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# TOURISM AS MASS MEDIA: FROM THE WEEKEND TO SEVEN EARNING DAYS

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**Abstract:**

*When saying “tourism” people use to think at good times, at leisure, lake of work. Is “tourism” just a way of spending free time? I doubt. Because the main economic sector in the world economy is desalinated for rich peoples, rich countries. It seams hopeless to discuss the tourism desires of Ethiopian population or of the 30% of poor of Romania etc. I focused on the subject and I found out a new perspective.*

*I propose to focus on 4 main directions: (1) Mass media and tourism: in order to see if we can take tourism as a mass media; (2) Some major characteristics of tourism as mass media, some attributes on this regard; (3) Some major changes, present and predictable in the near future; (4) Possible options to booth the European heritage on the horizon of the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** *mass media, tourism, classic tourism, informal tourism*

Looking into the history: the industrialisation obliged the owners of the developed states (Britain, France, Germany, United States at that time) to take steps to protect the population (the first to start was the king of Great Britain who needs strong young men for his army on the Colonial Empire). The Americans were much more skilful. By the beginning of last century Ford looked for a solution to make profitable his business: cars production. He needed to produce a lot of them but the buy power was fable. So he decided to increase the wages of his own workers. This will change the whole economic system not only in America but also in the whole world (a new push will come in 1951 when Dinners Club will launch the credit card that gave the American the opportunity to live over their possibilities).

The directness (or may be the lake of profoundness) of the “American style”, which is based on the power of the USD determined them to adopt a new God: the car. The highways cover US in order to satisfy the fretting and the restlessness of this people of immigrants. The wide space of US arrived to be travelled democratically and easily including by the working class. As the quantity bring small profits but numerous they start to build hotels, motels, restaurants, service stations etc. for the new kind of “workers”: the tourists. People started to work hard a whole working week to spend a

weekend: but in the weekends other people (or the same) worked to serve the tourists and the tourists money multiplied and accelerated the labour and profits.

And all the establishments of the new industry were bigger and bigger. And after the 2<sup>nd</sup> WW the borders were crossed over. The American style gets into Europe. But an other face of this modern and general? Phenomena arrive to my attention: tourism was, is used as a massmedia tool for the both side of the affected population; the tourists and the local people. And more, new similar, even identical processes are refused to be recognised or analysed: the informal tourism

### **1. Mass media and tourism: in order to see if we can take tourism as a mass media**

I shall start with a statement: If one follows the history of development of thinking, one can find that causes were sometimes taken for effects, and effects for causes, that led to a wrong outlook, that turned sometimes into a dogma. Let's illustrate it. Let's take a general opinion like: We live a tremendous world (time). Things are moving so fast that we hardly have the time to realise the changes. At least concerning travel and tourism. Isn't it real? May be!

I have to start asking the meaning of some terms.

We use to say or to hear the sintagma "The fortress Europe" that wants to point out that nowadays Europe is the target of many immigrants, the 'Promised Land' for many people of the third world, the Eldorado... This obliges Europe to protect itself and its peoples. But we can say the same about US or Canada, or Australia, or South Africa. More, during history we find constantly places that attracted people. I also point out that any fortress supposes the besiegers and the attackers. And I add: its own internal problems. I remain on the slide some moments of the history connected to Europe: the Indo European migration, that Homer's time - just an internal, an European matter with some steps in Minor Asia to Prim and Helen's fortress. Alexander the Great- Europe to Asia - only one culture with detectable heritage till today. And than Rome - the city apprised to an empire. An European internal affair too. But barbarians against Rome were not only an internal problem, just reminding Attila. An other internal business: the crusaders and an international one : the Turks and Genghis Khan. And the finest time of the Great discovers the first foundation of the present geography. Napoleon, the WW and the crash of wall if Berlin and to close the retrospection, the actual brain hunting, mainly for US.

