CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM*

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Abstract: *International tourism, both in terms of economic development and globalization, brings positive, but also negative aspects, such as cultural and communication barriers. The information given in the paper show that different constraints may become an obstacle in the tourist destination development. The authors identify and summarize those constraints, cultural and communication barriers, related to international tourism. Despite the fact that barriers can be managed, reduced or even completely removed with adequate destination management, the findings of this paper indicate that there is a need to further improve cultural and communication competency in tourist destinations.*

Keywords: *Cultural barrier, communication barrier, international tourism, tourist destination*

1. INTRODUCTION

International tourism is one of the most dynamic economic activities in the world. UNWTO (The World Tourism Organization) defines international tourism as inbound tourism plus outbound tourism, the activities of resident visitors outside the country of reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips and the activities of non-resident visitors within the country of reference on inbound tourism trips [1]. Many countries attributed their public revenues to tourism. Likewise, countries that do not yet have enough developed international tourism plan to develop their economies with investment in tourist activities and offers. Therefore, we can say that today's tourism belongs to activities and processes that can positively affect a given country. Of course, like every process, it can also have negative aspects. An increasing number of people are involved in tourism movements, as a result of economic factors and social attitudes, as well as the availability of leisure time. International tourism had an impact of an increase in tourist movements, but also was affected by certain changes conditioned by globalization and its influence on tourism, and on tourist destinations.

International tourism as the contemporary tourism is accompanied by globalization, but also by certain negative segments such as cultural and communication barriers, that can become an obstacle in the tourist destination development. Adequate destination management enables the reduction or removal of cultural and communication barriers, but also the understanding of the local population and its culture, which today represents one of the motives of travel. Cultural and communication barriers are present in international tourism today and stand out as a priority challenge that tourism stakeholders and management faces. Understanding, educating and respecting the culture of the local population should become a trend of international tourism. Inadequate destination management leads to the emergence of various cultural and communi-

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cation barriers that need to be eliminated in international tourism. Aim of the paper is to indicate that there is a need for further improvement of cultural and communication competency in tourist destinations, which can be achieved through the development of adequate destination management.

2. THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Globalization is closely linked to international tourism, but also to the travel and habits of tourists that are constantly changing. Globalization brings changes not only in the habits of tourists, but also in the overall market. The diffusion of people's experience, but also the movement of goods, is associated with the emergence and expansion of the use of Internet, the media, and social networks. International tourism, apart from the mentioned impacts, affects the pay balance of a particular country, improves international exchanges, relations and standards, develops specific knowledge and skills. International tourism contributes to globalization in the way that creates global tourism cultures and world tourist flows. In addition to positive impacts, the negative effects of international tourism on the destination are also present. Some of the negative impacts of international tourism are often mentioned as the restrictions, barriers. Apart from limiting international tourism, it can affect the area of „gray economy" that can turn into a negative aspect if the destination does not react in a timely manner. Also, the social aspect of tourism is often neglected in under-developed countries where politics does not support social values and socially responsible business. Possible consequence of the exploitation of poor countries is provocative rebellion and dissatisfaction of local population whose needs and values are completely ignored.

International tourism, apart from the mentioned roles and significance, also affects several other segments. These segments are known by the name STEEPLE model, which deals with the following aspects of tourism [2]:
- Socio-cultural aspect,
- Technological aspect,
- Economic aspect,
- Ethical aspect,
- Political aspect,
- Legislative aspect,
- Ecological aspect.

International tourism influences the socio-cultural aspect due to differences in religious convictions, values, traditions, customs, dress, behavior and lifestyle in general. The socio-cultural impact of international tourism influences the changing cultural values and customs of the local population in a particular destination. Negative effects indicate the possibility of creating tensions between tourists and the local population, the possibility of an increase in crime, the destruction of tradition due to commercialization of culture. All of the above is happening due to improper destination management and neglect of socially responsible business. The technological aspect of international tourism involves information and communication technologies that improve information retrieval, purchasing services and networking. It includes numerous reservation systems for carriers, catering and accommodation facilities, and information about the destination in general. Example of the technological aspect is Viator Inc., the leading online travel agency, operating via mobile devices and applications [3]. The economic aspect of international tourism is the introducing of the global market and the intensification of competitive-

