Philosophical Reflection on Tourism in a Context of Global Intercultural Communications*

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Abstract—**The author of the article follows an interrelation of intercultural communications with various ethnic and religious identities and tourism. Tourism is discussed as an important phenomenon of contemporaneity. The author presents tourism as a pillar of the globalizing world co-existing with ethnocultural diversity and analyzes philosophical and sociological concepts of Russian and foreign scholars who offer their reflection of tourism as a form of human existence. Special attention is paid to the ethnic and religious tourism. The author reveals some peculiarities of the ethnic and religious tourism in the case of the Caspian region and its Russian part in particular. The phenomenon of tourism in this region is depicted as a stable basis for the consolidation of interreligious and intercultural relations between diverse peoples (ethnic cultures) that have been living there for centuries.**

Keywords—philosophy of tourism; institutionalization of tourism; intercultural relations; ethnic and religious tourism; ethnical and religious cultures in the Caspian region

I. INTRODUCTION

Philosophical comprehension of the social phenomenon of tourism is drawn from the analysis of the contemporary world (at a global scale) where countless ethnic nations coexist and interact in multicultural states. Tourism nowadays is an institutionalized system, able to accumulate practically all the social problems and to put into the spotlight cultural, communicative, and economic realities of modern-day societies.

The French poet and thinker of the late 20th — early 21st century Victor Segalen said once that since we had learned that the Earth is round, the journey ceased to exist, as the withdrawing from a certain point means the approach to the same point. So begins "tourism" — an endless flow of people who, in a strict sense, do not travel, but move in circles in a confined space. There is the interaction of cultures, which contributes to tourism and all the meanings and symbols associated with it.

II. TOURISM AND CROSS-CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

According to the author of the article, people as the representatives of diverse ethnic cultures, are integrated by tourism in the philosophical sense. Therefore, we shall understand the category "tourism" in the broadest sense. All the movement brings people closer. The circulation gains momentum: knowledge, technology, culture, information, money, communication, and economic transactions circulate. J. Baudrillard expresses the following idea: the human Universe has turned into a huge orbital station, "the space era has begun, which space is television" [1].

Let us note that in the new global culture, nowadays called "the screen culture", tourism plays a significant role. The English sociologist J. Urry, the founder of the so-called "sociology of mobility", studying global changes, offers new methods of analyzing economics, tourism, social infrastructure. Considering how people become the global consumers of places, J. Urry in his "The Tourist Gaze and Globalization" claims that "since the beginning of the 1990s, people have experienced the significant "space-time compression", people became closer to each other because of the modern technologies and communications". He writes further: "Many social groups are becoming increasingly aware of the "death of the distance" [2]. However, he adheres to the Z. Bauman's views that we move from stable to "liquid modernity".

The feeling of the space-time compression arises largely thanks to steady, rapid flows of journeymen, tourists, pilgrims, everyone, included into the orbit of people, moving around the Earth. At the same time, these processes also describe migration and interaction of diverse cultures since every human represents a unique ethnic culture.

Yet the postmodern world offers us another kind of journey: to the same places, where people travel to, but virtually. That is why J. Urry categorizes tourism as a journey "in flesh" and imaginative tourism using the Internet, phones, TV and other digital media.

Nowadays the global tourism industry, the fluidity as the defining category of the contemporary communities, has caused the processes of "production" and "consumption" of the places [3]. Intercultural relations among communities on

the globe, the real relationship among people, lacking due to the abovementioned reasons, are mediated by the flows of tourists. Therefore, the places change, improve and set themselves to accept these flows.

Globalization has made tourism global because here a huge number of places and people get interconnected. In this regard, "global" and "tourism" are not the separate concepts, connected by some external links, but a part of the complex independent system of interchangeable modern processes, including social and cross-cultural ones. Therefore, the tourism infrastructure, flows of people, generated images of the place visited, the variety of social practices, associated with tourism are comprehended within a "real reflection", which gets institutionalized form; the scholar research of tourism, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, travel agencies, corporations, etc., existing in unity as a global institution, spreading across the world [4].

III. INSTITUTION OF TOURISM AT A CROSSROAD OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

Tourism, in our view, accumulates all the principles of the postmodern society. Moreover, the established media and beautifully "packaged", for advertising, images of tourist sites and facilities spread throughout the world and thereby create and implement the idea of the globe as a single place to visit. Nowadays the visuality plays a more significant role in spreading the ideas of global tourism than twenty or thirty years ago.

