

SCIENTIFIC FUNDAMENTALS AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONAL AND GLOBAL STRATEGIES, IN THE TOURISM-ENVIRONMENT- AMBIENT RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract: *This paper wants to make some theoretical remarks on the relationship between tourism and environment, positive influences of tourism on the environment, and negative influences of tourism on the environment and the actions of protection and conservation of the environment and tourist potential. Importance of this reciprocal relationship is reflected in the positive conservation and tourism potential in the rehabilitation of the environment, but not negligible and destructive actions of some tourism activities such as excessive use of environmental elements (water, air, soil, etc.), for recreation and leisure, accompanied by an irrational, often brutal human on environment and natural resources thereof. To this end, tourism must be in harmony with the environment, population and culture in place, so that development is done in their profits and not their detriment.*

It is an imperative need to change the mentality: sustainable tourism, as form of tourism of the future must not repeat past errors, or applying the actions to protect and conserve the environment, tourism will have a lot to gain.

Key words: *tourism, changes in mentality, prevention, environmental conservation and rehabilitation, natural pollution, tourist traffic.*

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1. Introductory aspects

The tourism-ambient relationship presents a meaningful importance as the preservation and protection of the ambient represents the primary condition of development and evolution of tourism. This connection is a complex one, the latter acting on both directions. The natural environment, through its components, represents the basic resources of tourism, whereas the tourist activity has a both positive and negative influence on the environment, modifying its elements.

The definition of the environment gathers the quality of life, the individual's well being in terms of living conditions and the natural framework with the suitable habitats for animals and plants. The quality of life is determined by the long term availability in sufficient quantity and an adequate quality of resources such as water, air, earth and space in general, but of raw materials, as well.

As a cumulus of natural and artificial factors, that is factors created by human activities, the quality of tourism lies especially in the essential motivation of travelling, as the initial "raw material" (*Rodica Minciu*, pag.36).

That is why keeping a high level of quality to what natural resources are concerned represents the prerequisite for the continuous development and perpetuation of tourist consumption (*P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu*, pag. 468).

Over 30 years, beginning with the Environment Conference, from Stockholm, in 1972, mankind has begun to acknowledge that the issues regarding the environment are inseparable by the ones of wellbeing and economical processes, in general. Thus, one has come to talk about the "durable development" concept that implies no destruction or depletion of resources, ensuring the development.

Tourism has a considerable contribution to maintaining and improving the environment's qualities, acting as an active factor of the durable development, being in its interest to get involved in this issue and work in cooperation with the other industries in ensuring the quality of the resource base and its survival (*P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu*, pag. 472).

Over the years, the international tourist practice has proved that regardless of the type of tourism practiced (mass or alternative), in the end, a series of impacts felt in society as well as in the natural environment have resulted. Notwithstanding that mass tourism is responsible for the most visible and profound negative influences to the destination level areas, the latter being in their majority negative ones. One must not neglect, though, the benefits brought by tourism to the environment, to what its preservation and rehabilitation is concerned (*Mazilu Mirela, Revista de Marketing Online* Vol. 1, Nr. 4).

2. Positive impact

Tourism is one of the most important industries and knows a continuous development. More and more people are becoming interested in exploring new and far away destinations and cultures. Thus, the areas that dispose of particular natural resources are becoming more appealing to a considerable number of visitors, all the more because they offer the possibility of experiencing different traditions and customs of different cultures.

When there is a harmonious relationship between tourism and the environment, the latter takes its benefits from the first. There is quite of number of such examples, the majority belonging to one of these two types: preservation and rehabilitation of the environment.

Preservation signifies keeping and consciously using the natural and anthropical environment. Most of the times, preservation and tourism go hand in hand.

A lot of historical and archeological sites have been rescued from destruction due to the tourist's interest in them. Hundreds of houses with historical value from Great Britain would have been nothing but ruins today if they're weren't valuable to the tourists. Not only the commending houses and the castles were saved. Beamish Museum, near Newcastle, is an open museum that comprises a large number of humble looking buildings, such as the miners' huts and stores dating from the beginning of the XXth century. The latter have been saved from demolition due to their value as tourist attraction (*Gabriela Stanciulescu, pag. 16*).

