

Politicizing Cultural Tourism as a Means of Development

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The origin of tourism as a development strategy began in Spain during the 1960s,¹ and became the model that other nations, particularly those in the Global South, adopted as a development strategy. During its heyday in the 1960s, 93 percent of all Spanish export revenues came from the tourism sector.² Until recently, tourism was proposed as an effective long-term strategy for development of the Spanish economy;³ however, following the 2008 global financial crisis, the tourism industry in Spain collapsed. Current research suggests that Spain has lost its competitive edge in tourism as more competitively priced tourist destinations entered the market.⁴ The rise and fall of the tourism industry in the Spanish case indicates that tourism may not be the sustainable development strategy that it is thought to be. Nevertheless, the economic benefits of tourism, namely that entry into the tourist market has low overhead costs, and thus significant revenue potential, maintains tourism as a popular development strategy in the Global South.⁵ At the same time, tourism is associated with a variety of serious social and political issues, including the

¹ Francis Brown and Derek Hall. "Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues." *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 5 (2008): 840.

² Brown and Hall.

³ Jacint Balageur and Cantavella-Jordá. "Tourism and a long-run economic growth factor: the Spanish Case." *Applied Economics* 34, no. 7 (2002): 877-899.

⁴ Jose Francisco Perles-Ribes, Ana Belén Ramón-Rodríguez, Antonio Rubian Serrano, and Luis Moreno-Izquierdo. "Economic crisis and tourism competitiveness in Spain: permanent effects or transitory shocks?" *Current Issues in Tourism* 19, no. 12 (2016):1210-1234.

⁵ Brown and Hall, "Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues," 840.

tendency to exploit labourers, foreign control over tourism infrastructure (international hotels and resorts for example), disruption of culture, sexual exploitation of women and girls, and increased environmental degradation.⁶ As a development strategy, then, tourism involves much more than simple economic benefits.

That said, not all tourism is the same and as I will demonstrate later in the paper, precisising definitions and types of tourism is a difficult task. Cultural tourism, in brief, is tourism that engages with local culture. Within development policy, cultural tourism in particular has been praised as a means to create jobs in hospitality and tourism to garner economic growth that the state can then funnel back into the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.⁷ On the other hand, increased tourist populations and the associated commodification of culture create their own sorts of development problems that cannot be measured in terms of economics.⁸ The demand for *cultural* tourism, specifically, increased significantly in the 1990s with the expansion of globalization and an increased interest in more adventurous types of tourist activities.⁹ Today, cultural tourism is recognized as a “high-profile, mass-market activity,”¹⁰ accounting for an estimated 39 percent of all tourism.¹¹ Given the popularity of cultural tourism, a better understanding of the economic and social impacts of cultural tourism as a development strategy is needed.

⁶ Brown and Hall, “Tourism and Development in the Global South: The Issues,” 841.

⁷ Christian M. Rogerson and Clinton D van der Merwe. “Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa.” *Local Economy* 31, no. 1-2 (2016): 234-248.

⁸ Bob McKercher and Hillary du Cros. *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*. (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2002), 1.

⁹ Brown and Hall, “Tourism and the Global South: The Issues,” 840.

¹⁰ McKercher and du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, 1.

¹¹ Greg Richards. “Cultural Tourism: A review of recent research and trends.” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 36 (2018): 12-21.

Although there are an ever-increasing number of variables that may be analyzed in a discussion of development, this paper focuses on three such variables: first, economic development as a source of security and autonomy for a state; second sustainable environmental development as a source of potential insecurity at both the state and international level; and, finally, culture itself as the unique character that is being sold for development and which must be preserved for the people to whom the culture belongs. Thus, I ask: what are the implications of cultural tourism as a development strategy on economic development, environmental sustainability, and on culture itself?

My analysis employs Luigi Pellizzoni's theory of the biopolitics of neoliberalism alongside Arturo Escobar's post-colonial development theory—both of which share a Foucauldian analysis that emphasises the role of observation and self-sanction in regulating behaviour. Pellizzoni's interpretation of the biopolitical effects of neoliberalism establishes a unique connection between neoliberalism and the biological world. He argues that the market logic of neoliberalism inserts itself into social life by normalizing individualism, competition, and entrepreneurialship as *moral duties*, such that individuals voluntarily submit to the demands of neoliberal rule.¹² Thus, the inherently diffuse and dynamic structure of neoliberalism realized by these agents, alongside “the neoliberal view of limitless expansion of an unconstrained will” intersects with the “fully agential yet at the same time fully disposable biological world”.¹³ The result is that the biological world is shaped by, and understood through, neoliberal rationalities. Neoliberalism has two key features that make international tourism possible. First, neoliberalism encourages globalization through market expansion, thus making the world more accessible for travel. Second, the consumptive market logic of

¹² Luigi Pellizzoni. *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, (2015): 61.

