



RECONSTRUCTION OF TOURISM: TOURISM DETOX

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Keywords: Tourism Paradox, Tourism Equinox, Tourism Detox, Tourism Development, Sustainability.

TOURISM PARADOX

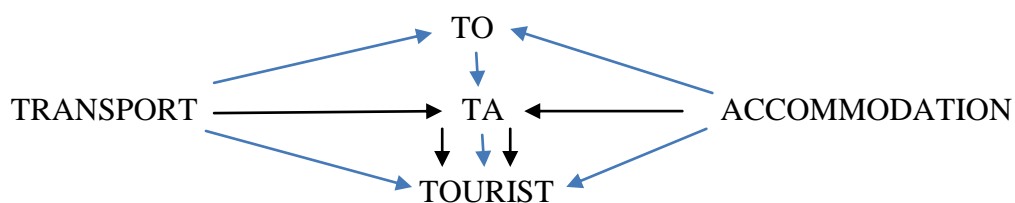
The tourism product is developed, funded, managed and marketed by both private and public sector entities such as government ministries, tourism authorities, hotels and Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's), all having their own ways of dealing with the product, own limitations and resource-based challenges. A tourism destination's characteristics and industry are highly affected by regional and local politics and policies, and are made up of a multidimensional conflation of macro- and micro-product features that are developed and marketed to dynamic and heterogeneous markets (www.equinoxadvisory.com).

The proposal offered by today's competitive paradigm that the more the number of tourists arriving at a destination, the more the income for the destination sounds good at first. New buildings, new lifestyles, foreign capital and new socio-economic relationships appear rapidly at the destination. The increased number of tourist arrivals gives the appearance of increasing desirability of the destination. Is it, however a feasible proposal for all cases? With the increased tourism activity, there is also an increase in problems faced by the local people and tourists at the destination. Having the tourism industry as the only development model for a country with its natural and cultural resources could not only destroy the social life but also the tourism industry itself. Although the equation "more tourists=more tourism income" is so simple, it is not a sustainable approach for the development plans. The prospects of even more income will cause an increase in the tourism revenue generation capacity of the destination which often causes deterioration and devastation of the attractions at the destination and a decrease of the tourism earnings.

The tourism paradox begins to appear at this stage since the natural and cultural resources that are worth seeing are consumed by those who come to visit them. The destination could shrink and disappear in the long run. Hence new projects and approaches to solve the problems caused by the growth of urban populations and establish healthy sustainable tourism destinations are becoming more important than ever. Tourism paradox is the name given to this phenomenon where industrial tourism deteriorates or destroys natural and cultural environment which is necessary for tourism activities.

An analogy can be made of a scorpion stinging itself when surrounded with fire to local economies dependent on tourism. For such destinations tourism is sometimes embraced as a lifestyle and everything there becomes entwined with tourism, in effect tourism becomes the ring of fire causing “self-destruction” of the destination. Although this metaphor is not novel, it expresses the notion where tourism itself causes a downward spiral as put forth by previous tourism researches that have considered the phenomenon from different points of view.

Table 1: Tourism Industry



Source: Unsever, I., 2004.

As the number of tourists visiting to a destination increases so will the revenue generated. Then it inevitably follows, facilities, roads, airports, and ports with the capacity to accommodate more people will be built for more income (Table 1). Tourism investments have been modified in such manner that negative natural and social impact is the central focus of prohibitions regarding investments.

TOURISM EQUINOX

Among the positive effects of tourism are the creation of jobs and income, promotion of intercultural relations and the possibility of recreation for the stressed urban citizens. Its negative consequences are ever-increasing traffic, over-exploitation of natural resources and generally inappropriate use of landscapes. Due to this, tourism sometimes endangers the sole grounds for its existence. Avoiding exploitation, increasing intensity of traffic and pollution of landscapes is one of the main tasks for the future.

According to Hermann Hinterstoisser, Head of the Nature Protection Department, Salzburgerland, the great variety of beautiful landscapes in Austria offers many different aspects of multifunctionality. The same landscape may have productive, protective,

recreational and ecological functions. The protection and sustainable development of landscapes has to be a joint task for spatial planning, agriculture, forestry, nature conservation and tourism as a whole in order to maintain the multifunctionality and diversity of the landscapes.