ness. There is also an increase in income, employment, integration, connectivity and regional development. As a direct economic aspect, we consider the consumption of tourists in a hotel, restaurant or any other accommodation or service facility. As an indirect economic aspect, we could mention food and beverage outlets, carriers, motorway charging. Ethical aspect of international tourism is: understanding of nations and intercultural communication, emphasizing tolerance, understanding and respecting the nations. The political aspect of international tourism is linked to the government management and the political measures directed towards the tourist destination. The political and legislative aspects are closely related because the politics dictates the legislative framework, unless otherwise decided. These are rules and regulations that relate to: distribution, marketing, provision, investment, transportation and communication. The ecological aspect refers to ecological sustainability, environmental protection and investment in renewable energy resources. The ecological aspect is also related to socially responsible business. It emphasizes the importance of preserving the environment, saving water and energy in large tourist complexes.

The contemporary international tourism is characterized by the strong dominance of Europe, to which even half of the total number of international tourist arrivals and revenues belongs. Nevertheless, regarding Europe, it should be emphasized that a reduction in the international tourism share is also evident, mostly because of new destinations in other parts of the world and accelerated tourism development. An overview of the regional distribution of international tourist arrivals and revenues from international tourism is presented in Table 1.

Area	International tourist arrivals (million)	International tourist arrivals (%)	International tourism revenues (billion USD)	International tourism revenues (%)
Europe	671,7	51	519,2	39
Asia and the Pacific	323,1	24	389,6	29
Americas	210,90	16	326,2	24
Africa	62,7	5	37,3	3
Middle East	58,1	4	67,7	5
World	1326	100	1340	100

Table 1: International tourist arrivals and international tourism revenues in 2017
Source: Independent work of the author on the basis of Tourism Highlights, 2018 Edition,
UNWTO, https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419876.

According to Table 1, Europe is dominant by international tourist arrivals in 2017, which accounts for 51%. Asia and the Pacific follow with 24% and Americas with 16%, while Africa and the Middle East occupy the last places with 5% and 4%. The ascent of Asia in international tourism is the main feature of contemporary tourism development, and the increase has been recorded since the end of the 20th century. Africa and the Middle East lag far behind Asia and Europe, but this can be linked to many barriers that these destinations face. Europe earns the highest revenues from international tourism, but Asia has come closer to it (39% compared to 29%). Americas (North and South America together) are also close with 24% of revenues. The greater revenue share of America is associated with higher purchasing power of tourists visiting this destination. The Middle East and Africa are occupying the last places, both in terms of arrivals and revenues from international tourism. Although Europe has a slower growth dynamic, it still has a steady growth in international tourist arrivals and revenues from international tourism.

3. CATEGORIES OF BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

International tourism is under the constant influence of qualitative and quantitative barriers that negatively affect the tourism development in a particular destination. Numerous experts, scientists and managers were engaged in identifying and defining barriers in international tourism, also in trying to remove them. Barriers to international tourism are a limiting factor for its development, that affect the entire system within the destination: the local community, tourism entities, the way of life, and the development of international tourism in general. In order to properly manage barriers in international tourism, it is necessary to timely identify the barriers, accept their presence, find the causes of barriers, and remove them.

Barriers can basically be divided into [4]:
- barriers affecting individual travelers,
- barriers affecting sectors related to tourism.

The first group of barriers are related to travel abroad, visas, procedures and standards for issuing travel documents, entry and exit taxes, health controls, discriminatory treatment, air traffic regulation, infrastructure conditions and prejudices. The second group includes import policies, licenses, investment procedures and regulations, and barriers regarding the access to information.

Dodds & Butler [5] identify the following general barriers in international tourism: ecological barriers, technological, virtual and political barriers. Considering ecological barriers, the international tourism has a double impact on ecology. First, the tourists' impact on ecology and the second is the tourist organizations' impact on ecology [6]. The environmental impact of tourists is higher if more tourists are concentrated in a small area over a longer period of time, and if the tourism development and leisure time is left to tourists. Tourist organizations influence the environment by changing and adapting the space to the needs of tourist facilities, sports and recreational facilities. The environmental impacts of tourism can create three groups of barriers: physical barriers (pollution of the sea, air and soil), social and cultural (unregulated constructions of small apartments and rooms), and economic barriers (excessive use of resources, where there is a lack of resources for the local population) [7].

