

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL DEMARCATION BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS TOURISM AND THE PILGRIMAGE, IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract :The present study attempts to identify the relationship between religious tourism and pilgrimage, as well as the elements that make religious tourism and pilgrimage individual and separate components of this increasingly varied aggregate in what concerns the conceptual and the theoretical demarcations. There are more and more opinions, especially nowadays, at the beginning of a century which, according to the way it manifests and according to predictions; it is certainly deeply influenced on various levels by the element religion and its reflections. As a consequence, during the pilgrimage, like during the religious tourism, various impulses- ranging from the religious to the cultural and the spiritual ones, cultural, psychological, sociological, topographic and economic impulses- that are gathered act together and succeed in maintaining a phenomenon that is always alive, engaged in continuous revolution and interpreting the needs and the inner impulse of those who practice it. It is important to underline the fact that one cannot make a clear distinction between these, when it comes to visiting religious buildings and holy places.

Keywords: religious tourism, recreation, cultural tourism, pilgrimage

Introduction

Hoping for the better, people have always searched to broaden their spatial and temporal horizon of knowledge, of their existence. One of the most important means of achieving this goal is travelling: people travel in order to find what they need to survive (or to improve it). Besides the material items, the travellers also gather new information, knowledge and experiences, all in favour of progress and civilization.

Etymologically speaking, the term *tourism* seems to originate from the Latin “*tornus*” (circuit) which in its turn gave the French “*tour*” with the meaning of a journey, outdoor exercises, a walk, a trip in a circuit. Most dictionaries find the origin of the word “*tourism*” the English “*tour*” and “*to tour*” (to travel , to wander) that entered English language around the 1700s. These words are considered the origin of words such as “*tourisme*” in French , “*tourism*” in English , “*turismo*” in Italian , “*turism* ” in Romanian. From the word *tourism* derives *tourist* too.

Religious Tourism

This form of tourism is the second stage in the evolution of tourism, the pseudo-tourist stage, which coincides with the period covering the Early Middle Ages until the Renaissance. The concept of religious started and developed from the understanding of the tourist's motivation. The difference between this form of tourism and other forms lies in the tourist's religious motivation. The definitions that were given to the concept of religious tourism, cultural tourism, travels with a single function, or with multiple functions represent an argument in favour of the relationships between these concepts and the need to view tourism from a systemic point of view[1].

An approach to the concept of religious tourism is not an easy task. It is important to mention that, theoretically, there have been many attempts to demarcate, but nonesucceeded

in ending this discussion. This is mainly due to the continuous development of the interaction between the main factors: religion, culture, tourism.

When the attraction for the tourists consists of a monument or any other item pertaining to the religious culture, one can speak about tourism in the religious space[2].

The idea of religious tourism developed from the understanding of the tourists' motivations. The major difference between this form of tourism and other forms of tourism lies in the tourists' religious motivation. This is why a demarcation between the main forms of attraction within the religious tourism[3] is necessary:

- natural attractions (even associated with the idea of natural phenomenon) with religious implications- lakes, mountains, islands, caves, places with a religious “load” etc;
- buildings carrying religious significance;
- special religious events that take place outside religious buildings;
- sacred places associated with tragedies (the place where the Twin Towers in New York were built) but also important political events (prisons, buildings that housed conspiracies etc.)

The association between religious motivation and tourism is considered insufficient in order to demarcate the concept of religious tourism. The mere association may lead to the confusion that is often encountered between religious tourism and pilgrimage, which might involve a sacred and symbolic dimension (in the consequences of a touristic experience and what it provides to the individuals)

The religious tourism –key component of the cultural tourism

Another side of the demarcation is that between religious tourism and cultural tourism. Moreover, there lies the necessity to mention the theories of conceptual differences between religion and culture. When considering its content, culture is viewed by **Taylor** as “a complex that includes the knowledge, the beliefs, the art, the law, the ethics, the traditions, the habits that were conquered by man as a member of a society”[4]; **Linton**, on the other hand, sees culture as a complex of physical and psychological behaviors shared by society and that are persistent, becoming something ordinary for most members of the society and being transferred by the members of that society from one generation to another.

From a narrow perspective, culture includes *all aspects of human life, material and spiritual elements that are transferred b society from one generation to another*. Therefore, any human being, any human community, and any society belongs to a certain culture.

From a broader perspective, culture is a complex of knowledge, representations and attitudes of the world, psychological elements that offers a certain original status to a nation when considering universal culture. It also includes a series of beliefs, laws, habits acquired by individuals as members of a society.

