Tourism and Community Cooperation as Exemplified by the Aloha Spirit--Peace Begins at Home

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ABSTRACT

This article explores a framework of how tourism can help achieve peace. A multi-level framework is recommended from the local to world levels. To achieve the proper environment or spirit, cooperation must begin at the local level and work its way to the international plane.

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INTRODUCTION

Since tourism is defined as travel for the purpose of pleasure, peace is absolutely necessary in order for tourism to take place. In our tumultuous world environment, peace is not easily achieved, is easily destroyed, and can never be taken for granted. Although every country adopts the goal of economic growth and development, the relationship between economics and peace is not clear. For example, economic prosperity does not guarantee peace, nor does it necessarily lead to more peaceful global relations. History has shown that nations can even prosper economically during wartime.

Peace studies have existed for some twenty years now, but has focused primarily on conflict resolution. The existence of conflict and hence, finding means to resolve them, has been the guiding premise, however, it behooves us to look beyond this approach toward finding ways to minimize and prevent conflicts through pursuing means of conflict avoidance. For example, it is felt that with tourism can come the opportunity for developing more positive and explicit direction toward peace, especially through the international linkages that promote interaction and understanding. This is the ultimate hope for the leading industry in the world with $2 trillion annual receipts, that is double the estimate of world military expenditures.

This can be accomplished at the various levels described in the

following matrix that examines dimensions of peace in relation to tourism. The schematic illustrates the benefits and mechanisms that enable tourism to become a driving force for peace.

DIMENSIONS OF PEACE FOR TOURISM

	BENEFITS	MECHANISMS
VISITOR	Self actualization Broad Weltanschauung Communality Connectivity	Visitor-resident interface Appropriate tourism Education
COMMUNITY	Improved quality of life Enhanced cultural heritage Positive images	Sister-state relationships Community support Local tourism associations

NATION	National cohesiveness
	  and unity
	National image
	National pride
		Bilateral agreements
		National agencies
		National tourism
		  organizations

REGION	Regional cooperation
	  and coordination
	Regional cohesiveness
		Multilateral agreements
		Regional marketing and
		  advertising
		Regional tours
		Regional tourism
		  organizations

WORLD	Global interaction
	Global awareness
	
	Universal justice
	Global society
		Global relations
		World information/
		  communication
		  network
		Global policies
		World tourism organizations

Benefits to the visitor that promote peace follow from travel motivations such as Maslov's self-actualization, MacCannell's (5) search for authenticity, Cohen's (1) seeking a spiritual center and further, the desire to expand one's Weltanschauung through meeting others and experiencing other cultures. Graburn's (3) model of the "sacred and the profane" depicts tourism as a sacred quest that provides a modern day religious experience that enables one to transcend one's daily existence. MacCannell calls tourism the "pilgrimage of the modern age." The relationship between tourism and values is explored in a World Tourism Organization Report entitled "Les Valeurs Spirituelles" (7) and by Comic (2) who discusses tourism as a subject of philosophical reflection.

Although some claim that tourism reinforces stereotypes and prejudices, I would argue that the opposite is more likely to occur. This happens in three ways: 1) when one visits an unfamiliar place,

false preconceived notions and ideas about the physical and social environments become evident; 2) visitors can observe that despite many apparent differences, people are basically the same; and 3) lifelong interest in the people and places visited is often the result of familiarity, i.e., social distance is shortened. Enlighted educational programs to prepare visitors for their trip can do much to enhance these effects.

Repeat visits are often functions of human relations; visits to friends and relatives are major reasons for travel. Feelings of communality and connectivity are engendered by tourism and can be promoted by education and appropriate forms of tourism that provide a greater appreciation for different cultural heritages and lifestyles and hence, a satisfactory experience for both visitors and residents.

At the community level an improved quality of life can result from a higher standard of living and better facilities, e.g., health and safety. Within the community, support by residents is a necessary component for the success of the industry with the ideal of cooperation and coordination by local community associations.

Positive. images of the destination, industry, visitors and residents alike, must exist. This will occur only if the visitor-resident relationship is that of host-guest, and not servant-master. Service does not necessarily mean servility. Positive images are requisites for a climate of mutual respect in the visitor-resident, and even the resident-resident, interfaces. Improved international linkages are often the goal of sister-state relationships.

In the struggle for a better national identity, tourism provides a means for enhancing national cohesiveness and unity. Tourism presents a country and its citizens to the world and hence can do much to promote a positive national image. It is often the case that greater self appreciation results from others being interested in one's culture. Moreover, a common theme of domestic tourism is "self discovery" that is almost always accompanied by an increase in national pride.

National organizations such as the U. S. Institute of Peace established after 20 years of effort by Senator Spark M. Matsunaga from Hawaii, share common goals with tourism. The 1981 Commission on Proposals for the National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution concluded that a focused federal investment in international peace and conflict resolution is in the national interest and is necessary to stimulate broad government and private and voluntary sector activity in international peace endeavors. One of their stated findings is particularly relevant to how national efforts can contribute to peace through tourism--"through the worldwide activities of government, private enterprise, and voluntary associations, Americans can expand their own and other's cross-cultural insights and abilities necessary to promote peace at all levels of society."

Within a region like the Pacific or Europe the potential for regional cooperation and coordination for tourism is great, since there are already existing regional organizations and goals promoting trade and commerce. Developing and marketing multi-purpose, multi-destination

tours fosters greater regional cohesiveness, despite existing competition. Regional tourism organizations could do much to provide solutions to common problems and promote bilateral and multilateral agreements that reduce barriers to travel. Recent events in Europe underscore the importance of freedom to travel and the need to monitor the impact of recent changes on tourism development.

