

## **TOURISM, ELEMENT WHICH GENERATES INCOMES AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD**

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***Paper's Objective:** This paper aims to present the opportunities which could be created by international tourism, regarding the incomes and monetary aspects, and—in a special way—helping humankind to build a common future, too, based on the wish of people to understand the way in which other people live and are looking for economic performance. This presentation has as its base a study on information given by Romanian tourists after they came back from their journey (on a sample of 200 persons) and it has the purpose of identifying the sensitive aspects and the cultural differences, in order to facilitate the competitive tourist strategies' creation.*

*This paper could be an important base for inspiring those involved in tourism activities, due to the fact that it offers extremely precious information for promotion strategies' conceiving and for the way in which to communicate with Romanian potential market. The attributes which are looked for Romanians have to be communicated through futures study-tours and through the guides which accompanied the tourists groups, through information given by hotels' employees and printed catalogues. There are needed precise slogans, with emotional impact, too.*

*Navigare necesse est*

Tourism is an activity which has been acquainting in the last sixty years an unprecedented expansion, in comparison with any precedent period in history. Of course, the people's number has been rising constantly in the last 150 years, but what it does matter in the analysis of tourism impact upon human beings' life and upon societies is not only the number of tourists, but the populations' percentage which are involved in an activity like this. In 1850 there were 1,262 millions people on the Earth, in 1900, the number was 1,650 millions, in 1950, 2,556 millions and in 2000, 6,073 millions; a 4.8 times rising (*Encarta Encyclopedia*, 2004). This is a big number, but it is noteworthy to be mentioned that not all of this people are involved in tourist related activities and not all of them benefit from this activity; people who belong to developed states benefit much more by tourism, in comparison with people who earn their living in developing countries. Countries like France or Switzerland take a big share of international tourism in Europe. Both of them are developed economies; French and Swiss people have a high living standard, which affords them to be involved in tourism and both of them, and in the same time they attracting a lot of people from all places of the world. Many people would like to see Versailles or Loire's Valley or to take a tour with ship on Lake Lehman, while looking to the Alps snowy crests.

The choosing of this place as an example is not random—Geneva could serve as model for conceiving of a better world. Eleven particular ideas have emerged in Geneva’s history and culture, and all of them still play hard in the wider world of politics today (*Slim, 2007, pp. 112-124*). Some of these eleven ideas are directly linked to traveling; one of them is one on which early modern Geneva was founded: *freedom of movement*. Geneva changed dramatically—demographically and politically—when it welcomed Protestant refugees from France, Italy, England and Scotland in the first part of sixteenth century. Linked by this ideal is the one which regards *freedom of thought*; throughout history, many people have moved because they were persecuted for thinking freely in their homes. This has a very deep effect: it has contributed to the rising of culture’s level in this mountain town, which brought with it the development of ideas which has facilitated the rising of civilization’s level in this area. Calvin and famous Enlightenment figures as Rousseau, Voltaire and Madame de Stael made Geneva their homes in exile. The other ideal regards *the peace*—it is an idea that emerged strongly in Geneva in the twentieth century and it is tied by the idea of a *compassionate war*, which lays at the foundation of Red Cross (based upon human compassion and reason). Swiss *pragmatism* made in 1845 the shortest civil war on the history’s record, which lasted less than a month, in which only 100 people died.

In this example we could see that freedom of movement, freedom of thought, the ideal of peace and pragmatism could contribute to conceiving of a better world. It is noteworthy to mention that the transfer of ideas could take place under persecution’s pressure (Calvin and Voltaire’s examples speak for themselves), but of course under the impulse of people’s desire to travel and to meet other people and to visit new places, too.

The social, political, economical and cultural upheavals in the last two centuries are due to two components: one regards the “revolution” which took place in the ideas’ ground, the other one regarding the technical development and innovation. This contributed to the appearance of industrial revolution and division of labor, which rise the productivity’s degree, rising the leisure time for employees. As such, countries touched by these two revolutions become more civilized and their people enjoyed a better living standard. As soon as this happened in different countries, their citizens become more and more attracted by different activities regarding the spending of their leisure time.