Any thing knew under the sun? Nothing, that people coming to Europe, going around or just moving from one place to an other inside Europe. Each with his business: to make fortune, to robe some rich people or places, to solve some dispute with other... Let me conclude: every one travelled and is still travelling. But has this anything to do with tourism? Yes, as long as tourism is travel. No, as long as tourism is leisure, hospitality even informal tourism. The difference is the motivation. I do not explain what is the motivation to do tourism, as anyone of you knows the subject. Allow me to point out that nowadays tourism, mass tourism practically collapse the space.

Let me give an example. Suppose we are in Amsterdam, or Munich, or what so ever but Western Europe not Eastern one: We have not to imagine, we can find easily two fellows on Thursday telling one to the other: what are you doing this weekend. I want to swim a little bit. This time I want to try Malaga. I leave at 4,30. It seams, they said: I am just getting out to buy some beer. Or even your example. You just leave to the Winter University for 10 days, as you use to go to your grandparents.

Space does not exist anymore for travel. At least as an obstacle. The motivation is the main difference between travel and tourism. And there are so many motivations. Let's keep in our mind this important feature: motivation. As we still have some problem to define tourism.

**Defining tourism:**

We have here only 3 definitions: This way of defining tourism might force us to consider as "tourism" all travels of all people and all their movements on account of war, famine, illegal emigration, emigration (as the Chinese from Hong Kong), political refugees, sales of goods etc. and last but not least travels for "tourism purposes"? Shall we take for tourism only the travel made for having a holiday? What shall we do with business tourism, tourism for conferences as the INFER Congress?

What is "tourism"? There where various definitions of the notion that have changed in time.

- "Tourism is about people being away from home, short-term, temporary visits, with the express purpose to make "tourism" Rob Davidson in "Tourism" (Pitman 1991);
- "tourism is any kind of activity, performed by any one away from home for more than 24 hours";
- "Tourism: the business of providing travel and services for tourists"; but also "the practice of having a holiday as a tourist." (The Oxford Student's Dictionary)

It is hard to admit that tourism, a sector of the world economy with an important turnover, which involves one of three inhabitants of the Earth self-defines itself by the term "tourism". This is why I consider necessary to expand the notion of tourism as we will use it further on, to the broad meaning of the term, because the basic characteristic of tourism is movement, direct contact with a new space, a different "reality". Classical theory use to add an explanatory adjective: hospitality, leisure etc. I use further on "tourism" as synonym for "travel as any rule for the hole is also the rule of a part of the hole.

Every one of you knows what is mass media: newspapers, radio, television etc.

First allow me one big digression: mass media and tourism are made not for all countries. Only for those with a certain economical level. We find mass media and tourism also in poor countries but not as a mass activity, or goods, or tool. Taken this tell quell tourism suppliers and clients and information might be more present as the newspapers, or people listening to radio. And the whole touristical activity is public; any one can make a trip as they can buy a magazine.

**What is "mass media"?** According to the tasks it has set for itself, mass media also has several definitions. But all of them focus on the following basic characteristics:

- omnipresent and public : you can find them everywhere and they available are any time for anyone;
- rhythmical and periodical issue;
- widespread, universal, their message is complex and vast;
- penetrative, addressing anyone, the masses of people, directly, simplifying the distribution of information;
- instant and up-to-date communication;
- accessibility.

Robert Escarpit counted the followed basic characteristics. Let see if tourism fulfils these requirements:

- omnipresent and public: YES;
- rhythmical and periodical issue: the same for tourism: by season, on holidays or business travel: YES;
- widespread, universal, the message is complex and vast. It suits for tourism too: YES;
- penetrative, addressing anyone to the masses of people... just the mass tourism: YES;
- instant and up -to date communication: the view seems to be the faster of the senses and the main one used in by tourists: YES;
- accessibility: same in tourism: YES.

Mass media facilitates access to information - access to culture, education and training

- typical social communication - "satisfaction" by means of entertainment and fun. We are talking the same about tourism.

And more, tourism offer additionally:

- Heterogeneity: a lot of things - touchable or not, mixed together.
- Intangibility - you can not touch the touristical product before buying it, and you know what you bought only via information.
- Perishability - the life of a touristical product is short enough to give headaches to touroperators and not only to them.
- International - not necessary to explain to you.

