

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TOURISM, CONCEPTS AND CLASSIFICATION

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Abstract: *Perceived as an alternative to mass tourism, alternative tourism is characterized through: the emphasis on travel as an experience of host cultures and the maintenance of traditional values and societies, individual, independent or small group activity, slow, controlled and regulated development and small scale. Alternative tourism has many sub-types: ecotourism, convivial ecotourism, adapted tourism, adequate tourism, authentic tourism, community tourism, controlled tourism, sustainable tourism, fair tourism, ecological tourism, endogenous tourism, integrated tourism, participatory tourism, tourism "for the poor", responsible tourism, soft tourism, solidarity tourism, green tourism, volunteer tourism. The values that bring together all these sub-types are expressed in the form of tourism niches such as: "return" trip, immersion trip, solidarity trip, trip for teenagers (more interested in visiting the most popular places), alternative tourism, cultural tourism, equestrian tourism, river tourism, social tourism or science tourism.*

Key words: *alternative tourism, sub-types*

INTRODUCTION

"It is assumed that 'new', 'alternative' forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, are not only the result of perceived problems of (mass) tourism, but also of the changes that have taken place in Western societies, where the economy has moved towards post-Fordist production and disorganized capitalism [16,17,20,21]. In this context, it is argued that the tourism industry and its destinations are changing and creating products that are better in line with new motivational structures, tourism segments and general consumption trends, with increasingly differentiating consumers and expanding and changing markets faster than ever before" [5,12,13].

The concern for finding tourism alternatives aimed at reducing the negative impact of tourism on tourist destinations dates back to 1970-1980, when alternative tourism became part of a wider ethical, ideological and political movement to find active and innovative solutions for the intolerable situation in tourism with implications for the future [1,22]. Thus, in 1976, the Association of Independent Tour Operators was established, a British alliance of tourism companies, mainly smaller and specialized, in order to offer alternatives to mass vacations [3,15]. In 1981, the European Ecumenical Network for Third World Tourism was established with the stated aim of reducing the damage caused by tourism in the Third World (today, developing countries) by: educating tourists, tour operators; with other bodies/organizations; efforts to find alternatives in tourism and alternatives to tourism.

"The first manifestations of alternative tourism were socio-cultural and political, with church groups such as the Ecumenical Coalition for Tourism in the Third World playing a prominent role in disseminating this sector. Manifestations based by nature of alternative tourism, with an emphasis on environmental sustainability, emerged in the late 1980s under the label 'ecotourism', which reflects the additional influence of the contemporary environmental movement"[7,10,11,23].

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this approach, based on consulting the specialized bibliography, were analyzed the concepts of alternative tourism and the typology characterized by its sub-types in order to perceive this form of tourism as an alternative to mass tourism, considering that the

emphasis on travel as an experience of host cultures, maintaining values and traditional societies as well as the slow, controlled development on a small scale can be aspects that lead us to deepen and practice this form of tourism.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The phrase alternative tourism refers to "forms of tourism which try to avoid negative social, cultural and environmental effects" [9]. Alternative tourism is the opposite of hard tourism ("tourism practiced on a large scale for economic reasons and which neglects the social, cultural and environmental impact").

The option for alternative tourism is made from the perspective of six criteria:

- search for originality (cultural and outdoor sports activities);
- the desire to be different from other tourists;
- tourist destination and location (exotic, undiscovered, unexplored, new, pioneering, primitive);
- a specific type of accommodation (home to locals or in ecological housing) or adaptation of a classic accommodation formula (cottage, furnished house, cottage, family hotel, holiday village, camp);
- specialized tour operators (non-profit organizations or travel agencies and tour operators with an "alternative" philosophy;
- the nature and quality of the relationship with the local environment (progressive development planned, controlled, extended by the local community in partnership with developers, respecting natural and human ecosystems and following economic principles regarding the use of essential resources).

Alternative tourism differs from sustainable tourism (which designates "forms of tourism in harmony with their physical, social and cultural environments on long-term") through large-scale activities. The "alternative philosophy" consists in: ecological conservation of energy and water, training and employment of guides specializing in environmental exploration, recycling of wastewater and waste and subsidized transport and accommodation to encourage as many customers as possible. That is why we perceive it as an alternative to mass tourism ("participation at tourism in large numbers, a general feature of developed countries in the second half of the twentieth century), alternative tourism is characterized by: the emphasis on travel as an experience of host cultures and on the maintenance of traditional values and societies, individual, independent or small group activity, slow, controlled and regulated development and small scale.

