

THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE CASE OF ALBANIA

Drita Kruja, PhD

Lecturer, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Faculty of Economy, Shkoder, Albania

Mariza Lufi

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

Iris Kruja

Student, Epoka University, Tirana, Albania

Abstract

Developing countries and tourism: sometimes we think this combination as a remedy to solve many economic problems. We must instead ask if the tourist activities are able to improve the development of Third World countries, or, rather, their growth can cause damage to these weak economic systems. It must, therefore, understand the circumstances in which tourism can contribute to sustainable development of these territories. The first benefit of tourism is creating jobs and opportunity for people to increase their income and improve their living conditions. But the question is also:

What is the price that those countries should pay? The phenomenon of tourism has enormous consequences in terms of environmental, cultural, economic and social cannot be underestimated. A way to be able to have a better and more effective development of tourism in areas of the South is represented from the increment and a proper balance between domestic tourism and international tourism.

Several developing countries still have a gross domestic product (GDP) relatively high, so in addition to the poverty that exists in these countries they are going to increase the size of the middle class and the high class, which have a higher propensity to high consumption as tourist consumption.

Keywords: Tourism, developing countries, Albania

1. Tourism and the Developing Countries

Tourism all over the world knows the problem of seasonality. Usually the tourist activity reaches peak in periods called "high season" and sharp drops in defined periods of low season. This feature has always inspired tourism managers to find a solution for the seasonally, to adjust the tourism activity.

The seasonality is related to two factors: the first character of climate, the second related to leave granted to employees. Regarding the first factor is impossible to remedy, in particularly at certain times of the year. Even in developing countries often feel the need to adjust the tourism activity, although in this case it has some advantages? Many Third World countries can boast a climate that allows for a pretty long season, but as we said this is not the only factor to affect.

Few developing countries have implemented policies for tourism. Still are discussing about strategies that are able to act positively on the economic impact of this sector (Lea, 1998). One thing certain is that if Third World governments want to maximize the economic benefits of tourism should focus their attention on some important aspects. First we need staffs that are equipped with more skills, not only because this would have jobs for nationals not just those with low or very low qualifications, but also because this workforce could aspire to positions hierarchically important, thus reducing the dependency management by industrialized countries. Secondly, it is important that the countries of the South fail to attract foreign capital in order to facilitate the development of small local businesses. To maximize the benefits from tourism is essential that all activities linked to its complement in order to create a symbiosis with the territory. It is desirable, for example, to reduce the presence of a type of tourist facility highly prevalent in Third World countries: the resort.

This conclusion arises from a series of premises:

- 1) The tourists who travel to villages in developing countries often have no interchange with the world around them, living in an oasis, unable to appreciate the culture or the beauty of the places where.
- 2) Work on the premises shall be restricted to activities with low income.
- 3) In structures of this kind, a large portion of the proceeds is to be repatriated in the North.
- 4) The tourists, living almost exclusively in the village can rarely initiate mechanisms of consumption going to stimulate other branches of the local economy. Therefore, they are preferable other tourist facilities that are able to create more cultural and economic

involvement. Until the mass of people living in developing countries will not have a strong and clear conscience of their abilities and potential, will be difficult to envisage concrete forms, and especially with a greater degree of autonomy, economic growth, including of course efficient and sustainable growth of income and employment in tourism.

To what extent the Third World countries may be dependent on tourism? What are the real gains enjoyed by these countries?

These are some questions which will need to answer for the exact size of the impact of tourism in developing countries.

In the third world, we are faced with two problems (Lea, 1998):

- These countries often depend on very few economic activities, with the consequent impossibility to establish a "virtuous circle" that enhances the well-being.
- A dependency that in many Third World countries is established due to the strong presence of tourist activities in industrialized countries, which have the tendency to take away from the country part of the revenue generated in these countries.

