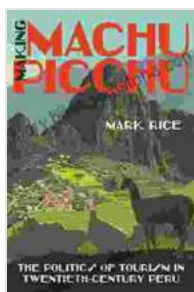


The Politics of Tourism in Twentieth Century Peru

Tourism has played a significant role in shaping the economic, social, and political landscape of Peru throughout the 20th century. From the early days of exploration and adventure tourism to the mass tourism of recent decades, the industry has undergone profound transformations, reflecting the evolving political and cultural dynamics of the country.



Making Machu Picchu: The Politics of Tourism in Twentieth-Century Peru by Mark Rice

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Early Tourism and the Politics of National Identity

The origins of tourism in Peru can be traced back to the late 19th century, when European and American explorers began to venture into the remote Andean regions in search of adventure and archaeological treasures. The discovery of Machu Picchu in 1911 by American historian Hiram Bingham further ignited interest in Peru's Inca heritage, attracting a growing number of foreign visitors.

The Peruvian government recognized the potential of tourism to promote national identity and stimulate economic development. In the 1920s, President Augusto B. Leguía initiated a series of policies aimed at attracting foreign investment in the tourism sector. These efforts focused on the construction of infrastructure, such as roads and hotels, and the promotion of Peru as a destination for cultural and natural tourism.

Tourism and Economic Development

After the Great Depression, tourism became an increasingly important source of foreign exchange for Peru. The government continued to invest heavily in the industry, establishing the National Tourism Board (Junta Nacional de Turismo) in 1936. The Board was responsible for promoting Peru as a tourist destination, developing tourism infrastructure, and regulating the industry.

Tourism played a crucial role in Peru's economic development during the 1950s and 1960s, contributing to the growth of the service sector and creating employment opportunities. However, the benefits of tourism were not evenly distributed, with rural communities often marginalized from the economic gains.

Tourism and Sociocultural Transformations

The growth of tourism in Peru had a profound impact on the country's sociocultural landscape. The influx of foreign visitors brought new ideas and customs, which influenced local culture and traditions. The tourism industry also contributed to the preservation and revitalization of traditional crafts and cultural practices.

However, tourism also led to negative social consequences, such as the commodification of culture and the displacement of local communities. The construction of tourist infrastructure, such as hotels and souvenir shops, often had a detrimental impact on the local environment and cultural heritage.

Tourism and Political Conflict

The political instability and internal conflict that plagued Peru in the latter half of the 20th century had a significant impact on the tourism industry. The Shining Path insurgency, which erupted in 1980, targeted tourist destinations and infrastructure, leading to a decline in foreign arrivals.

The government's response to the insurgency included the imposition of martial law and the militarization of tourist areas. These measures had a negative impact on the tourism industry, deterring potential visitors and creating a climate of fear and insecurity.

Tourism in the 21st Century

Since the end of the internal conflict, Peru has experienced a revival of tourism. The government has prioritized the industry as a key driver of economic growth and development. The establishment of peace and stability, the improvement of infrastructure, and the diversification of tourism products have attracted a growing number of foreign visitors.

However, the challenges facing the tourism industry in Peru persist. The need to balance tourism development with environmental protection and sociocultural preservation remains a key issue. The government and tourism stakeholders must work together to ensure that the benefits of

tourism are shared equitably and that the industry contributes to sustainable development.

The politics of tourism in Peru in the 20th century has been a complex and dynamic process, shaped by the interplay between government policies, economic development, and socio-cultural transformations. Tourism has played a significant role in the country's economic growth, national identity, and cultural landscape. However, the industry has also faced challenges, including political instability and socio-cultural impacts. As Peru continues to develop its tourism sector in the 21st century, addressing these challenges and ensuring the sustainable and equitable development of the industry will be of utmost importance.



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