

# The **GEOTOURISM** INDUSTRY in the 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

*The Origin, Principles, and  
Futuristic Approach*



Editor **Bahram Nekouie Sadry**



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*Edited by*

**Bahram Nekouie Sadry**

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## **DEDICATION**

*This book is dedicated to the Nekouie Sadry family;*

*And to:*

*All my mentors, who inspired me through their books and speeches;*

*My kind friends who encouraged and supported me;*

*My keen students who were a source of motivation to me;*

*And:*

*To all hard-working researchers, executives, and managers who endeavor to alleviate poverty and who popularize geoscience through developing geotourism and geoparks around the world.*

# About the Editor

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## **Bahram Nekouie Sadry, PhD**

*Adjunct Senior Lecturer and Geotourism Consultant*

Bahram Nekouie Sadry, PhD, is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer and a Geotourism Consultant. Dr. Sadry conducts research in the fields of geotourism, ecotourism, and wildlife tourism and heritage interpretation. He has published several books and textbooks on geotourism and has undertaken geotourism consultancy projects for the private sector. He is also an education consultant and a curriculum developer on tourism and geotourism in higher education and has conducted geo-tour guide training courses for his national government. Dr. Sadry is deeply involved in the development of geotourism and is a passionate advocate for the creation of national geoparks and UNESCO Global Geoparks around the world. He holds a BE degree (Mining Eng.), MSc (Geography), and PhD (Educational Administration).

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# Foreword 1

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It is less than 25 years since the first formal definition of geologically/geomorphologically based modern geotourism was published. Geotourism provision essentially gives travelers (or geotourists) the opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding of a destination's Earth history, geological elements, and landscapes. Indeed, across most of the world, geotourism has long been considered a geologically focused form of tourism. Perhaps, surprisingly, its antecedents can be traced back to at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By promoting and imparting something of the wonder of geoscientific inquiry and its outputs, geotourism can engender amongst its participants sufficient empathy to motivate their support for the protection and conservation of geodiversity and geoheritage, that is, "geoconservation." Both modern geotourism and geoconservation, alongside practitioner reportage, have from the early 1990s attracted academic study and consequently evolving managerial and theoretical underpinnings.

The seminal 1995 geotourism definition, published in *Environmental Interpretation* magazine, following further research and reflection, was subsequently revised several times by its author. That author has freely acknowledged that others—particularly in Australia, China, and Europe—had either mentioned "tourism geology" or something similar but had generally not indicated any specific meaning of their terms; their mentions with the associated studies really helped to lay the groundwork for modern geotourism's widespread acceptance as a new paradigm.

The first dedicated national geotourism conference, *Tourism in Geological Landscapes*, was held in Belfast at the Ulster Museum in 1998. *The Inaugural Global Geotourism Conference*, much practitioner focused, was held only a decade ago in Fremantle, Australia. The first international conference on the history of geotourism, *The Appreciating Physical Landscapes: Geotourism 1670–1970* conference, was held in London at the Geological Society as recently as 2012. Meanwhile, *The First International Conference on Geoparks* was held in Beijing in 2004.

The emergence of modern geotourism and the provision of geosites and geomorphosites interpreted for tourists both predate, by at least a couple of decades, the designation of the first geoparks; the latter can be stand-alone ensembles of geosites and geomorphosites or part of some national or

international designation. The first geoparks were established in Europe in 2000. Significantly, UNESCO's original Geoparks Programme Feasibility Study report of that year included the seminal geotourism definition and its major concepts. Formal designation as a member of Global UNESCO Network of Geoparks network has been available since 2004. Although geoparks were initially a European development, it is in Asia that they have particularly expanded in numbers and popularity. For example, the People's Republic of China has more than a quarter (31 of 111) and the region had over a third (39 of 111) of the UNESCO Global Geoparks designated by the mid-2010s; additionally, that country had by then designated 185, and recognized another potential 56, National Geoparks. Geoparks have done much, and more significantly than any other single initiative, to promote and develop geology-based tourism. Indeed, to maintain their UNESCO geopark membership, they must offer interpretative services. Probably the greatest contribution of geoparks is their requirement to engage with the broader, especially local and business, than just the Earth science communities. They are one of the success stories of 21<sup>st</sup>-century sustainable tourism, something for which their proponents are to be congratulated.

Modern geotourism provision meets geotourists' needs by encouraging them to visit localities with spectacular or readily appreciated, and usually (on-site and/or off-site) interpreted, geological/geomorphological features. These features are often more readily, at least in the marked seasonal climates of Europe and North America, seen outside of the major vegetation growth period; hence, potentially it can extend the tourism season in some coastal and upland areas. Of course, the appreciation of physical landscapes and the extraction of their mineral resources has been a pragmatic human activity, long before the recognition and practice of geotourism, especially for the purposes of agriculture, construction, and metallurgy; evidence for this can be found in both the archaeological and historical records.

The breadth of geotourism's encompass is clear from the preceding paragraphs. They suggest that any attempt to summarize this breadth of geoscience and its tourism component in a single book is a major and challenging undertaking. This book's 23 chapters are spread across five sections covering geotourism's concepts, assessment, interpretative provision, geoparks, and its global future. They have been contributed by an international assemblage of 35 authors, each contributing from their own perspectives and experiences. The various authors explore the spectrum of modern geotourism provision, practice, and development. The range of topics covered range from urban tourism to the world's best geosites and from mining geoheritage

to geotrails and interpretative writing. The included case studies, geographically spread from Albania to the Azores and the Americas to Japan, indicate the variety and wide distribution, geographically and by type, of modern geotourism provision. The diversity of views expressed in these chapters, helpfully summarized by the Editor, challenges readers to engage in studies to further understanding and disseminating geotourism beyond its current strongholds.

This book is a timely contribution to studies on the status and practice of modern geotourism. Its publication would not have been realized without the personal vision, wide connections, organizational skills and perseverance of the Editor, Bahram Nekouie Sadry. Fellow students of geotourism and the wider readership of geography and tourism specialists owe him, for this sterling effort, a considerable debt of gratitude—one which I am most happy to wholeheartedly express. As Bahram suggests in the book's opening sentence "Geotourism is an emerging and promising field for enjoyable and meaningful experiences in contemporary tourism." Similarly, this book is an enjoyable read and will add understanding and meaning to its readers' own geotourism experiences!

