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Possibilities and Choices in Tourism

"There is nothing impossible to him who will try," Alexander the Great once said. Impossibility is just an excuse for those who are not determined enough to achieve. Since nothing can be regarded as impossible, being an ethical tourist is therefore possible. Nevertheless, several ethical dilemmas and issues complicate many things about being an ethical tourism. Because of such problems, many do not believe that becoming ethical tourists who are respectful to nature, history, and cultures is not possible. On the contrary, becoming ethical tourist and sustainable tourism are possible. Present moral issues are the result of people's choices. Even strongly criticized tourism fields can become morally admissible; wildlife tourism might be an ethical activity by making the right decisions, similar decisions may reduce the environmental damage of the tourism sector's side effects, and even ethically misunderstood slum tourism can become a mutually beneficial process for both visitors and hosts.

Initially, wildlife tourism can become an ethical and sustainable activity for all; it can also become beneficial to non-domestic animals. To explain its importance further, wildlife tourism significantly impacts the tourism industry economically; it employs many people and accounts for 20% to 40% of all tourism industries. It has an even more significant impact on the economy, especially for specific countries, like Tanzania and the Maldives. In such countries and others, the principal source of tourism incentive is the wildlife tourist attractions

(WTAs) (Moorhouse et al., 2016). There are just six WTAs that have made a beneficial impact on animal welfare. Even standards differ from one type to another, and there are also some WTAs that provide care for rescued wildlife (Moorhouse et al., 2016). By most, however, wildlife tourism is considered an unethical and detrimental activity because many wildlife tourism sites violate animal rights and cause unethical conditions; as a result, animals suffer or even die. Luckily, not everywhere is the same; there are also ethical places (Daly, 2019). Because there are various options for tourists to choose from, they can make their own choices, whether ethical or not; but, there are always ethical choices. For instance, there are many elephant parks where people can see and touch elephants in Thailand; most are morally questioned and considered unethical because animals are captivated and forced to entertain tourists by presenting various activities like playing with balls and darts or painting (Daly, 2019). Maetaman is an example to such parks. However, there are also ethical choices, like Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort, which is more ethical and animal friendly (Daly, 2019). In Anantara, contrary to other facilities of the same concept, elephants are not expected to present various shows for tourists; thus, Anantara may be considered a more ethical and animal-friendly elephant park. Even though Anantara's services are comparatively expensive, tourists are still free to choose (Daly, 2019). The welfare of animals over other inexpensive, but morally questionable, establishments. In addition to all these, as animal welfare improves, tourists enjoy the experience more (Moorhouse et al., 2016). For example, according to Grennan & Fielding, when tourists interacted with animals they believed were well cared for, their vacation was enhanced; yet, when animals looked to be abused, it detracted from the trip and left an unpleasant impression on tourists (as cited in Moorhouse et al., 2016). As long as there are various choices, but people still prefer the

unethical and money-oriented ones, there is no impossibility for ethics of tourism; it is just a matter of choice.

Furthermore, the negative impacts of tourism-related transportation on nature constitute a global danger for the earth. Only in Europe, tourism-related transportation eats 3% of all energy produced. Moreover, it is also responsible for half of nitrogen oxide emissions (Polyxeni & Ourania, 2008). Compared to all others, air transportation has the most significant percentage of emissions at all. Nitrogen oxide also emits other detrimental gases, including greenhouse gases (Polyxeni & Ourania, 2008). Nevertheless, tourists do not have to fly by plane when they travel. There are many other ways to travel around the globe, which damage the environment less than airways. For instance, trains emit ten times fewer greenhouse gases compared to planes. Additionally, the ships emit 190 times less (Polyxeni & Ourania, 2008). Hence, planes are not the only way to cross oceans and continents. Conceivably, ships and trains are much slower than planes, but tourists can choose eco-friendly and ethical options. If people continue to prefer air transportation to others, this is not an impossibility; they have the freedom to choose.

Finally, slum tourism might be the most criticized type of tourism overall, and there are numerous moral controversies regarding it. To explain it more, slum tourism is an activity that includes the visitation of places and people that suffer from poverty. Furthermore, according to Dovey and King, slum tourism is gaining popularity over time (as cited in Booyens et al., 2019). Most of the time, slum tourism is considered an unethical activity because it is believed to be abusing for locals and a violator for human rights since visitors approach locals as animals in a zoo (Kieti & Magio, 2013). However, even slum tourism may also become a sustainable and morally acceptable activity. In order to understand the concept

of slum tourism, it is good to understand why tourists visit slum neighborhoods. Meschkank (as cited in Kieti & Magio, 2013) claims that “Slum tourism turns poverty into entertainment as it is experienced momentarily and then escaped from permanently” (p. 40). As a result, slum residents have been reduced to commodities, serving as a business product, according to Lefevre (as cited in Kieti & Magio, 2013). Considering the present situation, it is hard to say there is a sustainability and ethical approach for slum tourism right now. Contrary to what is believed, visitors do not bring so much benefit to the slum residents. Still, ethical and tenable slum tourism is more than just an impossible dream. For instance, slum tourism’s greatest beneficiaries are now the tour firms that have continued to operate in a way that prevents social interaction between slum dwellers and visitors in Kibera, Kenya (Kieti & Magio, 2013). Eliminating these tour firms and building direct connections between dwellers and tourists might be a good start for a more ethical slum tourism in Kibera. By altering the conditions of slum areas, achieving a new kind of slum tourism, so-called “creative tourism,” may also be possible. For example, making tourists active members and co-creators of the experiences they have during their visitation might be a good step for creative tourism (Booyens et al., 2019). Again, current controversial and unethical slum tourism does not constitute an impossibility for an ethical version of it; it is more than possible by making necessary alterations and regulations.

To conclude, some people do not believe the idea of an ethical tourist; moreover, they think such a thing is entirely impossible. However, accomplishing this challenge is up to people and their decisions. Tourists might ignore ethical decisions when they want to escape their real-life experiences (Dwan, 2001). It may be good to remind them all of these ethics that they ignore. Tourists may also choose to spend their money on ethical places, like

Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort, instead of other controversial places in wildlife tourism. Alternatively, tourists may prefer eco-friendly transportation ways instead of making airline companies richer. Even slum tourism may become a beneficial concept for all by enough regulations and alterations. When considering all these, it is impossible not to believe in ethical tourism.

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