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## WEEKEND TOURISM AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

*The article presents the conception of weekend tourism as a cultural phenomenon. The paper defines social functions of weekend tourism and the main stages of its development: the initial stage of weekend tourism, the stage when it becomes an organized leisure time activity, and the stage of its popularization. The article also introduces a classification of weekend tours and major centers for weekend tourism.*

*Key words: weekend tourism, stages of development of weekend tourism, classification of weekend tours, world centers for weekend tourism.*

Weekend tourism is a separate type of tourism. As a cultural phenomenon it deserves considerable attention as it is developing at a rather rapid pace. However, in the world of science this phenomenon has not been researched enough. The development of weekend tourism, its problems and prospects were examined in the scientific works of I. Petrova and V. Kirsanov. A number of scientists, such as O. Beidyk and I. Smal, in particular, stress that the use of tourist resources is necessary when organizing a tourist activity. Yet, these authors do not provide an integral system and theoretical ground for the concept of weekend tourism [1, p. 74].

For a contemporary tourist, traditional trips, where recreation and fitness are combined with a couple of excursions, are not enough. Weekend tourism has considerably expanded the range of tourist services, and it is no longer associated only with ordinary rest. Modern civilization and the tourist industry as its constituent provide people with an opportunity to realize their various motivations. When traveling, tourists have the chance to become witnesses of notable events in the world of sport, culture and art, add to their knowledge of the world and fulfill their cherished dreams.

One of the main tendencies of modern tourism is catering for different needs of tourists, which, in its turn, encourages the integration of different kinds of tourism. Thus, weekend tourism is often represented as a mix of activities, such as recreation, entertainment, pilgrimage, etc., and involves different types of tourism, such as ecological, sports, countryside tourism, and many others. The combination in each case will depend on a certain tourist, their preferences, hobbies and purposes.

The aim of the article is to analyze the concept of weekend tourism as a cultural and social phenomenon. To perform the research, the followings tasks should be fulfilled:

- to define the concept and basic functions of weekend tourism;
- to analyze the basic stages of development of weekend tourism;
- to outline the basic criteria of classification of weekend tours;
- to provide information on the world centers of weekend tourism.

Nowadays, as well as many years ago, humankind thirsts for new impressions, exciting, enigmatic or even dangerous experiences (there are, for example, tourists that travel to

watch the eruption of volcanoes). Such journeys remain in memory as the brightest moments of life because they allow seeing some events that will never take place again, such as ceremonies of coronation and inauguration of heads of the states, sporting competitions, fashion shows, concerts of world stars, festivals, carnivals, and many others.

In our opinion, the definition of a weekend tour can be as follows: a trip that is done over the weekend with the aim of recreation and which integrates other socially oriented kinds of tourism, such as pilgrimage, sports or hiking, which is usually combined with nature oriented types of tourism (rural tourism, ecotourism).

From the public point of view, evolution of weekend tours is very important as it will implement such socially important functions as economic, cognitive, recreational and entertaining, which are the basic functions of tourism. The last three functions have a more subjective character, as a measure of cognitive, recreational and entertaining efficiency for every tourist – visitor of certain events – will be different.

The economic efficiency of developing weekend tourism is indisputable. It even allows alteration of tourist seasonality to meet the requirements of a particular tourist in a most optimal way. For many tourist regions, resorts, cities and small towns, events that are popular with tourists are the additional source of revenue. Moreover, if a country is visited by foreign tourists, the revenue is in a foreign currency. Therefore, as a rule, local communities are interested in popularization of weekend tours.

The development of weekend tourism can be roughly divided into three basic stages.

The first stage – from the ancient times to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – is the initial stage of development of weekend tourism. It is possible to consider any trips that happened in old times with the aim to observe a holiday or a competition (for example, the Bacchanalia or the Olympic Games) as weekend tours. The events were, generally, of local and national importance.

One of the significant events of interest that performed both an economic and recreational function was fairs, attended by people from various social strata. Spectacles were an obligatory part of each fair. For example, in France of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, people performed theatricalized presentations. Fairs were always visited by the crowned heads, who struck people by the refinement and luxury of their clothes. «In Venice, the fair of Ascension Day was a magnificent theatricalized and ritual action. Exactly at that time there was a ceremony of betrothal of the Venetian doge to the sea. More than 100 thousand people flowed down to Venice to look at this spectacle» [6, p. 80].

Soon, such significant events began to attract attention of the inhabitants of the nearby states. For example, The Carnival of Venice, which dates back to 1094, gained international popularity in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it obtained a «special face» with traditional disguise, wearing fancy clothes and masks. The carnival grew into a bright show, attended by aristocrats and commoners, as well as numerous guests from other cities and countries.