—**Thomas A. Hose, PhD**

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&  
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March 2019

## Foreword 2

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This is an important book because it brings together the interpretive and management aspects of geotourism on a global scale. It reveals geotourism's potential to popularize the fundamentals of geoscience and open up new pathways of sustainable economic development. Through his own chapters and those of the authors he has invited, Dr. Sadry has conveyed his global knowledge of the geopark movement and the art of geoscience interpretation.

For me as an American geologist, geoscience educator, *Roadside Geology* coauthor, and chapter author in this book, it is my first introduction to the terms geopark, geosite, or geomorphosite. This may be an example of the cross-fertilization a work of this scope can achieve, for example, inspiring its US readers to advocate for our country joining UNESCO's geopark system.

People know some aspects of nature in their bones. Scanning the night sky, they know that the Moon is Earth's neighbor and the stars are far, far away. In contrast, awareness is rare that shapes of hills area snapshot result of continuing Earth processes, while the bedrock is a legible record of many moments in the unimaginably distant past. This book offers the hope that in a well-interpreted geopark, visitors will get "deep time" and Earth processes into their bones, the way we geologists experience them.

I first heard the word geotourism in the late 1970s from my PhD advisor, Professor Dietrich Roeder. He is credited with, in 1969, introducing the word "subduction" from the Alpine literature into its present plate-tectonic sense. Though German was his native language, you only knew that because his English was "too good." He was playful in his use of it. Geotourism for him described the pleasure of blending geologic insights along the roadside with awareness of the geology's connections to local nature and culture.

The geotourism concept inspired me in 2001 to take some Georgia teachers to the Grand Canyon. I wanted my group to internalize the canyon's lessons on Earth processes and deep time. Was it possible to build the story up piece by piece on the drive from Phoenix Airport to our destination? Though I did not know the word "geosites" until I read this book, such sites were my answer. In *Roadside Geology of Arizona* by Halka Chronic, I learned that nearly the whole sequence of layers seen in the Grand Canyon is exposed in road cuts heading north from Payson, a town about 90 miles northeast of Phoenix. Four miles from Payson, in a county park and nearby road cut, you

can lay a hand on the Great Unconformity, with your thumb on a 1.6-billion-year-old rock that represents the roots of a mountain chain planed flat by erosion. Your fingers touch sandstone layers from the Cambrian Period, when life with shells first appeared, more than a billion years later. A perfect geosite to create a memorable experience, but with neither sign nor park brochure to mention it.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need for bone-deep awareness of Earth processes is greater every day. Without it, people are prone to imagining that scientists are only guessing when they say that burning coal is raising global temperatures, or that mostly gradual changes to landscapes and climate enabled the evolution of whales, tree frogs, and people. Admittedly, much progress could be made if politicians would finally yield to expert advice that geoscience in school needs equal emphasis with chemistry, physics, and biology. But this book offers an additional vision. Imagine putting the “Great Unconformity” in a starring role in a geopark promoted as a tourist attraction. Imagine, too, the local economic benefits of opening this new front of popular attention.

In 2012, I wanted to help teachers and others internalize plate boundary processes in a trip to California to be called “Geology on the Edge.” I thought to promote it using Professor Roeder’s word “geotourism.” Having the internet by then, I searched for the term. To my surprise, Wikipedia informed me that a team with the blessing of the *National Geographic Society* had lassoed it as a synonym for sustainable tourism, with only incidental Earth science significance. Fortunately, I persisted to find a blog by Dr. Sadry that identified geotourism as a parallel concept to ecotourism, distinguished as “abiotic nature-based tourism.”

The phrase “abiotic nature” seems strange at first. From the outer edges of Earth’s atmosphere to the deepest mines and drill-holes, it is now clear that some form of life is ever present. Even the first tourist in space, Dennis Tito, whom Dr. Sadry mentions in his intriguing “Space and Celestial Geotourism” chapter, brought biota with him. But ecologists use “abiotic” abstractly for the nonliving components of the larger Earth system. Without them, life could not exist. If we fail to preserve Earth’s favorable abiotic features, its special atmosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere, we fail to preserve ourselves.

Having found his blog, I emailed Dr. Sadry to ask how I could help support his meaning of geotourism. One eventual answer was his invitation to write a chapter (which became two) for this book. Being further asked to write this Foreword gave me the opportunity to review his entire labor of love, this book, filling in numerous gaps in my knowledge of geotourism.

In these chapters, you will read about successes and challenges in several countries with setting aside localities for geotourism. Whether carved out

by glaciers and rivers, or miners' dynamite and pickaxes, rock outcroppings attract visitors, and tourism can help local economies.

Reading on, you will learn of the tradeoffs between signage, leaflets, and digital media in conveying geoscience concepts. You will experience the tension between the often-lucrative enterprise of selling access to nature's joyrides, and the challenging and sometimes costly work of imparting wisdom in the ways of the planet. And you will see that like its sister activity, ecotourism, geotourism includes both keeping local people invested as volunteers and beneficiaries, and managing resources, so that we visitors do not love a place to death.

Regarding education by firsthand experience, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American geologist James McFarlane summed up geotourism's potential (his italics):

to teach persons not versed in geology ... not as in a textbook, but by pointing to the things themselves ... *There are some kinds of knowledge too that cannot be obtained from books, but must be gathered by actual observation.*

This book will help geopark managers, geoscience educators, and all researchers and students of geotourism to use those "things themselves" to instill bone-deep awareness of how the planet works. It will also help them use geotourism to create economic value for alleviating poverty while protecting resources for future generations. Thank you, Dr. Sadry, for having the knowledge, vision, and energy to bring it all together.

