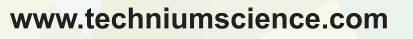


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Controversies regarding the Covid-19 pandemic in national and international tourism. Sociological and legal effects

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Abstract. The approaches considered by the authorities, generally enforced, during the "Covid 19" pandemic regarding the state of national and international tourism have been characterised as excessive and controversial not only from an economical point of view but as well as from a cultural and functional one, and they must be analysed from a sociological perspective. The shortage of medical, organisational and human resources, the lack of mental preparation of medical workers but as well as that of the population in terms of preventing massive losses led to the rapid destruction of what we used to call tourism. From a sociological perspective the world-wide blockage was mainly caused by the superficiality of the prevention methods adopted and by their radicality that blocked the entire economy. By this article I try to approach from a from a sociological point of view the "pandemic" effects that that have influenced and are still influencing tourism. In extenso, the plethora of factors like public transportation, hospitals, workplace and so on have provoked the rapid spread of COVID-19 virus and the impact was ravaging for the hospitality industry due to the fact that the client in his role of tourist received only negative signal, signals of fear and uncertainty. The controversies regarding different fields of national and international tourism are various in number, but the present interest lies in COVID-19 virus and a consequence of this plague is the foreclosure as opposed to the fact that by imposing the right measurements and by protecting this field in a composed way without letting panic to reach the population it would have been possible to at least mentain a constant level of activity in tourism and as a consequence a steady national and international economy. Furthermore, I want to issue the assumption that if there would have been a propper crisismanagement on a national level, even on international one, a partnership between the government and the private sector, meaningfull aid coming from government towards the people, employees, antreprenours, elders, lower-class families, private inverstors, not only that from an economical point of view tourism could be saved but also a "positive aura" could have been built in the psyche of the individuals and that would have helped them to have a diffrent type of confinment. For excample, a 10 days stay in a highly reviewed an alternative method provocative, peacefull and safe- but to acomplish this the hoteliere should revise the concept on which a touritic package is built (by offering services as therapy, medical check-up and so on). The motto of the new concept could be the old saying "A healthy mind in a healthy body" -"Mens sana in corpore sano" in this way the panic, fear and seclusion could be replaced with cultural work and the right to mental wellness with the help ground-braking touristic offers. From a sociological perspective, in order to have a healthy mind in a healthy body or in order to strengthen our immune system, we, the ones that form the contemporary society should exploit outdoor activities, relaxation time, travelling, living, all this leading to the reinforcement of tourism

Keywords. Sociology in tourism, ethics, emotions, gender, sexuality, social life, emotional work



Fundamental concept

The importance and the dynamic of tourism world-wide has been proven by the evolution of its forms along time. Thus, tourism starts with it primary forms of travelling in the Dark Ages, going on with educational tourism, sport's tourism , medical tourism up to mass tourism that has taken off during the 60's. In the XXth airplanes and cruise ships have an important contribution into settling down the touristic product by opening new ways to exotic destinations such as the Pacific Islands, Tibet, Alaska and in the XXIst century space tourism brings expansion to the concept of tourism.

At the core of the development of tourism lied the change of the sociological approach both in individual and group level given by the need of people to retrieve or discover feelings, sensorial experiences, gender, ethics, sexuality, spirituality, materiality, or even the need of the individual to find the self.

Tourism can be viewed as a system of travelling because each stance of it has an effect on the individual, its family and of society, consequently being a system with co-dependent elements.¹

In our time the study of Sociology in tourism is prevailed by a multitude of perspectives that reflect more and more the depth, the richness and the status of tourism as a central element of social contemporary life.

The transformation of the sociological approach in tourism has had as a consequence the transformation of tourism industry. By this we mean that tourism has gone through a major change regarding the origin of international tourists that were western, mainly euro-anglo-central in middle-class tourists coming from developing regions such as Asia, this tendency is I terms of tourism study a social element with great implications and effects that stands side by side with the global changes in terms of social self given by the expansion and development of technologies starting from social networks up to the "selfie" culture.

