

# **Towards a Multicultural View of Tourism Politics**

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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to offer an insight into the 'world of tourism'. It opens with a selective historical introduction which gives an overview of the development of the phenomenon up to the mass international tourism of the present day as seen from western experience. Three historical periods form a framework for the foundation of modern international tourism. It is suggested that a number of events during these periods are significant in that they prepare the way for the phenomenal growth of tourism today.

The paper then reviews the literature from many areas and disciplines. With few dissenters, tourism is seen to be an interdisciplinary field of study. Whilst it has only recently attracted the attention of the academic, it has now become fertile ground for some social scientists, for example, geographers, sociologists, economists, and anthropologists. However, the field of study remains under researched, especially in the areas of political science and international politics (Matthews 1975; Richter 1983; Klosters 1984; Stock 1987; Richter 1989; Hall 1994).

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As with other academic research, financial support appears to have influenced the direction of work. The tourism industry, in its widest sense, has tended to foster studies that have commercial application. Supporting research has, therefore, tended to follow a functional path. With few exceptions (Krippendorf 1987), education and training in tourism follows a similar route (Burkhart & Medlik 1981, Ritchie & Goeldner 1994). More recently there has been a greater emphasis placed on the whole phenomenon of tourism. Questions relating to the environment, rural development and human development have stimulated writers, such as Jost Krippendorf to deliver passionate arguments away from the purely financial to broader issues of tourism study. As the Amazing Thailand Campaign commences, this paper presents a foundation for a multicultural view of the phenomenon of mass tourism.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism as a practice, as well as travel for specifically educational purposes, has a very long history. Holloway (1985:22) notes that although the term tourism dates from the early 19th century, the activity occurred as early as 776BC when the Greeks hosted the first Olympic Games. Others, for example Lickorish and Jenkins (1997:11) place prehistory tourism as being from English medieval times to the early 17th Century. Prior to this

time, it seems reasonable to assume that explorers, pilgrims and traders were the ancestors of today's tourists, before the division of the world into recognisable political units.

There will always be differing interpretations of history but few would argue with the observation that "a sense of history is vital to us all in seeking to understand our human condition" (Harrison 1997:1). The question is where to begin? Inevitably, we begin with ourselves but of course we need to draw on the work of others. At present we will draw on the work of E.H. Carr, an historian widely recognised for his scholarship in international politics, which divides the modern period of international history into "three partly overlapping periods marked by widely differing views of the nation as political entity" (1945:1). [Of course, he is writing from a British perspective, largely about Europe, immediately, following the Second World War]

Carr's three periods are:

1. The gradual dissolution of the pre-international order of the mediaeval unity of empire and church and the establishment of the national state and the national church. This period was terminated by the French Revolution (1789) and the Napoleonic Wars, which lead to the Congress of Vienna.
2. This second period was the product of the French Revolution and lasted until the start of the First World War in 1914 with the Treaty of Versailles as its



outcome.

3. The third period began in 1870 and reached its culmination between 1914 and 1939.

Following on from this there is a fourth period, about which Carr speculates (1945:34-37), but with which we are now more familiar. This is clearly the contemporary period in which the mass international tourist emerges. Nevertheless, it is argued this development can only be understood by drawing on previous periods.

Studies about early tourism are rare, however one revealing analysis is contained in the thesis John Towner wrote at the University of Birmingham, U.K. on the Grand Tour 1550-1840 (Towner:1985). A major leap forward in the history of tourism occurred from the early 17th Century with the popularity of the Grand Tour. Towner (1985) reveals that this selective look at Europe was a feature of many wealthy young men's lives and seen as part of their education. The period covered by his thesis provides fascinating reading up to 1840. By this time the French Revolution had passed and parts of Europe were politically divided into a number of nation states.

The early tourist, like today's non-packaged tourist, would appear to have had much greater contact with the local population than is presently the case for many mass tourists. Wealthy young men from Europe and their tutors did not have a monopoly on grand touring.

