TOURIST BEHAVIOUR

A Psychological Perspective

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Developmental Tourists vs. Development Tourism: A Case Study

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Introduction

> *"The tourist thought about how wonderful a picture he had taken—a dirty,*
> *scrawny, Balinese woman who was once a famous dancer...*
> *but now with her basket on her head, her skirt hitched up to her knees,*
> *her swollen feet, wearing an old t-shirt with the printed message: 'Paradise'."*

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Putu Oka Sukanta (2000)

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Tourism is believed to be one of the world's biggest industries and, despite terrorism and other threats, it is promoted as still having an enormous potential of global economic growth and employment. The World Travel and Tourism Council (2001) pointed out that tourism creates more than 10 per cent of the global economic output and one in ten jobs worldwide. The World Tourism Organization (2001) predicted that international 'arrivals' will reach 1 billion by the year 2010, pushing revenues to US $ 1,550 billion, nearly four times more than the current earnings. Not surprisingly, this worldwide expansion of tourism is the subject of massive propaganda.

The swift development of new types of tourism stands in a dialectic relation with the frequently shifting tastes of tourists. Different kinds of tourists seek different alternatives offered by the tourist industry. As a result, the tourism market is increasingly segmented. One could argue that choosing a particular form of tourism affirms tourists in their personal and socio-cultural identity, contrasting themselves with both the people of the destinations visited and with other tourists (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). In this way, tourism can be considered as the business of 'difference' par excellence. Besides, not each individual's experience of a tourist destination will be similar. The actual experience that tourists have is authentic for them and will impact on the self in a number of ways.
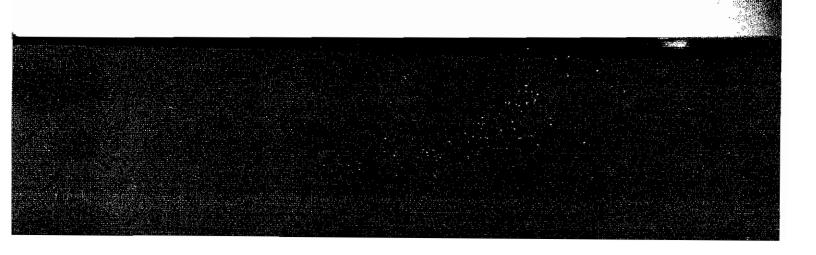
Before addressing development tourism it is necessary to delineate the theoretical framework that was used for this study. On a more general level, the different parties and brokers involved in the tourist encounter will be briefly described. As development tourism is a new type of tourism, a more in-depth analysis of so-called 'alternative' forms of tourism will follow.

International Tourists

It is as difficult to define a tourist or 'guest' as it is to describe tourism. For the tourism industry, the decision as to who is or is not a tourist is fairly simple and pragmatic. They usually define a tourist as "anyone who spends a certain amount of time or travels a specified distance away from home" (E. Chambers, 2000, p. 18). However, there are clear differences between international and domestic tourists (see Ghimire, 2001). Besides, when thinking of other kinds of 'travellers'—refugees, immigrants, and other displaced people—it becomes clear that this definition is too broad. A tourist can be conceptualized through the dimensions of experience and activity; what it is to be a tourist and what it is to act as a tourist. Accordingly, there are many tourist typologies. The importance of these typologies lies in the fact that the broad diversity of tourists and tourist experiences is highlighted and that an insight is provided into the motivations of tourists and their behaviour. While each typology has added something to our understanding of tourists, we need more than a mere classification to come to a deeper understanding of tourists. Besides, as many classifications are simplistic, and usually not based on empirical evidence, they have become less useful over time in analyzing tourist behaviour and motivation (Selwyn, 1996, p. 6).

Although there is agreement on the fact that tourism is socially generated, the social conditions associated with the tendency to venture abroad are not well understood. Issues of race and class, for example, are often obscured (Munt, 1994a). Tourism studies needs a critical examination of the relationships between tourism and social class—itself interconnected with generation, gender, and ethnicity. A thorough history of the development of tourism requires paying as much attention to the social and cultural conditions of tourists' ordinary, non-tourist lives as to their choices of tourism styles and destinations. In other words, it is as important to pay attention to where tourists are coming from, including their cultural background, as it is to look at where they are going. According to Nelson Graburn (1983, p. 1), for example, there is a "necessary relationship between the two 'spheres of life'—work and home vs. leisure and travel". Stated differently, tourism developments can be seen as a reflection of changes in more essential or basal aspects of a society (Dann, 2002). Merging insights from market segmentation research and anthropology could be very rewarding here.

The study of tourist motivation is an important dimension of tourism research, but methodologically adequate studies are practically non-existent. A possible reason for this might be the fact that tourist motivations are very complex and often incompatible. Besides, there are huge variations according to the type of tourism. Accepting that one of the main motivations of tourists is leisure, relaxing,

or 'not working', many believe that tourism in general can offer a chance for self-reflection, learning, and personal transition—with the bonus that knowledge and understanding of the 'other' can endow societal respect. Tourists can therefore be seen as "observers who gaze into the elsewhere and the other, while looking for their own reflection" (Galani-Moutafi, 2000, p. 220).

If tourists are recreated or renewed even a little bit by their touring, it is not clear what the effect of this—and of learning through meeting the 'other'— might be on their home society. Up to now, there has not been a lot of research on the persistence of attitude change due to tourism (Nash, 1996, pp. 50-54). More studies are needed before we can accept with any confidence the notion that tourism of whatever kind has consequences of significance for the tourist and the home society. In any case, too many journeys are too short, too superficial and have qualities too much like home to result in enduring personal transformations (Kottler, 1997). Edward Bruner offered a negative critique of the aspirations for the self offered by tourism advertising, arguing that "in the tourist encounter, the tourist self is modified very little while the native self experiences profound change" (1991, p. 248) as a result of the neo-colonial nature of tourist interactions.

Tourist Destination Residents

The people living and working in tourist destinations are often referred to as 'hosts' (*e.g.* Smith & Brent, 2001). This generally conveys the idea that resident populations are willing partners in the tourist activity. In some instances, this may be the case, in others not. Attitudes towards tourism held by local residents vary according to the distance from tourism centres and, by extension, familiarity with the tourism industry, as indicated by the frequency with which tourists are observed within the home villages. The perceived direct and indirect economic gain and impact of tourism also plays a role here. Of course, there may be divergent views on tourism within a single community (Cohen, 2003). That is the reason why considering 'local people' as an undifferentiated mass is not very helpful. 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).