Tourism became a mass phenomenon. It is noteworthy to be mentioned that the transportation and communication sectors are very responsive to technical developments and innovations; they are absorbed very quickly by those two sectors and this contribute to big social, economical and political upheavals.

“In many instances the great social and political upheavals throughout history have been preceded by major advances in the technology of transportation and communications” (*McNeill, b*) 1954, *quoted in Gilpin, 1989, p. 56*). As it is a human activity with social and economical implications, tourism is touched by the transportation and communication’s improvement.

Today, countries which want to enter efficiently the globalization (or regionalization) processes must develop two elements: one regards the integration of their networks with networks in other countries (or if it is possible, the creation of a international “hub” in/from that country’s territory); the other one aspect regards the opening needed for receiving new ideas, new people, or put in very few words, being receptive to another people’s culture for the rising of human treasury’s knowledge. Here it is timely to look at Geneva’s previous example. International tourism could fully serve these aims.

Tourist activity has implications on many levels:

- it has a monetary dimension (it generates revenues at destination’s place);
- it has a dimension regarding the transfer of ideas—as people travel with their ideas “in their heads and souls”;
- it permits cultural interaction between the tourist’s (culture) and the receiver’s (culture);
- this could start a process of mutual understanding between the nations to whom they belong to;

- as the people from different states understand each other (due to their contacts), the states to whom they belong to will start “rapprochement” to each other, element which in the long run will contribute to the rising of political interdependence between these countries, for the benefits of their citizens, their economy and their society, without culture playing a great role in this “game”. This could be a very brave step on the way to political unification of those—until then—two separate political entities. This could be regarded as an Enlightenment characteristic, which has the vocation of universality and in this way, **tourism**—beside **scientific cooperation** (Skolnikoff, 2000) and **trade**—could bring in the people’s vision the idea of the one humanity which can surpass its specific cultural condition, through the acknowledgement of their allegiance to one global family (Malita, 2007, p. 187).

The recorded “jumps” in technological field in the last century directly contributed to the extraordinary development of air transport; and this, corroborated with the rising of quality of life and the expansion of leisure time, have determined an expansion of tourist activity at global scale. In this way, today we could speak about business, entertaining, resting, cultural and religious tourism. Here we must mention the fact that, even the population from Muslim countries doesn’t enjoy a high standard of living, Muslim people respect one of the five pillars of Islamic canonical law, which regards the traveling of every Muslim at least once in life to Mecca (or Karbala). This is about religious tourism, but it is an important element nowadays, as we can find 46 Muslim countries in the world, while 1/5 of total world population belonging to Islam (Dobrescu și Bârgăoanu, 2001, p. 99).

Tunisia has—beside the other Maghrebian countries (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Libya), even they are not the most developed nations in the world—some cultural peculiarities which make it a place which attract many peoples from all world. Muslim Maghrebian countries attract many tourists there and in the following lines we will present the importance of tourist sector in the Maghrebian countries’ economy; some data and number will be brought as evidence for the fact that tourism matters a lot in their economy and social life.

Table nr 1

Inbound and outbound tourists (thousands) in Maghrebian countries

	Inbound tourists (thousands)		Outbound tourists (thousands)	
	1990	2001	1990	2000
Algeria	1,137	901	3,828	903
Libya	96	174	425	—
Mauritania	—	30	—	—
Morocco	4,024	4,223	1,202	1,612
Tunisia	3,204	5,387	1,727	1,480
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,461</b>	<b>10,715</b>	<b>7,182</b>	<b>3,995</b>

Source: World Bank Report, World Development Indicators, 2003, pp. 352-354

As we can observe from the table nr 1, the number of inbound tourists in Maghrebian countries rose at 10,715,000 in 2001, in comparison with 8,461,000 in 1990, a rise of 26.64%; what is important is the fact that the number of outbound tourists fallen down at 3,995,000 in 2000, from 7,182,000 in 1990, which represents only 55.62% of the value of 1990. This thing has an important effect upon expenditures made by North African tourists, which have been reduced, in the same time having a rising of incomes due to tourism. Tourism becomes in this way an important currency source for their internal economies.

