En la lengua taína, el término *Ara* significa árbol, gente, entre otras acepciones. *Ara* es un símbolo de identificación y arraigo al territorio caribeño, y a la vez un símbolo universal con un mensaje y un sentido muy positivo.

El principal objetivo de la revista *ARA* es ser un medio de comunicación académico y de ciencia aplicada. Mediante la publicación de artículos y estudios enfocados a la investigación científica y práctica, se pretende profundizar, extender y divulgar la comprensión de la red de relaciones existentes entre el fenómeno turístico y el desarrollo sostenible de las sociedades.

Desde la revista *ARA* se invita a investigadores de todas las disciplinas académicas a nivel mundial a que contribuyan a este fin con sus aportaciones. Para ello son especialmente bienvenidos aquellos estudios que traten el turismo en la zona geográfica del Caribe en su sentido más amplio, es decir, incluyendo las zonas costeras orientales del continente americano limítrofe al Caribe, así como los estudios que se centren en zonas de cualquier otro lugar del mundo con situaciones similares a las del Caribe.

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In the Taina language the term *Ara* means tree, people, among other meanings. *Ara* is a symbol of Caribbean identity and origins as well as a universal symbol with a positive message.

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ÍNDICE
SUMMARY

St. Kitts at a Crossroad

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Abstract

Like many island economies, St. Kitts is at a crossroads. The acceleration of globalization and the decision of the European Union in 2005 to remove preferential treatment for its main industry, sugar cane, have left the island with limited options. Tourism has now become the key avenue for economic growth.

Destinations go through various cycles, both popular and unstable, which are affected by market and tourism trends as well environmental and social factors. For many tourism destinations, especially islands, there is intense competition and weak differentiating factors and the product has become commoditized. As tourism has been put forth as the key driver for economic growth and sustainability within the island, long term strategies need to be put in place to adapt to changing trends and markets. There is a need for strong governance and resource management using an integrated and holistic framework. The destination life cycle model provides a useful framework for a discussion of the factors which inhibit sustainable tourism development in islands and various measures that are needed to ensure a stable economy. St. Kitts will be used as a specific case to illustrate these factors in an island context.

Key Words:
Caribbean Tourism Policy, competitiveness, St. Kitts, sustainability

Resumen

Como muchas economías isleñas, St. Kitts está en una encrucijada. La aceleración de la globalización y la decisión de la Unión Europea en el 2005 de eliminar el tratamiento preferencial para su industria principal, la caña de azúcar, han dejado opciones limitadas a la isla. El turismo se ha convertido ahora en el factor clave para su desarrollo económico. Los destinos pasan por varios ciclos, tanto de popularidad como de inestabilidad, afectados por las tendencias del mercado y del turismo, así como por factores ambientales y sociales. Para muchos destinos turísticos, especialmente las islas, existe una competencia intensa, los factores diferenciales son débiles y el producto se ha mercantilizado. Habiéndose presentado el turismo como el factor clave del desarrollo económico y sostenible de la isla, es necesario implementar estrategias a largo plazo para adaptarse a unos mercados y a unas tendencias cambiantes. Es necesaria una fuerte dirección y gestión de los recursos en un marco integrado y holístico. El modelo del ciclo de vida del destino proporciona un marco útil para discutir sobre los factores que impiden el desarrollo sostenible del turismo en las islas y las diversas medidas que son necesarias para asegurar una economía estable. St.Kitts será utilizado como un caso específico para ilustrar estos factores en un contexto insular.

Palabras clave:
Política turística caribeña, competitividad, St. Kitts, sostenibilidad

Introduction

Probably the main political and social stimuli and motivations for developing a tourism industry derive from its assumed potential to generate employment and economic development (Puppim de Oliviera, 2003). Generally, tourism produces beneficial economic results such as jobs, foreign exchange, infrastructure additions (airports, cruise ports), but is also responsible for mixed social and environmental impacts.

Hence, governments often focus on short term economic gains from tourism without considering the possible longer term, social and environmental consequences.

