

T HINKING AGAINST “EMPTY SHELLS” IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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Tourism is a sophisticated creation of capitalist practices and a development vehicle both in less developed and in industrialised countries. This article, written in the style of an academic essay, contributes to the field by identifying two main tourism development strategies used to cope with globalisation and modernisation, and it presents an analytical model through which to frame them. Most tourism projects rely on an increasing number of tourists and think *towards the outside*; to satisfy tourists, local offerings must adapt constantly to their shifting needs and desires. This tourism development strategy breaches continuities in the cultural production of meanings within local communities. However, there are some examples of touristic developments which think *against* this strategy and look *towards the inside*, as described in this article.

Keywords: tourism, development, value, production of meaning

Introduction

Agustin García Calvo holds that to speak of an idea is to speak *against* it, since the aim of thinking is to defy any given order of things and words (García Calvo 1977). Although this might seem a daring proposition, this assertion reveals a fact that we tend to forget quite frequently. The words on which we so firmly base our indecisive interventions are historical and mutable, because they acquire their meaning through the very same actions to which they intend to refer. These actions are carried out in a myriad of social and cultural – and hence historical – contexts. This is especially important in a field as specific, pragmatic and applied as Development Studies – we use capital letters for those ideas that rule the world, as if everybody

knew to what they really refer. Theoretically speaking, the essential aim of the idea of Development – modified with adjectives and nouns such as “sustainable” or “tourism” or a combination of both – as with “sustainable tourism” – should be its own self-destruction; that is, to become unnecessary once the correct practices have been implemented. However, this is not the case at all.

In the following pages we aim to think *against* the idea of tourism development; that is, to defy the hegemonic view of what tourism development means for the global institutions that foster it, while standing for an approach based on an *ecological epistemology*.¹ Hence, this article does not remain at the discursive level of deconstruction. Instead, it sketches some tourism development practices implemented in medium-sized and small communities according to the number of inhabitants in each territory. After framing the methodology used in our analysis and the theoretical approach we take to model two main tourism development strategies (*valuing* and *valorising*), we describe some alternative views in three different contexts.

Methodologically, this article is a theoretical analysis of the processual structure of three ethnographic case studies on tourism development. It intends to analyse the attention paid to the cultural production of meanings in tourism development projects, in order to answer whether hegemonic tourism development strategies consider continuity in the sociocultural production of meaning. Both sociological and anthropological accounts carried out in tourist contexts, as well as our own ethnographic research, show that continuity is often ignored. Indeed, there is an increasing awareness among scholars that the challenge of impact management and sustainability goes beyond environmental concerns or equity in the distribution of costs and benefits, and includes intra-/intergenerational maintenance and a balance between tourism stakeholders and the natural/cultural conditions of destinations (Lengkeek and Steen Jacobsen 2016).

Several decades ago (Nogués-Pedregal 1995) we reformulated this “intra-/intergenerational maintenance” in terms of continuity in the production of meaning, and we have been exploring the attention paid by tourism stakeholders to this continuity in the context of tourism development projects since then. Unfortunately, the literature published in English is strongly characterised by ongoing and circular definitional debates,² a strong link with the subject of ecotourism or nature-based tourism, and very modest increases in research focused on new thematic areas (Ruhanen et

¹ The authors believe that writing yet another article deconstructing the underlining policies of wording or stressing the power of definitions to delimit what is possible and feasible and what it is not, would be a waste of time for the reader and a waste of material resources impacting on the environment. The authors, fully aware of their position in the medieval hierarchical structure of the university labour market, which determines the world of possibilities in academia especially for young researchers, and so stand for an *ecological epistemology*. This is an ethical commitment to publishing only when they have something to communicate. This stance, which is definitively opposed to that of “publish or perish” which epitomises “academic capitalism” (Slaughter and Leslie 1997), would eventually save paper and trees, chlorhydrate for bleaching, and minimise the effects of residues of chlorine-based compounds in processing paper too.

² Indeed, the case studies compared in this article use different terms to address the same process of community development: *community-created, community-driven, community-initiated, valuing, from the inside towards the inside*.

al. 2015). Still, gleaning from the scientific literature on tourism development projects, we have detected two broad patterns that differ both in their ultimate goals and in their specific tourism policies (Nogués-Pedregal 2006).

To illustrate the feasibility of the model to an English-speaking audience, we have only selected cases from three different cultural backgrounds and different levels of tourism development. Apart from the data obtained through our own ethnographic research on Elche, all the descriptive information from the other two cases has been taken directly from empirical studies. Given the qualitative approach followed in this essay-style article, we have not collected secondary data from any other source.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Board of Directors of the World Bank views tourism as a volatile and unstable modality of development (Hawkins and Mann 2007: 359), tourism is still widely regarded as contributing to development both in less developed and in industrialised countries by institutions such as UNTWO or OECD. In Europe, for instance, tourism has become a favoured vehicle for addressing socio-economic problems that peripheral rural areas face, or for mitigating the problems of industrial decline; and for many developing countries tourism has become the main source of earnings through foreign exchanges, as well as being a source of income and employment (Sharpley and Telfer 2015: 6–7). Indeed, one of the earliest academic definitions of tourism states that “tourism is the synthesis of all activities, especially those economic actions [*wirtschaftlichen Vorgänge*], that start up and are directly related to the arrival, stay and departure of strangers towards, within and outside of a specific municipality, state or country” (von Schullern zu Schratenhofen 1911: 437).

