

**TOURISM, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

TOURISM – A BRIDGE OF ESTABLISHING SUSSTAINABLE CULTURAL CONTACTS

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***Abstract:** Culture and tourism are strong drivers of society on a global scale. The existence of minority groups is especially significant for tourism because their culture is something hidden and unknown but by no means essential in creating tourism products. Also, these groups play a crucial role in fostering a deeper understanding of the richness of the diversity of the world's regional cultures and a greater appreciation of the common heritage. According to some estimates, cultural communities are driving forces for more than half of the tourism activities in Europe. Thus, it is expected that cultural tourism will achieve enormous growth in the tourism sector because tourists want to get acquainted with different cultures and their cultural heritage. The diversity of cultures, the richness of languages, customs, religions, cultural and historical monuments, and works of art are vital factors in tourism development.*

***Keywords:** culture, tourism, minority groups, cultural tourism, multiculturalism*

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Cultural diversity, multicultural destinations, and the involvement of local communities are essential components of the development of modern tourism. UNESCO reports back in 1990 emphasize that it is crucial to recognize the significance of cultural diversity in various fields (Vilnius, 2007) in order to protect and promote them with the aim to preserve the identity of minority communities. Taking this into account, the involvement of local communities is vitally important for minority groups, which, most often, do not have enough strength to promote their values on their own. There is often a conflict between the pressure to achieve economic development through tourism and the vulnerability of minority groups, which are the basis of tourists' interest in some tourist destinations. It is not

only the basis for the integration of tourism and culture but also for the establishment of standards and systems for preserving local and world culture. The path to include minority groups in the development of a tourist destination is long and thorny, taking into consideration the lack of resources and often the will of local communities. At the same time, it is extremely important to find funds and convince decision-makers to direct those funds to minority communities. Exactly, this is the basis for understanding the seriousness of investing in a culture of diversity as an essential element of intercultural dialogue realized through tourism.

Therefore, the challenges of creating cultural contacts through tourism development must be kept in mind. This is primarily about the needs of tourists and minority communities, (Getz, Anderson, 2010), such as:

- the need for sustainable tourism development respecting the cultures of minority communities, as well as international principles and standards;
- the need to encourage the deepening of the identity of minority communities and the exchange of cultures through cultural tourism;
- the need to take concrete steps to achieve a feasible balance between tourism and local communities,
- the need to take into account the impact of the increased volume of cultural tourism on tourist destinations and minority communities living there, and
- the need to foster cooperation and to develop best practices among all stakeholders involved in the tourism of a destination.

CULTURE AND TOURISM

Modern tourism, which includes a great number of people, differs significantly from similar phenomena in society in the past. The fact is that there were movements like tourism even before, in the earliest times, when people traveled regardless of the types, speed, and comfort of vehicles. The changes that have occurred during tourism development have led to differences between the modern concept of tourism and similar phenomena in certain stages of the historical past. The emergence of mass tourism is closely related to historical changes in socio-economic relations, ie the way of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of goods. Starting from these characteristics, we get to know about the influence of civilizations and the remnants of their tangible and intangible culture as the basis for tourism development around the world.

The development of tourism is not only the focus of tourists but also the focus of governments, international, and tourism organizations. They all see tourism development and the inclusion of minority communities as a chance for the overall development of a destination, but even more than that. The role of the development of cultural tourism, in which the minority community is involved, is reflected in (*Richards, 2001*):

- improving the overall economic development of a tourist destination by creating new jobs and reducing unemployment,
- promoting identity and cultural diversity of a tourist destination, and
- ensuring sustainable development and use of cultural wealth.

It is exactly here that the clash of the roles of cultural tourism is best seen, the conflict that should ensure the economic development of the destination by increasing the number of participants in these movements. At the same time, it should limit their access to minority communities to a level that will result in their preservation for future generations while promoting cultural identity and diversity. Some authors consider this to be a remake of certain aspects of culture and simplification in the function of better placement through tourism. This is completely wrong from the aspect of tourism development that insists on the authenticity of cultural identity. (*Hugh, Allen, 2005; Smith, Robinson, 2006*)

The phenomena of tourism related to the needs of individuals for culture are cultural tourism, heritage tourism, religious tourism, ethnic tourism, commune tourism, third age tourism, and gastronomic tours (*Štetić et al., 2014*). At the same time, many ethnic communities are increasingly actively involved in tourism through the promotion of their cultural values. Tourists are attracted not only by cultural and historical monuments, and cultural institutions but also by the specifics of ethnic groups and read through phenomena from their everyday life. *Cook, Yale, and Marqua* define it as the overall practice of a society consisting of three parts (*Cook et al., 2002*):

- *material cultural goods* - include works of art and various art products,
- *daily cultural activities* - include gastronomy, clothing, language, and specific forms of interaction of members of society through play, work, and life as a whole,
- *special cultural expressions* - encompass the unique history, architecture, and tradition of a society.

