

TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPT, EVOLUTION AND VALIDITY

Questioning the importance of tourism is completely indisputable and, for this, it has been considered by several authors as one of the most important economic sectors in the world (Sharpley and Telfer, 2004). According to the data provided by international institutions such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is one of the fundamental bases for global socio-economic development, generating an estimated income that they can amount to approximately 10% of world's GDP, fact that makes tourism the third most important global industry¹.

At the end of the twentieth century, international tourism was able to generate annual profits estimated at more than US\$450 million and, according to the estimates of Sharpley and Telfer (2004), had the coronavirus pandemic not arisen, it would have exceeded US\$2 trillion in 2020. These figures show the economic importance of tourism in many countries, especially the underdeveloped and developing countries, as it is a major generator of socioeconomic revitalization (Lopez-Guzman *et al.* 2011).

The progressive increase in arrivals of international visitors to various tourist destinations has allowed their socioeconomic development, although not without difficulties. To maintain its viability, the tourism industry has promoted initiatives to meet the demands of the clients (Moral Cuadra *et al.* 2016), which led to the emergence of new tourism modalities² that are more sustainable and committed to the preservation of the environment and the local cultures (Jouault, 2014).

It is for these and other reasons that, for at least half a century, tourism has been regarded as one of the most effective ways of stimulating the socioeconomic development of many

¹ Tourism, Trade and the WTO: Joint communiqué of UNWTO, WTO, ITC and WTTC: <http://www2.unwto.org/es/press-release/2018-10-08/turismo-comercio-y-la-omc-comunicadoconjunto-de-la-omt-la-omc-el-itc-y-el->

² One of these new forms of tourism is community tourism, which involves contact between visitors and local host communities. This form of tourism is intended to stimulate the socio-economic development of local communities and preserve their cultural identity and environment. However, it also has significant negative repercussions.

areas which, due to various circumstances, had not been able to achieve it until now. This consideration of tourism is supported by international organizations such as UNWTO as part of the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development held from 21 to 26 April 2012 in Doha (Qatar)³, which recognizes its importance as a generator of wealth, employment and business opportunities, as well as basic infrastructures for socioeconomic development.

However, despite its obvious benefits, tourism can provoke unwanted consequences such as an unequal distribution of wealth, environmental deterioration, low-skilled jobs and speculative phenomena that have been denounced by different organisations. As Moscardo (2008) points out, if the implementation and development of tourism is not properly planned, it can cause more inconveniences than benefits, and will not always be a valid alternative to achieve socioeconomic development.

It is important to define what is meant by development. If it is only considered as 'economic growth', it is clear that tourism plays an essential role, but there are other aspects that go beyond the purely economic. These include health, education and collective well-being, where the contribution of tourism may not be as decisive. Socioeconomic development does not occur in the same way in all places, as it depends on the economic, cultural or political situation, which can determine its success or failure. Others can be added such as the international context and the very structure of tourism, which is seen by some as a kind of neocolonialism. Sharpley and Telfer (2004) believe that sustainability can become an impediment to development by imposing restrictive measures in pursuit of environmental conservation. Tourism can help socioeconomic development, but by no means it is a "miraculous" solution capable of solving all problems in all parts of the world.

1. WHAT IS TOURISM?

The concept of tourism has been the subject of various interpretations over time, reflecting its abstract and multidisciplinary nature (Burns and Holden, 1995). Similarly, there is no single definition of tourist, which further complicates this issue.

As for the concept of tourist, although it is not known who and when it was first used, Burns and Holden (1995) attribute it to the British lexicographer Samuel Pegge (1733-

³ https://unctad.org/meetings/es/SessionalDocuments/td500_Add_2sp.pdf

1800)⁴, while Feifer (1995) maintains that it was the famous French writer Stendhal (1783-1842)⁵. On the other hand, Theobald (1994) does not point to anyone in particular, and in his opinion, it emerged at various times and from various sources.

