry can indirectly contribute to the strategy “Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” and towards strengthening the concept of European citizenship. In line with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the particular

objectives under the flagship initiative on “an industrial policy for the globalisation era”, it is particularly important to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector (Madrid Declaration, 2010).

The declaration was followed by the Commission’s aforementioned Communication on Tourism: "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" (COM 2010) showing acceleration in actions taken in favour of European tourism development. The Communication proposes an ambitious set of actions, which should be implemented in the next few years in close cooperation with all tourism stakeholders at all levels.

‘The renewed EU tourism policy, building on past achievements and setting priorities should help the European tourism industry to face the challenges and thus create more and better jobs through the sustainable growth of tourism in Europe.’ (<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism>).

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## **ATLAS Events**

### **An overview**

ATLAS annual conference 2009

Experiencing difference. Changing tourism and tourists experiences

Aalborg, Denmark

May 27-29, 2009

ATLAS and CAUTHE

1st International Symposium on Volunteering and Tourism. Developing a Research

Agenda - Linking Industry and Academia

Singapore

June 14-15, 2009

ATLAS Africa conference 2009

Tourism for Development: Environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and  
empowering communities

Gaborone, Botswana

July 1-3, 2009

ATLAS Religious Tourism Special Interest Group meeting

Managing the Religious Tourism Experience

Nazaré, Portugal

November 19-22, 2009

ATLAS SIG meeting Business Tourism

Liverpool, United Kingdom

November 22-24, 2009

ATLAS Winter University

Portorose, Slovenia

February 7-17, 2010

SIG Volunteer Tourism meeting

Travel Philanthropy, Volunteer and Charity Tourism

Crete & Santorini, Greece

April 22-25, 2010

Backpacker Research Group meeting

Independent Travel in Uncertain Times: An expert conference

Hermanus, Western Cape, South Africa

September 2-4, 2010

Tourism Geographies Group meeting

European Regional Perspectives on Tourism Geographies –

Contrasting Research Approaches and Linguistic Traditions

Tarragona, Spain

October 14, 2010

The Doctoral Colloquium & Poster Session  
Limassol, Cyprus  
November 2, 2010

ATLAS annual conference 2010  
Mass tourism vs. niche tourism  
Limassol, Cyprus  
November 3 - 5, 2010

Business Tourism meeting  
Advances in Business Tourism Education and Research  
Estoril, Portugal  
November 14-17, 2010

Tourism Geographies Group meeting  
The Changing World of Coastal, Island and Tropical Tourism  
Martinique, French West Indies  
January 27-29, 2011

ATLAS Africa conference 2011  
Sustainable tourism and environmental education: A natural link  
Kampala, Uganda  
June 6-8, 2011

ATLAS annual conference 2011  
Tourism and landscapes  
Valmiera, Latvia  
September 21-23, 2011

ATLAS annual conference 2011  
Re-creating the Global City: Tourism, Leisure and Mega-Events in the Transformation  
of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cities  
London, United Kingdom  
2012



**ATLAS annual conference 2010**  
**Mass tourism vs. niche tourism**  
**Cyprus University of Technology**  
**Limassol, Cyprus**  
**November 3 - 5, 2010**

Tourism and leisure in the 21st Century are being shaped and buffeted by many forces. The industry employs more than 220 million people worldwide and generates more than 9% of global GDP (WTTC, 2010).

Undoubtedly, the tourism industry generates substantial economic benefits to both host countries and tourists' home countries. Especially in developing countries, one of the primary motivations for a region to promote itself as a tourism destination is the expected economic improvement. As with other impacts, this massive economic development brings along both positive and negative consequences.

The impacts of tourism on people and the environment are well documented. Yet the controversies in tourism remain undocumented. One such controversy exists between the proponents and opponents of mass and niche tourism. The 2010 ATLAS conference aims to examine and give answers to two highly controversial and compelling questions:

**Mass Tourism: Is it exploitation?**  
**Niche Tourism or mass customisation?**

The concept of "niche tourism" has emerged in recent years in counter-point to what is commonly referred to as "mass tourism" (Robinson and Novelli, 2008). Proponents of niche tourism suggest that the term 'mass tourism' is problematic to define with any precision and they claim that the term refers to the production, structure and organisation of tourism akin to an industrial process whereby economies of scale are sought to meet market needs. Poon (1993) defines mass tourism as a large-scale phenomenon, packaging and selling standardised leisure services at fixed prices to a mass clientele. Further to this Fayos-Solà (1996) went as far to suggest that the operational model of mass tourism no longer suffices to achieve competitiveness in tourism enterprises and regions and he proposed that a new paradigm, the New Age of Tourism (NAT), is gathering strength owing to its ability to face to prevailing circumstances.

On the other hand proponents of mass tourism emphasise that not only 'mass tourism: is due to revisit in terms of what the terms implies, but also that by any sensible definition the mass tourism market is growing despite the decline of the traditional mass tour operators market (Swarbrooke, 2007). Proponents of mass tourism suggest that the term is fundamentally a concept that relates to scale and participation rates. They further claim that "we get ourselves into dangerous water when we start trying to broaden its meaning to certain types of tourist or tourism" suggesting that this has wrongly and unfairly rendered mass tourism as a term laden with negative value judgements.

According to Pons et al. (2009) the study of mass tourism is shaped through a series of paradoxes. Pons and his colleagues (2009) also argued that while the rise of mass tourism has been the subject of much attention, the focus has tended to be on the impact it has upon local peoples, local economies or local environments as well as on economic and managerial issues.

Niche tourism, on the other hand, has emerged in response to the changing tastes of consumers who are travelling more frequently, and are becoming more experienced and more discerning. This has given rise to a number of apparently new forms of tourism which are undertaken by limited numbers of tourists with special interests or hobbies and the finances to back them up (niche tourism is notoriously expensive compared to mass tourism). However, as all forms of tourism grow in popularity, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain at which point niche tourism becomes mass tourism. Cultural tourism in historic cities is a good case in point. It is interesting to debate where we can draw the line between mass and niche tourism and whether we can differentiate between tourist profiles, motivations and behaviours (for example, it is naturally assumed that niche tourists are 'good' and mass tourists are 'bad'). Such simplistic assumptions need to be challenged.

