

Routledge Introductions to Environment Series

Environment and Tourism

Andrew Holden



London and New York

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Environment and Tourism

For many people 'going on holiday' is an increasingly central feature of contemporary western society. The tourism industry has expanded rapidly since 1950, but are environments benefiting from or being damaged by the tourists who visit them?

Environment and Tourism is an introductory text about the relationship that exists between tourism, society and the environment. The book examines the meanings of 'tourism' and 'environment' and gives a historical overview of the growth of tourism. It discusses how the tourism industry markets physical and cultural environments, to sell into the consumer market. Inevitably there have been consequences from the growth of tourism on environments and the use of environmental management and planning techniques is described. Ethical dimensions of the interaction between tourism and the environment are also considered. The book suggests ways in which the economics of tourism can be adopted in a positive way to aid conservation, in light of the failure of conventional economics to deal with problems of resource usage and pollution.

Environment and Tourism proceeds to look at whether the concept of sustainability can be applied to tourism and provides a critique of the 'new' forms of tourism that developed towards the end of the twentieth century. An extensive range of international case studies is used to illustrate the theoretical ideas presented. To aid the student there are chapter outlines, end-of-chapter summaries and further reading sections.

Andrew Holden is Principal Research Fellow in Tourism at the University of Luton.

Routledge Introductions to Environment Series

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Series editor's preface

Environment and Society titles

The modern environmentalist movement grew hugely in the last third of the twentieth century. It reflected popular and academic concerns about the local and global degradation of the physical environment which was increasingly being documented by scientists (and which is the subject of the companion series to this, *Environmental Science*). However it soon became clear that reversing such degradation was not merely a technical and managerial matter: merely knowing about environmental problems did not of itself guarantee that governments, businesses or individuals would do anything about them. It is now acknowledged that a critical understanding of socio-economic, political and cultural processes and structures is central in understanding environmental problems and establishing environmentally sustainable development. Hence the maturing of environmentalism has been marked by prolific scholarship in the social sciences and humanities, exploring the complexity of society-environment relationships.

Such scholarship has been reflected in a proliferation of associated courses at undergraduate level. Many are taught within the 'modular' or equivalent organisational frameworks which have been widely adopted in higher education. These frameworks offer the advantages of flexible undergraduate programmes, but they also mean that knowledge may become segmented, and student learning pathways may arrange knowledge segments in a variety of sequences – often reflecting the individual requirements and backgrounds of each student rather than more traditional discipline-bound ways of arranging learning.

The volumes in this *Environment and Society* series of textbooks mirror this higher educational context, increasingly encountered in the early twenty-first century. They provide short, topic-centred texts on social science and humanities subjects relevant to contemporary society-environment relations. Their content and approach reflect the fact

that each will be read by students from various disciplinary backgrounds, taking in not only social sciences and humanities but others such as physical and natural sciences. Such a readership is not always familiar with the disciplinary background to a topic, neither are readers necessarily going on to further develop their interest in the topic. Additionally, they cannot all automatically be thought of as having reached a similar stage in their studies – they may be first-, second- or third-year students.

The authors and editors of this series are mainly established teachers in higher education. Finding that more traditional integrated environmental studies and specialised texts do not always meet their own students' requirements, they have often had to write course materials more appropriate to the needs of the flexible undergraduate programme. Many of the volumes in this series represent in modified form the fruits of such labours, which all students can now share.

Much of the integrity and distinctiveness of the Environment and Society titles derives from their characteristic approach. To achieve the right mix of flexibility, breadth and depth, each volume is designed to create maximum accessibility to readers from a variety of backgrounds and attainment. Each leads into its topic by giving some necessary basic grounding, and leaves it usually by pointing towards areas for further potential development and study. There is introduction to the real-world context of the text's main topic, and to the basic concepts and questions in social sciences/humanities which are most relevant. At the core of the text is some exploration of the main issues. Although limitations are imposed here by the need to retain a book length and format affordable to students, some care is taken to indicate how the themes and issues presented may become more complicated, and to refer to the cognate issues and concepts that would need to be explored to gain deeper understanding. Annotated reading lists, case studies, overview diagrams, summary charts and self-check questions and exercises are among the pedagogic devices which we try to encourage our authors to use, to maximise the 'student friendliness' of these books.