Everything that makes a society unique and specific, its entire existence throughout history, the products of its activities, and interactions among its members can be the motive towards which tourists move within cultural tourist movements. Depending on the uniqueness, historical significance, attractiveness, accessibility, and personal preferences, tourists will make a selection of those motives that they want to visit during their trips. (Štetić S. et al. 2014).

Today, the existence of multiethnicity, multiculturalism, and multicultural population in a tourist destination is crucial for the development of tourism. These represent an inconceivable treasury of tourism development and affect its promotion in such destinations. On that occasion, it is very important to preserve this multiethnicity through the development of multicultural content. This also refers to the lack of knowledge of minority languages as a prerequisite for communication in multiethnic communities. (Ilić, 2009)

MULTICULTURALITY – NEW CHALLENGES FOR CONTACT OF CULTURES

As we know, every culture is conditioned by time and represents a part of humanity insofar as it corresponds to the ideas and needs of people in certain areas. For centuries, the territory of Serbia has been exposed to turbulent events, movements of peoples, and the strong influence of different civilizations and cultures. Accordingly, in the territory of Serbia, there are not only numerous remnants of the past, but also fascinating traditions, and gastronomy that are intertwined in such a way that they influence the development of our modern society and give a specific note to anthropogenic tourism values of Serbia even today.

Tourism and culture have an extraordinary role in fostering a deeper understanding of the richness of the world's cultural diversity and a greater appreciation of the common heritage. That is especially important for Serbia, in whose territory 30 national communities live in Vojvodina and Eastern Serbia. Only in the area of Vojvodina, there are 26 national communities with six languages in official use (Pušić, 2008). Each of these communities has its own specificities that are characterized by unique customs, folklore, and gastronomic specialties. All these make these regions especially interesting for domestic and foreign tourists. Apart from rest and recreation, the initiators of tourist movements have always been space with all its elements. Basically, foreign tourist movements have a cultural need that often dominates over recreational needs, which also affects the types of

their movements and the creation of specific requirements and tourism products.

Within the anthropogenic tourist values of Serbia, we must also observe modern forms and forms of human creativity in addition to cultural and historical values. For tourism needs, events and gastronomy, as well as national communities with their cultural milieu, should be especially singled out. Serbia is a country where a great number of events with different characters are held every year (sports, economic, entertainment, music, cultural, etc.) and they represent a significant tourism potential. They can be placed through special forms of tourism, either as a primary motive for the arrival of tourists or as a complementary offer during their stay. Currently, that potential is minimally exploited, mainly neglected and unrecognized.

In modern tourism development, it is crucial to encourage and strengthen national communities. They have a lot to present but are not recognized enough. They should be shown that they can achieve significant financial results by investing in the promotion of the cultural resources at their disposal.

The tradition and culture of minorities are recognized all over the world as a motivating element of tourism development in rural areas. "*The Wealth of Diversity*", a project organized in Serbia, especially in Vojvodina and Eastern Serbia, (Štetić et al, 2020) involves a large number of peoples, nationalities, and ethnic groups living there. This is a space where many differences exist and it is necessary both, to respect them, and to respect different approaches to diversities. It represents an inexhaustible source of tourism development.

In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and in 2002, the UN General Assembly declared World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. This gives us an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and coexistence. Tourism is an activity that encourages people on a global level to raise awareness all around the world about the importance of intercultural dialogue, diversity, and inclusion.

When studying the comparative advantages of Serbia as a tourist destination, we usually start from an excellent geographical and traffic position. At the crossroads of east and west, north and south, between Asia, and Europe towards Africa, Serbia is also a crossroad of civilizations. For centuries, the territory of Serbia has been a place of mixing peoples and cultures. In addition, Belgrade, with its history of over 7,000 years, is one of the oldest capitals in Europe.

