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THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM  
AS A FACTOR IN THE NEW MIGRATION BEHAVIOUR  
OF THE POPULATION IN LATIN AMERICA

The development of new forms of tourism (ecological, rural, cultural and cognitive), referred to jointly as alternative tourism, was one of the most important factors behind the socio-economic changes taking place during the 1990s in many countries of Latin America. The influence of this factor was especially strong within the areas that only recently have been "discovered" by tourists, both foreign and domestic ones. Such areas are characterised by the relatively low population densities, poorly developed tourist infrastructure, as well as limited transport-wise accessibility. These features cause that the inflow of tourists is accompanied by the immigration of persons providing tourist services and by the increase in spatial mobility of the native population.

The present paper concentrates on the analysis of the new migration behaviour, associated with the differentiation of forms and spatial expansion of tourism. Various forms of spatial mobility of the population directly or indirectly related to the provision of tourist services are presented. Information contained in the report originates first of all from the case studies devoted to the new tourist areas in Latin American countries. Along with this, I refer to my own observations from the studies conducted during the last dozen or so years in Mexico and Ecuador.

The analysis of the migration behaviour of population presented, encompasses three kinds of spatial mobility associated with the development of tourism: migration into the new tourist areas, short-term migrations of the native population stimulated by the demand for various kinds of tourist service, and migrations of persons dealing professionally with services within the tourist sector (Skoczek, 2000).

MIGRATIONS TO NEW TOURIST AREAS

Alternative tourism takes place mainly within the areas featuring poorly developed tourist infrastructure. The gradual increase of the number of tourists interested in a given place stimulates the extension of the bedroom capacity and the development of other tourist facilities. The analysis of the

tourist offer contained in the guidebooks and leaflets makes it possible to state that the owners or administrators of the new hotels and pensions are usually the foreigners or the people coming from the cities. Both of these usually are the ones that had visited the area as tourists and made the decision of at least a temporary move to the area and of the provision of tourist services, being conscious of the quality expected, oftentimes simply charmed by the nature, landscape or the way of life of the native population<sup>1</sup>.

The examples of this kind of behaviour have been known since long in many countries of the world. It gave the beginning for the development of the known tourist centres in the Swiss Alps, on the Caribbean islands (especially the Little Antilles) or in the Argentine's Patagonia. The contemporary initiatives of providing the hotel accommodations within the 'new' tourist areas are to an extent a continuation of these experiences, with due consideration, though, of the needs and interests of the modern tourists.

The very first centres of ecological tourism in Latin America were established in the 1960s and 1970s in Belize, Costa Rica and Ecuador, upon the initiatives of foreigners — the former tourists that once had visited those countries, the employees of the foreign travel offices, or the representatives of the NGOs, trying to promote local development.

An example of the tourist colonisation carried out by the U.S. entrepreneurs is provided by the development of the small island Cayo Ambergis, situated close to the coast of Belize. Since the 1960s the place was visited by the American tourists, interested first of all in diving and in the unique features of the world's second biggest coral reef. They would stay in the homes of the local fishermen at the beginning. Soon, the first family hotels appeared, established by the the U.S. citizens settling in Belize. During the 1980s a lot of hotels, pensions, as well as second homes, belonging to the immigrants from the United States (some of them have also obtained the citizenship of Belize) appeared on Cayo Ambergis. Then, in the 1990s the majority of the area of the island was divided up into the land plots belonging to the immigrants from the United States, the Americans conducting tourist-oriented activities or intending to take up such an activity. Local population, mostly of Mexican origin, is now a minority among the population of the island and was practically deprived of the possibility of providing tourist service (Arnaiz Burne, 1997). Yet, the participation of the local population in the establishment of the subsequent centres of ecological tourism in Belize was much more important. The Toledo Ecotourism Association, which groups the inhabitants of a dozen or so villages situated close to the locality of Punta Gorda, and

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, for instance, hotel Luna Runtún near Baños, a known tourist centre in the Ecuadorian Andes (province of Tungurahua), is being promoted as "A Swiss managed hotel with Swiss quality and Ecuadorian hospitality". The owners of the Casa Nahuazo pension, located in the same area, present themselves as the European-American family, living in Ecuador since 1981, charmed by the beauty of the country, and ready to help a tourist in getting to know it.

carries out the common tourism-related undertakings, is assessed as one of the most successful projects of the so-called “community controlled ecotourism” (Kersten, 1997; Wesche, 1996).

