Community-based cultural tourism: issues, threats and opportunities

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Community-based cultural tourism: issues, threats and opportunities

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Using examples from long-term anthropological fieldwork in Tanzania, this paper critically analyzes how well generally accepted community-based tourism discourses resonate with the reality on the ground. It focuses on how local guides handle their role as ambassadors of communal cultural heritage and how community members react to their narratives and practices. It pays special attention to the time-limited, project-based development method, the need for an effective exit strategy, for quality control, tour guide training and long-term tour guide retention. The study is based on a program funded by the Netherlands-based development agency, Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV), from 1995 to 2001, and on post-program experiences. Findings reveal multiple complex issues of power and resistance that illustrate many community-based tourism conflicts. The encounter with the "Other" is shown to be central and that the role of professional intermediaries in facilitating this experience of cultural contact is crucial. Tour guides are often the only "locals" with whom tourists spend considerable time: they have considerable agency in the image-building process of the peoples and places visited, (re)shaping tourist destination images and indirectly influencing the self-image of those visited too. The paper provides ideas for overcoming the issues and problems described.

Keywords: cultural tourism; community; tour guiding; representation; anthropology; Tanzania

Introduction

While social scientists have long taken a critical stance toward the concept of *community*, it remains widely popular in the tourism planning and development discourse. Although not often acknowledged, one of the reasons why community-based tourism (CBT) programs are hindered in their success is because those organizing it ignore the problematic assumptions embedded within the community concept itself (Tosun, 2000). Not surprisingly, the fuzziness of the notion is cleverly exploited in tourism marketing. While CBT is intended to empower people, the representations deployed in constituting the targeted "communities", be they imagined or real, remain largely unexamined. Because of the communicative power of tourism, representations of destinations have direct and potentially significant influences on the people who are being presented, represented and misrepresented, as well as on those (sub)groups who are absent from such representations. It is still common for ethnic minority groups to be depicted as the "exotic Other" in exhibitions, postcards or tourist literature (Smith, 2003).[1] When the tourismified definition of a community identity prevails, the group is frozen in an image of itself or museumized (MacCannell, 1984).

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Which images and ideas of community are being (re)produced in CBT projects and policies? Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Tanzania, this paper tries to answer this question by analyzing the key role of local tour guides in the representational process. However, it is first essential to delineate the broader scholarly field within which this study engages by briefly reviewing some key ideas on community and its application in CBT. This is followed by an explanation of the research methodology used in this paper and a description of the Cultural Tourism Programme (CTP) in Tanzania as a typical example of CBT, first from a general perspective and then focusing on the role of local tour guides. A critical analysis is made of how well generally accepted CBT policy discourses resonate with the reality on the ground. The concluding section reflects on how the complex challenges revealed by the CTP case studies could be turned into opportunities for sustainable CBT projects in Tanzania and beyond.

Community and community-based tourism

Community is a very elusive and vague term. It is used to refer to not only a locality (e.g. a village community) but also a network of relationships (e.g. cyberspace communities). Most descriptions rely on Eurocentric conceptions that go back to the theorizing of scholars like Tönnies, Marx, Durkheim and Weber (see Amit & Rapport, 2002). According to *The Community Tourism Guide*, for example, a community can be described as "a mutually supportive, geographically specific, social unit such as a village or tribe where people identify themselves as community members and where there is usually some form of communal decision-making" (Mann, 2000, p. 18). Such a notion of community evokes a group of people who have something in common and who are actively engaged with one another in a benign fashion, and such sentiments may be used rhetorically to generate some kind of shared identity where it was only latent (Anderson, 1991). Interestingly, community, "unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) . . . seems never to be used unfavourably" (Williams, 1976, p. 76). Received ideas about community have distorted and limited empirical research and theory, especially when alluding to out-dated notions of collectivities as fixed in time and space or when invoking community as a unity, as an undifferentiated thing with intrinsic powers that speaks with a single voice. Amit and Rapport (2002) critically examined community as a methodological, theoretical, phenomenological, political and legal construct. They discussed the "slipperiness" of the concept, which they believe is "too vague, too variable in its applications and definitions to be of much utility as an analytical tool" (2002, p. 13). Their analysis reveals that community can equally be a site of violence, political struggle or multiple hierarchies.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, the importance of CBT has clearly been recognized over the past two decades. Nobody will dispute the fact that destination communities must benefit if tourism is to be viable and sustainable in the long term. CBT aims to create a more sustainable tourism industry (at least discursively), focusing on the receiving communities in terms of planning and maintaining tourism development. This idea came to the fore in the 1990s, with Pearce (1992) suggesting that CBT presents a way to provide an equitable flow of benefits to all affected by tourism through consensus-based decision-making and local control of development. While mass or mainstream tourism attracted trenchant criticism as a shallow and degrading experience for developing countries, so-called "alternative" forms of tourism have been viewed much more benevolently and few critiques have emerged (Ryan, 2002).[2] As a particular alternative form of tourism, CBT suggests a symbolic or mutual relationship where the tourist is not given central priority but becomes an equal part of the system (Wearing & McDonald, 2002).