Currently there are numerous definitions of both terms that, according to Burkhart and Medlik (1981), can be grouped into:

- technical: to identify the different typologies of tourism and tourist for statistical and/or legislative purposes. One of the first definitions was proposed by the League of Nations⁶ in 1937, considering as a tourist any person who stays more than 24 hours in a place other than his habitual residence for leisure, work or both⁷. At the United Nations Conference on Tourism and International Travel held in Rome in 1963, a similar definition was adopted, with a tourist being considered to be any person who for a period of less than 12 months moves to a different place in order not to engage in any paid activity⁸. This is the definition adopted by most international organizations such as the UNWTO, being commonly used to quantitatively measure tourist flows.
- conceptual: essentially formulated from anthropological approaches but, according to Nash (1989), it is impossible to define what tourism is if it is not previously established who can be considered as a tourist. For Nash, tourism could

⁴ Called "the Younger", he was a British antiquarian, poet, composer and lexicographer. His work is closely linked to that of his father, the clergyman and also antiquarian Samuel Pegge "the Elder" (1704-1796). In 1796 he was made a member of the Society of Antiquaries and after his death four years later, he was buried in Kensington Cathedral, where his memory was honoured with a monument.

⁵ Pseudonym of the French writer Henri-Marie Beyle. He is one of the most important French writers and the greatest exponent of literary realism, standing out among his works *Red and Black* (1830) or *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839).

⁶ Also known as League of Nations. Created on 28 June 1919 as a result of the implementation of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, it was conceived as a supranational body based in Geneva, Switzerland, to establish and promote peace, as well as the reconstruction of the international scene after the aforementioned conflict. Although it ended up being a failure to respond to various international problems that would eventually trigger World War II, it would not be dissolved until 18 April 1946. It is considered to be the antecedent of the current United Nations.

⁷ In the event that a person spent less than 24 hours, and according to the definition of the League of Nations, would be called a hiker.

⁸ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc00/m83-s.pdf>

be defined as all that activity carried out by a person who, in addition to enjoying his leisure time, does so by traveling (Nash, 1989). Smith (1989) includes the motivations of tourists, stating that their movements are motivated by a need for change. In a similar vein Graburn (1989) considers that tourism implies a break with the conventions that govern daily life, allowing to satisfy moral and cultural needs.

Buck (1978) and Gilbert (1990) consider that confining the possible definitions of tourism and tourism to only two categories constrains them significantly to a particular academic approach. According to Gilbert (1990), the ideal would be a definition that encompassed both categories, as Jafari did in 1977. According to Jafari, tourism is the study of people in a place other than where they usually live, as well as the industry that provides them with the goods and services necessary to meet their needs, in addition to the impacts generated by both in the destination. Sharpley (2000) argues that it is impossible to suggest a definition of tourism and tourist that harmonize all positions precisely because of the wide variety of definitions.

Despite this, all approaches seem to coincide in their consideration of tourism as an eminently social activity, which would not be possible if human beings did not have any motivation to move to places other than usual. It should be added that, as it is currently conceived, this would not be possible without a series of products and services that are mostly offered by the tourist industry.

Briefly, it could be stated that the basic characteristics of tourism would be the following:

- it is generally associated with leisure, which means a break from everyday life for a “brief” period of time.
- both their consumption and participation are conditioned by the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of tourists.
- its industry is characterized by a great range of products and services.
- it depends on several factors specific to each destination, which can be socioeconomic and cultural, as well as the positive and negative impacts that tourism can generate.

2. WHAT DOES DEVELOPMENT MEAN?

As with the terms tourism and tourist, it is difficult to determine what is meant by development, a concept that according to Cowen and Shenton (1996), is characterized by ambiguity. Generally, the term development refers to a process by which a certain social group moves from a particular situation to another that is expected to be better than the previous one. In the collective imagination, this term has become synonymous with progress, although, as Thomas (2000) points out, it never happens and that is when, according to Goulet (1992), it would be more accurate to consider it as a synonym for regression.

Likewise, the concept of development has been closely linked to the idea of modernization, but understanding it from Western cultural parameters and as a consequence of the economic growth that will occur as long as this is higher than population growth, at which point it can be said that it has been achieved (Redclift, 1987).