Against this background of contradicting and contrasting views abstracts for presentations are invited on the following (but not only) themes:

- Historical Foundations of mass and niche tourism
- Tourism's Changing face: New age Tourism versus Old Tourism
- New theoretical and empirical insights on mass and niche tourism
- The time and space of mass and niche tourism
- Competitiveness in mass and niche tourism markets
- Alternative models and strategies for tourism development - The mass versus niche tourism controversy
- Ethical Tourism and corporate Social responsibility: Niche and Mass Tourism Perspectives
- Challenges in managing and promoting mass/niche tourism destinations
- New forms of tourism: A mass or niche market phenomenon
- New technologies and their use in mass and niche market segments
- Community issues and mass/niche tourism
- New and alternative approaches and methodologies for the study of niche and mass tourism
- Mass tourism and safety/security issues

# **Business Tourism meeting 2010**

## **Advances in Business Tourism Education and Research**

### **Estoril, Portugal**

### **November 14-17, 2010**

#### *Where*

Estoril, Portugal. A wide range of wonderful experiences awaits the visitor to the Estoril Coast. Furthermore, Lisbon is only about half an hour away by car or train. Nowhere else in the world can such dramatic changes of scenery and such contrasting atmospheres be experienced in as small an area as the Estoril Coast. The region offers a concentration of different experiences all within a half hour's drive. Apart from an enormous range of sights attractive to any visitor, a number of more specialised interests can also be pursued. Estoril, a world-famous resort, is a true cosmopolitan centre with wonderful nightlife and all the infrastructure for a summer centre - beaches, excellent hotels, golf courses, a casino and even a motor-racing circuit. The planned transformation of this area began in the early 20th century, due not only to its proximity to the sea, which was starting to be a focus of attraction, but also to the existence of thermal springs, at that time much in vogue (they are currently closed). The centre of this new luxury resort was the Park and the Casino (Estoril's trademark), surrounded by buildings, arcades and excellent hotels. Estoril was previously known for the several forts along the coastline which ensured the defense of one of the possible entries to Lisbon, and for the Retreat built here by the Mendicant Order of Franciscan Friars in the 16th century, now the Salesian College. In the 1930s Estoril became one of Portugal's main tourist centers and the chosen place of exile for a lot of deposed European monarchs (King Juan Carlos of Spain among them). During the Second World War it was the refuge of writers, politicians, artists, businessmen and many Jews persecuted by the Third Reich. The Estoril Coast is widely regarded as the Portuguese Riviera. Its climate is exceptionally mild. Even in winter, temperatures seldom fall below 10°C.

Located in the tourism area of Lisbon-Cascais-Sintra, ESHTTE is a higher education institution, whose purpose is that of preparing skilled professionals, who are able to cope with all challenges facing the tourism sector, in its entrepreneurial and institutional areas. Through technical and scientific learning, based on the needs of the tourism sector, those who graduate at ESHTTE are true agents of change, capable of facing opportunities and challenges in uncertain and competitive environments. ESHTTE's courses' are recognised by WTO's TEDQUAL certification and it is now the higher education institution in Europe with the most certified courses in the tourism and hotel areas.

#### *For*

- Anyone teaching Meetings and Business Events (conferences, exhibitions, incentive travel) in Universities
- Anyone involved in research connected to these subjects
- Anyone studying these subjects in Universities
- Anyone working in the Meetings and Business Events industry who wants to learn more about current education and research activities for this sector

- Anyone working in the Meetings and Business Events industry who wishes to communicate their views to educators and researchers specializing in this field.

#### *Why attend*

In these times of rapid economic and geopolitical changes, the importance of Business Tourism continues to expand around the world, with a growing number of new destinations and venues targeting the market for Conferences, Exhibitions and Incentive Travel. In most countries in the developed world, income from Business Tourism now represents between one-third and one-quarter of all tourism spending. This is therefore a subject entirely worthy of attention from academics and researchers everywhere, and recently there has been considerable growth in the number of Universities offering courses related to Business Tourism and Business Events. Academics specialising in teaching and researching in this subject area will directly benefit from attending the ATLAS Business Tourism conference, which has become the most important international annual forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practice in teaching and researching this subject. This year's conference will focus on a broad range of topics that are related to education, research, and management in the field of business events.

#### *Topics to be discussed*

- Business tourism destination marketing
- The planning and design of business events
- The distribution networks for business events
- The design and operations of conference and exhibition venues
- Business tourism trends
- Co-operation between companies operating in the meetings and business events industry and educational institutions
- The role of business events in the marketing mix
- Service quality in the meetings and business events industry.
- Examples of original initiatives in the field of teaching or researching meetings and business events or examples of co-operation between employers and educational institutions.

**ATLAS Africa conference 2011**  
**Sustainable tourism and environmental education:**  
**A natural link**  
**Kampala, Uganda**  
**June 6-8, 2011**

ATLAS Africa, Makerere University, Kent State University, University of North Texas, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Nature Uganda, Nature Palace Foundation and Uganda Tourist Board invite you to the 7<sup>th</sup> ATLAS Africa conference in Kampala, Uganda 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Nature degradation resulting from rapid population expansion and unsustainable livelihood strategies is alarming in developing countries. The need to protect what is left has attracted both local and international attention. Tourism has been advanced by conservation and development organizations, governments and the tourism industry as an approach through which conservation, development and livelihood issues can be addressed. Tourism is seen to come with new opportunities and benefits like: direct revenues, local area investments, jobs, extra incomes (e.g. by selling handcrafts, agricultural produce etc), and infrastructural development that can contribute to addressing livelihood problems hindering nature conservation.

Tourism from 1980s up to date is the fastest growing industry according to UNWTO, WTTC, and regional organizations' statistics. The WSSD Rio summit, 1992 (Earth summit) and the subsequent WSSD Johannesburg summit in 2002 (Rio +10) focused on tourism among others as a strategy to achieve sustainable development. Agenda 21 on travel and tourism industry and later Sustainable Tourism- Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme were formulated because of the dual role tourism often plays in nature conservation and in achieving global environmental awareness and education.