The rise of globalization and international tourism, led to rise of technology and virtual reality, which have become an integral part of travel. With the advancement of technology, the needs of tourists have increased, as well as the technological offer in the tourist destination. Thus, today it is almost necessary that destinations have wi-fi points, free internet access, and cultural attractions QR codes [8]. Today's novelty is also virtual glasses that make it possible to find out all the information about the destination [9].

Political barriers in international tourism can be linked to political situations, the visa regime, but also to crises in certain destinations. Sometimes restrictions and travel difficulties are the result of the deliberate policies of certain countries. Motives that cause crisis situations are: political, religious, social, economic, and may also be the desire to destroy the economy of a particular area [10]. These types of barriers are very sensitive and represent one of the hardest to solve. Political and religious motives that cause crimes in destinations have the greatest and long-lasting impact on tourist arrivals. These can be: incidents related to crime, terrorism, wars, civil and political unrest. An example of the political and religious motives is Syria [11]. A similar situation is in Lebanon, where the barrier to tourism development is of a political nature

[12]. European countries have somewhat less barriers, but are still present. Barriers in Malta, as a tourism-dependent country, are associated with too high focus on tourism, and accordingly there are barriers to water and electricity shortages [13]. Barriers in Greece, which is also heavily dependent on international tourism, are much bigger and more difficult to solve, due to poor political decisions and lack of financial resources, as well as constant population revolutions and a drop in the security of international tourists [14]. In addition to political unrest, Greece has a problem with environmental degradation, high pressure on the water supply system and significant pollution of water.

4.   CULTURAL BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Cultural barriers are the most frequent limitations associated with international tourism. Ignoring foreign traditions and customs, disrespect and lack of understanding of the nation, stereotypes and prejudices, are a significant problem today. Prejudice and stereotypes create a number of conflicts in communication. Stereotypes refer to conventional ways of thinking about certain phenomena or people [15]. A stereotype is a positive or negative estimate of the group members or their observed features. They are often negative beliefs, which can and must be changed through education. One of the forms of stereotype is the cultural stereotype, standardized images that have special significance to common members of a particular group of people [16]. Furthermore, prejudices are based on socially accepted stereotypes, most often negative. There are many forms of prejudice such as racism, anti-Semitism, religious intolerance, political and national prejudice, prejudices related to sexual orientation, etc. [17].

Cultural barriers include all restrictions related to discrimination, stereotypes, language, religion, gastronomy, architecture, and restrictions related to norms, customs and traditions, that directly or indirectly affect tourists [18]. Discrimination refers to discrimination on a national, racial or gender basis. There is also a discrimination against the gender structure, where women, for example, are „less valuable" compared to men, and in a particular destination they have less right [19].

In the world today there are about 19 major religions, divided into smaller religious groups. It is estimated that only Christians form about 34,000 smaller religious groups [20]. Each of the existing religious groups has its code of conduct and principles. Precisely in tourism, understanding and respect for other religions and beliefs is very important. This is the most common case of discrimination and cultural barriers in the world. The most common example is the inappropriate dressing of tourists when entering religious institutions, loud conversation or even ridicule.

Gastronomic barriers are present in international tourism, but to a lesser extent from religious barriers. Namely, individual countries consume and serve food that is completely unacceptable to other countries, or is considered unattractive. Such a barrier can become the cause of great conflict by tourists and the local population. There are also interesting examples of specialties in other countries such as worms and insects in Thailand, but also elephants [21]. Gastronomic barriers may also be less diverse in flavors: stronger, hot flavors (Mexico), the addition of dairy products to almost all meals (Ukraine), exotic plants (Brazil, Thailand, and Maldives) [22].