¹³ Pellizzoni., 64.

neoliberalism demands ever more things to be bought and sold. Eventually, the market logic of neoliberalism expands beyond the consumption of material goods to include nonmaterial goods, here specifically experiences of culture. As an economic development strategy made possible by the expansive demands of neoliberalism, cultural tourism, then, participates in shaping neoliberal rationalities.

Post-colonial development theory is inherently concerned with the effect of development on culture and is often exacerbated in relationships between the Global North and the Global South. For Escobar, the Global South is constructed via the normalizing gaze of the North, which posits itself as the standard of “developed” and the Global South as the Other, which means as backwards, primitive, savage; in short not like “us”. In the name of development, the Global South begins to accept this view of itself by aspiring to the cultural and development standards of the Global North.¹⁴ In short, intercultural relationships, particularly those of power and dominance, shape culture itself. Post-colonial development theory, then, has something unique to contribute to the discourse of cultural tourism because culture is explicitly the object of the tourist’s gaze. On the one hand, tourists from the Global North seem to value the culture of the Other; however, on the other hand, they entrench a power dynamic wherein the host is maintained as the Other.

As I will demonstrate, cultural tourism as a development strategy presents a series of double binds for developing states, wherein economic benefits, environmental protection, and culture itself may be supported and maintained, while simultaneously being undermined. To support this argument, I highlight a series of cases from the Global South. In the economic argument, I turn to Morocco and Egypt to highlight the opportunities and risks

¹⁴ Arturo Escobar, “Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work to the Third World,” *Alternatives X* 10, no. 3 (1985): 377-400.

of economic dependence on tourism. In the environmental argument, I turn to the global case of climate change and the effect of economic disparity between the Global North and Global South on climate change and climate responsibility. And finally, in the cultural argument, I turn to South Africa, Mexico, and Cambodia to demonstrate how selling culture may be educational or appropriative.

A brief and problematic definition

As a subset of tourism, cultural tourism has proven difficult to define.¹⁵ Tourism in general can be broken down into various subcategories, for example eco-tourism, adventure tourism, volun-tourism, religious tourism, medical tourism, package tourism, and sex tourism, to name but a few. This variety is further complicated by the fact that any given trip may involve multiple types of tourism. If for example, a person was to go on a safari in the sub-Saharan desert, the trip could be classified as package tour that encompasses both eco-tourism and adventure tourism. Cultural tourism, though more specific, is a polymorphous category of tourism that refers to any tourist activity that engages with the local culture, including tangible experiences such as visits to museums, world heritage sites, ancient ruins, religious spaces, and consumption of art, architecture, cuisine etc., and intangible experiences related to feeling immersed in local culture.¹⁶ Culture tourism, then, is a catch-all for things like heritage tourism, religious tourism,

¹⁵ Douglas Noonan, and Ilde Rizzo, "Economics of cultural tourism: issue and perspectives." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 41, no. 2 (2017): 95-107; Linda K Richter, "Power, Politics, and Political Science: The Politicization of Tourism," 189:203; Greg Richards, "What is Cultural Tourism?" *Van Maaren*. Edited by Ergoed voor Toerisme. Weesp: National Contact Monumenten, 2003; Greg Richards, "Creativity and Tourism: The State of the Art," *Annals of Tourism Research* 38, no. 4 (2011): 1225-1253; McKercher and du Cros *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*.

¹⁶ Greg Richards, "What is Cultural Tourism?" 2003; Greg Richards, "Creativity and Tourism: The State of the Art," (2011).

and ethnic tourism, but does not include business trips or travel to visit friends and family.¹⁷ With this definition in mind it is easy to see why tracking and analyzing cultural tourism is a herculean task.

Tourism and Economic Development

The tourism industry is one of the largest economies in the world, accounting for a little over 10.4 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) or gross world product (GWP).¹⁸ The largest tourist economies are primarily Western states; however, of these states the tourism industry is a small portion of GDP. Tourism accounted for 1.4 trillion dollars in the US economy in 2018, which represented a mere 7.7 percent of total GDP.¹⁹ Meanwhile, states that are highly dependent on tourism tend to be in the Global South. For example, tourism accounted for 109 billion US dollars²⁰ of the Thai economy in 2018, which was 21.2 percent of total GDP.²¹ In 2017,²² tourism accounted for 52.9 billion US dollars of Morocco's GDP, which accounted for 18.5 percent of total GDP.²³ In fact, tourism has been a major component of Morocco's development strategy since 1999 when King Muhammad VI spearheaded a campaign to make tourism Morocco's leading

¹⁷ Christian M Rogerson. and Clinton D van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," *Local Economy* 31, no. 1-2 (2016): 234.

¹⁸ WTTC World, 2018. *World Travel and Tourism Council calculates global and national tourism statistics, which will be cited again in this paper by the region and the year of analysis.

¹⁹ WTTC US, 2018

²⁰ My calculation to US dollars using exchange rates from 2018 found at www.exchange-rates.org. In Thailand this represent roughly 3.5 trillion Bhat.

²¹ WTTC Thailand, 2018

²² The WTTC stopped calculating tourism statistic for individual North African Countries in 2018, they now provide a single report for all of West Africa.