Destination communities commonly come under pressure when tourism develops. Foreign values, money, and good inevitably alter the cultural landscape, sometimes permanently. Demonstration effects, for example, are changes in attitudes, values, or behaviour that can result from merely observing tourists. Critics of tourism development have consistently rounded upon cultural 'bastardization', 'trinketization', the destruction of cultures, and so on. However, cultures themselves are never fully internally consistent, and 'traditional' societies are not necessarily homogeneous in social structure, nor are they always in conflict with 'developed' forms and therefore liable to be destroyed by change. In other words, cultures are durable, but not static. Every culture changes in dialogue with changing economic and socio-political circumstances and with other cultures with which it is brought into contact. There is a need to recognize cultural forms

and differences not as continuity with prior traditions, but as novel forms which arise through and are the very product of global socio-cultural flows such as tourism.
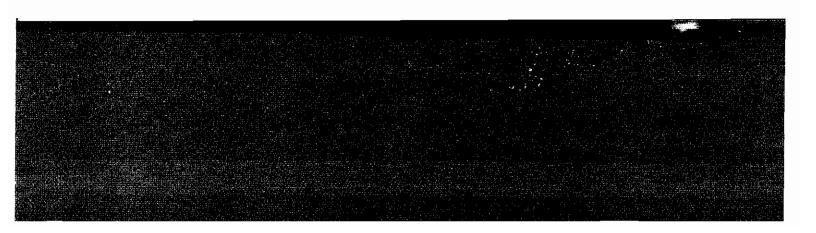
The Tourist Encounter and the Role of Culture Brokers

Tourists are usually thought to enjoy themselves, rarely gaining more than a superficial acquaintance with the 'hosts' and not very much being interested in really understanding them. In the case of international tourism, coming to grips with the problems of a developing country is in itself difficult and thus interferes with the desired pleasures of the vacation. In a similar way, 'hosts' are often not interested in meeting the 'guests'. When 'guests' arrive at the destination, they bring with them different beliefs and behaviours, and 'hosts' also have certain ideas about 'guests'. If 'hosts' and 'guests' have dramatically different views about acceptable behaviour, standards, or perceptions about morals and what constitutes 'proper' behaviour, problems can arise, ranging from minor and almost amusing misunderstandings to major disasters.

One could argue that 'hosts' and 'guests' create stereotypes about each other—both before and while meeting each other. These stereotypes frame the temporary relationships that arise. In this sense, tourism functions as a way of representing the world to ourselves and to others, and one of the principal avenues through which our world-views are shaped. This process of creating and interpreting other peoples and places is referred to sociologically as the "process of othering" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 73; see also Said, 1994).

The simplistic host-guest model has recently come under attack because it does not meet the challenges of explaining contemporary tourism. Favouring a static and exclusionary vision of cultures, it does not fully address the complex interactions between different cultures and their global environments (Aramberri, 2001; Cohen, 2003; Sherlock, 2001). Tourism has become such a significant dimension of global social life that it can no longer be conceived of as merely what happens at tourist destinations and encounters involving tourists away from home. It is, first of all, a complex socio-cultural phenomenon based on the production and consumption of commodities—services in this case—that are exchanged via transnational market relations (Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). The host-guest paradigm excludes from our attention all the interactions that do not take place between tourists and those providing touristic services. These interactions are nevertheless the overwhelming bulk of tourism.

We should not forget that tourism is a highly mediated activity. Travel agencies, for example, play important roles in determining where tourists go as well as what they see and do and when they arrive at their destinations. Also travel warnings—mostly issued by Western governments against travelling to certain developing countries—heavily influence the choice of a 'safe' tourist destination. The tourist encounter itself is often set up through the negotiation of so-called culture brokers, tourism facilitators or cross-cultural mediators (Nettekoven, 1979; Smith, 2001). Culture brokers are primary decision-makers, selectively identifying segments of the destination culture content to be shared with the tourists.

There are several categories of brokers. At the local level, guides and interpreters are culture brokers, but as tourism has grown from a business to an industry, others including travel agents, accommodation providers, government at all levels, and international agencies have assumed the leadership. However, tour guides still dominate the tourist front stage. 'Local guides' are often the only members of the local community with whom tourists spend time. However, 'local' tour guides are not necessarily natives of the tourist destination. They might, for example, be from the same country but come from another region or belong to a different ethnic group.

Although emphasized in much of the literature on guiding, the goal of guides is not necessarily becoming a bridge actor, defined as someone who flattens cultural differences and gets rid of other obstacles which occur wherever tourism enters new domains. Besides, local guides are mostly inadequately prepared and trained for this difficult task. They generally lack a profound knowledge of the societies of the foreign tourists, while foreign guides often know little about the wider society of the tourist destination. In order to understand their strategies, it can be more useful to look at local tourist guides as being small entrepreneurs who, not always successfully, sell their services to a varied group of visitors.

Contemporary 'Alternative' Forms of Tourism

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, 1995, p. 3). Alternative forms of tourism encompass a wide range of connotations: tourists characterized by particular motivations; tourist practices; a tourist product; levels of technology; solutions to planning; local, regional, national, or international politics; a strategy for development. It is important to note that seeking alternatives to mainstream tourism is a contemporary but by no means a novel theme (see Löfgren, 1999).

An 'Alternative' to What?

Although alternative forms of tourism are usually proportionately small relative to other forms of tourism, they are significant in terms of both the claims that are made about them and the rate at which they are growing. In part, their development resulted from the need to address problems associated with 'mass tourism' (Turner & Ash, 1975). Alternative forms of tourism are proposed as more appropriate for developing countries than traditional mainstream tourism because they aim to capture the benefits of tourism while eschewing its excesses. Many believe that such tourism may be particularly useful in fostering positive development, based on the converging interests of developing economies, local populations, cultural and environmental sustainability, and the tourists themselves. According to Karl Vorlaufer (1996, pp. 46-47), alternative forms of tourism structurally grew out of two difficulties of mainstream tourism: the

alienating accommodation and the difficulty to get in touch with destination communities. Economically, they were a response to the increasingly diverse preferences of different kinds of tourists.
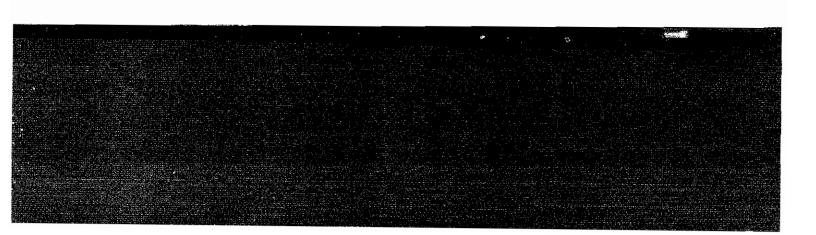
However, even here there are those who suspect that alternative forms of tourism are just the old tourism in new jargon (see Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Alternative forms of tourism have, indeed, been viewed too benevolently and few critiques have emerged. In any case, it is essential to challenge the tacit assumption that the emergence of alternative forms of tourism is both designed for, and will result in, surmounting the problems that have been identified in mainstream tourism. Besides, alternative forms of tourism are simply not possible without a global system of transport and infrastructure capable of moving people from one destination to another.