Accounts of travel on a European Grand Tour a little later, and in a grander way, were made on a more extensive tour led by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V of Siam) in 1897. This is well documented in the Siam Society library and archives in Bangkok. John Towner's (1985) contribution, through the analysis of diaries and logs from 1550 to 1840, offers one dimension on the history of the period prior to this. Through the examination of this data, he is able to trace the main cities and routes which the 'Grand Tourist' took. The logs and diaries kept, focused on learning and landscape, but they were not always experienced. Even at this time, plagiarism and fabrication were not beyond the scope of the diarists! This research also demonstrates the avid pursuit of souvenir taking on a massive scale and the following of the herd. Not unusual even today.

Quite clearly, Towner's (1985) study falls mainly into the first period suggested by Carr earlier, but it also extends into the second period. He concludes his study in 1840 when many of the European nation states we are familiar with today did not exist, for example Italy and Germany (Thailand, also, was known as Siam until 1932, when it ceased to be an absolute monarchy). However, a degree of national identity was evident in England, France, Spain and Russia as well as in some smaller European states. The ideas of nationalism were only beginning to germinate in many parts of Europe. This was a long way away from the establishment of many nation states,



and from the creation of national institutions such as national tourist organisations (NTOs).

The early tourist would have accepted that a tour would include the unfamiliar and a much greater contact with the native population. Frontier formalities would have been much less rigid. Passports were not introduced until 1914 and then only in certain countries. Now, although travel may be infinitely more comfortable and safer, passport and visa regulations control the tourists length of stay and in some instances admittance to the destination country. Moreover, often when a visa is granted on demand at the point of entry it constitutes little more than a tax (WTO:1997). The early period of tourism or pre modern period then lies deep in the past. It is largely documented in old logs and diaries with fragments emerging in historical novels and films. It was not packaged and certainly not the privilege of the masses. It was largely deregulated because world polity was anarchical and lacking in regulation. It does not fit too easily into the historical periods suggested by Carr however the ideas germinating during this time were to have a powerful influence on modern mass tourism.

## THE MODERN PERIOD

The evolution of international tourism in its modern sense is then recent. It develops from the perception

of people that they are part of a nation and implicitly that they accept the notion of nationalism. Kedouri (1966:9) states that nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the 19th Century. This would be in accord with the view, widely held by historians that the French Revolution in 1789 set the scene for the development of nationalism. The creation of states may be seen as the precursor of an international system centred on the nation-state. The contemporary international tourist, by definition, could not precede this period of time.

For present purposes, the second and the third of Carr's historic periods may be combined. For much of the time, conflict chiefly originating from national self-determination ravaged Europe, spilling over into Asia and Africa during and after the Second World War. There was a brief respite in Europe during the 1890's 'Golden Age' which favoured travel and tourism. This was primarily elitist and voyages by ocean liner became popular. The Titanic, which sunk on its maiden voyage in 1912, was one of a number of passenger ships built at this time. There was also some recovery in the interwar period. "An important step towards opening up this activity to the wider population came during the 1930s when annual paid holidays were introduced for the first time in the industrialised countries of Europe and beyond" (Davidson:1992). However, for the masses this was reflected in modest domestic tourism including day trips and visits to relatives. Urry (1996),



gives a clear account of this mass phenomenon in his description of the rise and fall of the seaside resort in Britain. The tourism of the elite, chiefly European and American, came to an abrupt end towards the close of the decade with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Therefore if international tourism in the modern period started to emerge centred around international society from the early 19th Century to date, it remained elitist for some time and remains so in many developing countries, today. Not only did the early part of the period encompass the consolidation of the nation-state as the primary political actor on the world stage, it also coincides with the development of mass transport. Burkhart and Medlik (1981:315-318) provide a select chronology of this development starting with railway and ocean liner services through to the air and surface transport more popular today. Without these developments, the attraction of something foreign and the means to get there, the prospective international tourist might just as well have stayed at home. Nevertheless, elitist tourism resumed and the development of passenger air transport progressed with the manufacture of the Douglas DC3 in the late 1930's. Mass transport services and facilities, also, were not developed at the same time throughout the world. Indeed, there are still parts of the globe which have remained relatively untouched by many aspects of this feature of modernisation. Nationalism is another matter.