All over the world, the environment has benefitted from tourism in different ways. Several countries from Eastern Africa, such as Kenya and Tanzania, have developed national parks immense game reservations for preserving the wildlife, the most known being Masai Mara and Seregeti. They have taken this step knowing that wildlife is the most important natural resource that attracts tourists in Eastern Africa. The natural parks and reservations have managed to protect numerous species that otherwise would have been destroyed by the uncontrolled and illegal game. Nowadays, Kenya has 13 national parks and 24 reservations, representing 7, 5% of the country's surface. Tourism does not only offer a reason for preserving the natural and anthropical environment, but it also delivers the necessary money for the aforementioned preservation: a part from the tourism capital may be used for maintaining the environment in good conditions. For example, quite a lot of English parishes use the donations form

visitors and tourists for reconstructions and restorations.

Rehabilitation signifies giving back life to a building or a certain area and resurrecting it as something different from its initial state. While preservation presumes keeping the environment in a condition closer to the original, rehabilitation implies a major change in using the environment. A lot of buildings and areas have been saved through tourism being rehabilitated as tourist attractions or as tourist accommodation spaces.

The world holds a lot of such examples of individual buildings and entire areas which have been given a second chance by rehabilitating them as tourist attractions. The old factories have begun a new life as museums; industrial areas have been transformed in locations for different festivals; a great variety of castles and commanding houses that were in desolation have become accommodation spaces for tourists. Such examples prove how the environment can benefit from tourism saving what otherwise would have been entirely lost.

One must bear in mind that both the natural and the anthropical resources must be preserved for they are available one time only; once consumed, the existence capacity of the tourist destination is terminated. That is why tourist development must be oriented towards the social net benefit and less towards the profit and loss account. The concept of social net benefit presumes that combination of activities that determines a local development with the least possible deterioration of the natural and social environment. To control this phenomenon all participants must understand the need for durable development and must also acknowledge that success depends on resources and their preservation (*Gabriela Stanciulescu, pag. 17*).

3. Negative impact

The destructive actions of certain tourist activities are usually manifested by inadequately using the ambient environment, for recreational purposes and doubled by the brutal intervention of man over the landscape and its natural resources (*P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu*, pag. 470).

Tourism is a consumer of tourist space and resources, implicitly participating to the degradation and pollution of the environment and the tourist potential. This degradation is done either by direct tourist pressure on the landscape, flora and fauna or other tourist objectives that tourism can partially or totally damage, either by the incorrect concept of valorizing certain tourist areas, points or objectives.

The man's pressure on the natural environment increases every day, people moving constantly and on longer distances than in the past. Spending quality time offers the privilege of an intense exploitation and of a conquest of the natural environment, the most part of the free time being done outside town, in nature. Periodical trips, weekends or vacations towards green spaces have become a social habit with negative consequences on the environment.

A lot of the damages caused by tourism to the environment are caused by the increased number of visitors going to destinations that have over surpassed their optimal receiving capacity. The environment rarely breaks away from negative effects when the number of tourists is quite big. The quality of water and air and the diversity of flora and fauna are inevitably affected in one way or the other, as well as the landscapes, cities and sites (*P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu*, pag. 470).

In the areas with increased attraction, developing activities that endanger the quality of the environment is fostered. Such areas are, usually, the tourist objectives situated outside the marked layouts and landscapes, where the tourist traffic tends to become uncontrolled.

The uncontrolled tourist traffic done to the tourist natural or anthropical objectives causes, most of the times, the irreversible destruction of certain elements that have long before treated as tourist attractions (destroying the vegetation and flora, demolishing trees and especially saplings, poaching, degrading the landscape etc.) (*P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu*, pag. 471).

The pollution of nature is also intensified due to auto tourism which has a baneful effect and consequently leads to the alteration of air quality, to destruction of pastures, trees and flora etc.

