

Too Many Guests: The Problems with Mass Tourism

Until very recently, international travel was a luxury for only the **affluent** or adventurous. However, since the middle of the twentieth century, the dream of seeing the world and visiting exotic locations has become more of a reality for a greater number of people due to rapid advances in technology and a dramatic rise in **middle class** populations. This greater access to international travel has many positive effects for both guests and hosts since traveling overseas allows many people to escape the stress and pressures of their everyday lives and create memories that will last them a lifetime, while tourism has become a **booming** business and major source of **revenue** for the local communities. Currently, international tourism makes up approximately 10% of the world's economy with an estimated 1.6 billion international arrivals per year (Kummerer, 2018).

Although the aforementioned economic effects of tourism are very positive for the local places that people visit, in many cases these financial gains are only short term and they are causing some serious long-term negative effects on the local, **host communities** and the environment. When too many tourists visit the same location without proper management, the area becomes overcrowded and this results in many negative effects. In famous cities such as Venice and Barcelona, for example, the recent massive increase in tourists has upset local residents because living costs like rent have gone up exponentially, so many have been forced to move out of the city. Moreover, the old, narrow streets have become too crowded with tourist shops, so the locals are finding it more difficult to get to markets to buy daily necessities like food (Fisher, 2018). Aside from these negative effects on local residents, **mass tourism** can have a **devastating** impact on local ecosystems as well. For instance, in Thailand international arrivals have increased 123% since 2010, and this has had a disastrous effect on popular tourist destinations like Maya Bay, which has lost 80% of its marine life and had its coral reefs severely damaged by boats, divers and swimmers during this time period (Haines, 2018).

According to experts in the tourism industry, there are a few main reasons for the recent, dramatic growth in international travel. Firstly, since the early 2000s, there has been a big increase in the number of low cost airlines, which makes it cheaper for many people to travel more often. Likewise, between 2008 and 2016, the cruise ship industry exploded by 44%. Aside from these cheaper transportation costs, **accommodation** prices have gone down as well because of online companies like Airbnb. Furthermore, the rising **affluence** in countries such as China and India has resulted a greater number of people who can

afford to travel internationally (Abend, 2018). Experts have also noticed that there has been a social change in people's reasons for visiting certain destinations due to social media. According to Fisher (2018), before the rise in popularity of social media like Instagram and Facebook, most tourists visited a location to see it and have an experience there, but now many people travel to places where they want to be seen; taking a selfie photo at a famous spot and then uploading it to social media has become the main reason for the trip.

However, if this current **trend** of mass tourism to the same locations continues, it will have irreversible effects on the local communities and environment. In order to prevent this, many countries have been adopting solutions to make their popular tourist spots more **sustainable**. Some examples that have been introduced are **restricting** the number of tourists to a particular area, taxing them to visit that area, fining them for their behavior, and developing new ways to reduce tourists' waste.

References

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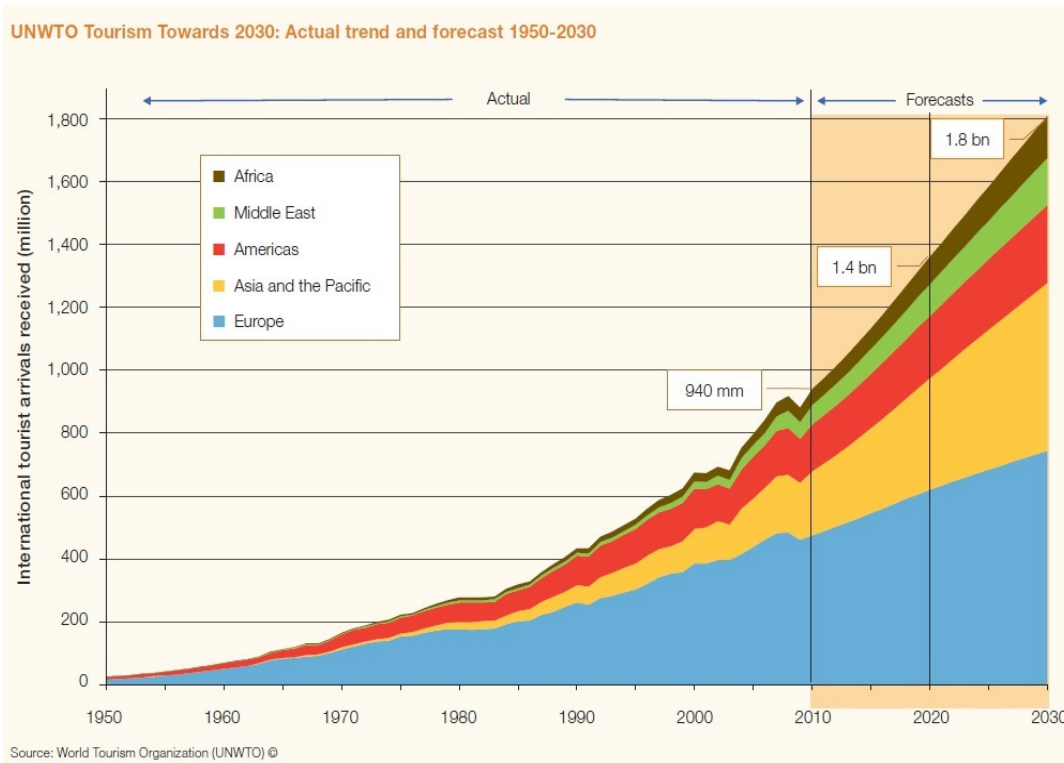


Figure 1. A Growing Trend, United Nations World Tourism Organisation Tourism Towards 2030 (UNWTO, 2016)

The number of international arrivals to the Middle East has been increasing (see Figure 1, above), what are some of the reasons for this trend?

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What are the key benefits of tourism? (Why do many governments seek to increase the numbers of tourists visiting their countries?)

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What are the key causes of international tourism (the reasons for why do people travel overseas) and consequences (the results – positive and negative)

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If you were to write a problem, solution and evaluation essay based on the reading above what could be the essay's aim and sequence sentence? (i.e., the essay's thesis statement)

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Answer the following questions based on the video @ <http://aquascript.com/mass-tourism/>

00:10 – 00:16

For how long will Maya Bay be closed?

00:37 – 00:50

According to the boat skipper, what was damaged by the boats in Maya bay?

What is an advantage of mass tourism for him?

1:00 – 1:14

How long is Maya Bay's beach?

How many tourists visit it every day?

1:35 – 1:45

What percentage of Thailand's coral reefs have been harmed?

1:53 – 2:05

What is one reason conservationist Andrew Hewett thinks four months will not be enough time for Maya Bay to recover?

2:07 – 2:13

How much money is made from entrance fees to Maya Bay per day?

References

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