The anticipated benefits of CBT are three (Rozemeijer, 2001, p. 13):

(1) CBT generates income and employment and, as such, contributes to rural development – a benefit that especially applies in remote areas;
(2) the benefits derived from the use of natural resources for tourism will prompt the community to use these valuable resources in a sustainable way; and
(3) CBT adds value to the national tourism product through diversification of tourism, increasing volume and economies of scale.

Four dimensions are considered equally important for sustainable development (Rozemeijer, 2001, p. 15):

(1) CBT should be economically viable: the revenue should exceed the costs;
(2) CBT should be ecologically sustainable: the environment should not decrease in value;
(3) there should be an equitable distribution of costs and benefits among all participants in the activity; and
(4) institutional consolidation should be ensured: a transparent organisation, recognised by all stakeholders, should be established to represent the interests of all community members and to reflect true ownership.

While the above indicates that CBT projects have often been created in the context of ecotourism (e.g. Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005; Snyder & Sulle, 2011), probably the most promising niche to develop CBT programs is cultural tourism, identified by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2001) as one of the major growth markets in global tourism. The main strength of CBT, especially in cultural tourism, lies in its potential to empower rural communities and to make a substantial contribution to development and the eradication of poverty (Manyara & Jones, 2007). CBT activities that are designed and implemented through community consensus other than centrally planned (top–down) CTP may cause less negative effects and disruption of rural cultures.

These tourism programs may also enhance the opportunity for spontaneous, rather than contrived, encounters between destination communities and tourists. For these reasons, intergovernmental agencies like the UNWTO and UNESCO have singled out cultural and heritage tourism as the most suitable form of community-based development for developing countries. For many people, (sustainable) cultural tourism development is actually synonymous with CBT involving local people (Lamers, 2001). While the notion of CBT stresses that many of these projects and products are indeed focused on a local community (and its natural and cultural heritage), in practice, they are seldom controlled and managed by that community – "community-centered tourism" would actually be a more accurate term.

Although Murphy (1985) argued a long time ago that communities should play an integral role in the development of tourism and proposed an approach that emphasized the need for community control, the debate still continues as to how an appropriate and sustainable form of community planning should be implemented. Consensus and control are key issues (World Wildlife Fund, 2001), and the political nature of the planning process continues to be a major difficulty (Smith, 2003). A pluralistic approach to community-oriented tourism planning assumes that all parties have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Jamal and Getz (1995) provided a critical analysis of collaboration and cooperation, stating that power imbalances often act as a significant barrier to successful collaboration. Reed (1997) suggested that power relations are indeed an integral element in understanding CBT planning and the relative success of collaborative efforts. It is clear

that few communities have equal access to political and economic resources, especially indigenous minorities who are often politically, economically and socially disadvantaged (Snyder & Sulle, 2011). CBT can offer such communities the chance to move toward greater political self-determination, but *only* if local control is maximized.