The effects of the pandemics for the global tourism

The virus outbrake started in China, a very common destination among Europeans, but once the numbers began to increase, the situation worsen because the clients started to give up travelling in many Asian countries such as China, where in February 2020 the bookings decreased with up to 81% even in Thailand, a very popular destination for Europeans.

The impact that this pandemic has in tourism is concerning -international travelling in touristic purposes is currently suspended for an unspecified time.

What will come off global tourism? Are we witnesses to a period of transition in the concept of tourism? Certainly, the sociological impact in groups at global level given by the Coronavirus and by the measurements taken along time is significant and probably will lead to a higher appreciation and willingness to live, be free, travel, discover.

Nowadays remoted places are discovered, away from traffic and crowded areas, unlike the previous times before the Coronavirus when were were preferred crowded, highly rated places. Therefore, the sociological effect of Coronavirus urged the social groups to desire and follow the concept of safety, trust, protection and responsability.

Domestically, my research being based on the questionnaire, shows the fact the the Romanians have chosen new regions in our country to spend their free time, rural regions not as hi-tech as before, mainly boarding houses not very far from home where the owners took care of providing the comfort needed, traquility and safety.

¹ PAUL ALEXANDRU BRUMARU, ANA-MARIA TALOȘ Sociology of tourism, Revue Roumanie electronique de geographie, Volum 1, Numarul 2.



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We are going through a difficult time for tourism but not only that, also the tourism has a key role in building an image and a reputation for a country and this is why the choices made by individuals are very important. Among the most popular activities now - having a low contamination risk - are travelling by car or outdoor trips, individual trips.

The new tendencies in today's tourism are formed by the destinations in which nature and the opportunities of spending time in the open are preferred.

The international tourism has suffered massive drops due to the COVID-19, according to WTO.



Research methods and tehniques used

The method or the scientific way to be followed is in general the same for every research, the difference consisting of techniques used that being the particular ways in which the scientific method is applied to the issue of Covid-19 pandemic in Romanian tourism³.

Considering the requirements of my study I have used the individualised method (or the method of genethics) which stand for studying an aspect, a singular event, specifically the effects of pandemic in tourism, in specified conditions of time and space at a national level based on a prospective study which began with studying the present and near past in order to foresee the future evolution of facts or social aspects, the effects of COVID-19 pandemic⁴.

In the present article I have used two sets of claims:

- qualitative, based on the interpretation of the questionnaire.

- qualitative-analytical, by studying opinions emerged in this field of knowledge.

The methodology of sociological research emphasis the methods and techniques used. Thus, the methods outs emphasis on the rules, knowledge principles and transformation of social reality, in my research being applied the method of time criteria, transverse, namely sociological inquiry and observation, the two methods being statistical, next to the research. As well, I have used investigation as method for gathering information, data-processing and data interpretation.

² ARCHANA SINGH ,2020 COVID19 IMPACT ON TOURISM AND HOW TRAVEL WILL CHANGE POST LOCKDOWN . Available from: <u>https://www.travelseewrite.com/how-travel-will-change-post-lockdown/</u>. Accessed 13 decembrie 2020].

³ MIHAILESCU, IOAN, Sociologie Generală, Ed. Polirom, (2003) pg.36

⁴ MIHAILESCU, IOAN, Sociologie Generală, Ed. Polirom, (2003) pg.36



The most complex method used is that of sociological inquiry, because it is an investigation of questioning data, phenomena identified in big or small groups in order to depict and explain them. This complexity is influenced by two types of phenomena: subjective (personal ambitions, needs, motivation, opinions, mind sets, types of actions) and objective which highlight the demographic characteristics like occupation, gender, age but also the characteristics of social and living environment.

Among the instruments of sociological inquiry used in this research are: the plan, the interview, the questionnaire.

The plan is the starting point because it has shown be what will I be researching, how, when and the interview is the technique, the process that has helped me to obtain informations regarding phenomena and social facts based on a number of questions and answers given by individuals or groups.