The ceremony of betrothal of the Venetian doge to the sea and the Carnival of Venice became the basic events of the city that received their international status.

Similar events, although not so popular, took place in other countries. The events like wedding ceremonies of monarchs and coronations, which traditionally attracted public attention, have not lost their popularity to this day. For instance, the wedding ceremony of

Prince William of Wales, which took place on April 29, 2011, drew thousands of tourists to the country.

In October 1810, on the occasion of wedding of Crown Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese, the beer festival Oktoberfest was first conducted in Germany. Since then local brewers have been placing the tents annually, and the west makes use of its huge popularity in order to attract tourists.

The second stage, lasting from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is the stage of organized weekend tourism. The first person who introduced organized trips was an Englishman Thomas Cook.

In 1846, Thomas Cook left Scotland to work out a weekend route for the admirers of Walter Scott and Robert Burns' works. Every inhabitant of England read and quoted them. The calculation was quite precise: a fanatic reader would definitely wish to become familiar with the fairy-tale world of their favorites' works. Thomas Cook was the first who understood it and realized one of lucrative ideas of future tourism business. Having published the travel guide to Scotland, Cook took the first 350 passengers for a train journey to the destination.

Having mastered routes across Scotland, Ireland, North Wales and Isle of Man, Thomas Cook went further. He offered a few large landlords of central England to open their castles and parks for public viewing. Cook thought it would be interesting for representatives of the working class. The Duke of Rutland, who opened his countryside castle for tourists, replied first. Other noble people followed him.

In 1851, in London's Hyde Park a large pavilion was built to house a trade-industrial exhibition. Having got wind of it, Thomas Cook decided to organize tours to that exhibition for different categories of population.

In 1895, a special organization for workers called «Friends of nature» was set up in Vienna, and then in Germany and Switzerland. It organized so-called «day-off trips». Such domestic trips for workers were an exciting tourist experience. In many European countries at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century sprouts of mass tourism for commoners appeared. Fundamentally, it was tourism aimed at workers with cognitive-pedestrian, regional and recreational purposes.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Brazilian carnival shaped its own face, forming blocks of participants typical of this carnival. Year by year its songs were becoming more beautiful, while dances and decoration elements were richer and more complicated. In 1928, the first school of samba appeared in Rio de Janeiro. The tradition of organizing parades of samba schools spread from Rio to other cities of Brazil. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the carnival in Rio de Janeiro gained worldwide fame, its chief attraction being the parades of samba schools, beautiful and revealing costumes of the performers, and uniqueness of Latin American atmosphere.

The amount of tourists that visited the foregoing events was considerable enough, although it could not be the index of mass character, as in other countries such tours were not practiced so often. In addition, these trips were not regular. Tourists frequently organized the journeys individually, following their own program.

The third stage – from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day – is the stage of mass distribution and functioning of weekend tourism. In the second half of the

20<sup>th</sup> century, weekend tourism expanded to embrace other Venetian and Brazilian carnivals that enjoyed worldwide popularity. The Olympic Games took place regularly and attracted millions of tourists and fans, as well as the world and continental cups in different types of sport. Film festivals appeared and soon became traditional.

At this stage, every city and every country, aiming at ultimate self-fulfillment, produces that unbelievable, unique impression of a magic holiday, once seeing and experiencing which is impossible to forget. Such tours combine rest in well-known tourist centers with excursions to the most prominent events in the spheres of culture, arts and sport.

Development of weekend tourism is supported by governments and businesses because, apart from revenues, tourism provides potential publicity to the city and the whole country. At the present stage of development, this type of tourism becomes an organized and mass phenomenon in the world, without which it is now impossible to imagine modern life.

According to various tour operators, customers choose such well-known events as the Olympic Games, world and continental cups, the Cannes Film Festival, the «Oscars» ceremony, All Hallows' Day, Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris, Munich «Oktoberfest», fashion shows in Milan, Tokyo and New York, auctions, Venetian and Brazilian carnivals.

As year after year the amount of tourists in the segment of weekend tourism is increasing, this kind of tourism needs further study and improvement of organization, a large role in which is played by development of the classification and its criteria.

Today there are few definitions of the conception of «weekend tourism», and its classification lacks systematization. However, it is possible to distinguish a few basic groups of predefined orientation toward relevant tourist sources of certain types of tourism, namely: socially oriented types of tourism, which envisage the use of public tourist resources (pilgrimage, entertainment, sport tourism), and nature oriented types of tourism, which are based on the use of natural resources (rural tourism, ecotourism, etc.).

Entertainment tourism is connected with weekend tourism and it can be classified according to the next criteria: use of relevant tourist resources; subjects of basic events; scale of event (international scale (the Brazilian carnival, the Olympic Games), national scale (the Sheshory festival in Ukraine), regional scale (sports competitions of regional level), local scale (City, Town, Village Days, etc.); frequency of realization (regular events, such as the Cannes Film Festival or the Olympic games, and unique events, such as opening the Suez Canal or the wedding of Prince William of Wales).

