

**1. What is international tourism and how does it differ from domestic tourism? Be sure to incorporate the concept of borders!**

I think that the biggest difference between international versus domestic tourism, is the fact that individuals have to cross international borders with one form of tourism and not the other (but more so state or regional borders). There are also differences in the mode of transportation, legal requirements, and reasons for destination choice. According to the UNWTO, Domestic tourism is defined as “...the activities of a resident visitor within the country of reference, either as part of a domestic tourism trip or part of an outbound tourism trip,” and International tourism is defined as “...inbound tourism and outbound tourism, that is to say, the activities of resident visitors outside the country reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips and the activities of non-resident visitors within the country of reference on inbound tourism trips.” The most prevalent difference between the two forms of tourism is that with international tourism, an individual is entering into a different country or territory that is foreign to their state of citizenship. Because of this, there are different ways of having to go about traveling internationally, such as passports, flight tickets, language barriers, cultural differences and the unfamiliarity that comes with finding your way around the country at hand. With domestic tourism, I do believe that there are boundaries too, however they don’t tend to be limitations or filters, but more so “markers” of entering into a new region. However, I do think that since there is such a distinct idea of borders when it comes to international tourism and entering another country (whether it is physically or mentally), the symbolism for what it means to be there for the tourist is greater and more emotional than domestic tourism.

## **2. What are the benefits and limitations of international tourism?**

As the name implies, international tourism is touring internationally, or in a foreign country. While international tourism is a wonderful experience, there are specific benefits and limitations to it. Some benefits of international tourism are new experiences and changed perspectives, economic growth and social relevance for the host country, and also a time for the host country to show and preserve their culture (which fuels nationalism). International tourism provides opportunities for new experiences and changed perspectives in all aspects. Going abroad and experiencing another country's culture, language, geography, and society, creates a new perspective than before by allowing the individual(s) to realize that there are differences between humans and society greater than what their normal perceptions of everyday life are, and they are able to experience someone else's "normal". It also creates a greater sense of pride in oneself about where they come from while dually holding respect and admiration for another culture. International tourism also fosters economic growth and social relevance for the host country by profiting off of the money poured into their economy through tourism and travel, which can end up being a significant portion of their economic wealth. Hotels, attractions, restaurants, museums, parks, money spent at airports, etc, all contribute to economic growth. Tied to economic growth from international tourism is also social relevance. When more and more individuals choose the host country as a significant destination or place to see due to a variety of reasons, there is an increase in tourism. International tourism also allows the host country to showcase their culture and heritage while simultaneously preserving it, because the historic landscapes, statues, buildings, and other works of art are a part of why tourists come to the country in the first place. Some limitations to international tourism are language barriers,

cultural differences, and preservation of cultural heritage, communities, and environment.

Language barriers can be a big factor in whether individuals decide to travel to a certain country.

Although in many countries, individuals may still be able to find their way around without

knowing the language, the lack of understanding places a barrier on how fulfilling the trip can be

because there are limitations in socializing with the people within the country, who literally make up the entire cultural experience. Countries have now started to include multiple languages in

specific parts of the country where tourism is heavy, however tourists who want a more

“authentic” experience in the more local sectors of the country will be met with a frustrating and

awkward language barrier which can impede on the experience. The language barrier is only one

piece of the cultural barrier that prevails when tourists enter into a foreign country. Even before

traveling to another country, most societies have stereotypes or dislikes about certain countries

that usually stem from a difference in cultural values and norms. Without doing research

beforehand, individuals from completely different countries can run the risk of being involved in

an awkward or heated cultural misunderstanding which can affect the tourist’s perspective on the

particular country and their citizens, and the citizens of the country, on specific tourists. I think

the biggest limitation though is the question of preservation and sustainable tourism, and where

the line is to be drawn when it comes to what is allowed of international tourism. Tourism is an

industry/business so there are parts of the land, culture, and society that have to be altered in

order to meet the needs of new tourists and the changing mindset of what it means to have an

enjoyable experience abroad. Communities have to adjust to new tourists, overcrowding, lack of

housing, and a less homely environment, the land becoming overused, eroded, and altered, and

there is a constant worry by citizen’s of the host country of what could become of their culture

and heritage down the line.

### **3. From a demand perspective, how does international travel differ from domestic travel with respect to motives and constraints to travel?**

I think the biggest shift in demand for international travel and domestic travel so far has been with the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, there was a shift from people seeking vacation outside of the country, to staying within their home countries because of international borders being shut down to stop the spread of the virus. **(enter statistic)** According to the research of Rand Corporation: Objective Analysis. Effective Analysis., some of the main motives behind domestic tourism are “...economic factors, demographic factors, activities and specific destination-related attributes, environmental factors, weather, and transport infrastructure...” versus the motives behind international tourism which are usually more self-actualizing and emotion driven due to a more secure financial positioning, and a need for relaxation through vacations. I think a big constraint to travel for international tourism are the rules, regulations, and legal requirements needed. It is much easier to travel domestically without the need to make sure you have documentation of citizenship for foreign countries. Another demand constraint is the financial planning and resources needed for international tourism. Tourism internationally versus domestically can be a lot more expensive and require a lot more planning in order to make budget shifts. On the flip side, the demand constraints of domestic tourism are that most individuals aren’t spending as much money within their home country as they would abroad, which is also a reason why individuals *choose* to travel domestically.

