



Università degli Studi di Genova

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Scuola di Scienze Sociali

BA TOURISM SCIENCES: BUSINESS, CULTURE AND TERRITORY

# TOURISM PSYCHOLOGY

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**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF  
TARGET POPULATIONS**

**SOCIAL INFLUENCES**

# FROM INDIVIDUALISM TO SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- The spread of self-centred behaviour could lead one to think that the vast majority of people are looking for individualised stays/holidays, i.e. tailor-made to the needs of the individual/family group. In fact, those who are looking for personalised offers are a minority.
- Most people, while claiming their own individualistic specificity, also suffer social influences in the choice of the type of holiday, the level of services, the location.

# SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND DECISION MAKING

- Not everyone goes on holiday: for economic reasons or because they refuse to undergo what they consider to be a ritual. Those who go on holiday choose their destination according to individual needs, availability of resources and social influences. In addition to the tourist that we have defined as "homologated" also for other types of holiday can partly respond to the need to be "like others", to feel part of a group. The greater the need for affiliation the greater the need to take a holiday.

# SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND CHOICE OF DESTINATION

- The attractiveness of a tourist destination depends not only on its proximity to the tourist's expectations [determined by needs] but also on its being considered a fashionable or exotic place to visit at least once in a lifetime. The spread of the internet and the birth of low-cost companies have made destinations, once considered elite, accessible to a much wider public [massification of the holiday in prestigious places and access to once niche types of holiday, e.g. cruises].

# SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND "HOMOLOGATED" TOURISTS

- Within this typology we can distinguish two sub-types:
  - the elite tourist
  - the "forced" tourist
- The elite tourist has resources that are out of the ordinary and sees holidays in exclusive [and very expensive] locations as a way of guaranteeing the frequency of people with whom he shares, in addition to economic resources, interests, ways of thinking and business.
- The forced tourist sees the holiday as an obligatory passage not to feel excluded from the social group to which he thinks he belongs [or aims to belong].

# SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND AESTHETIC AND HEALTH TOURISM

- It is a type of tourism strongly influenced by the increasing diffusion of stereotypes of beauty and good physical fitness on the one hand, and by the awareness of the positive relationship between lifestyle, nutrition and psychophysical well-being on the other.
- The recovery of the thermal tourism sector, which was in vogue in the 50s and 60s and then entered a recessionary phase, is strongly linked to the increased social attention to health and the use of non-pharmacological remedies also from a preventive point of view.

# SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND OTHER TYPES OF TOURISM(1)

- Cultural tourism is affected by the strong media attention to the historical and cultural aspects of the various countries.
- Religious tourism is experiencing a period of particular flourishing thanks to the spread of the need for spirituality, the search for an inner space regardless of the strictly fideistic characterization of belonging to a religious belief.
- *Camperism* and camping can still be traced back to the "on the road" philosophy of the beat [Kerouac] movement of the 50s and 60s, characterised by non-conformism [hence the birth of the term "beatnik" invented by the journalist Herb Caen, of the San Francisco Chronicle, in an article he wrote on 2 April 1958, as a disparaging term to refer to beats, or to the members of the Beat Generation, as a union of words with the Soviet satellite Sputnik, to underline both the distance of the beats from current US society and the fact that they were close to communist ideas, at a time when the United States was experiencing a deep feeling of anti-communism and a paranoid red fear during the Cold War McCartian period]

## SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND OTHER TYPES OF TOURISM (2)

- Ecotourism also owes its fortune to the diffusion and increasing consumer demand for organic products, zero km and complying with defined and controlled production processes.
- The growing success of food and wine, which has now become a constituent element of much of the tourist offer and no longer a mere complement, is in turn strongly influenced by the increased interest in cooking, the rediscovery of traditional flavours and the matching of food and wine products.

# THE (LACKED) EVOLUTION OF GENDER TOURISM

- Independence, time and resources are the prerequisites for tourism and the amount needed was greater in the past. It should therefore come as no surprise that the great travellers, from explorers to "cultural" or "trainee" travellers, were predominantly men.
- Although in 1678 for the first time in the world a woman, Elena Lucrezia Corner, obtained a degree [followed within a century by three other Italians, the last of whom, in 1777, was the Ligurian Maria Pellegrina Amoretti], it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that women of the more affluent classes could begin to face, like their male peers, the adventure of the Grand Tour.
- It should also be noted that the description of the places and the very nature of the trip were described in a masculine way [assimilated to the act of conquest] while the objects of the conquest were interpreted in a feminine way [to keep silent about the clear references to femininity in a sexual key that often accompany the advertising iconography in a tourist key].

# GENDER TOURISM AND SEX TOURISM (1)

- Every trip is potentially linked to the sexual sphere: the holiday with the partner, the meeting of new people in neutral contexts, the trip aimed at sexual adventure in its various forms.
- The trip with the partner is probably one of the most widespread formulas, so much so that many packages are designed according to the classic stereotypes of couple's life: romance, the right mix between intimacy and public activities, attention to the other).
- But the trip also allows us to get out of the schemes, to abandon the roles we usually play without fear of endangering our social identity. The journey can be seen as a "free zone", a parenthesis of our life in which everything is possible, even, if not above all, transgression. In fact, historically holidays represent moments in which love stories, or supposedly such, are born and die. Moments in which one is willing to live emotions and feelings without thinking about tomorrow.

# GENDER TOURISM AND SEX TOURISM (2)

- The sexual component of the holiday has changed in the last half century.
- With respect to sexual expectations we can distinguish between:
  - 1) those who have stable relationships and do not feel the need or seek adventure;
  - 2) those who, if an adventure happened, might be available;
  - 3) those who are on holiday also to live their sexuality and if it happens would be available
  - 4) who goes on holiday to have sexual encounters for a fee.
  - The first two categories are similar to the average tourist
  - The third sees the holiday also as a moment to freely live one's sexuality in non-castrating contexts due to social and moral qualms. It is LGBT tourism (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) that has found in places like Berlin and Amsterdam, Mykonos and Samos, Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, Sand Bay and Camp Bay in South Africa gay-friendly places and structures that make tolerance their philosophy of hospitality, a response of civilization as well as commercial.
  - The fourth category (about 3 million people, 500 thousand interested in relations with minors, according to the United Nation World Tourism Office, UNWTO) represents a real social and moral scourge: some countries promote this type of tourism because it is practised professionally, in others it is illegal exploitation.