Architectural barriers relate to a vulnerable group of tourists, tourists with reduced mobility or to general obstacles in day-to-day movement. From the beginning of civilization, infrastructure has been carried out in accordance with the needs of healthy people. After the mid-1950s, the

system began to notice architectural barriers and encouraged the investment in removing them [23]. There is a lot of investment in reducing architectural barriers today, especially in hotels and accommodation capacities. Architectural barriers include not only barriers for persons with reduced mobility, but also barriers to infrastructure within the destination, arranging access to attractions, as well as transport [24]. The most common architectural barriers from this group are the unregulated approach to tourist attractions and poor transport infrastructure. Finding a solution for architectural barriers is sole in the hands of the state, local government, and destination management.

Perceptive barriers relate to persons with reduced perception, that is, the lack of measures and indicators that enable the orientation, the identification of places, the sources of danger for everyone, especially for the blind, the visually impaired and the deaf. The main needs of people with vision and hearing disabilities in tourism are [25]:

• clear, detailed, up-to-date and accessible information,
• freedom of movement in space and use of equipment,
• appropriate devices that guarantee orientation,
• appropriate measures to ensure safety,
• adequate tourist guides.

In addition to persons with vision and hearing disabilities, perceptual barriers may also refer to people who have a normal perception, but destinations have not invested enough in general information tables, panels and information for tourists.

5. COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Communication is the process of conveying ideas, thoughts and information [26]. Communication is used to understand and interact between cultures. Without communication, there is neither interaction nor transmission of ideas and the spread of experience. Verbal communication is also the most important form of human communication. Language, as a system of symbols, provides the opportunity to express certain values and social relationships, views of the world, view of the environment and interpersonal relationships. The language has many cultural, ethnic and social functions [27]. From the cultural point of view, it is the basic means of preserving culture and the basic medium for the transfer of culture to new generations. Language helps to establish and preserve a community by „linking" individuals to the community on the basis of a common identity. From a social point of view, language is important for all aspects of human interaction. There is no element of human communication in which there is no culture and language. Cultural aspects of communication derive from cultural systematic knowledge, attitudes, values and beliefs. In communication we distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication. We can still share verbal communication in oral, written and electronic form [28]. Oral communication refers to conversations in which the word is spoken. Written communication refers to letters or reports and documents, while electronic communication refers to e-mail communication (or skype communication, etc.) [29].

Communication barriers occur when a tourist visits the country, and does not understand the language of the local population. English is the language that most of the world's destinations speak or have a minimum of knowledge about. But the problem happens when either a tourist or a local population does not know either a bilateral language, nor a third language, for example, English. Technological advancements certainly help to eliminate communication barriers, but

they are still not fully developed. Thus, there is, for example, Skype Translator, and numerous applications for smartphones [30], but all of these require adequate financial resources, Internet access and translation time.

Tables for basic information about the building, place or attraction are usually written in several languages. Of course, it is almost impossible to translate all the into all languages, therefore this barrier will be very difficult to overcome if there is no close access to the Internet, google translator or similar applications. The same situation occurs in museums, signaling, warning, road signs or B2B relations. The problem also occurs with the websites, as the most common source of information about some destination. They are most often translated into the language of the local population, and additionally in three or four languages more. This is completely unnecessary restriction, because it requires modest financial investment for translation into several more languages. This would enable easier communication, but also easier information for tourists traveling to that destination.

Most often in the world of oral communication there are not many barriers, but the problem arises in non-verbal communication in the business world. Non-verbal communication is the way people communicate without spoken words, intentionally or unintentionally. Problems with non-verbal communication are associated with decoding the message. To decode the message in non-verbal communication, a thorough knowledge of the sender and recipient's culture, situation and circumstances is needed. Non-verbal communication involves: facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, body position, touch and vision. If managers from culturally different countries meet at a business meeting, a barrier may occur if the managers are not familiar with the mutual culture. The business of multinational companies in an international business environment implies quality and efficient management based on the knowledge of different cultural elements. Intercultural approach to management implies promoting intercultural understanding and building business intercultural communication aimed at effective business in international tourism.

6. EFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

There are various tools for reducing cultural and communication barriers in international tourism. Some of them include application of certificates, methods of cultural mediation, education of the local population and encouraging community participation, the promotion of (so-called) pro – poor tourism strategies, etc.