## Nationalism

One might ask what has nationalism got to do with tourism? The most obvious answer, given earlier, is that the international tourist cannot exist without nations to cross. The nation, as expressed through the nation state, appears to be a central feature of the contemporary international tourism phenomenon. International tourists primarily visit nation state(s), not continents, regions or cities. Lying behind the nation, and the force behind it, is the nationalism and the national identity from which it derives. Both host and guest are familiar with such feelings in any encounter they may have.

The literature on nationalism is quite extensive and much of it emanates from international political and historical studies (Carr:1945, Kedhour: 1966, Bull and White:1966, Claude: 1966, Holsti: 1972, Reynolds: 1973, Waltz,1979,). It is clear that there is a change in perception on the part of a people. They are a nation ( rather than subjects of a ruler) and are prepared to have a stake and to engage in a struggle to achieve and retain national self-determination. In simplistic terms, the constituent parts of the phenomenon are a land, an idea . and a people. Nationalistic ideas are accepted by the people who lay claim to a piece of territory. The process of nation building continues today, however it was from the 1870's in Europe that significant progress was made. Wars and their settlements have been a popular field of



study and this accounts for the third period on which Carr and other historians focus.

### **War, Nationalism, International Tourism and the Modern Period**

Tourism is a perishable commodity in at least two senses. One that once deterred it takes time to recover and secondly that it virtually disappears if the destination is unsafe. Clearly wars and nationalism have influenced the study of international politics and diplomatic history. These factors have been influential in international tourism, too.

The 1870's are significant because they saw the unification of Italy and Germany. Both nationalism and international politics can also be interlinked because the two major wars of the 20th Century were between many nations. The First World War was largely a western conflict with an institutional outcome. The foundation of the League of Nations, in 1919 demonstrated the concern to solve differences by diplomatic rather than military means largely because the protagonists were exhausted. It failed to produce a lasting settlement on territorial or nationalistic issues.

The Second World War has a more powerful global claim and accelerated the acceptance of nationalistic sentiment and calls for self-determination. This war was unique in that many parts of the globe were

engaged in the conflict and more were affected by it. This included large parts of Southeast Asia, including Thailand. War has been described by Clausewitz as "the continuation of politics by other means". This conflict really established the practice of global international politics. The establishment of the United Nations with equal voting power in the afterwards General Assembly for all members confirmed the principle of equality among nation states. Nevertheless, the creation of the Security Council with permanent members who hold a veto, still retained de facto that some are more equal than others. However, a steady growth in membership through decolonisation and national self determination has resulted in many more tourist destinations.

There are two features with obvious similarities between mass tourism and practices in the second world war. They are mass participation and international awareness. If one believes that the origins of this war are rooted in nationalism and expectations of self-determination, then these two features are significant. They are also significant in the development of contemporary mass tourism.

Mass participation in the context of modern warfare meant that the bulk of the population were involved. Formerly, fighting had been conducted by volunteer, mercenary and conscripted forces. With the advent of nationalism, conflicts were no longer seen as the province of the elite supporters of a monarchy or dynasty



but became the concern of all who constituted the nation. Likewise, tourism became a mass activity because as more people engaged in this activity, it was no longer regarded as elitist. Even during the war, destinations emerged for 'rest and recreation' and these were not only for the higher echelons.

The war, as well as being a great leveller, promoted international awareness amongst the less well educated. Service in different parts of the world meant that many of those engaged in the war travelled more widely. They were also in contact with people who lived in the area. This still continues today with, for example Japanese, Australian and other links associated with the 'Bridge on the River Kwae' at Kanchanaburi, a western province of Thailand.