There have been numerous criticisms of CBT. According to Blackstock (2005), the literature on CBT, as presented since the 1990s, has three major failings from a community development perspective. First, it tends to take a functional approach to community involvement (not having the transformative intent of community development and not focusing on community empowerment). Second, it tends to treat the host community as a homogeneous bloc (for whom "consensus" is rare). Thirdly, it neglects the (external power-based) structural constraints on local control of the tourism industry.[3] This has resulted in misunderstandings that are reflected in unsuccessful development or dissatisfied community groups who resent changes, particularly in relation to tourism and tourists.

Attention to multiple interests and identities within communities and their relationships to external actors, political institutions and national policies are critical to understanding the multiple challenges facing CBT (Belsky, 1999). Honey described how many CBT programs are "relational" rather than participatory; "they seek to improve relationships between the community and either the state or the private enterprise through trade-offs rather than to devolve ownership and management of the protected area or tourism project to the local community" (1999, p. 392). Power is people's ability to control the resources required for tourism development – labor, capital, culture and natural resources – and to secure personal returns from having tourism in their community (Brennan & Allen, 2001). Hence, power influences people's willingness and ability to engage in tourism.

Taylor and Davis (1997) conducted a review of the literature concerning the involvement of community members in sustainable tourism development. They argued that to suggest that disparate opinions between groups and individuals can be aligned toward some communal vision fails to recognize that tourism development is fundamentally different from other types of economic development. The economic benefits of tourism may be unevenly distributed but the costs, the intrusion, congestion and rising prices will affect both those who support and those who hate tourism. The main issue centers around the conflict that arises over the planning of the growth and development of tourism where local participation is encouraged by public agencies, but a vociferous minority, in favor or against, influences decisions, the silent majority remaining unheard, suggesting a passive but tacit acceptance.

Even if communities have control over their development, "local control is not necessarily the 'good thing' that many writers imply, particularly where that control is in the hands of development-driven politicians" (Pearce, 1992, p. 26). The control of tourism by players within the community and the pressure to increase visitor numbers could seek to widen community differences as well as creating another destination stereotype. Moreover, the interests of one local community will not necessarily coincide with those of others, nor is it likely that the interests of the local community will be the same for all within the community (Hall, 1994). According to Reed (1997), power relations may seriously alter the outcome of collaborative efforts or even preclude mutual action on the local level. Local power relationships within the community can be factional, as can those of players on the broader stage such as national governments, NGOs and supranational institutions. Empowerment issues, such as who participates, come to the fore: often the disadvantaged (those who need it most) are left out of the process and women are restricted to low-paying service roles (as cooks or cleaners). The emergence of local elites is as likely to produce inequalities within the community, just as these other players produce disparities of benefits at a different level. The word "local" – and, likewise, the word "community" – distracts

one from the "intense complexity of micro-politics that all sides are inevitably imbricated within and shaped by" (Meethan, 2001, p. 61).

As Sofield (2003) noted, however, many of the benefits of CBT planning lie in the process, not simply the outcome. By taking the journey down the community engagement and empowerment path, problematic areas, power imbalances, lack of social capacity and capital can be highlighted, which can then work in people's favor (Beeton, 2006). To have a say in the management arena is only one of many ways to ensure that local people benefit from tourism. Rather, the modes of participation are related to the institutional arrangements and the different stages of tourism development present in a community (Li, 2006). To distribute benefits to a community, the tourism initiative need not always involve the community in any rights, tenure or control of the project (Simpson, 2008).