Although McLuhan coined the term "global village" with the media in mind, tourism can be considered to be a more pervasive force in achieving a global society because of its people-to-people interface. This occurs through the increasing complexity of world society that fosters greater awareness of limited global resources of the "spaceship earth" that makes us world citizens, whether host or guest. In a sense, tourism can be regarded as the ultimate information/communication industry and can do much to promote universal justice or develop a world polity through international institutions.

TOURISM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Obviously there are overlaps and interrelationships among the five dimensions, however, what the schematic is meant to show are the various linkages between tourism and peace. This paper focuses on the community level, for like charity, peace begins at home. Because of the special nature of tourism, where the traveler visits a place that is also a place of residence, success of a destination depends on the management and organization of the industry and also support by local residents.

In these respects, Hawaii can be seen as a role model. It is a destination consistently cited as being very popular with respondents in national and international surveys and has healthy growth rates and prospects for the future. Surveys conducted by the Hawaii Visitors Bureau indicate that visitors to Hawaii have high satisfaction rates. In fact, about half of our visitors are repeat visitors. Further, polls of residents over the years have shown consistent support for the visitor industry.

From a current base of about 6.6 million visitors a year, the state projects that visitor arrivals to Hawaii by the year 2000 will be 9 million. Current visitor/resident ratios are 6 to 1 annually and 1 to 10 daily. These numbers are rather remarkable given that Hawaii is the most remote island chain in the world.

If volume is any measure of success, then this does not occur by chance, especially after some thirty years of mass tourism. Tourism has the potential for sowing the seeds of its own destruction. More than likely, a product that can still be considered to be a quality one after so many years is the result of carefully orchestrated policies and collaborative efforts that have evolved in the community after many long years of experience. Despite many mistakes, deficiencies, and problems still to be solved, a number of key areas can be cited as major accomplishments in tourism planning and management in Hawaii. Moreover, the 1984 Governor's Tourism Congress emphasized that more efforts need to be made for a quality tourism, rather than increasing visitor counts.

State Planning for Tourism - including a Tourism Functional Plan that is the most comprehensive in the nation, recent strategic marketing and development plans, periodic studies of the economic impact of tourism, an incipient social impact assessment study, occasional Governor's Tourism Conferences in which policies are formulated, an six sister-state relationships based on tourism. This year the state legislature increased funding for tourism to more than $20 million.

National Tourism Organization (NTO) - quasi-public Hawaii Visitors Bureau (HVB), the promotional arm of the state that has helped mobilize the industry in a number of collaborative efforts to improve the tourism experience within the community. These efforts include marketing, visitor satisfaction, community relations and a research program with an unprecedented 38 years tourism data series, about 20 annual research publications, and an annual research seminar. Within the auspices of the HVB Education and Training Committee, training videos, school modules, a brochure on career ladders, and career fairs have been developed. Other worthwhile efforts within the community worthy of note include the Return Witness Program for visitors who are victims of crime, instructional videotapes for visitors and residents, and interpretation programs for tour guides. All of these programs have been the result of cooperative efforts of industry, government, and academic personnel and volunteers.

Tourism Education and Training - a number of programs are available in the community, including the state and private universities, community colleges and private agencies. The Visitor Industry Education Council has produced several instructional units and videotapes for the school system. The Hawaii Hotel Association has an Adopt-a-Hotel Program for the high schools. The Department of Education sponsors a visitor industry internship program for disadvantaged high school students. Many scholarships and internships are given to students from private donors.

Legislatively-mandated School of Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii (TIM) offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, two professional executive programs, visiting scholar programs, and local and overseas seminars. Students are required to take a foreign language and 800 hours of internship in Hawaii's "living laboratory". Research and service projects are conducted by faculty and students for the community-at-large. The school is active in international, national, and local polity through its faculty and representation by Dean Chuck Y. Gee on the World Tourism Organization, U.S. Travel and Tourism Aministration, Pacific Asia Travel Association, and Hawaii Visitors Bureau. The University of Hawaii has established an Institute for Peace that will soon be offering a Certificate degree program.

Crossing the Cultural Boundaries - Hawaii is known as a beautiful, exotic and romantic destination. However, the key to the success of tourism in Hawaii and the message that Hawaii has for the world is the Aloha Spirit. Although some socio-cultural discord does exist, Hawaii's image to the outside world is that of cultural and racial harmony. Hawaii has been called the "melting pot of the Pacific" reflecting the socialization toward a common culture. However, the concept of "multi-culturalism" is preferable since it implies coexistence of different ethnic groups, rather than dilution.

Philip McKean's (6) concept of cultural involution is applicable to Hawaii where in recent years there has been a revitalization of traditional music, dance, art and crafts. Several hotels like the Kaanapali Beach Hotel and the Mauna Lani have implemented exemplary Hawaiiana programs for their employees and guests. The impact of tourism has been the topic of lively debate at the State Capitol, dialog talk show on public TV, and breakfasts sponsored by President Albert Simone of the University of Hawaii.

Resident Attitudes and Perceptions - a survey monitoring resident reaction to the economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects of tourism in Hawaii were conducted by this author. The results indicated that respondents generally felt positively about the effects of tourism. Priorities were ranked according to several key questions on trade-offs, while perceptions were determined by factor analysis. However, significant differences in responses by major ethnic groups were found.(4)

Future Prospects for Tourism and Peace in Hawaii - due to its excellent reputation and mechanisms already in place, Hawaii is an ideal place to pursue activities relating to tourism and peace, including education and research, sponsoring future conferences and seminars, and establishing a center for tourism and peace. These efforts will assist in the next stage in the progression of Hawaii as a direct provider of tourism facilities and services into a provider of expertise, knowledge and ideas in tourism planning and development, as well. Hawaii is recognized as one of the more successful visitor destinations in the world and we are working to building the ideal of Hawaii being a true leader in the tourism movement.

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