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The Ethics of Tourism: Determining the Fundamental Moral Issue, Part II

In order to determine the postulate of ethics in tourism, it is necessary to systematically establish and analyze a group of issues first as part of a philosophical and theological reflection on the moral value of man and his actions. These issues include both general questions concerning the very foundation of the judgment of this kind of human activity, as well as the many specific problems that arise in the relationships and interactions that result from planning and realizing touristic aims. These relationships are primarily personal. However, from a moral point of view, the relationship between the tourist and his reason for traveling, which employees of the tourism industry largely influence, also exists. For, different and specific kinds of relationships arise depending on the type of tourism in which a person participates

Key words: tourism, travel, ethics, morality.

The Moral Issue of Interpersonal Relationships in Tourism

Tourism fulfills a social role and is an arena in which man realizes his social nature, since tourism creates many situations in which man confirms his need for others in order to function as an individual. Tourism also makes it possible for people to either establish or strengthen interpersonal relationships because tourism provides opportunities for people to meet each other and learn to live and cooperate with each other. Numerous interpersonal relationships can result from tourism. These relationships involve tourists and

their relationship with each other, with the local inhabitants of tourist destinations, and with employees who work in the field of tourism.

Most people meet each other coincidentally and occasionally when pursuing their mutual touristic goals. Tourists interact not only with members of their small tour group, but also individuals who they have yet to meet. These encounters can become an occasion for tourists and those whom they meet to realize many common goals and form deeper relationships. At the same time, however, these encounters can provoke organizational and ethical problems. Relationships between tourists involve a number of specific circumstances.¹ In a group of tourists, there is usually a “leader” whose moral responsibility is always greater. This person can be the tour guide, a resident, or even one of the participants. A member of a tour group who is not culturally inclined and is motivated by fashion, social coercion, or a desire to simply be entertained can make tourism, particularly cultural tourism, difficult for the other participants.²

Tourism almost always involves forming relationships with the local people. However, tourists and “natives” can become involved in a number of unethical activities and attitudes. For this reason, the postulate in tourism ethics must assume certain obligations on the part of both parties. Tourists are primarily obliged to respect the locality’s just laws, customary norms, and traditions. The *Global Code of the Ethics of Tourism* (abbreviated hereafter as *Global Code*) states that “[t]he understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognize their worth.”³ Consequently, the *Global Code* continues, stating: “Tourism activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and in respect for their laws, practices and customs.”⁴ The *Global Code* also emphasizes that, “[w]hen traveling, tourists and visitors should not commit any criminal act or any act

¹ Cfr. B. Tołłoczko, “Socjologia pociągu” – wprowadzenie do badań nad interakcjami między podróżnymi, “Folia Turistica” 2016, no. 40, pgs. 85-96.

² Cfr. K. Buczkowska, E. Malchrowicz-Moško, *Etyczne dylematy turystyki kulturowej*, “Turystyka Kulturowa” 2012, no. 12, pg. 42.

³ Art. 1.1.

⁴ Art. 1.2.

considered criminal by the laws of the country visited and abstain from any conduct felt to be offensive or injurious by the local populations, or likely to damage the local environment; they should refrain from all trafficking in illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products and substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national regulations.”⁵ Sometimes tourists can have an unethical paternalistic attitude toward local inhabitants and assume that they (the tourists) are better (wealthier) and superior to the locals.⁶

It is the local inhabitants’ fundamental obligation to be hospitable, friendly, kind, and cordial toward guests. This rule also pertains to hotel employees and those who work for tour agencies. The basic principles that they should abide by are: polite and friendly service; keeping guests informed; respecting guests and maintaining a friendly atmosphere; understanding others, which is essential in establishing contact with guests and skillfully engaging in conversation; a readiness to help; and offering additional services.⁷ The *Global Code* states that “[t]he host communities, on the one hand, and local professionals, on the other, should acquaint themselves with and respect the tourists who visit them and find out about their lifestyles, tastes and expectations; the education and training imparted to professionals contribute to a hospitable welcome.”⁸ The mutual relationship between tourists and local inhabitants is a separate issue. According to the *Global Code*, “[t]ourism policies should be applied in such a way as to help to raise the standard of living of the populations of the regions visited and meet their needs; the planning and architectural approach to and operation of tourism resorts and accommodation should aim to integrate them, to the extent possible, in the local economic and social fabric; where skills are equal, priority should be given to local manpower.”⁹ Realizing these standards is not always easy in practice when the locals compete excessively for tourism.