In this way, the characteristics of the interview highlighted more complex issues, identifying sets of mentalities, routines, beliefs and customs.

On one hand, the interview has offered me the opportunity to observe more complex behaviours and also to document the spontaneity of the answers given but on the other hand it dose not provide the cover of anonymity, it is cost-generator because it takes very long and requires a lot of material or functional resources. The quality of the informations is generated by the training of the interviewer but also by the time taken to complete it - from 5 to 10 minutes up to 1 hour.

Another instrument of sociological inquiry used by me in the questionnaire which refers to a logical and psychological sequence of questions and graphic marks, according to the stimuli, in relation to the hypothesis of the research in order to gain informations about the social phenomena based on written answers provided by different individuals. Partly, the advantage of using a questionnaire in my research emphasized the fact that provided the safety of anonymity, nonetheless I was able to apply it on a massive part of the population. Now, regarding the disadvantages of using this instrument, it lies in the fact that I can not record the body language of the person that was answering it and the level of spontaneity.

In developing this research instrument I have taken into consideration a certain set of rules, especially: I have avoided negative questions, double negations, hypothetical questions, I have not used words that have multiple meanings.

Thus, I have applied a questionnaire named QUESTIONAIRE REGARDING THE PANDEMIC EFFECTS OF THE VIRUS COVID-19 IN ROMANINAN TOURISM that has 25 questions and to which 50 people have answered, not only male or females, Romanian citizens of foreign citizens.

Interpretation of results

90% of those who answered are Romanian citizens that live in over 10 years in Romania and who consider that the vision of a Romanian tourist is different from that of a foreign tourist. Also, 90% of the subjects consider the fact that this pandemic has had such a catastrophic impact in tourism but also it has turned out to be a positive thing for local tourism, developing it. On a scale from 1 to 5, all those 50 people think that the virus has had a negative effect on national tourism, that it would be preferable to eat in your room and to find a psychologist or a medical doctor at the hotel.

On the other hand 90% of the subjects would rather find accommodation in a individual house with its own pool, inside a resort -seaside or in the mountain area- the housekeeping must enter everyday and sanitise everything and if entertainment is to be organised everybody must wear a mask.



40 % consider that during he Covid-19 pandemic is safer to travel in Romania than to go abroad, whereas 30% think that is safer abroad and the rest of consider that none of the two are safe.

Regarding the effects of the pandemic inside the group of friends, the whole group consider that they miss the old way they used to socialize and that some have lost touch or at least their relationship has grown cold.

Regarding the actions anti-Covid taken by the Romanian Government, 90% of the subjects consider the fact that the rules instated are highly unsatisfactory and they cast a negative influence on tourism but also that it would have been a good idea to set-up medical centers in each resort and to hand out anti-Covid tests and medication free of charge. All the persons questioned think that it would have had a positive effect on physical and mental health if the Government would have offered a free trip either to the seaside or tot he mountainside.

If we speak of the impact of wearing a mask 20% of the subjects think that their health is affected, and 80% think that wearing a mask has no negative effect on one's health.

Covid-19 outbreak has developed rural tourism by 40%, 50% of the subjects say that the cultural tourism has developed also and the rest of 10% say that the pandemic helped the online tourism to gain popularity. 70 % think that rural tourism will continue to develop after Covid-19, 20% place their bet on medical tourism and 10% on spa tourism.

80% say that on a scale from 1 to 5, prevention and hygiene measures have an influence on the spreading of the virus to its peak and the rest of 20% think that they are not important.

Different approches regarding this theme

The report of the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that in 2020, in USA have died with299 082 more people than average in the last seven years. According to CDC, alongside the multitude of factors that have contributed indirectly to the large number of deaths because of the pandemic, the main factor is the unsettleement in healthcare. By percentage, the highest average growth compared to the previous years has been identified among Hispanic population(53,6%). for the Afro-American population the growth was that of 32,9%, and for those of Asian origin 36,6%.

The highest rate of mortality has been recorded in the population from 25-54 years old.