—**William (Bill) Witherspoon, PhD, PG**  
*Retired Geologist Leading Walks and Talks*  
*Co-author, Roadside Geology of Georgia*  
*March 2019*

**PART I**  
**Geotourism Concepts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

## CHAPTER 1

---

# The Scope and Nature of Geotourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### ABSTRACT

A brief introduction to the history of geological tourism and the definition of modern geotourism are given. The boundaries as well as the theoretical and experimental definitions of geotourism are discussed in this chapter. The theoretical framework about geotourism principles and its development are proposed. The structure and contents of the new book are reviewed.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Geotourism is an emerging and promising field for enjoyable and meaningful experiences in contemporary tourism. Geological tourism has a history of over a hundred years in some countries, including England, Australia, Iceland, and so on. To illustrate, geology-based tourism in England is said to be rooted in the last years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Hose, 2008), and many visitors to Iceland during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century mentioned the geological features as their primary reason to visit the country (Ólafsdóttir and Tverijonaite, 2018). So, the emergence of geological tourism in other countries was probably around the same time (e.g., Gray, 2004; Turner, 2013). The co-author of *Roadside Geology of Georgia*, William Witherspoon (2012) has uttered that “[in the USA], I have been hearing the term geotourism since the 1970’s, in the sense of geological tourism” (W. Witherspoon, pers. comm., July 16, 2012), but modern “geotourism” only appeared for the first time discussed by Hose (1994) in the first focus of university research and the academic literature in 1994, and was first then defined by Hose (1995),



gaining credibility with its acceptance by UNESCO's Earth Sciences division in 2000 and with the 2009 launch of the "peer-reviewed Journal of Geoheritage" (Hose, 2012).

The *Geoheritage journal* is an international journal exploring all aspects of our global geoheritage, both in situ and portable. According to Coratza et al. (2018 and all references therein) two terms that are being utilized more and more regularly have been made known in scientific terminology: "Geoheritage" and "Geodiversity"; More recently, Geotourism as tourism related to geoheritage and geodiversity and all in all, tourism related to abiotic nature appeared (e.g., Hose, 1995, 2016; Gray, 2004; Sadry, 2009; Reynard et al., 2009; Newsome and Dowling, 2010; Farsani et al., 2012; Reynard and Brilha, 2018; Dowling and Newsome, 2006, 2010, 2018). Therefore, over the past 15 years, geotourism has developed from an unknown niche trend to an approach in tourism planning and for abiotic nature conservation, especially with highlighting the UNESCO sponsored global geopark movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Geotourism is somehow selling the story and beauty of a country's rocks, which is noticeable in quite extensive subsectors, such as "Rural geotourism" (Farsani et al., 2013), Urban geotourism (Hose, 2006; Sadry, 2009; Riganti and Johnston, 2018; Del Lama, 2018; Gaidzik (Chapter3)), Celestial geotourism (Chapter 20 in this book) and Space geotourism (Chapter 20 in this book), Roadside geotourism (e.g., Sadry, 2009; Strba et al., 2016; Witherspoon and Rimel (Chapter 13 in this book)), Community-based geotourism (Turner, 2005; Mukwada and Sekhele, 2015), Underground and cave geotourism (Garofano, 2018), Submarine geotourism (e.g., Lima et al., 2014), Dinosaur geotourism (Turner, 2004; Cayla (Chapter 18)) even Meteorite geotourism (Chapter 20); Mining geotourism: one particular type of tourism related to mining heritage and mine sites (e.g., Hose, 2006; Sadry, 2009; Garofano and Govoni, 2012; Mata-Perelló et al., 2018; Gaidzik and Chmielewska (Chapter 21)); Adventure geotourism (e.g., Sadry, 2009; Farsani et al., 2013; Newsome and Dowling, 2018: 477), Volcanic geotourism (e.g., Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper, 2009; Woo et al., 2010; Hose, 2010; Dowling, 2010; Cooper and Eades, 2010; Turner, 2013; Erfurt, 2018) and, according to Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper (2009), connected geotourism with volcanic geotourism phenomena which consists of thermal springs (the springs of natural hot water, which are extensively used in health tourism, e.g., Turner, 2005); incorporating such hot springs to regular events held annually is also quite common in some countries (e.g., Japan and Indonesia). "Many resorts benefit from these spas for health and wellbeing reasons, which is especially common in Iceland, Japan and New Zealand, where there are numerous active volcanoes offering

an amazing scenery for visitors experiencing the spas. In this respect, the preservation, sustainability and education of various geosites is particularly based on volcanic heritage” (Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper, 2009, 2014). Therefore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, geotourism subsectors are unique and broad enough so that they deserve direct management, planning and marketing by specialized institutions as well as purposeful research. It is sometimes convenient to utilize one of these products which are highly specialized, at a larger geotourism or tourism scale; however, it would depend on the aims of the related companies. To accomplish this, the perfect essence or three key elements of geotourism (Sadry, 2013) are:

1. Abiotic nature as the main attraction;
2. Geological heritage interpretation<sup>1</sup>; and
3. Positive outcomes for nature (and locals).

Also, in a parallel manner, according to Weaver (2011) the core ideals of ecotourism are: meaningful participant learning and maximization of positive ecological and sociocultural impacts.

Hence, the core ideals of geotourism can also be developed in a similar manner comprising: meaningful participant learning and maximization of positive geological and sociocultural impacts. The present chapter intends to enhance the understanding of the geotourism industry as an outstanding subsector of the wider tourism industry, which truly deserves special attention from academics and related organizations. Meanwhile, geotourism activities should control tourism’s rising interactions with abiotic nature and especially geological heritage.

