

Contemporary issues in travel and tourism essay examples

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Ecotourism](#)



Contemporary Issues in Travel and Tourism

Introduction

Traveling away from one's home for the point of pleasure, leisure, business, or religious obligation has progressed from ancient times to its contemporary form. This diverse industry generates income and jobs all around the world, for both less economically developed nations and the world's super powers in Europe, North America, and across Asia. In the US alone, tourism generated 1.4 billion US dollars in the year 2013 with the most popular tourism spots being New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington D. C (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). These places have a high level of tourism development, whereas other places, such as New England's Mount Desert Island (MDI), home to Bar Harbor, in Maine, are becoming more and more popular due to a variety of factors. Not only has the number of tourists visiting the island increased over the past two decades, putting stresses on hotels and the national parks in the area, the demands of the tourists have changed as more and more middle-class Americans want to feel good about their travel choices and have the comfort of knowing that their vacation is environmentally "sustainable" in some capacity. These environmental, economic, and sociocultural issues currently driving change in the travel and tourism sector in Bar Harbor and Mount Desert Island as a whole, reflect the local businesses and tourism planners decisions to push MDI as a spot for ecotourism. Appropriate methods and strategies to convert the island to an ecotourism spot are being employed as well as localizing the necessary resources to make the island live up to a sustainable image.

Background information

Bar Harbor, Maine in the United States is a popular seasonal travel destination. Many individuals who live on the East Coast enjoy coming to Mount Desert Island (where Bar Harbor is located) in order to enjoy the coast and Bar Harbor's National Forest: Acadia. It is also a popular destination for cruise ships who host retirees as well as for New Englanders who purchase summer homes on the Atlantic coast. Although the annual population (those who live year round in town) of Bar Harbor is a little under 5, 200 people, over three million visitors (Wikipedia) travel to Bar Harbor for the summer annually, which puts great stress on hotels and general spatial requirements in town. In the 2013 season, a record number of cruise ships, a total of 126, visited Bar Harbor, which is 18 more than the previous year (Trotter, 2013). The dates for cruise ship tourism are between May 5 and October 30, and it is estimated by town officials that over 167, 000 passengers arrived by cruise ship into Bar Harbor in 2013. As per data given by Cruise Lines International Association, over \$46 million was collectively contributed to Maine by cruise ship tours in 2012. Figures for 2013 have not yet been published. The increase of 18 additional ships from the previous year, led to an increase over \$1 million USD in revenue.

Main tourism markets

The main tourist attractions in Bar Harbor include hiking the Carriage Road trails at Acadia National Park, rock climbing with Acadia mountain guides, sailing through Frenchman Bay, a stroll along the iconic Shore Path, a whale watching boat trip, Acadia Park kayak tours, plus much more. Mount Desert

Island is certainly family friendly with activities for all to enjoy, whether one enjoys outdoor adventure or perhaps something more low key, such as relaxing on the waterfront or strolling Bar Harbor's quaint downtown. Bar Harbor is very easy to explore by foot in order to enjoy the shopping opportunities and many restaurant opportunities on Main Street or Cottage Street, or by bicycle, which can be rented from shops in town, that will enable one to see all of Acadia National Park. Although one may need a car to reach Bar Harbor, vehicles are completely unnecessary to get around this small town.

How tourism affects local economy, social life and environment

The social life for vacationers is flourishing as Bar Harbor offers a plethora of bars and restaurants, with specialty seafood and lobster options. The local economy thrives during the summer and brings an influx of seasonal workers; however it suffers during the winter when all of the tourists leave. Mount Desert Island is a highly environmentally protected area, especially since it contains Acadia National Park, which is federally protected. Overall, tourism positively affects the local environment, economy, and social life; however, there are challenges posed by the increasing number of tourists visiting annually.