So strong is the belief that development is due exclusively to economics that both ideas have ended up being accepted with virtually no discussion (Mabogunje, 1980) but since the late 1960s have proved not to be the case. In some countries, and despite significant economic development, a number of social and political problems had not been solved, if not aggravated, in addition to noting that the standard of living of broad sectors of society had not improved at all (Seers, 1969; Todaro, 2000).

From the 1970s onwards, health, education and housing were added as essential elements of development, which are used as indicators to establish the progress of a certain social group, albeit from economic criteria. In order to achieve high social well-being, it is essential to meet basic needs and raise their level of development, which can manifest themselves materially and culturally in freedom, understood, according to Goulet (1968), as the possibility of choosing between numerous options without being subjected to anachronistic beliefs or institutions.

In its Human Development Report published in 1990⁹, and similar to Goulet, the United Nations defines development as the increase in opportunities that allow a population to enjoy a long and healthy life, access to education and all those resources that allow an

⁹ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_1990_es_completo_nostats.pdf

acceptable level of well-being. According to Goulet (1992) in order to achieve this, the following elements must be taken into account:

- economic: such as wealth creation and equitable access to resources to reduce poverty.
- social: improvement of education, health, employment and access to housing systems.
- political: clear recognition and respect for human rights, political freedom and the implementation of systems of government that guarantee the creation of basic structures that meet the needs of society.
- cultural: strengthening the sociocultural characteristics of a society.
- paradigmatic: protection and promotion of the values that characterize a society.

According to Sharpley (2000) it would be possible to add the ecological, as a sign of the current concern for the environment, which has been revealed in recent times as one of the most important to achieve an adequate socioeconomic development.

All these elements are currently taken into account by several institutions. such as the United Nations or the World Bank, which consider them essential.

The establishment of a consensual definition of development is certainly complicated by its very nature, and limiting it only to economic growth and other social indicators, such as educational or health status, would not be appropriate, since the concept of development includes other elements that are difficult to verify, such as political freedom or cultural integrity.

3. ...AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT?

Having seen what can be considered as development, it is time to do the same with another equally important concept, that of underdevelopment.

Among the most common challenges faced by underdeveloped countries are poverty, inequality and limited opportunities for progress. Some can be mitigated and even solved thanks to various means such as tourism, which plays a prominent role in many underdeveloped and developing countries, as well as in some less-favoured areas of developed countries.

Not all underdeveloped countries suffer from the same problems or with the same intensity, which is due to their geographical, social, political and economic particularities,

as well as their historical trajectory. All of them significantly affect their level of development or underdevelopment.

It could be said that the features that best characterize underdevelopment are:

- overdependence on the primary sector: many underdeveloped countries depend almost exclusively on agriculture and the export of its products to make profits and create employment, occupying up to 60% of its total workforce, while in the developed ones it does not usually exceed 5%. In the case of underdeveloped countries it can be up to 14% of GDP, while in the most industrialized it is only 3% (FARA, 2013). Agricultural production in underdeveloped countries is often low due to the lack of economic and technological investments.
- low standard of living: which has a negative impact on the health and education of the population. Among the factors contributing to this situation, perhaps the fundamental one is the scarcity of economic income, measured by GDP per capita, which varies markedly among underdeveloped countries. With regard to the level of health, indicators such as life expectancy at birth or the infant mortality rate are often used, which also differs from one country to another.
- high population growth rates: currently estimated to be more than 80% of the world's population lives in underdeveloped countries. This percentage is likely to increase as long as these countries, such as those in the developing world, continue to experience higher population growth rates than developed countries, where it is falling to negative values. This demographic explosion, together with the finiteness of the planet's resources, can lead to numerous political, economic and social problems and conflicts, many of them difficult to resolve.
- negative balance of payments and high international debt: this is one of the most recurrent problems in these countries. Many of them lack of important natural resources, as well as of a sufficiently developed industrial sector, which obliges them to import most of the goods needed to meet their needs. Likewise, the impossibility of paying the interest on the debt, causes it to increase.
- anachronistic socio-political structures: many of the consequences of underdevelopment are due to inequity in the international distribution of political and economic power, where sociopolitical structures and their strategies for stimulating their development are essential. The belief that the establishment of democratic regimes can stimulate better socioeconomic development is not

entirely right, and in many countries, due to its cultural and historical peculiarities, its establishment can have the opposite effect, being possible for a small elite to take control of resources and legitimize their position and decisions under a democratic mandate (Sharpley, 2000).