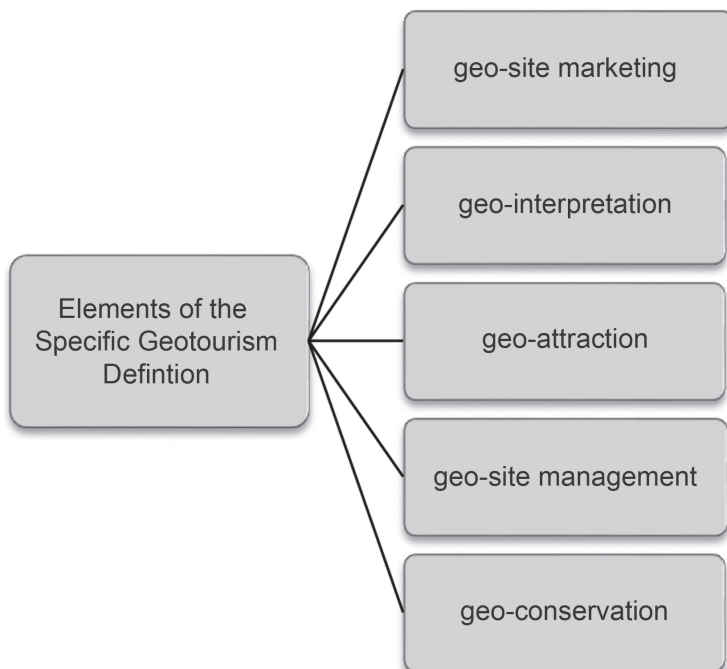
The first section below defines the term “geotourism” and proposes a theoretical frame for geotourism principles. Following this, a review of the structure and contents of the book is discussed.

## **1.2 TOWARD A DEFINITION OF GEOTOURISM**

According to Newsome and Dowling (2010: 4) “a more specific definition of geotourism helps to develop a focused strategy, which is fundamental in accomplishing the objects of geotourism. It includes geodiversity conservation, visitor education, and empowering local communities by providing knowledge about their geological resources and employment opportunities.” There are five elements of the definition of geotourism in more specific ways (see Fig. 1.1).

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<sup>1</sup> Also, see Chapters 9 (based on the 15 principles in interpretation), 11 (ABC approaches in geointerpretation), and 23 of this book.



**FIGURE 1.1** The five elements of the definition of geotourism in more specific ways.

*Source:* Materials adapted from Newsome and Dowling (2010: 4).

### 1.2.1 TRUE GEOTOURISM

“Modern tourism originated after the 1840s. It is just 60–70 years since geographers began to study modern tourism from a geographical perspective, and *Relationship between Recreational Activities and Land Use* by K.C. McMurry was generally recognized as the first work of geographers studying modern tourism” (Chen et al., 2015). Although it has long been recognized that tourism and geological background of our environment are inextricably interwoven, it is generally accepted that the first widely published definition of geotourism in the modern era was coined and began, hence, by the “father” of geotourism, Thomas A. Hose in 1995 as

*The provision of interpretative and service facilities to enable tourists to acquire knowledge and understanding of the geology and geomorphology of a site (including its contribution to the development of the Earth sciences) beyond the level of mere esthetic appreciation (Hose, 2006: 221) (see Fig. 1.2).*

Modern geotourism's aforementioned original definition along with some of its associated concepts was integrated within the UNESCO 2000 Geoparks Programme Feasibility Study (Patzak and Eder, 1998 cited by Hose, 2010: 268) that effected the movement of global geoparks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A UNESCO geopark is territory with well-defined limits that has a large enough surface area for it to serve local economic development. The geopark comprises a number of geological heritage sites of special scientific importance, rarity, or beauty; it may not be solely of geological significance but also of archaeological, ecological, historical, or cultural value (UNESCO, 2000).

Therefore, in a philosophical manner, geotourism with the suffix (-ism) is an umbrella for geoparks and "geoparks are obviously a major subsector of geotourism provision" (T.A. Hose, Pers. Comm., March 23, 2019) but from the managerial view point (exactly for practitioners) geotourism is just one of the tourism activities (but the main one) within geoparks among other "geopark tourism" activities (see Fig. 1.3).

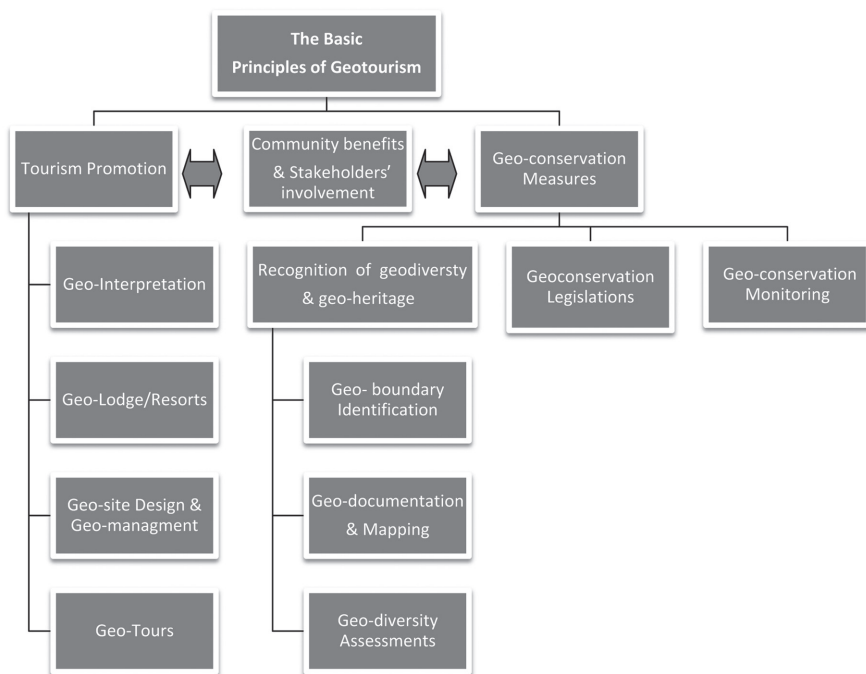
### ***1.2.1.1 THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GEOTOURISM***

The basic principles of geotourism consist of tourism promotion, geological conservation measures, community benefits, and stakeholders' involvement. For a planning strategy to be effective, the aforementioned four components must be used correctly (see Fig. 1.2).