In line with the idea that tourism is a set of mainly economic activities derived from the presence of tourists in a given territory, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) gave an *official* definition in 1994:

Tourism is defined as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Tourism is, according to the UNWTO, what tourists do. We broaden this view and define tourism as “the aggregate of socio-technical practices and devices that, linking the desirable and the feasible, enable certain social groups to spend their leisure time away from their usual routine” (Nogués-Pedregal 2008: 2). The founding idea that privileges the ontic role of tourism in most territorial development plans, is univocally fixed to the arrival of tourists, who are definitely the most important signifier. This idea has led tourism stakeholders³ to focus their policies and strategies on

³ According to the UN World Tourism Organization (2005: 7) tourism stakeholders include governments and international institutions, policy-makers, tourism establishments and enterprises, tourism employees and their trade unions, tourism professionals and consultants, tourism education centres, travellers, non-governmental organizations involved in tourism projects, local populations and host communities among others.

unveiling the enticing treasures of destinations so as to enchant non-local inhabitants – “outsiders” in Jeremy Boissevain’s terms (1996a). This form of policy-making primordially thinks *towards the outside*, and is mostly founded in existing resources (i.e. weather, natural beauty, exoticism ...). No initial investment other than embellishing each competing destination with exquisite embroideries and facilitating access to beaches, natural landscapes or to remote ethnic groups or places is required. *Diaphorotropism*, or being attracted to travel in response to variance and contrast will eventually be enough to encourage people to travel. A glance through the many tourism development projects is enough to realise that the aim is to create forms of desire that seduce visitors to increase the revenue income – in theory – of the local hospitality and leisure industries.

This tourism development strategy *towards the outside* privileges satisfying tourists’ desires. Consequently, it requires that the local offerings of services and products adapt constantly to customers’ shifting needs and desires, as well as looking after their safety and ensuring they enjoy themselves. This strategy presents tourism for local people as everyone’s business for – as the argument follows – tourism helps to diversify the economic basis of the region through expanding the labour market. In spite of this desire, for regions with a weaker economic basis and/or limited resources, regular tourism development transmutes itself into the trap of international tourist flows and, as a result, they usually become dependent on non-local industries that are in control of and which manage those movements (Blázquez-Salom, Cañada and Murray 2011).

Could this valorisation *towards the outside* be somehow different? Over the following pages, we think *against* this strategy and discuss the cases of certain villages in North Poland, New Caledonia, and specially Elche, in which tourism development planning has attempted to look *towards the inside*. In this article, we call this strategy: *valuing* (*dar valor*).

Is the question of tourist numbers a cultural question?

Venice is one of the most appealing tourist destinations in the world. As in Barcelona, another of the cities most afflicted by the number of tourists, local authorities in Venice plan to install people-counters at overcrowded bridges, to limit the amount of tourist accommodation provided, and to establish a *locals-first* policy for boarding water buses among other measures. Neighbourhood movements against the crowds of tourists – labelled as *tourismphobia* in Barcelona (Milano 2017; Yanes Torrado 2017) – stick up posters warning visitors about Venice becoming an “empty shell”. A theme park totally depopulated of the Venetians who endow it with meaning and make it a lively city, buckling under the weight of “heartless speculators” that will provoke “the cultural desertification of the city” (Figure 1). Still, the idea of tourism

as a vehicle for local development continues to be blatantly present. In Venice, for instance, many local retailers dress their shop windows with complaints against fakes and, paradoxically, demand that the individual mass-tourists support local industry: “Defend our Made in Italy. Don’t buy half price junk. Original handmade papier-mâché mask not made in China” (see the white stickers in the bottom right and lefthand corners, Figure 2). Other retailers invoke a virtue of necessity; acclimatise to the changing environment and continue with the production of cultural meaning: “We keep on creating masks in the old way, adapting them to modern tastes” (Figure 3). Meanwhile, the city cruise association does not express too much regret for this situation: “Venice keeps the entire Adriatic cruise industry afloat and provides 5,000 jobs” (Gerard-Sharp 2017).



Figure 1. Venice: Is tourism responsible for the desertification of the city or is it a source of wealth?
 (source: <http://vенеziablog.blogspot.com.es/2016/05/welcome-to-venice.html>, November 2017)



Figure 2. “No more unfair competition. No more fake discount”, Venice, April 2017, photographed by the authors



Figure 3. “We keep on creating masks in the old way”, Venice, April 2017, photographed by the authors

Tourism is a spatial phenomenon, which in most cases, implies travel to someone else's homeland. Since the early days of social scientific concern for tourism, scholars have accounted for the effects of a large number of tourists by describing tourism as a neo-colonisation of quality space (Gaviria 1974), in so doing establishing irritation indexes (Doxey 1975), drawing touristic typologies (Smith 1978: 8–9) or using qualifying notions such as “carrying capacity” (de Kadt 1979: 17). At that time, the UN Conference in Stockholm (1972) recommended a radical change in development policies so as to avoid a global ecological crisis. Though not alarmed about tourism precisely – in *Our Common Future* (1987) there are only two brief mentions – the Brundtland Commission advocated a strategy of sustainable development as a way of correcting the negative effects of out-of-control capitalist development.