Analyze current issues: environmental, economic, spatial, socio-cultural

The main issue posed to those wanting to visit Bar Harbor, or Mount Desert Island at large during the summer months, is the extreme inconvenience and

difficulty to reach the island. Maine is the northeasternmost state in the United States and the town of Bar Harbor is less than 200 kilometers (~113 miles) from the Canadian border. To reach MDI from Boston, it takes a 6 hour drive north, or a 7 hour drive from Burlington, Vermont, or a 7 hour trip from Quebec, Canada. There are not easily accessible trains or buses to Bar Harbor and the nearest airport is about an hour and a half away. Because of its distance, Bar Harbor rarely gets visitors from the West coast of the United States or from overseas. Its location may continue to be a deterrence for many tourists, despite its increasing popularity in New England.

Moreover, the influx of seasonal workers into Bar Harbor over the summer poses serious challenges for the town's economy in the winter. Bar Harbor is mostly a ghost town during the winter months and therefore those who want to open businesses for the summer seasons will certainly be out of work for seven months out of the year. With the increasing numbers of tourists, there is also a space and land use planning problem in Bar Harbor. As new hotels and commercial buildings are being put up both downtown and around, the natural space designated as park space and land for vegetation is being encroached on. Also, the price of rent for homes or apartments in Bar Harbor in the summer is continually on the rise.

Analyze strategy to remedy current issues

As of 2005, Bar Harbor, Maine was declared a spot for ecotourism in the United States; however, the town has a long way to go before they fully embody all that ecotourism entails. The trouble is that the residential demand and local initiative to create a carbon neutral island is very much at

odds with the very nature of Bar Harbor's remoteness and the great distances tourists must travel to reach it. Therefore, the more people drawn to Bar Harbor for " ecotourism" could actually result in greater environmental damage as more miles are driven and flown for people to get to Mount Desert Island. Furthermore, the island is still completely dependent on fossil fuels and although efforts are being made to turn the island into a zero-carbon example for the United States, there is much progress to be made.

Description

Ecotourism is an increasingly popular contemporary alternative form of tourism and can be defined as tourism that aims to be low impact, involve locals as much as possible, and include observation of wildlife or wild areas. In third world settings, ecotourism would be a different kind of economic driver as the income generated from the tourism would go back into the community to help preserve wildlife or natural in addition to boosting the economy. While these ideals seem excellent on paper, they are difficult to achieve in practice. In another vein of thought, ecotourism can also be defined as low impact travel to places that are known to contain endangered species or perhaps be a location which is previously " undisturbed". It is considered to be different from traditional tourism as the travellers are meant to not harm or impact the community or environment which they visit and they would provide funds for conservation and stimulate the local economy, rather than benefitting a large hotel chain or transnational corporation of some sort. The origins of ecotourism date back to the onset of

the environmental movement in the 1970s although it did not become a prevalent form of travel until the late 1980s.

Theoretical knowledge and examples of destinations

Costa Rica is considered a textbook example for ecotourism. One project in particular, the Rara Avis project, incorporates international tourists living together in a small, forest “ ecovillage” that attracts thousands of scientists, tourists, and students and that engage in nature-oriented activities in open air classrooms and rainforest laboratories. However, although the revenue from this project assists in protecting the area, it is well understood that the increase in number of homes and foreign tourists has had adverse affects on wildlife and led to the development of private reserves that act as a “ buffer” to development. Therefore, the very idea that was meant to increase environmental consciousness for the nation is also harming the natural land. There is also a clear discrepancy between true ecotourism and “ greenwashing” of ecotourism where newer, cheaper destinations in Costa Rica masking as ecotourism, creates large-scale tourism developments and is unsustainable in its scope.

Another example of ecotourism is aboriginal tourism in Australia. Learning about ancient cultures has a universal appeal that translates into big business. Venturing out to Australia’s “ outback” and having an experience with aboriginal people, such as in Ayers Rock, Australia, is a form of ecotourism that attracts more than 300, 000 visitors annually. There are two managing groups for this experience and therefore levels of competition are relatively low for those companies. This form of ecotourism has come with

some costs as aboriginals feel that tourists have invaded their privacy and come in with little respect for their cultural beliefs or sacred areas. Despite efforts to make this tourism “ sustainable”, aboriginal tourism is an unfortunate example where ecotourism causes more harm than good.