4. HISTORY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

After the Second World War (1939-1945), several international institutions such as the newly created United Nations began to see tourism as one of the most effective tools for stimulating the socioeconomic development of many areas of the planet, especially the most disadvantaged. During the 1960s and 1970s and largely as a result of the decolonisation process undertaken by former powers such as France and the United Kingdom, new independent states will emerge in various parts of the world, especially in Africa and Asia, which decided to bet on tourism in order to develop themselves.

Although some of these new countries had significant natural resources, they considered it totally unfeasible to base their development solely on their exploitation and commercialization, due to their lack of international competitiveness, which motivated their interest in tourism and the strong support of various international organizations such as the OECD, the IMF or the World Bank. As a result, many of these countries began to design structural adjustment programs based on neoliberal postulates that would allow them, through tourism, to increase their volume of exports and diversify their sources of income.

Authors like Sharpley and Telfer (2004) think that these plans only worked to promote mass tourism that is extremely dependent on foreign investment, which meant that the local population and its interests were sidelined. Despite this, and especially during the 1960s and 1970s, it was firmly believed that if tourism and its infrastructures could be developed, it would be possible to achieve the desired socioeconomic development. However, it is during the 1970s that the first criticisms of tourism will begin to be heard, many of them arising from the aforementioned structural programmes.

In 1979 De Kadt published *Tourism: passport to development? Perspectives on the social and cultural effects of tourism on developing countries*, exposing and analyzing the various impacts caused by tourism as a catalyst for socioeconomic development. Although De Kadt does not question the benefits derived from its application, such as job

creation or the generation of business opportunities, it does highlight many of its negative effects, such as overexploitation of resources, excessive dependence on foreign investment, uncontrolled urban growth or speculation. De Kadt's position contrasts with that of Miossec (1976) or Butler (1980), who argue that despite the possible negative impacts of tourism, it is the best alternative for the socioeconomic development of many regions of the planet, especially the most impoverished.

These criticisms, along with events such as the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1984 and the subsequent publication three years later of the Brundtland Report¹⁰, caused that during the 1980s, many development plans began to adopt a more committed approach to environmental preservation after several negative impacts of tourism on the environment which, in many cases, were difficult to reverse.

It also began to encourage greater participation of local communities, essential for their own development through tourism. Subsequent initiatives that emerged after the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro between 3 and 14 June 1992¹¹ and the adoption of its conclusions by the United Nations, made it possible the emergence of new concepts such as "sustainable tourism" or "local development" (Rapley, 2002).

The previous approach based on maximizing economic benefits gave way to a new one that sought to make tourism an effective means of eradicating or mitigating the devastating effects of poverty, as well as promoting cooperation between local communities and tour operators. All this led to the emergence of new types of tourism such as community tourism, which despite its good initial intentions, have not been exempt from criticism such as that of Harrison (2008), who considers that it does not favor socioeconomic development and is only neocolonialism. In an economically globalized international scenario, it is essential that tourism rethinks its objectives and its dynamic role, which, according to Telfer and Sharpley (2008), would force it to adopt a new name: "post-development". In the present century, and until the outbreak of the pandemic, tourism has been experiencing a progressive growth in developing countries,

¹⁰ http://www.ecominga.uqam.ca/PDF/BIBLIOGRAPHIE/GUIDE_LECTURE_1/CMMAD-Informe-ComisionBrundtland-sobre-Medio-Ambiente-Desarrollo.pdf

¹¹ https://www.fomento.gob.es/recursos_mfom/pdf/2957B9E8-13A4-4F21-9F46-32CDDF73CF6D/95788/Tierra5.pdf

which has been partly possible to several factors such as a greater availability of income from potential visitors and the "democratization" of tourism (UN, 2013).