2. Economic Impact of Tourism in The Third World

Tourism can affect economies and change the environment, but that's not all. Tourism can have opposite effects, in one hand it reinforce the cultural identity and allow the traditions and local customs to be known worldwide, but it can happen that there is a loss cultural due to cultural colonization induced by tourist flows pressure. It is evident that the boundary between the positive cultural effects and negative is very skinny; they need to find the right balance. The social consequences of tourism in the Third World countries may be heard at different levels from the microenvironment, the family until consequences that are reflected on the whole society. A positive effect of tourism can be seen in greater degree of education required in relation to activities such as agricultural; unfortunately the required level of education tends to remain modest on average. One drawback is the loss of cultural values, the increasing abandonment of traditional cultures, religious change, and the desire of young people to live with typical standards of the industrialized countries. A further negativity, due to tourism, lies in increasing activities as illegal drugs, prostitution and petty crime. According to Mathieson and Wall the effect of increasing crime in relation with the density of population in the tourist area (especially during the peak season), the proximity of the international borders with the tourist area (example U.S. and Mexico), and the difference of the income between tourists and residents. One of the important ideals of tourism is to contribute to the knowledge of different cultures, to grow the seed of understanding and

tolerance. The positive effect on culture has been the possibility to present the art of the developing countries worldwide. On the opposite side, the pressure from tourists on the cultural side has helped to create an "economic art" market, made for the consumption causing the loss of the real meaning of the local product, trying to transform them just in a market of souvenirs. The positivity lies in their distribution and possibility that tourists can enjoy the diversity of other cultures, but the negatives is that is many events and sacred ceremonies becomes just shows and parties for the pleasure of tourists. An interesting example that shows how cultural aspects can be changed from the outside is the reggae music in Jamaica. This genre, which is connected to African roots, to the religion and to the political situation of the inhabitants of Jamaica, has grown so large as to be known throughout the world. Unfortunately, this music has been partly changed from the entertainment industry and lost some of its deepest roots.

Tourism is located in an ambiguous position: it has simultaneously the ability to preserve and to destroy. If government control only economic performance, without putting attention to environmental and social impact, there is a risk of seeing a worsening of tourism that may have also economic consequences. It's very important the constantly monitoring of the capacity, although this procedure is not done easily but it is very important to protect the environment and ecosystems.

It is important to ask a question: how to avoid the collapse of the social impact in the Third World? It is important to act on two fronts: pay attention to the tourist, they must have more information of the countries that are visiting, awareness of the diversity of cultures, civilizations visit. On the other hand, the government must take steps that in addition encourage the increase of arrivals but also preserve culture territory.

3. Albania: Pre-Conditions For Tourism Development

Albania has unique ecological features that provide significant but under-utilized tourism potential, including coastal areas, mountainous terrain, rivers, parks, and protected areas. The tourism industry in Albania currently focuses on coastal areas, rather than on the unique features that set this country apart from its neighbors. Albania's natural features have the potential to attract tourists seeking ecological and cultural experiences. Thoughtful, sustainable development of these resources could enhance community livelihoods throughout Albania (Kruja&Hasaj, 2010).

According to Ministry of Territory Adjustment and Tourism, 2003 the following pre-conditions are necessary to achieve the objectives and realize the application of the necessary strategies in order to achieve these:

1. *Principals of Sustainable Tourism Development be accepted on all levels of planning*
2. *Basic infrastructure*
3. *Clarification of ownership of land and buildings*
4. *National and regional tourism law and regulations*
5. *Law enforcement*
6. *Clear responsibilities for tourism development on all levels*
7. *Regional and national stability*
8. *Improved statistical information system*
9. *Public / Private Commitment*

3.1. The Society Between Tradition And Modernity

Albanian society has elements of modern and traditional elements with the dichotomous approach of modernization theory, because a company to move towards modernity traditional economic and social structures must be entirely replaced by modern social and economic structures. The widespread opening of small businesses (cafes, restaurants, retail stores), which occurred when the government allowed the free exercise of trade, it gave evidence of the Albanian entrepreneurship. Albanian people abandoned their job in the countryside, trying to invest their savings, with all the risks that this entails, usually in companies located in the city.

3.2. Sustainability And Carrying Capacity

Tourism is only one factor among many, such as agriculture, trade and other economic sectors, which impacts on a specific territory. To be compatible with sustainable development, tourism should be based on the diversity of opportunities offered by local economies: it should be fully integrated with local economic development and contribute positively to it. However, tourism can play a positive role but also negative, in the context of sustainability is a consumer of non-renewable resources (landscape, water, energy, etc...) Generates pollution (example: because of transport) the existence and influence social and economic local communities. The negative impacts of tourism can be effectively managed if they have been previously identified, measured and evaluated. The management of tourism