Characteristics of Tourists Choosing Alternative Forms of Tourism

As working and living conditions change, so do tourism priorities. Graburn (1983, p. 24) argued that "changes in tourist styles are not random, but are connected to class competition, prestige hierarchies, and the succession of changing life styles, as well as to external factors such as the cost and modes of transportation, access to regions and countries, and the state of the economy". According to Jost Krippendorf (1987), these new circumstances are favouring a tourism market that emphasizes the socio-environmental context and focuses on the 'humanization' of tourism, using descriptions such as 'cultural exchanges' and 'interaction experiences'. Tourist values of individuality and self-realization are replacing those of comfort and rationality. Segmentation, flexibility, and customization are replacing packaging and standardization. If all of this is true, some tourists at least are no longer content simply to remain on their hotel compound, despite its new and clean appearance (Neumann, 1993).

Western tourists choosing alternative forms of tourism to developing countries seem to come from a specific pool of people. Empirical studies (*e.g.* Vorlaufer, 1996, p. 43) have produced the following characterization of those people: (1) people between 20-49 years, the group of 20-29 years and men being proportionately high represented; (2) people with a relatively high monthly income and a high profile of formal education (language proficiency); (3) people belonging to the higher social 'classes'; (4) people active in politics, with an interest in culture and who like to travel; (5) people who believe themselves to be more conscious of ecological problems; and (6) people interested in the experiential and educative aspects of travelling ('collecting' new experiences, broadening their horizon).

Furthermore, many of these tourists: (1) carefully prepare their travel by informing themselves on the social and political situation of the country to be visited and the life of the local people; (2) want to know more during their travel about the development aid given and want to have contact with the local people, in order to get to know their social and economical problems and their culture; (3) want to explore the visited country more by own initiatives than organized tours; and (4) prefer staying in local hotels and pensions to big

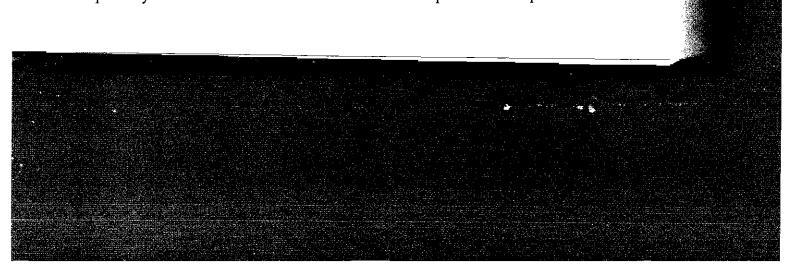international hotels. It is obvious that not all so-called 'alternative tourists' perfectly fit in this description.

Post-Modern Views on Alternative Forms of Tourism

Chris Rojek (1993), Tom Selwyn (1996), Ian Munt (1994b), and John Urry (2002), among others, have applied post-modern views on tourism. According to these scholars, a number of key characteristics of post-modernism are highly relevant to the analysis of tourism: the emergence of specialist agents and tour operators (and its adjunct, more individually centered and flexible holidays); the de-differentiation of tourism as it becomes associated with other activities; and the growth of interest in 'other' cultures, environments and their association with the emergence of new social movements (Gard McGehee, 2002). Tourism can be considered as prefiguratively post-modern because of its particular combination of the visual, the aesthetic, the commercial, and the popular.

According to post-modern views, contemporary alternative forms of tourism help us trace the relationships with new types of consumers (the new middle classes), new types of political movements (new socio-environmental movements and NGOs) and new forms of economic organization (post-Fordism). Most alternative tourists reject certain forms of mass tourism, have diverse preferences, seek many alternative sites and attractions, and have insatiable requirements to explore their 'identities'. This acceptance of multiple and subject-to-change identities stands in sharp contrast with the earlier age of modernity, when identities appeared to be more stable (Bauman, 1996). Tourists through their displacements are looking for what they feel their own society has lost—nature, purity, wisdom or freedom. The search for identity rekindles the uncorrupted nearly perfect society (Lanfant, 1995, p. 35). When they go away they encounter, in guise of an ideal identity, the idealized identity which they have in their heads.

According to Erik Cohen (1995, pp. 16-17), alternative tourists are more reflexive on the effects of tourism upon the destination community (which might also explain the success of the new socio-environmental movements). Nevertheless, alternative forms of tourism have also been caricatured as "ego-tourism"—a smug, up-market restyling of the same old tourism model (Munt, 1994a). Munt cited tourist brochure after brochure as proof of the neo-colonialist atmosphere these alternative forms of tourism to developing countries seem to be. He kept propounding that all the so-called 'cultural preservation', for example, is part of an excuse for Western bourgeois travellers to make themselves feel more worldly and better, essentially through a sort of catharsis. The relative popularity of new and far-distant destinations lies in the accumulation of cultural capital—or the ability to demonstrate 'taste' (Bourdieu, 1984)—where long-haul tourism is used to construct the identities of new class fractions among the middle classes of the developed world.

Alternative tourists often contrast their morally justifiable means of travel with the morally reprehensible practices of so-called 'mass tourists'. The moral superiority of their tourism comes from the idea that it provides an experience
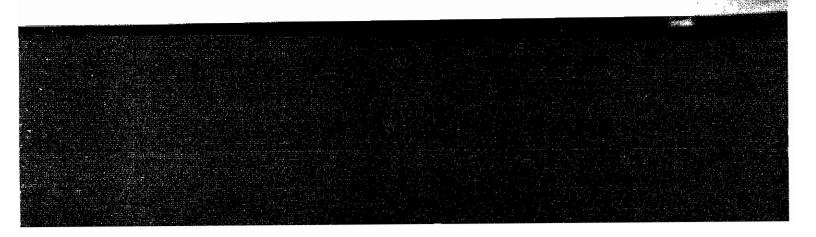
of the culture of the host country rather than its destruction. Problems are blamed on the kind of holidays taken by less affluent members of the affluent developed world who do not understand that the true purpose of travel is to experience 'otherness'. Much alternative tourism can be seen as an expression of the new middle-classes' hegemonic struggle for cultural and class superiority.