²³ WTTC Morocco, 2017. *My calculation to US dollars, in Morocco this represents roughly 194.4 billion Dirham.

industry.²⁴ The result has been a rapid increase in the number of tourists as well as a shift in economic development.²⁵

The economic development of the tourism sector can be classified by the pre-Fordist, Fordist, and post-Fordist models, which correspond to modes of production and consumption rather than historical global moments.²⁶ In the tourism sector, the pre-Fordist stage is characterized by the prevalence of family businesses and limited marketing, followed by the Fordist phase, which “is characterized by the mass production of standardized goods and services, to reduce their unit production costs.”²⁷ Finally, the post-Fordist, or neoliberal, phase is characterized by a flexible model of accumulation that impacts both production and labour and the expansion of tourism to the global market by way of modern technology.²⁸ Morocco entered the post-Fordist phase of tourism development in 2000 through tax incentives to court international investment in the tourism sector, while maintaining state investment in the industry by supplying both financial and natural resources to investors.²⁹ The post-Fordist phase of tourism encourages the continued acquisition of land by investors not only to supply, or more accurately to *create*, the demand for tourist destinations, but also to serve the investment interests of tourism developers.³⁰ By reinvesting tourism profits back into land acquisition, investors are able to generate higher profits than simply providing hospitality accommodations and services.³¹ However, there is little evidence to show that these policies have benefited the Moroccan people; in fact, the development of the tourism

²⁴ Fernando Almeida Garcia, “Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco,” *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events* 9, no. 2 (2017): 1.

²⁵ Garcia, 1.

²⁶ Garcia, 3.

²⁷ Garcia, “Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco,” 3.

²⁸ Garcia, 3.

²⁹ Garcia, 19.

³⁰ Garcia, 20.

³¹ Garcia, 20.

economy appears to have been designed to support the political structure of the monarchy and the political elites within Morocco.³²

Still, tourism is regarded as an essential and effective development strategy in Morocco because of the rapid expansion of the tourism industry and the employment and infrastructure that supports it.³³ The Vision 2010 plan for tourism development in Morocco revolved around boosting the economy through tourism infrastructure and job growth and training in the hospitality sector.³⁴ This plan was generally successful in achieving its stated objectives; however, development of tourist infrastructure, namely beach resorts, lagged behind the stated goals, which was attributed to the 2008 global financial crisis.³⁵

Indeed, the 2008 financial crisis highlights an important point. The fact the states in the global South are dependent on tourism means that they are susceptible to exogenous shocks in the global tourism market, which is exacerbated by increased reliance on foreign travellers for economic growth, specifically a reliance on individual tourists. Because of this, the state must market itself in such a way that the individual tourist finds the destination an appealing and safe experience. The state can facilitate this interest with effective marketing; however, some factors are beyond the state's control. States remains susceptible to unforeseen shocks, for example tsunamis, war, hurricanes, recession, and diseases, and some suggest that states can take steps to mitigate these types of unforeseen events.³⁶ Indeed, at the time of writing this paper, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has effectively shut down tourism around the globe.

³² Garcia, 3.

³³ See: Hatim el Gharbi, "Tourism is part of Morocco's path towards sustainable development." *Ideas for Development*. Accessed January 4th, 2019: <https://ideas4development.org/en/tourism-is-part-of-moroccos-path-towards-sustainable-development/> ; Siona Jenkins, "Mohamad Sajid: tourism is essential for Morocco's development," *Financial Times*. Accessed January 4th, 2019: <https://www.ft.com/content/783fc966-5c23-11e7-b553-e2df1b0c3220>

³⁴ Garcia, "Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco," 13.

³⁵ Garcia, 13.

³⁶ Richter, "Power, Politics, and Political Science: The Politicization of Tourism," 192.

Even under normal circumstances, mitigation of risks requires capital, and if the developing state relies on tourism as the means to attain capital, states must walk a delicate balance when it comes to supporting a tourism economy that appeals to travellers while developing the state. State security is a factor in the desirability of a tourist destination—as it is for development—and as such it is in the state’s interest to promote political stability, without which there is a distinct risk that the tourism industry can rapidly collapse, which is precisely what happened in Egypt in 2011 during the revolution.

Tourism in Egypt was considered the “rising star of the new millennium” because of the rapid increase in the tourism economy, which increased from 304 million dollars in 1982/1983 to 6.429 billion dollars by 2004/2005.³⁷ In response to a growing debt with the International Monetary Fund, Egypt adopted tourism as a development strategy, which included officially classifying the Sinai and the Red Sea as tourist zones, establishing laws that guaranteed rights to operating licence for private companies, and granting ten-year tax exemptions for investors.³⁸ Meanwhile, the state funded infrastructure and development while selling land to foreign investors.³⁹ The result of which is that the lion’s share of the economic activity garnered through the tourism industry comes from rents in private foreign investment and Egyptian elites.⁴⁰ Because of this, Richter and Sterner argue that tourism as a development policy in Egypt was not so much because of a desire to develop the state for the people, but to maintain the neo-patrimonial structure of Egyptian politics.⁴¹ In this case there was a clear failure to establish state

³⁷ Thomas Richter and Christian Sterner, “Politics, Economics and Tourism Development in Egypt: insights into the sectoral transformation of a neopatrimonialism rentier state,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 5 (2008): 939-959.

