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Research Article

Tourism and Cultural Interaction: A Paradoxical Relationship

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to discuss and contribute to the understanding of the relationship between tourism and cultural interaction, as well as the relationship between people of different cultural backgrounds in tourist context. The interaction between cultures framed by an ideal intercultural communication is frequently the center of a tourism discourse, promoting a possible heavenly world brought by tourism. This paper argues that its relationship is, by definition, problematic because of the complexities of the tourism and the cultural phenomena, clearly shown on the contemporary social and scientific debate about monoculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism, and the problems and paradoxes it entails. The discourses of international organizations on the specific subjects of cultural issues and relationships, having in mind their institutional roles, also reflect, in their choices and silences, the complexity of the subject. The main conclusion of this piece of research is that such a relationship is inescapably complex, and sometimes paradoxical and contradictory or irreducible due to the complex natures of tourism and intercultural communication themselves.

Keywords: *Tourism; monoculturalism; multiculturalism; interculturalism; dignity; paradoxical relationship; recognition*

1. Introduction

This paper seeks to address the relationship between the cultural interaction defined by the diversity of cultures present in the tourist phenomenon. It also seeks to understand how the relationships between people are shaped, such as those of the host community, the emitter society and the tourist, perceived as an actor with a specific social role that is more or less limited in time and space (Ferraz, 2008, 2017; Jafari, 1992; Josefová & Štýrský, 2016; Rojek & Urry, 2007). Moreover, it implies discussing the match or mismatch of cultures that tourism entails, as well as the measurement of cultural

domination or emancipation effects that are integral dimensions in human interaction and communication. Thus, the debate on the issues of homogeneity, uniqueness and cultural diversity underlying the discussion on monoculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism cannot be forgotten, inasmuch that it is an unavoidable issue in understanding the web of relationships between people, communities and societies that shape our world (Claval, 2001; Condorelli, 2018; Josefová, 2014; Moufakkir, & Burns, 2012)[1]. The paper also analyzes the discourses of international organizations on the cultural issues, especially their role in the configuration of an international regime (Ruggie, 1998), and what it means in terms of institutionalized ideologies and asymmetrical interdependence between societies (Ferraz, 2008, 2012). Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind the assumption that cultures are non-static realities and imply socialization, generational passage and dynamic interaction (Claval, 2001), involving individuals, groups and societies.

The hypothesis underlying this paper is that the relationship between people of different cultures in the context of tourism is neither linear nor unproblematic, but essentially paradoxical, even contradictory. The mentioned positive aspects of fruitful interaction between people, while increasing mutual understanding and awareness, intrinsically involves always some degree of unavoidable symbolic violence, power and asymmetries, tension and conflict.

This relationship is shaped by the specific formal regulation of the tourism phenomenon, by the power relationships of the social context and in the interpersonal interactions of everyday life, by insufficient socialization towards a cultural plurality, or even by the absence of an organic mono-culturalism that results from the construction of meaning for an understanding of the reality[2]. However, this is insufficient for a full understanding of the phenomenon.

But beyond that, the complexity and paradoxical dimension of our problem resides also in the cultural dimension by itself, and the plural and conflictual social and scientific debate around mono-culturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism as a model to understand the reality or propose the relationship between people of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Finally, a crucial issue that is transversal to the two previous dimensions: the cultural matrix of tourism and the diversity of views on cultural interaction which tourism is not alien to, for example, in notions of monoculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in this article is intensive qualitative research. Our objective is to present, discuss and understand the diversity of positions and dimensions of the several discourses of social sciences and specific institutional collective actors about the cultural issues in contemporary societies, in particular, the issues related to the interaction between societies and persons with different backgrounds happening in the context of tourism in a globalized world.

Our chosen technique was document analysis of different types of documentary sources. In this type of study – documentary studies –, documents can be understood as "communicative devices produced, used and reused for specific practical", involving the knowledge of the "the contexts of their production and use" (Flick, 2009, p. 262). Given that "documents are the means to constructing a specific version of an event or process" (Flick, 2009, p. 261), expressing knowledge and experiences about a given social practice, it is also important to contextualize them and their authors in the societal framework and their problems.