As being named a '(mass) tourist' is considered the worst kind of insult, the alternative tourist prefers to call him/herself a 'traveller'. Travelling is associated with 'discovering'—adventure, expeditions—and a resource in the endeavour of self-realization, whereas tourism is associated with 'recognizing'—visits, circuits—and confirming one's view of the world rather than really transforming it (Rojek, 1993, p. 175; Urbain, 1993, p. 73). The term 'traveller' assumes that it is no longer a process of tourism with which the individual is engaged, but a considerably more de-differentiated, esoteric, and individualized form of activity. A second order of tourism is built on the first, a kind of "anti-tourism", which promises real as opposed to tourist experiences (Löfgren, 1999, p. 266). In order to legitimize and authenticate this 'travel' experience, tourism experiences are 'aestheticized' in two important reports. In the first place, there is the dual requirement to make trips both purposeful and distinguishable from those of the average tourist. Travel is considered as purposeful, tourism is not. Secondly, there is a desire to experience 'primitive' cultures, but also a desire to experience 'real' poverty and dicey situations. MacCannell labelled the latter as "negative sightseeing" (1999, p. 40).

The advocacy of the need to protect cultures finds strong resonance in the colonialism and romanticism of the past, a kind of racism that celebrates 'primitiveness'. Many affluent tourists who embark on so-called 'alternative' trips are there, not to have a mutually beneficial exchange with the local people, but because they want to feel good about their adventure and pump up the brag factor. Philanthropic aspirations often mask hard-nosed, immediate self-interest. Not a few alternative tourists, for example, object to having to pay a higher entrance fee than local people for access to protected areas, thereby betraying an ignorance of the social, cultural, and economic ramifications of their position of wealthy foreign visitor.

There has always been a nagging inadequacy around the assertion that one cannot sell poverty, but one can sell paradise. Today, the tourist industry does sell poverty. The so-called 'reality tours' organized by the San Francisco based organization *Global Exchange* are just one example (Michel, 2000, p. 242). In Calcutta, many tour operators offer tours into the slums (Hutnyk, 1996, p. 207) and in Rio de Janeiro one can go on a 'favela tour'. What is unacceptable at home suddenly becomes acceptable when transgressing imaginary, mental, cultural borders. Tourists need to go and see elsewhere that, in the end, their own life is not so bad. In this sense, every voyage, every confrontation with 'otherness', can be said to involve a re-siting of boundaries of identity and difference. In this process, the visual element seems to be very important. Tourist productions of all sorts focus on what the tourist 'sees' (Little, 1991). This might be partly because it is much easier to describe visual impressions than impressions from the other senses (Urry, 2002, pp. 152-156). Tourists are not just looking; other senses also interact in this making of a vision (Franklin and Crang, 2001; Meethan, 2001, p. 88). It is

only that these other senses have not kept up with the "verbalization and technologization" of the visual (Löfgren, 1999, p. 85). Or, as Alain de Botton put it, "it is easy for us to forget ourselves when we contemplate pictorial and verbal descriptions of places" (2002, p. 18).

When discussing the tourist experience, it is thus always necessary to talk about the act of looking. Alternative forms of tourism give the Western middle classes the opportunity to 'see' other cultures in developing countries, especially while visiting peoples' settlements. Alternative tourists are anticipating the disappearance of certain cultural groups or see the paved roads encroaching upon the 'off-the-beaten-track' destinations and want to see the last remnants of 'otherness' before they are (supposedly) gone. In this sense, alternative forms are not at all different from other forms of tourism. They also spur 'exotic' people to preserve their customs and traditions, and then use them as tourist products to offer on the market. In many cases, the peoples visited are treated as objects to be viewed, a process that might be called "zooification" (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, pp. 246-248).
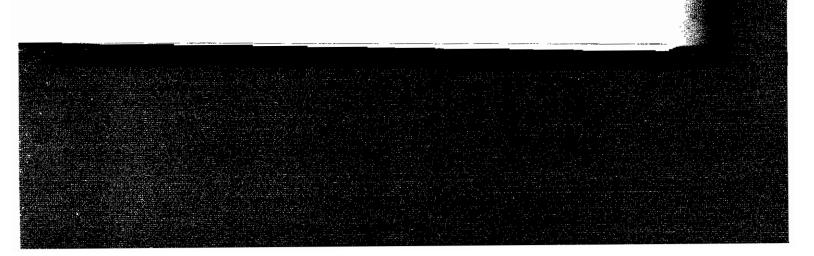
While some alternative tourists acknowledge the inevitability of social change within developing countries, they overlook the degree to which it has already occurred. Their belief that developing countries should develop is consistent with the typically middle class context from which these tourists have come (Errington & Gewertz, 1989). This is the reason why the alternative tourism industry depicts tourism as a modernizing force in developing countries, a force that is believed not to threaten the 'primitiveness' of peoples. Their image caters to the tourists' ambitions to see a changing but as yet unchanged, 'primitive'.

Development Tourism: A Case Study*

Very often, Western development NGOs are embedded in tourism, but not necessarily consciously so. This is clear, for example, in the case of NGOs dealing with displaced and marginalized people—something which also tourism development is prone to be responsible for; human rights organizations working on child sexual abuse, forced labour and migration; organizations dealing with land issues; and women's and other people's organizations working on handicraft production, sustainable management of resources and employment issues. A recent European survey (Kalish, 2001) revealed a surprisingly low level of strategic NGO involvement in tourism in developing countries. This might be explained by the fact that NGOs see mainly the negative aspects of international tourism.

Increasingly more NGOs, however, agree that abolishing tourism is impossible and that the only way out is to help making it a fairer industry (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, pp. 168-170). Some NGOs already help and fulfil monitoring functions in the development of tourism. They (1) provide credit and non-financial services for micro-enterprise; (2) build the capacity of residents to assess tourism options, contribute to planning, and implement their chosen options; (3) facilitate communication and negotiation between tourism businesses and local people; and (4) take time to understand tourism businesses so that they are well positioned to advise or mediate on combining commercial and developmental goals (NWHO, 1999, p. 25).

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* A more complete rendering of this case study can be found in Salazar (2002).

Several Western tour operators have alliances with local or international development NGOs and the trips these tour operators sell sometimes include visits to project sites, usually with a strong educational orientation (NWHO, 1999, p. 11). Many of these operators are small and driven by personal social philosophies, hoping not only to make a living while contributing, but also to serve as examples for larger operators. Some development NGOs themselves are actively involved in tourism, by organizing tours for their staff, volunteers, and benefactors to the projects they fund abroad. These field trips can be named 'development tourism'. This particular form of alternative tourism can be situated somewhere in between 'cultural tourism' and 'ethnic tourism'. One could also classify it under "edu-tourism" (Holdnak & Holland, 1996), as learning is one of the mean objectives of the journeys. Development tourism also shares some similarities with overseas study or volunteer programmes (Wearing, 2002) as the people associated with these programmes often cite personal development and knowledge about other cultures—cultural immersion—as one of the principal goals of their stay abroad (Debusscher, 2000).