In addition, the geographical expansion of tourism has allowed many countries to increase their percentage of international tourist arrivals, thanks to the good state of conservation of their attractions and because they are relatively unknown to the general public. In some of them, tourism is its largest source of income, reaching up to 25% of its GDP, a fact that has caused its governments to become more involved in encouraging tourism.

5. WHY TOURISM?

Among the most widespread reasons for the adoption of tourism as a means of promoting development is its important economic contribution to the balance of payments, foreign exchange and job creation. That is why, as Oppermann and Chon (1997) point out, many governments so strongly support tourism in their respective territories. However, the question arises as to whether tourism is really chosen, especially by the underdeveloped countries, as a means of their development, or whether it is the only alternative offered to them.

For Brown (1998) many of these countries lack natural resources as well as a developed industrial sector, and are heavily dependent on international aid, which is why they turn their attention to tourism, although, depending on their circumstances, it is not always the right decision. In contrast to Brown, there are authors such as Jenkins (1991), who argue that tourism can be considered a perfectly valid tool for the following reasons:

- it is constantly growing: since the 1950s, the figures for international tourism at that time (25 million) have grown progressively except for some slight decreases as in the 1990s, when its growth rate was 4% per year, very similar to the 1950s (Sharpley, 2000). Although tourism is generally a safe option for promoting socioeconomic development, a number of external circumstances of global reach such as the Oil Crisis (1973), the outbreak of the First Gulf War (1990) or the current coronavirus pandemic, have led to a decrease in tourist arrivals. Despite the fact that in the short term circumstances such as those mentioned imply a decline in tourism activity, the contribution of tourism to socioeconomic development in the places where it has been established usually remains.

- as a generator of wealth: in addition to its role as a driver of development, tourism makes it possible to redistribute wealth equitably, as well as to attract new investment from industrialized countries to the less developed through the expenses of tourists and companies in the tourism sector. Theoretically, it is one of the ways in which developed countries help development, but it is not uncommon for such investments to end up with the opposite, such as an increase in their dependence on the outside world.
- it does not suffer from tariff or trade barriers: unlike other activities, tourism does not suffer trade or tariff impositions from third parties that could impede its international development. In regions with higher tourist emissions, there are generally no legal limitations preventing travel outside their borders, or a maximum spending quota on destinations. Although theoretically all destinations have the same opportunities to access the international tourism market to offer their attractions and increase visitor arrivals, their volume will be determined by competition from other destinations, as well as by the interests of the tourism industry (Jenkins, 1991; Sharpley, 2000).
- use of "free" resources: many visitors travel to a destination depending on its natural attractions or historical, which, at first, do not require strong prior investments for their tourist exploitation, and whose value will depend on the possibilities they offer for this purpose (Jenkins, 1991). It should be borne in mind, however, that many of these resources will require adequate conservation plans to ensure their sustainability and thus continue to attract visitors.
- generator of infrastructure and business: it is obvious that in destinations tourists require a series of goods and services. Tourism, and more specifically its industry, is able to offer them, as well as various business opportunities that also have an impact on other sectors which, in principle, have little or nothing to do with the construction. However, its success or failure will depend on several factors such as the economic and sociopolitical situation and the capacity of destinations to attract investment (Telfer, 1996; Sharpley, 2000).

Generally, the countries most dependent on tourism have more limited resources, so the weight of tourism in their GDP is fundamental, becoming the dominant economic sector. The economic contribution of tourism to development can be verified in a variety of ways, such as the arrival of international tourists, their contribution to exports and GDP, or the

ability to generate jobs. However, it is not clear how to measure its importance and contribution to the development of other factors of a non-economic nature.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM

Sometimes, the real contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and the benefits derived from it are difficult to quantify, while the negative ones are much more noticeable by the population of the destinations, who may feel that it is not an adequate means of achieving it. Tourism is a complex phenomenon and its influence is felt in many and diverse socio-economic sectors, whose positive effects should be more evident for the population, which, according to Canada and Gascon (2006), could be achieved through political initiatives that allow them to be identified, analyzed and promoted at the economic, sociocultural and environmental levels.