The documentary sources used in this study are articles, declarations and books produced by

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[1] *The debate on the plurality of tourist practices and discourses and their role in the configuration of the phenomena of the monocultural, multicultural and intercultural is, by itself, worthy of an autonomous and extended study that is beyond the main scope of this article. In any case, and avoiding any imprecision in the definitions and interpretations of such problems, when it is unavoidable to understand our main objective, we will the subject.*

[2] *Organic as opposed to arbitrary, resorting to the senses ascribed by Gramsci (1966, 1974) when discussing ideology.*

several scientists in the field of social sciences and humanities. Their discourses express different subjects, point of views, positions and interests, and symbolic conflicts in the scientific, political and societal fields. They are also, in the words of Foucault (2002), "regimes of truth". What we can find in those documents is crucial to delimit the subjects and understand how the actors in the field construct and define a discourse about the intercultural relationships in our societies and what are the problems and the dilemmas we face.

3. Developing the Problem: The Centrality Culture in Tourism Interactions and the Complexity of Framing Cultural Issues

From our standpoint, the main issue lies on the subject of intercultural communication, which is essential for every human interaction and inevitable in tourism, being here frequently demanded as its main benefit and legitimacy (Ferraz, 2008). Even in the most linear and formal perception of cultural interaction, we can see the presence of a host culture, the culture of the society where the tourist is coming from, and a tourist culture (Jafari, 1992).

On the relationship between tourism and culture, its main factors are the issues of authenticity and expressive motivations. And also, the fact that, in itself, the interaction between individuals and peoples of different sociocultural backgrounds is always a strong possibility, even a central objective and motivation, frequently invoked by all the actors involved and also by some of its promoters, such as States, international organizations and private corporations (Ferraz, 2008, 2017).

For this, we should remember of the different perspectives or consequences that the hypothesis of contact and the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of the encounter theory provide us (Reisinger, 1994); the changes and discussions on the definitions of authenticity and related tourist experiences (Kim & Jamal, 2007; Pearce, 2005; Wang, 1999); the multiplicity of cultures present in the tourist interaction (Jafari, 1992); the changes in the ways of live and cultural traditions and social roles brought by tourism development and interaction (Rozenberg, 1991); the diversity of phenomenology of tourist experience diversity and its direct correlation with the cultural and the nature and motives of the interaction, such as existential, experiential, experimental, diversional, and recreational (Cohen, 1996); and, finally, the diverse nature that cultural interaction can take on, intend or bring, such as monoculturalism, multiculturalism or interculturalism. This is a process and a consequence intrinsically related to the model of development and production of tourism, its asymmetries, power relationships and ideological discourses, shaping inequalities in the relationships between societies, different collective actors and persons (Ferraz, 2008, 2017).

However, things go even further, when we see that cultures of a mobility society are an essential trait of contemporary identity existential conditions, including various kinds of movement of persons, objects, data and ideas, which take on physical, psychological, social and cultural forms. We have mobility of objects, corporeal mobility, imaginative mobility, virtual mobility and communicative mobility (Urry, 2007). In short, how monoculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism address the constant and inevitable crossing of different peoples and cultures.

According to Claval (2001), multiculturalism in times of globalization, large human migrations and high mobility (including tourism), and where it is possible to maintain frequent contact with societies of origin through communication technologies, does not necessarily have to do with interaction or coexistence of several cultures in the same space. In this older perspective, where dominant groups tolerated, to a lower or higher degree, strangers, the aim could be the integration or absorption of minorities by the dominant culture. These multicultural situations would, in reality, be managed within a framework of the logic of monoculturalism, which could take two forms: the integration of the other into the host society, re-socializing him/her in the dominant culture, in a process of total hegemony or tolerance for some differences; or the exclusion of the other because he/she has a different cultural background.