The institutionalization of tourism reflection makes tourism almost the center of "liquid modernity", promoting globalization, bringing the cultures closer. The formation of a new tourist destination is the result of long-term work, a part of a reflexive process, through which the new places, previously unknown, get included in a globalized world. In this regard, many objects, that were not the objects of interest before, are becoming relevant. Tourist infrastructures are being created in the most unexpected places, perhaps to reproduce the lost exotic. Among those locations are Alaska, Antarctic, Cuba in terms of its "colonial" heritage, Iceland, Russian Caspian region, and so on.

The flow of the tourists from different countries increases, especially this concerns the eastern countries as if replacing the Western "consumption of the places" in the East. Moreover, there is the growing desire of the Eastern tourists to see firsthand the places of the West that, according to the tourists, contributed largely to the development of the world. The American sociologist J. Hendry describes the creation in the Asian countries of the theme parks, that are full of "exotic Western" features. In those parks, the oasis of Western culture is cultivated and reproduced. The sociologist calls this trend the reverse Orientalism or the Orientalist retaliation [5], when the bizarre (to an Eastern individual) artifacts of the Western civilization are displayed and perceived as unusual, exotics, weird.

Tourism is also important for implementing some human's existential intentions. The need to realize oneself in a not very comfortable world, the desire to communicate, to shorten distances, to visit in person some mega-events, to experience events, meetings with people, to engage in new spaces — in short, all those existential manifestations, without which no one can live in a harsh and not very friendly modern world, contribute to the development of tourism. Tourism, in turn, enables people to implement their desires and helps in their cultural identification. Getting into an unknown culture with peculiar religious, ethnic, socio-ethical forms of behavior, everyone compares it to their own ethnic culture. All this contributes to the building of cultural identity and those processes in the native society that allow or impede the formation of multiple identifications — as a citizen, as a representative of some subculture or ethnic culture, etc. That is why the internal motives of a person form largely the global flows of tourists in their quest not only to explore the new places but also to know themselves as parts of an ethnic group, culture, state [6].

Gravitation to co-presence in a meaningful place for an individual usually pushes him/her to travel the unknown spaces, to reach visually different landscapes of life events. Mediated by tourism socio-cultural practices are possible only in specific "leisure places", geographically and ontologically distant from work and home. They are felt like the "other" places, different from the daily routine and familiar sights.

Thus, the significance of ethnic tourism increases. This type of tourism provides an opportunity to meet the original, exotic, yet unknown for the travelers, culture.

IV. ETHNIC TOURISM AND ITS INTERCULTURAL MEANINGS ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE CASPIAN REGION

Ethnic tourism is defined by its peculiar subject and universal demand in the conditions of globalization and mutual influence of cultures. The 21st century makes evident the growth of peoples' integration with the simultaneous deepening of interest to one's ethnic roots, origins of culture, religion and language.

A Russian researcher N. Berkovich reveals the meaning of ethnic tourism through the perception of ethnicity and ethnic groups. The researcher points out that ethnic tourism per se strives for the implementation of peoples' need in self-identification and ethnic socialization. This kind of tourism addresses the peoples' history, its cultural and religious roots, psychology and linguistics. Ethnic tourism allows finding the lost semiotic codes of one's peoples, to conceive its genuine sources, reconstruct ethnic historical memory [7]. Thus, a peoples' ethnocultural identity is being formed and under the appropriate conditions it may turn into an attractive touristic destination.

Ethnic tourism has impressive prospects in Russia due to the country's multinationality. Potentially, ethnic tourism may follow a wide variety of tourist routes, reflecting the country's ethnic structure. We may immediately think of a number of tours, e.g. "Indigenous people of Siberia", "Culture of people of the Volga region", "History of Saami people in Russia", "Tatar people in the Caspian region", aimed at the cognition of both a history and a contemporary life of these (and many other) ethnic groups.

However, ethnic tourism may also be directed outwards and be aimed at creating cultural images of ethnic groups, countries, and regions. This type of ethnic tourism intersects with some other types of tourism such as rural, ethnographic, ecological, religious, and pilgrimage. Thus, one may become acquainted with new and unfamiliar ethnic groups and their every-day and religious cultures, reconstructing unique history. E.g., Norway is actively developing tours that allow tourists to experience the age of Vikings — to dress like them, eat like them, stay in Viking villages, etc.

Ethnic tourism, directed at the cognition of an ethnic group, is a specific knowing of the other. It is a kind of comprehension of other ethnic groups with their history, traditions, religious and cultural myths, languages, everyday culture, etc. Precisely this form of ethnic tourism triggers dialogue and mutual penetration of global cultures that do not have shared spiritual and material backgrounds.

We believe that ethic tourism may bring a positive contribution to the establishment of ethnocultural communications among different nations, and to the overcoming of contradictions that still exist among peoples in a contemporary global world. It stands to reason that an ethnocultural peculiarity ought to be transferred to other types of tourism. Ethnic and religious kinds of tourism may also fulfill a positive function in multicultural Russia, forming and improving the tolerant relationship among peoples. This is also true for the polyethnic Caspian region of Russia, which plays a significant role in the country's social, economic, and cultural spheres.