Most scholars argue that tourism generally causes three types of impacts: economic, sociocultural and environmental, which can manifest themselves alone or jointly and in a positive or negative way (Pickering and Hill, 2007; Ivanov and Webster, 2013).

The effects of tourism, according to Quintero-Santos (2004), are the result of a complex phenomenological relationship that materializes in the relationships maintained by visitors, residents and the destination. Although in some cases the population of the destinations is not able to assimilate the impacts of tourism, in most cases they tend to identify them in a positive way, especially if the benefits obtained meet expectations. If this is not the case, those who have a special impact on sociocultural or environmental issues are perceived unfavorably (Liu *et al.* 1987), and may even generate conflicts between different sectors of a society although, collectively, they consider that tourism is an appropriate way to achieve its development (Gascon and Canada, 2006).

The main effects of tourism are of the following type:

6.1. Economic

They can be of different types and incidences, depending on various factors such as the existing economic structure, the level of technological development, the type of social organization and the productive processes (Kemausuor et al. 2016).

In the opinion of Soteriades and Dimou (2011), the generation of income in a destination is closely linked to the perception that potential visitors have about it. If they have a positive image, in addition to increasing the number of visitors and meeting their expectations, the destination will be able to increase the benefits obtained from tourist activity thanks to the greater predisposition to spending by tourists (Chi and Qu, 2008). For Almeida (2005), what really determines the acceptance or rejection of tourism is the economic performance obtained. If expectations are met, support for tourism will be high, as well as interest in participating in its development (Vargas-Sanchez *et al.* 2015).

Sometimes, the lack of knowledge of many underdeveloped or developing countries about tourism activity means that they have to resort to intermediaries who advertise their attractions internationally. It is generally entrusted to large operators who, depending on the relationship they have with the governments of those countries, can be essential. Overreliance on these operators, who will try to impose their conditions, could lead to the country's loss of control over the tourist exploitation of its resources, as well as unwanted changes. If the opposite happens, and it is possible to establish fair agreements for both parties, the destination will be able to maximise its benefits from tourism, and with it, its contribution to socioeconomic development.

6.2. Sociocultural

It is clear that tourism causes changes in the population of destinations, which can affect their way of life (Dogan, 1989; Picornell, 1993). Although some changes may be negative, the social commitment to tourism to achieve its development is essential (Chandralal, 2010), which will depend on their expectations and attitudes towards the arrival of tourists, which it may or may not be strengthened depending on their consideration of the consequences. Dogan (1989) does not show so much optimism, and highlights the negative impact that tourism can have on the culture and way of life of many societies. To avoid this, it is necessary to take into account the sociocultural particularities of the destination.

Factors such as the vigor of tradition, as well as the attitude of the inhabitants of a towards the tourist activity, can generate antagonistic positions. Regarding the maintenance of cultural identity, if the implementation of tourism does not take into account sociocultural particularities, it can cause groups with less identity awareness to end up distorting their

cultural manifestations to make them more attractive to potential visitors, which, in many cases, ends up turning them into an "ethno-theme park" (Beard Moose, 2009).

As far as the relations between tourists and the population are concerned, they go through phases that can determine the success or failure of tourism. These are:

- "euphoric": happens in the moments immediately following to the implementation of tourism. Among its most remarkable characteristics it is worth noting the good predisposition of the population to the arrival of tourists, which, initially, do so in small numbers. Hopes for tourism as a means of achieving socioeconomic development are high.
- "apathetic": once tourism has been consolidated, the relations between visitors and locals become characterized by their conventionality.
- "annoying": consequence of tourist saturation. The first negative reactions of the population towards tourism begin, and stimuli are necessary to maintain social support.
- "opposition": it is characterized by the explicit rejection of tourism by the population, due to unwanted sociocultural and environmental changes, which leads to the decline of tourist activity.