Research methods

This is a qualitative study, guided by the grounded theory approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007), whereby descriptive research leads to the development of more meaningful theory and measures. It critically analyzes how well the generally accepted CBT principles, as outlined above, resonate with the reality on the ground. The findings presented here are part of a long-term anthropological study on tourism in Tanzania (Salazar, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out over a period of 14 months (June–August 2004, January–August 2007 and February–March 2009), focusing on the northern Arusha Region, together with shorter periods of work in Manyara, Kilimanjaro, Tanga, Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. The methodology used, distinctively (though not uniquely) anthropological, involved mixed methods. A major part of the fieldwork consisted of extensive observation. As a participant, the author joined tourists on 24 tours, lasting from a minimum of one hour to one week (including overnight stays in some of the communities under study). As an observer, countless hours were spent socializing with local tour guides and informally talking to them (and this in the communities as well as at training institutes). Hundreds of pages of field notes were recorded. The second-most important source of data was interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted and recorded with 30 guides, along with semi-structured interviews with five people involved in guide training; 15 local tour operators; and 13 tourism authorities at local, national and regional levels.

Almost all the interviewed guides agreed to fill in a questionnaire that collected basic demographic information and data on their education, guiding, tour preparation and information resources, travel experience, hobbies and the use of new information and communication technologies. A local assistant carried out 23 additional short, structured interviews with local people. In addition to observations and interviews, various types of secondary data were collected: newspaper and magazine articles; online publications; official documents (e.g. tourism laws and regulations); tour guiding syllabi; and all kinds of tourism-related brochures, pamphlets and other promotional materials. Supplementary data were gathered from tourists by informally chatting with them during safaris. In all instances of data collection, the author was identified as a foreign researcher and, if appropriate, the official accreditation provided by the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) was shown. All primary data (field notes, interview transcripts) were interpreted with the help of ATLAS.ti, a software package for qualitative data analysis based on the principles of grounded theory (Muhr, 2004).

Extensive background literature research was carried out at various libraries: the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California at Berkeley in the US; the University

of Dar es Salaam, the Economic and Social Research Foundation, Research on Poverty Alleviation and the Professional Tour Guide School in Tanzania; and the University of Leuven in Belgium. In addition, the African collections of the Africa Museum in Belgium were used. Tapping into various literatures – on anthropology and ethnography, tourism and travel and Tanzania – might have been time consuming, but it allowed the making of theoretical and conceptual connections that would otherwise never have been made. This research is kept up to date through the assistant and by local contacts in Tanzania by using e-mail and short text messages (SMS).

CTP as exemplary CBT?

Although often praised by the tourism sector, NGOs or authorities, promising CBT initiatives are few in number and hard to sustain (Akunaay, Nelson, & Singleton, 2003). The most well-known Tanzanian example is the award-winning Cultural Tourism Programme (CTP). This project was launched in 1995 by the Dutch aid agency Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV). According to the organization's politically correct sustainable development discourse, in 1994, it received a request for help from a group of young Maasai who wanted to develop tourism in their village – a textbook example of the bottom-up, participatory approach.[4] In reality, tourism is one of SNV's areas of expertise and the agency has extensive experience with CBT in countries such as Bolivia, Botswana, Cameroon, Laos, Nepal and Vietnam (Caalders & Cottrell, 2001). In SNV's development framework, CBT projects are defined as follows:

> Tourism initiatives that are *owned* by one or more defined communities, or run as joint venture partnerships with the private sector with *equitable* community participation, as a means of using the natural resources in a *sustainable* manner to improve their standard of living in an economically *viable* way. (Rozemeijer, 2001, p. 14)

SNV was planning to expand its tourism activities to Tanzania and, unsurprisingly, quickly found local communities interested in jumping on the CBT bandwagon.

CTP was set up as a loose network of local communities, mainly Maasai in northern Tanzania, operating independently from each other and offering individually developed tour packages. These include campsites, home-stays, traditional food and beverage, trained guides and local tours involving natural heritage (forests, waterfalls and caves) and cultural attractions (historical sites and visits to healers, storytellers, artisans and cooking mamas). The main activities on offer are hiking, mountain climbing, cycling, canoeing, fishing and dhow trips. SNV financed the various CTP modules, controlled their expenditures and organized some minimal training for tour guides. The Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB), on the other hand, was responsible for promoting CTP to both local and international travel agencies and tour operators (De Jong, 1999).