Botswana’s ecotourism certified camps have recently been recognized as some of the world’s top hotels and ecotourism experiences. According to an article posted in in the International Ecotourism Society (ecotourism. org), the Chobe Game Lodge and the Mombo Camp Hotel is among the twenty most highly rate lodges and resorts in Africa and the Middle East. Located in the pristine Okavango Delta of Botswana, the Moremi Game Reserve, where the Mombo Camp Hotel is placed, is situated on a beautiful park teeming with wildlife and adventure. The resort provides luxurious accommodation, which may seem astray from the essential values of ecotourism, but still functions as a sustainable tourism industry for both the environment and local community. The Chobe Game Lodge boasts scenic views over the Chobe River and Caprivi floodplains and is the only permanent hotel in the safari game national park. There are countless animals to see on the safari tours and game drives as well as after-dinner stargazing. While some ecotourists prefer to get their hands dirty and be more active participants in their environment, by either hiking trails or volunteering at a local school, the Chobe Game Lodge appeals to those who would rather be passive onlookers of the environment being visited. These two hotels are both certified under the Ecotourism Certification System, which is designed to support responsible behaviour (not only environmental, but also social and cultural) whilst delivering a quality eco-friendly product to tourists.

Analyze current trend

The overall question of whether ecotourism is actually a tool for sustainable rural community development and environmental protection or if its just another form of “greenwashing” is a tricky one. The environmental harm caused by ecotourism is ironic yet perhaps unavoidable. There are some strategies to reduce the environmental footprint and cultural understanding of ecotourists. For example, small scale, community-based afforestation schemes involving the planting of native trees can help offset damage caused by tourism developments. Regarding ecotourism being a form of community development, there are evident ways that communities can benefit economically from hotels and activities for tourists. However, some of these profits may only be delivered by rudimentary, low-level skilled workers, such as construction, and may not help a community develop in the long term, such as by providing education opportunities and ways to develop a community beyond dependency on one single industry, such as tourism. It is also difficult to consider the hotels, such as those mentioned in Botswana, as true venues of ecotourism, as the rate at which one could pay for a night at a luxury hotel or the champagne served with a dinner, could provide food on the table for dozens of children or education for girls. These paradoxes which exist do not agree with the intentions and visions of ecotourism, rendering the question whether a successful case of ecotourism has truly been demonstrated. Overall, ecotourism needs to be closely examined to determine whether or not its practices are truly sustainable.

Introduction

Travel and tourism is one of the fastest growing industries with greater

contribution to GDP than other large industries such as manufacturing, communications, retail, and finance. Tourism and travel is a promising tool for economic development as it creates jobs and stimulates economic growth. At present day, tourism and travel is doing better than ever before and for the first time, it supplies every one out of eleven people with a job in tourism and travel.

Hertz Rent a Car considers itself the #1 Car Rental Brand and serves almost every nation world wide. According to its website (hertz. com), the mission of the company is to “ be the lowest costs, highest quality and most customer focused rental company in every market we serve, creating value for our shareholders”. Their values are built on: passion, professionalism, respect, responsibility, innovation, integrity, diversity, discipline, excellence, and execution. Hertz was founded on the premise that it would be the global leader in “ mobility and equipment solutions” and to this day, as lived up that that vision. Operating for over 90 years, this American company serves 145 countries around the world and has almost 30, 000 employees.

According to wikipedia, Herz is the largest rental company founded in the U. S. based on sales; however it only has the second largest fleet in the U. S. car rental market. Enterprise Holdings leads the way with 979, 370 cars in service in 2013 while Hertz and Avis follow after with 488, 000 and 344, 000 vehicles, respectively.

Hertz also followed behind Entreprise last year in estimated revenue as Enterprise profited 11, 900 USD (in millions) whereas Hertz profited about half of that (\$6. 3K USD in millions).