Controversies in Romanian tourism based on the results of the questionaire regardind the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

On one hand the statistic resulted from the questionnaire and the interview used in this research show the fact that the world-wide crisis of Covid-19 have discouraged people from travelling, having visible negative effects on the international tourism but on the other hand has had positive effect in national tourism due to the fact that many people preferred to temporarily live in a remote, peaceful and open space in order to work from home mainly because another effect of COVID-19 crisis (that affected world-wide economy) is the fact that companies had to reorganise and many workers had to work from home and the schools closed, everybody switching to on-line learning fact tat caused other issues in terms of materials, human resources, information and technology.

Sort-term rentals in tourism has been affected by the banning of indoors activities in restaurants. The gaps in legislations allowed the national authorities to impose penalties and as a result the courts of law got even more crowded due to the fact that a lot of people contested the fines that they have received.

Another controversial aspect is the fact that while we are forced to stay home, the unemployed rate grew, workplaces disappeared because of the fact that small businesses were either closed or went bankrupt but the bills keep coming, bank loans have to be paid and one



must provide food for his/hers family but still the main concern of the authorities is not how to provide financial, moral, psychological or administrative support for the ones in need but to check an issue fines. What is the solution in this case and how can possibly not see hopelessness in the eyes of our people?

Legal effects

First of all we relate to the actions taken in order to protect the work relations in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

The spread of COVID-19 virus and the necessary actions taken inorder to stop its spreading on national or even global level (some events are forbiden, lockdowns all over the world and so on) obviously have a fast and negative impact in national or international economy, by extension changing the legal regime of the employer and the employee.

Thus, the majority of public institutions but also the businesses operators in tourism, civil building and another range of interlaped services have adopted world-wide acclaimed measures in order to make sure that the social distancing is respected and the ones that were able to work from home choose this type of remote work.

When this pandemic started, the authorities have imposed a requirement that was curently turned into the Decree of state of emergency published in the Official Gazette that requires the employers to set-up "where is it possible" during the state of emergency the possibility to work from home or work remotely, governed by an unilateral act of the employer.

The Ministry of Labour reccomends that employers should allow employees to work from home and to make work relations more flexible that they curently are implemented, such as:

- Regulation of individualised work hours at the requirement of the employee or with his consent

- the provisional change of work place, agreed by both sides

About the legal actions taken regarding the way in which on-line work takes place in Romania, the employers are not familiarised with the rules of this type of work such as they are forced to re-evaluate the way in which their company can be organised not only on a functional level but also by taken into account their human and physical resources in order to have an satisfactory activity I the work-field.

Remote work benefits from legal regulations not only in the area of working-from-home but also in on-line work, where there are more specific rules instated. In the current climate, taken into consideration the advices of the authorities, employers choose mostly a work-from-home policy but their employers would prefer to insulate themselves in a remoted area, different from their home if they are financially stable and they can afford it, as to either at the mountain side or at the seaside where they can rent a small house, a cottage and they can enjoy their family, safety, tranquillity while fulfilling their work objectives.

The employer can entail work-from-home by applying the Decree of state of emergency regarding the remote work and subsequently the reccomendations of the Ministry of Labour or the part from the Labour Code that reffers to emergencies, major force or the protection of the employee in a way that after considering the geographic particularities and the spread of the virus the employers analyse the state of facts and decide weather they can apply the regulations or not.

In order to support the business operators the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business can release, after filling a request, Emergency Situation Certificate, based on a set of justifying documents.

There is also a situation where out of caution about the degree highly contagious COVID-19 the employees do not come to their workplace. In this situation, there is no legal reason to



justify their absence, except from the regulations regarding medical leave or quarantine leave, otherwise simply missing work for safety or precaution reasons can not be justified.

The Ministry of Labour expressly recommends additional measures to be taken such as: - prioritizing essential services over non-essential services following an analysis by each employer.

- drawing up a business continuity plan by identifying the essential activities in order to have continuity but also in order to have the competent and available staff for relocation.