In conclusion, there are strong reasons to believe that recent wars, in particular the Second World War, contributed to the growth of modern international tourism. It has been pointed out that this conflict, which contained major elements of nationalism and mass participation, produced unprecedented international awareness in the world generally. The experience of travel by some whetted the appetite for international travel and tourism under more peaceful conditions.

## Post War

Economic recovery, sometimes

assisted by substantial aid, paved the way for a growth in international tourist arrivals and receipts. According to the WTO figures (World Tourism Organisation:1987), there were around 45 million international tourist arrivals in 1950 and this grew to slightly more than 330 million arrivals by 1985. Of those in 1985, 67.41% arrived in Europe whilst 11.1% arrived in the East Asia and the Pacific region. In the earlier years, these tourists when spread over so many countries and over the complete year were not so significant. The total number of arrivals in any one state is small and therefore, not surprisingly did not attract political attention.

In the United Kingdom, for example, it was not until 1969 that tourism legislation was passed. The Development of Tourism Act of that year was formulated primarily to help to solve two domestic issues and not really to facilitate international incoming tourism. At the time, there were balance of payments problems and secondly there was a need to placate nationalist sentiment in Scotland and Wales. The Labour Government of the day saw the introduction of this declaration of tourism policy as a way of both increasing foreign currency earnings and cosmetically stalling the devolution lobby who were gaining support for Scottish and Welsh independence. The initial draft of the Act made provision for the creation of tourist boards only in Scotland and Wales. Then, as an afterthought, a tourist board for England was included in response to concern by



tourism interests on south coast resort towns.(Dodson:1991)

In Thailand, the celebrations marking the centenary of King Chulalongkorn's first tour of Europe have provided clear evidence of a long interest in tourism. Leading the field in bringing information more widely available have been exhibitions at Chulalongkorn Library and at the Siam Society. In December, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn opened the Siam Society's international conference on the 1897 Royal Tour at the J.W. Marriott Hotel, Bangkok. A very substantial international and local audience proved that even today the sense of adventure associated with a tour is timeless, especially a Royal one. One clear outcome of the tour itself was a wider awareness of Siam in other countries. Following on from this measures were taken to formalise publicity and promotion.

A special publicity section for visitors was set up by the Royal State Railway of Siam as early as 1924. In B.E. 2502 (1959), a national tourist office was set up, called the Tourist Organisation. It was renamed the Tourist Organisation of Thailand in 1963, and then replaced by the creation of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in 1979 (Dodson 1994). In many respects multiculturalism has been as much a feature of tourism in Thailand as it was for Rama V and his entourage in Europe and it is also significant that this was recognised so early.

## Concluding Remarks

On the surface, Towner's Grand Tour may not be useful; firstly because the period is so much earlier than the modern period, secondly, because it is about Europe and not about the whole world. In fact, his contribution is potentially useful in at several ways. First, he completed this research in the 1980's, very much within the modern period. Second, the pre-modern period preceded the foundation of a new elite tourist, larger in number but still supported by two touristic prerequisites, means and motivation. Third, possession of some geographical knowledge and educational awareness would appear to link the modern mass tourist with the pre-modern tourist. The pre-modern tourist was in many ways the 'ancestor' of today's international tourists who have spread throughout the globe. The difference is that the pre-modern tourist, including the Grand Tourist, constituted a small elite and that tourism outside ones own country largely continued to be elitist until the advent of nationalism and world war.

After the Second World War, global recovery was aided in varying degrees by the allied victors, chiefly the United States of America. The Marshall aid programme in Western European countries greatly assisted the restoration of devastated economies and landscapes. Increased wealth, after post-war rationing, provided the discretionary income for leisure tourism, particularly in industrialised countries. Initially, many early post-war



tourists stayed within their own countries, but as leisure time increased as well they became more adventurous.