Hence we hope that these concise volumes provide sufficient depth to maintain the interest of students with relevant backgrounds. At the same time, we try to ensure that they sketch out basic concepts and map their territory in a stimulating and approachable way for students to whom the whole area is new. Hopefully, the list of Environment and Society titles will provide modular and other students with an unparalleled range of

perspectives on society-environment problems: one which should also be useful to students at both postgraduate and pre-higher education levels.

David Pepper

May 2000

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Preface

This book forms part of a series produced by Routledge on the theme of 'environment and society'. The particular emphasis of this publication is upon the interaction that exists between the environment and tourism. Its main purpose is to provide an introductory text for undergraduate students to the concepts and themes that govern this interaction.

Two simple words, 'tourism' and 'environment', but in the following 70,000 words it is only possible to introduce the reader to the complex issues that lie behind these two terms. Both 'tourism' and the 'environment' represent complicated concepts, and both can be interpreted as intricate systems, where actions taken in one part of the system have consequences for its other component parts. This book takes an holistic approach, in trying to understand the complexity of both tourism and the environment, and the relationship that exists between them. Consequently, the book adopts a multidisciplinary stance to the investigation of this relationship and should be of interest to a range of students studying under the aegis of social science. The perspectives used in this book come from the disciplines of geography, sociology, social psychology and economics, as well as the fields of environment, development and tourism studies.

The term 'environment' is used in its widest sense to incorporate all aspects of human behaviour. Cultural, political, economic and social aspects of the environment are an important part of this book, besides purely considerations of the physical environment. All of these factors affect the way we live, and how as humans we interact with each other, as well as the non-human world. In the last half of the twentieth century the world has witnessed a faster pace of economic development than ever before. This pace of development has placed a tremendous strain upon the natural resources of the earth, and the functioning of the environmental systems that we as humans rely upon for our survival.

Global warming, ozone depletion, desertification and acid rain are all examples of the types of negative environmental changes that have resulted from, or been accelerated by, human actions. Humans' rights are also sometimes threatened by development, as humans continue to deny rights to other humans, and people are displaced from their traditional lands and denied access to resources. Subsequently, our interaction with fellow humans and the non-human world presents us with many ethical questions. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we are increasingly being forced to face ethical issues, if not for the survival of other humans and species then for our own survival. The realisation that we are part of and not separate from this system, which we call 'environment', is beginning to show signs of dawning on an increasing number of people.

Changes in society, which can be traced to the Industrial Revolution almost two hundred years ago, are also influencing the way we live. Increasing rates of urbanisation in both the developed and less developed worlds, and the adoption of an ideology of consumerism as a global creed, are placing increasing demands upon our environment to satisfy our needs and desires. The process of urbanisation has had the effect of removing people from nature, and has presented people with the need to define new notions of community. These changes have developed needs and other wants which, combined with an increased level of prosperity, are increasingly satisfied through consumerism. One form of consumerism, which seems to be an increasingly popular way to meet these needs, is tourism. At the beginning of this century, there are over 650 million people travelling internationally on an annual basis, which is expected to rise to 1,600 million in twenty year's time. For many in the economically advanced societies of the West, tourism has therefore become a necessity of life, an experience that is consumed with increasing enthusiasm.

A trend of this expanding demand for tourism is for tourists to go further and further afield from where they live. Packages have already been sold to tourists for the first flights to space which are expected to take place within the next five years. Many of the world's coastlines and mountain areas have been developed for tourism and even Antarctica is now a part of the tourist menu. In Spain, the first country to experience mass international tourism in the 1950s, tourism has brought vast economic, cultural and physical environmental changes. These changes are both positive and negative; as will be seen in this book, tourism can be an agent of both positive and negative changes. Recognition of tourism as an

agent of change – its growing importance in the world economy and the effects that it can have for the environment – was given at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (Earth Summit II) in New York in 1997. The basis of this recognition was that tourism must be developed in a sustainable fashion, to ensure the conservation of resources for future generations to make their livelihoods from tourism, just as their parents do now. A fine aim that probably few of us would disagree with, but in reality a concept that represents a diversity of opinion over how it should be achieved, which in turn reveals much about the complexity of the environment in which tourism operates. It is this complexity of the interaction between ‘tourism’ and the ‘environment’ that this book sets out to explore.



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