

SEX TOURISM BETWEEN PLEASURE, NECESSITY AND MORALITY

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ABSTRACT: *Currently, the sex industry ranks third in the world, after two other illegal businesses that bring huge profits, namely drugs and arms trafficking. Sex tourism is a well-known phenomenon worldwide, being a silent industry, but in full expansion. It is often assimilated to activities in the field of prostitution due to the use of the services offered by this industry in the destination country. With the emergence of this type of activities, sex tourism gave birth to an industry of over 180 billion dollars worldwide involving a very large number of people, tourists on the one hand, and sex workers on the other.*

KEY WORDS: *sex tourism, economy, globalization, sex industry.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *R0, R1, Z3.*

1. INTRODUCTION

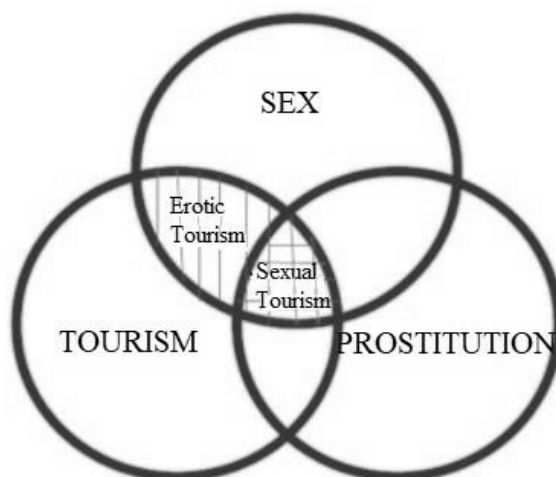
In our society, sexuality appears as an effective tool in advertising campaigns, news, newspapers, books, magazines, films or television shows and we are witnessing day by day, more and more a phenomenon of its globalization. Therefore, regardless of the context in which it is used, sexuality is meant to be an exceptional marketing tool being used successfully in the sale-purchase process of various products or services.

The economic sector of tourism is frequently promoted through advertising campaigns that associate dream places and landscapes with the image of beautiful women or manly men. In this way, in the minds of many tourists, a new tourist attraction appears that they cannot access at home due to certain moral, social, political or religious norms or standards. Thus, the body is born as a tourist attraction, through which desires, passions and curiosities of any kind, can be satisfied by a simple trip to

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a country or locality, where anything is allowed from a sexual point of view, which in the country of origin, generically called "home", is forbidden to them.

Sex tourism is a well-known phenomenon worldwide, being a silent industry, but in full expansion. It is often assimilated to activities in the field of prostitution due to the use of the services offered by this industry in the destination country (figure 1). Prostitution has existed worldwide for centuries, but is much better highlighted in underdeveloped countries, generically called "Third World countries."



Source: after Gravari-Barbas Maria, Staszak J.F., Graburn N., 2017

Figure 1. Difference between erotic tourism and sex tourism

Within this tourist phenomenon there are two forms of sex tourism, namely:

- sex tourism promoted by countries where prostitution is legal, being regulated by normative acts and considered to be a professional activity;
- sex tourism that takes place in underdeveloped or developing countries where prostitution is not regulated by any act, being illegal.

The export-oriented economic policies of highly economically developed countries undermine agricultural activities, thus destroying any form of income in rural areas (Kempadoo, 1998). The development process deteriorates their economic support capacity and forces many young girls into prostitution, making a process of migration to large cities. The globalization of prostitution is based on two triggers: sex tourism and migration.

With the emergence of this type of tourist attraction, sex tourism gave birth to an industry of over 180 billion dollars worldwide involving a very large number of people, tourists on the one hand, and sex workers on the other.

2. SEX INDUSTRY

Currently, the sex industry ranks third in the world, after two other illegal businesses that bring huge profits, namely drug and arms trafficking.

In "Third World" countries, sex tourists are ageless. The men and women who make up this influx of tourists come from economically developed countries in Europe, North America or Australia, travelling thousands of miles to satisfy their sexual pleasures in countries recognized worldwide as the biggest tourism attractions in the field (Buia & Nimarã, 2014). The most popular destinations for sex tourists are:

➤ Thailand. No wonder this country is at the top of the list, being famous for the red light districts of the capital Bangkok. Post-prostitution laws are unclear and hesitant, which is why prostitution is more tolerated and somewhat permissive. Many people in this country believe that prostitution and tolerance of other lifestyles are a necessary part of Thai culture, so the "oldest profession in the world" has flourished and developed rapidly. There are about 3 million sex workers, a third of them are minors.

➤ Brazil. This country in South America has always been a tourist attraction due to its exotic life, beautiful people, dreamy beaches and numerous festivals, the most famous of which is the Rio Carnival. What is noteworthy about sex tourism in this country is that there is an increase in the sector of female sex tourism. Although the state authorities have been quite receptive to this type of tourism, with the organization of the World Cup in 2014, it seems that the phenomenon of sex tourism has not slowed down.