As a result of these initiatives, new forms of tourism emerged generically referred to as alternative tourism. Different forms of alternative tourism (responsible tourism, ecotourism, green tourism, ethic tourism, community based tourism and sustainable tourism) have grown in popularity. All emphasize environmental ethics and the role of environmental education in tourism management. Yet, the link between tourism, nature conservation and environmental education at the conceptual and / or theoretical level has remained blurred. Meanwhile, the practical use of tourism to achieve development, fight poverty and conserve nature has grown in importance. This explains the emphasis given to tourism in establishing protected areas world over. Although not always stressed in tourism management, environmental education through visitor interpretation, wildlife education centres, and community conservation programmes has become an important natural resource management tool. Generally, however, the lack of a theoretical or conceptual framework to link tourism, nature conservation and environmental education has made it difficult to develop sound policy and management procedures. No policy model apparently exists to combine the three. This is one of the concerns of this conference.

## **Conference goals and objectives**

The goal of the conference is to discuss how tourism and environmental education can be linked into a major strategy for nature conservation and sustainable development. Developing countries, where biodiversity loss is often more pronounced, will serve as the backdrop for the discussion yet applicable research and case studies from around the world are welcomed.

The conference aims to achieve the following general objectives.

- To analyse the role of environmental education in tourism and nature conservation.
- To critically examine how tourism can be used as a livelihood strategy.
- To critically examine how tourism can be used as a nature conservation strategy.
- To critically examine other approaches, beyond environmental education, that have been used to create environmental awareness.
- To critically assess the roles of various stakeholders in managing tourism and nature conservation.
- To develop new approaches to tourism and environmental education with global and local applicability.
- To provide an open forum for the exchange of views among academics, conservationists and practitioners, local communities, various stakeholders of the tourism industry and all other people and organizations involved.

## **Call for papers**

The organizers welcome abstracts, full papers and communications on a range of themes but not limited to:

1. Tourism and community development
  - Community tourism development process
  - Role of public, private and third (NGOs, IGOs, CBOs etc) sectors.
  - Gendering community tourism development
2. Tourism and nature conservation
  - Tourism and conservation in protected areas
  - Tourism and conservation outside protected areas
  - Community based tourism and nature conservation
  - Role of public, private and third (NGOs, IGOs, CBOs etc) sectors. Tourism and conservation; conflicts, co-existence or symbiosis
  - Law, policy, and ethics in tourism and conservation
  - Gender and conservation
  - Benefits and benefit sharing of tourism and nature conservation

3. Entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism and nature conservation
  - Private sector involvement
  - Profits for nature conservation
  - Gender and entrepreneurship in tourism development
  - Partnerships in tourism businesses
  - Marketing strategies
  - Entrepreneurship training and skills development
4. Environmental education for sustainable tourism and nature conservation
  - Formal education
  - Informal education
  - Non-formal education
  - The role of Indigenous Knowledge (ITK)
  - Education and training for quality tourism products/ facilities/ services delivery

The official language of the conference will be English.

***Submission of abstract***

Abstracts (approximately 200-350 words) indicating background, practical implications and applications, methods and or data sources and indicative findings of the paper is expected to be submitted for vetting and verification by scientific committee.

Abstracts should be submitted to ATLAS by using the form at the ATLAS website before December 30<sup>th</sup> 2010.

**ATLAS annual conference 2011  
Tourism and landscapes  
Valmiera, Latvia  
September 21-23, 2011**

**ATLAS annual conference 2011  
Re-creating the Global City: Tourism, Leisure and  
Mega-Events in the Transformation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cities  
London, United Kingdom  
2012**





## **ATLAS regional groups**

### **ATLAS Africa**

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### **Introduction**

We are quite pleased to inform the ATLAS fraternity in different parts of globe that ATLAS-Africa has really spread its wings and now has membership drawn from different parts of the African continent and beyond. This includes parts of Western and Northern Africa where there has been least representation. Also, as the Coordinator of ATLAS-Africa, it is important to inform the membership that, at the beginning of 2009, I relocated from Moi University where I had served as a long-term senior member of the Department of Tourism Management. Currently, I am serving as the Principal of Kisii University College situated in the evergreen environment and the rolling hills of Southwestern Kenya, not far from the country's border with Tanzania.

The Institution is a Constituent College of Egerton University one of the largest Public University in Kenya. I would also like to state that Kisii University College is the newest member of the ATLAS fraternity having received it membership a fortnight ago. It is the aim of the Kenyan Government to develop the institution into a full-fledged University to cater for the increasing population of Kenyan youths seeking university admission.

### **Recent accomplishments**

As a Chapter of the umbrella Association, ATLAS-Africa has made several accomplishments in the recent past. We have managed to hold extremely successful international conferences in different parts of Africa including, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda and Botswana. An interesting feature of these conferences is the fact that it they have managed to attract delegates from all parts of the world including Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.

Currently, ATLAS-Africa has created an effective network of institutions of higher learning and research centers throughout Africa. This network of academic institutions is involved in various initiatives as per the goals of ATLAS including conducting joint research activities in the field of tourism, leisure and other related areas, curricula development, sharing of the state-of-the-art research findings on tourism, student and staff exchange. For instance, presently, several African Universities including Moi University in Kenya, Makerere University in Uganda, the

University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and the Institute of Finance and Banking in Rwanda are undertaking joint research projects such as VicRes, DelPh and the 3-Step project. These major research projects have provided noble opportunity amongst African scholars to work closely in aspects of proposal writing, fieldwork, publication and dissemination of research findings.