This eco-awareness led to a serious concern about the need to merge the preservation of nature with economic growth at the level of decision-making. Thus, within a sustainable development strategy, policies ought to consider nature in any action taken, with every agency involved making such considerations. This concern for nature evolved into a more convenient and manageable concept: the environment. Whereas the concept of nature allowed for a restricted view of the global ecological problem as merely a question of trees, birds, rivers and air-quality, the notion of the “environment” included humankind not only as another biological species, but also and primarily as a social entity. This shift in outlook required a new development paradigm that conceived the “environment” as “the physical, living and non-living surroundings of society with which it stands in a reciprocal relationship” (Udo de Haes 1991: 10). As applied to tourism, and partially founded on the quantity of tourists as well, different approaches to sustainable development designed conceptual tools such as the “ecological footprint” (Hunter 2002) or “social impact assessment” (McCombes, Vanclay and Evers 2015).

Concurrently, during the last decades of the twentieth century, culture – that “heuristic device” we use to differentiate one human group from another (Appadurai 1996: 13) – was discovered as an economic asset for investors seeking an outlet for global capital flows (Bianchi 2005; Nogués-Pedregal 2002: 147; Scott 2012: 1). Considering the fact that socio-cultural diversity awakens a desire for travelling (diaphorotropism), *cultural* differences were packaged in order to be managed by tourism stakeholders, as in the UNWTO list of stakeholders in footnote 3. Such differences were often transmuted into the administrative category of “heritage” which, in turn, became a synecdoche of the social whole that had produced it (García García 1998). The correspondence between culture and heritage, placed authenticity and commodification “at the heart of discussions about the sociocultural consequences” of tourism among Western academics (Cole 2007: 944; Xiao et al. 2013: 367), ever since Robert Redfield's seminal ethnographic description of the early impact of visitors and the “commercialization” of the fiesta in Yucatán (Redfield 1941: 300–302).

In one way or another, every social anthropologist of tourism has described the locals' (“insiders”) reactions to the numbers of tourists (“outsiders”) visiting (Boissevain 1996a). Some ethnographies have even described communities where tourists were not yet corporeally present but where they were portrayed as desirable

characters and therefore as still determining local practices (Travé Molero 2015). The documentary *Chambre d'hôtes dans le Sahel* by Christian Lallier (2011) reflects the life of a tiny village in the North East of Burkina Faso, where locals are taught how to provide accommodation and offer food, to present tours and to make local crafts for prospective tourists.

As with nature, there is also a need to redefine sustainability in socio-anthropological terms, so as to include intangible elements such as values, meanings and social practices. For instance, in Bali, a world-renowned tourism destination, a *cultural-ecological* kind of sustainability was initiated in 1989 “to encourage vigorous economic development in Bali while also ensuring and enhancing traditional cultural values and protecting the integrity of the natural environment” (Pickel-Chevalier and Ketut 2016). Despite this, Michel Picard describes the crux of the matter in the following terms. For some authors, like Willard Hanna, “Balinese culture was becoming a tourist commodity to the extent that the Balinese were mistaking the commercial attractions they present to the tourists for the genuine culture”; while authors like Philip McKean underlines the historical and dynamic resilience of Balinese culture to cope with foreign influences (Picard 1995: 57). For instance, a Balinese person asked an ethnographer doing her fieldwork on rituals of possession to keep the names of the villages secret, even though the Balinese seem to be “extremely willing to commoditize large parts of their cultural heritage and ritual life” (Hornbacher 2011: 175). This awareness of cultural distinction is present in the discourse of the “ordinary Balinese as well as members of the tourist industry, by the questionable idea that Balinese culture is so resilient that it selects only what it can adapt and change to conform [to] Balinese values” (Howe 2005: 143).

This paradox between exploiting cultural tourism to develop the territory while seeking to preserve cultural elements has also been an issue which less mature tourism destinations have also faced. This is the case in Nepal for example, where an anthropologist acknowledged that in a training program provided by local authorities, he found no interpretation of the native culture in terms of describing the meaning of the Tharu stick dance (Kunwar 2002: 173).

In public discourse, it is difficult to think *against* tourism as anything but as a means for the development of territories. However, it is no longer a question of analysing the disruption of ancient rules of hospitality (Zarkia 1996), but of how the rules of sociability are determined by the laws of marketing. We agree with Simone Abram when she maintains that social anthropology should “imagine alternative forms of intervention” after completing an ethnography of all the technologies that help people to travel elsewhere (Abram 2010). As one of the names of power (Nogués-Pedregal 2008: 1), tourism can hardly be restrained, if so, bridled. Barcelona could probably live without tourism. However, could Venice, Bali or Nepal live without it? “Now, Nepal without tourism is condemned, but with tourism culture is destroyed” (Kunwar 2002: ii). García Calvo sagaciously argues this point too:

To be real and to continue being truly real, it is necessary to move capital, my friends: because money is the reality of all realities; and the things that have

failed to become money in one way or another, can still boast of being alive and mysterious, they have lost the opportunity to render themselves tangible, and will remain condemned to non-existence. (García Calvo 2005: 29–30)

Considering this fact, how do societies cope with tourism and their own social reproduction? In the accounts to follow, we detect a trend that might permit us to theorise ethnologically friendly tourism development strategies.