Tourism can transform local communities and raise living standards and quality of life through greater income, new employment and educational opportunities (Eber, 1992; Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Elliot, 1997). However, tourism is more than an industry and economic activity since it influences the socio-cultural and environmental aspects of most countries in the world. As early as the 1980s, Krippendorf (1987) wrote about tourism's role as a potential burden on cultures, economies and the environment. The issues that call for more sustainable forms of tourism and tourism development arise from the same concerns over general sustainable development. These issues include increased population density, overdevelopment of the built environment, increasing dependency of a host community's economy on tourism, increased use and therefore pollution of resources, and degradation or even elimination of the natural environment, competition, increased congestion, inflation and strains on infrastructure (Wilkinson, 1989; Wheeler, 1993; Stabler & Goodall, 1996; Filho, 1996).

Destination Life Cycles

Butler's (1980) destination life cycle model has been used to describe the tourism development process in many tourism destinations. It represents an application of the familiar product life cycle in the marketing literature. Describing an inductive approach with laissez-faire conditions rather than strict regulatory environments, the life cycle model describes six stages of an evolutionary sequence that a tourist area passes through: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and rejuvenation or decline. Each stage is characterized by changes in the nature and extent of facilities provided and in the development process:

- Exploration: the initial discovery of a tourist area through limited visitation by 'explorers'.
- Involvement: characterized by basic and limited provisions, initial advertising and marketing initiations for the tourist product. The product creates or fulfils a need in the marketplace.
- Development: described by more facilities, growth and tourists. Accessibility is enhanced and outside investment or competition is attracted to the destination. Companies raise entry barriers through cost and quality to make imitation difficult. This stage usually marks the commencement of growing antagonism by the local or host community.
- Consolidation: portrays the maximum number of tourists that have reached capacity levels. Tourist interest is no longer peak and ownership turnover is high although the resort is well established. Demand starts to level off and competition intensifies.
- Stagnation: depicts when tourist numbers hold steady and efforts are made to maximize what profits are still accessible.

Following stagnation, Butler suggests two, key, likely scenarios: rejuvenation (efforts are made to revitalize levels of interest) and decline (demonstrates a waning market).

As facilities are provided, awareness grows, but visitors will eventually decline as carrying capacities are reached. Each stage is accompanied by changes in the nature and extent of facilities provided and the local/non local provision of these. Generally, no local involvement is apparent until the decline stage as employees are able to purchase facilities at significantly lower prices as the market declines (Butler, 1990).

There has been much discussion of the operationalization of the life cycle model in relation to broad evolutionary patterns (Agarwal, 1997). Controversy about the exact shape and pattern of the life cycle curve and detailed specification of its parameters has been an ongoing characteristic of the literature. However, it remains the most quoted framework for describing the general patterns of tourism development (Hovinen, 2002). An abbreviated three-stage version of the model -low, intermediate and high impact- has been successfully applied to a sample of 20 small Caribbean islands (McElroy & deAlbuquerque, 1998) as well as to a global sample of 47 island microstates (McElroy, 2002). In each case, the so-called Tourism Penetration Index (TPI) ranked destinations according to their level of tourism development and has become recognized as a comprehensive measure of the industry's overall socio-economic and environmental footprint.

Tourism Development in St. Kitts

The postwar economic history of many small Caribbean islands is the story of restructuring away from colonial stables (sugar, cotton) towards the most sustained engine in global commerce, tourism. Today international tourism accounts for roughly 10% of global income, employment, investment and exports (WTTC, 2007). Not surprisingly, the Caribbean represents the most tourist-penetrated region in the world. According to

WTTC estimates for 2007, tourism accounts for 16.5% of Caribbean GDP, 14.8% of employment, and roughly 20 and 21% respectively of new capital formation and exports. The region, which contains only 1% of world population, consistently attracts a disproportionate share of tourism activity, i.e. roughly 3% of global tourist arrivals and expenditure (Andrew, 2005 in Dodds, 2006).