Interpersonal relationships also occur between tourists, employees, and employers who work in the tourist industry. The *Global Code* states the following about this issue:

⁵ Art. 1.5.

⁶ Por. A. Sancewicz-Kliś, *Turystyka odpowiedzialna w wymiarze lokalnym i globalnym*, [in:] *Turystyka i zdrowie*, A. Mazur [ed.], Warsaw 2011, pg. 97.

⁷ Cfr. J. Adamowicz, G. Wolak, *Jak być hotelarzem?* Cracow 2004, pg. 8.

⁸ Art. 1.3.

⁹ Art. 5.2.

The fundamental rights of salaried and self-employed workers in the tourism industry and related activities, should be guaranteed under the supervision of the national and local administrations, both of their States of origin and of the host countries with particular care [...] Salaried and self-employed workers in the tourism industry and related activities have the right and the duty to acquire appropriate initial and continuous training; they should be given adequate social protection; job insecurity should be limited so far as possible; and a specific status, with particular regard to their social welfare, should be offered to seasonal workers in the sector.¹⁰

The uniqueness of tourism is that, while tourists enter into relationships with each other and the local inhabitants of the regions that they visit, the first person with whom tourists interact is the service provider, the person who organizes the tour, or employees of the tourism industry. Therefore, tourism ethics must also include rules for operating tourist enterprise since a concrete person who is responsible for his actions is always involved. In this way, there is neither a vague responsibility on the part of the enterprise, nor the collective responsibility of its employees.

The Tourist Relationship – Tourist Enterprise

Tour companies provide services such as organizing excursions, a complex program of events, ticket brokerage, accommodations, tour information, and services provided by tour guides and residents. In order to obtain these services, a tourist must enter into a contract with the tour company. This relationship, however, can involve many ethical issues and even dilemmas that the representative of the tour company and his client must face.

In tourism, an entrepreneur's desire to profit pushes him to produce the most effective advertising for his services¹¹ rather than a product, since tourism's aim is to provide services rather than concrete goods. These services are, among other things: accommodations, food, guides, insurance, sightseeing, information, etc. Unlike material goods, services cannot be stored. The provision of services occurs when the services are rendered.¹² The consumer – otherwise understood as

¹⁰ Art. 9.1, 9.2.

¹¹ Cfr. M. Dębowska-Mróż, M. Kapciak, *Reklama w turystyce w świetle badań ankietowych – aspekty etyczne*, "Autobusy: technika, eksploatacja, systemy transportowe" 2016, no. 6, pg. 1663.

¹² Cfr. A. Anszperger, *Etyka zawodowa w turystyce*, "Ekonomia i Prawo" 6(2010), pg. 462.

the tourist—appears immediately at the place of consumption (hotel, restaurant, excursion, etc.). Therefore, it is impossible to “test” this service or repair it. The consumer simply becomes richer in experience, which will enable him to make a more conscious choice in the future. Conversely, an entrepreneur’s abuse of a customer’s trust incurs future losses.

According to Anszperger, tour companies can act unethically in the following areas: the information they provide about the tourist location and quality, meaning the standard of benefits; partial or total failure to provide the services listed in the contract; an unjust contract; asymmetrical risk; as well as a so-called “one-way ticket.”¹³ All of these, however, occur on when a company does not provide the services that it advertises.¹⁴ In this way, the tourist is either deliberately misled by the person who organized the tour or by an intermediary,¹⁵ or the agency deliberately says nothing about circumstances that would dissuade the tourist from purchasing the vacation package. Sometimes the organizer does not verify the conditions before selling the vacation package, and sometimes opinions about hotels and tourist locations are presented only based on the opinions of others.¹⁶ This also takes place when tour programs tend not to reflect what the organizer declares, and the organizer considers as taboo the clients’ rights, freedom to revoke participation, and insurance coverage.¹⁷

In some situations, clients have exceedingly high expectations. In addition, sometimes the services provided are offered in an environment undergoing social, political, and geographical changes. Consequently, alterations to the tour program are not always the organizer’s fault. Nevertheless, it is necessary to determine the fundamental ethical principles according to which a tour company operates. To this end, entities are making more and more effort to determine the moral standards that those who work in the tourism industry should follow.