➤ Spain. Cities like Ibiza, Madrid or Barcelona have always been a dream tourist destination for tourists who prefer a lively nightlife in clubs, but a new tourist activity is born in this country, namely sex tourism. Prostitution is legal in Spain, making it one of the top destinations in Europe for sex tourism. In Madrid, the red light district is very accessible from the busy streets, and in Barcelona, it is a top attraction. What is surprising is that the vast majority of women working in this industry come from South America and not Spain.

➤ Indonesia. It is another Asian country facing the problem of human trafficking, especially children who are forced to work in sex tourism. Even though prostitution is illegal, being considered a "crime against decency and morality", Indonesia remains a popular destination for sex tourists. What is a peculiarity for sex tourism is not the presence of prostitutes in traditional brothels, but their presence in virtual environments, in various forums, social networking sites or other media circles where they can be approached very easily. Studies show that this form of advertising and communication via the Internet is very effective in sex tourism in Indonesia.

➤ Columbia. Known especially for drug trafficking, this country in South America is also popular with sex tourists, on the one hand due to the fact that prostitution is legal and on the other hand due to the low prices, which fluctuate depending on how attractive it is, or not the client or how well he knows to negotiate.

➤ Philippines. Even though prostitution is illegal, the sex tourism phenomenon is constantly evolving. Over 500 000 women work in the sex industry, the vast majority being presented as waiters or entertainers in bars or clubs. The sex tourists who frequent this country are mainly businessmen from East Asia, USA. and Western European countries. According to social research, Filipinos tend to be extremely tolerant of any lifestyle, even extravagant, which is supposed to have led to

an expansion of this tourism phenomenon. A percentage of 40-60% of tourists visiting the country are sex tourists traveling alone.

➤ Kenya. As in the case of the vast majority of the states present in this top, with the exception of the Netherlands, the engine of sexual tourism activities is poverty. In most cases, minors aged 12, work in this sector. Prostitution due to lack of financial resources by uneducated young girls has led to an alarming increase in sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. According to statistics, in Kenya, only 60% of prostitutes use a condom, given that the average frequency of clients is 5 clients/day. Despite these dangers, state authorities are encouraging sex tourism due to the country's acute need for economic recovery.

➤ Netherlands. The country's capital, Amsterdam is in the top of tourists' preferences, thanks to the famous red light districts. Prostitution is legal and very well regulated, providing safety conditions for both those working in the sex industry and tourists. Prices in Amsterdam vary between 35-100 euro, depending on the time slot, the age of the customer and its attractiveness. It was among the first countries to offer sexual services to women.

➤ Cambodia. It has a fairly strict set of laws on prostitution, but despite this, it is a favourite destination for sex tourists. Due to internal problems related to the country's poor economy and the activities of the Khmer Rouge that have led to political undermining, the vast majority of sex workers are minors, some parents are sometimes forced to sell their children due to poverty, and others are fooled into the hope of a better life. Virginity is often an asset.

➤ 10. Dominican Republic. The vast majority of Caribbean countries are experiencing an increase in the sex tourism industry and especially female sex tourism. It is estimated that between 60 000 and 100 000 women work in this sector, many of them minors. It is a favourite destination of American and European tourists (Buia & Nimară, 2014).

Revenues from sexual activity worldwide (table 1), for the most active countries, are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Revenues from the global sex industry

No.	Country	Income from the sex industry (mil. USD)
1	China	73 000
2	Spain	26 500
3	Japan	24 000
4	Germany	18 000
5	U.S.A	14 600
6	South Korea	12 000
7	India	8 400
8	Thailand	6 400
9	Philippines	6 000
10	Switzerland	4 400
11	Turkey	4 000
12	Indonesia	2 250

13	Taiwan	1 840
14	Ukraine	1 500
15	Bulgaria	1 300
16	U.K	1 000
17	Malaysia	963.8
18	Netherlands	800
19	Italy	600
20	Russia	540
21	Cambodia	511
22	Israel	500
23	Ireland	326
24	Czech Republic	200
25	Jamaica	58
26	Australia	27

In human trafficking and women world trade, traffickers make the price according to anticipated dangers and difficulties, respectively. In Israel, for example, a woman from Eastern Europe is worth between \$ 5000 and \$ 20 000. The market created is very vast and a pimp can earn in a year, between 50 000 and 100 000 dollars from the services provided by a prostitute and a brothel can make a profit of 250 000 dollars/month.

A form of masking prostitution is also the famous belly dance and raised to the level of art in Muslim countries. In Egypt, for example, the phenomenon of globalization has also reached this ancient art. Currently, belly dancing is used by most women in developing countries as a first step towards prostitution from Middle Eastern countries, especially oil-producing ones (Buia & Nimară, 2014).

Of course, the phenomenon should not be generalized, but the vast majority of women from poor countries choose this form of sexual expression in order to make money as quickly as possible, in a society where women in that state would not choose such a profession. There are only over 300 Muslim dancers in Egypt, as Islamic fundamentalists have forced many locals to give up. Despite this fact, the demand for such a tourist package, which also includes belly dancing, is quite high, thus leaving a free place on the profile market. In Cairo, most dancers come from Russia, Argentina, Brazil and France. The dancers work either in nightclubs and hotels on the road to the pyramids, or on cruise ships.