- determining the level of risk for any activity susceptible to COVID-19 exposure, limiting the exposure and immediately notifying the competent Public Health Directorate in case there is a risk of infection within the company 5 .

The situations in which the employer can no longer support the continuation of the activity are multiple so that the measures they can take consist in temporarily reducing the activity to 4 days a week, temporarily interrupting the activity with sending employees into technical unemployment with payment of 75% of their salary, suspending temporary employment contracts due to force majeure - in this situation the employers can play their employees, and even termination of employment contracts in the event that employers are deeply affected by the economic effects of the pandemic.

There are situations in which the decision of the public authorities has suspended commercial activities, the Decree establishing the state of emergency announcing a series of protection measures that should help employers who cannot pay salaries and employees who are not paid.

From a sociological point of view, these transformations, this instability and uncertainty induced from the central level to the local one, individual level, but also from the macroeconomic level to the microeconomic level produce only negative and destructive effects both at personal and group level.

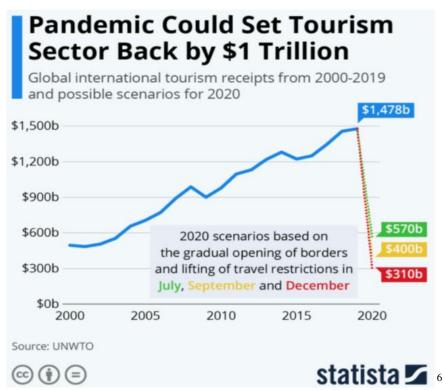
A personal opinion

The population of Turkey, Greece, Europe and America during this period are relaxed and have a deep understanding of this system, walk the streets quietly and continue their social and daily life unlike the population in Romania where they feel fear and dread could be seen in the eyes of people. Is it a problem of the system or is it just the lack of education and distrust in the political and medical system of Romanian citizens?

The Romanian government has taken the model of other states such as Germany, France closing everything that means hospitality industry, thus helping to bankrupt the private domain in this branch. The difference between Romania and other European states is the support we don not receive from the authorities, unlike the other states where it is offered regarding the development of a business so as to withstand the pandemic.

⁵ https://ziare.com/locuri-de-munca/angajatori/masuri-de-protectie-a-relatiilor-de-munca-in-contextul-pandemiei-1602236





I believe that anti-COVID-19 measures in the field of tourism should be reconfigured by allowing the freedom to travel, but with massive help and support from the authorities to those in the hotel and hospitality industry, by innovating project ideas, financial support in the procurement of travel equipment. protection, the establishment of medical centers at the entrance to each tourist resort and the implementation of the concept of medical police to monitor certain crowded areas, to highlight tourist areas, people moving in those areas but also to provide protective equipment to prevent the spread of the virus .

Also in my research on sociological perspectives in the dynamics of Romanian tourism helps me biographical research for generations more precisely the aspect of modern society analysis on the delimitation of life phases affected by "institutional dinosaurs" that continue to exist because there are periods in each stage of life when constraints -the moment of childhood and adolescence - are subject to the compulsory school system and they are more imperative, the right to retire which is subordinated to age, old age which is the object of specific social policies.

Furthermore, in tourism you must know how to address and adapt to each age, generation, culture, religion, usually it is characterized by the diversity of types of tourists.

The social change given by the change of generations also has an effect on tourism because many people want to discover old customs and traditions by choosing as their destination places with a history, with a story behind them. (Bran Castle, Belvedere Panoramic Amphitheater Hotel Complex)

The concept of generation is important in the sociology of tourism because each age category and their availability must be taken into account. Thus, school holidays are important because according to them parents plan their vacation and the category of pensioners benefits from greater accessibility, they can go on vacation at any time because they have availability and time. There is also a difference between the process of bodily aging in modern societies given

 $^{^{6}}$ UNWTO , 2020



more by the psychological and social effects of aging, the health system but also the culture of a country. Thus, given the differences between generations based mainly on culture, environment and society in which they developed, I can not help but compare the thinking of the majority of people in Romania who consider that at the age of 60 their lives passed and the thinking of women and men in America or other countries who, at the age of 70, run on the beach and engage in social challenges, travel, are open to the new.