(And more we have in tourism private sector versus public sector)

I shall say and you shall judge these days:

During the sixties, tourism has turned into a mass movement. By comparison with mass media, we can identify all basic characteristics of the latter: a location where the message (information) is elaborated to be then spread through specific channels of distribution bearing the same goals in mind. Moreover, tourism as mass media allows the "target" to check the information on location during the trip, a kind of feed back that

makes the information the more trustworthy. We may therefore consider tourism as a means of mass communication.

*Let's have a look on how mass media is working*

Any mass media product have a source, usually an institution or better a structure with all it is involve on that: ownership, finance, constraints, control etc. >>> Any mass media product exist in order to fulfil a need: of the audience or of the source >>> Once a mass media message is decided to be sent on it is encode, plunged in a special production process that will make the >>>> (message) product: The product can be used for information and persuasion. it can have genre or realism etc. >>>>Once on the market, arrived to the audience the product must support the decoding, under the restriction of ideology or culture and >>> in the context of all these it might and usually determine a >>> feed back: effects, or profits or so >>>>

*And more al this process is continue, active, dynamic*

We know now, that as a rule, not all the country enjoys mass media experience as well as tourism activities. The international exchanges in these fields were limited enough in comparing with the domestic market. I just want to remark that the countries that export more have a larger domestic market. US stay on itself, Western Europe is under American influence but has also an important "local" international market with 15 % exchanges between its own countries. The last technologies made the communication global but the same trends still remain in international exchanges for mass media and tourism.

The mirror in tourism: the first 20 hotels chains own 30,000 hotels And the number is not all: each of them has its own philosophy, rules and we can say its own world: Come in the world of Club Med! Tourism is a global activity from is very beginning.

This allows me to state: "From a very young age, the child gets accustomed to holidays. Then, from desire, alluring brochures to the holiday itself, we create the image, the illusion of happiness. We sell them their remembrances. We are endowed with most effective means of persuasion. This is the result of our being continuously in immediate contact with life and reality, but reality as we present it".

Tourism is a means of mass communication. Of all mass media it is the most powerful due to its range and especially its force: it is governed by the "principle of Apostle Thomas: touching is believing". This force is ignored because it doesn't bring a quick return on investments; the future is sacrificed for the sake of the present. The power to awaken the sense of history and values is lacking. And more extensive efforts should have been made, especially in Europe, in order to avoid the lost have rediscovered brother countries.

*Let's have a closer look to the tourism activity*

Information flows in tourism industry: We can see that tourism is not sleeping, not eating, not using transport vehicles - you all know it very well. Tourism is something more. Information, flows of information. The main actors: travellers, suppliers, intermediaries, tourism organisation and government agencies, market researchers

must not be analysed for them selves but for the flows of information they handle. Their input and output of information. Gigantic. And very strong one.

Each piece of information flow through a media typical for tourism: these media can be static or dynamic, pretrip or intrip as per example on the slide. But the real nature is much more complex.

The world of tourism: first the casum belum: the free time and disposal money. And this is not haphazard or accidental. If we have a look on the history of economy we shall find out that leisure has a recent life; as well as labour unions: last 100 - 150 year. To point it out well, I remind you that Ford has based all his philosophy on the buy power of his own workers; and he get on to rise their buy power. The history shows that things happened similar for leisure and tourism.

I shall say, that under the motivation and required information, the pour future tourist take the decision to travel. There are 2 main fields of tourism production: the invisible and HORECA - basically services. But all these have to be carried on on social, political environment and nowadays on the international one. And the guides give shape to the tourism product, that is remembrances.

I want now to point out the world of tourism as information. Not only the potential tourist is a target, but also each of the actors are a source of information and a target in the same time.