Helped by the fact that experiential "meet the people" tourism was becoming in vogue, CTP grew rapidly in its first years of existence. The number of tourists in the 18 initial modules increased from 2600 in 1998 to over 7000 in 2001. For comparison, around the millennium, Tanzania as a whole registered approximately 500,000 international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2003). Revenues, very modest when compared to more lucrative safari or hunting business, were distributed partly to local executors and partly to community funds. Because SNV published widely the success of its CTP, the project was awarded the TO DO!99 Award for Socially Responsible Tourism (Adler, 2000). In 2002, the International Year of Ecotourism, CTP was heralded as Tanzania's good practice example of sustainable

development by the UNWTO (2002, pp. 237–240). The modules were also widely praised in western guidebooks such as the *Lonely Planet* and the *Rough Guide*.

Due to its perceived economic and institutional sustainability (and because from the start it had been conceived as a 5-year project), SNV withdrew from the program in 2001, although their own philosophy prescribes that a successful CBT venture needs "involvement of an organisation as a partner in project development and commitment to provide continued support" (Rozemeijer, 2001, p. 61). As soon as SNV pulled out, there was a declining cooperation between the different communities involved (van der Duim, Peters, & Wearing, 2005). The intended Tanzania Cultural Tourism Organization, created with the aim of coordinating the various modules, broke down before it even started. Each village dealt only with its own activities, and not everybody in the participating communities was happy with the presence of curious tourists. In some places, the revenues were not distributed properly and there were escalating conflicts over land and natural resources (Nelson, 2003, 2004).

At the time of writing, CTP now has 27 participating communities and many others are waiting to join. However, the various modules offer very similar packages and accessibility is a major factor determining success – villages nearby Arusha (Tanzania's "safari capital") or on the access roads to protected areas are far more popular than more remote ones. Because CTP as a whole badly needed professional management, the TTB assigned a full-time CTP coordinator to develop guidelines and quality standards and to address many marketing problems that arose. In 2005, SNV became involved again, this time by providing two tourism consultants. They identified the following issues as most problematic: standards of accommodation, hygiene for toilets and food preparation, an imbalance of nature-based activities over ones that engage with local culture (although the name of the program suggests otherwise) and the weak interpretation skills of guides (Ashley, 2006). That latter issue is considered next.

CTP tour guiding

> My guide for the [CTP] Osotwa program, Olais Mokolo, resigned from his position as a village executive officer (a local government position) to become a tour guide in order to increase his income. This fact highlights that individuals are benefiting from these programs and do have an incentive to become involved in tourism. (Ofosu-Amaah, 2007, p. 59)

The quote above hints at the importance of "local" tour guides in CTP in particular and CBT in general.[5] They are often the only people with whom tourists spend more time than the average short interaction with other community members. Guiding therefore constitutes a strategic factor in the representation of a community, next to influencing the quality of the tourist experience, the length of stay and the resulting economic benefits for the community (Salazar, 2010). Although emphasized in much of the literature on guiding, the individual goal of guides is not necessarily to become a cultural broker, defined as someone who flattens cultural differences.[6] It is more useful to think of them as small entrepreneurs who, not always successfully, sell their services to a varied group of tourists (Bras, 2000). Guides are not altruistic mediators by vocation, nor can they be expected to submit blindly to CBT rules and regulations. Instead, they sell images, knowledge, contacts, souvenirs, access, authenticity, ideology and sometimes even themselves.

Guides are indispensable to convey to tourists the richness of local natural and cultural heritage. Face-to-face interpretation lies "at the heart and soul" of what guides can and should be doing (Weiler & Ham, 2001, p. 549). In her book on the dynamics of guiding,

Pond (1993) stresses the importance of the skills of delivery over actual knowledge. In addition, they need to understand the currency of their services in a global market that is highly unstable and influenced by continuous changes in consumer preferences (Ap & Wong, 2001). This requires them to endlessly vary, reinvent and customize their services. What guides should and should not do is ideally controlled through mechanisms such as codes of conduct (a form of soft law), professional associations, awards of excellence, formal training, professional certification (or accreditation) and licensing (Black & Weiler, 2005).