Another way of degrading the environment is effectuating investigations with tourist scientific and irrational character, investigations that become complete through: over sizing resorts from the receiving and treatment capacity point of view, not respecting the general principles of exploitation of natural resources.

The analyzed aspects suggest that along with the other social and economical activities, tourism represents an important source of pollution that immediately imposes an ecological development.

The reefs are threatened, suffering from decline and degradation due to a combination of natural factors with anthropogenic ones. The scientific community is in agreement and the media talks about it. 58% of the reefs in question are potentially threatened by the human activity. The over-exploitation, as well as the coastal development presents the highest threat.

The biggest damages done by man are in relation with tourism. In the same time, tourism has a great economical importance for the countries with significant areas of reefs, such as the states and the territories form the Caribbean Sea. For some smaller insular territories, tourism is the fundamental holding point of the local economy. Since tourism in the Caribbean Sea is dependent almost entirely on the coastal resources, the biggest development has to be exactly in this area. The impact of the tourist activities comprise both direct physical effects (such as damages brought by diving and anchoring) and indirect effects generated by the development of the tourist infrastructure in general.

The impact of tourism can often be reduced by increasing awareness and changing the behavior of tourists and workers from the local tourism industry (P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu, pag. 473).

An example that can highlight the mutual and complex relationship between tourism and the environment, in general, and the negative impact one has on the other, particularly, is the disappearance of 14 cabins form the Romanian Carpathians in the past 20 years, due to certain fires. The causes are diverse: lightning, short circuit, gas leaks, tourist negligence, lack of anticipation of those who used to manage them and the fact that all of these altitude cabins had no fire bar systems, or fire extinguishers, and the installations were perilous improvisations.

One of these cabins is the Diham Cabin, a tourist destination in itself, which, through the destruction of the Malaiesti Cabin way back in time (ultimately rebuilt), remained one of the few mountainous shelters that could have stopped the tourist flux form the Nordic area of the Bucegi massif, especially with the destination Peak Omu (V. Glavan, *Geografia turismului in Romania*, pag. 9).

4. Actions and measures of environment protection and preservation and tourist potential in the European Union

The protection and preservation of the environment and the tourist potential is being outlined as a distinct activity, having specific problems that require the collaboration of specialists from different fields of action. This act can have a satisfactory efficiency only if a proper juridical and administrative framework is established, the latter imposing administrative organization, the existence of certain economical resources, an efficient legislative support and a sustained activity of civic education (P. Baron, O. Snak, N. Neacsu, pag. 407).

The forming in the context of a durable development must start from school, better yet, from kindergarten, so as the example of parents and afterwards the school teachers can become the first lesson that the children learn. Or, if the parents do not have a respectful forming towards the environment, if the ones especially working in tourism do not have the necessary education to deal with a durable tourism, in the future, we shall not have people with a proper education to what the durable development is concerned.

From the main actions of protection and preservation regarding the environment and the tourist potential outlined by the politics of the European Union, the following stand out:

- Preserving the natural and anthropical tourist resources with the purpose of a continuous usage in the near future as well;
- Increasing the standard of living of the local communities;
- A better awareness and knowing, both by the local population and the visitor, of the idea of preserving the environment;

- Getting the authorities and the economical agents involved in accomplishing all the components of a durable tourism;
- Involving the media, to which the tourist industry has become more and more dependent on.

Aside from these, one must not ignore the fact that actual tourism is increasingly preoccupied by the problems of the environment. Consequently, vacation planners (tour operators, airlines and hotel chains) and governments must engage themselves in a proper environment management. There is no economical point to send tourists to destinations that do not correspond to the necessary criteria (*Gabriela Stanciulescu*, pag. 21).

To what the Romanian tourist potential is concerned, the essential actions that regard protecting and preserving the environment and its tourist resources are the following:

- The scientific and rational exploitation of tourist resources so that the rhythm of exploitation does not surpass the rhythm of recycling and regeneration;
- The resolution of resources with tourist valences in the context of valorizing all the natural resources and the protection of the ambient environment;
- The arrangement and proper organization of superior level areas, lay-outs and tourist objectives;
- The organization and rational tourist exploitation of national parks and reservations, ensuring their protection;
- The adequate organization of mountainous areas;
- The renewal of the technical and material basis of tourism which is designed to ensure a competitive and ecological tourism;

- The educational actions regarding the environment and the tourist potential oriented towards the whole country.