In countries like Morocco or Tunisia the receipts from tourism represent over 15% from their total value of exports—and this is an important source of incomes. Tourism contributed in Morocco with 20.2% in its total exports’ value in 1990 and in Tunisia this percentage is even bigger, respectively 22%.

International tourism receipts as inbound tourists  
(in \$ millions and as percentage in total value of exports)

	Receipts from international tourism (\$ millions)		Receipts from international tourism (% of exports)	
	1990	2001	1990	2001
Algeria	64	102	0.5	0.5
Libya	6	28	0.1	0.4
Mauritania	9	28	1.9	7.7
Morocco	1,259	2,460	20.2	22.0
Tunisia	948	1,605	18.2	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>4,223</b>		

Source: World Bank Report, World Development Indicators, 2003, pp. 352-354

Conspicuously, Maghrebian area becomes at the beginning of this millennium an area with a special tourist potential, attracting a large number of European tourists. At this point, it is noteworthy to be mentioned that Tunisia is the most preferred place for Romanian tourists; of the 200 people questioned about their preferences regarding their international tourism bending, none of them have visited other Maghrebian country, with Tunisia's exception. Tunisia is the most preferred destination country for Romanian tourists. Here they can find a different world from that one where they live; here Europeans contact a very different culture in comparison with that one where they have grown up and live, where the peculiarities of Arabic negotiations remain in their memory all their life after their meeting with a Tunisian seller; his spirit's resilience meets the European methodism, rationalism or induction. As a Northern European, it is interesting to see people which Egyptian professor Abderrahman Badawi, Arabic Academy's General Secretary, recognized—while he participated in 1967 at a Conference in Sorbona—to be guided by the Arabian way of thinking; “[T]he Arabian way of thinking is like a fountain; it is repeating like the water which springs out; in the same vein, the Arabic music is melodically, and not harmonically; and the time is like a spiral, not like a trajectory.” (de la Bastide, 1994, p. 17)

Here we must point that Maghrebian countries were always linked stronger by Europe, in comparison with the Black Africa. Between Maghreb and Black Africa, there is “the sea without water”, bigger than the Inland Sea; it looks like—as Homer said—the “not winnowed sea” (Braudel, vol. I, 1985, p. 314). There it is Sahara desert, a big hindrance in the way of human travels. To the Northern part of Maghreb, there is Mediterranean Sea, which always linked easier Northern Africa by Europe. This is due in great part to the unity in climate area, too, and to the presence of this sea (Braudel, vol. II, 1985, pp. 5-16). The roman conquer was facilitated in great measure by the presence of this sea; the roman civilization penetrated all the civilized Mediterranean seashores dwelled by Etruscans, Phoenicians and Greeks (Gibbon, vol. I, p. 1); Roman Empire became in this way a circle-Mediterranean Empire, its communication being facilitated by the Great Inland Sea (Toynbee, 1979, p. 46). But this strong link among Mediterranean shores manifested in the other direction, too: we had the Arabic revenge, which extended its domination from the South throughout Spain, and even to Poitiers, where it was stopped in 732 a.d. (McNeill, a) 1979, p. 213). As we could see, in many instances the Mediterranean was ruled by a hegemonic power, but in the history there was present a good neighborhood policy and a very intense trade and traffic among all its shores. Of course, in other periods of time peaceful trade linked through interest the Mediterranean shores.

Put in a simple way, among Mediterranean people, there have been and it will be present a great *interdependence*, and they will not be isolated by this sea. This is much true now, when air transport made from this sea a “river” crossed from North to South in less than two hours. Her most notable breadth is 1,100 km, from the end of Adriatic Sea to Tripolitan seashore, and it is an unusual one; there are only 740 km between Marseille and Algiers (Braudel, vol. II, p. 11). This sea is much little than a river

and to demonstrate this it is sufficient to take a short view on the Hannibal's passing of Rhone river—a very hard and full of risk operation.