Both wars had involved mass participation and mass travel by many participants. The technological developments and greater global awareness resulting from this period assisted in the laying of the foundations for the mass international tourism of today. In Britain, former troop transport planes and other redundant military resources were converted for civilian use, for example, Vladimir Raitz, founder of the 1960's U.K. tour operating company Horizon, pioneered charter holidays to southern European destinations for British tourists using refurbished military planes. However, it was to be another decade before many charter aircraft were available to longer haul destinations.

Obviously, the advent of cheap charter flights and package holidays revolutionised international tourism in Europe and made it a really mass activity. However, before the late-1960's, only relatively small numbers of people travelled to Southeast Asia, principally from the wealthy industrialised countries of Western Europe, the United States and Australasia, and consisting of those social groups which could afford the not inconsiderable cost of sea- and later airborne travel to the Far East (Hitchcock et al:1993:2). Therefore the extra decade meant that it was as late as the 1970's before Thailand and other long-haul Asian destinations

experienced international tourism on a massive scale.

## **RESEARCH IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD**

### **Selected Literature on Tourism**

Resources for research are greater within European and North American countries, therefore it is not surprising that these sources contribute a substantial amount of the academic literature on the subject. "Pioneer [tourism] papers can be traced from the 1930's or even earlier but it has only been since the late 1960's that a significant and substantial body of literature has started to emerge" (Pearce & Butler:1993:1). One is tempted to ask why? Certainly the 1960's was a time of substantial growth in the liberal arts and the social sciences in the west. Indeed, it has been observed that "the field of tourism was discovered by social scientists in the early 1970's"(Dann, Nash and Pearce:1988). This would coincide with the foundation of tourism's premier academic journal, the *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR) in 1973.

The ATR has maintained its leading position, although there are now a large number of journals which focus on tourism, for example *Tourism Management*, *Tourism Recreation Research*, the *International Journal of Management and Tourism*. Surprisingly, in view of comments



about lack of research in the politics of tourism (Richter: 1983, Hall: 1991), writers in the early volumes of the *Annals of Tourism Research* were preoccupied with politics. This was the period during which the intergovernmental World Tourism Organisation was established (Jafari: 1975) and the demise of the International Union of Official Tourist Organisations (IUOTO:1975). Nevertheless, as we shall see, analysis of international politics and policy has been subsumed by other issues which have preoccupied the journal's contributors. In many respects while these issues may not have been addressed directly from a political dimension by the academic community, we can assume that the formulation of policy and subsequent implementation or non-implementation have been quietly bubbling away.

Britton sums up these 'other issues' in his review of Harry. G. Matthews' book (1978), when he wrote that "many in the industry choose to believe that tourism is somehow above politics" (Britton:1979). Certainly, by Volume 3, 1975-6, contributions to the ATR appear to have moved away from concern with the reporting of the activity of international organisations. However, there is more to politics than the recording of the deliberations of international political fora. For example, Jafari (1989) has suggested that academic writers offer at least four differing viewpoints or perspectives about tourism. Simplistically, these are those for, those against; those who are

in between and those who study tourism scientifically. He points out that these perspectives cross different disciplines and are not mutually exclusive.

## **Modernity and Post-Modernity**

If the 'industry' is above politics, as Britton argues, then another way of approaching the literature on the politics of tourism may be needed. Concepts used throughout social sciences and the arts include the classifications; modern and post modern. Some writers on tourism have commented on this (for example, Urry 1990, Shaw & Williams 1994:197-200). However, many of these holistic approaches, at present stem from studies of leisure in western countries. They show trends away from two week beach or city destination holidays towards greater diversity of demand. Whilst studies in this area make a valuable contribution to future trends, the prospect of setting the literature of the politics of tourism in this context appears daunting, especially when a significant proportion of mass international tourism remains 'modern'.