The Halal certificate contains a linguistic, religious, cultural, traditional and health context, and may include products and services. The word „halal" means „allowed". The halal products include: food, cosmetics, medicines, but also general-purpose goods, while halal services include: trade, banking, catering, etc. [31]. The Halal certificate secures the halal quality of products or services that are in accordance with Islamic regulations. Halal products or services fulfill quality attributes and are permitted as such for food consumers of Islamic faith. Also, halal products are acceptable for all ages, they are health-correct, they are present in all areas of the world, and additional control guarantees quality assurance [32]. Halal certification can be obtained by any company that aligns its production with the requirements of halal standards. The process of obtaining certificate is also an integral part of the standard [33]. In Serbia there are about fifty companies that have a Halal certificate, among whom there are: „Mlekara" Subotica, „Dijamant" Zrenjanin, „Sojaprotein", PIK Becej, „Medopromet" Subotica. These companies have

Halal certificate for certain products. Among the hotels, seven hotels in Kopaonik, Zlatibor and Belgrade are in the process of halal certification [34].

Mediation is a method of resolving conflicts in which an expert, neutral person, provides support to the conflicting parties, to resolve the conflict constructively and on mutual benefit [35]. The goal of cultural mediation is to create such a communicative relationship that will help members of other cultures to accept things and situations that at first seemed strange and incomprehensible. In the event of a cultural conflict arising from cultural barriers in the destination, a cultural mediator should immediately take measures to resolve the conflict.

The most important characteristics of cultural mediators are [36]:
- ability to communicate,
- compassion,
- careful and active participation in the conversation,
- knowledge of the country of the local population,
- knowledge of the country of tourists,
- knowledge of cultures, traditions and laws.

The ability to communicate refers to the knowledge of foreign languages, but also to the way of communication. Compassion is closely related to the communication ability, as well as careful and active participation in the conversation. The mediator must be careful in communication, so that the situation would not take on negative aspects, or one side would not feel less important. The importance of knowledge of the local population country, as well as the tourists' country is emphasized, and we associate this with the knowledge of their culture, tradition and laws. The mediator could spot the cause of conflict in a timely manner and solve the conflict as soon as possible. The process of mediation to the conflicting parties enables better acquaintance, freedom from prejudices and stereotypes and constructive thinking directed towards the common good. In practice, various procedures of intercultural mediation are applied, of which the most frequently used are therapeutic and solution-oriented procedures [37]. In addition to formal mediators, there are also informal mediators [38]. Informal mediators do not have the interest of mediators, they are not prepared to be mediators, and their role is often not visible, but it is very subjective and important. Informal mediators are media, friends, relatives, souvenirs, photographs, as well as employees in tourism, other tourists and members of the local community. They affect possible prejudices of tourists, and they can (mostly unconsciously) remove cultural and communication conflicts or barriers.

The education of the local population and community participation is important for the development of tourism, but also in resolving or eliminating cultural and communication barriers. The local population is a very important player in the development of tourism destinations. The local population is aware that using resources and poor management can result in the destruction of existing values in their environment. The presence of tourists in a tourist destination can have positive impacts such as: awakening the pride of one's own past, of tradition, satisfaction with the progress, rising of self-confidence [39]. Likewise, it can also have negative impacts such as: the feeling of taking up own's space, hostility towards tourists, crowds or noise that arises with constant travel movements [40]. The benefits of tourism development are numerous, such as: increasing the local populations' income, ensuring economic independence, stability of the area, building communal infrastructure, encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises. Of course, the disadvantages are also present such as: population displacement, overcrowding of capacity, destruction of natural and cultural resources, impossibility of permanent employment due to the

seasonality of the tourist destination [41]. The education of the local population is a tool for reducing cultural and communication barriers. The education of the local population includes involving them in decision-making, and continuously educating them on new trends that should be adapted. Education could be carried out through the learning of foreign languages, learning the culture of the most frequent tourists, but also providing support to middle and small entrepreneurship.