### **Botswana conference**

This conference was held on 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 in the congenial hill dotted City of Gaborone the Capital and Seat of the Government of Botswana. The City is one the most ultra-modern Urban conurbation in Africa with many modern and uniquely designed high-rise buildings, high-class roads, railway and airline infrastructure. The University of Gaborone, one of the largest institutions of higher learning in Southern Africa hosted the conference. The University is strategically located not far away from the CBD of the City of Gaborone and is quite renowned, especially in the southern Africa region, for its high quality manpower that the institution trains including in the field of tourism and hospitality. The University has also, in recent years, attracted distinguished scholars from different parts of the world who are involved in teaching, research, dissemination of knowledge and skills, and community extension.

The Botswana Conference was sponsored and jointed organized by ATLAS, the International Geographical Union (IGU), Leisure and Global Change and the Government of Botswana through the University of Gaborone. The main theme of the conference was, “tourism for development: environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and empowerment of communities.”

The conference attracted over 100 delegates from different parts of the world. However, due to proximity the majority of the delegates came from African countries, especially South Africa and Kenya, and of course the host country. The conference was officially opened by the Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism in the Government of Botswana, Honourable Onkokame Kitso Mokaila, himself a renowned expert in the field of tourism management and wildlife conservation.

The Honourable Minister eloquently elucidated issues as regards the role of tourism in promotion of overall national development and poverty reduction in Botswana and Africa in general. He ascertained that as the case is with many other African countries, tourism is a leading foreign exchange earner for Botswana second to mineral exports. The industry accounts for over 13% of formal and informal employment and overall contributes close to 15% of the country's GDP. However, the Minister consented that for the country's tourism industry to remain competitive in the highly volatile global tourism industry there is urgent need for Botswana to diversify its tourism product away from the conventional wildlife based tourism. Apart from the Minister, other high level dignitaries including top Government officials, Members of Management of the University of Gaborone, private sector representatives and officials of foreign missions in Botswana attended the conference.

Overall, the papers that were presented in the conference covered diverse topics including the development of e-tourism, cultural and social tourism, desert tourism in Northern Africa, heritage tourism, rural tourism, sport tourism, agro-tourism, pro-poor tourism, destination management, ecotourism and CBT models. The main theme that

ran through most of the papers is sustainable tourism development, environment conservation and community empowerment.

Although papers were presented covering other parts of the world, the main aim of the conference was to discuss and share innovative ideas concerning the relationship between tourism and sustainable development in the African context. In this regard, presentations covered sub-themes such as the benefits and costs of tourism development amongst rural African communities, nature conservation in Africa, the nature and role of tourism development in Africa, sustainable tourism development and the impacts of tourism on the natural and cultural African landscape, and innovative strategies to utilize tourism for the attainment of the MDGs. Perhaps more importantly, the Botswana Conference served as an open forum for the exchange of innovative information and views amongst academicians, policy makers, tourism practitioners, community and nature conservation managers and planners.

Last but not least, as is the tradition of the ATLAS-Africa Conferences, the last day of the conference entailed participation of delegates in field trips to carefully selected areas adjacent to the host institution. In this regards, the delegates had a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit model community based tourism establishments in the rural African environment in areas not far away from the City of Gaborone including the famed Mmenkgodi Cultural Village which is co-owned and managed by an association of widows and Bahurutshe Village specialized in Botswana handicraft making and traditional art performances.

During these visitations delegates had the opportunity to be involved in participatory tourism initiatives including Botswana traditional dance, mimicry of Botswana traditional wedding ceremony where Leontine Onderwater served as an Africa bride and other delegates serves as traditional dancers and beer drinkers.

The visitation to the cultural villagers was crowned by delegates being served with sumptuous traditional Botswana meals usually served during indigenous wedding ceremonies. The cuisine included uniquely cooked indigenous beef, Botswana indigenous bread made from finger millet, indigenous tea made from wild herbs that have got medicinal potency and of course traditional brew. The meal was served in the open wilderness of southwestern Botswana environment renowned by its diverse wildlife species and unique cultural attractions.

### **Future events and acknowledgement**

Finally it is my great pleasure to announce to the ATLAS membership that before the end of this year (2010), two thematic publications covering selected papers of the Botswana conference are going be out of press. The books are at the final stages of publication and members are encouraged to order copies from the ATLAS Secretariat in Arnhem, Netherlands. There are also plans to have the next ATLAS Africa conference in one of the West Africa countries, possible Gambia or Ghana. Lastly, it will be impudent to end this report without acknowledging the critical role played by the following institutions in promoting the overall sustainability of ATLAS Africa since its inception: Wageningen University, Moi University, the ATLAS Secretariat, University of Pretoria and Makerere University. I also would like to most

sincerely thank all the members of the ATLAS Africa Board for their indivertible role in moving the Association to greater heights. For any further information, I can be reached at jsakama@yahoo.com or principal@kisiiversity.ac.ke.

## **ATLAS Europe**

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During the last 15 months I attended as ATLAS representative numerous meetings organised by the EU as well as the SIG Backpacker conference in Hermanus in South Africa. For detailed description of the work of the European Union in regards to tourism, please see the paper on EU policies in this issue.

As explained in the previous ATLAS Europe report, I have been invited to become a member of the Sustainable Tourism Group (TSG) of the European Commission. The first tourism sustainability group (TSG) was set up in 2004 by the Tourism Unit of the DG Enterprise. The group is composed of representatives of international bodies, member state governments, tourism industry, environmental organisations, trade unions and research and educational bodies. It participates in policy making and drafts reports on tourism sustainability issues in the EU. The last report of 2007 proposes 3 major aims for the sustainability of European Tourism: Economic prosperity; Social equity and cohesion and environmental and cultural protection.

In January 2009, the second TSG was set up, this time with new members. The latest TSG is divided into three Working groups:

- WG A on sustainable destinations develops indicators for sustainability and works closely with the European network NECSTOUR and the EDEN Program (see paper on EU policies).
- WG B on sustainable businesses assists the EU to analyse various industry surveys and the Eurobarometer. This group also followed the EU funded study on Competitiveness of the European Tourism and the different knowledge networks that are equally funded by the EU.
- WG C on consumers develops strategies to raise the awareness of consumers for sustainability issues. This groups equally followed very closely the progress of the Calypso study and participated in numerous Calypso meetings.