Methodology

In order to analyze development tourism, the case study method was chosen. The research focused on the *'Culture & Project Journeys'* (CPJs) organized by the Flemish development NGO *Vredeseilanden* ('Islands of Peace'). The CPJs were a 3-year pilot-project in collaboration with the Flemish tour-operator *Joker Tourism*. Since *Vredeseilanden* itself evaluated the first two years of the project (Van Walleghem, 2002), this research was limited to the last four CPJs, undertaken in 2001 to Senegal, Costa Rica, Tanzania and Benin.

All 31 CPJ participants received an extensive questionnaire and an invitation to participate in a semi-structured interview. The Flemish tour leaders sent an extensive written report of each journey. In addition, the conception, preparation materials, and evaluation of the tours by *Vredeseilanden* itself were carefully analyzed. What is missing to make this research more complete is some participatory observation and interviews with people living in the destination communities. Plans to participate in one CPJ in 2002 had to be cancelled because *Vredeseilanden* unexpectedly decided to stop the pilot project.

The data obtained from the tourist questionnaires helped to get a better idea of which kind of people choose for development tourism as a way to spend their holidays. Of the 31 participants contacted, 22 participants (71 %) sent the questionnaire back. Out of this 22, seven (32 %) accepted to be interviewed and another 12 (55 %) accepted to answer additional questions by phone or e-mail. The seven semi-structured interviews contain many useful data that complement and refine the findings of the questionnaire. The data were analyzed with the help of *Atlas.ti*, a popular software package for visual qualitative data analysis (Muhr, 1997), using a self-created coding system.

Background Information

To understand what the CPJs were about, it is necessary to describe how these journeys arose and which organizations are behind them. The Flemish development NGO *Vredeseilanden* painstakingly tries to make people more aware of international development issues. They do this via educational activities but also through organizing tours. The CPJs grew out of so-called 'exposure trips'. Through these trips, *Vredeseilanden* offered their committed volunteers the opportunity to visit projects in Africa or Latin America. The NGO hoped that afterwards the volunteers would be better equipped to engage in local actions and campaigns. However, slowly the idea grew to also start organizing tours for a broader public. In 1998, *Vredeseilanden* contacted the Flemish tour leader association *Karavaan*, and together they started developing the new tour concept.

The CPJs wanted to build bridges between Flemish people and people in the 'South', and this in a more conscious manner than through an average tourist trip. By linking Flemish teachers, for example, with teachers from developing countries, *Vredeseilanden* tried to give both groups a more realistic view on each other. The organization sees a correct image building as an important condition for mutual understanding. With the CPJs it hoped to reach new target groups in order to make more people sensible for the problems surrounding development aid.

On the one hand, the CPJ participants visited local development projects. The idea was to not surcharge the project by just sending tourists along. The plan to organize this kind of trips arose in close dialogue with the local partners. Some were very enthusiast, others agreed under certain conditions. Everyone acknowledged the importance of a thorough evaluation of the journeys. Apart from visiting projects, the journeys also included visits to the most interesting regional landmarks. In this way tourism and cultural activities were combined with the visit to development projects, contact with the local partners of *Vredeseilanden* and the people involved in the projects. The visits were as much as possible guided by local guides. In addition, accommodation and meals were trusted to local pensions and small restaurants. If possible and appropriate, the group of tourists stayed in the villages. In this way, *Vredeseilanden* hoped that most of the money spent would go directly to the local communities.

Questionnaire Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaires reveals that we have to do with a rather heterogeneous group of tourists. Most homogeneity can be found in the high level of education, an element also mentioned in the research conducted by *Vredeseilanden* (Van Walleghem, 2002, p. 11). The profile of the average CPJ tourist corresponds well with Vorlaufer's (1996, p. 43) description of alternative tourists (see above). The age range of CPJ tourists covers the whole so-called 'active population', the average age being 40. There is an important sub-group of tourists

between 20 and 29 years. However, the average age is older than in Vorlaufer's research, mainly because of a second sub-group of tourists older than 50 years.

Vorlaufer reported men being proportionately high represented. In our pool of tourists, men and women were equally represented, whereas in the research of *Vredeseilanden* there were more women. The groups of CPJ tourists under research are too small to conclude anything about a possible gender bias. Another contrast with Vorlaufer's research is the fact that only a minority of the CPJ tourists is active in politics back home. Nevertheless, most participants can be called active citizens in a variety of ways. Three tourists were volunteers for *Vredeseilanden* before the journey, while half of the group was already financially supporting the NGO.

For most tourists, the CPJ was not their first trip outside Europe. More than half of the group has no intention at all to ever return to the place visited. Most people, however, are interested in making another CPJ. It is also noteworthy that nine respondents claim to have prepared themselves for the journey in no other way than attending the special information sessions provided by *Vredeseilanden*. For most tourists, it is important to share their travel experiences back home, mainly through pictures and, in a lesser extent, through traveller tales and diaries. Almost everybody agreed with the statement that they were interested in other cultures.

There is almost no (subjective) behavioural or attitudinal change reported. This might be because most respondents were already very interested in themes such as development aid and intercultural issues before the trip. For them, the journey rather confirmed their previous attitudes and behaviours. Many, however, claimed that the CPJ helped them to get a more nuanced view on development-related issues, even if this has little or no effect on intended engagements in the future.

As far as culture contacts are concerned, most respondents indicated that they had much more personal contact with other tourists—their fellow CPJ tourists included—and expatriates than with local people during the journey. Qualitatively, the few contacts with the local people were more often described as superficial or functional (out of practical necessity) than as deeper contacts. Most tourists also stayed in touch with each other after the trip. Six respondents stayed in touch with local people they met during the trip. Less than half of the group would accept to receive a visit from local' people they met on their trip. Although all respondents speak three or more languages, this did not always enable them to have direct contact with the local people, as often the tourists did not speak the language(s) of the places visited.

Analysis of the Semi-Structured Interviews

The most recurring and striking thoughts as expressed by the tourists can be grouped under four broad categories: (1) ideas related to the CPJ itself; (2) ideas related to what the tourists have learned from their CPJ; (3) ideas related to culture contacts; and (4) ideas related to tourism and development.

1. *The 'Culture & Project' journey: A distinct(ive) kind of tourism*

As described earlier, the CPJ can be classified as an alternative kind of tourism. People partly chose for these journeys because of its unique formula. Most of the tourists interviewed had already travelled outside Europe and were looking for a new experience, distinct from what they had done before. This corresponds with Löfgren's observation that some tourists are in "constant search of sights and attractions, impressions, events, or adventure" (1999, p. 14). The *'Culture and Project'* journeys offered people a convenient and secure 'off-the-beaten-track' experience. Tourists also chose for this kind of holiday in order to distinguish themselves from other types of tourists, mainly 'mass tourists'. In practice, however, enacting their role as 'alternative tourists' proved to be quite difficult.