Ethics

¹³ Cfr. *ibid.*, pg. 464.

¹⁴ For example, these discrepancies may pertain to the standard of the accommodations or services provided, the hotel location (distance from the beach, ski lift, neighborhood [factories], busy roads, sewage treatment plant), location of the room itself (e.g. view of a parking lot or hotel warehouse), food (e.g. hotel restaurant, meal hours, customer service of waiters).

¹⁵ Multimedia techniques support these types of activities.

¹⁶ Cfr. K. Korbiel, *Przejawy zachowań naśladowczych wśród uczestników forum dyskusyjnego o tematyce turystycznej*, “Folia Turistica” 2016, no. 40, pgs. 99-118.

¹⁷ Cfr. M. Janocha, *Ochrona praw konsumenta będącego stroną umowy o imprezę turystyczną*, “Studia z Zakresu Prawa, Administracji i Zarządzania” 2013, vol. 4, pg. 284.

Professional ethics appears here in the form of institutional regulations (codes, oaths, and pledges) as well as norms formulated as either casual individual propositions or an ordered set of postulates.¹⁸

Sometimes state institutions attempt to intercede in order to enforce certain ethical standards. State intervention, however, is not good in the field of tourism just as in any other area of the economy. Although touristic enterprise has its own unique features, it functions just like any other enterprise where good laws that act as a framework and protect against financial and accounting fraud are necessary.¹⁹ This is why tourism ethics also pertain to the deontology of other professions such as accounting.²⁰

Moral questions also arise regarding the model of the tourism industry. Some people unambiguously criticize the tourism industry's excessive monopoly, but this is an oversimplification of the situation. Competition within the market certainly promotes the quality of services. However, the consumer himself is sometimes guided to choose a certain tour agency based on its size, reputation, and the scope and range of its offices' activities. The monopoly that travel agencies, hotels, resorts, etc. have in the market favors unethical activities of these businesses, on the one hand, yet is provoked by the clients themselves, on the other.

Tour industry representatives are always the concrete people with whom clients engage, whether this person be an instructor, a guide, a tour guide, or a resident. Ultimately, these individuals are responsible for the "ethicalness" or "unethicalness" of their actions. All activities connected with tourism services are subject to moral evaluation, beginning with the organizer's obligation to ensure the tourists' safety. The basic ethical criteria of all employees who work in the tourist industry are reliability and professionalism, while the fundamental principle of a tour company should be personalization. The *Global Code* states:

Tourism professionals have an obligation to provide tourists with objective and honest information on their places of destination and on the conditions of travel, hospitality and stays; they should ensure that the contractual clauses proposed to their customers are readily understandable as to the nature, price and quality of the services they commit

¹⁸ Cfr. K. Parzych, P. Czapliński, *Etyka w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem turystycznym*, [in:] Географія та туризм, Б. Яценко (ed.), Київ 2007, pg. 167.

¹⁹ Cfr. A. Irzyńska, R. Irzyński, *Oszustwa w dokumentacji finansowo księgowej dotyczące też przedsiębiorstw turystycznych*, [in:] *Turystyka i zdrowie...*, pg. 65.