We can consider that alternative tourism has "doubtful consequences": captive locals in conditions of poverty, social problems, overcrowded resorts, captive tourists in golden ghettos a possible explanation for the phenomenon of new age (new beliefs and spiritual practices). The division of the types of alternative tourism can be done according to criteria such as attractions, accommodation and motivation.

Alternative or advanced or reformed tourism [6] has the following sub-types: ecotourism, convivial ecotourism, adapted tourism, adequate tourism, authentic tourism, community tourism, controlled tourism, sustainable tourism, fair tourism, ecological tourism, endogenous tourism, tourism integrated, participatory tourism, "for the poor" tourism, responsible tourism, soft tourism, solidarity tourism, green tourism, volunteer tourism. All this is brought together by the value of aspects related to "return" travel, immersion travel, solidarity travel, travel for teenagers (more interested in visiting the most popular places), youth site, alternative tourism, cultural tourism, equestrian tourism, river tourism, social tourism or science tourism.

Ecotourism has been defined as "tourism oriented towards exotic, often threatened natural environments, intended to support conservation efforts and wildlife observation",

“travel in relatively undisturbed and uncontaminated natural areas with the specific purpose of studying, admiring and enjoy both the landscape and the wild flora and fauna, as well as the existing cultural manifestations (past and present) in those areas”, “a responsible form of travel in natural areas that contributes to the protection of the environment and the well-being of local people”, “tourism that takes into account environmental, cultural and social considerations; green tourism” or as “the form of tourism whose purpose is the conservation of fragile environments and ecosystems” [14,18]. Ecotourism partially overlaps with adventure and safari tourism. Specialists make the distinction between hard ecotourism (in which are provided a minimum of facilities and there is a very close interaction with the environment) and soft ecotourism (which involves the use of considerable support facilities). Because most ecotourists, residents with incomes and secondary education in developed countries but with degraded environments, form an elite that supports the conservation of relatively natural areas in economically poor but ecologically rich countries, ecotourism is labeled as ego-tourism and eco-imperialism.

Friendly ecotourism is a concept promoted, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, by a number of researchers. "Friendly conservation" is "a vision, a policy and a set of governance principles that respond realistically to the basic pressures of our time." it's about [23] a "post-COVID friendly revolution" and about conviviality as life, the alchemy of sociability - that is, exactly what was destroyed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The task of the tourism and hospitality industry, in particular, and of society in general, is precisely to restore conviviality. The call for a convivial revolution is “On the barricades, comrades! At the bar!” (The bar is the place where the British joke, enjoy the company of others, express their opinions, make friends, make alliances and make deals).

Adapted tourism represents, in fact, a form of environmentally friendly tourism whose purpose is to apply measures to protect the natural environment by implementing sustainable tourism activities. It is considered the unaltered preservation of floristic and faunal biodiversity by reducing the anthropogenic impact on environmental factors: water, soil, air by preserving habitats and ecosystems.

Adequate tourism is defined as "tourism that focuses on small-scale development, the recognition of non-material needs and the preservation of the quality and stability of natural and human resources" [5]. It is also considered as "tourism suitable for an area given its economic, social, environmental conditions". This form of tourism - adequate tourism is associated with sustainable tourism.

Authentic tourism can be defined through the prism of the tourist in search of authentic, of authenticity. It is considered that the tourist of 2022 will be a better educated, more sophisticated tourist, with many active trips, concerned about the environment in which he lives and eager to have a better life. All these aspects lead to the conclusion that these tourists want to have real experiences rather than false ones.

Community tourism is defined as "forms of tourism proposed and managed by the local population itself, forms that integrate harmoniously into the different collective dynamics of the place of reception" and as "a holiday that benefits both the traveler and the destination". This sub-type of tourism is based on the collective responsibility that allows the local community to be actively involved in the development and management of tourism in considered area.

Sustainable tourism has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" and "is based on the premise of caring for the environment, society and the economy" and resembles responsible tourism. This type of tourism aims to minimize the negative impact of tourism and maximize the positive impact.

Fair tourism is "a form of sustainable tourism that aims to apply the principles of fair trade in the tourism sector, meeting a number of criteria, focusing on respecting residents and their lifestyles, as well as the sustainability of tourism progress for local communities" [16]. The factors that make tourism unfair have also been identified: activities specific to mass tourism, natural disasters (landscape, earthquakes), transport capacity to the tourist destination, cultural degradation, environmental degradation, multiplier effect, tourism infrastructure, government investments, private sector investment, forest and environmental law violations, local migration, entrepreneurial opportunities, employment opportunities, community participation, pollution (air, noise, water, land) and the use of natural resources.