It is expected that domestic and foreign visitors will in the future prefer greener, more serene, and more natural destinations where they can easily find the values stated in the basic principles of sustainable tourism, and they feel healthy, relaxed and secure. The balance, which does not change and disturbs these social and economic relations at the destination is called “tourism equinox”. The name “equinox” is derived from the Latin *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night), because around the equinox, night and day are about equal length.

Local communities need to control and self regulate their tourist industries, and tourism offers the best options in terms of environmental protection and long-term, sustainable economic growth in these communities (Wearing, S., Wearing, M. and McDonald M., 2012).

One of the best examples worldwide is Yamaguchi, located on the periphery of Honshu, the main island of Japan. After the rural areas of Yamaguchi lost 32% of its population, the local people of this destination understand that tourism equinox can be used to bring together a range of activities, products and experiences to useful economic advantage. The Yamaguchi tourism policy aims to satisfy both residents in rural areas, as well as visitors from urban areas. The travellers who prefer rural tourism have the desire to stay somewhere for a longer period of time, to get to know a smaller place in the country, and close to nature, and to gain a better understanding of what it means to live in a rural area. Rural residents are seen as important providers of various services and products and the approach represents a form of neo-endogenous economic development. The interaction and economic benefit is supposed to generate mutual value and appreciation. This micro-economic activity is also designed to help bring extra income to rural households, and to female householders particular (Murayama, M. and Parker, G., 2012).

Tourism communities in Malaysia face also the problem of in-migration of labor from rural to urban areas. Land use conflicts - e.g. logging of tropical forests in the Endau-Rampin region of southern Peninsular Malaysia and in the Liwagu-Labuk River Basin, Sabah, East Malaysia, still continue (Malaysia Leo Conception, 2012). The strong risk of depopulation in rural areas, combined with the importance of rural areas throughout the European Union’s (EU)

geography, has induced several different programs that attempt to encourage the development of these areas (Hernandez-Maestro, R. M. and Gonzales-Benito, O., 2013).

On the other hand, the growth of rural tourism have to be totally diverging with that of seaside tourism development that, without control could create huge holiday resorts and artificial villages with no identity. Many coastal regions in Portugal, Italy, Greece and particularly in Spain, have suffered this problem, and coast line has been completely destroyed by blocks of apartments and huge hotels, without green or natural areas. In some leading municipalities such as San Gimignano, Pienza, San Quirico d'Orcia or Radda in Chianti the number of nights spent per capita is over 50 and the local governments are discussing about constraints on visitor numbers (Randelli, F., Romei, P., Tortora, M. and Tinacci, M., 2012).

Laura Piriz, National Board of Fisheries and Dr. Karl Bruckmeier, University of Göteborg, mentions that from the times – less than 100 years ago in Sweden – that “fishing community” was nearly synonymous with “coastal society” to the present days when fishery is marginal, both in national, economic and social terms, a dramatic change has happened, usually called modernisation. Today the Swedish archipelago areas are discussed mainly in terms of negative demographic growth with real estate being appropriated by people from urban areas and temporary overcrowding by tourists – indicators of cultural, social, economic and ecological impoverishment and decline. Swedish rural and environmental development policies address the questions of keeping alive the archipelago. Today the local governments try to create islands of projects and experiments with local knowledge to take the advantage of diversity of knowledge (for example, in organic agriculture and horticulture, local handicrafts, sustainable and high quality local fisheries, new consumption styles).