²⁰ Cfr. *Code of Ethics in Accounting*, www.skwp.pl.

themselves to providing and the financial compensation payable by them in the event of a unilateral breach of contract on their part.²¹

Professions related to the tourism industry are a form of service. In a particular way, tour directors and tour guides are obligated to be honest and willing to serve others. Their task is: to guide tourists, take care of them, and provide them with knowledge during their travels.²² These individuals are teachers, caretakers, and educators. For this reason, they should have many personal qualities such as: good reflexes, self-control, the ability to quickly connect facts, consistency in their actions, energy, an ability to observe many things at once, and a caring instinct.²³ The guide's knowledge should be assessed in ethical terms, and incompetence in a guide should be considered a sin. A guide must be knowledgeable about geography, history, nature, and culture and also have certain moral principles and attitudes. Interestingly, certification programs for tour guides put more emphasis on knowledge and skills (e.g., working in a group) and completely omit addressing ethical issues.²⁴

The reliability of printed guides and tour publications is a separate ethical problem. The *Global Code* states that

[t]he press, and particularly the specialized travel press and the other media, including modern means of electronic communication, should issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists; they should also provide accurate and reliable information to the consumers of tourism services.²⁵

A variety of publications and guides influence tourists' relationship to the destination, which is mostly nature and cultural sites and goods, which is discussed in the following section.

The Relationship to the Tourist Destination

Ethics

Tourism always involves the natural environment in some way and enables individuals to have contact with nature and to discover its

²¹ Art. 6.1.

²² Cfr. A. Stasiak, R. Wiluś, *Analiza form i programów kształcenia przewodników turystycznych i pilotów wycieczek*, in: *Etyka przewodników turystycznych i pilotów wycieczek*, Cracow 2010, pg. 81.

²³ Cfr. A. Mazur, M. Bekta, *Znaczenie współczesnego krajoznawstwa dla rozwoju turystyki kwalifikowanej*, in: *Turystyka i zdrowie...*, pg. 57.

²⁴ Cfr. A. Stasiak, R. Wiluś, *Analiza form i programów kształcenia przewodników turystycznych i pilotów wycieczek...*, pgs. 84-88.

²⁵ Cfr. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, art. 6.6.

beauty.²⁶ Direct contact with nature through tourism can lead people into contact with God. As man contemplates the created world, he can also discover God (see Wisdom 13:5). A tourist destination may also be a cultural landmark. Orienting tourism toward these aims raises certain moral problems depending on the type of tourism.

Tourism ethics will always involve the issue of ecology. The contemporary teachings of the Catholic Church dedicate a lot of attention to the topic of nature.²⁷ In the document *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Tourism*, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People notes the relationship between tourism and nature.²⁸ The *Declaration from Cape Town* (2002) and the *Declaration from Kerala* (2008) extensively discuss the ethical problems associated with tourism and the natural world. All of these statements are aptly summarized in the following from the *Global Code*:

All the stakeholders in tourism development should safeguard the natural environment with a view to achieving sound, continuous and sustainable economic growth geared to satisfying equitably the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.²⁹

This, however, does not concern only the narrow issue of tourists respecting the natural environment, but also, for example, the issue of building hotels and everything involved in tourism infrastructure (ski lifts, railway lines, highways) in specific locations. The *Global Code* also says the following on this issue:

Tourism infrastructure should be designed and tourism activities programmed in such a way as to protect the natural heritage composed of ecosystems and biodiversity and to preserve endangered species of wildlife.³⁰

²⁶ Cfr. J. Horowski, *Turystyka w chrześcijańskiej edukacji ekologicznej*, "Pedagogia Christiana" 2011, no. 2, pg. 218.

²⁷ Cfr. Francis, Encyclical: *Laudato Si* (Vatican City, 05.24.2015). Cfr. also: J. Pociask-Karteczka, *Przyroda w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, [in:] *Przyroda, geografia, turystyka w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, M. Ostrowski, I. Sołjan (eds.), Cracow 2007, pgs. 65-86.

²⁸ "Tourist activity has a very close relation with nature. Immersed in a daily life dominated by technology, tourists wish to have direct contact with nature, to enjoy the beauty of landscapes, to learn about the habitat of animals and plants, even by subjecting themselves to effort and risks. Nature basically constitutes the ideal place for starting and developing tourism."

²⁹ Art. 3.1.

³⁰ Art. 3.4.

In this sense, people often morally object when they see that the desire to make a certain region more attractive to tourists depletes the region's natural resources.