Since the 1990s the initiatives of construction of the accommodation infrastructure in Latin American new tourist areas are being undertaken more and more often by the domestic investors (coming usually from urban areas), and less frequently by foreigners. Some of them decide to move their permanent residence to the new place, while others preserve their homes in town, and move over to their hotel or pension only for the tourist season. That happens, for instance, in Mindo, located in Ecuadorian Andes (province of Pichincha), which is visited mainly by bird watchers. The owners of the small hotels situated in the township, are immigrants from Quito, who settled there for good, while the owners of the luxury pensions (*hosterías*), constructed in the vicinity, still live in Quito (Lisocka-Jaegermann, Makowski, Skoczek, 1998; Skoczek, 2000).

Plans of tourist development of the southern stretch of the Caribbean Sea in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo (*corredor turístico Punta Herrero — Xcalak*), known also as Costa Maya, referred to as a project of development of the environmentally-friendly tourism (opposed to the developments in the areas of mass tourism, which have been expanding over the last twenty years in Cancún, Riviera Maya), attracted the interest of the foreign and domestic investors<sup>2</sup>. The accommodation infrastructure, which existed in the region in 2000, encompassed altogether 23 facilities of the total capacity of 160 rooms. These facilities are small pensions of a couple or a dozen rooms, single bungalows, or clusters of huts (*cabañas*), belonging to the persons having come from abroad, from other states of Mexico, and from Chetumal — the capital of the state of Quintana Roo (see Campos Cámara, 2000; *Caribe Mexicano — Quintana Roo. Mapa y Guía del visitante*, 2000).

Groups of native population also participate in migrations to the new tourist areas. In the Brazilian or Ecuadorian Amazon there are cases of resettlements of the Amazonian Indians to the estates located close to the tourist centres of the type of “jungle lodges” or “campamentos”. Most of them were organised by the travel agents in order to enrich the programmes of visits of foreign tourists. In some instances, though, the initiative of resettlement is undertaken by the Indian community itself. The best known example

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<sup>2</sup> According to Romero Mayo (1997) six foreign investors expressed their interest in 1996 in the extension of the tourist infrastructure in Costa Maya (the potential investors originating from the United States and Spain), along with a Mexican consortium Grupo Posadas, and the local investors from Chetumal. The intentions presented by them at this occasion with respect to the new hotel infrastructure indicated the wish of attracting the same kind of visitors as those, who already stay at Cancún and the centres located within the Riviera Maya. Until the year 2000, though, the implementation of these plans proceeded very slowly and it is still possible that Costa Maya will be developed in accordance with the initial concept of the environmentally friendly tourism.

is the Zábalo estate, established by the Cofán Indians, from the Ecuadorian Amazon, located more than 200 km away from their previous place of residence, Dureno<sup>3</sup>. All the inhabitants of Zábalo (17 families of altogether some 100 persons) provide tourist services, collaborating with the travel agents specialised in the organisation of tours to the Amazon for foreign visitors (Wunder, 1996; Borman, 1995).

#### SHORT-TERM MIGRATIONS OF NATIVE POPULATION

Alternative tourism development is due both to the initiative of the travel agents (foreign, domestic, as well as the increasing number of the regional and local ones), and to the demand of individual tourists, travelling by public transport and looking for accommodation on their own. The improvement of the transport connections between the main cities and the peripheral regions, observed in the majority of countries of Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, aiming at territorial integration, increased accessibility of the areas featuring significant natural and cultural values. Provision of various kinds of tourist service, especially guidance and transport, became one of the major sources of income for the inhabitants of the new tourist areas. This type of activity usually requires short-term stays outside of the place of permanent residence. The main group, undertaking this kind of activity comprises male population from Andean villages located close to trekking routes (like, for instance, Camino del Inca in the vicinity of Cuzco in Peru) or to climbing areas (like in the vicinity of Riobamba in Ecuador, or of Arequipa and Huaraz in Peru), as well as men coming from the Indian villages in the Amazon.