Ideally, CTP tour guides are villagers with wide knowledge about the local heritage. They also need to learn (through professional training) how to handle tourists and how to reduce potential negative impacts caused by tourism (cf. Christie & Mason, 2003; Weiler & Ham, 2002). Almost all guides for the initial 18 CTP modules received a brief training from a professional tour guide school in Arusha. Even if these schools mainly focus on wildlife tourism or mountaineering, and with virtually nothing taught on cultural tourism or culture in general, they at least learned some more generic "tricks of the trade" (Salazar, 2010). From the moment SNV withdrew from the project, there was no more financial support for such training. Many of those who were trained have quit their guiding jobs for other (more beneficial) activities outside their villages. Some communities, understanding the importance of guiding for the development of their tourism packages, invested by sending promising villagers to tour guide schools in Arusha. However, these youngsters soon realized that they could earn more money by becoming safari driver-guides and often did not return to the communities that had sponsored their education. While the TTB and SNV recognize that guiding skills are a major problem in many of the CTP modules, there is little happening to change the current situation. SNV, now having "capacity-building" as its organizational priority, claims not to find anyone able to train the local tour guides (even though there are plenty of tour guide schools in Arusha). The brief ethnographic examples below are not meant to criticize the selected modules as such but to illustrate that the current situation can have dramatic consequences for the representation of (often marginal) people, the quality of the services delivered to tourists and the further development of CBT in the area.

In the summer of 2007, the author accompanied a group of American tourists on a typical three-day visit to the Maasai CTP of Mkuru. On their first day, they had a walking safari through the savannah. Their tour guide was not a Maasai but a Meru from a neighboring village (he never identified himself as such though).[7] One of the tourists was a general medical practitioner and very interested in knowing more about how the Maasai use local plants for medicinal purposes. The guide told her that the plants "they" (the Maasai) use have no real healing values but are just used because of tradition. When visiting a Maasai *boma* (livestock enclosure), he was unable to explain how the settlement is structurally organized. After a very brief introduction, he invited the group to "walk around and take pictures". The next day, the group went on a camel safari. At the start, the Meru tour guide introduced all the camels by name. The accompanying Maasai men (one per camel), on the contrary, were never mentioned, let alone properly introduced.

During a CTP tour in Tengeru village, the local Meru guide explained to a group of European tourists that only the Maasai wear blankets, while the Meru wear clothes. He further claimed that the Meru are more developed compared with other "tribes" because they have adapted quicker to modernity, and that the Maasai are certainly more primitive. One of the highlights of the nearby CTP of Il'kidinga, a settlement of Arusha people, is a hike to a hamlet on the top of a hill, with amazing views over the surrounding areas.[8] Upon approaching the hamlet, tourists perceived red blankets on the bushes around the houses.

They all assumed that these were Maasai garments that the women had just washed and were drying in the sun. Little did they know that neither the women who had washed the blankets nor the men who occasionally wear them in this village are actually Maasai. Once inside, the Arusha guide took them to a man (whom the tourists also mistook for a Maasai) who was sharpening a machete. The guide explained that under colonial rule villagers used to buy knives imported from the United Kingdom. Nowadays they purchase cheap knives coming from China. The blades of the imported Asian knives are sharpened and made smaller so that they fit locally crafted protective sheaths. The guide went on to tell that used machetes are sold to visitors because "tourists always like something historic".

Where to go from here?

> Any group or community in today's world should be able to undertake self-criticism and to change in any way it wants to go until it begins to restrict the similar rights of others. The touristic requirement that a group internalize an "authentic" ethnic identity, even if the resulting image is widely held to be a positive one, is no less a constraint than the earlier form of negative ethnic stereotyping. Conforming to the requirements of being a living tourist attraction becomes a total problem affecting every detail of life. (MacCannell, 1984, p. 389)

Tourism is much more than a mere economic activity; it is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, present in virtually every corner of the world and affecting people in multiple ways. The sociocultural effects of tourism, especially in developing countries, are probably the most worrying aspect of a global(ized) sector that offers cut-price packages to remote and exotic destinations. Tourism affects the way cultural practices and landscapes are shaped, and cultural change reflects the influence of tourism as one of the agents in place transformation. Success stories in tourism might not be so hard to find. However, in light of sustainable development, success should never be conceived of as a static result. The fact that external as well as internal factors can disrupt even the strongest and most successful tourism projects should make us cautious (cf. Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan, & Luloff, 2010).