## **A Disciplinary Approach**

Another way of analysing the literature on the politics of tourism would be to look at contributions in a disciplinary context. Because the study of tourism is interdisciplinary, the contributions from a wide range of disciplines need to be considered. None can be excluded because all will have a



bearing on politics. Such an exercise could take each discipline one by one and follow individual developments or adopt one or more variations of the Jafari model mentioned above.

### **An Interdisciplinary Approach**

Another alternative would be to consider the development of writing from the late 1960's using an interdisciplinary perspective. This has been a route which has been followed by Pearce (1993). In this he considers tourism as an area of knowledge for the purposes of curriculum design. He concludes that understanding of the knowledge base "should give tourism scholars confidence that their study area has a respectable place in the changing world of knowledge".

Any review of literature is at liberty to frame a perspective of the knowledge base, however it also needs to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge base itself. In this case, the base is not clear, but as we have noted, disciplines have contributed in varying degrees at varying times. The Annals of Tourism Research (1991), devoted an entire special issue to this debate entitled Tourism Social Science. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to conclude that the contributors to this issue covered all the material required to place the study in context from a disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspective even at that time.

The disciplinary/interdisciplinary

debate may no longer be central, especially for the study of the politics of tourism although the exercise of power is unmistakable. It is sometimes said that knowledge is power. Writers in those disciplines which established interests in tourism studies, early, only revealed part of the field of study. In some ways study of the politics of tourism needs to follow the work in other areas of tourism because these assist the claims of who gets what.

### **THE POLITICS OF TOURISM**

The task here is to indicate which literature has something to offer for, in a sense, all writings about tourism are political contributions. They reflect the values and beliefs of the author(s). Frequently, they may also be documents supportive of specific tourism industry proposals or national tourism plans.

There is a continuing debate about values. It is quite topical currently in parts of Asia, particularly the Asean countries, where the promotion of 'Asian values' is very real. One article, which concisely sums up this debate, concludes;

"to say that one set of values is both distinct and superior, owing nothing to outside forces, is self-defeating. There is a constant interchange between different cultures - in the long run, values will be adapted and shaped to the needs of each society. The ability to respect and understand differences of emphasis on global



human values-providing they do not violate international norms-is one lesson of history that we should never forget" (Owen & Roberts:1997).

The short article, from which the extract above is taken, opens with a discussion of values from a religious, economic, political and cultural perspective, making a comparison with the West. In the conclusion, there is little that one would challenge, except the phrase in the last sentence. Nowhere in the article is it clear what international norms are, let alone who decides what they are. However, the authors are advocating a position similar to multiculturalism about which we are to return.

### **Multiculturalism**

'Mining thoughts' is a much loved phrase of Fay (1996) in his philosophy of social science and it is his thoughts I am mining here. Some further expansion is required in order to adopt a multicultural perspective to the literature and hopefully to the remainder of the paper. In the interplay of thinking between atomistic and holistic viewpoints, and indeed many viewpoints in between, Fay suggests that because of various problems with the concepts of respect and acceptance multiculturalism is better defined by means of the concept of engagement. By this he points out that;

"engagement suggests that mere acceptance of differences is insufficient.

Social science sensitive to the demands of living in a multicultural world is devoted to understanding the nature of these differences; it seeks to learn why people differ and how these differences sprang up over time and in what manner they relate to us" (1996:240)

Using the tenets of multiculturalism, as advocated by Fay, is an appropriate starting point for a study of policy and the politics of tourism in Thailand. Consistency also demands that they should be followed in this review of the literature. Acceptance or indeed rejection of differences is not the goal. Understanding why, how and what must take precedence.

In his final pages (1996:241-6), Fay offers twelve theses of a multicultural philosophy of social science which give advice on how to engage in interaction and growth which are the ends of social science understood from a multicultural perspective. These theses give good advice. They present difficult challenges because they run counter to many traditional one dimensional views of research practice, however when read they seem to make complete sense. For the present, they will not be listed or described, but simply incorporated in the following text.