Let's suppose a restaurant: training is responsible to teach the staff about the habitudes and traditions of different kind of tourists: Muslims do not eat pork, French like vegetables, an English breakfast is made of, and an American one of...Hungarian papricash must served very hot and so All these is modifying the world of the staff but in the same time is reinforcing local traditions. They have to: nobody looks for international meals, every one wants something special, local too. In the same time the tourist, once plough into tourism world, expects to find the due respect for him, waiting to be served accordelly if he is an Arabian, a Juif or he celebrate his anniversary. The information goes both sides; We can conclude that touristical information become global but it is generating local effects, as only local offer can be for any interest for making tourism. We can go on with all the actors playing in tourism and we shall find similar situations.

Creating local and keeping specificity. A emerging, changing specificity, but good enough to preserve the personality of people, groups, persons and strong enough to maintain the heterogeneity of the humanity that made the life and the evolution possible.

I hope you agree that tourism is a media and a very large one

How popular is tourism? But how populous is it? 10% of the population leave for a touristical program. I know that these figures counted the same persons several times. But the same statistics are made for papers or TV shows. Mass media do not rely only on direct consumer but also on rumour effect: I hear it on the radio! I have seen it on TV yesterday evening! But I do not believe: I was there last summer and it is quite different. I saw it by myself... The power of tourism directs information.

In a small country as Romania, and poor to - I did not said not gifted - the touristical circulation might have a much more importance.

And now the question: is it tourism a mass media? And my answer is YES.

## **2. Some major characteristics of tourism as mass media, some attributes on this regard**

Classic tourism as mass media: there are two main conditions that are considered to allow practising tourism (in the classic, usual meaning of the word): the available money and free time. In view of this I must also point out:

There are very large direct means of communication employed in tourism. The information emerges as a result of the activity of entire area / community in its political, social, economic, cultural life. Their heritage, present and hopes give the image of the touristical destination, the interaction of the tourism industry with the market, the quality of the direct contact with reality (feed back).

Tourism is as a means of communication because it facilitates: transmission of information in view of a predetermined scope; contact of the "target" with a certain culture / society with a great potential to influence shaping the targets view on the subject; proves and supports a certain standard of living as a result of a long-term social contract (the Marshal Plan included the vacations in its promises: the German citizen for instance would hardly give up to their right to vacation).

Informal tourism as mass media: people having neither money nor time have come to travel in the past years, during which this transit has grown to be a mass movement. Examples upholding this idea would be for instance:

- illegal immigration: any illegal immigrant follows a certain route to get to the "Promised Land". And the information he uses is accurate and effective! How can I get this information? How is this underground world of "tourism" structured? A fair analysis will not be able to prove whether this illegal immigration is more to the benefit of the immigrants or the citizens of the target country.
- legal immigration : relatives come up for travel expenses one way or the other etc.
- movements generated by local crises : such as : East European countries, Hong Kong, Africa and Israel ( the latter, as an exception which keeps tourism alive in spite of all crises). And these are not only "travels" but also direct contacts. Western Europe, its peoples and their heritage are the main attraction point for "travellers" up to Pakistan and Africa, as in Antiquity! It seems that the "quantity" is in pacific area but the "quality" still remains in old Europe.

Tourism as a mass media using other means of communication: the revolution in the field of informatics already allows the rich - mainly people in business - to travel on the electronic highways of the global communication networks. Thus, it doesn't matter any more for them if they are on the beach or in their office. In such situations,

the tourist stays at home and the information is the one that travels, the image of the place he is "linked" to. The heritage is digitised!

Tourism is travelling in circle. That means coming back home. But after sharing the experiences of touring that include also the new acquisitions from the heritage of visited places and peoples. As a mass media tourism is accelerating a new "global heritage". We might ask if tourism (and / or modern communications) generate a common and global heritage! My answer is definitively NO, as everyday people die and new heritages are made, including their personality and own heritage and experiences too. We can rather say that this process is similar to macroeconomics, where the activities of many economic agents are not added but aggregated. So, the minority might be the speaker for the group. And this is the fortune for Europe: its heritage has the chance to put its mark on future human common experience.

Summing up, we may say that tourism, both in the "classical" and "broad" meaning of the world is a very powerful means of transfer of the information about communities, people, their history - their heritage, about present and future by direct contact and therefore very effective.

