

19/09/2023

Pathways to post-capitalist tourism



Investigators of the TUDISTAR group (UAB), the Wageningen University and Research (Netherlands) and the University of the Balearic Islands, all specialized in the study of tourism, have published an article where they analyse the consequences of the expansion of the current tourism business and propose to transcend the capitalist model and transform it into a post-capitalist one through the proposals of the sociologist Erik Olin Wright.

Leisure and tourism on a daily basis, shared, committed, regional and dedicated to care. Source: Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa

The group of authors who have published this article are specialized in the study of tourism. We identify the expansion of the tourism business with planetary effects, colliding with the limits of comfort and climatic survival, non-renewable energy consumption or social coexistence. COVID-19 proved our vulnerability, completely suspended tourism and made us consider, momentarily, the need to change our socioeconomic model.

In the first place, our analysis starts from the fact that these limitations have to do with characteristics of capitalism, such as considering the economy as a system independent of society and the physical and biological environment. From there, we build on Erik Olin Wright's proposal to transcend this system by adopting post-capitalist measures.

Secondly, we embrace the idea that tourism does not have to be a capitalist activity. Thus, we can design forms of organization from the integration of the economy, society and the biosphere. This forces us to define how to transform tourism, within environmental limits, human rights and well-being, democracy, etc.

Our article raises, thirdly and lastly, the transposition of Erik Olin Wright's proposals to tourism, to propose pathways to post-capitalist tourism. We accompany each of them with examples of success, to reinforce their practical potential. First, to "dismantle" capitalist tourism with regulatory reforms, with the example of the regulation of tourist use that the Barcelona City Council carried out in its day. A second line of work, "taming" tourism through the use of counterbalancing institutions, such as the example of private initiative social tourism in Brazil, or unionism that proposes labour criteria for the choice of tourist destinations in the US.

A third is to "resist" with social organization outside of the market and the State, such as community tourism in El Salvador, or the management of public use of a Majorcan natural site in the hands of an NGO. Finally, the line called "fleeing" from capitalism represents refuge in a micro-alternative, such as the appropriation of a hotel in Argentina by the workers.

The article presented develops these arguments to broaden the horizons of the academic debate on what to do with tourism. On a scientific level, the *Tourism Geographies* magazine, a leader in this matter, disseminates the debates in the International Geographical Union. But our claim to political advocacy impels us to disseminate the results in Catalan and Spanish, in collaboration with Alba Sud, by publishing this report in in a more informative way and other languages:

Fletcher, R., Blanco-Romero, A., Blázquez-Salom, M., Cañada, Murray Mas, E., Sekuloba, F. (2021). **Caminos hacia un turismo poscapitalista**. Barcelona: Alba Sud Editorial, Informes en Contraste, núm. 18. ISBN: 978-84-09-33932-7. Available online: <https://www.albasud.org/publicacion/ca/104/caminos-hacia-un-turismo-post-capitalista>

All that remains is to make ourselves available to the whole of society to deepen the study of the socio-territorial dynamics of tourism, which is the objective of the TUDISTAR group at the UAB.

Asunción Blanco-Romero (1), Macià Blázquez-Salom (2)

(1) Department of Geography, TUDISTAR research group, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

(2) Department of Geography, Universitat de les Illes Balears.

References

Fletcher, Robert; Blanco-Romero, Asunción; Blázquez-Salom, Macià; Cañada, Ernest; Murray, Ivan i Sekulova, Filka (2023). **Pathways to post-capitalist tourism**. *Tourism Geographies*, 25:2-3, 707-728. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2021.1965202>