It is the basic classification of weekend tourism. Yet, it can be improved by adding other criteria.

To our opinion, weekend tourism can be classified by the following criteria:

The use of relevant tourist resources:

- nature oriented weekend tourism is focused on natural resources, unique natural phenomena (merry dancers, eruption of volcanoes, etc.);
- socially oriented weekend tourism is focused on public resources (religious, social, artistic, historical, sporting and political).

Subjects of basic events:

- religious (Descent of the Holy Fire at Orthodox Easter in Jerusalem, Israel);

- artistic (the festival of ancient theatre in Arles, France);
- gastronomic (the international beer festival «Oktoberfest» in Munich, Germany);
- entertaining (trips to theme parks such as Disneyland in Orlando, Florida, the USA);
- historical and cultural (Saint Patrick's Day in Dublin, Ireland);
- floral (the festival of bonsai in Nara, Japan; the festival of oranges in Orange, France; National Tulip Day in Amsterdam, Netherlands; the festival of violets in Toulouse, France);
- social-entertaining (Venetian and Brazilian carnivals);

Geographic scale:

- international (the Brazilian carnival);
- national (Sheshory festival in Ukraine);
- regional (Pysanka (Easter egg) holiday in Zakarpattia, sporting competitions of regional level);
- local (City, Town, Village Days, etc.).

The classification we offer is not intended to be exhaustive and can be improved by adding other criteria.

The analysis of the basic world centres for weekend tourism shows that the majority of them are located in Europe. The world's leading countries in terms of organization and realization of different events, which form the basis of entertainment tourism and weekend tourism, are France, Italy, Germany, and Great Britain. Some events conducted in these countries have already got centuries-old history and long-standing traditions (Saint Patrick's Day in Ireland, the Carnival of Venice in Italy, Beaujolais Nouveau Day in France, Oktoberfest in Germany, etc.).

The most popular festivals conducted in Ukraine that attract tourists' attention are:

- the All Ukrainian festival of modern song and popular music «Chervona Ruta»;
- the international festival «Molodist»;
- the All Ukrainian youth festival «Perlyny Sezonu», etc.

However, unfortunately, Ukrainian festivals, fairs, sporting and other events that improve the tourist image of the country, region or particular locality, still cannot enter the international arena. In our opinion, In Ukraine it could be promising to conduct national festivals or other events that reflect national culture. For example, Sorochyntsi Fair has every reason to attract participants and audiences from all over the world.

The prerequisites for the successful realization of such events are relevant public policy and acquisition of sponsors, as confirmed by the experience of event realization abroad. In Ukraine there are a number of quite well-known trademarks, whose owners would gladly invest money in self-promotion by supporting national events in spheres of culture, art, and sport.

Activities on organization and realization of such events in small towns that are located not far away from the capital or regional centers (where transport infrastructure is developed, which means there is a possibility to accept an abundance of guests and visitors), first of all, should be targeted at developing weekend tourism, which will help create additional workplaces and bring additional money to the local budgets.

It is necessary not to forget the experience of the world's leading countries in the sphere of organization and realization of projects aimed at developing of weekend tourism.

One example is the experience of organizing theme parks. The first theme park was built in 1954 in Anaheim, California, the USA. As early as 1971 Disneyland was visited by 100 million tourists, which resulted in building 26 new hotels in California. In the same year, another Disneyland was built in Orlando, Florida, the USA, followed by Tokyo in 1983 and Parisian suburb in 1992 in Europe. The proprietor of all these parks is the super star of the show business industry Walt Disney Co. [6, p. 210].

It is clear that the development of tourism anticipates not only the framework of tourism itself but also leisure activities in general. In a number of foreign countries certain institutes are even created, which are concerned with the improvements in the organization of leisure. Those include the National Recreation and Park Association of the USA, the Park and Recreation Fund of Japan, the Association of German Theme Parks and Leisure Companies, the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment of Italy, the Institute of Recreation Management of Great Britain, etc.

So, weekend tourism at the modern stage of development of the society is an important and necessary phenomenon, which is aimed at performing almost all basic functions of tourism: economic, cognitive, recreational, educational and entertaining. Stable development of weekend tourism and the necessity for optimization of its functioning anticipate thorough scientific research into history of development, geography of distribution and tourist market of this segment of the industry; introduction of a number of government programs related to development of weekend tourism; acquisition of sponsors and patrons of arts; effective promotion of weekend tourism.

In fact, weekend tours are relatively cheap for an average tourist, and are a decent source of revenue for localities that host weekend tourists.

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