Ecological tourism is a generic notion of the sustainable natural exploitation (marketing) of resources as tourism products. The assessment of the ecological quality of tourism must take into account several basic indicators: water and energy consumption, waste disposal, fragility or vulnerability of ecosystems and biodiversity, land use intensity and physical impact, pest management, protection of the atmosphere, noise level and visual impact.

Endogenous tourism is mentioned as a sub-type of alternative tourism, but it is not defined if we consider that the endogenous term means "of domestic origin", we can conclude that the phrase endogenous tourism refers to a sub-type of tourism in which the involvement of local elements (destination, community, culture, etc.) in the tourist act is majority, if not, even total [2,4]. Integrated tourism, which is the opposite of diffuse tourism, dates from the years 1960-1970 and has been defined as "Neither high-end tourism nor '3 S' tourism, [but] a local development initiative that is based on the will of the population to share with tourists living in the village and to participate, together, in the development of the natural environment."

Participatory tourism is understood especially as ecotourism that develops through community participation and involvement of locals in the process of destination management and delivery of tourist services in the respective tourist destination, involvement justified by the role of local community vehicle in transmitting local culture. The local community can thus make its voice heard and make its own choices regarding issues that affect its existence. "Tourism for poor" is considered a type of approach of tourism rather than a tourism sector and aims to provide the poor with economic, social or environmental benefits through charitable tourism (by purchasing tourist packages from a charitable tour operator).

Responsible tourism has been defined as "a mode of tourism that responds to the current interests of host populations, natural, socio-cultural and economic heritage, producers and consumers, without compromising the ability to meet the future interests of the same components", as "tourism that seeks to avoid negative social, cultural and environmental effects", as "tourism that respects the laws and customs of locals and does not affect the environment" and as "responsible tourism" [3,19].

Soft tourism is defined as "tourism with little or no negative impact on the physical and socio-cultural environment of the destination areas" and as "tourism that seeks to avoid negative social, cultural and environmental effects". It is the opposite of mass tourism because it is practiced on a small scale and optimizes the benefits of the local community. Soft tourism aims to conserve nature and protect human health, but also has social goals, respect for the habits, family structure and traditions of the local population and economic goals, a fair distribution of tourism income, a diversification of the tourist offer. Green tourism is defined as "tourism in which environmentally friendly practices have been adopted by tourist destinations and tour operators" and as "tourism that seeks to avoid negative social, cultural and environmental effects" [9]. Green tourism, which focuses on

certain healthy environmental practices, and less on practices that do not meet environmental standards addresses to customers who take informed purchasing decisions. Green tourism is synonymous with ecotourism and ecological tourism, being represented by all forms of tourism that support the development in perfect harmony with nature and the socio-cultural environment of the tourist destination, aiming to improve the social, cultural and environmental impact of tourism activities.

Volunteer tourism has been defined as “a form of tourism in which travelers participate in voluntary activities, usually for a charitable organization”, as “the act or practice of doing voluntary work as needed in the community in which they are on vacation”, as “the use of time and income in a discretionary manner to get out of the ordinary sphere of activity to help those in need”, “the combination of leisure travel and voluntary work”, as a “form of moral consumption” [8,17] and as “the type of tourism in which an individual travels abroad to a destination considered predominantly underdeveloped or under development to provide support to those in need”.

CONCLUSIONS

Alternative tourism is based on an alternative philosophy that consists of aspects related to the ecological conservation of energy and water, training and employment of guides specialized in exploring the environment, recycling of wastewater and waste and subsidized transport and accommodation to encourage as many customers as possible. Ecotourism as a sub-type of alternative tourism, has as main objective the conservation of nature and rare species and which must have minimal consequences on the environment and local culture and contribute to the well-being of the local population and can be a form of responsible tourism practiced in areas which contributes to the protection of the environment and the improvement of the living conditions and well-being of the local population and is closely linked to sustainable tourism with a view to reducing the environmental, social and economic impact where possible.

As for authentic tourism, it must propose to be truly authentic, an ethical, beautiful, ingrained, natural, honest, simple and humane authenticity while integrated tourism is a form of local domestic tourism practiced in rural areas, desired and developed by the locals as a form of inter-relationship. This "integrated" character is given by the relationship between the different local actors involved in the provision of tourism services. About volunteer tourism we can deduce that it is considered a serious form of leisure and a growing segment of alternative tourism through volunteer travel as a niche market sustainable especially for protected areas. Also, green tourism is a topic of interest through the proactive action of some organizations that want to implement more environmentally friendly activities that influence the behavior of tourists regarding the impact of tourism on it.

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