Chapter 4: The Development of Mass Tourism in Mexico

Michael R. Redclift, David Manuel-Navarette and Mark Pelling

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter examined the way in which nature and space form part of a historical narrative in the Mexican Caribbean. It showed how the ideas of ‘discovery’ and ‘modernity’ formed key elements in the discourses supporting the process of economic development, and were employed as antidotes to ‘backwardness’ and ‘neglect’. The creation of a new tourist economy was driven by claims and discourses that equated tourism and entrepreneurship with progress and urban development. In this chapter we take the story forwards, concentrating on the role international tourism has played in Mexico’s development in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. To fully appreciate the importance of tourism for the environment and social structure of the Mexican Caribbean, it is particularly important to analyse Mexico’s relations with the USA and the way in which globalization has contributed to the creation of mass tourism during the last 30 years.

THE ORIGINS OF MODERN POPULAR TOURISM

The word ‘tourism’ was not coined until about 1811. It expressed an essentially modern idea – that people should voluntarily make a journey, usually a circular trip, with the object of seeing new sights and experiences. Travel, as distinct from tourism, had always been with us, but as the derivation of the word suggests (‘travail’), travel implied a functional journey or, as in the case of the eighteenth century ‘Grand Tour’, a journey carried out on one’s own, or in a very small socially exclusive group to familiar sites. Travel...

You are not authenticated to view the full text of this chapter or article.

Elgaronline requires a subscription or purchase to access the full text of books or journals. Please login through your library system or with your personal username and password on the homepage.

Non-subscribers can freely search the site, view abstracts/extracts and download selected front matter and introductory chapters for personal use. Your library may not have purchased all subject areas. If you are authenticated and think you should have access to this title, please contact your librarian.

Further information

- Access help/troubleshooting
- Purchase or trial Elgaronline
- Contact us

or login to access all content.

Subscriber Login

Username/Email Address
Enter your username

Password
Enter your password

Forgot your password?
Submit

Don’t have an account?

Login with Shibboleth »
Login with OpenAthens »
Have an access token?
6. Mass Tourism in Cancún, Mexico
7. Mass Tourism in Cancún, Mexico
8. Mass Tourism in Cancún, Mexico

Use the handout to complete these tasks:

1. Describe the location of Cancún and the Yucatán Peninsula.
2. Briefly describe the development of tourism here – try to relate this to the Butler Model.
3. What attracts tourists to this location? Include at least two physical factors and two human factors – and be specific.
4. Construct a table to identify positive and negative economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism in this area.
5. Describe how tourism is being managed to reduce the impacts of mass tourism by assembling large numbers of tourists in small areas creates intense environmental pressures. There is a real threat to environmental balance. While coastal resorts had been popular in elite tourism in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century they became the focus of mass tourism. There are many reasons for this the emergence of paid holidays, the arrival of mass transport through the railways and the desire to escape the harsh living conditions in industrial capitalism. The attraction was sea and sand and the contrast to home provided by the absence of industry. The beaches of Europe, Australia, Mexico, the Caribbean and the Black Sea have been attractive to mass tourists from many countries. Home » Essay on Tourism in India.