**Contemporary Trends in the Creation of Tourist Attractions**

**IB Geography – Changes in Supply**

Dynamically developing modern tourism has a continual need for new attractions, i.e.

destinations for millions of customers who have already visited the recognised attractions. As

these tourists have been everywhere, it takes a lot to impress them. A rich and versatile

tourism offer (only these have any chance of standing out from thousands of others) should be

based on a search for original attractions and when these are found wanting, the creation of

new ones. By necessity, the creation of these primarily involves culture and technology, for

the number of natural attractions is limited and those that exist have already been identified.

The attractions emerging these days are tied into a new model for the evolution of

tourism, the three E’s (Entertainment, Excitement, Education), which has supplanted the

traditional three S’s model (Sun, Sea, Sand). The emerging new attractions are meant to

entertain, excite (in a sense to frighten), to raise adrenaline levels and to educate by provoking

thought and reflection. Such entertainment and educational ends are served by the theme and

amusement parks that have developed as a result, the most important example being

Disneyland6

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The first Disneyland was created in California, and the next ones in Florida, Japan,

Hong Kong and Paris (Euro Disneyland). Other important attractions that appeared in the

second half of the 20th century include the Pompidou Centre, the Arctic Center located by the

Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, the Greenwich Waterfront, the Oxford Story and the Smurf Park

in Belgium.

Another method of creating new attractions is compiling lists of modern wonders. The

Swiss millionaire and traveller Bernard Weber announced a worldwide popularity poll to

determine new wonders of the world on his New7Wonders Foundation website. A jury

composed of the most distinguished architecture and art experts selected 21 objects out of the

77 that were nominated for final voting. Propositions for the inclusion of objects on the list

were sent in by SMS and email. In many countries, for example in Brazil, inhabitants were

mobilised to vote, for the government was banking on attracting large-scale promotion for the

nominated object and increased revenue from tourism.

On the magic day (all the sevens – 07.07.2007) at a grand gala in Lisbon graced by the

presence of astronaut Neil Armstrong, soccer star Ronaldo and singer Jennifer Lopez,

accompanied by the secretary-generals of the UN, Kofi Annan and UNESCO, Federico

Mayor, the Seven New Wonders of the world were announced. The jury’s verdict aroused

very strong emotions. The Egyptians were outraged by the Pyramids’ exclusion from the list,

while many experts lamented the absence of Angkor Wat and were surprised by the

qualification of the mediocre statue of Christ the Redeemer.

UNESCO officially dissociated itself from the ranking. It was stated that… the list of

seven new wonders of the world is the product of a private initiative and the outcome of votes

and quizzes; it has nothing in common with the preservation of unique objects of international

heritage, either cultural or natural.

In 2010, a campaign was launched to select the Seven Natural Wonders. For the first time,

natural objects in Poland competed to be named a natural wonder, in this case the Białowieża

Forest and Masurian Lake District. Masuria, splendidly promoted by the Polish Tourist

Organisation and local organisations (using the apt slogan “Masuria, Wonder of Nature”),

reached the actual final.

**Determinants of the Tourist Attraction Market**

The market-based approach is a crucial element in tourism development. The

coremarket attributes of attractions are their proximity to large cities (the primary source of

tourists), accessibility, opening times, daily visitor attendance and accompanying services. On

the basis of this information we can assess the quality of any attraction, paying attention to 6

such criteria as: authenticity, uniqueness and pulling power, i.e. the number of tourists, hence

the income generated by attraction managers7

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It might be asked which factors will influence the tourist attraction market in the

future. A distinction can be made between a group of factors producing the external

conditions for tourism and those factors linked to tourism phenomena. The first group

undoubtedly includes a group made up of political, economic, sociocultural and technological

factors (to mention the most important).

In addition, changes occurring in tourism itself (internal conditions), new trends,

fashions and forms of behaviour carry consequences for the tourist attraction market. One of

the most important factors shaping the tourist attraction market is developments in the media,

especially television

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Figure 1. Model of Tourist Attraction Market Determinants



**Political Factors** (e.g. changes in Europe, continental integration, terrorism and travel

security risks). These factors influence the geography of travel and visitor attendance at

attractions located in safe tourism regions. Problems of a political tenor have a significant

influence on tourist traffic in a given country. In the eyes of tourists, places in the grip of

conflict or natural disasters lose their positive image as safe and attractive destinations. This

results in a drop in the number of tourist arrivals and income. Tourism development plans are

postponed to a later date (e.g. in Israel, Pakistan and Sudan).

But a new tourist attraction might arise precisely because of this kind of situation. For a new

type of tourist is appearing – so-called “conflict” or “war” tourists – i.e. tourists travelling to

places in the grip of war or conflicts. These people are notable for their willingness to

participate in, or rather observe, unsettling events and to be part of them.

Such tourists desire to be part of the shifting cards of history, and seek emotional thrills by

going to dangerous places, often risking their lives in the process. The same applies to places

affected by such natural disasters as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis and floods. For

some tourists with particular interests, these can become tourist attractions. After the

December 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia, many tourists appeared to examine the

devastated terrain and even today the traces of this catastrophe are shown to tourists in

Thailand or Sri Lanka as tourist attractions.

**Economic Factors** (common currencies in Europe and the world, the situation in developing

countries, the accumulation of capital, globalisation). Dubai is an excellent example. The

wealthy sheik of this emirate saw an opportunity for the country’s economic development

(following the exhaustion of crude oil reserves) in tourism. In order to attract tourists, he

invested millions of petrodollars in the creation of new tourist attractions designed to shock

the whole world (the tallest building, the most expensive hotel, the Ski Dubai skiing station,

artificial islands shaped like palms or maps of the world, a replica of the terracotta army, and

so on). Tourist attractions generate profits from admission tickets and the provision of

catering, accommodation, transport, cultural and recreational services. Taxes paid by tourism

managers replenish local budgets. Attractions create a huge employment market in tourism

services6. Visitor expenditure exerts a multiplier effect in local and regional economies (food

production, catering, souvenir production).

**Sociocultural factors** (including changing family models, aging communities, the issue of the

disabled and nature conservation). These factors have an impact on the creation and

adjustment of attractions to meet ecological requirements and make them accessible to the

disabled and elderly.

Technological factors (advances in communication and telecommunication, virtual reality,

the home cinema, computer technology). Engineering and technology have been drawn into

the process of creating new attractions, for example the construction of the tallest buildings,

the most astonishing structures or means of transport which become attractions simply by

being used. The most exclusive attraction is currently space flight, although the number of

clients is limited in this case by the high cost, but in the not too distant future, as flying costs

are reduced, we will certainly be able to speak of space tourism.

**Final Conclusions**

The current trend for attraction development is strongly linked to more leisure time

becoming available, the rise in human mobility and people becoming wealthier. After the

Second World War, we can observe a kind of boom in tourist attractions. Not only investors 8

but also tourism associations or organisations and local government backed the creation of

themed tourist attractions. The leisure industry decided to create theme parks modelled on

Disneyland. Farms, factories and mines become involved in the creation of new attractions

based on the historical value of their heritage. Huge shopping malls and marinas converted

into attractions for tourists appeared.

The last 20 years of the 20th century brought unprecedented tourist attraction

development. They doubled in number over this period in many countries. It is safe to speak

of a tourist attraction phenomenon, and the market for attractions is dynamically developing

to satisfy the needs of tourists and tourism organisers. Attractions are continually being

created, discovered and managed in line with users’ needs and tastes, while attraction

development is of interest to the central government administrations of countries receiving

tourists, tourism regions and the whole tourism industry