The problem of protecting and preserving the environment and the tourist resources must be treated with equal importance as the problems of general development to what the economy is concerned.

To the European Union level, the European Commission has explicitly acknowledged that “the proprietary objective of growing and occupying workforce must be accompanied the promotion of social and environment objectives”. Thus, based on the results of the durable tourism Group (TSG, Work Papers, European Commission, Bruxelles, 2007), presented within the “Actions for a more durable European tourism” report, fallen into the strategy objectives of the Lisbon Agenda, tourism can, more than any other economical activity, develop synergies in close interaction with the environment and the society. This can happen mainly because the development of tourist destinations is connected to their natural environment, to the cultural characteristics, to the social interaction, to the security and wellbeing of the local populations. These characteristics make tourism the capital motor of preserving and developing destinations – directly, by raising awareness and giving aid, and indirectly, by offering an economical explanation for delivering support from other sources, as well. The global tendencies and the priorities are shifting: now, more than ever, the great challenge for the tourism sector is still being competitive, but also durable, admitting that, on the long term, competition depends on durability. Particularly, climate changes

represent a fundamental aspect that also imposes tourism industry to reduce its contribution to the greenhouse gas emissions, and to destinations to adapt to the types of tourism they offer. In the future, European tourism will focus on the quality of tourist experience – they will follow destinations that pay a higher attention to the environment, while the local employees and communities will be the ones that express more concern for tourist in the first place.

5. Study regarding the evaluation of the tourism and environment impact to European and global level

In the vision of durable tourism and ecotourism the enunciation of certain clear purposes of development and arrangement, acceptable to what economical advantages are concerned that is the access to a relatively higher wellbeing and the development of social, vital issues, **simultaneously with the preservation of the balances of the natural environment**, is necessary. The only way to ensure a safer and healthier future lies in a balanced treating of the environment and the development. Only through a correct orientation of the development methods, one can get to modifying the actual production and consumption approach, which has revealed its stale character and its poisonous consequences on the ambient environment.

In this sense, the evaluation of The Environment Impact (E.I.M.) represents an assisting tool of decision, having as an objective the determination of the main effects on the environment. E.I.M. is a procedure through which the decisional factors become aware of the possible effects of development on the natural

productivity and the environment's quality; it is a way through which one collects and handles the necessary data for a project involving the evaluation of the degree of satisfaction to what the conditions and the durability imposed by the latter are concerned. The content of an E.I.M. used in the world, including the states of the European Union, comprise the following essential aspects:

1. *Describing the proposed project:* presenting the objectives, the steps, the rate of exploitation of the existent resources;
2. *Presenting the basic situation,* meaning the actual state of the environment, of the evolution characteristics in order be acquainted to the possibilities of making this project viable and true;
3. *Analyzing the impact aspects:* investigating the types of impacts that may arise and appreciating their future evolution;
4. *Describing the alternatives:* elaborating several versions and sustaining the best ones;
5. *Establishing an improvement proposition* for the impact problems, especially related to the negative ones;
6. *Elaborating a monitoring plan* (continuous follow-up) regarding the improvement measures and the ones relating to the best functioning of the project.

These impact evaluations are required by the European Commission and the World Bank in sustaining any development project, with important financial aid. Accomplishing such a challenge has the merit of reducing the cumulative effects of the human activities that, generally, are difficult to evaluate and detect.

Under the recommendations of the European Union (TSG, Work Papers, European Commission, Bruxelles, 2007) and the U.N., such as WTO – World Tourism Organization – each state can elaborate, depending on the types of environment disposed, its own developing strategy and impact evaluating. Even though in the beginning the project does not fulfill all the E.I.M. elements, **a continuous analysis of the real impact** is necessary, determined even after the project has been completed. Currently, in our country, one concludes environment agreements for starting certain economical activities for obtaining the permit for further functioning, and rarely one closely and at precise intervals monitors the transformations that take place on the spot.