### ***1.2.2 "TOURTELLOTIC GEOTOURISM": A TAG FOR DESTINATIONS***

Witherspoon (2018) states that "the geologist I clearly remember using this word [geotourism] in the 1970s was my mentor, Dietrich Roeder, who coincidentally also had brought the term 'subduction' into the plate tectonics lexicon" (W. Witherspoon, pers. comm., Dec. 15, 2018). Also he previously mentioned that "the 1995 definition you cite [from Thomas A. Hose in 1995 who first defined the term geotourism in the globe] is older than the very different definition that the Wikipedia article cites [Jonathan Tourtellot's geographical sustainable tourism charter & concept] dating back to 2002. And taking over a useful term [Geotourism] purely as a brand name is a *shame*" (W. Witherspoon, pers. comm., July 16, 2012). Unfortunately, recent usage of the same coined word "geotourism" by Jonathan Tourtellot, senior editor of National Geographic Traveler is not a new subsector of tourism

industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, “with no focus on geodiversity” (Neches and Erdeli, 2014); and according to Ólafsdóttir and Tverijonaite (2018), National Geographic and its so-called Geotourism Map Guides just seek to inform visitors concerning the more sustainable choices provided in each area, thereby helping to enhance the region’s geographical character and contributing to the well-being of local people.



**FIGURE 1.2** Geotourism principles and their promotion codes within geoparks and individual geosites (as geotourism sites).

Source: Own construction; some materials adapted from Gray, 2004; Dowling and Newsome, 2006, p 5; Hose, 2006; Sadry, 2012, 2013.

Fortunately it is sustainable tourism principles and a new comprehensive strategy for sustainable tourism for any destinations and a related “charter and concept promotes behaviors such as buying local products, improving employee well-being, and donating to local causes” (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2016) and this is just a *broad* term that covers all *tourism*. Also it is an excellent strategical device to change mass tourism to sustainable forms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, “*National Geographic* has spread use of the word

‘geotourism’ as shorthand for ‘geographical sustainable tourism,’ which is outlined in a charter document and in more recent interviews, Jonathan Tourtellot increasingly uses ‘destination stewardship,’ which would be a far more appropriate tag for the charter.” Destination stewardship is indeed of critical importance, when so many of the world’s special places are being ‘loved to death.’ Use of “geotourism” to mean “destination stewardship” ought to be ended, because it causes confusion with a prior use of the term, as a category of nonliving nature-based tourism. Geotourism is a sister category to ecotourism, which informs the traveler about a destination’s ecology of living systems. Geotourism teaches the traveler about a location’s Earth history, rock types, and landscapes. By increasing the visitors’ sense of wonder, both ecotourism and geotourism can motivate them to practice destination stewardship. This must not be swept aside by obscuring the term “geotourism” with a less appropriate use (W. Witherspoon, pers. comm., Dec. 15, 2018). We can’t change the name of the tourism industry, which is internationally well-known, to the geotourism industry on the pretext of integrating a sustainability charter to the tourism industry. The tourism industry would entail its own name and a brilliant sustainable charter.

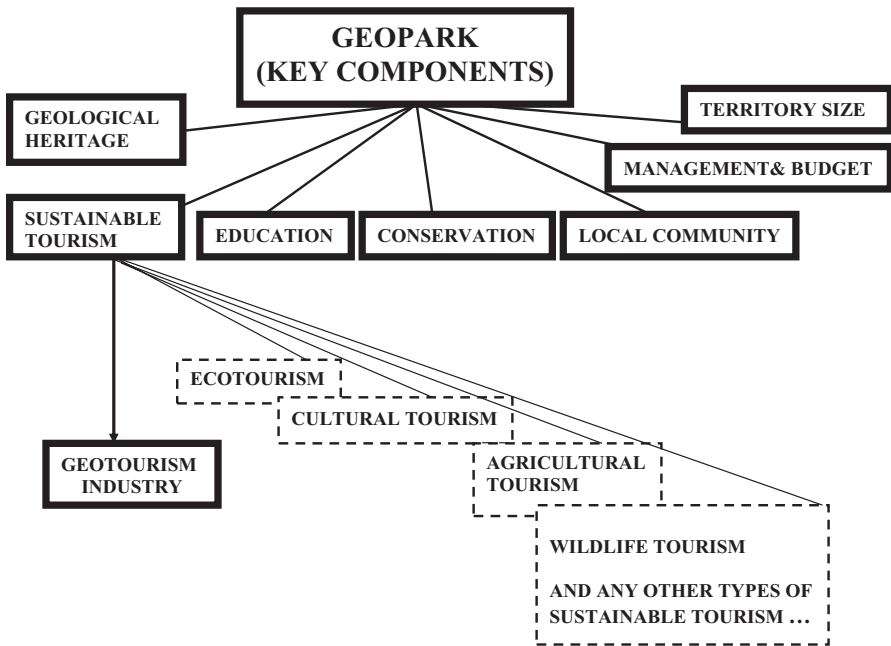
Tourism science would develop its independent subsegments for interpretation, attractions, marketing, management, and nature conservation. More recently, adding “geology” to the holistic concept and definition of the approach taken by National Geographic in the Arouca declaration have been reiterated to take this approach by José Luis Palacio Prieto and his colleagues (Chapter 17) in this book. As they noted that: “More recently, geotourism (as a modality of geographical sustainable tourism) was defined as ‘tourism which sustains and enhances the identity of a territory, taking into consideration its geology, environment, culture, esthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents’ (Arouca, 2011). Undoubtedly, geological heritage is a key component of the geotourism offer of the geoparks referred to herein, with the relationship between geological heritage with other types of heritage—both natural and cultural—as major factors.” And added that “This chapter does not provide an in-depth discussion of these two perspectives, although geotourism activities in Latin American geoparks are compatible with both.”

According to Reynard (Chapter 5 in this book), “some authors (e.g., Hose, 2016: 6) consider that the Declaration has added confusion more than solved the problem,” that emerged from National Geographic side (see Hose (Chapter 2 in this book, for more discussion, to avoid confusion and more probably to close the debate)).