Valuing and valorising

The following graph (Figure 4) summarizes the marketing of the intangible and the mediation of the tourist space (Nogués-Pedregal 2012: 203–204). During their daily social interaction, (1) people make sense of their lives and (re)produce what is called “culture”. Some elements (tangible and/or intangible) of this mode of understanding life are selected (2) by the hegemonic ruling groups in order to mark out distinctions in society and to separate them out (Bourdieu 1979). Culture would thus be used as a way of referring to differences among human groups as well as to make sense of the world within each group in terms of managing past memories in the present (heritage) so as to foresee future possibilities (development). The closest relatives of these ruling groups, namely policy-makers and top-level technicians (3) manage these selected elements and categorize them as “cultural heritage” according to hegemonic ideological principles. That is, according to a set of ideas about the nature of the social world; how it works and how it should be organised. In state based societies, the management of this “cultural heritage” is undertaken by a monopoly of institutionalized agents called “experts”. These experts are the agents that legitimise the label “heritage” by means of technical reports and studies.

In tourist contexts we observe two possible strategies (4 and 5) for the management of cultural elements. On the one hand, *dar valor* (to value) implies working towards maintaining continuity in the production of meaning, towards the historical density of societies, and towards producing their own memory. This focus on memory (6) offers cohesion to society, and/or creates cultural identity, and/or recovers the value of authorship and public recognition, especially in those societies where the official history marginalizes important social groups (normally the indigenous population). To accomplish this aim, projects should pay attention to the meanings that those elements labelled as cultural heritage have for their authors. Attention and long-time fieldwork seems to be the only method available to deal with this delicate issue with the necessary care. Alas, the scholar’s use of memory as a field of research and research produced in this field paradoxically links with the other strategy. The strategy of *poner en valor* (to valorise) is concentrated primarily “towards the outside”, that is, it aims to attract tourists and connect with their motivations for traveling. This usage (7) transforms “cultural heritage” into a “resource”. The last step (8) could be the implementation of appropriate policies based on field studies in order to improve the project, preserving continuity in both meaning and the production of meaning.

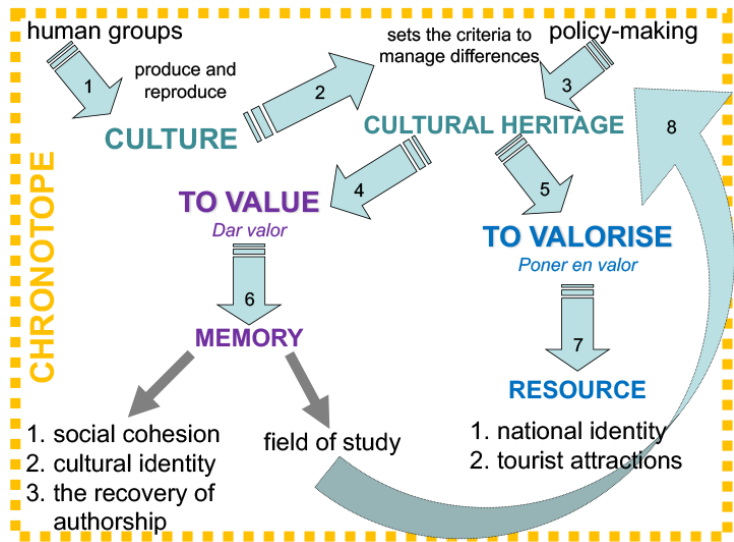


Figure 4. Two strategies: to value or to valorise?

Ethnographic examples

North Poland

In the paper “Community participation in sustainable rural tourism experience creation: a long-term appraisal and lessons from a thematic villages project in Poland” (Idziak, Majewski and Zmysłony 2015) the authors present their study of five thematic villages in North Poland. These projects form an interesting set of case studies in rural tourism development, described by the researchers as *community-created* – or in our terminology, *valuing* the project. All of them involve the proactive participation of locals who “collectively create tourism product and experiences through participating in the processes of development planning and management” (ibid.: 1342). This development planning is based on their cultural knowledge and experience of the territory (step 1: production and reproduction: culture), although the initial idea came from outside (steps 2 and 3: policy-making and cultural heritage labelling). The concept *community-created* is somehow opposed to that of being *community-based*, the latter concept, according to Idziak, Majewski and Zmysłony, implying that “local communities are seen as passive or re-active stake-holders that can be helped towards pro-activity” (ibid.: 1341), a definition that fits the notion of *valorising*.