These examples are given to prove that Mediterranean Sea could be “fastened” together through conquest or resorting to a peaceful way of “conquest”—a conquest with a human face, which takes into account the needs and desires of all the riparian people, their vital interest regarding their welfare and prosperity and this “conquest” can in its turn, “dominate” the hearts and minds of those people, illuminating and helping them to realize that trade and travel bring greater benefits than military conquest. Geneva and (later) EU models could serve as good examples for cooperation among those nations which bounded Mediterranean Sea. The history, climate and geography help us to tackle the integration and interdependence in Mediterranean Sea being based on interest and this fits perfect in the greater framework regarding EU neighboring policy through which EU looks for avoiding the appearance of unacceptable differences between the enlarged EU and its Southern neighbors, offering them opportunities for cultural, economic and political cooperation and integration.

The **images** projected by Tunisia (especially) upon Romania will make the next lines' analysis. This will help to prove that *travels* and *tourism* could fully serve—beside generating big revenues—this noble aim: to help people to understand each other and to rise the civilizations' degree, creating in this way the prerequisites for a better world's construction in common, by all of them. The tourism participates directly in the process concerning the fulfilling of that indispensable texture which facilitates the creation of a world where would rule peaceful and mutual trust relations, nurturing that needed “revolution” in the ideas level for attaining this noble aim.

There were put some questions to a sample of 200 Romanian people. The questionnaire was given to tourist agencies from Oradea (Romania), where the people attended to answer those questions.

First question regarded the tourists' age when they made international tourism for the first time in their life; the greatest percentage (27.2%) is met for the age between 25 and 30 years, and on the second place it is the age between 20 and 25 years (23.4%); the percentage was 18.1% for those between 35-40 years, 17.1% for the age 30-35 and 12.4% for those between 40 and 50 years. As we can observe, the greatest percentage (50.6%) of tourists are between 20 and 30 years, which shows that *young* generation is by far, more opened and willing to travel; this is a very important thing vis-à-vis the acceptance of new ideas by them. When one wants to bring the “wind of change” in a society, he must take into account the *young generation*, because the changes in their habits takes place easily and this could have a long term effect; through this change, there is created the possibility to direct the changing of society for peaceful coexistence ends and for a better understanding of people who belong to other cultures and who were “visited” during travel. Young generation is that one which could “revolutionize” the society in the direction of a better world's construction, and as they are tourists, tourism could be regarded as the mean to attain this end.

Second question regards the geographical area where Romanians travel; 40.5% of the questioned people visited Hungary and after this country, the most visited are (in order): Germany, Austria, France and Italy, throwing a contrasting light upon what a grand political scientist sustains—that Romania is not a part of Western culture and religion (Huntington, 1997, pp. 230-239).

Of the 200 questioned people, 29.3% were at least once in Tunisia, but in no other Maghrebian country; this could be regarded as an encouragement regarding the Romanian's openness to make tourism in Tunisia (almost one person in three is a good and encouraging share).

At the question regarding the way in which they catch up of making tourism in Tunisia, 35% mentioned that it was their initiative and in the same time somebody's recommendation, 51% mentioned it was their initiative and 14% sustained it was somebody's recommendation.

The sixth question regards the reason for visiting Tunisia; the most important reason for traveling to Tunisia is the desire for a new experience (48.5%). 27.1% mentioned it was the group's pressure and 17.5% mentioned their desire to have to tell something to somebody about the travel in an

Arabian North African country; 6.9% mentioned that they chose Tunisia as a place for their honeymoon (an aspect which could combine all the three reasons mentioned above). As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy to be mentioned that 48.5% of the questioned people wanted to visit Tunisia in a desire to try new experiences—again an encouraging percentage regarding the Romanians' openness to new cultures, especially to the Tunisian one.

This is amplified by the desire of 78% of the questioned people which haven't ever visited Tunisia until now to travel in this country. Much more, 86.4% from the people which visited at least once this country mentioned their desire to go back there and this percent could be regarded as a way through which the economies of those two countries become integrated (interdependent) in tourism related areas (transportation, accommodation, purchasing, etc...).