³⁸ Richter and Sterner, 948.

³⁹ Richter and Sterner, 948.

⁴⁰ Richter and Sterner, 954-965.

⁴¹ Richter and Sterner, 940.

security as both a means of encouraging tourism and means of institutional development.

Further research on the role of tourism, land acquisition, and social unrest is required, especially in the case of Egypt. During the 2011 Egyptian revolution, the foreign tourist economy effectively collapsed overnight and today it is still struggling to recover.⁴² As a development strategy, tourism not only failed to establish economic and state security but may have contributed to the growing inequality that arises from neoliberal development policies and the sense of injustice that inspires revolutions. Access to land is a defining feature political struggles to overcome poverty, hunger, and oppression.⁴³ The global demand for economically productive land often pushes the most vulnerable out of their homes and into more densely populated centers, which in turn creates an environment of social injustice, unrest, and instability.⁴⁴ Development without the informed consent and participation of the populations that it ought to serve lacks legitimacy. Furthermore, foreign acquisition of land without informed consent of local populations adds to a feeling of alienation from the land and the sense of injustice that comes without political representation. Because of these factors, Anseeuw and Taylor indicate an ominous political tipping point in those nations whose land is being snapped up by international investors.⁴⁵

In both Morocco and Egypt, neoliberal economic policies targeting the tourism sector supported the desire to maintain the existing political norms of neopatrimonialism within each state. In each case, elites maintain neopatrimonialism by making domestic resources available for foreign

⁴² WTCC Egypt 2015

⁴³ Ward Anseeuw and Mike Taylor, "Factors Shaping the Global Land Rush," *Grabbing Back: Essays Against the Global Land Grab*. Edited by Alexander Reid Ross. Edinburgh, London, Oakland: AK Press, 2014.

⁴⁴ Anseeuw and Taylor.

⁴⁵ Anseeuw and Taylor.

corporate investment in the tourism sector for their own private gain rather than for state development. From a post-colonial development perspective, neopatrimonialism represents a new face on the same old colonialism whereby local elites are coopted to sell public resources for private foreign investment. This cooptation and new face on colonialism is made possible, in part, by the all-encompassing nature of neoliberal economics. Building on Foucault's conception of biopower—although ultimately arguing against Foucault's own theory about neo-liberalism—Pellizzoni argues that “the basic goal of neoliberal policies... is to develop, disseminate and institutionalize economic rationality in any social field”.⁴⁶ This mechanism decentralizes power, by means of private wealth, and as such,

the type of society envisaged by neoliberals is eminently disorganized, decentered, incoherent and impossible to plan or steer in any precise direction, the only possible task being to provide the conditions for an unconstrained expression of all the forces at stake, which means ensuring that the market logic prevails everywhere.⁴⁷

In this light it should not be at all surprising that the development of tourism has utilized neoliberal economic strategies. The market logic of tourism in the neoliberal moment is one which places a degree of power in the hands of the individual traveller as a consumer, but which ultimately encourages states to export tourism development to transnational corporations. The nature of the neoliberal moment, with its focus on the individual's financial freedom, free markets, and free trade, and the subsequent growth of transnational mega corporations, alongside the retreat of the state's governance capacity, means that transnational hotels, airlines, and travel agencies are the big winners of

⁴⁶ Pellizzoni, *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*, 61.

⁴⁷ Pellizzoni, 62.

tourism development. As such, tourism as a development strategy is mediated through the market rather than the state. The state then, has few levers to pull in order to control the development of a tourism market. The financial impetus to keep costs low means that there is incentive to keep the local economy comparably weak so as to attract both investment in hospitality and tourism as well as budget travellers. Indeed, tourism does not reduce the income gap between developed and undeveloped countries.⁴⁸ Similarly, we should not expect that it should decrease class inequality within the state.

Environmental Issues and Cultural Tourism

The negative environmental impacts of tourism are well established.⁴⁹ At one point it was thought that tourists' appreciation and desire for visual consumption of natural landscapes, free from industrial imagery, would create a demand for environmental preservation within the tourism industry and that increasing tourism could become a democratizing force that would enable tourists to vote with both their dollars and feet.⁵⁰ Tourism appears to be uniquely capable of increasing awareness about environmental protections for two central reasons. First, "tourism enables a much wider range of environments to be gazed upon," thus exposing the traveller to a variety of landscapes, be they urban, rural, or remote.⁵¹ Second, travellers then compare the various environments and landscapes and, over time, develop an aesthetic judgement about desirable tourist destinations and travel experiences.⁵² It is through the development of aesthetic judgment that the tourist develops a romantic ideal of the environment and their travel experiences, which feeds the demand for

⁴⁸ Garcia, "Analysis of tourism policy in a developing country: the case of Morocco," 3.

