form of tourism that respects local cultures, history and environment, and values social responsibility while celebrating diversity and connecting people (tourists with other tourists and with host communities) and is characterized by the enjoyment of discovery, learning and sharing. This ‘slowing’ of the pace of a holiday provides opportunities to interact and connect with local people and places on a deeper level. This facilitates a more detailed exploration of the cultural environment in which the holiday is taking place and results in a more rewarding and memorable experience for the participants.

The slow tourist focuses much more on immersion with local life and an understanding of places they visit beyond their initial tourist offer. Slow tourism activities while on holiday do not differ much from other types of tourism; but again the key characteristics of engagement, immersion and slowness are central to the experiential philosophy of ‘slow’ that requires more integration, research and lingering within the environment to acquire more knowledge and form stronger memories. While slow tourists are likely to engage with any type of attraction, the smaller ‘hidden gems’ are likely to be the most rewarding. Hence, authenticity becomes a focal point for the slow tourist and much of the experience is driven by the search for authenticity.

Slow travel is an even more recent emergence from the slow movement, but the principles remain the same. The opportunity to stay in self-catering facilities allows the traveller to become more integrated within the community, to partake of community services, to visit local hostels and to purchase local produce. It moves away from the idea of the ‘resort’ or the ‘holiday park’ (which are, conversely, noisy and exciting, with fast food provision and instant entertainment) and seeks to offer a more traditional lifestyle, which may bring with it many benefits to the local community that are prevented by the inclusive nature of resort-type facilities, thereby stymieing the potential economic benefits for local communities.

One key observation here is the move away from airline travel and the use of slow transport or forms of transportation that fit the slow philosophy. Air transport is considered to be an epitome of globalization and, hence, an antidote to slowness. Instead, slow tourism requires the use of slower and more environmentally friendly forms of transport. Furthermore, within destinations, public or local transport should be used much more in order to encourage the closer connection with locals and local culture. As slow tourism is also characterized by more active pursuits, hiking and cycling are tourism activities that fit the concept well, being forms of transportation that encourage the tourist to engage more with the destination, landscape and local environment.

Slow travel is clearly exemplified by narrow-boats or heritage railways, where these are part of the tourism infrastructure that can be used for travelling; but they do represent a mode of travel which is relatively polluting for the environment. By contrast, travel that follows the true nature of the slow concept — traditional and low impact (e.g. horse-drawn carts) — still exists in some parts of the world not just for the benefit of tourists but as a necessity for the community. The islands of Sark in the UK Channel Islands is one example and represents a deliberate decision by the islanders to focus on traditional forms of transport (horses, donkeys and bicycles), and is the opposite of the situation in some countries, such as rural Romania, where these same methods of transport are chosen because they are affordable. The majority of travellers see this as part of the quaint and authentic nature of the destination, regardless of the socio-economic and sociocultural issues that create these scenarios. This idea, of course, derives from its polar opposite of fast-moving commuter trains and busy stations and instead looks back to a reflective and quieter past.

Further reading

Peter Robinson

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The concepts of ‘society’ and ‘culture’ are a key element of tourism. Early travellers were actively seeking out new cultures and new communities, and much of today’s developed world is heavily influenced by the art, architecture and food of these early tourists. As indicated
by Sharpley (2008) in Tourism, Tourists and Society, the relationship between tourism, society and culture can be viewed from two perspectives: the influence of society and culture on tourism, and the influence of tourism on society and culture.

Looking at the context of tourism, ‘society’ encapsulates an aggregation of people related to each other through persistent relations in the development of tourism (Mayhew, 1968). The understanding of local culture within a society is imperative for the planning and development of tourism, which itself is often based upon the distinctive culture of the destination. When society is discussed within tourism, it is a multifaceted term that encapsulates travellers and host communities and describes their individual and integrated activities. Many tourism theories rely heavily on the notion of society, as it defines the environment within which our sociocultural practices, behaviours, morals, ethics and norms are developed within the communities in which we live.

It is important to fully understand the cultural impact that tourism creates in a society, especially the direct and indirect interaction of host communities with tourists. In many studies into the relationship between different societies and cultures, it is suggested that the host communities are regarded as the weaker party, often the result of a neo-colonial view of the host as servant (especially in developing countries). This is especially evident in research related to the concepts of pro-poor tourism and community-based tourism. The impact that tourism brings about is termed acculturation, which describes the way in which the value systems and behaviours of a society and culture are influenced by visitors to that culture, thereby threatening its indigenous identity.

The ideas of ‘society’ and ‘culture’ are often used interchangeably to mean sociocultural in multidisciplinary studies including in tourism. Franklin and Crang (2001) used the term ‘touristic culture’ to describe travel in order to experience culture as more than the physical travel itself. It is the preparation of people to see other places as objects of tourism, and similarly the preparation of places (and their peoples) to be seen. By contrast, Galdini (2007) and Gezici and Kerimoglu (2010) suggest that cultural tourism is not just the visual consumption of cultural artefacts (such as architecture, art and artefacts) and the places that house them, such as galleries, theatres and museums, but also the way in which visitors are given the opportunity to absorb and experience some sense of place.

Hence, ‘society’ and ‘culture’ may be considered to be a part of sociology – the scientific study of society, social institutions and social relationships. Tourists visiting a community or place create relationships that typically differ from the indigenous population. Thus, the influence of society and culture in tourism needs to be well understood, especially in consideration of the impact upon the individual, their family and society at large (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2006).