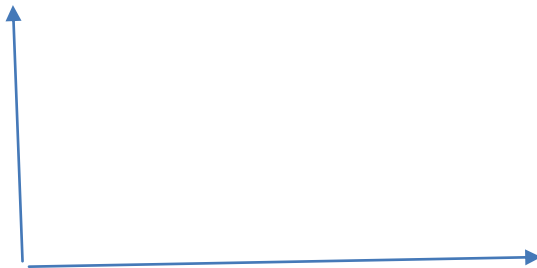
In Mallorca however, in the tourism sector the damage is caused by sheer numbers and by the fact that tourist are notoriously unconscious of their environmental behaviour when away from home. Tourism is a consumer industry and it is difficult to impose better environmental standards on a transient population. For a long time Mallorcans have bemoaned the degenerative impact tourism has had on society, language and environment but have been happy to accept the considerable economic benefits. Many commentators advocate an expansion of ‘new’ tourists at the expense of ‘old mass’ tourists through a policy of diversification. Highly laudable providing total income from tourism remains constant or rises. If more ‘new’ tourists’ and fewer ‘old’ tourists results in a fall in GDP or per capita incomes, Mallorcans must accept a fall in their standard of living or at least trade it against a

possible increase in their quality of life. Such moves usually benefit the higher social echelons and not the working class sector, already subject to vicious ‘seasonality’, who may not find this sort of solution so acceptable. Are there enough ‘new’ tourists with sufficiently high disposable incomes to fulfil this policy move? Golfers, cruise tourists, the conference trade etc have so far made little economic impact, and mass tourist numbers continue to rise in any case! (Buswell, R. J., 2011).

TOURISM DETOX

We have previously analyzed the issue of tourism paradox which was mainly about the negativeness of tourism and negative progress of tourism economy. The aforementioned tourism paradox was about regions which become tourism destinations where relations of tourism industry has dominated roles over its unplanned and uncontrolled economic and social structure with unbalanced funds.

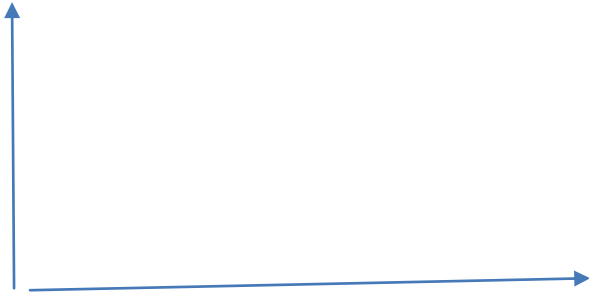
Table 2: Number of Beds in Kusadasi



Source:

The concept of distortion through tourism followed by spoilage of tourism can be better observed in regions where the early season is welcome. With the idea of having a share from the tourism industry in touristic resorts such as Kuşadası, Antalya and Alanya where the season starts earlier and people commonly enjoy to have an economic welfare in these regions in comparison to the other touristic regions, it is clearly observed that the nature, environment, social structure in the province and dominant cultural elements are speedily decreased. As a result some of them has become extinct and most of them have lost the identity. Consequently, these destinations which have become favourite touristic resorts with their unique touristic attractions have lost their characteristics. In 1980, 42875 beds were in Kusadasi and the rate for a 3 stars hotel per person per night was USD 30. Today in a resort hotel the all-inclusive rate per person per night is USD 8-10 (www.kuto.org.tr).

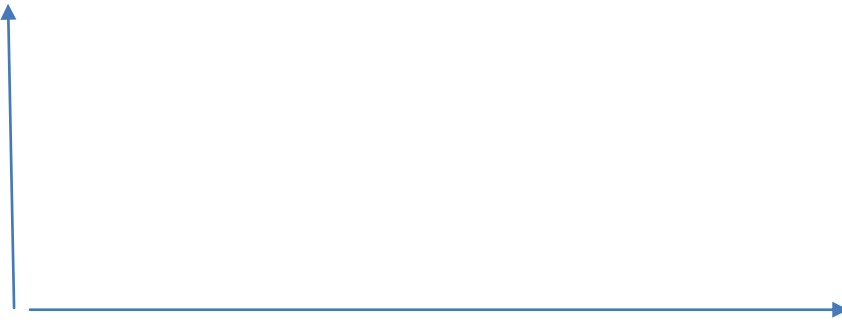
Table 3: Tourism Receipts in Kusadasi



Source:

Because of the fact that they are well known and because of their accessibility in terms of transportation, tourism industry has a tendency to use these destinations until they lose their unique characteristics. This leads to a fast grow of paradox of expecting “cheap” tourists and tourism models day by day. The people in these regions where the economy of the society based on tourism are in search for “more tourists” in order to satisfy their economic expectances just like drug addicts.