The development of tourism brought a result vitalization of crafts and a gradual adjustment of craft production to the tastes and needs of tourists. Production of various kinds of goods, purchased by the tourists, was taken up both by the people from the localities with a long tradition of craftsmanship, like the Otavalo and Salasaca Indians from Ecuador, Indians from Altos de Guatemala, or Indians from the southern and central Mexico, and by the inhabitants of the Indian villages in Amazon and the Mexican Selva Lacandona, who until quite recently have been producing a limited number of craft goods only for their own needs<sup>4</sup>.

The increase of demand for various kinds of craft products contributed to the growth of trade in these products. This phenomenon is another factor

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<sup>3</sup> The migration was initiated by Randall Borman, a son of Americans, employees of the Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, working in the years 1955–1982 in Dureno. He succeeded in persuading a group of Cofán Indians to move into a new place, more often visited by tourists, and to providing tourist service there (Pasek, 1999; Wesche, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Kersten (1997) writes that “*For many Lacandones, the sale of tradition crafts now is the main source of income. Over half of the community sells pottery, wood carvings and necklaces at Na Bolom (in the cultural centre of the Lacandones in San Cristobal de las Chiapas — MS), and bows and arrows at the ruins of Palenque*”.

causing the increase of spatial mobility among the inhabitants of some areas in Latin America. The souvenirs are more and more often traded by their producers, and the craftsmen selling their produce, brought from the natal villages, or made on place, before the eyes of the purchasers, can be often seen in the streets of main cities and the known tourist centres. The programs of tours organised by travel agencies frequently include visits to craft workshops, as well as participation in the production process itself — classes of weaving or pottery making.

Trade in folk craft goods coming from Mexico, Guatemala, and the Andean countries has nowadays an international dimension, and it is often being organised by the representatives of the respective ethnic communities, living in the United States, in Canada, and in numerous European countries. Latin American craftsmen would often emphasise that they send their products directly to individual buyers in various countries of the world. These buyers are either tourists, who had visited the workshop of a craftsman some time before, or the acquaintances of these tourists. Thus, for instance, producers of souvenirs of balsa wood, owners of workshops and shops in Baños in Ecuador, send their products to Venezuela, Colombia, United States, and Europe, the craftsmen from the township of Guano near Riobamba have the regular customers of their rugs and tapestries in the United States of America, and the craftsmen from the small town of Pujilí near Latacunga, who paint pictures on leather (*pinturas de tigua*) and produce painted furniture, also send their products directly abroad. Undoubtedly, though, they sell most of their produce at the Indian markets in various localities in Ecuador. Some of them, especially the Mestizos, would usually take advantage of the service offered by intermediaries, while Indians would more often go with their products to Quito and to other bigger towns, as well as to the more known Indian markets in Otavalo or Saquisilí (Lisocka-Jaegermann, Makowski, Skoczek, 1999; Skoczek, 1999).

The trade journeys of the craftsmen take place mainly during the tourist season, while those of the intermediaries — also in the periods preceding Christmas time or Easter, when the demand in cities increases. It appears that the growing interest of the inhabitants of the cities, particularly the ones belonging to the so-called middle class in folk crafts (furniture, ceramics, plaiting, rugs, tapestries, etc.) is to an extent associated with the mimicking of the behaviour patterns of the Northern American and European tourists, visiting Latin American countries.

#### MIGRATIONS OF PERSONS PROFESSIONALLY INVOLVED IN THE TOURIST SECTOR

The development of alternative tourism is accompanied by the increase of the number of regional, and first of all — of the local travel agencies. They specialise in organisation of various forms of active leisure, and also provide

services to people interested in a variety of forms of advanced tourism<sup>5</sup>. The employees of these offices are oftentimes immigrants, originating from large urban centres or traditional tourist centres. Some of them come from abroad. Many work only seasonally.

An intense mobility of people dealing professionally with tourist services is observed in places where ecotourism in national parks and other protected areas, established in sparsely populated regions takes place. This results both from the lack of local workforce with adequate skills (guides, drivers, aeroplane pilots, jungle lodge employees), and from the seasonal character of the tourist traffic.