Responsibility also entails minimizing tourism's negative impact on culture. Tourists' disrespectful behavior toward cultural landmarks and goods, especially and even more when it devastates these cultural goods through wear and tear, should arouse ethical reservations. According to the *Global Code*, "Tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations; particular care should be devoted to preserving and upgrading monuments, shrines and museums as well as archaeological and historic sites which must be widely open to tourist visits."³¹ It is important to note, however, that one should not give into the other extreme by isolating natural resources and cultural goods from tourists. On the contrary, they should be made widely available. Even more, access to cultural sights and monuments under private ownership or guardianship should be granted with all due respect to the rights of the owners or to the religious worship of certain places, unless access infringes upon the requirements of worship.³²

Today the line demarcating tourism in nature and cultural tourism is becoming blurred because both forms of tourism are connected, and both have an emotional element to them.³³ While the very definition of "cultural tourism" is positive and valuable, it is no longer possible to consider the value of tourism based on "ranking" different museums, whether one experiences closer and deeper contact with inhabitants, blends in in a crowd of natives, gets to know and follow their way of life, and assimilates the atmosphere of a place.³⁴ This very fact demonstrates that even cultural tourism can involve a whole range of ethical dilemmas,³⁵ and other specific types of tourism such as: ethnic tourism, event tourism, popular culture, cultural heritage tourism,

Ethics

³¹ Art. 4.2. Por. also: B. Holderna-Mielcarek, *Zarządzanie środowiskowe w przedsiębiorstwie turystycznym*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Handlu i Usług w Poznaniu," no. 16, pgs. 89-104.

³² Cfr. *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. Art. 4.2.

³³ Cfr. K. Fiedorowicz, *Zwiększanie atrakcyjności turystycznej Polski*, [in:] *Turystyka i zdrowie...*, pg. 152.

³⁴ Cfr. A. Stasiak, *Kultura a turystyka – wzajemne relacje*, "Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego," <http://dSPACE.uni.lodz.pl:8080/xmlui/handle/11089/3444>, pgs. 2-3.

³⁵ E. Malchrowicz-Moško describes these dilemmas in more depth in the following article: *Turystyka kultury wysokiej w świetle dylematów etycznych*, "Turystyka

religious tourism, dark tourism, slum tourism, and sex tourism can involve certain dilemmas. Contemporary tourists do not always know why they visit certain places.³⁶

The Moral Issue of Specific Types of Travel

Different types of tourism depend on the tourists' relationship to the destinations to which they travel. These types of tourism can be further divided into different categories. Each type of tourism deserves to be analyzed separately because each entails specific moral problems. To this end, it is important to determine if travel occurs in a group or individually, for the short or long term, if the tourists will remain in one location or travel around, and whether they will travel within their own countries or abroad. Certain specific ethical problems can arise from whether a person participates in individual tourism or an organized tour, and these problems even depend on what form the tourism takes: hiking, skiing, cycling, canoeing, sailing, horseback riding, diving, speleology, climbing, or extreme sports. Depending on the type of activities involved, certain moral norms exist for such tourist events as: rallies, flights, canoeing, expeditions, cruises, bivouacs, camps, hikes, and traveling camps.

The names of specific types of tourism reveal that they involve certain moral aspects: responsible tourism, sustainable tourism, ecotourism, proper tourism, soft tourism, solidarity tourism, fair-trade tourism,³⁷ and qualified tourism.³⁸ The *Global Code* states that "Nature tourism and ecotourism are recognized as being particularly conducive to enriching and enhancing the standing of tourism, provided they

i Rekreacja" 11(2014), no. 1, pgs. 16-22. Por. also: K. Buczkowska, E. Malchrowicz-Moško, *Etyczne dylematy turystyki kulturowej...*, pgs. 44-51.

³⁶ This is the kind of tourism (where a tourist focuses on observing what he encounters) is sometimes referred to as contemplative, while the other (where a tourist enters on an expedition for a specific purpose) is referred to as methodical. Cfr. A. Mazur, M. Bekta, *Znaczenie współczesnego krajoznawstwa dla rozwoju turystyki kwalifikowanej...*, pg. 52.