Table 4: Number of Passengers of Charter Flights in the Years of 2010-2012 in Izmir ABD airport



Source:

Is analepsis possible? Dialectics are the reality: the treatment is within the disease! Just as in the case of drug addiction, it is possible to be cured from the addiction. Certainly, the process cannot be easy and this requires a large amount of time. Knocking the habit has a psychological, sociological and economic perspectives. Self-control and consistency is the basic component. In order to succeed it is a must to support this consistency with scientific methods.

Similarly, it is also possible for the regions with tourism paradox to disengage from this paradox, yet it is not quite easy as it is expected. Tourism destinations can be disengaged from

this paradox to reach to the natural, historical, economic and ancient social positions through consistency in the society and with the help of scientific methods. When succeeded there will be a more balanced and controlled tourism with respect to the nature, environment and social structures even with the less number of tourists visiting the regions. With the realization of “tourism equinox” and performing it balanced with other economic models, tourism’s supportive quality will shine out.

The very first requirement to be disengaged from tourism paradox is to have a social consistency. This will mean an implementation and politics which would not only be accepted by political, administrative and social domains but also be approved by nongovernmental organizations, people in the regions and more importantly by tourism operators. This is not easy, on the contrary it is difficult to operate, yet it is not impossible.

As mentioned before, Mallorca Island in Spain is maybe the first touristic region which has performed a predominant tourism industry in the world. When this reconstruction on the island is examined, it would be clearly seen that it is possible to disengage from tourism paradox.

Many of these have already been mentioned – environmental degradation and resource depletion, the continuing rise in mass tourist numbers; the creation of foreign tourist enclaves unfamiliar or even unknown to Mallorcan locals; seasonality; shifting of investment overseas by Mallorcan capital etc. In addition the increase in Mallorcan population through inward migration with a higher birth rate than that of locals will cause tensions unless employment opportunities are increased. Second homes and increased permanent residents from north and west Europe will inflate house prices further. Both sets of population increases will put new and difficult-to-sustain pressures on social services in the public sector at a time when it is difficult to increase the tax harvest and invest in services. Changing patterns of household formation will increase demands for new housing. Instability in other parts of the Mediterranean will increase the number of visitors to Mallorca, if only in the short run. This may compensate for the drift of tourists to competing areas – Turkey, Middle East, North America, Caribbean etc. Of course,

Mallorcan capital may prefer to *follow* these shifts (Buswell, R. J., 2011).

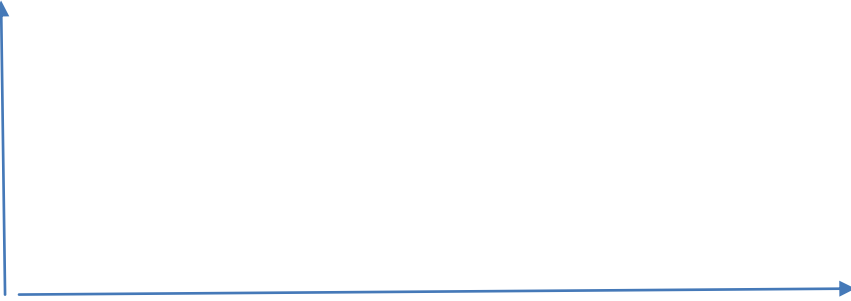
Table 5: Number of beds and Tourism Receipts of Mallorca



Source:

The best possible way to refine the things that have been impaired is demolishing. Through collapsing the buildings, the number of beds in Mallorca are decreased. As a result with the growth of natural environment instead of beds tourism income on the island is increased. Tourism income has had a tendency to increase together with the increase of natural environment necessary per bed. Decreasing the demand of the number of beds in order to increase the income per bed and to disengaging the tourism region from dominant economic activities by strengthening the social and economic structure is defined as Tourism Detox.