Nowadays, as Claval (2001) maintains, there are not only multicultural situations but also multicultural ideologies, along with standardization processes largely facilitated by the expansion of

mass cultures and the new patterns of consumption and life that the West has disseminated at a global scale. On the other hand, and somewhat paradoxically, high mobility also favors the increase of cultural confrontations. It is in this tension that contemporary multicultural situations emerge, which is associated with the crisis of the idea of progress in Western societies, which, having ceased "to believe that their own values had a universal dimension and ought to be shared by everyone, they have no reason to impose their own cultures to the newcomers" (Claval, 2001, p. 10).

From here, multiculturalism would emerge based on the assumption that all cultures have the equal right to exist and to express themselves. This is a good starting point for delimiting the first dichotomy: heterogeneity versus cultural homogeneity. However, cultural diversity is not limited to the issue of multiculturalism, and the topic of interculturality or interculturalism that often emerges in its critique (Condorelli, 2018) must also be mentioned. For example, the aforementioned multiculturalism does not focus on the tensions of a possible or desirable cultural integration nor on the difference of perspectives on human rights within a framework of the discussion about human dignity and communication with ethical and moral impacts. These are some of the main issues that are at the heart of the debate between interculturalism and multiculturalism.

On this problem, Josefová (2014) states that "the concept of an intercultural society is too often assimilated with an ideal unattainable in reality. The reason is that the coexistence of a large number of different cultures in such society essentially increases the risk of conflicts because of cultural misunderstanding and rejection" (pp. 1019-1020). Thus, we have to ask to what extent we should negotiate dignity and respect between two very different cultures that need to interact. Quoting Sartori, Josefová (2014) considers that a "good society [is] pluralistic and based on mutual tolerance. It seems that current multicultural society does not mean development of pluralism but its denial [because] multiculturalism does not want differentiated integration" (p. 1020).

Thus, we can consider two types of cultural diversity in societies: one that is rooted in the older identity policies and the recognition of diversity, proposed by Charles Taylor (1994) and called multiculturalism; and another that is called interculturalism, owing to Sartori (2000) the idea of a policy of dialogue and reciprocity (Condorelli, 2018; Taylor, 1994). This interculturalism is at the heart of what Josefová (2014) calls intercultural communication, put in motion by individuals, social groups, organizations, States and societies, that is facilitated by "just knowledge of cultural distinction" (Josefová, 2014, p. 1020). That just knowledge of cultural distinction is not easy to obtain, being a very demanding challenge that involves symbolic interpretation, diversity of positions and interests and notions of dignity[3], justice and morality.

On the subject and the field of cultural diversity that goes beyond simple tolerance of the diversity or that refuses pressures for homogeneity, we face a dilemma: how to achieve social cohesion, peace and dignity in a society that is de-traditionalized, more individualized and, at the same time, globalized and with increased cultural differentiation (although closer than in previous ages)? We follow Condorelli (2018), when she addresses the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism on posing the question of "how the recognition of cultural difference and the instance of social integration can be reconciled?" (p. 249). In here we observe tensions between de-localization, re-localization and re-composition "of social and cultural ties, now without any more boundaries of space and time. This is the basis of identity problem [...] [re-introducing] the theme of the encounter/clash between different cultural identities, different universalisms characterized by different value systems and different processes of individual identity building" (Condorelli, 2018, p. 251), and raising the question on how to manage the relationship between identity and alterity.

For multiculturalism, the most important factor is the difference, the cultural specificity, that should be promoted, recognized and protected because it is the basis of individual and collective

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[3] *Dignity "as a natural property of man as man, and, in this sense, as an autonomous criterion, which does not depend on any cultural specificity or dogmatic faith", as stated by Donati, cited by Condorelli (2018).*

identity, implying differentiated citizenship (Condorelli, 2018). That entails going beyond the equal universal citizenship of rights as a way to include differentiated cultural groups and rights, rejecting "the liberal individualistic conception of the privatization of differences, in the name of universalistic principles of equality, in recognition of differences on a public and institutional level" (Condorelli, 2018, p. 253). Condorelli (2018) speaks of two kinds of multiculturalism: communitarian multiculturalism and pluralist multiculturalism. The former accentuates full autonomy from the mainstream for different ethnic and cultural communities within the same sociopolitical reality. The latter, acknowledging the recognition and rights of cultural minority groups, asks for limitation of practices and traditions contrary to liberal principles of respect for the dignity and liberty of human beings, "such as polygamy or infibulation" (Condorelli, 2018, p. 253).