³⁷ Cfr. A. Sancewicz-Kliś, *Turystyka odpowiedzialna w wymiarze lokalnym i globalnym...*, pg. 96; K. Buczkowska, E. Malchrowicz-Moško, *Etyczne dylematy turystyki kulturowej...*, pg. 43; M. Kazimierzczak, *Turystyka zrównoważona synonimem turystyki zorientowanej etycznie*, "Studia Periegetica" 2009, no. 3, pg. 9.

³⁸ Qualified tourism requires physical and mental preparation as well as knowledge, skills, and an ability to use specialized tourist equipment. Por. A. Mazur, M. Bekta, *Turystyka kwalifikowana a formy wypoczynku*, in: *Turystyka i zdrowie...*, pg. 135

respect the natural heritage and local populations and are in keeping with the carrying capacity of the sites.”³⁹ Therefore, there are forms and types of tourism that are considered good by definition. Other forms of tourism betray that they are ethically doubtful by their very name. Forms of tourism that are good in and of themselves exist, but the manner in which they are implemented is questionable.⁴⁰ This demonstrates how broad the issue of ethics in tourism is and how tourists, those who organize tourist events, and the communities that welcome and receive tourists are confronted with many tasks. The problem that remains is to educate people in being responsible within the field of tourism, which can be done by creating wise educational programs and through the mutual impact that tourists have on each other.

The specific moral issues connected with tourism are exceptionally broad and continually expanding in proportion to the development of human activity. The outline above points out only directions for specific ethical issues, the aim of which is to draft an outline of “ethical” tourism and define the characteristics of an “ethically” touristic environment as well as the criteria for the “ethicalness” of the tourism industry. Being guided by ethical standards is beneficial to tourists, since it enables them to achieve the aims of tourism. Recognizing ethical principles and respecting them in the enterprise of tourism not only serves tourists, but also the industry itself,⁴¹ because it increases trust in this industry. In the final account, the state and its economy (as well as the countries that send tourists and the countries that host them) benefit when a tour company is guided by ethical principles. Ethics in tourism can be a kind of “medicine” for many negative effects of touristic activity, the tourism industry, as well as everyone who makes a living from tourism. Most of all, however, ethics of tourism makes it possible to recognize and realize the objective aims of tourism.

Ethics

³⁹ Art. 3.6.

⁴⁰ For example, making people pay to enter a location that should be open and free to the public, such as places of worship. Por. E. Malchrowicz-Moško, *Turystyka kultury wysokiej w świetle dylematów etycznych...*, pg. 18.

⁴¹ Por. J. Jermacz, J. Dolatkowska, *Możliwości i korzyści wynikające z zastosowania kategorii moralnych i etycznych w przedsiębiorstwie turystycznym*, “Edukacja dla Bezpieczeństwa. Przegląd Naukowo-Metodyczny,” 9:2015 nos. 369-377; J. Adamowicz, G. Wolak, *Jak być hotelarzem...*, pg. 13.

O ETYKĘ W TURYSTYCE. PRÓBA USTALENIA ZASADNICZEJ PROBLEMATYKI MORALNEJ (II)

Postulat etyki w turystyce domaga się najpierw sporządzenia systematycznej grupy zagadnień, które następnie mogłyby być poddane szczegółowej analizie w ramach filozoficznej i teologicznej refleksji nad wartością moralną człowieka i jego działania. Zagadnienia te obejmują zarówno problematykę ogólną, dotyczącą fundamentów oceny tego typu ludzkiej aktywności, jak i liczne problemy szczegółowe, jakie wiążą się z relacjami powstającymi w związku z planowaniem i realizacją celów turystycznych. Relacje te mają charakter nade wszystko osobowy, ale dla oceny moralnej ważne są również odniesienia turysty do celu wyprawy, kształtowane w znacznej mierze przez pracowników branży turystycznej. Specyficzne relacje powstają także na bazie określonego rodzaju podróży.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, podróże, etyka, moralność.

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