### **1.2.3 CLARIFYING THE SITUATION**

#### **1.2.3.1 COMMON CONFUSION: ASSUMING GEOTOURISM AND GEOPARK AS EQUIVALENT**

Following the correspondence with geopark executives, and also considering the previous educational and consulting experiences of the author, as is mentioned in Chapter 17 of the book, considering geoparks and geotourism as equivalents among geopark executives and even sometimes among researchers, is quite prevalent. This may cause confusion in written articles, book chapters, and in using different concepts. For instance, when geotourism and geopark are taken as synonyms, a holistic definition of geotourism covers more attractions. So, geoparks would be more successful and diverse. This is a common mistake by geopark executives intending to be more successful in managing a geopark. While geotourism is an independent scientific and research subsector in itself and by considering the fact that geoheritage and local community are essential in order for the geopark to be registered, the development of other forms of tourism in geoparks is not only permitted but also would add to the diversity of the geopark, the attractions, and the revenues. Another benefit of incorporating other forms of tourism into geoparks would be enhancing the attractiveness and economic success of such areas. Geotourism is a central part of geoparks but in addition to geotourism other types of sustainable tourism using other diversity and heritage of a region are applicable. In most geoparks around the world, other forms of tourism such as ecotourism (e.g., The Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark in Malaysia; see Chapter 22), agricultural tourism (e.g., a “GIAHS/Geopark” site like Kunisaki Peninsula in Japan; see Chapter 14), wildlife tourism (e.g., whale watching in the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark in Portugal; see Chapter 7), cultural tourism, and so on alongside geotourism as foundation to a geopark, are promoted and related products are supplied for the visitors, which has added to the diversity of the geopark. Also, “geotourism is the vehicle for geoparks leading to the important UNESCO recognized global geopark criterion of sustainable development” (Newsome and Dowling, 2018: 478). As a result, geotourism is one of the tourism components of the UNESCO recognized global geopark criterion of sustainable development (see Fig. 1.3). Since geotourism has its own conceptualization and its own geoproducts, the definition of geotourism should be narrowed down and become more specific like abiotic nature-based tourism.



**FIGURE 1.3** The core elements and key components of a geopark. Other forms of tourism within geoparks, as noncentral components, dashed.

Source: Materials adapted from UNESCO, 1999, 2000 and GGN Guidelines, 2010.

### 1.2.3.2 GEOTOURISM DEFINITION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

According to Ólafsdóttir and Tverijonaite (2018) researchers emphasize the importance of narrowing the definition of geotourism to geology and its conservation, pointing out that applying a broader approach to geotourism might reduce the impact of the concept. To clarify the situation, I propose the following definitions as conceptual and practical definitions:

- a. A Conceptual Definition (Sadry, 2009: 17):  
It is knowledge-based tourism, an interdisciplinary integration of the tourism industry with conservation and interpretation of “abiotic nature” attributes, besides considering related cultural issues, within the geosites for the general public.



- b. A Practical Definition (Newsome and Dowling, 2010: 4):  
Geotourism is a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on geology and landscape. It promotes tourism to geosites and the conservation of geodiversity and an understanding of Earth sciences through appreciation and learning. This is achieved through independent visits to geological features, use of geotrails and view points, guided tours, geoactivities, and patronage of geosite visitor centers.

### **1.3 STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK**

This book comprises 23 chapters written by 35 authors from different countries around the world. Topics of different areas, including various samples and case studies, are covered so it enhances our understanding of geotourism as a distinct form of tourism, which is becoming a rising issue all over the world.

Chapter 2 (Thomas Hose) examines historical viewpoints on the geotourism concept. He fully discusses the history surrounding the definition of geotourism from Asian “definitions,” Chinese thoughts on geology-related tourism, Australasian and European definitions to historical aspects of geointerpretation in detail. Hose’s emphasis on the historical roots of geotourism includes geosites and geomorphosites and artistic outputs, and so on. He finishes by suggesting that recognition of geotourism, recent development, and history can and should be placed within a broader tourism history context.

In Chapter 3, Krzysztof Gaidzik outlines the opportunities and challenges for urban geotourism in the Polish small-sized towns to large cities like Kraków, Kielce, and Wrocław. He argues that the combination of urban tourism with geo-education are recognized by local governments as a great idea for promoting tourism in the town. He suggests that the geology of cities and town provides geo-educational elements for development of urban geotourism to visitors.

From Poland to Brazil, where Antonio Liccardo, Virginio Mantesso-Neto, and Marcos Antonio Leite do Nascimento (Chapter 4) discuss the relevance of Mining Heritage Attractions to promotion of geotourism. They present six cases chosen throughout Brazil that considered as cultural heritage. These sites are in the Ouro Preto, Diamantina, Chapada Diamantina, Ametista do Sul, Pedro II, Currais Novos as well as Itu, which allow geotourism for the general public to be developed.

Geomorphosites—Esthetic Landscape Features or Earth History Heritage? is the focus of Chapter 5 by Emmanuel Reynard. He describes the esthetic character of geomorphosites as heritage sites and argues that geotourism development depends on the geohistorical value of geomorphosites and explaining and interpretation of Earth's history and processes. The link between the esthetic dimension of geomorphosites and geotourism are illustrated with two examples: glacier tourism and geocultural sites.

In Chapter 6, Afat Serjani describes Albania's geoheritage and geotourism through the pioneering work of writing the first geotourism book in Albania. This work presented the main chapters of the first book of the series: "Geoheritage and Geotourism in Albania" for the selection of important Earth science sites, and the classification and categorization of geological sites for geotourism development.

Further promotion of geotourism in a fascinating island archipelago belonging to Portugal is outlined by Eva Almeida Lima and Marisa Machado in the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark (Chapter 7). The chapter highlights a number of planning and management efforts to promote the development of a sustainable tourism industry by integrating geotourism into its overall destination development strategy. They argue that the main challenge to this new form of tourism, geotourism, is to keep the balance between the enjoyment into the geolandscapes, geological heritage, and the geoconservation. Additional key points are outlined including the integration of the existing services and infrastructures with new interpretative services and products that allow the implementation of a high-quality geotourism in this archipelago.