### **3. Some major changes, present and predictable in the near future**

I start with globalisation: Tourism becomes more and more global. The first 10 hotels companies operate in many countries. There are countries that can not afford to have embassies in such many places as these chains have subsidiaries. And the development is blowing up by new tools as franchise and management contracts.

### **4. Possible options to booth the European heritage on the horizon of the 21 st century**

What tourism is concerned, usually only business tourism was a subject, meaning the tourism industry capable to become a development factor. The lack of communication between the East and West European countries, before 1989 has brought the Eastern peoples disastrous advice and measures leading to the immediate and complete withdrawal of the state, which deserted its responsibility as tourism administrator. After 50 years, we gave up traditions and took over the American system of the "free market", which generated fierce competition and a primitive search for wealth. The history of these past years records that the political factors in Eastern countries, while waiting for foreign investments, often deliberately encouraged a savage tourism market and the destruction of the existing touristical base by faulty management. But people can not forget that they could afford a holidays for half of a month' s wage - true, on communist resorts but as expensive as for Western ones - and now mass tourism is only a dream. I do not point these out as a " nostalgic one ", but because I know, as you do, that the " state of health " means nowadays not only cure and drugs, hospitals and social protection but also tourism, that means that part of the common income as the average life standard.



Western Europe is modernising its touristical base and prepares to adapt its offer to Asian tourists. In order to integrate, Eastern countries should look for that services that are not offered on the market and, like the Yugoslavs, build up their offer, bases on their heritage. All this, after they meet the domestic demands which could be solved very quickly. The main problem of today tourism in this area is the lack of political will of a "sector policy" as it is called today, which should catalyse energies and simultaneously cleanse legislation.

We can go on but let me conclude

As Western Europe has welcomed us back today and listen to what we have to say with the tolerance shown to the newcomer who still doesn't know to play by the rules I still BELIEVE in the rebirth of Europe in a new Universe, in a common effort along with the other continents. The UE is compulsory. " And there is hope: some 1500 years ago a European culture evolved that was to unfold, exploit, but still educate with its values the rest of mankind. Thus, everything happening in the world now and eventually taking place in the universe tomorrow bears the imprint of Europe" (C. Noica - De Dignitatae Europae).

Our chance in the nowadays-apocalyptic competition offered by our heritage what tremendous upside-down referring the countries but also about the importance of actors in caring on the tourism activity. Just look to the travel agencies and national authorities. Will these trends be real? May be. At least part of them. Any way, even if it will be a small fire we can have a lot of smog.

All this allow me to say:

## **Conclusion**

In a global world we have to live globally. But integration cannot be achieved without learning the rules of world tourism, without learning and respecting its rules of conduct. Especially since we cannot ignore the fact that the outcome of tourism stretches out in the future. Tourism is not only a lecture about others but it also determines what attitude we will have towards others, how we will live together. Our world, the one created by the producers of tourism is a global empire, a single community: the human race, presented with all its distinguishing elements, with its past, its present and its hopes. Any mistakes can lead to incurable traumas for the crowds of people we call "tourists". And Europe has, is and will contribute with its heritage.

I have started to study tourism from another point of view: as a means of mass communication. As we have seen, the area is gigantic and there is no such thing as a scientific research in this field. But the history of tourism after the Second World War proves that there was a certain line in the politics of many countries to support this movement. The downfall of the "Wall" and the past years have proven the necessity of setting up a theory and practice for the use of this tool: for building or destroying social movements through persuasion, self suggestion and animation through tourism, for the conscious use of tourism as a means of communication, to boost the European heritage in this case.

The way we present the world we are simultaneously physicians and wizards and businessmen. And now, as the world is shaking under the desire for power and greatness, under blood, famine or disease we are among the few ones capable to heal the wounds. This is why I think we should meditate on this new dimension of our craft, the outcome of our actions. In the struggle for the money, glory, power or organisational perfection we shouldn't break that imaginary vow of Esculap we ought to have made before we started in this business. An European "heritage" too!

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