Tourism Enclaves: Geographies of Exclusive Spaces in Tourism

The rapid growth of tourism has led to the development of special enclaves or areas set aside for tourists. These enclaves are often characterized by their exclusivity, with restricted access or limited interaction with local communities. The creation of such spaces in tourism is a complex process that involves various stakeholders, including developers, governments, and local residents. This article explores the geographies of tourism enclaves and their implications for local communities and the tourism industry.

Defining Tourism Enclaves

A tourism enclave is a geographically defined area that is designed and managed primarily to serve the needs of tourists. These enclaves may include resorts, hotels, shopping centers, and other amenities that cater to the specific demands of visitors. Enclaves are often located in areas considered desirable to tourists, such as coastal zones, mountains, or historical sites. They are characterized by their physical separation from the surrounding local communities and by the limited interaction that occurs between tourists and residents.
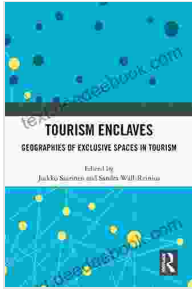
Tourism Enclaves: Geographies of Exclusive Spaces in Tourism by Jarkko Saarinen

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Types of Tourism Enclaves

There are various types of tourism enclaves, each with its distinct characteristics:

1. **Resorts:** Resort enclaves are typically found in tropical destinations or coastal areas. They offer a range of amenities and activities for tourists, including swimming pools, restaurants, golf courses, and spas. Resorts often have gated entrances and security personnel to control access and maintain a sense of exclusivity.

2. **Cruise Ship Destinations:** Cruise ship destinations are often developed to cater to the specific needs of cruise ship passengers. They include port facilities, shopping centers, and attractions designed to appeal to tourists on a limited time schedule. These destinations may be managed by the cruise lines themselves or by local governments.

3. **Historical Sites:** Historical sites that attract a large number of tourists may develop into enclaves, often managed by government agencies or private companies. These sites typically have controlled access and

regulated visitor flow to protect the historical integrity and provide for the safety of visitors.

Factors Driving the Development of Tourism Enclaves

Several factors contribute to the development of tourism enclaves:

1. **Demand for Tourism Experiences:** The increasing popularity of tourism has led to a growing demand for high-end, exclusive experiences. Tourists seek destinations and accommodations that offer privacy, security, and a curated environment tailored to their needs.

2. **Security Concerns:** Safety and security are paramount considerations for tourists, especially in areas with political instability or crime. Enclaves provide a sense of isolation and protection, reducing the risk of negative experiences for visitors.

3. **Economic Incentives:** The development of tourism enclaves can bring significant economic benefits to local communities. Enclaves create jobs, generate tax revenue, and stimulate local businesses. However, the extent to which local communities benefit depends on the management and distribution of revenue.

Implications for Local Communities

The creation of tourism enclaves has significant implications for local communities:

1. **Employment Opportunities:** Enclaves can provide employment opportunities for local residents, especially in sectors such as

hospitality, retail, and security. However, these jobs may be seasonal or low-paid, and competition from non-local workers can be high.

2. **Cultural Impacts:** Tourism enclaves can introduce new cultural influences and values into local communities. While this can enrich the cultural landscape, it can also lead to tensions between traditional and modern practices or create a sense of displacement for local residents.

3. **Environmental Concerns:** The development of tourism enclaves can have environmental impacts, such as deforestation, water pollution, and waste generation. It is crucial to ensure that enclaves are planned and managed sustainably to minimize their ecological footprint.

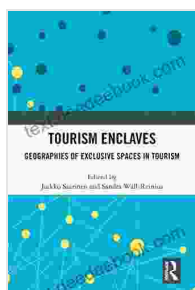## Implications for the Tourism Industry

Tourism enclaves also have implications for the tourism industry:

1. **Market Segmentation:** Enclaves cater to a specific segment of the tourism market, namely those seeking exclusive and controlled environments. This segmentation allows tourism businesses to tailor their offerings to the specific needs of these visitors.

2. **Competition:** Competition between enclaves can lead to the development of increasingly extravagant and exclusive amenities to attract tourists. This can drive up the cost of tourism and create a sense of inequality between enclaves and surrounding communities.

3. **Sustainability:** The long-term success of tourism enclaves depends on their ability to operate sustainably, both economically and environmentally. Enclaves need to find ways to balance the demands

of tourists with the needs of local communities and the preservation of natural resources.

Tourism enclaves are complex and contested spaces that both benefit and challenge local communities and the tourism industry. Understanding the geographies of these enclaves is essential for addressing issues of inclusivity, sustainability, and cultural preservation. By carefully planning and managing tourism enclaves, it is possible to harness their economic benefits while minimizing negative impacts and fostering a harmonious relationship between tourists, residents, and the environment.

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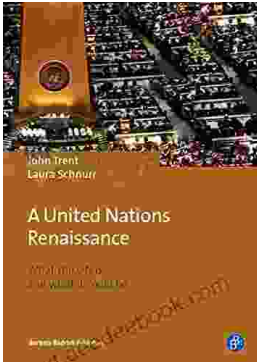|	
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