Analyze customers, competitors, and suppliers

Its services appeal to every traveling customer who may need a rental car while on vacation. Hertz was founded as a value-conscious company and thus specifically appeals to those traveling on a budget. If one wants to rent a limousine or other form of luxury vehicle while on holiday, it is best to look elsewhere. One must be above the age of 25 years old to rent a car and have a valid drivers license. Hertz's services also appeal to customers with disabilities as it developed the first low-floor passenger coach in North America. These vehicles render access to those in wheelchairs or those who use ECV (four wheel electric vehicles) as the design of the vehicle offers a floor only a foot (~30.5 cm) off the ground between the front wheels which gradually goes up in slope towards the rear of the vehicle. This design was originally called the "H2000LF" by Hertz and was eventually marketed as the "Gillig Low Floor", which became widely deployed employed by public transportation services in the US. This design not only reduced loading and unloading times but also made public transport readily accessible to those with disabilities and increase convenience, in general. This innovative technology is a trademark of Hertz's promise to provide the best transportation at the most affordable prices to anyone and everyone around the world.

Hertz's suppliers range from many types of car manufactures depending on what is available in the local area. In its possession, Hertz has over 300,000 vehicles around the globe. The rental car industry is highly competitive as there are many other car rental agencies available worldwide such as Thrifty, Enterprise, Budget, and Alamo, as well as local car rental agencies. Hertz

also has a commitment to supplier diversity and in most recent years, has pledged to increase contracts with women and minority-owned supplier companies.

Contemporary changes in the industry

A significant change in the rental car agency is increasing environmental consciousness among the upper middle class (also those who can afford to travel for vacation) and thus the demand, desire, and luxury for greener, environmentally friendly transportation is increasing. This could decrease Hertz customers, as some may want to travel by public transportation or train, which emits less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. If Hertz were to offer green vehicles, they may end up attracting more customers or customers who normally wouldn't rent a car. A catch here is that most countries around the world are not equipped with charging stations for electric vehicles nor do they have gas stations that readily serve biofuels. Therefore, Hertz would need to selectively choose markets, perhaps Western Europe and Australasia could be a good place to start, and join efforts to develop electric charging stations and electric car services.

Advice on how the company should respond to the contemporary changes

Avis is the only company that has begun renting hybrid cars. This could be a good option for Hertz to implement as hybrid cars, such as the Toyota Prius, run on either gas or electricity and gets incredible gas mileage. Customers may be attracted to this option so they can save money on fuel while on holiday.

According to Wikipedia, Hertz launched a “ Green Collection” of rental cars in September 2006; however, it has yet to truly take off and become a strong marketing tool for the company. The website claims to offer Toyota Priuses, Ford Fusions, Buick LaCrosse, Toyota Camry, and Hyundai Sonata. However, in my personal experience in renting cars from Hertz, I have never seen these cars in the lots or viewed advertisements for a “ green collection. Therefore, Hertz could certainly increase advertising for this fleets as well as offer these options around the world, especially in cities where people are becoming more and more environmentally conscious. The claims regarding which electric or hybrid cars are available where re very misleading on the website as it says that Hertz has an agreement to bring the Nissan leaf fully electric car to some locations in europe and the United States; however a date for this release or more specific locations are unannounced. Certainly, a challenge for providing electric cars as a rental option will be the lack of electric charging stations. Thus, Nissan needs to work with city planners and other local organizations or companies to fund more electric charging stations to accommodate the s increasing electric fleet. On its website, Herts offers a very short one page “ The Hertz Green Traveler Collection” which shows three pictures of a Toyota Camry Hybrid, Toyota Prius, and Nissan Altima Hybrid. This is certainly not enough information as it fails to note which locations host these vehicles or the company's plans to increase the fleet in the future. One necessary action item for the company to take is to provide more literature and information for customers about their electric or hybrid car options asan i creasing number of people are planning their holidays or vacations around how “ sustainable” it is.

The only notable example where Hertz has implemented an electric vehicle plan is in Spain. According to the article published in the Green Fleet section of Auto Rental News on June 13th, 2014, Hertz has partnered with a Spanish electric company called Endesa and will be renting out all-electric Nissan Leafs. This pilot project, known as Spain Zero Emissions Mobility to All (Zem2All) is taking place in Malaga, Spain and the airport there in order to promote sustainable transportation efforts. Although this is a step in the right direction, Hertz is still far behind other companies and individual efforts to drive more sustainably. In order for Hertz to continue its claim as a leader in the car rental industry, the company needs to continue taking actions such as these to appeal to the sustainability mindsets that are changing the tourism and travel industry today as we know it.

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