#### **4. What is the magnitude of international travel and tourism globally and more specifically in the United States pre-pandemic?**

The magnitude of international travel and tourism globally in the United States and around the world pre-pandemic was extremely impactful. According to Statista, “...Prior to the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, the global tourism sector had experienced decades of almost uninterrupted growth. The world’s population spent billions on hotels, cruises, vacation rentals, and package holidays every year, until the market reached a value of \$776.4 billion in 2019...” Specifically in the United States, the direct economic impact of international tourism and travel was \$1.1 trillion dollars spent in the U.S. by domestic and international travelers. International tourism also “...generated \$277 billion in payroll income and \$180 billion in tax revenues for federal, state, and local governments. Domestic travelers alone spent \$972 billion (a 4.4% increase from 2018), and international travelers spent \$155 billion<sup>3</sup> in the U.S., down 1.8% from 2018...”(U.S. Travel.org)

#### **5. What was the impact (economically and emotionally) of the pandemic globally and on international travel to the United States?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a dramatic economic decrease in 2020 with respect to international tourism and travel by 58% or 680 billion dollars in national total direct spending. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-profit organization which focuses on national health issues and the U.S.’s position globally on health policies, “...The toll the COVID-19 pandemic has exacted on the global economy has been significant, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimating that median global GDP dropped by 3.9% from

2019 to 2020, making it the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression...”. The pandemic not only caused a severe decrease in economic funds for the United States and other countries around the world, but on an individual level, there was a shift in the emotional states of American society. The pandemic affected all age ranges, and the mental health states of many Americans were enormously affected by the large percentage of deaths caused by the pandemic. According to the article “The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Effect on Mental Health in USA – A Review with Some Coping Strategies” written by Barnali Bhattacharjee and Tathagata Acharya, the pandemic and its effects on mental health directly correlated with fear surrounding being exposed to COVID-19, having a close relative or friend contract the virus, and the potential death due to virus. The pandemic also caused feelings of isolation and depression, as borders across the world, in the country, and within regions/states were shut down, and house orders were mandated. KFF also shared the statistic that “...from July 2020 also found that many adults are reporting specific negative impacts on their mental health and well-being, such as difficulty sleeping (36%) or eating (32%), increases in alcohol consumption or substance use (12%), and worsening chronic conditions (12%), due to worry and stress over the coronavirus...”.

Essay:

Now that we are at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, with only remnants of news of the virus here and there, tourism around the world is back in business. However, there is still an issue that surfaced pre-pandemic and post-pandemic: overtourism. Tourism has been around for centuries, and with the rise in the global population, increased standards of living, and new availability of the world due advanced technology and transportation, overtourism has continued

to be a topic of discussion. According to the Oxford dictionary, overtourism is defined as the phenomenon whereby certain places of interest are visited by an excessive number of tourists, causing undesirable effects for the places visited. I think the biggest cause of overtourism is the growing population mixed with more availability to tourism and travel than ever before. With more and more people having access to traveling, vacation destinations, historic landscapes and landmarks, and other characteristics associated with certain countries of choice when it comes to tourism around the world will continue to see a rise in tourism.

Out of all the countries in the world, overtourism is most prevalent in the cities of Dubrovnik, Machu Picchu, Santorini, Barcelona, Angkor Wat, Amsterdam, U.S. National Parks, Iceland, and Venice ( “The Real World” by Trafalgar). In the film, “Bye, Bye, Barcelona”, viewers were able to watch interviews of various people living in the city of Barcelona, and their opinions of what tourism has contributed (more so negatively) to their city. The changes to the dynamic, culture, authenticity of the city, population increases, housing dilemma, and overcrowding, have all impacted the citizens of Barcelona and cities elsewhere, where overtourism is so prevalent. The consensus of most citizens living in these areas where overtourism is right at their front door step, is that some type of action needs to be taken, in order to stop overtourism from ruining their homes for good. Although the tourism industry is back on their feet from the pandemic, total income from tourism is still not quite where it was pre-pandemic in 2019, and with data and research predicting that tourism will continue to rise in the next two years, overtourism is only going to become more and more rampant. Overtourism hasn't left, and I don't believe that it is going anywhere anytime soon. The pandemic might've been a hiatus from the monthly tourist influx that countries experienced, however as long as individuals have the financial resources and motivation to travel, they'll continue to. I believe

that it is time to shift the focus from how to stop tourists from coming, to how to make it more sustainable for the future without jeopardizing the lives of the citizens within the host country, and the country itself. That's where the idea of sustainable tourism comes into play. Since the rebound of tourism post-pandemic, there has been a reset movement going on to "making tourism better" with the question of: how can we do better than before and reduce overtourism? Sustainable tourism refers to finding sustainable economic, socio-cultural, and environmental practices within tourism, that "...1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation..." (UNWTO). Some sustainable tourism practices that I think would be of benefit to countries experiencing over tourism would be a political push to recognize the complaints of the citizens, and to formally recognize and implement changes within the regions. Even with all the changes that could be made in order to make tourism more sustainable, if the federal government is not constantly enforcing it, then the plan is prone to failure. Another way to minimize the impact of tourism in the future is to restrict the ways that the country accommodates tourists such as hotels, monuments, museums, and other famous destinations being coined as "tourist destinations", and limit the amount of change to communities in order to make room for tourism. However, I don't believe that the same sustainable tourism strategy will work everywhere. Tourism models are great as a foundation or



push towards an agenda that can be beneficial to countries especially for finding a common ground/mutual agreement on changing tourism to make it more sustainable, however sustainable tourism looks different for each country so a “one size fits all” plan for sustainable tourism is no longer realistic.

Sustainable tourism still has a long way to go before countries around the world have a rock solid foundation for making sustainable changes to the way they go about tourism and travel, and what it means for their country, but acknowledgement of the long-term problems that could come from over tourism and discussions of what to do to moving forward is definitely a step in the right direction.