From a structural point of view, culture has four main components, as it can easily be observed in the image below:

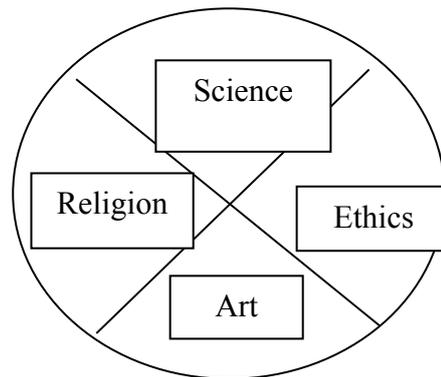


Figure 1. The most important components of culture[5]

Approaching religion from a cultural perspective in order to identify those models, laws and principles that govern the actions and the reasons for travel; at a first assessment, the religious tourism is evidently included in the cultural tourism. However, we do not fully agree with this statement; we believe that the religious tourism has an interdependent relationship with the cultural tourism. None of the concepts above can include the other completely, and neither can they be clearly separated.

From the concepts previously discussed, a set of elements are to be considered in order to define the religious tourism:

- the actions it is supposed to develop are ordinary, but also beyond the space where they develop and have a specific spiritual/religious charge, but not necessarily unique, as a basis;
 - it implies taking a trip, regardless if means of transport are used;
 - the destination is a place with a religious charge;
 - accommodation for at least a night at the destination place (in hotels, motels, campgrounds, accommodation available in monasteries or temples, homes of relatives or friends etc.)
 - meal is another item that requires to be the insured at destination;
 - the destination also allows other additional motivations that are tourism-specific: cultural animation (museums, festivals etc.), sports (hiking, tennis etc.), paramedical assistance (Fitness centers, massage), history (monuments), recreational, commercial etc.

Types of religious tourism

A first classification takes into consideration the general concepts of tourism:

- domestic religious tourism, made by residents of a country visiting their own country;
- receiver religious tourism, a country where non-residents are visiting a country (other than their own);
- issuing religious tourism, met when residents of a country are visiting another country.

Other three forms of tourism can be added:

1. internal religious tourism, including domestic tourism and inbound tourism;
2. national religious tourism that includes domestic and outgoing tourism;
3. international religious tourism, which consists of inbound tourism and outgoing tourism;

Starting from the concept of religious cultural tourism we can speak of two forms of travel [6]:

1. Those that only one function, a religious one, and here we can mention those travels dedicated to religious ceremonies, places that have miraculous sacred images etc. This types of travelers and the pilgrims are alike.

2. Those that have multiple functions, that combine the religious purpose of a travel with the strict cultural one and that allow the visiting of an important number of points of interest.

When considering the rhythm of tourism, we have:

- ❖ seasonal religious tourism, according to the main events, ceremonies, festivals
- ❖ weekly religious tourism - especially for the weekend – on Sunday when speaking about Christians, the Sabbath for the Hebrew etc.
- ❖ random religious tourism - according to leisure, to the occasional spiritual motivation and the financial availability of the tourist

When considering the number of tourists and the organization, we have:

- organized religious tourism, mass tourism;
- small-scale tourism consisting of small groups, o groups that are organized as a result of a private initiative;
- individual religious tourism.

When speaking about the orthodox tourism in the North-East, we can offer some details concerning a couple of essential forms[7]:

- occasional rural religious tourism
- exceptional rural religious tourism

1. The occasional religious tourism , that includes travelling to monasteries , except during major specific religious events, has the following locations:

- ❖ hermitages and monasteries near the towns
- ❖ major monasteries / cathedrals in the region

Main features of the occasional religious tourism:

- it has the purpose of carrying out some specific religious “duties”;
- usually, it doesn’t imply overnight stays unless we speak of the most important monasteries, and that happens only within their structures
- it has a strong personal character
- other travel expenses are occasional
- more often than not, the travel involves small groups and personal means of transport

2. The exceptional religious tourism is linked to major religious events and it can have the following destinations:

- the church in the village
- hermitages and small monasteries close to the villages
- the major monasteries or cathedrals in the area

The exceptional rural religious tourism has the following features:

- it is generated by the main religious events
- it becomes a mass phenomenon when considering the pilgrimage to the major monasteries
- it generates overnight stays
- the pilgrimage to the local churches coincides with the visiting of the relatives
- it generates additional expenses with the services that are being offered
- in most cases, it implies public means of transport
- the groups are larger
- special preparations are needed
- it can be limited in space and time; this allows its prediction, forecasting and preparation, which is an key element for the organizers