Located in the northern Leeward Islands of the Caribbean, St. Kitts has a land area of 168 km^2 with a population of approximately 39,000 inhabitants (CIA, 2007). Originally populated by native Carib Indians, the island was colonized by the British in 1623 and gained its independence, in Federation with Nevis, in 1983. For approximately 300 years, St. Kitts developed as a colonial sugar estate with tourism and manufacturing developing slowly from the 1980s. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the island declined due to the reliance on sugar and by the 1980's, unemployment reached up to 25 percent despite persistent emigration (www.countrystudies.com). The high level of unemployment was attributed to the inefficient performance of the sugar sector as well as to the poor transition of labour from agriculture to tourism-related services and lack of necessary training to make the change. In 2005 the government closed the state-run sugar company and embarked on a serious diversification strategy emphasizing tourism and, to a lesser extent, offshore banking, export manufacturing and domestic agriculture -an ongoing process begun in the late 1980s (CCA, 1991). "At its height in the 1970s, the sugar industry on St Kitts employed 2,500 people. Now that number is less than 20" (Bartlett, 2006). According to *The World Factbook* (CIA, 2007: 7), "tourism revenues are now the chief source of the islands' foreign exchange."

The dominance of the visitor industry in the St. Kitts economy is evident also from 2007 WTTC estimates. Tourism absorbs 33% of local GDP, employs 35% of the workforce, and accounts for 28% of new investment and 43% of exports. In the most recent study of tourism penetration (McElroy, 2006), St. Kitts falls in the intermediate impact range of a global sample of 36 small islands. It ranks below its more popular resort neighbors -Aruba, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, St. Maarten, Turks & Caicos, and UK and US Virgins- but well above many African and Pacific outposts: Cape Verde, Comoros, Samoa and Tuvalu. Along with many other destinations at the intermediate level of development, St. Kitts' tourism is characterized by growth volatility, intense pressure from competitor destinations, and planning challenges as resource conflicts emerge as land and labor migrate from traditional activities to the more lucrative tourism sector.

Recent tourism trends in Table 1 indirectly suggest some of the volatility and competitive pressures characteristic of the middle stage of development. For example, stay over arrivals peaked in 1998 and did not recover fully from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the U.S. until 2004. Since then growth has been steady with the expansion of the resort complex at Frigate Bay, the construction of the China-financed Warner Park Cricket Stadium, and the advent of direct air flights from New York (American) and Atlanta (Delta). Cruise traffic has been more erratic, buffeted by weather vagaries, competition from nearby destinations, and the profitability dynamics of the international cruise lines. However, record levels are expected for cruise arrivals in 2007 and 2008 (*Caribbean News*, 2007).

Table 1: Selected Tourism Statistics, St. Kitts-Nevis 1995-2005

Year	Tourists	Day	%	%	ALOS	Spend	Rooms
	(000)	(000)	Leisure	Amer.		(mill)	
1995	79	124	74	69	9.4	65	1,563
1996	84	88	78	71	8.8	67	1,610
1997	88	106	82	75	8.3	72	1,759
1998	93	157	86	77	8.7	76	1,762
1999	84	140	78	68	8.7	70	1,754
2000	73	190	--	45	--	58	1,602
2001	71	263	63	59	--	62	1,482
2002	69	170	--	60	9.6	57	1,438
2003	91	153	--	--	--	75	1,611
2004	118	259	--	--	--	103	1,825
2005	123	217	--	--	9.5	107	---
2006*	135	--	--	--	--	111	--

Sources: Compendium of Tourism Statistics, 2001, 2004, 2007 Editions (WTO); SKTA (2007).
Note: * Estimates from Prime Minister Denzil Douglas reported in "St. Kitts-Nevis expects EC $300m from tourism in 2006" (September 25, 2007) at: www.caribbeannetnews.com.

On the other hand, there are two somewhat worrisome indicators: the slight drop in the share of leisure travelers (see Table 1), and the decline in visitors from the Americas, the traditional mainstay market of the region. For example, according to Table 2, data from 1995-2000 show noticeable losses in both North American (U.S. and Canadian) and European market shares. However, preliminary figures for 2005 suggest the North American market is recovering (St. Kitts Tourism Authority, 2007). Part of the long-term problem has been St. Kitts' inability to establish a brand identity beyond the traditional generic paradise image of sun-sand-sea beach tourism. Several other intermediate islands which are nearby competitors in the Eastern Caribbean have successfully established niche markets: diving in Bonaire, ecotourism in Dominica, sailing in Antigua and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, volcanic exploration in Montserrat, and gastronomy in St. Bartholemy.

