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NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

This publication points out the negative effects of tourism on the environment. Its aim is to see tourism not only as a boon to the economy, prosperity and employment, but also as a complex, multi-stakeholder industry. The purpose is to find a mechanism for proper tourism management, through which to achieve a positive role in the social, cultural, economic, natural and political development of the destination. Otherwise, its uncontrolled development can lead to many harmful effects on the natural resources, consumption patterns, pollution and social structures.

Keywords

Environment – World Tourism Organization – Responsible tourism – Ecotourism – Sustainable tourism

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Introducción

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism is a "Tourism that takes into account its current and future impact on the economy, society and the environment and meets the needs of visitors, industry, nature and host communities."¹ Accordingly, sustainable tourism must:

1. Make optimal use of natural resources, which are a key element in tourism development, supporting vital ecological processes and supporting the protection of natural heritage and biological diversity.
2. Respect the social and cultural authenticity of the host community, protect their material and living cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to achieving understanding and tolerance between different cultures.
3. Ensure reliable, long-term economic development by providing equitably distributed socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including stable employment and economic opportunities, as well as poverty-relieving social services for host communities.

The development of sustainable tourism requires the informed participation of all stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure broad participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and requires constant monitoring of impacts and implementation of appropriate preventive and / or corrective measures when necessary.

In addition to the term sustainable tourism, there are two other types of tourism, which are also oriented towards the building of tourism in harmony with the environment and socio-cultural aspects:

- Responsible tourism - sustainable tourism is often called responsible tourism, a term accepted by entrepreneurs who believe that the word "sustainability" is used too much and is misunderstood. Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed responsibly. Responsible tourism emphasizes the responsibility of the tourism industry, expressed in creating greater economic benefits for local people and increasing the well-being of host communities, improving working conditions, involving the local population in decisions that affect their lives, a positive contribution to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, providing access for people with physical disabilities and encouraging respect between tourists and hosts. It also aims to reduce the negative impact on the community, the economy and the environment. According to the definition, responsible tourism is "improving the places where people live and the places that people visit" in this sequence.
- Ecotourism - According to the International Ecotourism Society, it is defined as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education".² Ecotourism must contribute financially to conservation and local people and must be oriented towards the conservation of natural resources.

¹ The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers, UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, 11-12, <http://Sustainable.development|UNWTO>.

² International Ecotourism Society, "What is Ecotourism?" (TIES, 2015), <http://What.Is.Ecotourism-.The.International.Ecotourism.Society>.

On the one hand, tourism has an exceptional economic contribution because it is one of the most important sources of income and employment. At the same time, tourism is a very complex industry, which involves many stakeholders (sometimes with opposing interests) and requires a significant amount of resources. As such, tourism can have many different influences depending on the way the activities are carried out. When properly managed, tourism can play a positive role in the social, cultural, economic, natural and political development of the destination and as such represents an important development opportunity for many countries and communities. Otherwise, the uncontrolled development of tourism can lead to many harmful effects on natural resources, consumption patterns, pollution and social structures. The need for sustainable planning and management is essential for the survival of the industry as a whole.

The negative impacts of tourism are more numerous and present than the faster results. It is essential to note that every action has consequences in the natural environment. This means that many negative impacts, whether socio-cultural or economic, will have detrimental effects on the environment. For example, the incorrect characterization of a traditional community, as a consequence of unplanned and non-inclusive tourism, will affect that community in terms of the environment and the available natural resources around them resulting in search for other sources of income. Among the negative impacts of tourism on the environment we can mention:

1. Expanding the demand for available natural resources that can generate competition with the local population for the use of resources and the resulting consequences due to excessive or inappropriate use. Example can be given by the cases of lack of water in certain places during peak seasons or the cases of fishing tourism in some destinations, where tourist boats compete with fishermen's canoes. In the latter case, the consequences can be many:
 - Reduction of available fish stocks, with changes in balance of the natural environment, which encourages the local community to look for another type of natural resource to exploit in order to survive, etc. It is worth emphasizing that the expansion of the demand for available natural resources can be characterized as a positive or negative impact, depending on how the tourist activity is conducted.³
2. Pollution in all its forms: Tourism can cause pollution in many ways. Here are a few examples:
 - emissions of ozone-depleting gases contributing to global warming caused by vehicles;
 - launching oil into the water by motor boats, yachts, boats and ships;
 - noise pollution, use of stereo systems; overproduction and improper disposal of rubbish, which is often sent to landfills in addition to those dumped by tourists, which worsens the landscape and the quality of life of the local community;
 - lack of basic sanitary conditions, which leads to the discharge of wastewater directly into the water. In addition to the impact on biodiversity (fish, corals, aquatic plants, etc.), which is more difficult to notice, there is an impact on the landscape, with changes in water color and unpleasant odors, release of toxic and non-toxic substances, etc.
3. Excessive use of resources: occurs when the level of use of resources by tourists exceeds the ability of the environment to recover. In this case, the attractiveness of

