

Summaries

Martina Backes und Tina Goethe

Four Decades of Critical Approaches to Tourism: Milestones and Traps

The critical discourse on tourism is as old as tourism itself. The rise of a debate on the faults of mass tourism was a result of the strong growth of the sector since the end of the 1950s. In this paper, the most important milestones and traps of the debate on tourism are discussed with a look at their particular historical context and in view of their strengths and weaknesses. Enzensberger (1958) excellently analysed the capitalist principles structuring tourism and animated the debate with his theory about travelling as a form to escape one's own social living conditions for a few weeks. The widespread dissatisfaction of leftist and solidarity groups with social conditions at home and the dominant world system as a whole prepared the ground for a broad reception of dependence theory. Soon the damage to traditional societies and cultures and to the social structures of the receiving countries caused by mass tourism from the North was a central point of the debate. At the same time „voices from the South“ complained about adverse social impacts and criticised the colonial-style character of tourism. The controversial debate was recognised by development experts, and for some time support for tourism as part of development cooperation stagnated.

Finally, during the 1990s, the debate on sustainability integrated the doubts and the critical views about tourism. The International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) 2002, launched by the United Nations 35 years after the International Year of Long-Haul Tourism in 1967, marks a preliminary result that stands for the hope to reconcile economic and ecological aspects. Nevertheless, the article concludes that between these two symbolic dates there is hardly any change in the basic socio-economic, environmental and cultural impacts on the people living in the main tourist destinations.

Judith Schlehe

Anthropology of Tourism: Between Field Research and Travel

Anthropologists and tourists seem to have a lot in common. The article explores similarities as well as differences between anthropological field research and tourism and relates this to current debates on the impacts of postmodern theory on fieldwork methodology and on the concept of culture. It is suggested that future anthropological research on tourism should investigate the creation of new cultural forms in the context of interaction between tourists and locals in order to overcome the conventional bias that attributes agency mainly to tourists.

Wolfgang Hein

Tourism and the Sustainable Development of Rural Regions in a Systemic Perspective. Examples from Costa Rica

This article seeks to demonstrate that the contribution of tourism to sustainable development can only be assessed in a holistic framework of analyzing social change. A systemic concept for analyzing societal change and the relationship between change on the local, national and global level is proposed. The main part of the article analyses the changes of a Costa Rican region brought about by tourism development in the context of post-fordist globalization. The impact of tourism on the local relations between economy and the environment, on socio-economic development in general and on local politics is analyzed and the conditions for stimulating a virtuous circle towards sustainable regional development are pointed out. It is shown that „sustainable development through tourism“ is not identical with „ecotourist“ development. The final chapters deal with political strategies to support sustainability on the local, national and global level taking into account the strong interdependencies between politics and the conditions for sustainable development on all three levels of global society.

Nicolai Scherle

Intercultural business co-operation in the tourist sector: conflicts and their resolution

Research on tourism in recent years has concentrated primarily on aspects of sustainability, regional development and the increasing diversification in the forms of tourism, while the central protagonists in the worldwide expansion of tourism, namely the tour operators, continue to occupy a subsidiary position in scientific debate, in spite of increasing globalisation and the associated challenges to the actors involved. This contribution presents an intercultural research project which is integrated into an application-oriented, interdisciplinary network of projects. The chief research aim of this project is to study the potential and risks of intercultural co-operation in the tourist sector, using the example of bilaterally co-operating German and Moroccan tour operators. It is the project's conceptual premise that the success or failure of a cross-border co-operation is not merely attributable to a purely economic understanding of co-operation, but rather should also take into account the cultural dimension of co-operation. Central to the discussion are those conflicts with which actors in German and Moroccan tourism are confronted in their everyday intercultural interaction, approaches to their resolution and an evaluation of German-Moroccan co-operation in general, especially in the context of conflicts arising.