must therefore adapt to the results obtained from the study of impacts. The Union for Conservation of Natural Resources has classified them into two categories, direct and indirect: the first generated by the presence of tourists, the latter by the infrastructure responsible for their activities. The word "impact" is connected to the concept of carrying capacity, referred to generically as the maximum number of tourists that a destination can endure, beyond which the impacts result in physical damage, economic, social net (Costa, Manente, and Furlani, 2001). For sustainable use and thus not deteriorating, environmental, historical and cultural resources is essential to know the limits and possibilities of use of the resort / tourist destination. According to Ceballos Lascuràin direct impacts of tourism on the environment can be divided into impacts on geological formations, rock formations, minerals and fossils, impacts on wildlife, impacts on plant health, aesthetic impacts on the landscape impacts on socio-cultural aspect. The concept of impact then joins the environmental carrying capacity, born in ecology and life sciences. The carrying capacity of the environment is one of the most used for planning and development of sustainable tourism in order to minimize environmental impact. World Tourism Organization defines the carrying capacity of tourism as "the maximum number of people who can visit once a tourist destination without causing environmental damage, economic or socio-cultural and without excessively reducing the quality of experience enjoyed by visitors. In other words, is "the greatest number of tourists that a destination can bear (maximum use level), beyond which the impacts result in harm (physical, economic, social) net (Costa, Manente, and Furlani, 2001). In a project of sustainable tourism is therefore essential to define the maximum number of visitors that an area can sustain.

Experts distinguish two levels of load capacity: the basic and the maximum capacity that can withstand a location and the optimal one, namely that you must strive to maintain the best relationship between visitors and natural resources. One of the characteristics of the load capacity is the limit (or capacity) change if conditions change. There are different concepts of tourism carrying capacity (IUCN, UNEP, WWF, 1991),.

- Ability to load physical (ecological or environmental), which is the limit beyond which the natural resources of the destination are impaired. Exceed this limit may mean, for example, changes in habits and behaviours required to animals to extinction. The ultimate consequence is the irreversible destruction of the environment and the disappearance of places like tourist resource.

- Ability to economic load is the limit at which the economic benefits from tourism reached the maximum and beyond which there is a shift to other economic activities.

- Capacity of social care is the maximum number of visitors beyond which creates tension with the local population. If you pass this threshold, it may happen that some of the local population to assume attitudes hostile to tourists, a situation that undermines the long-term sustainability of any tourism experience. - Ability to load or psychological perception, the maximum number of people who can share experience in sustainable tourism without impairing the enjoyment.

3.2.1. The district of Shkoder and the carrying capacity of Shiroka and Zogaj

The District of Shkoder Lake and the nearby city of that name, have a lot in terms of tourism. Tourism resources consist essentially in the presence of a diversified environment with rivers, mountains and sea. Shkodra is "the city that has everything within walking distance: the beach Velipoja is only 30 minutes from the city, Lake Shiroka, the largest in the Balkans, just 15 minutes from the city, the mountain villages to 3 -4 hours from the city. Unfortunately the communist regime led to a uniformity of style of buildings and urban landscapes, and now are a few vestiges of traditional and original buildings. The region of Shkodra has been considered through a national law (No 88 of 03.01.1993), as a tourism-oriented, but since that period little has been done in this direction. The hope is that in the near future there is a strong political will (both local and state) leading to development of tourism in Scutari, increased investments in favour of the local population and especially of its activities, thus stimulating the initiative private: this could be the starting point from which to blossom Tourism in Shkodra. As previously described, will also need to developed infrastructure to join to the tourist areas. However, will be crucial to preserve the existing character of the pristine places, creating a nature park, protecting and preserving archaeological sites, and not conducting a controlled development activities (tourism and urban), without which we would not sustainable any type of investment . A crowded environment, used indiscriminately, will contribute to remove the tourists, especially the tourist devoted to relax and contact with nature, that kind of customer that will be definitely more attracted in an area as Scutari.

The load capacity is not equal for the two locations (Metohu, 2009). If you start activities and specific investments, accompanied by active management by the guards of the protected area, to monitor and advise visitors, the area will be able to accommodate more tourists. In strictly physical terms the car will be a limit (the flat surfaces surrounding the lake are low) this should promote the use of public transport, cycling or walking. As for videos, there are no exact figures on the number of tourists in the area, but according to travel

agencies operating in Shkoder tourists are few. Their presence in this area is related to the presence of the restaurants on the lake. Greater presence there is in the summer, mainly by tourists staying in the city of Shkodra. We cannot yet speak of a social carrying capacity, as tourist arrivals are limited. It must however point to a sustainable tourism development, leading to an increase in wealth distributed among the resident populations, which tend to increase demand for new structures inland without the risk of destroying the beauty of the coastline which determine its' tourist influx in the area. So you can highlight an area still in its natural state, creating new sources of income for the local community.