Multiculturalism based upon a communitarian view could reproduce some sort of violence or cultural relativism that clashes with the notions of dignity and maintains a cultural non-communication, artificially blocking the dynamic dimensions of cultural processes. The perspective of pluralist multiculturalism could be seen as the basis for interculturalism and intercultural communication; however, that perspective could be criticized for producing a possible disappearance of cultural diversity, creating assimilations (Condorelli, 2018). This may happen because the principles that could not be subject to discussion are mainly the ones subscribed by the majority or by the more powerful societies, possibly producing a new homogenization based on power inequality. A plural monoculturalism could also be "a possible source of intolerance, separateness of minorities, cultural relativism, fragmentation and social conflict" (Condorelli, 2018, p. 259).

As a way to overcome these problems, trying to go beyond a simple pluralism of monocultures, Condorelli (2018) shifts the focus from recognition to reciprocity, and advocates that interculturalism is a way to avoid monoculturalism, plural monoculturalism and social balkanization, and to address ethical problems arising from the possible absence of common points of union and perspectives. Inevitably, as maintained by Satori (2000, cit. in Condorelli, 2018), there is some degree of assimilation when seeking integration, and we even see mutual recognition of dignity based upon reciprocity. Influenced by this position, Condorelli (2018) speaks of (pluralistic) reciprocity.

As an openness to welcome by the host society and acceptance by those who are hosted of the host society's rules of coexistence, of that spirit of liberalism underlying the rules and regulations (the values of respect for freedom and equality...) would build that relational bond and that dialogue between groups able to reconcile respect for the difference and instances of social integration. In this manner, Sartori sees in the pluralistic reciprocity the limit of recognition, beyond which the elastic of tolerance can no longer be stretched, [essential] [...] for 'living together in difference and with differences', without which 'politics of recognition and integration mutually exclude one another' (2000, cit. in Condorelli, 2018, p. 265).

However, there is always another issue: the power dimension that resides in intercultural relationships, as all human relationships entail a dimension of asymmetry and power (Foucault, 2002). That power dimension is increased because reciprocity involves socialization. Socialization in what, in the name of what? How to solve conflicts of interest and interpretation? In reality, when we interact, there is always the possibility of a change that goes beyond a pluralism of monocultures, even if the process is not similar. Interaction at the cultural dimension opens a strong possibility of change for all involved. So, where does that ideal interaction of people that some say happens in tourism lie?

These paradoxes and difficulties could also be seen when Condorelli (2018) quotes Luhmann, who states that, in "complex, extremely differentiated and globalized, societies, integration cannot be found on consensus. Its foundation is a procedural foundation" (p. 267).

However, interculturalism and the emergence of communicative systems of interaction presuppose "a shared symbolic code, some shared beliefs (in terms of language, values, expectations, norms...) [...] a common meaning [...]" (Condorelli, 2018, pp. 287-288). So, the author argues that "inter-culturalism emphasizes the dialogical, processual nature of cultures, understood as not fixed static entities but a dynamic process of constructing meanings, with others and through others" (Condorelli, 2018, p. 288).

Josefová and Štýrský (2016), on the subject of multiculturalism and communication in tourism, mention the need for mutual respect, mutual understanding and mutual tolerance, a mutuality that is important to overcome disrespect for minorities or the weak in power relationships, but also when minorities do not comply with reasonable principles of the majority. The problem is complex and there is the need for "philosophical, sociological, politological as well as psychological approaches" (Josefová & Štýrský, 2016, p. 4). The authors conclude that the concept multiculturalism seems to be outdated, and it could be possibly replaced by "the concept of interculturalism or a dynamic politological-psychological concept of intercultural communication" (Josefová & Štýrský, 2016, p. 4).

Summarizing, the issue of cultural unity and diversity is here operationalized in three concepts, explained hereafter.

