

TO BE OR NOT TO BE AFRAID OF GLOBALIZATION IN TOURISM?

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Abstract: In the context of Romania's recent adherence to the European Union, the tourism represents one of the real opportunities that the near future offers to our country.

Or, the gained experience, existent facilities and prices competitiveness are factors that recommend Romania as an attractive destination but, in the same time, the imperative action of all the ones involved in tourism will have to focus on the offered services considered to be of best quality (conformable with the ones of other European countries) and on maintaining a natural environment – its raw material – in complete harmony being known the fact that then when the environment and tourism coexists in harmony, the environment takes benefit of the tourism (and vice versa!).

The importance of this reciprocal relation also reflects itself in the positive actions of preserving the tourism potential or rehabilitating the environment, but we must not overlook the destructive actions of some activities of tourism such as: the excessive use of some environment components (water, air, soil etc) in recreational purposes amplified by an irrational, often brutal intervention, of people upon the environment and its natural resources.

In this purpose, the lasting tourism is and will remain in harmony with the environment and place population and culture, in such a way that its development will take place in their profit and not their disadvantage.

Key words: tourism, lasting, change of mentality, major way of intervention

From „homo habilis” to „homo touristicus” we have witnessed lately „perpetuum mobile” mobility, either due to commercial, social, religious reasons or due to the simple desire of discovery. These personal motivations (predominant until the 19th century) have been doubled by: adventure, personal development, exploitation, spiritual enrichment, generating radically metamorphosed forms of tourism. These forms are different from the general evolution of the touristic sphere and have been determined by the recent social and economic changes, manifested by:

📖 **Economic, social, political but also risk globalization** – which is manifested in tourism through an imperative adaptation to international standards, flexibility in offers, risk elimination and fast evaluation of the newest tendencies;

🏡 **Negative impact consciousness generated by environmental** and the robinsonian desire to turn back to nature, giving birth to various forms of ecological tourism, which according to Mowforth (1998) may have different other names: alternative

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tourism; ecotourism; ecological tourism; sustainable tourism; green tourism; natural tourism; rural tourism; wild tourism; adventure tourism; agrotourism etc.

📖 **IT society** facilitated the access to the most performant means of communication, ensuring an increased speed of developing the activity and a better quality of services, as if following the slogan „If time is money, quality means productive time”, because time is valuable for each and every tourist.

📖 **Cognition and communication** are two key elements that characterized the touristic phenomenon starting with its embryonic status. The discovery of new horizons determined Marco Polo, Columb, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, James Cook to cross the Pacific and made Livingstone and Stanley to create the first touristic guides based on their own traveling journals and letters (they actually comprised the routes they had covered). Thus, the travel and knowledge, specific to the humanist period of the touristic phenomenon, give birth to the first materialized bonds: traveling books, journals, touristic notes.

The formative and educative function of the travel becomes **predominant** in the 17th, 18th centuries, being associated with the fashionable tendency of the aristocratic families. Known as **Grand Tour**, this type of travel identifies the young aristocrats' travel to continental countries, leaving and returning the same city, which left to perfect their university studies.

Modern travel appears together with the industrial revolution, which will actually mark the decisive tournure in the general transformation of „travel” notion, mainly determined by:

- 🔧 The new scientific discoveries;
- 🔧 The passing from predominantly rural economy to industrial economy;
- 🔧 The time reorganizing and its separation into working time and leisure time;
- 🔧 The benefit of technical innovations in transportation means (the steam engine, the railway, the plane etc.).

These transformations determine the change of traveling motivation: the functional role of the travel transforms it into an organized necessity, promoted by an autonomous system: the touristic industry (the half of the 19th century).

This is the period of the first organizatoric structures which come to support tourism (traveling agencies – Thomas Cook, for example, starting with 1851 in England, the first touristic club houses, camping club houses, the first national park, Yellowstone, in 1872 and the first international exhibitions – London, 1851).

The end of the 19th century already marks the existence of a well-developed network of touristic organizations, legislative elements, transportation means which represent the beginning of mass tourism.

The development of mobility is specific to the 20th century, being directly influenced by the appearance of the car.