As a member of WG C, I have attended several Calypso meetings organised in different member states by the EU aiming at discussing the progress of the report with a broad range of stakeholders (see paper on EU policies). I had the pleasure to be invited to the Madrid conference of the European Tourism Ministers (see Madrid Declaration) with the consequence of an extra 4 days in Madrid due to the famous ash cloud! An extraordinary and positive experience (particularly for a tourism

researcher) for a colleague and me were stuck together with 700 other people coming mainly from South America and on their way to London in the biggest congress hotel in Madrid. With all 'guests' having chosen the 'right' airlines taken in charge the totality of the stay, there was a rather relaxed atmosphere and numerous encounters between people. The situation at the airport (where we had to change our tickets about every second day) was not all that relaxed for some airlines didn't cover any expenses, and with all means of transport fully booked or overpriced, the atmosphere became rather tense. (We got home by bus – 20 hour trip from Madrid to Brussels after Brussels airlines decided not to pay anymore hotels but organise return by other means of transport)

Being more implicated in EU activities and therefore in contact with ETAG members, I have been re-invited by ETAG to participate in some of their meetings. Since ATLAS left ETAG about 3 years ago, there have been some changes in the group. There is a new focus on SME's and the current members seem to have a renewed and greater interest in tourism research and collaboration with universities... to be followed....

On a research level, Angelique Lombaerts and Jacques Vork from InHolland submitted a very well thought and interesting FP7 project on 'International research on events and city marketing' with numerous partners from ATLAS. Unfortunately, the EU didn't retain the project.....

## **ATLAS Asia-Pacific**

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# ATLAS Special Interest Groups

## Cultural Tourism Research Group

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The ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Group (CTRG) has now been running for 18 years, and was the first ATLAS SIG to be established. In that time the group has carried out a wide range of research and dissemination activities, mainly centered around the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project.

Launched in 1992, the cultural tourism research has to date generated over 40,000 surveys of visitors to cultural sites around the world. The project utilizes a standard questionnaire form, which participants can download from the project website ([www.tram-research.com/atlas](http://www.tram-research.com/atlas)) in a variety of languages. This research has generated a number of key publications on cultural tourism, most of which are available from the ATLAS bookshop.

Over the years, however, there has been increasing attention for the relative lack of qualitative research in this area, and this led the group to propose the publication of a research monograph reviewing the state of the art in cultural tourism research methods and presenting a number of new directions, particularly in qualitative and ethnographic research approaches. This volume: *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*, edited by Greg Richards and Wil Munsters, has recently been published by CABI (<http://bookshop.cabi.org/>). The volume contains 17 chapters, covering methods such as surveys, mystery tourist visits, visitor tracking, grand tour narratives, collage, researcher-created video, photo-based interviews, ethnographic and actor-network approaches. It provides a practical guide on how to conduct research as well as a discussion and evaluation of the methods. The contributors include many authors who have collaborated with the ATLAS research programme over the years, and the case studies range from Europe to Asia, Australia and Latin America. The first chapter of the book can be downloaded from the CABI website.

The Cyprus conference in 2010 will provide the group with an important opportunity to review activities for the future. One proposal which will be considered is a project on the relationship between tourism and creativity, which is being developed in partnership with the European Cultural Tourism Network. A number of CTRG members have already expressed an interest in this project, and an ECTN representative has been invited to Cyprus to continue the discussions about further developments. The outcome of these discussions are likely to have an important impact on the future direction of the ATLAS survey programme, but in the meantime many ATLAS members are continuing to use the existing survey instrument to gather data on cultural tourism around the world. Participants in 2009 and 2010 have included partners from Cyprus, Latvia and India.

## **Business Tourism Research Group**

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Our 2009 conference was held in England for the first time, in the city of Liverpool, 2008 European Capital of Culture. There were over 30 participants, from 9 different European countries. For the first time, students were invited to participate, and the conference attracted 22 students from the University of Westminster's Masters course in Conference & Events Management and from Buckinghamshire New University. The conference began, appropriately enough, with a Beatles theme: a tour of Liverpool and its surrounding region's business tourism offer, followed by dinner at the Hard Days Night Hotel. The first day of the conference proceedings began with a welcome and presentation from Carol O'Reilly, manager of the Liverpool Convention Bureau. Following a number of paper presentations, delegates had a guided tour of the Liverpool ACC (Arena and Convention Centre), which opened in 2008. The next day, delegates crossed the River Mersey to the town of Port Sunlight, where the conference continued in the seminar room of the Lord Leverhulme Hotel and Spa. The gala dinner was held in the sumptuous surroundings of the The Great Hall of the Hillbark Hotel, situated in the countryside close to Liverpool.

During the year, members of the ATLAS Business Tourism SIG have used the social media to keep in touch with each other and to share research and other sources of data and case-studies relating to Business Tourism. A LinkedIn Group entitled 'Business Tourism Educators and Researchers Group' was created specifically for this purpose, and the group now has 135 members.

Our 2010 conference will be held in Estoril, Portugal, from 15 – 17 November, hosted by the Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Studies. The keynote speech will be given by Jonathan Cohen, VisitDenmark Marketing Manager - Business Events, and Steen Jakobsen, Convention Director, Wonderful Copenhagen Convention Bureau. They will discuss the Copenhagen Sustainable Meetings Protocol, which uses the United Nations' COP15 conference in Copenhagen as its case-study, and is an advanced level guide to organising sustainable meetings. The conference will include a tour of the Estoril Congress Centre, which has been awarded several prizes for its sustainable design and operations. Details are on the ATLAS website or at: [www.7btconference.cplevents.pt](http://www.7btconference.cplevents.pt).



## Spa and Wellness Research Group

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The Spa and Wellness SIG has been more focused on education this year, and several (virtual) discussions have taken place about the possibility of joint curriculum development or exchanges between institutions. The countries involved so far have been Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Hungary and Estonia. It is hoped that we will have more collaboration at Masters level in the future. This could take the form of ERASMUS exchanges for staff and students, joint projects for students, or even a joint degree programme in two or more countries.