Let us point out that ethnic tourism in the Caspian region is characterized by some peculiarities and relates to multiculturalism, a variety of religions, and the centuries-old history of the indigenous peoples. The Caspian region enjoys its history of intercultural unity, its own experience of peaceful coexistence of various languages, cultures, denominations, and confessions. That is evidenced by numerous historical documents, works of art, physical artifacts, and may also be implemented in the effective development of ethnic and religious tourism.

The Caspian region as a whole relates to the ethnic identity of its numerous ethnic groups (Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Kalmyks, Persians, Russians, Turkmens, etc), to the interaction of different cultures and religions, to the historical formation of different civilizations, and yes, to the ethic- and religious-based conflicts occurring. Ethnicity and ethnic identity of the peoples of the Caspian region are largely associated with the belonging of ethnic groups to different religions and religious movements. The organization of ethnic and religious tourism in this region should consider these complex circumstances.

Of importance for the organization of ethnic and religious tourism is the cult of sacred religious places associated with ethnic groups, having centuries-old history and own identity. Deep veneration of holy places in the Russian part of the Caspian region is, in particular, inherent in Muslim culture. The cult of sacred territories plays an important role not only for religious development but also for the design of attractive tourist destinations. Peoples,

living in rural areas of the Astrakhan region, in the North Caucasus, as well as in Iran, and in Turkmenistan, have been worshiping their native sacral places for centuries.

Essential traits of these cults are mostly similar to one another over the territories of the Caspian region and play in favor of the intercultural integration. Let us shed some light on examples of these unique worships. We refer to the research of Muslim cults in Central Asia. Its authors also stress some principles of worship over the Caspian region territory: "… the cult of "holy places" is unorthodox; it puts its essence in a form of traditional Islam as the content of the "holy places" cult is largely characterized by the remains of pre-Islamic beliefs. So, the cult ritual in the village of Yango-Asker (the Astrakhan region — author O.C.) bears a great resemblance to the ruzi-tef ritual, that is going back to the pre-Islamic practice of fire worship. The link of the major cults of the "holy places" to Sufism is also evident" [8].

However, independently on the territory, the mentioned cult of holy places has its specific traits. "In Central Asia, the cult of "holy places" has retained more of the traditional pre-Islamic features than in the Caspian region. More importantly, Sufism in Central Asia and its connection to the cults of "holy places" are at a higher level than in the Caspian region… An institution of porchans magi is widespread in Turkmenistan. This institution is an example of a peculiar religious syncretism of early creeds and the remnants of Zoroastrianism, existing as a cult of witchdoctors" [9].

Those kind of common historical, cultural, and religious common grounds of the sacred places are at the same time unique and attractive for tourists who desire to witness something special in the ethnocultural lives of other ethnic groups. The places where the original ethnic culture is being supported and cherished for centuries are more attractive for travelers rather than standardized tourist objects and places resembling each other.

The Caspian region of Russia also bears the features of uniqueness and exclusiveness. The spread of Islam across the Caspian territory shifted from Central Asia, the Volga region, and North Caucasus. There Sufism developed, along with the preaching of dervishes, and then the traditional theology of Islam (Kalam) started its genesis. However, since the religious tolerance is inherent to the Caspian region, all the teachings and creeds found the cross-cultural points for their dialogue, and furthermore, all the territorial entities attained an ethnic and cultural identity. Thus, the Russian part of the Caspian region is a large ethnocultural and religious area, having a large potential of turning into an important tourist destination and recreative zone, uniting diverse peoples who have been living there for centuries.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, the world is a very complex, sometimes contradictory phenomenon. In the variety of the modern world we're in need to establish a civilized dialogue of ethnic cultures and religions, supporting the idea of peaceful coexistence of different peoples in the context of globalization. In these conditions tourism represents the most

relevant factor of mobility and contributes to the understanding of people and countries, aiding in the identification of an individual.

Exactly this comprehension of another culture is the factor that at least partially may overcome the fragmentation, atomization of the modern world. Tourism is therefore seen as a positive stimulus for the development of society — tourist places are being rearranged willy-nilly, changing the infrastructure of the remote and unexplored regions. The world is thus becoming more civilized. Cultural, ethnic, and religious types of tourism today are a stimulating factor for the development of the states as it erases all boundaries, contradictions, and misunderstanding.

Let us emphasize that religious and cultural diversity of the modern world, expressed partly in the tourist movement, is an objectively real process that contributes to the establishment of a civilized human interaction in the global world. Tourism plays an important part in this process.

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