

Tourism, Marketing and Modern Iran

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This lecture explores relationships amongst commercial and public sector promotion of Iranian tourism, contemporary media images and 'Western' tourist motivation. In 'Western' tourist markets, modern Iran does not benefit from a positive image as a welcoming destination. Potential tourists receive and evaluate information on destinations from diverse sources including popular culture and news media. These images, often biased or inaccurate and rarely produced in Iran itself can be more effective drivers of tourism consumption (or non-consumption) than the formal promotional activities of the private and public sectors. One solution may be to emphasise a sensual, exotic 'Persian' past over an austere 'Iranian' present in tourism promotion. This risks confining culture to the status of an historical relic, doing little to foster more complete understandings of the Iranian present and perhaps limiting the scope for the future diversification of Iranian tourism beyond the heritage and cultural sectors.