The types of real impacts produced by tourism activities:

In the natural framework

A. Composition changes in the flora and fauna species:

1. Destroying the species habitat.
2. Killing animals for game.
3. Killing animals for gastronomical curiosities and souvenir market.
4. Influencing the internal and external animal migration.
5. Destroying the valuable vegetal species for picking plants and capitalizing wood.
6. Clearing the natural vegetation for achieving tourist facilities.
7. Reducing natural reservations and wildlife sanctuaries.

B. Pollution:

1. Polluting the water by leaking polluted waters and diffusing oil substances.

2. Polluting the air through exhaust gases.
3. Noise pollution due to tourist transportation and activities.

C. Erosion:

1. Settling and compacting the soles which leads to the increase of pluvial leaks and superficial erosion;
2. Increasing the risk of earth flows;
3. Amplifying the processes of triggering avalanches;
4. Damaging the outstanding geological shapes (caves, saddles);
5. Damaging the shores of rivers.

D. Natural resources:

1. Decreasing the water resources through over soliciting and over exploiting;
2. Reducing the classic fuel resources for sustaining the tourist activities;
3. Increasing the risk for natural fires.

E. Visual Impact:

1. Tourist facilities (recreational constructions, auxiliary services);
2. Waste and garbage resulting from tourist structure and traffic.

In built framework

Urban environment:

1. Removing lands outside the primary production;
2. Changing the hydrological and climate regime.

A. Visual impact:

1. Increasing the construction accessibility and occupied areas;
2. New architectural styles, inconclusive with the existent ones;
3. People and goods aggregates.

B. Infrastructure:

1. Over soliciting the infrastructure (roads, railroads, parking lots, communication systems, water provision, etc.);
2. Preparing for new facilities with general and specific infrastructure;
3. Environment management for adapting the aeriels for tourist purposes (sea walks, winter sports, navigation cyclo tourism, etc.);

C. Urban forms:

1. Changes in the urban structures (industrial, residential areas) and other utilities (tourist recreational structures);
2. Changes in the facilities regarding urban furnishings (streets, asphalt cosmetics, shops, etc.);
3. The danger of concluding certain contracts between the tourist arranged urban area and the other residential areas.

D. Restoration:

1. Reusing and restoring old urban sites, historical buildings;
2. Restoring and remodeling old buildings as a second residence.

E. Competition: the possible decline of the tourist attractions of a certain area due to the apparition of other attractions or due to motivational changes or certain tourist habits.

From this study vision of the eco durable tourist developing strategies it clearly stands out that the tourist resources cannot and won't be savagely exploited, otherwise there is a major risk of being degraded or even destroyed. The developing imperatives of all tourism forms mustn't affect the social and

economical interests of the resident population, nor the ones of the environment, and especially the ones of the natural resources, that constitute the main attraction, along with the cultural and historical sites. The riches exploited by tourism are part of mankind's heritage, and in this sense all nations must watch over their preservation. Thus, over the past decade, the reduction of issues related to tourist saturation and the increased pressure over the tourist resources, has led to the concept of receiving capacity and its evaluation. Some criteria have a subjective character, therefore non-measurable. As a matter of fact, impact studies have a well defined role and cannot be substituted to the receiving capacity evaluation. The social progress and the economical welfare depend on the activities that exploit the natural resources and can cause damages to the environment. The problems of the environment have become global, and consequently, the prevention and reduction strategies of the pollution forms reflect this reality.

6. Conclusions

Continuing this work of forming and education and local and global development in the spirit of the durable tourism and ecotourism, must be done by developing the people's capacities and ecological conscious, associating love and respect for nature, historical sites, art monuments and architecture along the years to come.

This "recipe" has to be scientifically underlined and sustained by measures and actions taken by the people holding the power. The latter must be related to the environment and tourist potential's inestimable and unique value in

developing and making the communities, aware of the beneficial evolution, in the spirit of durable ecotourism.

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