

Guest editorial

Ian Seymour Yeoman and Una McMahon-Beatte

What would a historian know about the future?

Today, tourism is not what it was 100 years ago or is it?

Reflecting on the era of the Grand Tour, Zuelow (2016, p. 180) notes that:

There are similarities, an accretion of the past. Politics remain an important element of the story, even if in an altered way from when Queen Elizabeth I paid the best and brightest Britons to go abroad to learn about the neighbors. The notion that travel is good for you, that it will make you a better, more rounded person, is very much in play. As was true for spa- and beach-goers almost three hundred years ago, today people link health with leisure. Modern tourists maintain a desire to find the sublime and beautiful, even if they do not use those terms. Despite living in an age of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, postcards and other souvenirs still fill shops at major attractions and sightseers race to buy.

There are similarities but the scale of tourism is very different today. In 1950, when statistics began there were 25m tourists who took an international holiday. Today, that figure is 1.3bn and forecasted to rise to 1.8bn by 2030 (UNWTO, 2011). Furthermore, whilst tourism was once seen exclusively from a Western European perspective, today the rise in tourism in Asia dominates the discourse about the future. In the past tourism was for the upper classes of society, now it is an experience for nearly everyone. As such whilst the Grand Tours of Europe were a theme of Victorian dinner parties, holiday experiences are now only a click away with a photograph and a shared experience on Facebook.

It was A.J.P. Taylor (Zuelow, 2016, p. 181), who said:

Dear boy, you should never ask an historian to predict the future, frankly we have a hard time predicting the past.

Futurists do look to the past to predict the future (Yeoman, 2012). Historically, the evolution of tourism can be depicted as a number of key phases. For example, travelling in the Middle Ages increased due to the number of people going on pilgrimage, whilst travelling in the Romantic period, with its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, led to the development of the Grand Tour and the modern concept of the "tourist" (Durie, 2017). From another perspective, technological advancement has been a driver of tourism development. For example, in the past travellers to New Zealand by sailing ship from England undertook a journey lasting up to six months. Steam ships cut this journey time to six weeks. Today, the same journey by jet aircraft is only 24 hours (McClure, 2004).

Futurists use the evolutionary paradigm from the futures studies field to identify key turning points in the evolution of tourism (Mannermaa, 1991). As such, it takes a historical perspective and then identifies future turning points to demonstrate future evolution. This special issue of the *Journal of Tourism Futures* covers a broad range of topics that have been identified as critically important in the study of tourism, whether it is mass tourism, mobility, policy making or nature. Each paper connects the past to the future and identifies the evolution of tourism into the future.

Brendan's paper critically reviews the transformation of Las Vegas from a local watering hole to a world-renowned entertainment city. He highlights several turning points focussing on how external forces have played a role in shaping the city into what it is today. These external forces are then used as the underlying reasoning for a series of scenarios, with signposts informing predictions detailing what might happen to Las Vegas in the future. O'Regan's paper

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deconstructs the backpacker label, by reconstructing it using the historical antecedent of drifting to build a clearer conceptual foundation for backpacking's future. The findings suggest that the future can be found in its drifter past of countercultural imagination and the motivation to escape. Bingemer's analysis of the historical development of airline distribution identifies a series of turning points. Looking to the future, Bingemer focusses on the development of GDSs, especially for intercontinental flights.

Croce argues the growth of tourism brings accountability. The paper identifies the driving forces of change arguing these changes have brought 1.3bn international arrivals (UNWTO, 2016). The coming decades will present destinations with significant opportunities, equally matched by challenges, to tap the potential of a healthily growing sector. Shocks and crises will still temporarily affect tourism development over the next decade, but the long-term trend will remain steadily upwards, as increasing affluence in well-populated world areas will feed a far from exhausted demand for travel, and technology will keep driving innovation. If global volumes increase, their distribution across world regions is going to change. This growth will necessitate an integration of policies at multiple levels. Integrated multi-level governance is a distinctive trait of the tourism sector and increasingly a requirement across all sectors of the economy. The simultaneously global and local dimension of international tourism requires coordination and a shared vision across multiple levels of governance to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Wielenga's paper examines the ten-year development of the German Wadden Sea area as it transitioned to a tourism destination, and it explores which factors contributed to and/or necessitated such a development. Following the phases of transition, Norden–Norddeich gradually developed, and can now be regarded, as a stable and dynamic holiday destination. Presently, Norden–Norddeich is the most visited mainland destination at the German Wadden Sea coast. Examining another tourism destination, Seraphin's paper looks at the future of the industry in Haiti. More specifically, the paper answers the following question: will Haiti be able to reclaim a positive image and leading position in the Caribbean as a tourist destination? The turning point in the development of the tourism industry in Haiti was the 2010 earthquake, which triggered a will to provide quality products and service. Seraphin argues that alleviation of poverty using tourism as a tool in a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster context should be analysed, understood and approached from a human aspect point of view and perspective.

There will be no future of tourism without China. Yan argues that the development of tourism cannot be examined without an understanding of the social, political and environmental factors that caused the emergence of nature tourism in China. This emergence, he argues, is due to a number of factors including transformation of value orientations, seeking longevity, interest in suburbs and population migration. It is these historical factors which will also determines its future. Finally, Khodadadi's paper explores the emergence of Iran's cruise tourism market – as an attractive option for both domestic and international markets – with the introduction of the Iran's first cruise ship since the 1979 revolution, named "Sunny".

Collectively, this special issue reinforces the importance of looking to the past. History is a mirror for the future and as Professor George Santayana (2011, p. 231) famously stated, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". Hence, the reason for this special issue on the history of tourism as the papers represent the key on-going debates across the world about issues such as climate change, over-tourism, transport and economic development which are not new. As Croce notes in her paper in this issue, those with responsibility for tourism, have also responsibility for its future.

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