Nearly all tourists interviewed failed to show a special interest in the CPJ or the visited country as such. Although some indicated a broad regional interest, most indicated that they were mainly searching for a new experience, something distinct(ive). As discussed above, alternative tourists make their trip distinguishable from those of the average tourist as part of the 'aestheticization' of their experience (Mowforth and Munt, 2003, pp. 69-78). The lack of focused interest in the country visited fits well in the strategy of certain tourists to collect as many destinations—and experiences—as possible. Collecting destinations implies that there is little or no time to ever return to a place once visited.

A characteristic of the CPJs—and most other alternative forms of tourism— is that tourists travel in small groups. Although some interviewees are not sure whether this is the best way of travelling (compared to travelling alone), they chose for this option out of convenience, not having to worry about the practical aspects of the journey and feeling pretty secure. Although a CPJ group can be very mixed, with people from different backgrounds, nearly everybody considered this as enriching rather than problematic. Having at least nationality in common gave them a feeling of security and created a kind of invisible cultural bond. Another reason to travel in a group, at least in this particular case, is the belief that it is otherwise impossible to get access to the areas visited. In other words, *Vredeseilanden* offered tourists a unique 'off-the-beaten-track' experience.

Most tourists interviewed expressed a pronounced dislike of so-called 'mass tourism'. They certainly did not identify with it. In fact, there was a noticeable tension concerning their own role as a tourist. On the one hand, people recognized that they were just tourists; on the other hand, they wanted to prove that they were something more (better?) than mere tourists. They illustrated this by the fact that they could bear the lack of comfort. The experienced ambiguity in tourist role can be linked to another vagueness, specific for development tourism. Some tourists had the impression that the local people pushed them in the role of an official NGO representative. According to the external evaluator of the research done by *Vredeseilanden* (Van Walleghem, 2002, pp. 24-26), this ambiguity partly reflects the tension between travelling—the aim of the tourist—and sensitization— the aim of the organizing NGO.

The tourists often did not know how to react to local people who were asking favours and looking up to them as rich Westerners. This experienced discomfort tells us more about the unequal relation between tourists and local people, than the fact that the journey was organized by an NGO. The opinions concerning the accompanying Flemish tour leader were divided. Some considered the tour leader as the one responsible for all practical aspects of the trip. Others expected the tourist leader to be a real 'culture broker', helping the group to lessen the 'culture shock'.
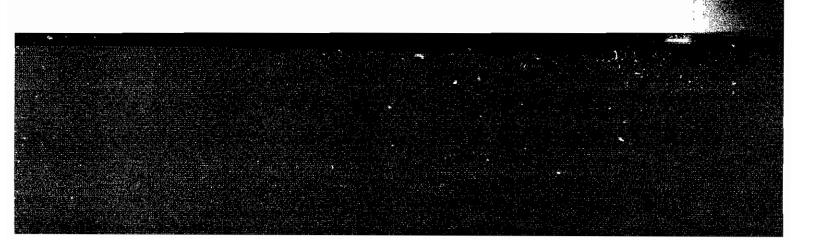
2. *Learning while travelling: Educative and experiential motivations*

Development tourists opt to leave their comfortable life at home behind for a short visit to the often harsh reality of developing countries. As the tourists were introduced in a very different environment, it was expected by the organizing NGO that they would learn from this confronting experience. *Vredeseilanden* hoped that the visits to their development projects would lead to an increased commitment of the tourists back home. The CPJs indeed offered the tourists an intense experience and people returned back home with an enriched view on development aid. However, the journeys did not have a lasting behavioural impact.

NGOs such as *Vredeseilanden* somehow hope that participation in development tourism might permanently change people's behaviour once back home. Nevertheless, as seen in the literature, the net effect of short-term experiences on behaviour seems to be minimal. The tourists interviewed confirmed this. Although *Vredeseilanden* considered the CPJs as a form of edu-tourism, only few tourists explicitly acknowledged the fact that they went on a journey in order to learn something. There were multiple opinions on the supposed motives of *Vredeseilanden*. On the one hand, tourists mentioned the point of making development aid tangible by visiting projects and meeting local project leaders. On the other hand, the importance of the financial aspect (fund raising) was stressed.

Even if a CPJ did not fundamentally change the behaviour of the tourist, he or she certainly experienced many new things. The *Atlas.ti* data-analysis revealed how tourists predominantly used visual metaphors when describing their journey, hereby stressing the importance of the "tourist gaze" (Urry, 2002) in their total experience. Seeing with your own eyes places that you might have seen before in a glossy magazine or on television is one thing, proving that you really were there another. An important part of the tourist gaze consists in taking pictures—the proof of 'having been there'. Respecting local attitudes concerning photography was something heavily stressed during the preparation of the journey. Tourists reacted in different ways.

It is remarkable that only one tourist referred to the other senses while describing what going on a CPJ meant to her. It might be no surprise that it was a woman doing so. Feminist scholars (*e.g.* Lupton, 1998) have stressed the importance of embodiment, or the way we live in and interpret our bodies. It is a concept that has been largely ignored in the male oriented literature on tourism

where tourists often appear as disembodied minds (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994). Tourists are indeed too often stereotyped as all eyes, no bodies—and sometimes no brains.

3. Culture contacts: The genuineness of meeting 'others'

CPJ tourists claimed their interest in other cultures and their longing to meet the 'other' to be major motivations to embark on the journey. The interviews nicely revealed how these motivations are surrounded by much ambiguity and how 'meeting the other' was often reduced to 'seeing the other'. The tourists themselves indicated that the contact with local people was not as intense as they had expected it to be, the lack of a common language being one of the main barriers. Communication problems were seen as the main reason for the poor quality of contact with local people. Even if all participants spoke a few languages, almost nobody had actually studied the local language(s).

One of the most common motivations mentioned for choosing a CPJ is to have closer and deeper contacts with local people. The *Atlas.ti* analysis correspondingly showed a large number of interview quotations related to culture contact. This culture contact is believed by some to be a tool that fosters peace and understanding between people. However, the initial expectations concerning culture contacts were not always met. Such contacts are hard to direct and predict, and the tourists' wish to 'come close to the people' blinded them to the often condescending nature of their project. It would be interesting to do more research on the initial expectations, in order to find out which kind of contact tourists exactly expected and anticipated. In any case, from the interviews it appeared that the quality of the culture contacts taking place during CPJs was not very different from those occurring in other tourism contexts.