⁴⁹ Lezen et al., "The carbon footprint of global tourism," 522-528.

⁵⁰ John Urry, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Environment'," *Theory Culture & Society* 9 (1992):4

⁵¹ Urry, "The Tourist Gaze and the 'Environment'," 8.

⁵² Urry, 9.

environmental protection.⁵³ From the perspective of post-colonial development, the idea that those who can afford to travel ought to be aesthetic arbiters of landscapes—rather than the people who call those landscapes home—because the experienced traveller’s judgment is better, represents a point at which the gaze of the idealized traveller establishes and creates norms of desirability in the Global South. But, insofar as travellers and local populations share the desire to protect landscapes this need not be a relationship of dominance.

Still, visual impressions may hide darker realities of tourism’s environmental impacts. Increasing tourist populations, and the development of infrastructure to support them, places pressure on resources, including land, water, and energy.⁵⁴ In ecological zones increased foot traffic can damage plant life, erode the soil, and drive wildlife out of their habitat, leading to an overall loss of biodiversity.⁵⁵ Mitigating the negative impacts of environmental degradation requires both the institutional mechanism to research and support environmental policies, which for the developing state is often in short supply. Beyond the ramifications for individual developing states’ environments, increasing international tourism has had a significant impact on global climate change. For example, tourism in states that market beach vacations are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and researchers have already noted a decline in tourist travel along the Mediterranean coast because of rising temperatures, a trend which is projected to continue.⁵⁶

The issue of accountability and action for climate change is politically contested and is exacerbated by carbon accounting as a method of pollution

⁵³ Urry, 9..

⁵⁴ U. Sunlu, “Environmental Impact of Tourism,” *Local resources and global trades: Environments and agriculture in the Mediterranean region*. Edited by D. Camarda and L. Grassini. CIHEAM, 2003.

⁵⁵ Sunlu.

⁵⁶ Jorge Olcina Cantos and Fernando Vera Rebollo, “Climate Change and Tourism policy in Spain: Diagnosis in the Spanish Mediterranean Coast,” *Cuadernos de Turismo* no. 38 (2016): 565-571.

measurement. As is stands, countries are responsible for the pollution that is created within their borders.⁵⁷ For states heavily dependent on tourism, this means responsibility for the carbon impact of tourists, which is arguably a disproportionate and unjust burden to bear for developing states. Additionally, international freight and travel is not accounted for in any state's carbon ledger; consequently, the actual impact of international transportation is not accounted for in climate change calculations and forecasts.⁵⁸ Previous estimates on the impact of global tourism suggests that tourism accounted for 2.5-3% of total emissions; however, these estimates did not account for the supply chain of the environmental costs of tourism, namely food, accommodation, transportation, and shopping.⁵⁹ A recent study included these costs and found that the tourism industry accounts for eight percent of global emissions.⁶⁰ Of this eight percent, the largest share arises from travel habits of Canadians and Mexicans travelling to the US, which accounts for 2.7 percent of the global carbon impact of tourism.⁶¹ Meanwhile, island destinations have the highest carbon footprint per capita, and in the case of Greece, Croatia, and Thailand more carbon is generated by tourists than by the local populations.⁶²

Unsurprisingly, travellers from high income states consumed more in terms of travel, consumption of goods, and hospitality than those from low income states.⁶³ Yet the effects of climate change are disproportionately borne by the poor, especially those in developing countries.⁶⁴ McLaren demonstrates that there is a relationship between ecological consumption, sustainability, and

⁵⁷ Naomi Klein. *This Changes Everything*. (New York: Random House, 2014), 79.

⁵⁸ Klein, 79.

⁵⁹ Manfred Lezen, Ya-Yen Sun, Futu Fatuuray, Yuan-Peng Ting, Arne Geschke, and Arunima Malik, "The carbon footprint of global tourism," *Nature Climate Change* 8 (2018): 522-528.

⁶⁰ Lezen, et al., 523.

⁶¹ Lezen, et al., 523.

⁶² Lezen, et. al., 522-528.

⁶³ Lezen, et al., 524.

⁶⁴ D. McLaren, "Environmental Space, Equity and the Ecological Debt," *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* (2003): 21.

global equity.⁶⁵ Poor countries often turn to environmentally deleterious means to produce energy and products because they are the only means available to them, “thus inequality is a driving force behind unsustainability.”⁶⁶ To suggest that developing states ought to be responsible for the environmental impact of their economic activity, when it is one of only a few means of development available to them, is an act of environmental injustice that creates a false equivalency of consumption across economically unequal states by ignoring the fact the Western world is the primary driver behind environmental degradation and climate change.⁶⁷ Such is the case with tourism, however, in this case developing states are dependent on Western tourists continuing to consume a larger share of the global carbon debt through travel and tourism.