Other people active in tour organisation in the areas mentioned above are the employees of the research stations, belonging to the foreign non-governmental organisations, or university foundations, that is — people staying only temporarily within a given country. Such centres offer also employment to the graduates of the domestic universities or to the students taking their professional exercises or working practices. Some of the research stations conduct, as well, the activity aiming at the preparation of the local population, first of all the members of the Indian communities, to provision of tourist service. This may consist in courses for the “native guides” (*guias nativos*), and in the assistance in organisation of the short stays of small tourist groups by a given community (construction of small hotels, preparation of meals, tracing of tourist routes so as to make it possible to get acknowledged with the local plant and animal world, as well as with the traditional agriculture, gathering, fishing, and hunting).

#### TOURISM AND THE INCREASE OF SPATIAL MOBILITY OF POPULATION — FINAL REMARKS

The literature devoted to the development of tourism in Latin America indicates frequently the significance of this process for the economic activation of the coastal areas. It is namely within the coastal areas where the best known tourist centres visited by foreign as well as domestic tourists con-

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<sup>5</sup> Thus, for instance, in Baños, one of the more known tourist centres in Ecuadorian Andes, called “the gates to the Amazon”, there is more than a dozen travel agencies, which organise climbing excursions to the peaks of Tungurahua and El Altar, reaching more than 5,000 m a.s.l., rafting down the rivers of Patate and Pastaza, and also single-day or longer trips to the Amazon. Similar numbers of travel offices (both branches of the companies seated in Quito and local agencies) are located in the tourist centres within the Amazon: in Tena, the capital of the province of Napo, and in the small settlement of Misahuallí, situated nearby. During the 1990s in Oaxaca in Mexico travel agencies were established, dealing with organisation of excursions along the new tourist routes crossing the Indian townships and villages, whose inhabitants undertake the activities aiming at promotion of cultural values among tourists. One of the most interesting proposals of this type is the initiative of the Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca — “a grassroot organization of 16 villages is offering ecological and cultural tours to six different villages in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca and six in the Mixteca region” (Morales, 1998).

centrate. A rapid increase of population in numerous coastal localities takes place owing to migrations. The seaside resorts became also the destination of the seasonal migrations of rural population dealing with small trade and provision of all kinds of services for tourists. On the other hand, much less attention was paid to the relations between the new forms of tourism and migrations. The development of alternative tourism was most often considered to be one of the factors leading to activation of the local economy through creation of new sources of income and the additional job opportunities for the local population. Still, the experiences to date, connected with the development of the new tourist areas, brings evidence that the process involves also a large share of the population coming from the outside. Creation of an even modest tourist infrastructure, and, first of all, the adequate promotion of tourist attractions, are beyond the capacities of the local communities. The representatives of the non-governmental organisations, active in promotion of the local development, frequently emphasise the difficulties in encouraging the local population to undertake joint projects of establishment of accommodation infrastructure and organisation of tourist stays. Provision of tourist services, as well as production and sale of souvenirs, have quite rarely the character of a concerted common actions, and much more often are done by just some of the inhabitants of the tourist areas or of the areas located close to the transport routes leading to such areas. That is why alternative tourism leads to an increased spatial mobility and the increased range of migrations, and to the differentiation of the time and objectives of the seasonal and short-term movements. It is, likewise, a factor encouraging the settlement of newcomers from other regions of the world, in the countries of Latin America. This especially applies to the North Americans and Europeans, treating provision of tourist services as the main or one of the important sources of revenue. Migrations of this kind have still relatively limited dimensions, but are, nevertheless, a phenomenon noticed in many countries of the region, both those, in which tourism is the most important sector of economy, and those, in which expansion of the tourist infrastructure and promotion of tourist assets became a matter of attention only a dozen or so years ago.

Undertaking of further studies of interrelations between the development of tourism and various forms of migration behaviour of the population of Latin America is of importance for the explanation of the socio-economic and cultural changes observed first of all within the rural areas, being the those the object of interest of contemporary tourists.

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