Several members of the SIG met up at the annual TTRA conference in Budapest in September 2010, as the theme was Health and Wellness Tourism and the conference was organised by the SIG co-ordinators. It meant that we had the chance to discuss our research in more depth. There are a number of interesting projects and publications emerging from different regions of the world, for example, the Nordic countries with their Nordic Wellbeing project; spa and thermal bath regeneration in Southern and Central and Eastern European countries, for example, Portugal and Italy, and Hungary and the Czech Republic. A national research project on health and medical tourism has also been taking place in Australia, and researchers have been active in Asia looking at onsen in Japan and meditation in Taiwan, for example.

In 2009 the SIG co-ordinators designed and distributed a questionnaire to ATLAS and TTRA members, and it will later be sent to industry practitioners too. The research was entitled the 4W project – Well What for Whom and Where? It focuses on the likely future trends in health and wellness tourism globally and in different regions of the world. So far, over 100 questionnaires have been collected and analysed from health and wellness tourism academics around the world.

A special edition of the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* was edited by Margaret Deery and the two SIG co-ordinators, which contained papers by a number of SIG members. The main themes were health tourism destination image, holistic tourism entrepreneurship, spa tourism in Portugal and Canada, rural wellness tourism in Finland, and wellness tourism in Australia.

An edited book is also planned to which SIG members will contribute short chapters. This will be edited by the SIG co-ordinators and Gerry Bodeker (co-editor of the 2008 publication *Understanding the global spa industry: Spa management*. Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann). This will contain several themed sections and around forty short chapters by a selection of authors.

It is hoped that we will meet next year in Finland, and we have also discussed hosting SIG meetings in Portugal, the Netherlands and Barcelona. Please do contact us if you would like to join the SIG or have any ideas for research, curriculum development or hosting an event.

# Capital City Tourism Research Group

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## Introduction

This Group has progressed well since it was launched at a successful and well attended meeting during the ATLAS annual conference in Portugal in September 2007. There are now over 60 members from around the world. The SIG encompasses city tourism broadly, but for the moment, tourism in national capitals provides a good focus for activities.

Group meetings are held during ATLAS conferences, the most recent at the Aalborg conference in 2009. Another meeting is scheduled for the Cyprus conference in November 2010; existing and new members are most welcome.

The Group's focus in the past year has been on promoting and publishing research on tourism in national capitals.

## Publication

*Book: City Tourism: National Capital Perspectives*

This book was published by CABI in 2010. It was edited by SIG Co-ordinators Robert Maitland and Brent Ritchie and examines some twenty national capitals around the world, with contributions from more than thirty authors. It develops an analytical framework for tourism in national capitals and provides the most detailed examination yet of the subject. The analysis distinguishes different types of capital and their varying functions to develop a typology of capital cities from a tourism perspective. It then examines the different aspects of city tourism that are particularly relevant to national capitals, focusing on city image and branding; the visitor experience; tourism markets; and tourism development. These elements are combined in an analytical framework that provides a structure for the detailed discussion in the book, with chapters by SIG members drawing on their original research to develop a wealth of conceptual, methodological and empirical discussion.

*Journal Special Issue:*  
*Current Issues in Tourism - Global Change and Tourism in National Capitals*

This special issue is edited by Robert Maitland and will explore global change and tourism in national capital cities. Globalisation has affected tourism in most cities, but

the particular qualities of national capitals mean they are often at the leading edge of change or display it in particularly intense form. At a time of increasing city competition, national capitals are at the forefront of efforts to gain competitive advantage for themselves and their nation, to project a distinctive and positive image and to score well in global city league tables. Since they are frequently their nation's focal point and the main tourist gateway, their success is inextricably linked with that of the nation. Capital cities usually boast clusters of culture and heritage attractions that lure leisure visitors, but they are also especially important in other developing and growing tourism sectors - for example, as centres of power they feature strongly in business tourism and as academic centres they are important for educational tourism. And the number of capitals has grown. The era of mass tourism has coincided with earlier decolonisation and more recent dismantling of the USSR, which has increased the number of states and thus capitals. Moreover, pressures for devolution have seen more cities seeking national capital status, even when they are not at the head of independent states – Barcelona is a familiar example. As capitals seek to adapt to global change and contested identities, they need to negotiate the challenges of updating their appeal to visitors and maintaining their distinctiveness in the face of pressures for standardisation and of reinterpreting complex histories as they represent themselves to domestic and global audiences.

There was a pleasingly strong response to the Call for Papers – we hope suggesting that the work of the SIG is succeeding in raising the profile of research in national capital tourism. The special issue will be published in 2011 or 2012.

### **Research Project: National Capitals' Tourism Representation**

This project develops a theme discussed at previous SIG meetings. Contributions to the book have confirmed its importance. It will focus on:

- How the images of capitals are represented – especially through websites and newer media
- How capital city status plays a part in these images and perceptions
- How far this differs according to the core function or type of capital city

We have little understanding of how different cities present their 'capital qualities' as part of the image they seek to convey to visitors. Examining this will make a valuable initial project. However, looking at the topic comprehensively would be an enormous task since there are multiple representations - for example by public and private agencies; city-wide and districts; whole city and particular events – and a variety of different media and channels.

We have agreed that initially we will focus on how capital qualities are portrayed through official tourism websites – the national tourism organisation and the city official tourism websites only - in terms of whole city portrayal – i.e. excluding district / precinct / event specific material.

We will discuss taking this forward during the Cyprus SIG meeting. This will allow us to add new research projects to our successful publishing initiatives. We welcome all ATLAS members to join our discussions.

# **Volunteer Tourism Research Group**

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## **Introduction**

The research group has been active since its inaugural meeting in July 2008. There are approximately 40 members from across the globe. The Volunteer Tourism Special Interest Group was set up to provide a network for critical discussion on volunteering within the tourism sector. The objectives to do this were established as:

- To identify, synthesise and discuss problem areas
- To advance volunteer tourism research
- To develop best practice case study material
- To provide a platform for critical discussion
- To disseminate research findings

In ATLAS Reflections 2009 (May) it was reported that the forthcoming first international Volunteering and Tourism Symposium: Developing a Research Agenda — Linking Industry and Academia was to be held June 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the James Cook University, Singapore Campus. The symposium was organized by Associate Professor Stephen Wearing and Dr. Kevin Lyons, chairs of the volunteering and tourism SIG for the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) and Dr. Angela M Benson on behalf of the ATLAS Volunteer Tourism SIG. As little detail was available for the last report, this reflection will include an update.

