

Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations

5 Rejuvenating Touristic Consumption:

From a Cognitive Approach to a Symbolic Intent of Modelisation

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Introduction

How can one explain that the number of visitors at Antarctica has more than doubled in less than 10 years and today reaches 34,000 per year? How can one explain that an online community on Facebook collects more than 7,600 people sharing their pictures and memories about Stonehenge and that the site in Wiltshire gathers more than 30,000¹ people each year for the summer solstice? How can one explain the success of touristic communities proposed by tour operators (monlookea.fr² or Nomadsphère³)? What about the development of travel agencies specialized in gender travel (Femmes du Monde) or in scientific excursion (Escursia, Aventuresvolcans)? Finally how can one explain the behavior of tourists that are ready to cross the world to learn how to make a kite (Asia Tour Operator), collect data on an community of primates in Africa (Saïga) or to learn how to spin wool in Auvergne (Essorr)?

In other words, new forms of consumption have appeared such as eco-volunteering, scientific tourism, adventure tourism, spiritual or religious tourism, green or fair tourism, tourism for women, etc.. that are far removed from the traditional holidays at the beach or in the mountains. Explaining these forms or these practices with the existing models of consumption might be difficult. Therefore, a new theoretical framework is suggested based on contributions in general marketing. This chapter has to be considered only as a first step in identifying a new construct; it does not aim at trying to operationalize it, or at investigating to what extent observations support it. Further research is needed to address these aspects of this approach.

Model 1: The Cognitive Approach

This approach considers the tourist as an *homo oeconomicus*, as his or her decision making and purchase processes are posited as rational, based on a clear understanding of their needs, based on utility, at all stages of consumption. This has been the mainstream approach for research in tourism marketing from the start of research in this

1 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/wiltshire/7465235.stm

2 Created by Look Voyages, this community gathers more than 10,000 members, allowing them to share pictures, videos and memories of their last holiday in a Look resort.

3 Created by Accor, for the segment of Nomads, this community gathers more than 43,000 members sharing tips for 300 towns around the world.

Chapter extract

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