To counter these trends, the island heavily promotes the historical Brimstone Hill Fortress, the only man-made UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Eastern Caribbean. Other tourism offerings include the scenic railway which mimics the original sugar transport. Recent marketing efforts include soft adventure and eco type adventures including rainforest hikes, and heritage tours of the island's sugar plantations. In 2007, St. Kitts was a host venue for the ICC (International Cricket Council) Cricket World Cup with six Phase One matches that took place at Warner Park Stadium in March. However, such efforts have not yet achieved international visibility for these local attractions. As a result, average trip expenditure of stay over visitors remains among the lowest in the Caribbean. According to Duval (2004: 15), the St. Kitts' figure (US$731) was less than 40% of the highest average ($1879) in Turks & Caicos. In addition, even average spending per passenger in the recently buoyant cruise sector is the lowest in the region except for Puerto Rico. According to Table 3, in the first quarter of 2000, per capita passenger spending averaged over US$170 in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands while the same average for cruise and yacht arrivals in St. Kitts (US$56) was only one third of that amount.

Table 2: Total Stay over Arrivals and Arrivals by Country/Region 1995-2000

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	% change 95' –00'
United States	36,454	36,640	38,380	39,907	34,716	20,867	-43%
Canada	9,081	9,346	8,629	7,596	5,880	5,141	-44%
U. Kingdom	6,729	9,092	9,938	12,847	13,163	11,855	+76%
Other Europe	3,104	906	3,130	2,319	2,563	1,367	-56%
Caribbean	22,953	27,182	27,455	29,273	26,296	28,046	+22%
Other	547	1,010	765	1,248	1,384	1,255	129%
Total	**78,868**	**84,176**	**88,297**	**93,190**	**84,002**	**68,531**	**-14%**

Source: St. Kitts & Nevis Ministry of Tourism (*found in* TDI, 2002).

Table 3: Passenger Spending During Port of Call Visits – Q1 2000

Ports of Call	Average Spending per Passenger
Antigua	$86.81
Aruba	$82.02
Bahamas	$77.90
Barbados	$81.12
Cayman Islands	$79.42
Jamaica	$73.15
Cozumel	$131.40
Puerto Rico	$53.84
St. Kitts and Nevis	**$56.22**
St. Thomas	$173.24
Average Spend	**$103.83**

Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers (*found in* TDI, 2002).

Like many other tourism destinations, concern over intense regional and international competition has led St. Kitts to adopt a copy cat strategy that is based on the development of new product offerings and the exploitation of local resources. For example, a port was built to accommodate large cruise ships without regard to economic benefits that were not proportional to the level of visitations that resulted. In addition, there is a current focus on new golf course and coastal hotel development which provide short-term return that may not be sustainable because of impacts on the environment which supports them. Such projects may indeed prolong St. Kitts competitiveness and defer its decline, but cannot be regarded as an alternative to long term planning. As Butler (1999) and Wall (1997) have argued, the effort to enhance 'competitiveness' as tourist destinations mirrors the inability or unwillingness of policy-makers and politicians to distinguish between sustainable tourism and the need to promote tourism within an overall balanced growth framework.

In 2002, the county's tourism plan attributed the recent volatility in visitation to a number of factors (Table 4). These include the high price of airlift, lack of brand identity and marketing efforts, deteriorating price/value relationships, a more educated and cost-conscious consumer and rapidly increasing competition from other destinations both inside and outside the region (TDI, 2002).