The above examples of the much-acclaimed CTP in Tanzania serve as a sobering example of how widely CBT rhetoric and practice can diverge. The principles of CBT certainly remain laudable. Unfortunately, the implementation of quality standards is often lacking. In the case of Mkuru, the visit to a Maasai community resembled a human zoo: Maasai and tourists staring at one another, with a guide unable to facilitate communication and exchange between the two parties. Because the tourists did not understand Swahili, they never noticed that their "local" guide was not a Maasai but a Meru. Of course, they also did not know that there are growing tensions between Meru and Maasai people in the area because the land they share around Mt. Meru is becoming overcrowded and overstocked. This background information would have led to a very different tour dynamic (and probably a much smaller tip for the guide). The Maasai community visited had no clue about how they were being represented by the Meru guide because they do not speak English.

The current lack of cooperation and consultation between the various CTP modules has a baleful influence on the way different ethnic groups represent one another. In Tengeru, the Meru guide found it necessary to clearly distinguish his ethnic group from the Maasai by denigrating the latter and depicting them as backwards. His comments partly have their origins in the guide's frustration that many foreigners think all Tanzanians are Maasai (Salazar, 2009a; Snyder & Sulle, 2011). The sight of a virile Maasai warrior, dressed in colorful red blankets and beaded jewellery, evokes the romantic image of a modern noble savage – a priceless tourism attraction. This has led to a true Maasai-mania that is profoundly affecting the daily life and culture of Maasai and other communities. Interestingly, the people

organizing the CTP tour in Tengeru all wore blue, although this color is not particularly associated with the Meru. They did this to indexically distinguish their ethnic group from the "red" Maasai. In Tengeru, the guides use the opposite strategy; they capitalize on the perceived similarities with the Maasai to attract more tourists. At the same time, by telling tales such as the Maasai machete story, Arusha guides take away some of the magic surrounding the (imagined) Maasai culture, without actual Maasai having any say in whether they like this or not.

The most flagrant case of deceit encountered in the research period was when accompanying a group of international volunteers on their visit to the CTP of Babati and Hanang. The entrepreneur organizing the program was not local, but a Haya from north-western Tanzania. His alleged CBT tours, widely advertised in travel guidebooks and on the Responsible Travel website, bring visitors to the Barabaig, a poor herding people living in the volcanic highlands near Mt. Hanang. The "local" guide, a Chagga from the remote Mt. Kilimanjaro region, has become used to playing the Barabaig. Only, on this particular tour the trick did not work because the volunteers had been in Tanzania for a while and spoke Swahili fluently. They quickly noticed from the interactions the guide had with Barabaig people that he did not speak the local language. They insisted on obtaining information directly from the Barabaig and discovered that many of the things the guide had told them were purely invented. The volunteers were so upset about this that they filed a formal complaint with the TTB. Neither the TTB or SNV nor the CTP coordinator claimed to know about this fraud (which would not be very surprising because they only visit the various modules with announced official delegations).

Conclusion

The only way to overcome this type of situations is to be realistic when planning CBT, taking into account the operational, structural and cultural limits to community participation (Tosun, 2000). Local-level participation is essential for achieving the global goal of sustainable development. However, such involvement often involves a shift of power from local authorities to local actors. Moreover, real consensus and true local control is not always possible, practical or even desired by some of the communities that develop CBT. Planners need insight in this complex web of shifting power relations as well as in the ways different stakeholders imagine CBT. There is clearly a need for fundamental education and training in target communities to accompany tourism development. Local communities must develop strategies for receiving and interacting with tourists as well as displaying themselves and their visible culture (Reid, 2002). This involves finding the right balance between economic gain and cultural integrity.

