TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: A VALID ALTERNATIVE?

INTRODUCTION

For at least half a century, tourism has been considered as one of the most useful means to stimulate the socioeconomic development of certain geographical areas that, for different reasons, have not been able to achieve it so far. This consideration of tourism is supported by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as part of the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development held between April 21 and 26, 2012 in Doha (Qatar). Its conclusions recognize the great importance of tourism as a generator of wealth, employment and business opportunities, as well as basic infrastructures in both developing and developed areas.

Although the benefits obtained from tourism are obvious, it can also generate unwanted consequences, such as an unequal distribution of wealth, environmental deterioration, creation of low-skilled and low-paid jobs, speculation ... which have been denounced by various social sectors, researchers and NGOs. Sometimes, and if it is not previously planned, tourism generates more inconveniences than advantages and, as Moscardó (2008) points out, it is not always a valid alternative to achieve socioeconomic development.

In this text, an attempt will be made to determine whether tourism can be considered a valid alternative to achieve socioeconomic development, as well as to identify its impacts, specifically in large urban centers, where interesting phenomena such as gentrification are taking place.

Focusing on urban tourism, a possible definition will be presented to understand its nature and characteristics, with the aim of answering these questions:

- why are tourists interested in cities?

- who are the "urban tourists"?

- what is gentrification and how can its effects be reduced?

1. TOURISM AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

After the Second World War, some international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) began to see tourism as a valid and effective alternative to promote socioeconomic development in various geographical areas and, especially, in Third World countries. These countries are characterized by extremely fragile economies that generate almost permanent political instability, a shortage of foreign exchange and a large foreign debt that is impossible to satisfy.

In the 1960s and 1970s, and as a result of the decolonization process that led to the creation, especially in Africa and Asia, of new independent states, many of these saw tourism as their way to development. Although many of these new countries had important natural resources, they could not base their development on these due to their lack of international competitiveness, which caused them to look to tourism as a means to achieve this.

Thanks to the support of international institutions such as the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), these countries began to plan neoliberal-inspired structural adjustment programs, which, through tourism, allowed them to increase their exports and diversify sources of income. In the opinion of authors such as Sharpley and Telfer (2004), these structural adjustment plans generated mass tourism highly dependent on foreign investment, which relegated the local population. Despite this, and especially during those decades, it was believed that if tourism and its infrastructures were further developed, it would be possible to achieve their development

It is in the 1970s when the first criticisms began against the supposed benefits of tourism and the consequences of these structural adjustment plans. In 1979 De Kadt published his work entitled *Tourism: passport to development? Perspectives on the social and cultural effects of tourism on developing countries*, exposing and analyzing the impacts of tourism as a means to stimulate socioeconomic development. Although De Kadt recognizes benefits such as the creation of employment or business opportunities, he highlights their negative consequences, such as the overexploitation of resources derived from an excessive dependence on foreign investment, uncontrolled urban growth or speculation.

De Kadt's position contrasts with that of others such as Butler (1980) or Miossec (1976), who argue that, beyond its disadvantages, tourism can be considered as a perfectly valid alternative to stimulate development. Such criticisms of tourism, and events such as the formation of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1984 and the publication of the Bruntland Report three years later, prompted development plans to take a more conscious approach to the environmental impacts of tourism on the environment. It also sought to involve more local communities, essential for the success of tourism as a means for its socioeconomic development.

Subsequent initiatives such as the celebration of the Earth Council in 1996 and the adoption of its conclusions by the UN in 1999, facilitated the inclusion of concepts such as "sustainable tourism" and "local development", which aroused great interest (Rapley, 2002). The previous approach, based on the maximization of economic benefits, gave way to a new impulse to make tourism an effective and viable means to combat poverty, as well as to promote collaboration between local communities and tour operators, which led to new tourist typologies such as community tourism which, despite its good intentions, has not been exempt from criticism such as those of Harrison (2008), who consider that it is a type of neocolonialism that is far from favoring socioeconomic development. In a current globalized international scenario with greater economic complexity, it is necessary for tourism to rethink its objectives and its role as a catalyst for socioeconomic development, which, according to Telfer and Sharpley (2008), would force it to adopt a new name: "post-development ".