The topic of the "Search for the World's Top Geotourism Destinations" is the topic of Chapter 8 by Murray Gray. The list presents sites that are both internally geodiverse and represents the world's geodiversity. Gray listed all the wonderful landscapes he has been to and considers as eye-catching and amazing. He proposed that the world's top 10 geotourism destinations are: Brazil/Argentina, Zimbabwe/Zambia, the United States, Australia, China/Vietnam, Switzerland, Bolivia, Iceland, and South Africa. However, these places are neither necessarily the best place on the Earth nor a perfect one for geological heritage interpretation, but the examples are a combination of outstanding natural beauty presenting geological features. Seemingly some of these spots are an ideal area for practicing ecotourism and probably perfect for establishing new geoparks simultaneously. He finishes by suggesting that these sites can be used to raise the public profile of geology, geotourism and geoheritage and also the list should also attempt to include sites from all the continents.

Moving from the Azores Islands to the United States, Ted T. Cable in Chapter 9 considers Interpreting Mining through a case study of a coal mine exhibit. The chapter presents definitions and principles of heritage interpretation and discusses the application of interpretation approaches at the famous coal mine exhibit in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, Illinois (USA). Cable presents potential benefits of using heritage interpretation in interpreting mining and promoting geotourism, and he encourages the application of professional interpretation practices to interpret mining. The chapter presents potential benefits of heritage interpretation to both the visiting public and to the sponsoring institutions.

Geotrails is the focus of Chapter 10 by Thomas A. Hose. This chapter provides a summary of the history, development, and nature of geotrails within the United Kingdom. The chapter necessarily explores the different types of geo-interpretative media, together with a brief consideration of their efficacy, associated with geotrails. It also examines the nature and needs of those persons who access geotrails. Hose suggests that, and indicates some of the ways in which, new geotrails might better appeal and be accessible to wider and younger audiences than those usually targeted by geotrail providers.

Geological and Mining Heritage Interpretation is the focus of Chapter 11 by Ross Dowling. The chapter identifies a number of characteristics of sound geo-interpretation. Dowling describes interpretation before characterizing geological interpretation (geo-interpretation) through a variety of interpretation methods. He then proposes the “ABC” Interpretation Method for geo-interpretation and argues that the key elements of geoheritage are the interpretation of the geological heritage which a visitor is viewing. This is referred to as geo-interpretation which places geology within the environment’s **A**biotic (nonliving), **B**iotic (living), and **C**ultural (human) attributes. This chapter illustrates geo-interpretation by showcasing interpretation for three geotourism attractions and three mine sites from six countries around the world.

In Chapter 12, William Witherspoon examines the Evolving Geological Interpretation Writings about a Well-Traveled Part of California, 1878–2016, USA according to the previous nine outstanding geology publications published between 1878 and 2011. These books cover place and routes connected to geology and give a clear explanation of maps designed to be used along the routes. California has a central role in the importance of geoscience concepts including early uses of plate’s tectonics to interpret outcrops and landscapes. The significant role of digital tools, particularly Google Earth (R) and Google MyMaps (R) to apply plate tectonics, location

markers, and planning out routes with driving time and also the possibility of social media to build on this foundation are discussed in this chapter.

This theme of the roadside geology is continued in Chapter 13 by William Witherspoon and John Rimel and the authors of this chapter describe Commercially Successful Books For Place-Based Geology: Roadside Geology Covers the U.S.; The *Roadside Geology* series books present interesting geological features and are widely available all over the United States and parts of Canada. The books are considered a valuable source of information for travelers and also a textbook at universities. It is a beginning point for its authors to tie geology to landscape, gold rush and settlement history, fossil collecting, climate history, and specific travel destinations.

From Community Engagement to the impact of Geoparks on the community, Malcolm Cooper and Kazem Vafadari share their experiences with Japanese Geoparks (Chapter 14). This chapter assesses the processes and patterns to be found in the Japanese community's engagement with Geoparks. It is based on trends identified by the authors over the past 15 years and longer, but is a commentary based on the activities of actual communities rather than surveys of tourists. The themes covered are the threads that make up the current community interest in geoconservation, rural decline and revitalization, globally important agricultural and other forms of heritage conservation (Geoparks, GIAHS and cultural heritage, Satoyama), and geotourism in Japan. These themes help us identify the impact of geoparks on the community, and the Japanese community's engagement with them.

In Chapter 15, Cristian Conibulo and Alexandru Andrașanu examine the role of volunteer management programs in geotourism development. The authors suggest that youth is a reservoir of creativity and energy for any community. If properly engaged and empowered it can have a very high impact on the growth of a geopark. Since 2013, Hațeg UNESCO Global Geopark has developed a Volunteer Program to use and inspire the young people. The chapter outlines the success story of the Volunteer Group in Romania. This chapter shows why volunteers are needed, how a volunteer program works in a geopark and what results were reached for local development, geoconservation, and geotourism promotion.

Chapter 16 presents a case study on the Geotourism and Proposed Geopark Projects in Turkey (Gülpinar Akbulut Özpaya). This chapter includes general information about the geographical and geological characteristics of Turkey. At the same time, this chapter is aimed at determining the proposed geopark projects and the perception of geotourism of Turkey.

Geotourism development in Latin American UNESCO Global Geoparks (Chapter 17, by José Luis Palacio Prieto, César Gosso, Diego Irazábal, José

Patrício Pereira Melo, Francisco do O’de Lima Júnior, Carles Canet, Miguel A. Cruz-Pérez, Erika Salgado-Martínez, Juan Carlos Mora-Chaparro, Krzysztof Gaidzik, Jerzy Żaba, and Justyna Ciesielczuk) is outlined through the developing four UNESCO global Geoparks, establishing the Latin American and Caribbean Geopark Network (GeoLAC) and the development of geotourism in Latin America. The chapter present five case studies from Brazil (Araripe), Uruguay (Grutas el Palacio), and Mexico (Comarca Miner and Mixteca Alta) as well as one aspiring geopark in Peru (Colca y Volcanes de Andagua). The chapter focuses on geoparks registered with UNESCO in Latin America. The authors argue that geotourism displays a growing dynamism and acceptance in various Latin American territories, although there are striking differences in their development. Latin American Geoparks are contrasting territories, some with a long tourism tradition, extensive infrastructure while others are socially and economically marginalized. They describe that geotourism is representing a true development strategy in rural territories in various Latin American territories currently characterized by limited social and economic progress that have led to emigration.