This paper seeks to stress the key importance of local tour guides in CBT, especially when cultural tourism products are being developed. Because of the communicative power of tourism, representations of cultural heritage have direct and potentially significant influences on the peoples and communities who are being presented, represented and misrepresented. Any CBT program wishing to achieve sustainable success needs tour guides who are well trained and, if possible, local. If guides belong to the community in which the tourism activities are taking place, their insider positionality at least gives them the advantage of knowing what the cultural sensibilities are. This helps to avoid some of the problems discussed above. Professional training is needed, not only to improve guiding and hospitality skills, but also to make guides aware of complex ethical dilemmas, such as disjunctures between local conceptions of community and the ways in which those communities are imagined by visiting tourists. Anthropologists specializing in tourism can play

a pivotal role in these programs (Salazar, 2010). Training as such may not be enough to tackle all problems, but it certainly helps tour guides to take better-informed principled decisions about guiding tourists.

The challenge remains to develop forms of tourism that are acceptable to the various interest groups within communities and that are at the same time economically viable and environmentally sustainable. Professionally trained local guides, provided they receive enough incentives for their work (so that they remain motivated to stay), are one of the key elements to achieve sustainable CBT. Apart from providing tourists an unforgettable experience, they can be instrumental in helping communities to have more realistic expectations about tourism development. In the same way that tourism fantasies have a tendency to essentialize "the Other", people in developing countries like Tanzania have a tendency to essentialize tourists and the mythical developed world they come from. The presence of affluent visitors prompts yearnings for change based on an illusionary image of the "good life" abroad, but this also produces tensions between local projects (e.g. modernization vs. cultural conservation). Liminally positioned local guides and sociocultural anthropologists alike are best placed to turn the many challenges facing CBT into worthwhile opportunities and to do this in culturally sensitive ways.

Finally, this paper indirectly asks important questions about the long-term value of short-term projects developed by external agencies and stresses the need for effective exit/handover strategies to be created before the end of such programs.

Notes

1. The continuous process of "othering" peoples in cultural tourism has been extensively discussed in the scholarly literature (e.g. Aitchison, 2001; Bruner, 2005; Dann, 2004; Salazar, 2004, 2010; Van den Berghe, 1994).
2. Broadly defined, "alternative" forms of tourism refer to "those forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social and *community values* and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences" (Smith & Eadington, 1992, p. 3; emphasis added).
3. Manyara and Jones (2007) even argue that, through foreign resource control and heavy reliance on donor funding, CBT in developing countries promotes neo-colonialism and reinforces dependency.
4. The Maasai, speakers of the Eastern Nilotic Maa tonal language, are a widely dispersed group of seminomadic pastoralists and small-scale subsistence agriculturists who occupy semiarid/arid rangelands in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania – collectively known as Maasailand. In Tanzania, they are said to have lived in the Serengeti plains and Ngorongoro highlands for some two centuries. Alongside the wildlife, the Maasai are the flag bearers of Tanzanian tourism (Salazar, 2009a; Snyder & Sulle, 2011).
5. As the ethnographic examples of this paper illustrate, the qualifier "local" does not necessarily imply that guides are natives of the place where they operate (although they are habitually perceived as such by foreign tourists).

6. The notion of culture broker implies a model of discrete cultures, an assumption contemporary anthropology questions (e.g. Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). Despite criticism (Aramberri, 2001; Sherlock, 2001), the concept is still widely used within tourism studies, where tour guides and other tourism service providers are conceived as intermediaries – be it cultural (Scherle & Nonnenmann, 2008) or social (Jensen, 2010) – between dichotomized host and guest cultures.
7. The Meru people, who have traditionally been farmers, are settled around the base of Mt. Meru.
8. The Arusha people are originally from the foothills of Mt. Meru. Influenced by Maasai ancestry, they still use the Maasai age system and other elements of Maasai social organization. However, they have different clans and abandoned livestock herding in favour of settled cultivation.

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