Between 2001 and 2008, as part of a European project (the Equal Community Initiative – ECI), the population of five rural villages in North Poland, located close to the cities of Szczecin and Gdańsk, decided what theme they wished to adapt to the area and organised the space so as to attract tourists. All of them shared similar char-

acteristics, including high unemployment rates, social stagnation after the State-Run Farm's dismantling and the emergence of several social problems such as alcoholism, depopulation or a lack of social integration. The main objective of this project was to "test and support new ways of combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market" (ibid.: 1347). In fact, we can identify this objective as a strategy used to valorise the territory; a strategy pursued by the Polish State and the European Union (step 5: to valorise in order to create a new resource – step 7 – a tourist attraction).

The village of Sierakowo created a *Hobbits' village* following J.R.R. Tolkien's books. The locals chose this theme because of the Pomeranian roots of J.R.R. Tolkien. They thought that in that way they could *value* their landscape of small moraine hills and woods that resembles the Hobbits' Shire (ibid.: 1351). Podgórkki created a *Village of Tales & Bicycles*, an idea that emerged through combining an annual Theatre Festival called "Spring with a Tale", annually organized by the locals, with their shared "love for bikes" (ibid.). Dabrowa chose the idea of a *Healthy Life Village*, using their traditional knowledge relating to the cultivation of herbs, an active lifestyle and healthy food (ibid.). Iwecino set up an *End of the World Village* based on the reinterpretation of the "Final Judgment" painting from its church. This idea allowed them to focused on themes such as astronomy and time, holiday traditions, the history of agriculture or the utilization of straws and hay (ibid.: 1352). Finally, Paproty created a village of labyrinths using primarily the labyrinthine shape of the village's surroundings.

All of these projects can be considered, and are labelled as such by the authors, as real *community-created* projects of sustainable rural tourism development (ibid.: 1342) although they are led by the most active community members who became local project leaders. Authors use these villages as examples of community-driven projects in which local people "support and participate in protecting their cultural identity and natural environment" (ibid.) (step 4: to value their heritage and step 6: based on collective memory, creating social cohesion, maintaining cultural identity and recovering authorship). No matter what we might think about theming, which implies building and narrating a story for tourists (which is not necessarily the story of the village), we should recognise that in these cases it is an effective way to include peripheral rural areas in economic circuits and to create development opportunities. This was done, from the very beginning, *valuing* both the cultural landscape and the community knowledge towards the inside.

The follow-up study showed that despite important problems, all the villages continue to run these tourist projects with Sierakowo and Paproty being the most successful destinations. Idziak, Majewski and Zmysłony concluded that in order to create a successful project, it must be a community creation using local knowledge and being based on the resources and the cultural continuities present in the area. This is necessary though perhaps not sufficient. This research also shows that at some point in tourism development, public support or private investment, including some mediation via outsiders' expertise, might be needed – always with the control and support of the community – in order to attain a higher level of success (step 8:

the opportunity to take advantage of the field study in order to implement appropriate policies).

New Caledonia

In “It’s up to the clan to protect: Cultural heritage and the micro-political ecology of conservation in New Caledonia” (2008), Leah S. Horowitz describes the co-management initiatives developed by the Kanak communities of New Caledonia in the Loyalty Islands Province. The provincial government also collaborate in this initiative that aims not only to preserve their natural environment but also their cultural heritage. Horowitz describes the system of protected areas, based on *community-initiated* conservation projects in order to preserve the natural environment and the Kanak culture, while simultaneously promoting the area as a tourist destination. We may consider those projects as largely *valuing*.

From the perspective of micro-political ecology, this study describes the importance of understanding community dynamics in order to design appropriate strategies for sustainable development and the involvement from the local communities. Of course, the study values this and stresses that their own cultural practices should form the basis of the project itself.

Administrated by France from 1853 onwards, New Caledonia includes “Native Reserves” or as they have been called from 1899 onwards, “Customary Lands”. These areas “are inalienable and under the collective ownership of the Kanak who inhabit them” (Horowitz 2008: 261). For Kanak people land is not sacred but is rather replete with social history that allows them to establish their identity (ibid.: 262). According to Horowitz, the landscape is the element that structures Kanak society and allows them to demarcate insiders from outsiders (step 1: production and reproduction: culture). For example, the “masters of the land”, the supposed first clans that occupied an area, have supreme decision-making powers over their area of influence, but the “guardians”, after having been asked by the masters of the land, are the ones who watch over the areas “to ensure that they are used only as authorized by the land’s first occupants” (ibid.). Because of this, the creation of protected areas opened up the opportunity to gain more control over their own customary territory. On no account should we forget that the Loyalty Islanders were very active during the anti-colonial uprisings that took place from 1984 to 1988. In fact, the independence movement was the beginning of a wider movement of cultural heritage recovery, preservation and revitalisation.