In the first two decades of the 21st century, tourism has experienced remarkable growth, especially in developing countries. This has been possible thanks to factors such as greater availability of income for potential travelers, which has allowed greater accessibility and the "democratization" of tourism (UN, 2013). The greater geographic expansion of tourism has also caused many developing countries to increase their percentage of visits, driven by their well-preserved attractions that are relatively unknown to the general public. In some countries, tourism is their most important source of wealth, which in some cases accounts for up to 25% of GDP, which has led their governments to become even more interested in encouraging it.

Although the contribution of tourism to socioeconomic development is obvious, its benefits are sometimes difficult to quantify, while its negative effects are more perceptible by the local population. According to this, it does not always seem to be an

ideal medium for development in all the places where it is introduced (Moscardó, 2008). Tourism is a complex activity that affects various and different socioeconomic sectors, and whose effects, especially the positive ones, should be more evident. This could be achieved by implementing political initiatives that make it possible to identify, analyze and encourage them economically, socioculturally and environmentally (Cañada and Gascón, 2006).

2. WHAT IS URBAN TOURISM?

Tourism in urban centers is as old as tourism itself, with examples such as the eighteenth-century Grand Tour or thermal tourism from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Urban centers in general, and particularly large European cities such as Rome, Paris or London, have been the origin of various tourist typologies, a fact that can be attested in travel guides and literary narratives for at least two centuries.

There is a clear link between cities and tourism because, according to Violier and Zárate Martín (2007), it is an activity carried out essentially by citizens who, temporarily, move from their usual residence to other places in search of leisure and rest, and whose demands cause changes in the urbanization and occupation of the destinations, as well as in their environment.

Ashworth and Page (2010) state that it is difficult to offer an adequate definition of urban tourism due to the limited identification and analysis that has been carried out on its various manifestations. It is a complex phenomenon that, until recently, had not aroused any academic interest, and that is why it has not been studied in depth. For Edwards *et al*. (2008) urban tourism is one of the socioeconomic forces that affect urban centers, and encompasses an industry that manages and offers various products and services aimed at a wide spectrum of visitors with different preferences and expectations. According to these scholars, other names such as cultural tourism, congresses or shopping, are part of urban tourism and the interaction that visitors have with the destination city (Ashworth and Page, 2010).

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2.1. Why are cities interesting to tourists? Who is considered an urban tourist?

In the opinion of Ashworth and Page (2010), there are three essential difficulties to satisfactorily answer both questions, which are:

- firstly, it would be necessary to distinguish between a simple visit and others motivated by other factors, which for Ashworth and Page are not the same. They base this distinction on the growth experienced by tourism during the last three decades, due to the fact that it has involved urban centers and that, in these, basic infrastructures for tourism are concentrated, and its development is what makes some cities into important tourist centers. Although it is proven that people travel more frequently than in the past, it is not done solely for pleasure, and inevitably, and although initially visitors do not intend to do urban tourism, at some point they will spend some time in the city. That is why these authors affirm that not all those who visit a city can be classified as urban tourists.

- secondly, the diversity of motivations that cause the visit to a certain city. Visitors are attracted because cities have an important diversity and density of functions and infrastructures, which, according to Wirth (1938) is what differentiates them from rural centers. The diversity of motivations of tourists does not serve to know their true reasons, and that is why Ashworth and Page (2010) recommend conducting surveys to get an idea of which are the tourist attractions that cause the influx of visitors.

- third and last, as they are centers of political and economic power, cities have a great cultural and leisure offer that generates visits to them (Church and Coles, 2006).

Regarding the differences between urban residents and tourists, behaviorally, they are relatively easy to determine, although what is really difficult is being able to distinguish between tourist and non-tourist uses of a city. According to Ashworth (2003) urban tourists and residents are not distinguished by their motivations and behavior. Both use practically the same urban services and infrastructure (shops, restaurants, attractions, transport ...), which produces a convergence between the local and the touristy. However, there are certain behaviors that distinguish urban tourists, which are characterized by four basic behaviors, which are:

- tourists usually enjoy a small part of what a city offers because they make a series of decisions regarding what, how and when to visit a certain place, depending on the time they have and their expectations (McCannell, 1976). The spatial and temporal availability of visitors is usually more restricted than that of residents, which limits their radius of action.