In the Western world in particular, tourism is increasingly viewed as a social right because of the benefits it brings to overall health and happiness.⁶⁸ As McCabe and Deikmann demonstrate, the change from tourism being viewed as an activity for the rich, to being viewed as a fundamental human right, coincides with global economic development.⁶⁹ As the function of global economic development, I suggest neoliberalism is the driving force behind this change in attitude, not only because travel has become a financially available activity, but because the demands of neoliberalism on the individual create the desire to escape through travel. Here, Pellizzoni helps to think through the relationship between neoliberalism and the environment.

On the one side we have humans, as individuals and populations moved by the ‘natural’ dynamics of need, desire, and interest; on the other there is the environment, the

⁶⁵ McLaren, 21.

⁶⁶ McLaren, 21.

⁶⁷ McLaren, 21.

⁶⁸ Scott McCabe & Anya Deikmann, “The Rights of Tourism: Reflections on Social Tourism and Human Rights” *Tourism Recreation Research* vol. 40 2, (2015).

⁶⁹ McCabe & Deikmann, “The Rights of Tourism: Reflections on Social Tourism and Human Rights.”

surrounding biophysical world, provided with its own ‘vital’ dynamics without being ontologically fixed, hence agential and a source of surprises, but also, and for this very reason, open to unlimited possibilities of intervention.⁷⁰

As a demand created by the desire to escape, and supplied by the interests of development, cultural tourism has a unique relationship to neoliberalism. Moreover, this relationship has a unique interaction with environmental intervention, which on the one hand seeks to protect the environment so that there is a commodity there, while on the other alters that environment through the activity of tourism itself. Whereas ecotourists may be more conscientious about their engagement with the environment because love of the environment is a direct motivation, cultural tourists do not necessarily share that concern. In cultural tourism there is the desire for pristine landscapes but not necessarily an awareness of how to walk gently in them. Think for example, of the difference between someone whose travel philosophy is “leave no trace”, and the person who removes rocks from national parks as a souvenir. The environmental concerns of cultural tourism as a development strategy thus present another double bind which simultaneously supports and undermines development goals.

Cultural Considerations and Concerns

Maintaining elements of culture that serve the happiness of local populations ought to be a central concern of development strategies because it is through cultural communities that individuals feel that they belong in the world. Admittedly, measuring cultural belonging and happiness is an unenviable task replete with normative pitfalls, so it is not surprising that much

⁷⁰ Pellizzoni, *Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature*, 67.

of development theory relies on other factors to measure development goals. However, a discussion of cultural tourism without a discussion of the ways in which it relies on and alters culture would be remiss.

Pieterse characterizes culture as the “arena of struggle” wherein individual agents, and local and national cultures either support or challenge one another.⁷¹ Because of this competition, culture is a living, changing element of human existence that ought not to be categorized or instrumentalized for political purposes.⁷² The beauty of this characterization is that it indicates a way to think about culture, while avoiding claims about what it is. However, for this reason appealing to culture as a development strategy is problematic. On a national level, essentialist claims about culture erase cultural differences within the state and have been used by the state to support nationalist policies that marginalize or oppress minorities in general, and indigenous peoples and foreigners more specifically.⁷³ Similarly, the politicization of cultural essentialism on local levels can lead to ethnic fundamentalism.⁷⁴ Cultural tourism complicates this narrative by targeting an element of culture that is perceived as marketable by instrumentalizing it as a product on the international stage. Here the issue of cultural leadership comes into question. Who gets to decide whether or not to market culture?

The benefits of a bottom up approach to cultural leadership and marketing culture can be observed in the case of post-apartheid South Africa, which sought to distribute the economic benefits of the tourism industry to poor rural areas and at the same time promote awareness of South Africa’s history in The Cradle of Civilization, which is located in one of South Africa’s

⁷¹ Jan Neverdeen Pieterse, *Development Theory* 2nd Edition. (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2010), 64.

⁷² Pieterse, 64.

⁷³ Pieterse., 67.

⁷⁴ Pieterse, 69.

poorest rural areas.⁷⁵ The development of tourism policies in the region began with local consultation, which demonstrated a need for job opportunities in the construction and hospitality and tourism industries for local peoples.⁷⁶ The Cradle continued to develop as a tourism destination with the help of small local businesses, including an artist's collective designed to promote local art to tourists, and the establishment of several family businesses that were "founded for lifestyle considerations rather than profit maximizations."⁷⁷ These local businesses are regarded as integral to successful tourism development because they combine local skills and knowledge with the international tourism market, and as such they serve an important educational and economic role in development.⁷⁸

The educational aspect of cultural tourism is a significant benefit of cultural tourism as a development strategy. Rogerson and van der Merwe found that the proportion of school trips to The Cradle increased compared to overall trips in the period between 2006 and 2012, largely because of a decline in overall visitors attributed to the global financial crisis.⁷⁹ While this presents something of a threat to the site as a global tourist attraction, the fact that it is accessible to local schools serves an important social function and decreases dependence on international tourism as an economic generator. Despite investment in cultural tourism, tourists visiting The Cradle are largely there to visit friends and family or for business. The resources that may be used for cultural tourism are being used for other forms of domestic tourism, and

⁷⁵ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," 238.