Tourism has a major impact on the economy at both the global and the local level, therefore, the implementation of poverty reduction goals must be implemented through tourism development strategies [42]. Such strategies encourage an increase in economic and sociocultural benefits for the local population. Pro - poor tourism is the promotion of links between business entities and the local population, in a way that the local population is more involved in the development of tourism [43]. Some of the factors that influence the economic involvement of the local population are: life security, sustainability, political factors, environmental protection, market factors and land ownership in favor of tourism [44].

The development of pro-poor strategies includes interconnected entities such as: business organizations, non-governmental organizations, local governments, associations, local entrepreneurs, artists, farmers, and other members of the local community who deal with informal activities. In this way, no organization is left to its own financial means, but together they make an attractive additional offer with a wide range of products and services. Through joint work, they can achieve the desired goal. The first priority of pro - poor tourism is the poverty rate reduction, and then promoting tourism and social and cultural activities. The table 2 shows the several types of pro - poor tourism strategies:

Strategies focused on economic benefits	Strategies focused on non-economic impacts	Strategies focused on policy/ process reform
Expanding business opportunities for the poor: small enterprises, particularly in the informal sector, often provide the greatest opportunities for the poor	Capacity building, training and empowerment: the poor often lack the skills and knowledge to take advantage of opportunities in tourism.	Building a more supportive policy and planning framework: many governments see tourism as a means to generate foreign exchange rather than to address poverty. The policy framework can inhibit progress in PPT (Pro-Poor Tourism); reform is often needed.
Expanding employment opportunities for the poor: unskilled jobs may be limited and low-paid by international standards, but they are much sought after by the poor	Mitigating the environmental impact of tourism on the poor: tourism can lead to displacement of the poor from their land and/or degradation of the natural resources on which the poor depend.	Promoting participation: the poor are often excluded from decision-making processes and institutions, making it very unlikely that their priorities will be reflected in decisions.
Enhancing collective benefits: collective community income from tourism can be a new source of income, and can spread benefits well beyond the direct earners.	Addressing social and cultural impact of tourism: tourists' behaviour, such as photography and western habits, is often regarded as cultural intrusion. Sex tourism exploits women. Tourism can affect many other social issues, such as health care.	Bringing the private sector into pro-poor partnerships: locally-driven tourism enterprises may require input to develop skills, marketing links, and commercial expertise.

Table 2: Types of pro - poor tourism strategies [45]

Numerous international institutions, directly or indirectly, through their programs or in collaboration with other institutions, give support to the tourism development in order to reduce poverty, with a special emphasis on developing countries. The most important of these are the UN and the World Tourism Organization, within it UNWTO, UNCTAD (The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), ILO (International Labour Organization), UNEP (The *United Nations Environment Programme*) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).

7.   CONCLUSION

International tourism, together with globalization, affects the tourists' needs, changes in the market, trends, but also the local population's way of life. The international tourism is characterized by constant changes and a rapid development of technology, as well as changes in the tourists' needs. In order for the tourist destination to follow all the new trends, it is necessary to adjust and form a quality destination management, as well as socially responsible business. International tourism and globalization bring positive, but also negative aspects, such as cultural and communication barriers.

Cultural and communication barriers in international tourism mean constraints related to ecology, economics, religion, lifestyle, architecture, perception, local population, politics and crime. Cultural and communication barriers in all of these segments can cause great damage that can lead to a reduction in tourists' arrival, but also to the dissatisfaction of the local population. The poverty of the local population in destinations that have high tourism revenues, is the result of inadequate destination management and political decisions.

Cultural and communication barriers can be managed, reduced or even completely removed with adequate management tools. Given the new knowledge that we have, policy implications are that the governments should design or reform the process of education of local population, should encourage intercultural communication, should introduce pro-poor tourism, and should generally create an atmosphere of accepting, understanding and respecting other nations, in order to more effectively reduce the cultural and communication barriers. Cultural and communication barriers are present due to the cultural diversity that tourists and the local population have to accept. Only adequate management of the destination and socially responsible business can reduce the cultural and communication barriers. It is expected that the future research of international tourism will be based on the removal and recognition of cultural and communication barriers, and will form the basis for the future development of international tourism in tourist destinations.

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