In 2000 there was no protected area in the Loyalty Islands Province, so the government decided to valorise the Kanak interest through the creation of “natural parks”, Horowitz used his work as a consultant on that project to study the relation between *community-initiated* conservation areas, tourism and cultural revitalisation (steps 2 and 3: policy-making and cultural/natural heritage labelling). Although he conducted six case studies, he only describes three of them in-depth: Tai Sala in

Ouvéa Island, where the president of the fishermen's union and assistant at the town hall, Alban Tusi, organized (along with his friend Maurice Kibe) various meetings with the locals, requesting the creation of a protected area. Easo, the capital of the island of Lifou, is where the cruise ships usually stopover when visiting the island. That fact helped the chief of the northern district to think about the possibility of creating a protected area. In addition, in the case of Muj on Easo Island, the idea came from the chief of the area too. All three villages showed a great popular inclination towards the projects, not only because of the possible economic benefits, but also because of the chance "to strengthen their cultural identity by preserving part of their cultural heritage" (ibid.: 265) in the form of the cultural landscape (step 4: valuing their territory and their culture).

Horowitz shows how conservation and environmental protection function as a means to attract tourists (step 5: this was the main objective of the provincial government, to valorise in order to create a new resource – step 7 – a tourist attraction). In turn, this became a tool used to recover and strengthen the Kanak cultural identity (step 4: valuing the cultural identity and its territory based on collective memory – step 6). In this process, co-designed and controlled from *the inside*, tourism and tourists play an important role in generating new income, while primarily providing a new meaning to quotidian relations and reinforcing cultural identity (step 6: creating cohesion, maintaining cultural identity and recovering authorship). The impact of this project is especially meaningful bearing in mind the fact that the Kanak people are little represented in tourism policies and imaginaries, which are controlled by the Caldoche, the inhabitants of New Caledonia with French origins (d'Hautesserre 2011).

The sentence "we Kanak must manage this" (Horowitz 2008: 267) summarizes the key to the success of the *community-initiated* (*valuing*) projects and its main guide, although of course this does not imply the creation of "novel micro-political frictions" around the distribution of costs and benefits (ibid.: 269). As aforementioned, the pure or perfect valuing project does not exist, as it works in the model as a Weberian ideal-type.

At some point they required external support which revealed the contradiction between the search for independence and the need for financial support. The solution proposed by Kanak community was clear: the public administration should "offer financial support and technical assistance for the conservation projects, particularly in facilitating and encouraging tourism" (ibid.: 271). From their perspective, the public institutions should *value* the project, not *valorise* it. This could have been step 8, but unfortunately, the province and the colonial administration preferred not to support this project, which they perhaps viewed as a little too autonomous.

Elche – Spain

The School Museum of Pusol is a case which exemplifies the valorisation of heritage and the social and cultural features that differentiate both tourism development

strategies (Carmona-Zubiri, Travé-Molero and Nogués-Pedregal 2015). It started in 1969 as an educational project initiated by a schoolteacher focused on the knowledge of traditional culture in the rural *pedanía* (district) of Pusol, in the highly industrialised city of Elche (step 1: production and reproduction: culture). The rural community soon appropriated the educational museum and the school has coordinated the efforts of all those who participate in the project (steps 2 and 3: policy-making and cultural heritage labelling).

Over the years, the project grew in importance, and it finally incorporated the urban life of the city. Somehow, that small school museum became the local museum of the town of Elche. A relevant role, especially in a city with two UNESCO inscriptions: the Palmeral of Elche, a landscape replete with groves of date palms, included in the World Heritage List in 2000, and the *Misteri d'Elx*, a sacred musical drama included in the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2001.

The capacity to attract involvement on the part of the entire local population rests on three pillars. First, the project maintains close links with the residents of the *pedanía* through its local association, which officially owns of the project, as well as the volunteers who collaborate to help manage the large number of donated objects they receive (step 4: valuing the cultural identity and its territory based on the collective memory – step 6). Second, the school, which frames the educational project, continues to operate. Its students enthusiastically participate as guides for other schools and visitors, and the teachers are actively involved in the museum activities too. Third, the school museum is an important agent in wider associations within the locality. Of particular relevance is its membership in and commitment to rural development – including tourism – through the Association for the Rural Development of the Countryside of Elche (step 6: based on collective memory, creating social cohesion, maintaining the cultural identity and recovering authorship).

The museum is a cultural production created by the locals (insiders) to preserve the spirit of the community (towards the inside). This approach has always rejected whatever outside action that might have interfered in the continuity of the production of what the school museum means. The educational project faced challenges in their transmission of living heritage, and aimed to connect schoolchildren with their territory, which was going through a rapid modernisation process. In the late sixties, the concept of “cultural heritage” was still a vague notion. For this reason, despite the museum receiving public subventions, its stance against any type of valorising strategies placed the museum beyond any institutional control (Illescas 2016). Moreover, the legal custodians of such categories harshly questioned what this project identified as “heritage”. Indeed, the prevailing social perception with regard to the popular cultural background was that at that time it was merely an obstacle to embracing the progress and development brought about by modernity.