⁷⁶ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 239.

⁷⁷ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 241.

⁷⁸ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 241.

⁷⁹ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, 242.

because of this Rogerson and van der Merwe conclude that the economic potential for cultural tourism is largely untapped.⁸⁰

In the case of The Cradle of Civilization, the fact that cultural tourism has not reached its full economic potential may be a part of the reason that it has been a successful foray into the tourism industry for the local population. The characterization of the benefits of local family business indicates that The Cradle remains in a pre-Fordist tourist economy and has not experienced the impacts of neoliberal business development. In bustling tourist economies, the introduction of a constant stream of tourists into the local culture adds an additional element into the cultural arena of struggle. While cross cultural relationships between locals and tourists can be a positive experience on an individual level, a large body of research demonstrates that tourist destinations experience a general *ennui* with tourist populations.⁸¹ Research on local populations' attitudes towards tourists suggests that in the early stages of development locals experience euphoria, but overtime feelings progress towards apathy, discomfort, and eventually antagonism.⁸² Murders of tourists in Mexico and Thailand, and terrorist attacks on tourists in Egypt, suggest that the long-term social impacts of tourism can have more nefarious repercussions.⁸³

⁸⁰ Rogerson and Van der Merwe, "Heritage Tourism in the Global South: Development implications of the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Site, South Africa," 242.

⁸¹ Paul Bac Dorin, "The Impacts of Tourism on Society," *Annals of Faculty of Economics* 1, no. 1 (2012):500-506; Brian King, Abraham Pizam, and Ady Milman, "Social Impacts of Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 20, no. 4 (1993): 650-665; Victor Teye, Ercan Sirakaya, and Sevil F. Sönmez, "Residents' attitudes towards tourism Development," *Annals of Tourism Research* 29, no. 3 (2002):668-688.

⁸² David Fennel, *Ecotourism*. London: Routledge, 2007, 47-48.

⁸³ See: Elizabeth Chang, "Were the American cyclists killed in Tajikistan naive for travelling there?" *The Washington Post*. 2018. Accessed January 4th, 2019: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/were-the-american-cyclists-killed-in-tajikistan-naive-for-traveling-there/> and; Josh Holiday, "British tourists murder in Thailand." *The Guardian*. 2014. Accessed January 4th, 2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/15/british-tourists-murdered-thailand-koh-tao> and; Woody, Christopher. "Violence is high in Mexico's most popular tourist destinations-but some groups are more at risk." *Business Insider*. Accessed January 4th, 2019: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-mexico-violence-affects-tourists-tourism-2018-4>

In his assessment of culture, Pieterse explicitly criticizes the post-development approach to cultural analysis for being, “long on history and short of future, strong on critique and weak on construction. It has room only for a reactive position of resistance rather than a proactive perspective of imagining and developing alternatives.”⁸⁴ This is a fair critique; however, a post-development analysis provides a comprehensive and compelling explanation for the culture clash that can arise from tourism because it examines power differentials in relationships. In his seminal work on post-development theory, Escobar takes up a Foucauldian analysis of development in order to highlight the ways in which development itself can lead to the continued oppression of the cultural “Other” through development policies that treat the West as the standard *par excellence*.⁸⁵ It is through this oppressive relationship that the global South began to see itself through the eyes of the West— as “inferior”, “underdeveloped” and “ignorant”, and it was in light of these views that the global South “began to doubt the value of [their] own culture” and accept the Western development objectives and cultural norms.⁸⁶ On the surface, the introduction of cultural tourism as a development policy, then, appears to flip the script on Western evaluation of foreign culture. However, the post-development analysis fundamentally requires an analysis of the historical conditions of the discourse of development.⁸⁷

The history of many states in the global South and the history of tourism is intimately linked with colonization. It is because of colonial history, post-development scholars argue, that the Western world produced the idea of the developing world as the exoticized, however ultimately inferior, “Other.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Pieterse. *Development Theory* 2nd, 73.

⁸⁵ Escobar, “Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work to the Third World,” 377-400.

⁸⁶ Escobar, 394.

⁸⁷ Escobar, 385.

⁸⁸ Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick, *Theories of Development* 3rd Edition (New York: The Guilford Press, 2015), 237.

Tourism, some argue, is an extension of a colonial past that markets the cultural heritage of the “Other” as an exotic and exciting experience designed for the consumption of the Western world.⁸⁹ McRea notes that a key motivation for cultural tourists is to a yearning to re-discover “familiar yet strange practices and beliefs” of a “fictionalized past.”⁹⁰ This is not to say that the cultural tourist is inherently naive or racist in their quest for cultural experiences. In fact, McRae argues that tourists are seeking authentic cultural experiences but that these experiences are tinged with a history of colonization that makes mutual and respectful cultural exchange difficult to attain.⁹¹ The central issue here is that of *inauthentic* cultural exchange because it represents a false view of culture that is created in the eyes of the tourist in the same way that the cultural identity of the Other was created by the colonist.

