

## BOOK REVIEW

### Modern Mass Tourism

*Julio Aramberri, editor (2010). Emerald Group Publishing Limited*

This is a very interesting book in enhancing our understanding of today's modern mass tourism's roots. The author relates the roots of modern mass tourism with the born of human being with reference to theories in the field of sociology. In this respect, the book is against to our conventional understanding of modern mass tourism. It is generally taught that modern mass tourism was born after the second world war. However, this book broadens our understanding of the term of mass tourism, its activities in today's global world and the history of it.

The book provides answers to one's questions regarding to activities occurring as a result of the existence of mass tourism: "is mass tourism manna from heaven or evil from hell?", "how do we need to see it?", "has it emerged as a consequence of the needs and wants of the modern society? Or has it been available since the existence of the human being in the world?". To answer these questions, one of course needs to evaluate modern mass tourism from different perspectives, particularly from the sociological one as Aramberri does in this particular book.

When we read the book, we get an impression that modern mass tourism is like a fire it burns everything it touches upon. In other words, if you hold it you will burn you, however, if you leave it you cannot survive because of the cold. In today's global world, many developing countries rush into modern mass tourism for their economic and social well-beings. "Does it really worth for those countries to involve in?", "what is the opportunity cost of involving in tourism particularly for developing countries", "who gets the big piece from international tourism?", "are we reading the statistical data of the UNWTO on the right way? Or are those statistical data misleading us", "does modern mass tourism create its own slaveries?". The academics need to teach tourism on balance emphasizing its pros, of course, without ignoring its cons. These are the issues Aramberri mentions in his book with a particular emphasis on the roots of modern mass tourism.



Broadly speaking, as we know, modern mass tourism has the following main characteristics: (a) the participation of a large number of people in tourism; and (b) the holiday is standardized, rigidly packaged and inflexible. These characteristics indicate that mass tourism requires large scale tourism development and the involvement of international travel intermediaries, like travel agencies and tour operators which generally put individual components into one standardized package. Since mass tourism is standardized and inflexible, destinations can substitute for each other. For instance, for today's mass tourists there may be no difference between Greece and Turkey. Even if there are some cultural and linguistic differences, these two countries offer the same sun, sea and sand, and to some extent similar cultural backgrounds, as a packaged holiday product. Large scale mass tourism development means increased dependence on international travel intermediaries and market conditions in the generating countries. In this case, dependence refers to the marketing dependence of the providers of the tourism services in a host country on international tour operators. In strictly economic terms, large scale tourism may arguably provide some economic advantages to a host economy, such as mainly foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities. However, since it involves participation of a large number of people and large scale tourism development, its sociocultural and environmental effects can be a burden to a host community. Therefore, it is argued that tourism development should be sustainable (Croall, 1997; Middleton and Hawkins, 1998; Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Wahab and Pigram, 1997). Thus, we face a vague concept of sustainable tourism which is impossible to analyze in a study of this kind. Particularly, for a developing country, sustainable tourism may require hard political choices and may not be feasible since the country concerned may not have a well-established economic structure (Tosun and Jenkins, 1998). This is to say that debt-ridden, eager to earn foreign exchange and create employment opportunities, particularly most developing countries may have little option but to support large scale rapid tourism development without any sense of opportunity costs. In addition, tourism development may still require foreign expertise and investment as long as particularly many developing countries have financial, technological and managerial deficiencies. In addition, tourists from the developed countries may still use foreign airlines, tour operators, and travel agencies as long as these international corporations provide an acceptable level of services with reasonable prices. Therefore, since there will be a large number of different interest groups in tourism development, the application of sustainable tourism development, like its origin (sustainable

development), is rhetorical and non-operational. Unfortunately, these are the issues lacking in this book.

Including its introduction and afterword (*concluding*) sections, the book has nine chapters. The first chapter called as “The Scissors Crisis in Tourism Research”, with reference to the incident of the *Scissors Crisis* in early Soviet history, it deals with the pros and cons of the global tourism activities. The second chapter titled as “The Global Tourism System” that critically deals with the global tourism activities based on statistics. The third chapter titled as “Postmodern Matrix” that evaluates the tourism and related phenomena in the context of postmodernist philosophy. The fourth chapter called as “The Accidental Tourism Researcher” dealing with a sociologist’s, Professor Dean MacCannel’s, studies on tourism. His writings deal with the social and cultural aspects of tourism, art, architecture, design and planning. He is the author of numerous books and research articles in the field of tourism. The fifth chapter titled “Liberation Theologies”, The sixth chapter “Paleface Does South Asia”, The seventh chapter titled as “Down the Path of Philosophy”, the eighth chapter titled as “The Languages of Tourism”, and the ninth chapter titled as “Alternatives to Modern Mass Tourism”. This is an interesting book and radically against the conventional wisdom; helping us to enhance our understanding on modern mass tourism. There were some other academic works evaluating tourism from unusual angles (Harrison, 1988; Nash, 1989). The word “modernity” referred to the capitalist way of life. In this sense, it would be more appropriate, perhaps, to title the book as “Modern Mass Tourism and Dependency”. If it is “modern mass tourism”, do we know anything about the conventional mass tourism? if it existed, would it be different from its modern counterpart as the author calls it.

I believe this book can be very useful for the academicians studying tourism development, particularly from the dependency perspective with a focus on consequences. Although it may not be appropriate and may not provide a clear understanding for novices in the field of tourism, it may broaden the understandings of the master’s and doctorate students.

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### **Kurtulus Karamustafa**

**Kurtulus Karamustafa** (karamustafa@erciyes.edu.tr) is a Professor in Tourism Management and College Principal, College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Erciyes University 38039, Kayseri/ Turkey.