The extent of the cultural distance that the visitor wishes to maintain may result in decisions on how unfamiliar the traveller wants his or her environment to be. Interaction and assimilation to the society and culture may not, therefore, be the same for different groups of travellers.

Tourism has significant effects on society. The very presence of visitors in a country, city or home (i.e. homestay) affects the living patterns of local people. The way in which visitors conduct themselves and their relationships with the citizens of the host country often have a profound effect on the way of life and attitudes of local people. This results in security and crime issues and resentment between locals and host communities. The negative social and cultural effects on a host society can be identified as follows, and often emerge from neo-colonial views of people in different, and often developing, countries:

- undesirable activities that are introduced to the host, such as gambling, prostitution, drunkenness and other excesses;
- demonstration effect of local people wanting the same lifestyle and luxuries as those indulged in by tourists;
- racial tension where there are differences between the tourists and their hosts;
- servile attitude developed on the part of tourist business employees which pay frontline ‘serving staff’ a very low salary;
- ‘trinketization’ or ‘commodification’ of culture, crafts and arts to produce volumes of souvenirs for the tourist trade;
- standardization of employee roles in every country;
- the erosion of cultural pride if visitors view people and communities as entertainment, to be gazed at;
- rapid changes in local ways of life if tourist numbers exceed the carrying capacity of the destination;
- disproportionate numbers of workers in low-paid, menial jobs.

The right balance of society and culture for tourism is not always a solution and neither is it a way to attract more tourists and, consequently, more money (Moulin, 1995). Instead, it is important to get the host community to better understand the benefits of tourism and to educate tourists about the communities whom they are visiting. In this light, it is critical to understand the change of local identity and values...
when studying local societies and culture. Conventional and traditional forms of tourism practices can result in the change or loss of local identity and values as a result of:

- **Commercialization of local culture:** this is evident when local religious cultures, customs, traditions and festivals are reduced to conform to tourists' expectations, resulting in what has been called 'reconstructed ethnicity' or 'conomodification'.

- **Standardization of tourism experiences:** diversity in society and culture is what makes tourism experiential. Hence, destinations that try to accommodate and satisfy tourist desires risk standardization as they seek to deliver the same products and services as other successful destinations.

- **Adaptation to tourist demands:** in many destinations, tourists seek souvenirs, arts, crafts and other cultural manifestations. In response, craftsmen have made changes in the design of their traditional local products to fit in with tourists' tastes. Hence, cultural erosion may occur in the process of commercializing and sustaining cultural goods.

Four basic elements that need to be adopted in promoting good-quality cultural tourism that emphasize the local society include:

1. an environment with aesthetic value and which influences tourism buying behaviour;
2. facilities which facilitate the stay and enjoyment of tourists;
3. events which bring life to the community and create a year-round destination;
4. well-trained staff who can deliver high-quality tourist experiences.

The following factors determine the development of any society and culture: time and common residence; shared activities and the degree of involvement in them; the characteristics of members; and the kinds of leadership present. These factors were further categorized by Pearce et al. (1996) into four theoretical approaches to society and community, with particular relevance to tourism impacts. They include:

1. **The social systems approach:** emphasis is placed on the role of social relations and the dominance of group membership.
2. **The human ecological approach:** emphasis is placed on living together and adapting to a setting which develops distinctive characteristics.

3. **The interactional approach:** this is seen as the sum of regular social interactions of individuals.
4. **The critical approach:** attention is given to the power of key groups in the decision-making process.

In conclusion, understanding the interrelations of society and culture within the context of tourism is an important part of the responsible tourism concept. The social responsibility of every stakeholder in the tourism industry is critical for the sustainability of tourist sites that are rich in culture and community engagement. Experiential learning from community engagement will deliver a more experiential tourism offer, and will leave a lasting impression on visitors.

**Further reading**


**SOCIOLGY**

Many aspects of tourism emerge from the principles of sociology, the study of society. The sociologist Boorstin, in his 1962 study, claimed that tourists were cultural idlers, generated from modern institutions, especially mass media. Such negative criticism influenced other research, and since the mid-1970s the studies around sociology and tourism have often become seminal articles which underpin a considerable volume of many aspects of current tourism research. One such study was MacCannell’s (1973, 1976); in his view, tourism was considered a symbol of ‘modern society’, where it is seen as a modern pilgrimage in pursuit of **authenticity**.

Cohen (1984, p. 373) defined the sociology of tourism as ‘an emergent specialty concerned with the study of touristic motivations, roles, relationships and institutions and of their impact on tourists and on the societies who receive them’. However, further studies have resulted in significant challenges to this definition, in both theory and...
Tourism The Key Concepts

Tourism: The Key Concepts offers a comprehensive collection of the most frequently studied concepts in the field. Within the text, key terms, concepts, typologies and frameworks are examined in the context of the broader social sciences, blending together theory and practice to explore the scope of the subject.

Terms covered include:

- authenticity
- destination management
- geographies of tourism
- hospitality
- LGBT tourism
- mobility
- planning
- society and culture
- sociology in tourism
- tourism strategy

Each entry contextualizes, defines and debates the concept discussed, providing an excellent starting point for those studying tourism for the first time, and a quick reference for those who are more experienced. With case studies, examples and further reading throughout, this text will be invaluable for all undergraduate and postgraduate tourism students.

Peter Robinson is Principal Lecturer and Head of Leisure at the University of Wolverhampton, UK. He has previously worked in senior management positions in the tourism industry, and has published internationally on the subjects of tourism and events management.

Tourism