3.3. Urbanization and the Urban Network in Albania

The urbanization process in Albania begins to involve the major cities since 1945. At that time, the rural population is as much as 80% of the total since the second world. Urban centres were little more than villages and agricultural market places and only the most important administrative functions. Urbanization proceeded in the following decades, but at a slower rate, affecting 36% of the population in 1990 and 52% in 2010 (INSTAT, 2012). The comparative data suggest also that a similar demographic balance will persist over the next decade.

Following the collapse of the citizens regained the freedom to transfer his residence, hitherto denied by the constitution. The city transfers were motivated by the lack of development prospects and job opportunities, the total lack of public services and basic infrastructure and the desire to access entertainment events available only in cities. The rural exodus has undoubtedly eased the population pressure in very depressed areas, but has also led to total abandonment of the most remote mountain village and a dangerous demographic imbalance, because the protagonists of these movements are boys, this is the reason that rural population today is made up predominantly of women and the elderly. The Communist model building has almost completely replaced the traditional buildings in Albania, they were simple and pleasant, consisting of single family houses in brick or stone, one or two floors, and crudely plastered with sloping roof covered with terracotta tiles. Unfortunately, this model survives only in the countryside and historical centres of main cities, now hidden by the buildings of the scheme, overlapping the fabric braking without any regard for the landscape and environmental value.

3.4. Civil Society as a Development Factor

Among all the post-communist countries, Albania has been found, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, with the least experience of civil society organization. On the eve of the transition the country was completely devoid of the cultural background and political tradition necessary for the development of civil society. The early phase saw the gradual formation of democratic organizations and interest groups independent of government, however, made difficult by the absence of national institutions and social policies that promote the interests of civil society. Only, in the nineties the Society for Democratic Culture, an organization financed by the United States of America, has launched programs aimed at maturing the spirit, especially in relation to participation in the electoral process to political life and initiative private enterprise. The Helsinki Committee, Member of monitoring human rights violations and other international organizations are not particularly efficient, due to the infiltration among them Communist Party members. Non-governmental organizations were located in Tirana. This implies that the substantial portion of the population residing in the country was not involved in the initiatives of these non – governmental organizations. The statistics from the Foundation for the Albanian civil society also show that women's organizations are among the most active, as well as the cultural and artistic activities. The lack of a channel of free expression and peaceful public claims brought in connection with mass demonstrations, to violent and destructive behaviours, such as the civil uprising of 1997 followed the financial scandals.

In developed countries the role of social partners is crucial in that they participate actively in the formulation of policy decisions, especially labour, corporatism in Albania is virtually nonexistent. The unions, in fact, are poorly organized and has few members, because the process of deindustrialization and high unemployment. The private sector, however, witnessed a remarkable development. Non-governmental organizations are currently active in the promotion of diversified public issues such as protection of human rights, ethnic minorities, women and children, environmental protection, poverty reduction, fighting corruption and crime organized (Bogdani,2004).

3.5. Tourist Development Strategies for 2012. The Role Of Foreign Organization

In recent years, Albania has developed a tourism aimed at the domestic market and neighboring countries, fuelled by the population of Albanian origin living abroad (the so-called 'ethnic tourism'). This form of tourism, however, has emerged in the absence of a specific strategy and without the support of instruments and regulations in support of

adequate urban planning / land use and a sound environmental policy. The biggest challenge for the Albanian tourism seems to be the ability to differentiate their offers, to propose alternatives to traditional destinations binomial "sun and sand", fulfilling a more cultural or adventure tourism and the so-called ecotourism (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, 2007). The image to convey is that of a safe place where authentic an Albania on a geographically limited and managed eco-socially responsible focuses considerable attractions easily accessible to European tourists. From '99 to now is a prevailing tendency towards elite tourism, with modern buildings, better quality services, tourist sites, tourist villages, etc.