The pilgrimage

The Latin “peregrinatio” meant a travel to foreign lands, but what we consider today as pilgrimage is rather different. Those who went on such a Christian mission, would walk on the chosen path, no matter what. they certainly knew they might not arrive to the final destination , but there were certain unwritten rules of pilgrimage back then. Due to the fact that they had to walk and the journey could take more than a year, (according to the departure point or to the final destination), pilgrims could not afford to carry too much food or too many clothes, but the people from the places in their path thought it was their ethic duty to give them food and shelter. Being a pilgrim is not essentially a feature of Christianity ; it has its origins in Christianity , but each religion has its peculiar features[8]. Theoretically, a pilgrimage is „typically voluntary” (Arnould et al., 1993) [9]; it starts with a phase of departure („separation”), followed by a kind of „transition” (the period of stay, to use the touristic lexicon), then they reintegrate (transformation of individuals back in community) (Arnould and Price, 1993) [10]. On the other hand, pilgrimage might also be considered as the promotion of a link between individuals from the same ideal orientation (which is not due to be in the ordinary life). It means that people can absolutely meet in an ideological or philosophical field, and so sharing the same behaviors and norms, without being so similar in their everyday life. This might be a point which can create a theoretical and practical gap between motives of dynamics discoveries (which we will link with tourism hereafter).

It is a distinct form of travelling and it can only partially be identified with religious tourism. For instance, the pilgrims that carry this journey out have several main features:

- the motivation behind their travel-deeply spiritual;
- their destination- a religious one;
- their actions carry a deep religious load- either during the ceremonies, or during daily activities;
- penitence is often an important feature(religions all over the world involve such physical and spiritual cleansing elements);

- means of transport- quality is not necessarily an important criterion;
- accommodation is usually given or inexpensive (low costs and quality).

Since Antiquity, the Latin word changes from the semantic point of view and its meaning is that of: traveler to holy places, with a devotional purpose. The teachings in The Old and The New Testament, especially in the Epistle to Diognet (2nd century) have also contributed to this semantic mutation; it is stated that the Christian is a foreigner on Earth, always a pilgrim towards the real divine world. The new meaning, specifically, a traveler to the holy places, having a devotional purpose, has been certified starting with the 7th century due to four representations that were found on the walls of St. Michael of Gargano Church (Italy).

In his *Demonstratio evangelica*, written between 314 and 320, Eusebius said, not without enthusiasm, that all those who believed in Christ came from all over the world to the Holy City but not like they did before, to admire the beauty of the temple and to worship God but to pray at the Mount of Olives where he had stopped and prayed and ascended to heaven according to The Acts of the Apostles.

Much of the information provided by Eusebius regarding Christian pilgrimage indicates a moderate flow of pilgrims to Jerusalem and other holy places in Palestine in the middle of the 4th century. The pilgrimage, seen as a private or collective journey to a sacred place, is a form of worship that was as widespread among the ancient religions as it is intensely practiced today.

Even though each religion shows differences in the time, the manner and the significance of the pilgrimage, the most important idea is common to all and highlights the necessity to visit places which are believed to be *inhabited* by Divinity, in its forms, sacred objects that belonged to the founders of religions, relics of saints and martyrs and even places that are linked to particular events.

The pilgrims are those who want to take the road in a different manner than common people do; they are fascinated by the secret, its obscurity; they seek to understand the mystery of life, they are fascinated by the occult forces. These people believe that with a little imagination they can cross unknown roads in order to reach what which they are looking for, not taking potential risks into account.

We must take into consideration that organized groups are heterogeneous, involving people who have less to do with the sacred; their taking part into a pilgrimage represents a huge step towards their return to religion as a consequence of the special moments they live during prayer and catechesis with other pilgrims.

Travel agencies' strategies try to link both features of a potential client-that of a pilgrim and that of a tourist; the demarcation is to take place when considering the services offered (transport, accommodation, additional activities etc.). All these parameters build the structure of the touristic concept (with respect of standards in service quality), but may be improved by a specific attraction. In the Durkeimian definition, tourist experience is almost considered as a pilgrimage ("quasi-religious", Quan et al., 2004).

In order to offer a complete image of the concept of religious tourism we add:

- the religious tourism does not intentionally include the tourist's faith in one religion
- the religious tourism involves a spiritual motivation towards a religious or a spiritual place or towards a place that carries a certain meaning, religiously speaking;

-when speaking about religious tourism, not all destinations are related to current religions; they may be associated to religions that are long gone (temples, statues, pyramids, tombs, sacrificial places etc.)

If religious tourism is seen as a private or a collective journey to a sacred place, it is also a widespread form of worship in ancient religions and even today. Although each religion has its own features with respect to time, methods and significance, the main idea is common to all and emphasizes the need to visit places that are “inhabited” by the Divinity, sacred objects that belonged to founders of religions, relics of saints or martyrs and even some places related to particular events.

One cannot clearly make the difference between them, when thinking about the visiting of religious and sacred places etc. The truth is tourists who visit monasteries out of curiosity, out of the need to see new places and new things that lure them with their beauty through art, remoteness and the special way of living of the locals are suddenly changed into pilgrims when reaching the sanctuaries: they light candles, they pray, they change their dress code. Something changes upon impact. Their meeting the sacred changes the external purpose of the journey, the tourist feeling an inner motivation too, other than that of just wanting to visit.