The most important reasons for Romanian tourists coming back in Tunisia are arranged as follows: 72% of them appreciated good value for money, 67% appreciated good hotels and food, 66% a family-friendly atmosphere, 48% calm and pleasant environment, 48% enjoyed the variety of shops. Other reasons for their return are: the experience of some different things, pleasant atmosphere, the services' quality, the character of a life lived in a relatively isolated area, like in a small town, the easiness to travel around the dwelling place, the easiness to communicate with domestic people (which are enjoyed to offer a trip on the back of a camel). As we can see, a very much things motivate Romanian tourists to have pleasant remembers while they traveled in Tunisia, and they have a lot of reasons to come back in Tunisia; but the most important are the value offered for money paid for tourism in Tunisia.

At the question regarding the tourists' desire to tell other Romanian people about their journey, on scale from 1 to 5, their desire could be weight at 3,82 from the maximum 5 possible points. The ratio price/quality is even better, and it is a very favorable one; it is 4,32 from the maximum 5 possible points.

Regarding the way in which they interacted with Tunisians, Romanian tourists used to refer to them as: normal, easy to communicate and interact with them, sometimes showing a strange behavior (when they were involved in a conversation, the Tunisians used to draw to nearer to them, creating even embarrassment in some circumstances). On the other hand, Tunisians perceived Romanians (as the Romanians think they project their image upon Tunisians) as follows: common people with common behavior; a *client* which bring with him money to spend; a buyer; a person with money. Here it is noteworthy to be mentioned that different needs carried by different people meet each other, for their *common* benefit: one the one side we see business—tourism business—with *money* earned by tour operators and destination country, on the other side we see people which have *desires* and *needs*—to live new experiences, to evade daily stress, to see other country—but this two sides with *different cultures* interact each with other, making in this way the steps on the “road” which possibly direct them to a common future.

The following questions (and their answers) regard directly the link between tourism, culture and the conceiving of a peaceful world. For the question involving an answer concerning the possibility that tourism could be a mean which facilitates the ideas' transfer among people from different countries and who belong to different cultures, on the Likert scale (which offers the possibility to point among -2 and +2), the Likert score is positive, respectively 0.821 (an encouraging value); but this is counterbalanced by Romanians' answer concerning the possibility that through their journey to Tunisia, they could promote the Romania's image in Tunisian eyes—here the score is only 0.211 (a little score, taking account the relatively geographical proximity between two countries, the Romanians' desire to visit Tunisia and the fact that both countries are strongly influenced by French culture).

But the Romanians strongly perceive that through tourism made by EU citizens in Tunisia, they could promote Europe's image in that Mediterranean country, rising its influence in that country, tourism becoming in this vein a soft power instrument at Europeans' hand; the Likert score is very high here—0.917. As a complementary answer, the 0.718 score for the question concerning the possibility

that through tourism, the economic and political relations between the two sides of Mediterranean Sea could be strengthened, contributing to the rapprochement among them, proves the great role of the tourism.

Much more, 79.1% from the 200 questioned people believe in tourism as an instrument and a mean which could contribute to the construction of a world where there human interaction are kindly dominated by peaceful relations.

Tourism—this present complex phenomenon—receives new valences; it can offer relaxation and escape from physic and psychic exhaust, distractions and opportunities for the development of the human being through filling up the life of people with new experiences, through new biotic and social experiences, in a world dominated more and more by information technologies, where there people watch TV or work at their PC, living in an unreal world, in a cyberspace, becoming homo videns, a digital generation (so named by the Italian Sartori), having a wantonly way of thinking, set up by others through media and propaganda, and so becoming intolerant, aggressive, superficial, empty and without happiness in their life. The change could start from “inside” and tourism, through the possibility which it offers due to the obligation regarding the house’s leaving, due to travel’s necessity and experiences lived on its own, involves self effort and demonstrates that the satisfaction’s degree depends in great part by *involvement* and through this involvement it could contribute to the changing of the unpleasant way of living—and why not—to the creation of a better world.

After reading these, we can conclude and sustain that tourism is an element which carries with it the perception that it has qualities and ingredients which could be mixed in the process of a peaceful world’s construction and this corresponds exactly with a saying which springs from Arabic wisdom “*[T]raveler, you will discover the things’ meaning and the value of the people.*”

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