In 2008, the financial crisis put an end to the tolerant coexistence of both views. The difficulties that the public administrations faced in order to maintain their subsidies exploded in April 2016. The school museum underwent its worst ever crisis,

and the director announced in the newspapers that the bankruptcy would lead to the dismissal of five employees, with the educational project facing closure. A few days later, a letter signed by a group of local specialists and scholars appeared in the newspaper. The content of the letter was clear enough: since the school museum was recorded in the main UNESCO lists, it should not receive the *same* consideration (Carmona-Zubiri and Nogués-Pedregal 2010). It must be noted that during the toughest crisis for local industry ever, the local government opted for a strategic city-branding plan that included the valorisation of two elements that were later recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO (Ayuntamiento de Elche 2009). However, as concerns the local heritage preservers, the school museum was not to be saved. As García Canclini posed,

even in countries where legislation and official speeches make use of the anthropological notion of culture (...) there is still a hierarchy of cultural values: art-work is worth more than craft, scientific medicine more than popular medicine, the written culture more than the oral one. (García Canclini 1999: 17–18)



Figure 5. “Two UNESCO World Heritages”. Heritage as a tourist resource. Elche, 2006, photographed by the authors

This claim was void because, ironically, UNESCO included the school museum of Pusol in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It also received the Europa Nostra Award in 2009, the Ibero-American Prize of Education and Museums in 2013, the Award of the Tourist Quality Commitment of the Spanish Ministry of Tourism, and the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence in 2016. However, such international

recognition entailed the acceptance of certain *valorising* practices (step 5). The local government gave these actions logistical and financial support: they arranged an annual subsidy in order to maintain the newly built facilities and the employees.

The museum is now part of a local network of museums and promotional brochures which advertise it (step 7: creating a new tourist resource). Indeed, Elche is no longer the “City of Two Heritages” as it used to be (Figure 5), but a unique city with three cultural heritages of humanity, as it is proudly publicised by the tourism information department (Figure 6).

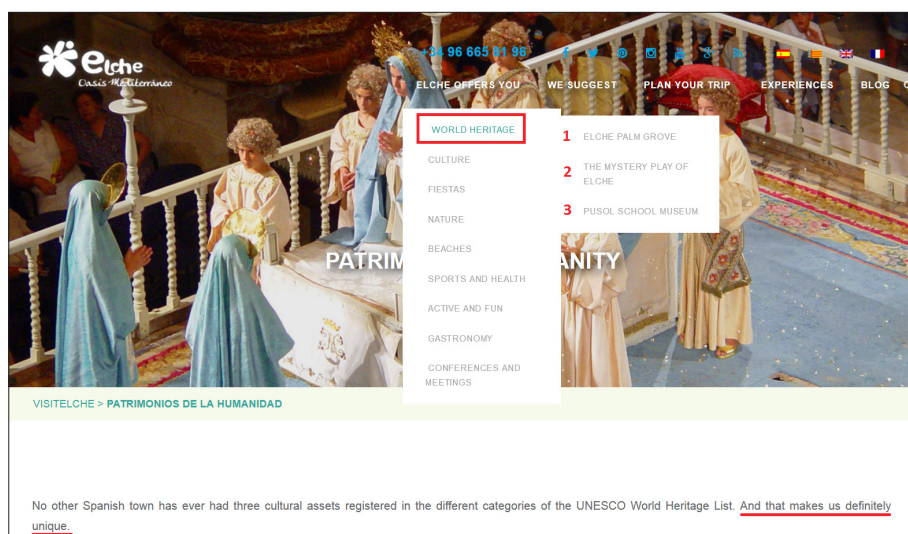


Figure 6. “We are unique” – a valorising strategy (source: <http://www.visitelche.com/en/patrimonios-de-la-humanidad/>, November 2017)

Conclusions

When the Venetian artisan thinks *against* the strategy that places the number of tourists above any other cultural consideration and adapts the masks in accordance with the new aesthetic, s/he values *towards the inside* for s/he controls the production of meaning, that is to say, s/he still decides what the masks actually mean.

On the contrary, a valorisation towards the outside as regards the destination resources only aims to meet tourists’ needs. Following the traditional definition of tourism as the synthesis of mainly economic activities that derive from the presence of tourists, private and public institutions centre their efforts on awakening and nurturing a desire for the promotion of ever-increasingly sophisticated and innovative strategies designed to attract more tourists. On the contrary, community-based tourism strategies focus on the empowerment of local communities and on control over tourist activity. At the same time, while being market driven, satisfy-

ing consumer expectations, utilizing skills and local human potentials regarding the delivery of professional services, they operate within government regulations and financial obligations, having an environmental awareness and exhibiting qualities such as friendliness, honesty and professionalism when dealing with visitors (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2017: 3–4). It is easy to understand that as tourism is one of the most sophisticated and perfect creations of capitalist practices, these characteristics generate an almost ontological contradiction between the implementation of global, market driven activities and the production of cultural meanings by local societies themselves. Some studies have cast serious doubts on the future viability of community-based tourism. This is because local communities are not isolated entities, but rather peripheral segments of a global “Gesellschaft” where individualistic values and class dynamics prevail (García-Andreu, Aledo Tur and Ullán de la Rosa 2017: 8). We know that tourism places even the most remote villages (cf. Lallier 2001) within a global context. To understand the complexity of the processes triggered by the increasing number of tourist arrivals the world over, social anthropology must concentrate on the micro-level. For many years now, we have invited social anthropologists approaching tourism to reject acculturation theories and to focus their analytical efforts on attending to tourism from a dialogical perspective. We stress this need once again in this article.