Nearly all interviewees indicated that they only desired temporary contacts with local people. In this sense, the post-modern view on people choosing alternative forms of tourism is adequate. The tourists were more interested in treating 'exotic' people as objects to be viewed—not excluding a brief chat— than as people they really would like to know better. Besides, there was a clear tension between making time for 'meeting' local people and wanting to 'see' as much as possible of the country visited. Despite the proclaimed interest in other cultures, almost none of the tourists interviewed had contact with foreigners living in their home country, Belgium. Political correctness, however, forced them to state that they were certainly not against contacts with foreigners at home.

4. Tourism and development: Personal theories and ideas

Even if the CPJ did not have a real transformative effect on the tourists, everybody acknowledged having more insight in the way international development aid works. The input of *Vredeseilanden* in fine-tuning these personal views was very evident from the kind of discourse used. As anticipated, tourists considered their own alternative form of tourism as a good example of tourism that benefits the destination community. The importance given to the concept of authenticity

indicates the ambiguity tourists felt between development and sustainability (conservation). It illustrates the fact that there are different kinds of tourists. In certain situations and for certain tourists, the search for the authentic may be the focus; for others in other settings, a more relaxed attitude may be the goal, even an enjoyment of the "real fake" which, according to Löfgren (1999, p. 261), is not at all a post-modern innovation.

According to the tourists interviewed, the CPJ did change their notions of international development aid. Their personal ideas on development bathe in the fashionable language of 'participation' and 'empowerment'. The tourists heard this discourse both during the preparatory sessions of *Vredeseilanden* in Belgium and during the journey itself. Most tourists indicated not to have had elaborate ideas on development aid before the journey. Further research could indicate whether they really developed a new personal theory on development or whether they just copied the discourse they heard from *Vredeseilanden*. Having to discuss about development aid issues during the trip was not always that well received. Most tourists considered the CPJ more as a relaxing holiday than a pure educational-intellectual trip.

As far as international tourism is concerned, there are many doubts among the tourists interviewed whether it benefits local people. Particularly 'mass tourism' is judged as an evil-doer. Some have a more nuanced view and prefer not to judge themselves but let the local communities decide. Most tourists considered their own CPJ to be a type of tourism that benefits the local people. This conviction corresponds with the idea many alternative tourists have of their own form of tourism. Some tourists admitted that the journey chiefly served their own purpose: enhancing personal development and self-realization ('ego-tourism'). Following their line of thought, it would make more sense, at least from the tourists' point of view, to talk about 'development(al) tourism' instead of 'development tourism'.

It is noteworthy that many interviewees spontaneously linked questions concerning tourism and development with the notion of authenticity. They were very worried that the unique character of the places they visited would disappear. Although all tourists acknowledged the importance of tourism as a tool for local development, they at the same time argued that tourism development should not threaten the authenticity (or primitiveness?) of local people.

Discussion

Two decades ago, Robert Chambers (1983, pp. 13-22) criticized development professionals visiting rural projects, especially their anti-poverty biases. These biases were recognized as: spatial (visits near cities, on roadsides and to the centres of villages, to the neglect of peripheries); project (where projects were being undertaken, often with special official attention and support); person (meeting men more than women, elites more than the poor, the users more than the non-users of services, and so on); seasonal (going in the dry and cool rather than hot and wet seasons which are often worse for poor rural people); and diplomatic (where the outsider does not wish to cause offence by asking to meet

poor people or see bad conditions). All these often combined to hide the worst poverty and deprivation. With development(al) tourism, these problems seem to have transferred from development specialists to tourists. Indeed, we could easily apply most elements of Chamber's criticism to development(al) tourism in general, and to the CPJs in particular.

The NGO *Vredeseilanden* started the CPJ project in the hope that it would make a difference: bringing Western tourists in contact with developing countries, and this in a more conscious manner than through an average superficial holiday. Implicitly, the NGO had hoped that their tourists—once they had personally experienced the complexities of international development aid—would engage more easily in development actions and campaigns at home. This did not happen. We have to recognize that *Vredeseilanden* meticulously prepared both the CPJs and the tourists themselves. However, one could raise questions regarding the net socio-economic gain of the journeys for the local people. Although they earned some extra money by receiving the tourists, the whole project was too small in order to make a significant and permanent contribution. Is it not contradictory then that a development NGO organizes an 'alternative' trip, with a focus on sustainable development, without implementing these ideas and making that the journeys themselves contribute in a more sustainable way to long-term local development? Not surprisingly, this was one of the main critiques expressed by the local partners of *Vredeseilanden* in the destination communities (Van Walleghem, 2002, pp. 28-46).

The CPJs nicely illustrate how tourism as an economic activity is at the forefront of the development (socio-economic growth) versus sustainability (conservation) debate. The tourists brought this tension forward in the semi-structured interviews when stressing the importance of local development while maintaining authenticity. To a certain extent, they accepted the fact that local communities should be given the means to develop socio-economically. Paradoxically, they indicated that this should happen in a way that does not alter the authentic way in which these local communities are living (or have been living in the past).

However, an economic cost-benefit analysis does not tell the entire story. It can easily mask fundamental societal issues. Analyzing the motivations of the CPJ tourists shows this. The interviews revealed that they considered the journeys much more as a tool for their personal development and self-actualization—development(al) tourism—than as an educational trip with a focus on international development issues, the original aim.

The tourists did struggle with their role as a tourist though. According to the research conducted by *Vredeseilanden* (Van Walleghem, 2002, p. 13), many tourists formulated the wish to confront their expectations more clearly with the aims, plan, and method of working of *Vredeseilanden*.

Being mainly concerned with the search for their own identity, CPJ tourists are not different from 'ego-tourists' choosing other alternative forms of tourism. They nicely illustrate how tourism can operate in powerful ways to shape identities, experience and the 'Self' of the tourist, as well as to influence what a tourist can know. Also other authors have described tourism as caught up in an

ongoing and never-ending process of identification (Abram, Waldren and Macleod, 1997). Travelling as a tourist raises many issues about identity and positioning—one's racial, gender, religious, cultural, and class positions all come into question. A tourist can afford to be curious of that which is new and strange, tolerant of which is 'Other'. However, this is only possible when the tourist is clear about whom he/she is him/herself (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). In this sense, tourists use representations of 'otherness' as opportunities for self-reflection.

It remains the question as to how far tourists can get in understanding the other'. The CPJ tourists, for example, worded their frustration about the difficulties they encountered in establishing contacts. As John Hutnyk (1996, p. 61) argued, not everybody who moves about may want to be immersed in an alien culture. No doubt, the willingness to seize such opportunities is often a very personal character trait. For many, entering other cultures remains primarily a personal journey of discovery. Most interviewees confirmed this. As revealed by the interviews, the contact with the unfamiliar is likely to be described in a purely visual way—and filtered through sunglasses and a camera viewfinder. In many senses, viewing the 'other' has always been part of tourism activities. The 'other' has been seen as a source of difference and excitement, with possibilities for exotic pleasure. Tourists travel to see with their own eyes how the 'other' works and lives. The tourist industry knows this and sells images that tourists already know and recognize. Many tourists consider their trip only as successful when it is as timeless, unchanging, primitive and exotic as they had imagined—or as they had previously seen on television or in nicely illustrated travel magazines.

