

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

ANTHROPIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS, TOURISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE? CASE STUDY

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Throughout this research we study the environmental problems generated by various manufacturing units, necessary, but with questions that are difficult to answer: essential? Are activities related to the tourism industry the alternative? Undoubtedly, despite the incursions made in the more or less recent past in what has come to be known as Territory Planning, at present there are not a few sectors of the scientific community, in general, and of the geographical and legal, in particular, those who believe that hardly without an intervention of the “public powers” in the territory –through “planning”–, a balanced spatial structure could be achieved, which contributes to the achievement of a more supportive society and, ultimately, with fewer inequalities –at least, in terms of opportunities–. All this without forgetting that, when dealing with the environment, historical reality has shown us that the relationship between the natural environment and the industrial sub-system –including the tourism sector– has given rise to specific forms of environmental management.

Tourism is presented to us as a sector that needs to be analyzed from what we could understand as an industrial sector. From this perspective, its treatment in tourism supply and demand involves generating strategies that contribute to the achievement of new conceptual bases, which facilitate the treatment of the sector from a perspective analogous to that of an industrial sector. This reality will mean that we find ourselves with important consequences in all areas (social, economic,...), presenting itself as an alternative to the anthropic and technological risks that threaten, in many cases, the Environment. And it is that it is not easy, although it is exciting, to approach the study of the so-called anthropic and technological risks in Spain, especially in times of considerable uncertainty such as those experienced and even suffered in recent years, marked by the so-called coronavirus

pandemic. the Covid-19, or at the present time the terrible war in Ukraine (issues that, necessarily, must be studied in other investigations). In fact, after speaking and studying, in other investigations, some real risks, not past but current, such as the risks inherent in the transport of toxic and dangerous materials, exemplified in the former Prestige catastrophe, it is time to study, in some detail, the risks inherent to manufacturing units located in the Pontevedra parish of Lourizán, in the marshes of the same name, located in the Pontevedra estuary, near the city. This is the ENCE/ELNOSA complex, and although the second one was dismantled a few years ago to relocate it, it can help us understand the environmental impact that this type of manufacturing unit entails.

To do this, we will begin by paraphrasing Professor Josefina Gómez Mendoza, who in an interesting “little article” published in October 2016 stated: «The people of Pontevedra, I know, lived counting the months and days for the closure of the Celulosa factory –now owned by ENCE due to privatization– that had to happen in the summer of 2018. Vain longing: the Government in functions? has extended the concession for sixty years, until 2073. The continuous opposition of public opinion and the requirement of the National High Court (19.5.2011), ratified by the Supreme Court ruling (July 11, 2014), have been of no avail, urging the State to initiate a record of expiration of the concession. The first was prior to the promulgation of the new law of 2013 for the protection and sustainable use of the coast; and the sentence of the TS prior to the publication of the Regulation of said law. Because the terrible thing about the case is that the extension of the ENCE factory in the Pontevedra estuary has been made using a law of “coastal protection and sustainability”. To what can the twisting and perversion in the use of words come» Gómez, J. (2016). And he goes on to say: «The Celulosa factory in the Pontevedra estuary remains a scandalous example of the economic model of the most authoritarian Franco regime and of the most blind territorial decisions with the environment and with social and citizen damage. That it is a model of anachronistic economic growth, indifferent to the environment, the territory and the landscape, extends in the second decade of the 21st century to three thirds of it. Which is resolved, to the greatest derision, under the name of coastal sustainability: that is indeed a scandalous “coating” for those of us who believe that the facts should at least adjust somewhat to the words and not manipulate them. And that they have been approved by an acting government, which does not exercise it in property and should only dispatch current affairs that ensure institutional continuity».

It is not easy to find alternatives to manufacturing units such as those discussed above; not even to the already dismantled and relocated plant of ELNOSA. Now it’s up to ENCE, its hypothetical closure will have, if it occurs, very notable economic and social consequences in the province of Pontevedra, in general, and in the Morrazo region, in particular (there are thousands of jobs that, directly or indirectly, depend on factory activity).

The alternatives go through the duality of comprehensive planning and the tourism industry (although we must not forget that in some political sectors, the latter is qualified, in some cases, as “colonial activities”, an affirmation that is surprising to say the least). All this without forgetting that when dealing with the environment, anthropogenic and technological risks, and the tourism industry, historical reality has shown us that the relationship between the natural environment and the social subsystem has given rise to specific forms of environmental management. In the industrial society achieved in the so-called “rich

countries”, this management has been oriented through an economic conception in which the concept of production has progressively separated from its physical and natural content, at the same time that it was linked to the exchange value of objects, thus arriving at the consideration of the product “per se”, detached from its relationship and its function in the system of which they are a part. Hence, although it is a topic for reflection, we propose as an alternative, once the Lourizán factory complex has been completely dismantled, and as is happening in other territories of the Spanish State, it would be worth considering expanding the figure of the “National Park of the Atlantic Islands”, to most of the Rías Bajas –with the exception, perhaps, of the metropolitan areas, such as Vigo–. In this way, a series of Policies, Plans, Programs and Projects could be applied, through Comprehensive Planning, in which methodologies such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) would be of great importance. The planning and management of Protected Natural Areas (ENP) is increasingly based on scientific knowledge. Decision-making on the use of these spaces is becoming less intuitive and more adjusted to their ecological functioning. Its management must harmonize the preservation of its values, based in most cases on certain modes of exploitation and use of its resources, and the new economic and use expectations that are generated with its protection. The integration of both aspects makes it necessary to evaluate the management of the ENP, that is, to what extent and why the objectives set are achieved or not. It will be found in the tourism industry, in the implementation of sustainable tourism, the alternative that helps to solve the problems derived from the relocation of the manufacturing activities studied, this is a completely past reality.