The tourism industry affects many international organizations and cooperation agencies, which in recent years have funded projects to support the Albanian government in pursuit of various objectives. UNDP, for example, has produced the "Platform for Supporting Albania's Tourism Development based on Cultural and Environmental Tourism", two-year program. It intends to pursue specific objectives at both national (creation of a legislative framework conducive to the promotion of environmental tourism and cultural skills and training of key players in the sector) and local (development of World Heritage sites by UNESCO). USAID, under the EDEM project (Albanian Enterprise Development & Export Market Services), agreed with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism Youth and Sports has been working in the tourism sector in the fields' Marketing and Promotion, Education and Training and 'Strategy and Policy' along with training programs for tour guides and support participation in international fairs. The U.S. agency also supports the creation and management of a "Brand Albania", which distinguish goods / tourism initiatives relevant and consistent with the strategies for sector development. The WTO finally, in collaboration with the Dutch Cooperation (SNV), is supporting the Ministry of Tourism in the review of special legislation. The Italian Cooperation has recently approved the project "Institutional Strengthening for the enhancement of Sustainable Tourism" in Albania, through a donor of 943,000 Euros, aims to create conditions conducive to sustainable tourism development and improve the quality of life in which the intervention

3.6. Law 7665 Of 21/01/1993: Concerning The Development Of Tourism Priority Areas

Until 1992, tourism has never been considered an important sector for the Albanian economy, although the potential economic and financial benefits in terms of currency were evident (Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, 2007). Tourist activity was managed by the Directorate General of AlbTourism a State agency under the Ministry of

Commerce of the dependency property. Properties of Alb Tourism were all tourist hotels, a park of vehicles to transport passengers within the country and also all points of currency exchange. Employed a large number of employees, almost 3000 people, all those who worked in the area including tourist guides and also controlled all contacts with travel agents or tour operators abroad. Covered from ideological norms and always controlled by the political police, the agency played a passive role and has never done any marketing or promotional activities abroad. After things have changed for tourism, which is now considered by all a promising sector and of great strategic importance for the future economy.

Conclusion:

After the radical transformation of many natural environments occurred in Albania during the twentieth century, still exist in this territory uncontaminated landscapes, offering visitors the opportunity to experience an almost timeless. The destination is therefore not just a place a destination for visitors, but also an integrated resource (including natural) to be managed and placed on the market. We can say that the entire Albanian coast there is opportunities for future development of diversified tourism. The environment, which represents the resource base of tourism, considered as the set of natural resources (landscape, vegetation, sea, rivers, and climate) and cultural resources (archaeological sites, historic sites, art in general) are suitable for the birth and development promise of the travel and tourism. The natural resource sector in the past is compared with a single goal of achieving the highest possible level of production. With the transition to an economic system based on free market, the role of government has become essentially to ensure conservation and rational management of natural resources. In Albania, we can develop different types of tourism, seaside tourism, health tourism, tourism for the honeymoon, eco-tourism. The European tourist market is looking more and more for natural areas for leisure and vacation.

The most important factors are:

1. Political will

This political will must be expressed in the determination of a clear strategy for the integral development of the Albanian Coast. In particular, the most interesting area is the Ionic, which offers a wider choice of alternative tourism development compared with the other areas and in particular the north, affected by the presence of wetlands. In a second phase can be assessed individual sites and tourist attractions. Certainly it is important the

infrastructure, which must be designed to meet both immediate needs and future economic development and even tourism.

2. Financial resources

Regarding financial resources, there are three main sources for tourism development in Albania.

- Remittances from immigrants, who can finance small projects to build individual and family bars, hotels.
- A very important role they play local investors, also supported by the credit of the banking system.
- Foreign investments have been considered from the beginning of the period of political transition and economic opportunity as crucial for the development of the country. Not all foreign investors but failed to implement their investment projects, and indeed many of them have returned to their countries of origin without ever having understood the paperwork that had to do to realize their business idea. The reasons for these reside primarily in the absence of an environment conducive to accommodate new initiatives; much influenced the tendency to operate in the bureaucratic centralist logic, which quickly created problems of operational uncertainty and corruption. In part, external factors have also affected, including the attitude of foreign investors arriving in Albania with the intention of achieving immediate gains by exploiting the favourable opportunities presented by changing the system without engaging in longer-term investments. The most important foreign investors are the World Bank, European Bank for Development and the European PHARE program.

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