Table 6: Mallorca Statistics



Source:

In the first place the best way to start is to perform a Tourism Development Plan. Having a plan shaped by “Tourism Detox” would stop the corruption, and by determining the models and places of reconstruction, it will initiate reformation. The idea of reforming by saving the existing would only increase the corruption. It is nearly impossible and very difficult and even is against to the law to collapse the buildings that have been constructed in the name of regulatory compliance and construction plans. Nevertheless, it is a need to have some incentives like taxes as well as forming social determination and explaining the medium and long term benefits of reconstructing the region to the stake holders of the tourism industry.

Tourism Detox does not work on the prominences which have no past history and has existed just for tourism and because of tourism. Making a tourism plan and reconstruction on the regions which are existed by the result of the mass tourism and have only facilities and nothing else is different from reconstructing the tourism in regions which have its own texture. We use the term “Tourism Detox” only for such destinations.

CONCLUSION

New projects and approaches to solve the problem caused by the growth of urban populations and establish healthy sustainable tourism destinations are becoming more important than ever. The opportunities to create a new form of tourism practice that potentially reduces our environmental and social impacts, while simultaneously enhancing our individual experiences, are the focus of a new approach called tourism detox.

A sustainable tourism is the only type of tourism that can offer an authentic countryside lifestyle area, where it is possible to relax and enjoy nature and countryside atmosphere, like in Tuscany, Provence and Wachau, without compromising the other local specialisation, first of all agriculture. Sustainability should be substantiated through policy and legislation and should be primary objective in all decisions regarding tourism. This covers a multitude of areas of study and implementation ranging from, but not limited to, environmental, social, economic and urban development and design.

Sustainable tourism began to be used from late 80s and early 90s the term has become more commonly used (Swarbrooke, 1999). Research on sustainable tourism has provided many ideas and tools in advancement of sustainability in addition to defining and delineating the concept. Despite the theoretical contributions provided by extent research positive, real-world examples of the concept of sustainability of tourism in general and destinations in particular are necessary. But the remarks about the negative impacts of tourism are intended to demonstrate and explain the tourism paradox.

Tourism itself is not an environmentally and socially “negative” activity that should be avoided. The tourism industry is worth developing and investing in and brings about negative impacts which sometimes outweigh its associated positive economic impacts if undertaken sustainably. But there does exist a form of tourism that is not destructive or paradoxical, and tourism has many positive economic and social benefits that are indispensable.

The very activity of tourism should not necessarily consume the very cause of the activity. Tourism can indeed not only provide the impetus for conservation, itself can be based on conserving or financing the conservation of the destination in short, it can ensure sustaining of tourism. Common sense should prevail over policy, lessons gleaned from mistakes of other destinations should direct destination development, and most importantly tourism should not be conceptualized as a finite stream of revenue where profit maximization is the logical course of action, but as a renewable resource that requires care and attention in its utilization. Based on an understanding that is distinct from mass tourism, a new tourism destination where the cultural and historical heritage is utilized needs to be created through investment, promotion and marketing that is focused on sustainability. Activities necessary for strategic planning should be carried out, and the cooperation of public and private sectors should be ensured after determining the applicability of slow tourism approach.

The awareness of locals and visitors should be raised in order to prevent damage to the historical and cultural environment, the carrying capacity of the region should be determined under sustainable principles, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities and professional organizations should cooperate against adverse environmental effects caused by tourism.

“Recommendatory” and “orienting” approaches rather than “prevention” should be adopted in legislations; local authorities should be supported in their endeavors towards sustainability. In respect to structure of tourism, "nonindustrial" scale and types should be subjected to a different set of rules different from the areas and facilities of mass tourism. Rights and powers of local governments over implementations should be expanded. Rural tourism must be promoted as a key driver of rural tourism development, and funds must be devoted to supporting the development of rural lodging establishments.

Mechtild Rössler from UNESCO World Heritage Centre-Paris, claims that, the inclusion of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage list proved that UNESCO's World Heritage Convention is pioneering new approaches in the protection of the planet's cultural and natural diversity. The 23 sites listed in this category show that there exists a great diversity of outstanding cultural landscapes that are representative of the different regions of the world.

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