


Tourism-phobia

Subjects: Social Psychology

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Definition

The perception of residents of tourist areas affected by intensification of tourism or overtourism, has changed from a positive or neutral vision to overt annoyance or irritation, which has generated a certain debate that has been conveyed in the media, an innovative aspect in the field of tourism. The term tourism phobia is mentioned for the first time in Spain linked to problems related to tourism and tourists. Donaire (Romero et al., 2019) specifically mentions the term tourism-phobia, referring to discontent in the latter stages in the Doxey's model (1975). Huete and Mantecón (2018) and Milano (2017, 2018) have linked tourism-phobia with a certain social opposition and criticism of tourist management. Milano (2018) describes that social criticism within a context of social organizations and residents outlining their disagreement with certain tourist activities. Huete and Mantecón (2018) coincides with Milano by pointing out that what the media considers to be tourism-phobia is essentially a social critique of certain aspects of tourism. Other authors (Alcalde et al., 2018) highlight that the concept of tourism-phobia has been used in a misguided way, confusing the social discontent due to too many tourists with the rejection of them. Simultaneously and as opposed to the concept of tourism-phobia, the term tourism-philia arises, which refers to the perception of the positive effects of tourism on the local economy and society (Zerva et al., 2019).

1. Introduction

The enormous tourism growth experienced in recent years by some tourist destinations such as Barcelona, Venice, Paris, Palma de Mallorca, to mention just some, has shown the existence of a certain social protest movement in the face of this growth. The perception of residents of tourist areas affected by intensification of tourism or overtourism, has changed from a positive or neutral vision to overt annoyance or irritation, which has generated a certain debate that has been conveyed in the media, an innovative aspect in the field of tourism.

Regularly, almost since the start of mass tourism, in almost every country the media has depicted tourism as an activity unrelated to political or social criticism. Also, the existence of social movements in the local communities affected has been an important factor. The problems identified by the most affected destinations are similar, such as the excessive exploitation of natural and cultural resources, the privatisation of public spaces, displacement, labour exploitation and residential tourism speculation (Hiernaux, 1999; Bonilla & Mortd, 2008; Blázquez & Cañada, 2011; Sosa & Jiménez, 2010; Cañada, 2010).

The annoyance or irritation displayed by residents in tourist destinations is not a recent phenomenon, despite the fact that it may appear to be so, according to what the media depicts. The benchmark study in this field is the tourist irritation index created by Doxey (1975), subsequently this vision has been completed by other significant studies such as Butler's destination life cycle model (1980), which warned of the problems that a destination in its latter stages encounters, and thus, also its residents. Likewise, in the 70's Turner and Ash (1975) pointed out the cultural impact caused by tourism on host societies. In the decade of the 1990's, mass tourism practices were condemned in different countries in southern Europe that were producing some protests (Boissevain, 1996).

The term tourism phobia is mentioned for the first time in Spain linked to problems related to tourism and tourists. Delgado (2007) defines this concept as a mix of scorn and distrust towards the tourist. The author draws attention to what he considers to be the main problem that is occurring in some destinations, "not the fact that there are tourists, but the fact there are only tourists". The tourism management of the historic centers is causing the emptying of people to make them spaces solely for business (Delgado, 2007). Donaire (2008) specifically mentions the term tourism-phobia, referring to the studies by Doxey (1975) to this end, and making this discontent coincide with the latter stages of this model. Donaire proposes a pragmatic approach to the term tourism-phobia based on the rational management, both of the flows of tourist mobility and the structures for receiving and accommodating tourists in cities.

Subsequently, Huete and Mantecón (2018) and Milano (2017, 2018) have linked tourism-phobia with a certain social opposition and criticism of tourist management. Milano (2017) describes that social criticism within a context of social organizations and residents outlining their disagreement with certain tourist activities. Huete and Mantecón (2018) coincides with Milano by pointing out that what the Spanish media considers to be tourism-phobia is essentially a social critique of certain aspects of tourism.

The causes of discontent shown by residents in tourist spaces with a high level of intense tourist activity is similar in any destination: an increase in property prices, the privatization of public spaces, a decrease in the purchasing power of residents, precarious employment in the tourism sector, the loss of traditional businesses, an imbalance between the number of residents and visitors, environmental impacts due to noise, waste, an increase in the offer of accommodation via online platforms, a significant increase in cruise ships, etc. The most striking example of the destination most affected by these problems is probably Venice, to such an extent that what happens in this historic city in relation to tourism has been called the "Venice Syndrome".

2. Future Directions

Postma (2013) points out that there is a need for more detailed and deeper research about the factors that contribute to or specifically cause the development of this irritation, with the exception of the article by Doxey (1975) and the authors who cite him or complemented his study. Rátz and Puczko (2002) tried to identify the factors that affect this irritation. For these authors, this attitude differs according to the specific characteristics of each tourist destination and the local community. Other authors (Alcalde, Guitart, Pitarch and Vallvé, 2018) highlight that the concept of tourism-phobia has been used in a misguided way, confusing the social discontent due to too many tourists with the rejection of them. The authors themselves reject the idea that there is tourism-phobia in one of the centers most renowned for this phenomenon, Barcelona. They limit the discontent to the problems with coexistence and management of tourist activity.

Simultaneously and as opposed to the concept of tourism-phobia, the term tourism-philía arises, which refers to the perception of the positive effects of tourism on the local economy and society (Zerva et al., 2019).

Keywords

tourism;over-tourism;residents;destination;saturation

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