Tourism and the Democratization of Cultural Heritage

Prof. Dallen J. Timothy
Community Resources and Development Department
Arizona State University
dtimothy@asu.edu

Mass tourism, including most forms of heritage tourism, has long focused on the extraordinary and grand tangible heritage of humankind. Yet, most of the world’s heritage is ordinary and not of significant interest to tourism and tourists. This presentation examines the importance of ‘ordinary heritage’ as a community asset that is worthy of protection, interpretation, and symbolic consumption, even if it does not attract large numbers of tourism. The following questions will be addressed: Why does tourism focus overwhelmingly on the extraordinary, tangible, and ancient heritage? Isn’t newer, intangible, and ordinary heritage also important? How do different cultures and nationalities perceive the idea of heritage and its protection? The presentation will address these and other questions and scrutinize certain trends that are occurring with the area of cultural heritage-based tourism.

Dallen J. Timothy (PhD, University of Waterloo, Canada) is Professor of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University and Senior Sustainability Scientist at the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability. He is also Senior Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa; Furong Professor at Hunan Normal University, China; Visiting Professor at Guangxi University, China; and Guest Professor in the Erasmus European Master of Tourism Management Program based at the University of Girona, Spain. Professor Timothy is the founding editor-in-chief of the Journal of Heritage Tourism and is commissioning editor of Routledge’s Cultural Heritage and Tourism book series, and co-commissioning editor over three book series at Channel View Publications. He also serves on the editorial boards of 25 international social science journals. He has published 37 books and over 250 articles and chapters on many aspects of tourism. He has ongoing research projects in North America, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa on tourism topics related to heritage, religious tourism, geopolitics and borders, marginal spaces, conflict, ethnic cultures, retail and shopping, community development, and personal identity. He is a Fellow of the Hospitality and Tourism Management Academy and was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Association for Tourism Policy, as well as the John Rooney Award (American Association of Geographers-RTS) for ‘outstanding contributions to the field and discipline of applied recreation, tourism and sport geography’ and the Roy Wolfe Award for ‘outstanding contribution to the field of tourism geography.’