From an individual activity to a collective phenomenon, lacking the qualitative elements of the previous form of travel, mass tourism emerged at the beginning of the 20th century; this auto destructive and environmental damaging phenomenon will become ample in the second half of the 20th century.

Hence, mass tourism has been the result of certain social, economic, political and technological influences from the Second World War Period (Poon, 1994) and the main factors responsible for its appearance and the conditions that encouraged its development were²:

- ✧ the proper atmosphere to travel due to peace and prosperity, the arise of paid leaves determined the increase of the living standard;
- ✧ man has more mobility and more spare time;
- ✧ the frontiers open;
- ✧ there is a greater discovery of the world due to communication means;
- ✧ the consumers contributed to the transformation of tourism in a mass phenomenon;
- ✧ the appearance of multinational hotel chains, hotel franchises, planes and promotional aerial tariffs or mass marketing are features that allowed the increase of new tourists number;
- ✧ the appearance of informatical systems and their application to the services distribution and the role of informatical technologies facilitated the development of mass tourism.

Communication is the second „key” word of postmodernist society having numerous facets, being realized through the most sophisticated communication means, but, surprisingly, even in business domain, there is more and more accent on reunions, symposiums, team buildings, seminars, events that have greater and greater weight in business tourism (a newly outlined form in nowadays tourism) tending to become a genuine industry.... which proves that even this domain is affected by globalization³.

Nowadays tourism and the touristic industry suffer major changes connected with some desired standards:

- services and touristic products quality;
- flexibility of all actors involved in the development of the touristic phenomenon, but also the two segments of the touristic market: demand and offer;
- the mesological attitude on environment;
- the individuality of the offer through some touristic programs moulded depending on each tourist's preference;

² B.G. Henche, *Marketing în turismul rural*, Ed. IRECSO, București, 2004, p. 19-20.

³ Alexandra C. Chiriac, *Asistența turistică în organizarea evenimentelor*, Ed. THR-CG, București, 2004, p. 6.

- the improvement of client relationship management (CRM – Customer Relationship Management) having as motto: „it is more important to keep a client than to gain a new one”.

Major changes may be identified in **the segments of the touristic market** (affected by the new social conditions) which are different to the ones specific to the mass consumption society. In this regard, the specialists in touristic marketing offer a new hierarchy of touristic forms at the beginning of the third millenium: business tourism, long distance travel (exotic destinations); club travels; health travels; luxury travels; event and adventure tourism; research and education travels; creative and hobby practicing holidays; active and sports practicing holidays, ecological tourism.

As far as we can see, it is now being searched that particular „peculiarity”. Tourists do not want anymore standardized, rigid touristic offers, manifesting a great interest for environment, silence, culture. But, there is a great request for simplified holidays, avoiding the touristic places in themselves and emphasizing regions or small corners more than countries. In this way great opportunities appear for rural tourism, underdeveloped areas or cultural tourism (Gilbert, 1989).

Also, the buying decision of tourists (metamorphosed in itself) has the tendency to promote short holidays, week-end type, to split their holiday over more periods of the year, but especially for „all inclusive” holidays.

Because of the introduction of all inclusive holiday offers, local companies often confront with the minimalization of their chances to obtain income by offering services to these tourists. This particular case is due to the tourists’ remaining on the same cruise ship or in the same touristic station during the entire period of their staying, where they will make their expenses and they will be offered everything they need. This conducts to the lessening of the opportunities for locals to take advantage over tourism. In comparison to the income realized by other hotels, we may say that holiday offers all inclusive type determine bigger imports and a lower degree of labor occupancy (Source: Tourism Concern). While this all inclusive system is very rare in Romania, in the European space it became an attribute of the modern tourist who respects himself and does not want any unpleasant surprises during his holidays.

The improvement regarding **the gratification degree** represents another tendency remarkable for the actual touristic offer in the European region: the tourist is more sophisticated in requests, more exacting in the quality of the services and „the authenticity of the offer” (Serra, 2002), demanding a genuine ethics in tourism.

Nowadays it is avoided more and more **the mass production** in the touristic domain, which had, why not recognize it, „its moment of glory” and generated large quantities of touristic products and offers, obtaining important incomes. That is why, **a double strategy** is imposed now and both for the conservation and development of the touristic resources; it pursues the optimization of direct and indirect effects of tourism in economy and society.

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