Various civilizations have emerged and disappeared on our soil. The promotion of multiculturalism can contribute to the preservation of customs and traditions of all ethnic communities living in one area. In addition, a large number of different cultural influences in a small space allow tourists to have different cultural experiences in the short term. It is a treasure that Serbia has at its disposal. It should be used both for tourism development and for the improvement of the economic power of that population.

From the aspect of economic effects in tourism, so-called additional elements of competition are a core problem of tourism offer competitiveness. The attractiveness of the destinations attracts a large number of people who visit them. In modern tourist trends, this is often identified with the local population, their way of life, customs, music, and gastronomy. This is the factor that attracts foreign tourists. However, in order to attract even more tourists, it is necessary that a destination is connected by traffic that has certain services for the needs of tourists and a sufficient number of catering facilities, which are often lacking in places where ethnic communities live.

DANUBE REGION OF SERBIA – A BRIDGE OF MULTICULTURALITY

The Danube, a pan-European Corridor 7, intersects with the land Corridor 10. The significance of these two corridors for Serbia is immeasurable. They connect Serbia with Central and Western Europe on the one hand and the Black Sea and Asia on the other. Corridor 10 is set along the route of the ancient Roman road Via Militaris and abounds in anthropogenic tourism motives located along this corridor. (Štetić, Šimičević, 2017). This material heritage dates back from prehistory with the sites from the time of Vinča and Starčevo cultures, through the Roman period and the medieval Serbian state, to the period of the Turks and finally modern Serbian state. Being in such a favorable position, Serbia has always been on the path of settling different peoples. All this left its mark on the culture, religion, customs, and everyday life of national communities.

Places in the Danube Basin of Serbia are specific in terms of population composition, and that is why it can be said that every village is authentic because of its culture, customs, and gastronomy. This is also a bridge between the local community and tourists. (Todorović, Štetić, 2009) Foreign tourists do not want to be passive observers but to participate actively in the life of the local community through their culture, customs, and gastronomy. The villages of Serbia have had an exceptional role in

creating and preserving culture, traditions, and customs that we can still see even today. Almost every village has its own cultural and artistic association and exceptional gastronomic specialties. Thus, it can complete the stay of tourists by presenting songs and games about their places.

Authentic and old forgotten dishes and drinks are exceptional products that satisfy the needs and curiosity of every tourist. (Privitera et al., 2020). For those who stay longer in authentic rural households, there is an opportunity to try indigenous sorts of fruit and vegetables, to get acquainted with the breeds of domestic animals, and to try their products. A large number of gastronomic events, which are a real treasure for the tourism offer, are held in Vojvodina: Fish Cauldrons, International Festival of Ethno Food, festivals of home crafts, Pumpkin Days, Banat Breakfast (*Banatski Fruštuk*), Sausage Festival (*Kobasicijada*). In Eastern Serbia, in addition to unique relief features, there is an ethnic and historical link that affects the connection between these areas. It connects eastern parts of Serbia into a unique natural and cultural space, and through the Timok Valley, this part of Serbia is directly connected to the Danube course. (Štetić et al., 2014)

The cultural and natural wealth and multicultural nature of certain parts of Serbia are not used enough for promoting tourism of Serbia in the global tourism market. The coexistence of different peoples and national communities and their cultures in this area have contributed to the richness we have today. Their specificities and possibilities have preserved their national identity, representing a richness of diversity that needs to be fostered. The biggest problem with preserving and developing folk culture is the fact that traditional folk arts, culture, and crafts are no longer part of the daily life of the population (Đurković, 2011). Modern movements from villages to cities on a global level have not passed by the villages in Serbia. The younger population is leaving, the age structure in villages is changing and there are fewer and fewer people who know and preserve the culture and customs of the old place.

CULTURE, MINORITIES, AND TOURISM

Just as we would not be able to imagine tourism without motivation, so the solution to the tourist needs would not be possible without the existence of cultures and customs, cultural goods, and cultural creativeness. Regarding the behavior of tourists, we must start from the basic elements of motivation, attitudes, needs, and values. The motivating force for travel is reflected in the tourists' expectations, needs, and desires. This also reflects

the socio-economic profile of tourists. The need of each individual is an inner urge for something new in the emotional, spiritual or physical sense. Starting from the former primary motivation of rest and recreation, today we are talking about a wide range of motivations: physical, cultural, personal, and prestigious. There are very important elements of the overall knowledge about a destination and its overall cultural values. Different destinations with similar characteristics may appear in certain requirements of the tourist clientele; however, a well-developed attitude of a tourism consumer relating to the value depends on the previous personal or somebody else's experiences. The direction and type of travel will depend on those experiences. Broad cultural knowledge about the characteristics of a destination and its population is necessary.