## TOWARDS MULTICULTURAL VIEW OF TOURISM POLITICS

When discussing politics, the famous adage, 'Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely' springs to mind. The statement, whilst attempting to describe what power does, only differentiates two degrees of power and then offers a holistic conclusion. A multicultural view would be more cautious. There are many examples of power corrupting, however equally there are many examples where powerful individuals have used their power to the common good. For example the Maharaja of Jodhpur early this century, perceiving common suffering in his state due to the depression, ordered the construction of a new palace, thus ensuring widespread employment. Power, then, may corrupt and absolute power may corrupt absolutely but not for sure. There are atomistic examples which draw the adage into question.

'Engagement', as we noted earlier, demands an understanding of the nature of differences. Can a concept like power be construed differently in different societies and cultures? Understanding the idea the 'all powerful' in a Buddhist culture, like Thailand, may be very different from the supreme being as understood in Christendom or under Islam. Moreover, differences extend beyond religious belief into the very roots of the culture. For these reasons an awareness of the nature of differences is a cornerstone of multiculturalism.

A second example may serve to illustrate aspects of the understanding of the nature of differences in relation to power. Recently (1997), a conference was held in Hanoi to try to understand more about the Vietnam War 30 years after it had ended. During the debate, Robert MacNamara former U.S. Secretary of State for Defence pointed out that he could not understand why the Vietnamese had not surrendered in the face of such heavy losses [reported to be over 3 million]. The former deputy foreign minister of North Vietnam commented that the Americans did not understand that for the Vietnamese it was not seen as a question of surrender or die but one of ultimate survival whatever the cost. In this situation, as history shows, the Vietnamese were the more powerful. The United States was stronger in military capacity but weaker in the will to use it. Furthermore the conference revealed that neither side really understood the other. During the Vietnam War a meeting to arrange a ceasefire had been set up in Berlin. A few days before this the U.S. airforce began heavy bombing of Hanoi. Why did not the Vietnamese understand the 'logic' of this? Occidental thinking about applying pressure may not work in an Oriental environment and vice-versa. In the power game, engagement of a multicultural kind seems necessary for optimum understanding and the promise of successful realisation of objectives.

In Thailand, these 'powerful ones' may be, what Pira Sudham refers to as



the 'Nai', (see for example Monsoon Country, People of Esarn, Tales of Thailand, Shire Books) or they may be from outside Thailand, for example, the international components of the global tourism world which include the tourist. In earlier times 'the powerful ones' in England were the aristocrats who developed London homes and holiday homes for the 'nouveau rich' of the day to enjoy. The Grosvenors, Dukes of Westminster and others in London still retains freeholds on many of these properties. The resort towns of England, like Skegness, Buxton, Brighton, Eastbourne and Bournemouth were also created by wealthy powerful noble people at that time.

A multicultural view can accept these and the other examples as history from which we can learn. However, the lessons should not be repeated today without question. What is of great concern is "that the social distance between guest and server in many developing countries remains chasmic" (Baum:1995). Western writing about the business of tourism, at most accepts differences but frequently does little more than impose a western perspective of how something should be done. The so-called 'best practice' model usually comes from richer, western generating countries who dominate the supply of international tourists so it is assumed western practice and thinking is the best model. This can be challenged by the concept of engagement.

The politics of tourism is no different from politics in any other

arena. Politics is about power and therefore it is about who gets what, when and how (Lasswell:1950, Lukes:1974, Held:1984, Hall:1994). In the contemporary period, "(t)he role of government is an important and complex aspect of tourism, involving policies and political philosophies" (Lickorish and Jenkins:1997:182). Whatever political philosophy is pre-eminent within a state or land, it seems clear that those holding power decide who gets what, when and how. The development of tourism policy usually comes later.

International policies are strongly influenced by domestic policy. In the era of globalisation, we are also arguing that in an international context a multiculturalist approach is not only most suitable, it is inevitable. Thai people are well placed to adopt this approach because in many ways this has been the founding strategy since the days of King Chulalongkorn.

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