Saudi Arabia is an important state that receives a large number of women and minors to be exploited in the sex industry. The vast majority of them come from countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan.

The Middle East has several international prostitution centers, the best are Dubai, Istanbul and Marrakech (Abed & Davoodi, 2003). Dubai's prostitution networks are very cosmopolitan, encompassing people from several countries such as Russia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Philippines, Pakistan, India, Morocco and even the United Kingdom. According to statistics, prostitutes from Russia and Ethiopia are the most common, and those from India are part of a very well-developed trans-oceanic prostitution network.

Prostitutes from Morocco are the most expensive, being demanded by Arab businessmen, and those from Uganda are the cheapest. Less common are prostitutes from UK whose clients come from Europe.

In Muslim society, the penalties for prostitution are very harsh. In Jordan, for example, the client risks life imprisonment or even the death penalty if the prostitute is of Muslim origin. In Egypt, prostitution is punishable by imprisonment, while in Lebanon, the law against pimping is not well enforced by the authorities, but instead, pimps are severely punished or even killed by Islamic fundamentalists if they hire Muslim women.

The expansion of globalization phenomenon has also affected the status of prostitution in Muslim countries in the Middle East region by encouraging this phenomenon despite the sets of conservative laws of Islamic fundamentalism. Globalization has brought unprecedented economic development, which has created an even greater distance between the social and moral values of men and women, forcing some of them to choose prostitution (figure 2).



Figure 2. The legal framework of prostitution worldwide

Table 2. Population and poverty in Latin America

Country	Population	Population under 18	Children living in poverty (%)	Poor childrens from urban area (%)
Argentina	41 446 246	12 076 420	24.3	7.6
Brazil	200 361 926	58 551 646	33.8	11.7
Chile	17 619 708	4 532 000	15.7	4.0
Colombia	48 321 405	16 014 036	36.1	15.0
Costa Rica	4 872 166	1 396 698	19.5	6.9
Dominican Republic	10 403 761	3 730 605	47.8	7.0
Ecuador	15 737 878	5 597 779	40.7	15.1

Guatemala	15 468 203	7 298 006	79.9	47.8
Mexico	117 200 000	39 200 000	41.7	12.1
Nicaragua	6 080 478	2 391 692	78.6	42.7
Paraguay	6 802 295	2 623 403	54.0	10.3
Panama	3 864 170	1 301 303	no data	no data
Peru	30 375 603	10 480 025	62.6	30.9
Uruguay	3 407 062	900 942	18.6	3.9

Source: World Economic Forum, 2017

Tourism activity in order to satisfy sexual pleasures with the help of minors is another trend in the global tourism phenomenon, being generally practiced by a category of tourists aged between 20 and 40 years. The victims of this tourist phenomenon being girls between 13 and 17 years old who come from disorganized or poor families (table 2). The most popular tourist destinations are: Brazil, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Thailand, Guatemala, Vietnam, Mexico, Nepal and Kenya (Gravari-Barbas, et al., 2017).

3. MARKETING STRATEGIES USED IN SEX TOURISM

Marketing strategies are a very important tool in attracting the attention of sex tourists about the potential of the destination. The images from albums, brochures and catalogs that present the tourist objectives of the respective countries, together with beautiful women dressed in traditional costumes, is a method of inciting men's interest in discovering the beauties of the place (Brown, 2002).

One such example is the image of promoting tourism in some countries, which highlights an exciting mix of images with beautiful women and enticing slogans. For example, the promotion of tourism in Brazil in the 1980s and 2014.

Starting from the phrase "advertising is the soul of trade", in the sexual tourism phenomenon appear in the strategy of promoting a specific tourist destination, subtle links through advertisements offered by airlines, the campaign to promote specific drinks or of an event, through a wide range of representations with sexual or erotic notes.

In the case of advertisements for men, there are locations where beautiful women appear in swimsuits or underwear and in the case of advertisements for women are presented single, active men, practicing different sports or having a business outfit.

Within the tourist market, there are especially representations of beautiful women whose connection is automatically made with the specific destination. In the advertisement, the woman is the "image" and not the product (Buia & Nimară, 2014).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Numerous reports that have been made over time on sex tourism show that practitioners of sex vacations act as if social responsibility has not yet been invented. In fact, for them, the only invention was sex. Over 10% of the approximately 850 million tourists who go on holiday abroad, practice sex tourism.

Sex tourism benefits both the sex industry and other economic sectors involved (transport companies, hotels, restaurants, local traders, revenues from the local or national budget, where prostitution is legalized, etc.).

Prostitution and sex tourism are often confused, being considered the same thing. The reality is that they have certain elements in common, but still differ in the fact that, in addition to offering certain financial or material benefits, sex tourism also involves a notion of relaxation and sometimes emotional or sentimental involvement.

Tourists who go on holiday with sexual themes, do not have a specific profile, being simply individuals who want to commit their sexual fantasies and who overlook the fact that this type of tourism is sometimes illegal, their justifications being numerous.

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