Monoculturalism is used in the sense of the existence of a dominant or hegemonic cultural model in a given socio-historical space. It implies the domination of one cultural model over others with whom it may interact, presupposing the exclusion or ghettoization of the other, or his/her socialization inside the dominant culture, in a logic of hegemony or domination resulting from a negotiation (or the lack of it), where the parties have unequal powers.

Multiculturalism is understood as a broad social practice and a cultural model that promotes and protects cultural diversity based on the recognition of diverse identities coexisting in the same socio-historical space, and fighting against cultural and identity homogeneities and the processes and objectives of monoculturalism. On the other hand, it may produce increasing incommunicability and lack of interaction between cultures and people, the refusal of active reciprocity, the blocking of cultural change and the emergence of cultural relativism that refuses to discuss universal and/or reciprocal rights and dignity.

Interculturalism is defined as a model of cultural interaction, a vision of culture and human communication and relationship practices that proactively seek interaction between different people and cultures, in a mutual process of more or less extensive transformation. That presupposes the recognition that, in this process, there are unequal power relationships and that the story never reaches an end. Yet, it also implies the emergence of a debate about non-negotiable boundaries regarding respect, dignity and reciprocity, the seeking of a space of deep communication between cultures, and the building of an internally plural and dynamic way of life. From our perspective, it seems to be a more adequate model to face the challenges of tourism interaction and life in common, in a framework of diversity and complex differences. Interculturalism also seems to have the potential to be a tool for the construction of positive peace, a peace embodied in equality and freedom, more than mere peace in the sense of absence of explicit conflict.

4. The Discourses of Intergovernmental Organizations on Cultural Issues and Relationships

The declarations proposed by international organizations, especially the intergovernmental ones, are one of the forms of materialization of an international regime in the sense ascribed by Ruggie (1998)[4], where the socio-historical dynamics and their contradictions are mirrored, some of the more or less dominant ideologies are materialized, and there are glimpses of forces' correlations between the various collective actors strongly shaping collective reality. We are in the international field, where both individual and collective actors, States and international organizations act and define patterns of asymmetrical interdependence, drawing societal dynamics that affect all and cannot be deduced (only)

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[4] *For Ruggie (1998), the concept of 'regime' relates to a set of "mutual expectations, rules, regulations, organizational plans, energies, and financial commitments that have been accepted by a group of states" (p. 56). In this way, and still following Ruggie (1998), international regimes can be understood as social institutions (in the sociological and anthropological sense of the term), around which "the expectations of States converge in different areas and themes" (p. 89). Such regimes are dialogical in nature, and social interactions arising from communication between actors must be included in the study of international regimes, beyond simple reference to norms (Ruggie, 1998).*

from the formal dimension of the sovereign power of the State or relationships and intergovernmental organizations (Ferraz, 2008, 2012).

The cultural issue can also be seen in the discourses of intergovernmental organizations, somehow reflecting the issues about universality, relativism and diversity in the cultural phenomenon. Starting with the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations, the cultural dimension is mainly related with education and access to scientific and artistic culture, rather than any claim of rights of cultural expression as property and way of life, i.e., a perspective that is not adverse with an idea of monoculturalism.

A second important phase is marked by the 2002 UNESCO's 'Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity'. The subjects now include not only the vindication of a wide dissemination of culture and education for humanity but also a goal: culture and education towards justice, freedom and peace, as well as the safeguarding of traditional cultures and heritage. The dialogue between civilizations and cultures is central, dealing with difference and pluralism, ascribing great importance to the defense of cultural diversity and the protection of cultural minorities.

The difficulties of how to deal with cultural diversity, cultural relativism and human rights are absent. The same could be asserted about multi and/or interculturalism, a pressing agenda for contemporary societies. Likewise, the issues of expressive rights and identity construction, which have to do with lifestyle choices and that go beyond the cultural traditions of the peoples, are not part of the Declaration's concerns.

The UN's 1992 'Rio Declaration on Environment and Development' (RDED), coming from the 'Earth Summit' and proposing an 'Agenda 21', as well as the 2002 'Millennium Goals' meeting in Johannesburg (aimed at the operationalization of 'Agenda 21'), do not bring us anything new on the above-mentioned issues regarding how to address the paradoxes of cultural diversity in an entangled global world.