Tourism can be affected by the phenomenon of generations in the sense that changes in population structure have economic consequences given the inverse effect of economic developments on demographic phenomena: demographic behaviours and developments (birth, mortality, marriage) that cause a change in population growth and a change in population. Its age structure, which in turn participates in a transformation of economic behaviours and life cycles. This transformation in turn has effects on demographic behaviours.

Tourism is affected by the history of mentalities so that, according to Ernest Labrousse "the economy is lagging behind, kept in place by the social and the social by the mental" (1962, p. XI)

At the microgroup level (friends, relationships), collective memory is very important, along with one's own memory.

Solution: emotional work, essential condition in "pandemic tourism"

The concept of emotional work is the management of feelings, expressions and actions taken in order to meet the necessary emotional requirements of a job, by regulating emotions in relationships with clients, colleagues, superiors and subordinates hierarchically, in decisionmaking in which it is necessary to suppress emotions so that they are not felt by those around them.

Pandemic tourism is a concept whose field involves during the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus additional emotional work due to the fact that it requires face-to-face contact with the client, control bodies, colleagues and requires the worker to transmit and produce an emotional state of well-being. Safety and understanding to both the client and colleagues and last but not least allows the employer to have control over the emotions of employees through training and supervision. This concept is very important in tourism especially in this pandemic period because the situations are unforeseen and especially in the relationship with the client you need to know how to manage your emotions, find the solution to meet his requirements and convey the security and certainty that the work will be done and you as an employee will be at his disposal at any time for whatever he needs.

The year 2020 was a real challenge for both employers, employees and tourists and I believe that the concept of emotional work has automatically developed and adapted.

On the one hand, the employer must know how to manage his business given the new regulations and limitations imposed, what business plan and strategy to adopt, how to convey to employees the safety of the job but also to ensure that if they want follow the imposed measures and they will take care that the others do it too, everything will be fine.

On the other hand, the employee in relation to the customer must take into account their reluctance and fear, provide them with the necessary protection tools and ensure the permanent hygiene of the hotel, restaurants and adjoining spaces. During this period special attention must be paid to strategies for regulating cognitive, bodily and expressive emotions. For example, if a dissatisfied customer comes to ask for an explanation for an irregularity, the employee must control his cognitive emotions trying to think of a happy situation in his life, a loved one or something that wakes the smile on his face and calms him down.



Regarding control over bodily emotions, he needs to change his body position and breathe deeply to reduce anger and try to explain the situation to the client and find a satisfactory solution together..

Expressive emotions are especially important in working with people, a smile can mean a lot to both the person and those around them, which is why in an unpleasant situation a smile could change inner feelings and even convey the same state of peace, understanding and openness in finding a solution to solve any problem and people around you.

In an uncertain time when things change from day to day, the most important thing we should focus on is what we can control: to keep our chins up, to keep ourselves safe and to hope for a better future. good to be with loved ones.

The determining factors in the emotional work of pandemic tourism are both social and organizational norms for example in a crowded area such as the Casino Mamaia area in the middle of the summer season where besides the fact that you can't find a parking space, you don't have to walk on the promenade area by the sea by other people, there is more legitimacy in expressing negative emotions as opposed to a quiet, outdoor tourist area such as Olimp Resort, Neptun, a quiet area in the mountains or even a village away from everything that means virus, chaos, technology and superficiality, as well as inner features and feelings at work such as the emotional expressiveness of employees through features, gestures, body movements to convey emotions or the level of identity of the career or how important is the career in his identity and how different is the expressed and emotional behaviour when they are engaged in work, as opposed to when they are relaxed but also the way in which the display rules are regulated, respectively the impression of the superior of the need to suppress negative emotions at work is different from the impression of the employee who considers an emotional discharge this possibility to say his pain or to unload his nerves towards colleagues.

Following my sociological research, I can strongly argue that no one will be safe until we are all safe.

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