- urban tourists quickly consume the products and activities offered by a city. Cities concentrate high levels of human activity, which means that, in most cases, the stay in them is shorter than in other destinations. According to Vandenberg *et al.* (1995), this is due to the great diversity of motivations for visiting a city, much more varied than those of non-urban destinations whose visit and stay is mainly due to vacation reasons.

- urban tourists are less likely to repeat their visits than visitors from non-urban destinations. According to Selby (2004), this is due to the very nature of cities, which contrasts with holiday destinations, where the offer is more generic. Many urban tourists limit themselves to visiting previously designated places that must be visited in order to be able to affirm that a city has actually been visited. Once their expectations have been met, they may extend their range of action within the same city on another occasion. Paradoxically, the more unique urban attractions are, the less likely they are to be visited again, as they tend to be a unique experience (Ashworth and Page, 2010). On the contrary, other products focused on offering a certain environment or way of life, and not a specific attraction, are likely to be visited more times. According to Mordue (2007), cities can choose two strategies to solve it: looking for new markets or redesigning their offer to adapt it to the demands of potential visitors.

- lastly, Pearce (2005) argues that tourists are moved by emotional impulses, and that their preferences and expectations depend on psychosocial elements that are susceptible to change unexpectedly. This should be taken into consideration when designing products specifically tailored to meet the expectations of visitors.

2.2. What are the impacts of tourism in cities?

Ashworth and Page (2010) consider that, generally, the impact of urban tourism has been studied in a few and well-known cases such as Venice, London or Paris. But even in those cities, tourists only visit a small area, which is really affected and where residents are disturbed.

Although tourism is an important source of income, in the case of some large cities, its weight may be less important than other economic sectors. Large cities such as Paris, New York or London are considered world tourist destinations, but in none of them is it a decisive sector in terms of employment or the volume of income received (Maitland and Newman, 2009). In contrast, financial or educational activities are of greater importance. In general terms, political entities realized the importance of tourism when they were able to measure the potential benefits that they could obtain in relation to the costs that its development would entail in their cities. The economic impacts of tourism in urban centers are closely related to its social, environmental and even political consequences, since practically everything in the "postmodern" city is measured quantitatively (Connelly, 2007).

There is a certain predisposition of tourists and the tourism industry to consider urban tourism as a "zero" cost experience, since many attractions are freely accessible. Usually, cities have public spaces that are offered to visitors for free or at a price well below its cost as a public service. This fact, among others, is what makes tourists poorly considered by residents, since they enjoy the facilities and services that they pay with their taxes. Obviously this perspective is wrong, since both tourists and the tourist industry contribute to the maintenance of the city and its infrastructures with their taxes, even in more than one place at the same time. The opposite also occurs, which is when residents benefit from the presence of tourists. However, the problem lies in the harmonization of public costs and private benefits (Haley, Miller and Snaith, 2005).

Sometimes, investments made in private spaces to accommodate the tourist flow, can concentrate it socially and spatially in these, but it can lead to a decrease in the economic benefits of the community. According to Riganti and Nijkamp (2008), two types of economic model predominate in urban tourism, the "windfall" and the "turnstile". Regarding the first, the tourist is seen as a business opportunity that can be attended without additional costs, while the second ignores the possible differences

between residents and tourists to serve both in the same way. Both models assume that tourists enjoy urban services and facilities in the same way and reasons as residents and do not incur an additional cost to city resources in the short term, although, as Riganti and Nijkamp point out, in most of cities none of the models would be sustainable in the long term due to the disposition of potential visitors and the congestion resulting from tourism.

Among the negative impacts of urban tourism is gentrification, a phenomenon that in recent years has been appearing regularly in the media as a result of various citizen protests, as well as a growing number of homes for tourist rental through large platforms such as AirBnb.

3. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF URBAN TOURISM: GENTRIFICATION

Among the definitions proposed to determine what gentrification is, Hamnett (1984) maintains that it is a phenomenon that affects the sociocultural, physical and economic aspects of certain low-income urban areas, in addition to the replacement of their population by upper-middle classes. For Gotham (2005), gentrification is a process that transforms a lower or middle class neighbourhood into a relatively richer environment, in which there are many attractions for the entertainment of potential visitors, and which reflects the close relationship between local governments, large real estate companies and the globalized economy. In general terms, it is a highly complex phenomenon that has been approached from various academic disciplines, and whose possible causes and consequences continue to generate intense debates since the 1970s.