Tourism activity is vital for the economic growth and development of countries at the global level. Accounts on tourism turnover and foreign exchange inflows are compiled every year. These are numbers that are available to everyone. However, the experience of meeting people with different cultures and permeating cultural influences cannot be expressed numerically. These quantities are immeasurable, which results in new knowledge and acquaintances of over a billion people who participate in foreign tourist movements and many more hosts who care about the realization of their travels. The impressions that tourists bring from a tourist destination are created by the host people. Thus, it is crucial to understand the importance and impact of cultural activities on tourism.

Also, the impact of tourism on the local population of each tourist destination should be particularly emphasized. It is increasingly important to envisage the impact on the destinations of minority communities. First of all, those communities are extremely sensitive to external influences. Their survival has always depended on the protection of culture and customs from the outside community. Often isolated, considered less important or irrelevant, these communities had to fight for survival. Their survival was possible only if they preserved their culture and customs. That is exactly what held them together and that is something that tourists are looking for today. However, the question is if tourism benefits such communities, i.e., if it benefits helps or causes damage to them. Opinions are different and divided among both the local population and tourists. It all depends on the angle of observation and the significance that the local community puts before itself.

Taking this into consideration, the project "The Wealth of Diversity" was launched in Vojvodina, initiated by the Danube Tourism Cluster Istar 21. The activities carried out within this project were aimed at presenting this destination as a unique tourism product.

The objective set in this project is to

"improve tourism offer in villages, which is presented through visits to old houses or museums, demonstrations of old crafts and trying authentic gastronomic delicacies, and attend rich folklore and music programs with the contents such as riding carriages, cycling, boating, participation in the preparation of traditional products, ... In addition to encouraging the production, affirmation, and promotion of original souvenirs and local authentic food products, the revival of traditional and artistic crafts and domestic production will certainly contribute to the development, improvement, and enrichment of tourism in rural areas of the Danube Basin." (<http://www.bogatstvorazlicljivosti.net/about-the-project/3110-about-the-project-%E2%80%9Eequality-diversity%C4%8Dity%E2%80%9C.html>)

Sustainable development presupposes the satisfaction of economic, cultural, and socio-ecological elements. This is exactly the way and method of tourism development in these communities. Their culture and tradition should be preserved and tourism should be developed so that tourists know how to behave in these tourist destinations.

CONCLUSIONS

Through all its manifestations, tourism brings cultures and nations closer; it performs pervasion and refraction, assimilation and disintegration of cultural circles and levels. When we observe tourist movements and tourism development as a complex of human activities, we should take into consideration all those motives that encourage them. Without cultural and cognitive effects in tourism movements, we could not speak of tourism as a specific social need. When traveling to a new environment, there is a strong desire to get to know everything that can direct tourists to cultural and historical monuments, culture, and history that has had an impact on the further development of that environment. Today, the local population, its characteristics, way of life, cultures, and customs have an increasingly significant influence on tourism. The desire and possibility of tourists to perceive all the significance and beauty of particular tourism motives and the environment that they get acquainted with, depend on the national structure, level of education, and interests.

It is extremely hard to combine different interests in certain tourist destinations. Through its various forms and activities, tourism influences the preservation of tradition; it confirms the identity of a community, its existence, and its way of life, although it is often identified with backwardness and underdevelopment in the world. For years, the rural population has been trying to reduce the level of traditional culture and get closer to urban culture, which is wrong. That is why the treasures of many cultures often survive only in the most isolated regions. After the period of globalization in the last decades, the beauties and charms of minority cultures have been rediscovered and their overall significance is comprehended, especially their value for the development of tourism in local communities. With ethnic tourism development, the possibility of a market for locally specific products and services has been created. This has ensured the strengthening of local communities and households in rural areas, and the population is re-evaluating their own cultural tradition.

In Serbia, throughout history, the pervasion of various peoples and cultures, and their mutual respect and acceptance have contributed to the richness we have today. Different national communities that inhabit our rural areas foster their specificities in order to preserve their national identity. This richness of diversity is the greatest value for Serbia and it is absolutely crucial for the tourism promotion of our country as a multicultural destination.

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