As a development strategy, then, cultural tourism must ensure that cultural authenticity is maintained; however, this often fails to happen. Decisions about cultural representation and authenticity in tourist destinations are often made by those outside of the culture that is being represented; meanwhile, cultural and artistic projects that reflect the local culture tend to arise from grassroots.⁹² The tendency for cultural exploitation and appropriation is especially evident in marketing cultural tourism. Marketing in the Mayan Riviera features Mayan peoples, especially scantily clad Mayan women, alongside picturesque scenic backdrops and archeological sites.⁹³ Although the Mayan people are appropriated and exoticized as a selling feature

⁸⁹ Dean MacCannel, “Tourist Agency,” *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001):23-37.

⁹⁰Leanne McRea, “Rethinking tourism: Edward Said and the politics of meeting and movement,” *Tourist Studies* 3, no. 3 (2003): 239.

⁹¹ McRea, 239.

⁹² Christine Ballengee-Morris, “Cultures for Sale: Perspective on Colonialism and Self-Determination and the Relationship to Authenticity and Tourism,” *Studies in Art Education A Journal of Research* 4, no. 3 (2002):232-245.

⁹³ Traci Arden, “Where are the Maya in Ancient Maya Archaeological Tourism? Advertising and the Appropriation of Culture,” *Marketing Heritage* (Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004), 104.

of the Mayan Riviera they are largely excluded from the economic benefits that come with being a key stakeholder; rather, their engagement in the tourism industry tends to be as service workers in the hospitality sector.⁹⁴ In Mexico, local artisans are pushed out of major tourist locations because they cannot afford the rents, the result is the sale of cheap tourist trinkets and the appropriation of cultural imagery in central tourist areas.⁹⁵ The “lower” forms of everyday artistry and craftsmanship are disregarded, meanwhile the archeological past of the Mayan people is marketed as high art and culture.⁹⁶

That said, the preservation of archeological sites is one of the potential benefits of cultural tourism. However, the degree to which this is achieved is contested as archeologists express concern for the impact of tourism on archeological sites in general.⁹⁷ In Mexico, archeology sites and ancient ruins are controlled at the national level and profits from ticket sales are redistributed for site maintenance and for archeological and historical institutes.⁹⁸ Yet, not all states retain control over their heritage sites. In 1999, Cambodia negotiated a deal with the Sokha Hotel, a subsidiary of the Sokimex oil and gas corporation, to handle the ticket sales into the Angkor Archeological Park; in the first year they earned 3.9 million dollars, none of which was used for park preservation.⁹⁹ Degradation of historical sites has also come about because of unintended consequence of tourism, for example cultural tourism in the Mekong Delta of Cambodia during the 1950’s created a demand for Southeast

⁹⁴ Arden, 104.

⁹⁵ Arden, 105.

⁹⁶ Arden, 107.

⁹⁷ See: Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram, *Marketing Heritage: Archeology and the Consumption of the Past*. (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004).

⁹⁸ Arden, “Where are the Maya in Ancient Maya Archaeological Tourism? Advertising and the Appropriation of Culture,” 108.

⁹⁹ Miriam T Stark and P. Bion Griffin, “Archeological Research and Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia’s Mekong Delta: The Search for the ‘Cradle of Khmer Civilization’.” *Marketing Heritage*. (Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004), 125-126.

Asian antiquities, which caused looting of ancient ruins and the sale of antiquities on the black market.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Having highlighted some of the economic, environmental, and cultural possibilities and concerns with cultural tourism as a development policy, I have established that cultural tourism as a development strategy is a double-edged sword which may promote economic development, environmental protection, and positive cultural interactions, but only to a certain point. As it stands, I am hesitant to suggest that cultural tourism is an overall net gain for developing nations. That said, if the focus is on local culture and development is instituted on a small scale, cultural tourism can have a positive impact. When tourism is a means of development, the individual traveller bears a responsibility to the host nation, whether they know it or not. The solution that McLaren proposes to the overall problem of economic and ecological debt can be applied to tourism and development; although, it represents an idyllic view of political will and the individual's capacity to search beyond their immediate reality. By linking consumption with the individual and setting a maximum rate of consumption, ecological debt and economic wealth can be redistributed at the individual level; thus, both global inequality and environmental degradation can be reduced and even brought to a state of equity.¹⁰¹ The fact that neoliberal economics informs cultural tourism and development, compounded by the fact the tourism as a development policy relies on an accumulation of individual travelers' habits and preferences, means that, like neoliberalism, the effects of cultural tourism as a development

¹⁰⁰ Stark and Griffin, "Archeological Research and Cultural Heritage Management in Cambodia's Mekong Delta: The Search for the 'Cradle of Khmer Civilization'," 125-126.

¹⁰¹ Stark and Griffin, 125-126.

strategy, will be disaggregated, uncontrollable from any one point, and filled with double binds that both support and undermine development goals.

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