In those large cities where consumption is the main activity of many urban developments, a growing cultural and socioeconomic segregation has been generated that has displaced large sectors of the population from their urban spaces. The causes include the increased touristification of cities and gentrification. In general terms, it could be stated that contemporary cities must face various challenges derived from neoliberal economic globalization, which has fostered greater urban fragmentation and inequality (Pavel, 2015). According to Harvey (2008), in cities where consumption prevails over any other sector, the quality of life of residents becomes a simple commodity at the disposal of the most powerful, who even influence in the urban policies.

It is in this context where socioeconomic segregation, which generates more divided and problematic urban areas. In the historic centers there is a great decline that makes them an object of real estate speculation that under terms such as "rehabilitation", "regeneration" or "requalification", justify urban actions that actually cause phenomena such as gentrification. The real estate pressure aimed at the creation of tourist accommodation and the serious threat against traditional businesses, many of them forced to cease their activity to make way for others focused on tourism or "nightlife", make it difficult for residents to stay in their neighbourhoods, who claim their right to continue living in them. These challenges have been recognized by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CPLRE) in its resolution 98, approved in 2000, which expresses the difficulty of achieving a balance between the preservation of cities, especially historical ones, and tourism development.

The increase in urban tourism due to advances in transport and better designed promotional campaigns, has turned urban tourism, and specifically cultural tourism, into a mass phenomenon that, in addition to serving as a means of socioeconomic development, poses various inconveniences in the preservation of historic centers. If these are not adequately protected, they can become spaces lacking in authenticity, as they are molded to the demands of potential visitors (Piccinato, 2002). For Harvey (2008), in these cases there is a transformation of the local identity into an object of mass consumption.

From a strictly urban point of view, it causes the disappearance of traditional commerce and the appearance of hotels and tourist accommodation owned by individuals or large companies, as well as an increase in the prices of rents, goods and services. All of this forces residents to move to other urban areas, which causes the loss of their identity. Slater (2006) argues that gentrification of certain urban areas entails the expulsion of their residents and their replacement by social strata with greater economic power that can occur in various ways: directly, exclusively or through noise pressure and coexistence problems. As Judd (2003) points out, the old view that the uses of goods and services in cities were clearly differentiated has been dismantled if the effects of gentrification are taken into account. This author considers that gentrification has been partially stimulated by local governments by abandoning their role as managers and providers of public services to venture into "entrepreneurship", where tourism can play an important role for the economic development of cities.

The growth of urban tourism in recent years has further evidenced its negative impacts on cities and their inhabitants, which has led to neighbourhood protests against tourism. This situation is called "nuisance phase", which occurs as a result of the tourist overcrowding, and which generates the first hostile positions. The scarcity or high prices of housing for purchase or rent for residents, or the proliferation of hotel accommodations cause the speculation of building licenses and the lack of plans by local governments to determine the "carrying capacity" of their cities (Zaar, 2019). Although local governments are aware of the problem thanks to reports from the European Union, which reveal the concern of many residents about the negative impacts of urban tourism, in general they still do not offer valid solutions.

What can be done to mitigate the effects of gentrification? Some possible initiatives to minimize the effects of gentrification would be the search for alternatives that allow the development of a more respectful urban tourism that takes into account measures that allow a reduction in the number of visitors and their impact on cities. Likewise, socioeconomic alternatives could be offered to preserve the "authenticity" of the neighborhoods most affected by tourist overcrowding. Last but not least, because it affects the work of local administrations, municipal laws should be developed and promoted to protect the fundamental elements of the residents' lives, which must be endowed with the ability to participate clearly and effectively in its preparation (Yúdice, 2008; Zaar, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Although tourism can be a valid and viable way to promote the socioeconomic development, it must not be forgotten that, in the same way that it brings benefits, it also has negative consequences. As Moscardó (2008) states, sometimes it is not a valid alternative, and therefore it is advisable to know in advance the particularities of the places. In the case of urban tourism, it is obvious that it generates a series economic benefits in cities, and in many of the, it can boost their economy and infrastructures, but if it is not properly planned and the needs of residents are not considered, adverse phenomena such as gentrification and neighbourhood protests against tourism can arise. To mitigate its adverse effects, it is essential that local governments are aware of its effects, as well as the development of legislative measures that take residents into

consideration and achieve the harmonization of urban tourism with the rights of those who live in cities.

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