Yet, these two ways of managing tourist related activities – empowering either the local community or integration into the global system – are grounded upon the valorisation of local resources *towards the outside*. Both approaches epistemologically conceive the players – the industry on one side, and the local community on the other – as homogeneous entities, external and independent from each other and with self-regulating chronotopes. Following this logic, we think that no matter the empowerment practices in the area implemented, any tourist practice carried out within a global frame will always end up undermining the societal frame where social practices acquire their senses and meanings. Commoditization is thus the incontestable result.

As an alternative schema for thinking through these problems, the examples described in this article stress that the valuing strategy of tourism development focuses on the most intangible of cultural elements (i.e. values and meanings), while underlying the economic potentialities of tourism as the main vehicle for regional development too. Despite a certain obstinacy in the use of concepts such as authenticity or commoditization – which reveal that the Western leisure-class believes in essential truths – tourist contexts engender characteristic social processes which render both concepts less operative. In the specific chronotope generated by tourist industry narratives, contrary to what Greenwood (1977) or MacCannell (1976) shrewdly foresee during these early days, the historical focus that nurtures collective memory – which in turn, upholds cultural identity – is no longer sold *by the pound*. Indeed, for instance, in Malta as well as in Bali, tourism seems to be working to counterbalance the power of the church and the state in some communities as well as revitalising identities through rituals and festivals (Boissevain 1996b; Cole

2007). Various ethnographies have confirmed that societies continuously re-enact and revisit themselves in terms of stretching the past into the present – as a tourist resource – in order to project themselves into the future – achieving development through the “innovated authenticity” present in handicrafts for tourist consumption (cf. Soler García 2017).

The three case studies indicate how the valuing strategy can be essential so as to avoid an interruption in the continuity of the production of meanings within a given community, although this cannot be enough to assure the success of a given region as a tourist destination. As this article suggests, in order to achieve a superior level of success (sometimes even in order to allow the survival of the project) public support may be needed. Anyhow, such support should not seize the project from its owners which would breach the continuity in the production of meaning within that group.

The case of the five Polish villages shows how valorising projects can be transformed into valuing ones, thus allowing the communities to appropriate those same projects. Sierakowo, Podgórk, Dabrowa, Iwecino and Paproty transformed themselves into thematic villages without losing their cultural identity, moreover valuing that identity and especially the cultural landscape as a means of recovering social cohesion.

The New Caledonian study illustrates how the conservation of natural areas – when the locals see a need for it and when they are the responsible for that mission – can lead to a cultural revitalisation process, and to a valuing process. Such revitalisation can happen at the same time when those areas become assets used to attract tourists and to generate an income for the community, not dissolving it but invigorating it by using collective memory as the main tool for that purpose. Unfortunately, this may prove inconvenient for public institutions. The institutions seem to prefer a valorising process because they are afraid of independent communities.

The museum in Pusol reveals more than a mere turn inward. The adoption of the strategy of valorising points to the emergence – through a dialogical process – of a tourist context that mediates, in the sense of a “device through which the hegemony internally transforms, from within, the meaning of work and community life” (Martín-Barbero 1987: 207) in their own self-identity as materialised in the culture objects and heritage displayed. In short, in this case valuing and valorising are also manifest in two different chronotopes of the heritage representation: the first one, in which heritage is formed as a set of symbols that represents a community – in its political connotation; and a second moment of economic significance, already consolidated as political symbols, prevails, as its instrumental use in tourist contexts is essential.

Identifying these two strategies as two ways of coping with globalisation and modernisation, we propose to push the social anthropology of tourism a step further. As long as scholars keep approaching tourism only as a synthesis of *wirtschaftlichen Vorgänge* to be bridled with policy measures and not as a mediator in the production of meaning, social anthropology will be hardly able to think up alternative viewpoints beyond the actual order of words and things in tourism development that creates “empty shells”.

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Promišljanje protiv "praznih ljuštura" u turističkim razvojnim projektima

Turizam je sofisticirana kreacija kapitalističkih praksi i razvojno sredstvo i u manje razvijenim i u industrijaliziranim zemljama. Ovaj članak, napisan u stilu znanstvenog eseja, doprinosi polju utvrđujući dvije osnovne strategije razvoja turizma koje se koriste u suočavanju s globalizacijom i modernizacijom te predstavlja analitički model za njihovo uokvirivanje. Većina turističkih projekata oslanja se na sve veći broj turista i razmišlja *prema van*; kako bi turisti bili zadovoljni, lokalna se ponuda neprekidno mora prilagođavati njihovim promjenjivim potrebama i željama. Takva strategija razvoja turizma prekida kontinuitet u kulturnoj proizvodnji značenja u lokalnim zajednicama. Međutim, postoje pojedini primjeri turističkog razvoja koji se *suprotstavljaju* takvoj strategiji i gledaju *prema unutra*, kao što je opisano u ovom članku.

Ključne riječi: turizam, razvoj, vrijednost, proizvodnja značenja