About cultural rights' contemporary issues, we must then go beyond the UN system, or intergovernmental organizations, to find a discussion on the issues that the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in 2002 left blank. We refer to the 2007 'Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights', written by a group of university scholars from the University of Freiburg, in Switzerland, which forms the basis of a UNESCO project.

On the 'Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights', we see the recognition of tensions and conflicts of identity that derive from the violation of cultural rights, and the pointing out that it is necessary to avoid cultural relativism and, at the same time, not to put peoples and cultures against each other. The Declaration further argues that cultural rights are not only about minorities but are identity claims of all human beings. This vision of culture and cultural identity is broader and more dynamic, not only by distinguishing cultural identity and cultural community but also by accepting the principle that a person may want to belong to or identify with more than a community, irrespective of geographical and political boundaries, and that he/she is free to modify that choice at any time. Another issue addressed here has to do with the enunciation that no one should have a cultural identity imposed or be assimilated into a cultural community against his/her will.

The issues raised by the Fribourg Declaration may, ultimately, bring more paradoxes with more questions than answers. They include, for example, the socialization processes and the extent to which socialization, especially of children, involves physical and symbolic violence, facilitation or guidance in the construction of identity. What are the degrees of autonomy and control of the actors involved in the process? Or, to what extent do these processes and the contents of socialization in terms of norms, values and behaviors not already mark the choices that the future adult can make? Furthermore, the issue of the relationship between cultural diversity and universalism, or how to problematize the principle of reciprocity and dignity in a context of living together in a shared space of culturally different people and communities remains to be solved. The Fribourg's statement mirrors a particularly matured vision of multiculturalism, incorporating the individual dimension and the permanent identity renegotiation and change within a framework of active advocacy of plurality and diversity. However, it does not sufficiently debate the other side of the problem: an effective interculturality that

turns the encounter between cultures, communities and people into a dialogic process and a factor of transformation and full communication that can go beyond good neighborly relationships and the defense of the right of the other to the difference.

In none of these do we find a clear approach to the problematic complexity of intercultural relationships, still full of shadows, namely the issue of cultural relativism; the tension between expressive individual identities, constantly negotiated and recreated in a horizon of plural possibilities versus a more traditional and/or conservative collective identity; a rethinking of cultural identity between the individual and the collective; and the relationship between lifestyle and cultural identity. Thus, more questions arise.

5. Conclusions: Tourism and Culture

The cultural interaction staged in tourism cultures is not only unavoidable but also central for empathy, recognition and awareness. However, interaction does not take place in a scenario of equality of roles, powers and interests, and there is no full sharing of meanings or total ideological consonance or social representations, which can lead to constructions and misjudgments of others and of the situation. Besides the asymmetry and power presented in all human relationships, the interaction between actors of different cultures is always mediated by the symbolic interpretation of the discourse, facts and behaviors that are variously signified in the light of diverse cultural referents. Similarly, if contact can lessen prejudice and hostility derived from ignorance, the reverse can also be the case, including increased xenophobia and intolerance, particularly if exposed to negative demonstration effects or to conflicts with actors that show ostensibly that they come from more developed societies much than theirs (Reisinger, 1994).

Finally, the socialization and change implied in the development of the capacity to deal with cultural diversity or in the phenomena of multi and/or interculturalism have always been an open door to processes of symbolic violence and molding, weakening of beliefs and representations by the internalization and the choice of others.

This results in the following recommendation: the plurality of interests, interpretations, roles and identities took on by individual and collective actors and their cultural foundations, staged in tourism interstation and reinforced by the centrality of culture subjects in the discourse, and invoked themes in the tourism field uncertainties of intercultural relationships and the socialization process presents us a paradox. We want cultural interaction as an ideal but this one, in a scenario of real interdependence and inescapable asymmetries, by itself, and alongside empathy, awareness, mutual understanding and recognition, also brings about tensions, conflicts and frictions. This manifestly has profound and complex implications that must necessarily be considered when working and researching this area.

6. Acknowledgment

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