## **Volunteering and Tourism Symposium, June 2009.**

The programme for the Symposium included a Full Paper Round Table Session where seven papers were introduced by the authors. Symposium members then had the opportunity of engaging in critical discussion with each other and the authors. A further fourteen papers were presented in five themed sessions (1) New Directions in Volunteer Tourism (2) Volunteer Tourists and Personal Development (3) Volunteering in Tourism Contexts (4) Development of Host Communities (5) The Industry of Volunteering and Tourism: Some Perspectives. In addition, Stephen Wearing and Robert A Stebbins gave keynotes.

The outcome of the symposium was a special issue in the Annals of Leisure Research, entitled Special Issue on Volunteer Tourism; Volume 12, Number 3&4, 2009. This double volume was edited by Kevin Lyons, Stephen Wearing, and Angela M Benson. The contents included an introduction to the special issue, an invited paper by Elery Hamilton-Smith and seven papers by international scholars.

## **Book: Volunteer Tourism: Theoretical Frameworks and Practical Applications**

The main focus of the SIG since its inception has been a book, which is to be published by Routledge later this year (December 2010). It is edited by Angela M

Benson and is the result of contributions from members of the volunteer tourism research group and the June 2009 symposium. The edited book includes a wide range of contributions with examples from around the globe, and whilst some of the chapters begin to broaden the thinking about the boundaries of volunteer tourism, it is evident that there are still areas with little or no discussion. The final chapter seeks to address this and offers an insight into structuring the research agenda for volunteer tourism.

### **Special Stream: Travel Philanthropy, Volunteer and Charity Tourism, April 2010**

The organizers (Eugenia Wickens and Jenny Briedenhann, Bucks New University, UK; Marios Sotiriades, TEI of Crete, Greece) of the Sustainable Tourism: Issues, Debates and Challenges Conference invited the ATLAS Volunteer Tourism Research Group to run a special stream at their conference in Crete, April 2010. This was a great opportunity for colleagues to get together and in total, sixteen papers were accepted. Unfortunately, the conference coincided with the volcanic ash disruptions and whilst the conference did proceed, many colleagues were unable to attend. The proposed outcome for the special stream is a special issue which is currently being negotiated.

### **Special Interest Tourism and Destination Management Conference, April 2011**

The organizers of the Sustainable Tourism conference (above) are coordinating a conference on Special Interest Tourism in Katmandu, Nepal, 27<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Although, there is not a special stream on volunteering it has been agreed that if there are sufficient papers the ATLAS SIG will chair the volunteer tourism session. Further details of the conference can be found at [www.specialnepal.com](http://www.specialnepal.com) or email the chair of the SIG [amb16@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:amb16@brighton.ac.uk).

Final reflective thought, as Chair of the SIG I look forward to liaising with members to develop next year's agenda.

## **Independent Travel Research Group**

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It has been a busy year for the BRG and we have just had the fourth ATLAS Backpacker Research Group conference in the beautiful surroundings of Hermanus, Western Cape, South Africa. This delivered 16 high quality papers and featured 16 original papers presented over three days by 9 different nationalities. The theme of the conference was Independent Travel in Uncertain Times and we had a good mix of papers but overall the key points evaluated the importance of comparative studies of independent travel behaviour as well as the importance of the mundane, familiar and everyday experiences of independent travel. In terms of the former, highlights were Marko Gam's insights into comparisons of backpackers in the Baltic states, Cody Paris' expert analysis of western and Asian backpackers and Joern Fricke's

comparisons between of Mexican and Malaysian backpackers. In terms of the latter, Professor Flavia Swann analysed the regulation of independent travel in the Napoleonic period, Emily falconer examined the familiarity of food in India, while Gareth Butler took us into the hostels of Norway.

Thanks must go to Professor Chris Rogerson and Jayne Rogerson for organising this conference and for providing the wine tour, penguin tour and indeed the daily whale performances. An outstanding location, with exceptional hospitality; highly recommended. Looking forward, we will be examining further publications that build on the last one *Beyond Backpacker Tourism* published by Channel View. A future conference is now being planned with the destination being in the Middle East region. One very important outcome of the present conference, however, was a change of name to become more inclusive, thus the Backpacker Research Group will now be known as the Independent Travel Research Group.

## **Tourism Geographies: Space, place and lifestyle mobilities**

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### **Forthcoming activities and events**

The activities of the Tourism Geographies SIG have been largely focused on events since the group's inception in 2008 and this looks set to continue through the remainder of 2010 and into 2011.

#### *Catalonia 2010*

Following the first meeting in Bristol in Spring 2008, the second seminar of the ATLAS Tourism Geographies SIG will be hosted at the Rovira i Virgili University (Catalonia) on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The one-day event is entitled *European Regional Perspectives on Tourism Geographies – Contrasting Research Approaches and Linguistic Traditions* and is hosted in collaboration with the Association of Spanish Geographers (AGE) (Working Group in Geography of Tourism Leisure and Recreation – Grupo 10) and the International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on the Geography of Tourism, Leisure and Global Change.

Speakers include: Yolanda Pérez (Rovira i Virgili University), Diego López Olivares (Association of Spanish Geographers), C. Michael Hall (University of Canterbury, NZ), Jarkko Saarinen (University of Oulu, Finland), Remy Knafou (Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne), Carine Fournier (Université de Brest, France), Alessia Mariotti and Fiorella Dallari (Università de Bologna, Italy), Tim Gale (UWE Bristol, UK), Harry Coccossis (University of the Aegean, Greece), Myriam Jansen-Verbeke (Catholic University Leuven, Belgium), Salvador Anton Clavé (Universitat Rovira i Virgili,

Catalonia), Cianga Nicolae (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania) and Nicolai Scherle (Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany).