A worldwide growing Dinosaur Geotourism development is the focus of Chapter 18 by Nathalie Cayla. She argues that dinosaurs are not only a very popular science topic but also paleontological tourism highlighting dinosaur paleontological sites is booming. This chapter aims to understand how, over time, the attractiveness of dinosaur geotourism destinations will be elaborated. After having presented the scope of the diversity of dinosaurian outcrops, several case studies illustrate the geotourism trajectories of these sites.

In Chapter 19, Mamoon Allan promotes the concept of “Geotourism for all” through discussing constraints and implications for Accessible Geotourism. He argues that despite the developments in the nature and scope of geotourism experiences in the last decade, people with special needs are generally excluded from different types of geological tourism activities, and to date, geological tours for people with special needs are still very scant. He suggests that it is critical to promote the concept of “Geotourism for all” in different geological tourism sites and to enhance the ethical practices in geotourism business. The chapter identifies the implications for such concepts in the geotourism context.

In Chapter 20, further development and promotion of geotourism is outlined by Bahram Nekouie Sadry. He highlights the development of celestial geotourism and space geotourism through emphasizing the abiotic aspects of environment. He also proposes a categorization for these activities as a

subsegment of geotourism. Managerial efforts to promote the development of a Space, considering parts of the universe as geotourism attractions which will be used as space geological environment in the future, and Celestial Geotourism industry by integrating geotourism into its vertical destination development strategy is also discussed in this chapter. The author argues that the development of celestial geotourism, in terrestrial activities, can be used as a factor that contributes to poverty alleviation and income generation for local communities in remote areas—especially in developing countries, a component resulting in environmental sustainability, and as a platform to promote public space geotourism in developed countries in the future.

In Chapter 21, Krzysztof Gaidzik and Marta Chmielewska outline the opportunities for geotourism in the Post-Mining Objects through a case study of Upper Silesian Coal Basin (USCB) in Poland. They argue that postmining tourism is a very intensively developing branch of geotourism industry and includes tourism of stone quarries, mine sites, exploitation hollows, and postexploitation areas with specific buildings, infrastructure, and culture, that brings out their geo-educational, cognitive, and esthetic values. They suggest that the area of the USCB is a perfect spot for the development of postmining geotourism. The chapter presents the main attractions of the region and aims to present some of the so-called hidden potential of this region, that is, smaller or lesser-known post-mining sites, waste dumps, and objects with different functions. The authors believe that appropriate regional policy and promotion, long-term sustainable development, and geoprotection of the present geoheritage will lead to geotourism development and economic growth of the USCB postmining area.

The penultimate chapter (Chapter 22) is on the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark. Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani outlines the popularity of Langkawi as an island holiday destination and its sizeable number of visitors. He addresses the fact that an increasing number of uncontrolled and unregulated visitors would cause serious sustainability issues regarding over development in various areas of the ecosystem, namely environment, waste disposal, electricity, and water supply. This chapter seeks to discuss the issues of conflict and balance between mass tourism, overtourism, and geopark tourism, specifically geotourism and what the outlook of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark could preferably be.

In Chapter 23, the final chapter of the book, the editor synthesizes the topics discussed in the book. While reviewing the topics covered by contributors, I manage to introduce some new matters. In order to expand concepts, various theoretical and practical observations are brought together; I also develop

some policies and strategies essential for geotourism planning and expansion. In this way, the chapter's main effort is to provide a deep insight into geology and tourism and leaves a list of items to be discussed in the future.

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## KEYWORDS

- **geotourism definitions**
- **geotourism industry**
- **the basic principles of geotourism**
- **Tourtellotic geotourism**
- **true geotourism**
- **key components of geoparks**

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# The Geotourism Industry in the 21st Century

The Origin, Principles, and Futuristic Approach

*“A timely contribution to studies on the status and practice of modern geotourism. . . . A sterling effort . . . This book is an enjoyable read and will add understanding and meaning to its readers’ own geotourism experiences!”*

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*“An important book because it brings together the interpretive and management aspects of geotourism on a global scale. It reveals geotourism’s potential to popularize the fundamentals of geoscience and open up new pathways of sustainable economic development. . . . This book will help geopark managers, geoscience educators, and all researchers and students of geotourism to use those ‘things themselves’ to instill bone-deep awareness of how the planet works. It will also help them use geotourism to create economic value for alleviating poverty, while protecting resources for future generations.”*

—From the Foreword by William (Bill) Witherspoon, PhD, Retired geologist leading walks and talks; Co-author, *Roadside Geology of Georgia*

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Here is an engaging overview of the development of, definition of, and approach to modern geotourism, a growing movement to help sustain and showcase the distinctive geographical characteristics of many places around the world. This volume provides a clear conceptual framework with illustrative examples from all corners of the world to better understand abiotic nature-based tourism. The volume looks at the establishment and effective management of the over 140 UNESCO geoparks around the world and other travel and tourism destinations of interest for their significant historical, cultural, and frequently stunning physical attributes. With studies from a selection of geotourist areas, the volume explores urban geotourism, mining heritage, geomorphological landforms, geoheritage (based on cultural and historical interest), roadside geology of the U. S., community engagement and volunteer management programs, and much more. There is even a chapter on space and celestial geotourism.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Bahram N. Sadry, PhD**, is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer and a Geotourism Consultant. Dr. Sadry conducts research in the fields of geotourism, ecotourism, and wildlife tourism and heritage interpretation. He has published several books and textbooks on geotourism and has undertaken geotourism consultancy projects for the private sector. He is also an education consultant and a curriculum developer on tourism and geotourism in higher education and has conducted geo-tour guide training courses for his national government. Dr. Sadry is deeply involved in the development of geotourism and is a passionate advocate for the creation of national geoparks and UNESCO Global Geoparks around the world.

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