The consequences arising from the population's relations with tourists will depend on the latter and the sociocultural distance between them. It could be said that the essential elements of these relationships are transience, spatial and temporal limitation and their lack of spontaneity to establish links. When socioeconomic and cultural distances are significant, conflicts can arise. As Sancho (1998) indicates, tourism has consequences that can be positive (increase in the quality of life, promotion of cultural identity...) or negative (unwanted sociocultural changes, conflicts over the control of tourism activity and its resources...), but both will depend on the perception that the population has about the results.

6.3. Environmental

Awareness of environmental preservation is growing, and is considered to be one of the key factors in tourism. Paradoxically, tourism is a potential environmental threat, and measures need to be taken to reduce its incidence. UNWTO (2001) has recognized this,

but if tourism is properly planned and implemented, it can contribute to environmental protection and socioeconomic development.

Regardless of the positions taken by both sides, many effects of tourism on the environment can be assessed relatively easily. In addition to influencing the environment, tourism also affects the experience of tourists. This raises the need to establish how and to what extent visitors' expectations can be met and, at the same time, reduce their impact on the environment with measures such as the establishment of appropriate visiting quotas. Other possible measures to ensure environmental preservation may be the creation of Protected Natural Areas and, in places where historical and artistic resources are available, protected archaeological zones.

Although these actions are not entirely sufficient to minimize the possible impacts of tourism, it is necessary, as Quadri (2006) points out, to complement them with others such as the promotion of environmental education and the wellness of the population, but if they are not carefully planned, they are likely to cause even more damage than if they are not applied.

7. HOW TO AVOID THE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS OF TOURISM?

In addition to promoting the creation of Protected Natural Spaces or policies for the adequate conservation of material and intangible resources, it is necessary to correctly manage and continuously evaluate the effects that tourism can generate on the environment and tourist resources.

Scholars such as Brandon (1998) believe that more restrictive measures should be adopted while others such as Davidson and Lockwood (2008) propose to raise awareness among the local population and visitors of the need to preserve tourist resources. In a similar vein to the latter are Carey *et al.* (2000), which argue that these measures do not guarantee anything without the necessary financial resources and adequate training for their management.

Furthermore, the reinvestment of profits in basic services and infrastructures in order to raise the standard of living must be carried out with environmental respect and sociocultural particularities in mind, which is not easy. The UN (2013) has expressed the need for institutional and governmental support, as well as from the private sector, to

promote initiatives capable of creating an ideal socioeconomic framework that promotes greater awareness, as well as business opportunities, about the usefulness of tourism as a socioeconomic catalyst.

8. IS TOURISM STILL A USEFUL MEANS FOR DEVELOPMENT?

For at least half a century it has been fostered the belief that tourism is the most appropriate means of promoting socioeconomic development but ... is it still valid in the current context?

During the 1990s, criticism of the concept of development and the suitability of tourism as a means of stimulating it, caused that scholars such as Sachs, proclaimed its end. In the opinion of the aforementioned author, after more than four decades promoting development as the only objective to which the most disadvantaged countries should aspire, it is time to put an end to this belief (Sachs, 1996).

Other members of the "post-development school"¹² such as Rahnema (1997), argue that the idea of development, as it is normally conceived, is wrong and fosters inequality, and that is why it must be reformulated. In the view of post-developmentists, the 1980s marked a setback for the development of the poorest countries because it stagnated or regressed in many of them, resulting in a worsening of the standard of living in their societies. Among the factors to which they blame this phenomenon, according to Hewitt (2000), it is worth mentioning the payment of high interest rates as a result of its high international debt, a reduction in foreign investments or the increase in trade barriers due to the adoption of neoliberal principles.

During that decade, many industrialized countries suffered a slowdown in their economic growth, a fact that had repercussions on the least developed and, no less important, according to Escobar (1997), was the widespread belief that socioeconomic development should follow essentially "Western" patterns, which ignored the sociocultural

¹² According to post-development theory, development is a reflection of the power of industrialized countries over the poorest. Emerged during the 1980s, it opposed the various development plans in force, as well as the theory of development itself. Among the most representative figures of post-developmentism are Arturo Escobar, Gustavo Esteva, Wolfgang Sachs and Majid Rahnema.

particularities of underdeveloped or developing countries and, in a way, they supposed a kind of neocolonialism (Rahnema and Bawtree. 1997).