³ UNCED (1992), "The Global Partnership for Environment and Development-A Guide to Agenda 21".

the host is ignored and priority is given to search conversations. As an example, a large number of tourists visiting at the same time a fragile natural attraction (like a lagoon in a cave), worsening the attraction to its incorrect characterization. This can also happen with cultural landmarks;

4. Inappropriate land use: deforestation, erosion and landscape interference. A very common example is the removal of riparian forest for the installation of tourist equipment, a fact which, in addition to not complying with the law, causes erosion and the subsequent strengthening of the water bodies, interfering with the landscape and the quality of the environment of the site;
5. Anchoring and subsequent trampling and breaking of corals as a result of water activities (such as diving, spearfishing, etc.) in fragile marine and lake species; Change in behavior in the wildlife as a result of the tourist tours and consequently changes in the ecosystem balance. We can take for an example the insufficient supply of food to the wildlife provided by tourists or even tourism entrepreneurs as a way to attract local fauna, generating changes in animal behavior that can even become aggressive by searching for easy food;
6. Degradation and concealment of the landscape as a result of the inadequacy of the tourist infrastructure (for example, giant hotel buildings, which often contrast with the local architecture and a mixture of building styles that incorrectly characterize the landscape); The large-scale construction of tourist sites such as hotels, cafes, restaurants and more. In an area without a suitable device for safe disposal of wastewater, can lead to catastrophic consequences. Wastewater carrying wastewater from such areas often pollutes nearby water bodies. This can lead to eutrophication of water bodies and loss of balance in aquatic ecosystems. Pollution of water bodies with wastewater can also lead to health problems and even epidemics, which can ultimately destroy large populations of aquatic flora and fauna and can also negatively affect human health.
7. Development beyond expectations, agglomeration and congestion. The travel of tourists from their home to the tourist destination includes transport by road, railway or air or a combination of these modes of transport. When the number of tourists is large, it invariably leads to greater use of the transport system. We are aware of the fact that emissions from cars and planes are one of the biggest causes of air pollution. When a large number of tourists use these means of transport to reach a particular attraction, it pollutes the air both locally and globally. Due to the rapid growth of international tourism, tourists currently account for nearly 60% of air transport. In many places, buses or other vehicles leave their engines on to ensure that tourists return to comfortable air-conditioned vehicles. Such practices further pollute the air. Lack of research, inspection and monitoring of maintenance capacity: disrespect for carrying capacity in natural areas can create discomfort for the host community and tourists by reduced quality of life, destruction of vegetation, erosion of paths, damage to drinking water sources and water sources for recreation, among other problems.⁴
8. Vandalism, which can lead to degradation of structures and tourist equipment. In addition, it can cause irreparable loss of natural, historical and cultural resources. A classic example is the collection of objects from the natural sites visited by the tourists, such as pieces of rock with rock inscriptions, plants, flowers, etc. Irresponsible tourists often pollute the tourist sites they visit. Waste disposal is a major problem in the natural environment. It is estimated that cruise ships in the

⁴ Stanovishte na Evropeyskia ikonomicheski i sotsialen komitet za politikata na turizma v razshirenia ES (2005 /C 255/02), Ofitsialen vestnik na Evropeyskia sayuz. 2005. V. 4.

Caribbean produce more than 70,000 tons of waste per year. If waste is dumped irresponsibly at sea, it can lead to the death of marine animals. Even Everest is not free of man-made waste. The trackers leave behind oxygen cylinders, garbage and camping equipment in the mountains and hills. There are trails in the Himalayas and the Andes that are called "toilet paper trail" or "Coca-Cola trail", referring to the remains left on such trails.

Tourism is usually seen to benefit the region's economy. It brings prosperity and provides employment for the locals. However, when tourism becomes unsustainable in nature, it can have catastrophic consequences for the environment. When an active tourism industry crosses legal and ethical barriers to make more profit, it can lead to massive environmental degradation. The local human population, flora and fauna suffer greatly from such irresponsible and unsustainable tourism.

The development of sustainable forms of tourism must be viewed as an even greater priority, as it requires coordination of the interests and skills of state bodies and the population in order to ensure the positive effect of tourism.

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