One could argue that tourism colonizes the imagination (Little, 1991). Tourists to developing countries often participate in a voyeuristic consumption of poverty, taking advantage of the photogenic aspects of it. The consequences of this tourist colonialism are no less deep-seated or penetrating than the more familiar economic and political expression of colonialism. The camera substitutes for the gun and tourists shoot their pictures and capture images in order to make their photo-albums into trophies; vision becomes supervision. In a certain sense, the eye/I is infinitely more potent than the gun. Such practices become a means of domination, of consumption of the 'other'. This is reinforced by the fact that tourists often travel in group and that they find their identity by congregating with their compatriots, thereby creating their own reality—their 'tourist bubble'—of being physically in a foreign place but socially outside the visited culture. They do not necessarily need to know each other or be in the same profession in order to do so. Still, they do often share similar value systems. Paradoxically, we could say that, although tourists travel further and further, in a certain sense they never leave home.

CPJ tourists—among other alternative tourists—are no exception. The majority of them were not interested in really getting to know the 'other'. Had that been the case, they would, for example, have tried to learn the local language, and opted to stay longer in fewer places. Their conception of culture contact translated essentially in 'seeing' the other. What are Western travellers in

developing countries if not both witnesses, consumers and producers of the effects of an often brutal global exploitation in which they are at one moment only minor agents, at another the prime architects? Whatever the case may be, we should be careful not to blame tourists for everything that is wrong with tourism. Much depends on "their education, the myths they have reason to cherish and the political and social structures they belong to and function within" (Hutnyk, 1996, p. 159). The CPJ tourists, for example, felt that they were something more than mere tourists—a common belief among alternative tourists.

Western development agencies and NGOs promote their own pictured version of the developing world. These different representations often conflict, confront, juxtapose, and sometimes even converge with each other—and with reality—in a struggle for dominance. These various discourses participate in a complex construction of knowledge, cultures, and meanings that systematically obscure possibilities of considering socio-political effects. Rather than working towards social transformation, many alternative forms of tourism—including development(al) tourism—seem to tinker at the edges of capitalist expansion into new market niches, a logical outcome of post-Fordism. One could argue that the tourist identity is mostly one of money. Also alternative tourists—often budget tourists—are very much oriented by cost. Following this logic, alternative forms of tourism can be considered as little more than a temporary and illusory escape from a privilege based on inequality.

It would be too strong to argue that it is ethically wrong to travel to developing countries—even for the sake of personal development or self-realization. There is something wrong, however, when this burdens local communities in one way or the other. In much of the tourism literature, the potential for the expansion of the individual 'self' of the Western tourist has been emphasized, even at the expense of the 'selves' of the local people, particularly when these people inhabit a developing country with another culture. Some therefore argue that virtual reality should replace physical travel as the ultimate form of sustainable tourism (*e.g.* Williams and Perry Hobson, 1994). Perhaps one day telecommunications will be so good that we shall indeed all be able to stay at home and experience our destination through virtual tourism in which electronic visualizations simulate the experience of actually visiting places. However, virtual travel will never be able to substitute the experience of being there oneself, a crucial element in most tourism. After all, places need to be seen for oneself and bodily experienced (Löfgren, 1999, p. 281; Urry, 2002, p. 154).

Conclusion

Although development tourism is organized by NGOs with the specific aim to confront Western people with development aid issues, this case study shows that people choosing for this form of tourism seem to be more preoccupied with their personal development and self-realization than with the development of the communities visited. These tourists may have learned more about how international development aid works, but this knowledge has little or no impact on their daily behaviour back home. In the semi-structured interviews, the tourists

themselves pointed to the ambiguity surrounding the aim of development) tourism: an educative journey with a focus on development aid (according to the organizing NGO) versus a journey consumed with the hope it would contribute to personal development (according to the tourists).

More generally, development tourism appears to correspond well to the post-modern description of alternative forms of tourism. It is another response to the demand for a new, distinct(ive) kind of leisure for the highly educated Western middle-class. Given these findings, development tourism can be re-termed as development(al) tourism, indicating the difference between the agenda of the organizing NGOs and the consumption of these trips by Western 'ego-tourists' working on their self-realization and personal development. Their tourist gaze reduces 'meeting other cultures' to 'seeing other cultures'. The 'Other'—in this case the people of the villages and projects visited—is mainly being consumed, despite the well-intentioned effort of organizing development NGOs to bring tourists and local people closer together.

Even given these negative findings and the current power relations in the context of tourism, a meaningful encounter between tourists and people living in tourist destinations is still possible. As we travel, we see the 'other' as a world we are travelling through. However, at some stage, that 'other' can become a part of ourselves. When the 'self'/'other' binary opposition is deconstructed, it becomes clear that concern for 'others', understanding of 'others' and care of 'others' can impinge on the 'self' in a positive way. With some shifts in the relationships of power between local people and tourists, tourism could enlarge a sense of 'self' for both parties (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). On the macro level of the global tourist system, local authorities and development NGOs have an important facilitating role to play. On the micro level of lived experiences, an attitude of openness and open-mindedness are important, both on the side of the tourism service providers and destination residents and on the side of the tourists. Only then can tourism transform to a circumstance where the commoditized, individualized, and self-centered focus is changed. Otherwise, tourism will remain an activity by means of which stereotypes are perpetuated and reinforced, rather than broken down, a means of shrinking the mind rather than broadening it...

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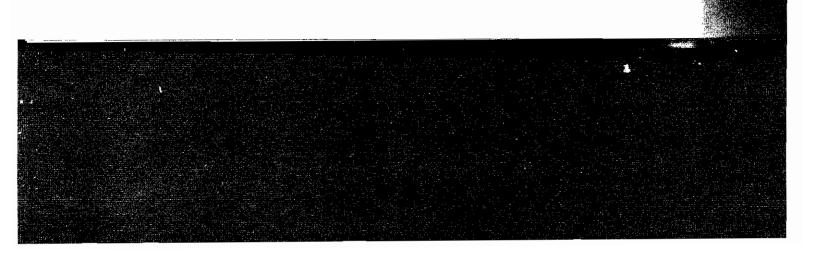Urbain, J.D. (1993), *L'idiot Du Voyage, Histoires De Touristes*, Paris: Editions Payot.

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