

Impact of Changes in Travel Behavior Triggered by the Covid-19 Pandemic on Tourist Infrastructure. Water Reservoirs of the Vltava Cascade (Czechia) Case Study

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Abstract : The Covid-19 pandemic and its effects have triggered significant changes in travel behavior. On the contrary to a deep decline in international tourism, domestic tourism has recovered. It has not fully replaced the total volume of national tourism so far. However, from a regional point of view, and especially according to the type of destinations, regional targeting has changed significantly compared to the previous period. Urban destinations, which used to be the domain of foreign tourists, have been relatively orphaned, in contrast to destinations tied to natural attractions, which have seen seasonal increases. Even here, at a lower hierarchical geographic level, we can observe the differentiation resulting from the existing localization and infrastructure. The case study is focused on the three largest water reservoirs of the Vltava Cascade in Czechia- Lipno, Orlik, and Slapy. Based on a detailed field survey, in the periods before and during the pandemic, as well as available statistical data (Tourdata; Czech Statistical Office, Czech Cadaster and Ordnance Survey), different trends in the exploitation of these destinations with regard to existing or planned infrastructure are documented, analyzed and explained. This gives us the opportunity to discuss on concrete examples of generally known phenomena that are usually neglected in tourism: slum, brownfield, greenfield. Changes in travel behavior - especially the focus on spending leisure time individually in naturally attractive destinations - can affect the use of sites, which can be defined as a tourist or recreational slum, brownfield, but also as a tourist greenfield development. Sociocultural changes and perception of destinations by tourists and other actors represent, besides environmental changes, major trends in current tourism.

Keywords : Covid-19 pandemic, czechia, sociocultural and environmental impacts, tourist infrastructure, travel behavior, the Vltava Cascade water reservoirs

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