Experiences over time in religious tourism and pilgrimage

The practice of pilgrimage as an early form of the religious tourism dates back before the birth of Christ and the emergence of Christianity .

Indians have been turning towards the Sacred Gange from ancient times. It is currently estimated that over 1,5 million people come to the ceremonies that are being held here every year. Vanarasi, known as Benares during the British domination, is an important religious and a cultural Indian centre and it is at least 3.000 years old. The underground temples of Ellora are also in India. They were named after the gods they served Kailasa, Visnacarna, Indra. The temples of Pandan- Lena and Mhar on the Salcette Island belong to the same category.

It is widely known that the ancient Egyptians practiced mass pilgrimage like that to Bubasti as we find out from Herodot’s writings. The great temples of Ancient Egypt are placed along the Nile: Kom Ombo, Edfu, Esna, Luxor, Karnak endowed with gigantic statues, impressive columns, pictures that depict the story of their Gods, their crafts, the timing of their activities in agriculture etc.

The temples of Amaterasu, Nikko, Izumo, Nagoya, Ise etc. were among the favourite places among the Japanese

In the classical pagan world pilgrimage was not only devotional but also had some specific purposes like: to obtain answers from oracles and to heal miraculously.

In Ancient Greece the temples and the heroes’ tombs were pilgrimage centers:

- the temple of Aphaia on the island of Aegina at 30 kilometers away from Athens, in Attica. The Goddess Aphaia was identified with Pallas Athena ;
- another temple is that of Apollo in Delphi in the central part of Greece, north of the Gulf of Corinth;
- the temple of Zeus in Olympia, west of the Peloponnese, where the Olympics took place during the classic period;

- The temple of Aphrodite (Venus in the Roman mythology), the goddess of love, in the ancient city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, western Turkey today;
- The Great Olympian Temple (Olympieion) of Zeus in the center of Athens.

Early Christian pilgrimage, compared with other forms of culture and devotion, is based on the original Hebrew and biblical tradition. It is gradually enriched by subsequent motivations, according to demands, methods and new forms, closely related to the Christian dogma and to the way it was implanted in different societies.

This form of tourism appeared in the second stage of the development of tourism, that was named pseudo touristic, and coincides with the Early Middle Ages until Renaissance. The term religious appeared and developed from the understanding of the tourists' motivations. The definitions that were given to concepts such as religious tourism, cultural tourism, single-purpose trips, multiple-purposes trips have the only role of connecting these concepts and stand for the treatment of tourism in a complex manner.

Nowadays, the religious pilgrimages have as their destination Rome (San Pietro Cathedral in Rome, St. Sofia Church in Constantinople, San Marco Church in Venice San Vitale Cathedral and St Apollinaire Cathedral etc.) and Jerusalem for Christians, Mecca and Medina in South Arabia for Muslims, Lhasa and the sanctuaries in India and Indochina for Buddhists, Mount Fuji for the Japanese, etc.

At the same time, a geographical area is not only a pilgrimage place for only one religion. Egypt, Turkey, Israel have many attractions for Christians, Muslims, Jews. Japan and China have Christian landmarks.

Conclusions

The concept of tourism is closely related to some essential features: the purpose of the journey, the length of stay, the quality of the services. We conclude that religious tourism is included in the cultural tourism and aims at visiting religious landmarks, with spiritual implications. The difference between this form of tourism and pilgrimage lies in the tourists' religious motivation. People have different opinions, especially nowadays, in a century that is deeply influenced on multiple levels by religion and its reflections. As a consequence, when considering both religious tourism and pilgrimage we are surprised to find that different motivations-religious, cultural, spiritual, psychological, sociological, topographical, economic, meet and live together. They also manage to maintain this phenomenon in a continuous revolution and to interpret the needs and the inner cravings of those who practice it. Therefore, it seems to be an interesting perspective to explore the different aspects of religious tourism, in order to better define it, and to make the bridge between theoretical concept of pilgrimage. Actually, pilgrimage relates fundamentally with self transformation, but in a concrete way, it may be associated with a collective touristic path, almost a reflex. Indeed, religious materials are always central in touristic choices, even if there is no religious aspect; pilgrimage can rather be explained by a common taste or idea, shared by people (a relationship more than a transaction, Arnould et al., 1993).

Moreover, we have to mention that people tend to confuse the religious tourism and the pilgrimage, on the one hand because of the travel agencies that put the label on these services they offer, and on the other hand, because of a general opinion that has been

reinforced. A pilgrim may become a tourist, or he may be considered, statistically, a tourist when his journey involves at least an overnight stay away from his home

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