

Chapter 3

Expanding and Updating Human Rights: Tourism as a Social Right in Contemporary Societies

Thiago Duarte Pimentel

Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Mariana Pereira Chaves Pimentel

Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Marcela Costa Bifano de Oliveira

Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil

João Paulo Louzada Vieira

Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Paulo Rodrigues Cerqueira

Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This chapter argues that tourism should be included as a social right because it synthesizes and represents the zeitgeist of contemporaneity. This idea is supported by three main arguments: (1) That there is a shift from a work-oriented society to a new consumption-oriented one, implying the revision of the meaning of current practices. (2) As a social force, tourism is a privileged category to represent, understand, and explain contemporary societies because it goes beyond the market and can heuristically express a complex and multifaceted human practice. (3) The

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8726-6.ch003

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references based on the previous societies' ideals, such as the right to work, must be revised and expanded to include tourism as a fundamental right, because (a) it can internationally represent a new kind of global citizenship, (b) basic material and economic human needs must be met for tourism to happen, and (c) it contributes to personal development, cultural exchange, and systemically update societies' development.

INTRODUCTION: THE MEANING OF TOURISM IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Tourism – at least as it is known currently – is a recent social practice and economic sector (industry). As a transversal and an interdisciplinary object, tourism history oscillates between a broader, more historical, social and non-economic orientated interpretation, and a narrow one, focused on the economic aspect of activity, its financial effects and its circumscription to the capitalist economic system as a commodity to be sold (exchanged) into the market (César, 2015; César Arnaiz & César, 2017). While the former view is a sort of continuing interpretation of the evolution of – a mix of – social practices through the human history since the old times (nevertheless, the common trace of its object [either leisure, hospitality, or displacement] has not necessarily the same); the former is a kind of conception emerged in the modern era, which is sustained by the embrace of the re-arrangement of the mode of production (from a feudal to a capitalist one) and the political power (from absolute monarchies to a national state).

In its current form, tourism is embedded in capitalist modern societies systems. Recently, it has become one of the most important industries in the world. In 2019, International tourism was the world's third largest export category, worth \$1,742 billion. In first place was fuels with \$2,310 billion, followed by chemicals with \$2,194 billion (UNWTO, 2020). Moreover, in the same year, the tourism sector generated 333 million jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2022), i.e., 1 in 10 jobs belonged to this sector. In addition, it contributed 10.3% of global GDP (WTTC, 2022).

Despite its growing, in terms of the volume of travels and moved (?), and the huge economic impact on the world economies, tourism is not yet a well distributed activity among the different societies in the world. It is not accessible to the biggest part of the populations in most of the countries, nor even internally at the same country.

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