As a result of these and other criticisms, and from positions such as those of the post-developmentists that Sharpley (2000) calls "idealists" because of their fascination with pre-industrial societies, which Sahlins (1997) considers an example of quality of life by basing their wealth not on the material, but on the importance of people, could disappear if means are implemented for their supposed development, such as tourism, whose effectiveness, according to Sahlins, is questionable.

CONCLUSION

Although it is undeniable that tourism is one of the most effective ways to achieve the socio-economic development of large areas of the planet, and especially of the Third World, like all human activity, it is not without causing unwanted effects. It should also be borne in mind that this is not a model of universal application that serves equally and in all places equally.

In order to reduce its impact, it is essential to know the particularities of each destination and its population to implement the most appropriate tourism model. If this is not done, and as unfortunately happens in some cases, tourism may fail in its role as a stimulator of development as a result of inadequate planning, as well as perhaps too high expectations on the part of destinations.

But first of all, it is essential to know what tourism is, and what we mean when we talk about development. Both concepts are complex, and in order to determine which is each of them, different authors have contributed their definitions, some of them antagonistic. The same should be done with regard to those who, and under what circumstances, may be called tourists. If these concepts are not clear, it will be difficult to determine exactly whether and to what extent the effects, both positive and negative, observed in a place are attributable to tourism.

With regard to the term development, in addition to knowing which are its most representative elements, it is essential to do the same with another concept, that of underdevelopment. Development has generally been considered synonymous with economic growth, ignoring other factors of equal or even greater importance such as those

of a sociopolitical, cultural and environmental nature, which are absolutely essential to achieve integral development. In recent decades, the concept of development has been the subject of various reinterpretations to highlight these factors.

The relationship between tourism and development, as well as its consideration as a highly effective means of stimulating it, dates back at least to the end of the Second World War, and since then, despite the criticisms that have appeared since the 1970s and until the present, it is generally still considered as such. Calling into question the contribution of tourism to socioeconomic development it is impossible, but it does not mean that certain issues such as the following should be ignored:

- to what extent does it contribute to that development?
- is it by itself, and without the need for other elements, able to stimulate it?
- why tourism and not any other activity?
- is it a freely chosen option (especially in underdeveloped countries) or is it their only alternative?
- is it a universally valid model?
- is it still relevant in today's world?

Just as the term development is a highly complex concept, so too are the various ways of assessing its effects in a given place, so it is worth asking what the intended purpose is, who or who benefits and who is responsible for its implementation. Many of the parameters that make up what we understand by development are clearly Western inspired, which has been criticized, among others by post-developmentists, as a kind of neocolonialism. Western sociocultural modes of organization may not (and should not in some circumstances) be applied elsewhere that have their own worldview. As Moscardo (2008) points out, the particularities of each place must be considered if tourism is to serve for development. It is not a universally valid model and instead, there must be different models of tourism conditioned by external factors of various types and intensity.

Similarly, to think that tourism alone is capable of generating development would not be correct. By influencing multiple socio-economic sectors, many of which, in principle, have little to do with tourism, these also influence tourism, so it could be said that tourism is one of the elements that, in conjunction with others, stimulates socioeconomic development.

There are many debates about this, especially considering that in many places tourism was chosen as a means of development several decades ago and, unfortunately, in many of them the effects have not been the expected ones, since phenomena such as poverty, the scarcity of essential infrastructures and a marked increase in environmental threats persist.

With regard to whether or not this is a freely chosen option, it is important to bear in mind the important role played by certain supranational political institutions, as well as the tourism industry, regardless of their private or public ownership. The tourism industry is made up of a series of organizational and power structures capable of dictating some measures or others, as well as what type of tourism should be implemented and the level of socioeconomic development that is sought to be achieved.

In conclusion...can tourism be a valid way of achieving socio-economic development? Is it still relevant in the current global landscape characterized by globalization? Probably yes, but provided that the appropriate modifications are applied to the sociocultural reality of those places where it is implemented, since, otherwise, irreversible consequences may end up being generated and, probably, worse than if it had never been carried out.

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