For further information on this seminar, please visit the seminar website:

[http://www.urv.cat/dgeo/gratet/seminaris/en\\_seminari\\_2.html](http://www.urv.cat/dgeo/gratet/seminaris/en_seminari_2.html)

There will be a meeting of SIG members during the day and all members of ATLAS are very welcome to attend.

### *Martinique 2011*

The Tourism Geographies SIG is also a co-organiser of the international conference on *The Changing World of Coastal, Island and Tropical Tourism*, to be held in Martinique, French West Indies from 27 - 29 January 2011. For further information please visit the conference website at <http://www.geog.nau.edu/igust/fwi/>

### *Seattle 2011*

The SIG will also collaborate with the Recreation, Tourism and Sport Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) to offer two joint sponsored sessions at the AAG 2011 Annual Conference in Seattle, WA. The event will be held from 12-16 April 2011 and the two joint sessions are entitled as follows:

1. 'Cosmopolitan urban tourism: Gentrification perspectives'
2. 'Contemporary tourism mobilities: The geographies of lifestyle migration'

Please see the AAG conference website for details of this event: <http://www.aag.org>.

For more information on any of these three events, please contact the current SIG coordinators at the addresses below.

### **ATLAS Tourism Geographies SIG appointed to the editorial board of the Journal Tourism Geographies**

The SIG has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal 'Tourism Geographies' edited by Alan Lew. The SIG coordinator will take the role of a 'Consulting Editor' for the journal and it is hoped that this will raise the profile / reputation of the SIG internationally.

### **Future development of the SIG**

As of summer 2011, the current coordinators will have passed three years in the role. As such, it is intended that a new coordinator(s) be appointed during 2011 from within the SIG membership. This issue will be on the agenda at the SIG meeting in Catalonia in October 2010.

Having organised four events in the first few years, it is hoped that the SIG will now be able to develop some collaborative research activity between group members and look at joint publication opportunities. This will also be on the agenda at the next SIG meeting in October 2010.

We intend to have an informal meeting of the SIG at the ATLAS 2011 conference in Latvia if there is sufficient interest among members and this would be a good opportunity to launch some more research-oriented activities.

For further information about the ATLAS Tourism Geographies SIG or to join the group please contact us (details below). We would be delighted to hear from any ATLAS members with an interest in the geographical / spatial / mobilities aspects of tourism or indeed from those who would like to be involved in this SIG in some way.

## **Events Research Group**

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### **Proposal for an ATLAS Special Interest Group on Events**

There has been a rapid increase in the number of cultural, sporting and business events in recent decades, and cities and regions have made growing use of these events to support their policy agendas. This growth has been coupled with a growth in research output and educational provision in the academic world in general and among ATLAS members in particular.

Given the rapidly developing nature of the field and the international nature of the subject matter it seems appropriate to develop a focus for collaborative research and educational initiatives in the context of ATLAS. A number of ATLAS members have indicated their interest in such a development (see list below), and it seems likely that the number of potential collaborators will be much greater.

### **Aims**

The aims of the ATLAS Events SIG will be to:

- Develop and support transnational research on events
- To stage expert meetings and other information exchange activities related to events
- To produce publications of interest to Group members and to the wider academic and practitioner communities.

### **Activities**

It is planned to develop a range of activities related to events over the next five years. In particular, it is anticipated that members will design and implement a comparative transnational research programme on the impacts of events. This is likely to include quantitative (visitor surveys) and qualitative (stakeholder interviews) components. This research will feed into to a joint publication by Group members.



For the coming 12 months, the following activities are envisaged:

- An initial meeting of potential members at the ATLAS conference in Cyprus to discuss the aims of the Group and potential activities.
- Design of a research programme based on the wishes of members.
- An expert meeting to be held in Tilburg in Spring 2011.

*No reports are available from the following SIGs:*

## **Gastronomy and Tourism Research Group**

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## **Sports Tourism Research Group**

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## **Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Research Group**

*Vitor Ambrósio*

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## **Mass Tourism Research Group**

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## **ATLAS new publications**

Duim R. van der and Kloek M. (eds) (2007 – 2008)

*Thematic proceedings of ATLAS Africa conferences*

Volume 1: Tourism and Nature in Africa (160 pp.)

Volume 2: Local communities and participation in African tourism (117 pp.)

Volume 3: Aspect of tourism in Kenya (117 pp.)

Volume 4: Tourism, nature conservation and wealth creation in Africa (74 pp.)

Volume 5: New avenues for tourism and wealth creation in Africa (118 pp.)

Zellmer K., Duim R. and Saarinen J. (eds) (2010)

Volume 6: Tourism for development: Environmental sustainability, poverty reduction and empowering communities (138 pp.)

Volume 7: Tourism, tourists and sustainability development in Africa (118 pp.)

Palmer R. and Richards G. (2007 – 2009)

*European Cultural Capital Report*

*European Cultural Capital Report 2*

Celuch K. and Davidson R. (eds) (2009)

*Advances in business tourism research. A selection of papers presented at ATLAS Business Tourism Special Interest Group meetings.*

Smith M. and Onderwater L. (eds) (2009)

*Experiencing difference. Changing tourism and tourists experiences. Reflections 2009.*

Richards G. and Rotariu I. (eds) (2007 – 2010)

*Sibiu European Capital of Culture 2007*

*The impacts of the 2007 European Capital of Culture in Sibiu*

Edwards J. and Vaughan R. (eds) (2010)

*Destinations revisited. Proceedings of the ATLAS conference, Viana do Castelo, Portugal, 2007*

Part 1: Visitors

Part 2: Attractions

Part 3: Cultures and cities

Part 4: Destination management and Marketing

Richards G. and Palmer R. (2010)

*Eventful cities: Cultural management and urban revitalisation*

Hannam K. and Diekmann A. (2010)

*Beyond backpackers tourism: Mobilities and experiences*

Smith M., Onderwater L. and Veldman J. (eds) (2010)

*Mass tourism vs. niche tourism. Reflections 2010*

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