Table 4: Weaknesses relating to St. Kitts Competitive Advantage

1.	Airlift – availability and price
2.	High prices – price/value relationship
3.	Lack of enforcement of laws on the books
4.	Tourism politicized/lack of intra-island cooperation
5.	Weak planning and coordination
6.	Litter/solid waste disposal
7.	Failure to preserve, protect, develop natural and cultural assets
8.	Lack of market research / don't know our customers
9.	Lack of Tourism and Environmental Awareness
10.	Tourism careers not promoted in schools
11.	Lack of technical training/low service levels
12.	Funding for marketing and promotion

Source: TDI, 2002, p 13

Development Issues and Constraints

In the consolidation stage of the life cycle model (Butler, 1980); destinations have a number of choices: 1) they can increase marketing and incentives hoping that airlift and other businesses will invest in tourism development; 2) they can do nothing or 3) they can implement a number of competitive strategies to try to retain or extend market share.

In the case of St. Kitts, such strategies were identified to try and counter weaknesses and are outlined in Table 5 (TDI, 2002). Although some of these priorities were addressed, many have not been integrated into a wider tourism plan for the region, nor have any substantial improvements been made. This is first and foremost illustrated by the country's lack of a long term sustainable tourism development strategy. In addition, the last tourism plan for the island was in 2002 and to date (2007) there is no current plan for tourism development.

Measures to implement the 12 priorities have also not been apparent. There has been some training and a taxi driver history and tourism training program has been developed. However, there is no current training for other areas of the tourism industry and there are no industry standards for environmental management, quality, health and safety, certification, social integration or customer service. There has been some success by the St. Kitts Tourism Board to improve airlift, but this is still a challenge (personal interview with Director of St. Kitts Tourism Board)

Table 5: Priorities for Development.
Based on the 'shared vision for the future of the industry'

1.	Training and human resource development
2.	Improving airlift
3.	Protection of the environment
4.	Promotion of entrepreneurship and empowerment
5.	Environmental cleanup and maintenance (litter, solid waste)
6.	Broader industry involvement in the marketing process
7.	Community and rural tourism development
8.	Promoting greater harmony/cooperation between St. Kitts & Nevis
9.	The development of industry standards
10.	Product development (nightlife, heritage)
11.	Public/private partnership
12.	Maintaining a relatively crime-free environment

Source: TDI, 2002

The level of environmental awareness on the part of government is evident in the failure to hold in check land encroachment by international developers, the re-

luctance to establish a marine or national park and absence of controls over the dumping of wastes. For example, currently there is no standard or policy for cleanup of the many rusted old vehicles which have been discarded in the rainforest and near abandoned sugar mills. Although entrepreneurship is encouraged by the Tourist Board, there are no economic incentives or training programs to assist new business development or community and rural development.

With the notable exception of Brimstone Hill Fortress, tourist attractions seem old and decrepit. Visitors have long been attracted to the island by its plantations and factories which are a legacy of British investment in the sugar industry. Unless privately owned and operated, unfortunately, these are falling into disrepair. Moreover, lodging on plantations is often expensive, their facilities need improvement and the quality of service is low. The recent completion of a Marriott resort is an attempt to improve the standard and provides the Tourist Board with a product that is heavily promoted in the marketing literature that has been produced by the island.

Tourism in many small islands has been developed without any systematic attempt to catalogue resources and to clearly designate areas for tourist visitation (Filho, 1996). St. Kitts cannot rely merely on the 3 Ss of sun, sea and sand and efforts to develop a competitive advantage out of its marine assets. The island continues to market itself the same way as other Caribbean nations despite an inability to compete in price or beach quality. There is a lack of diversification in marketing, and the history and authenticity of the tourism product are not being developed. "…There are dangers that market failure will be used to justify and rationalize any form of state intervention at the national or local levels and that tourism policy will reflect the lobbying and influence of vested interests" (Hartley & Hooper: 1992: 21). Clearly, economic development strategies must also take into account broader concerns such as whether the local population will adequately benefit and if there will be adequate protection and conservation of the environment. Indeed, St. Kitts' 2002 tourism plan noted that "the principal challenge in stimulating tourism growth is to define strategies that preserve those assets for future generations, generate broad-based economic impacts across all segments of society, and make the most productive use of limited resources" (TDI, 2002). Four years later, the country needs to focus on changing realities in the world and to adapt and change to these realities. As Gilmore and Pine (2001) suggest, there is a new customer who expects new experiences. New revenue growth within a destination lies not only in driving sales of existing goods and services but in creating experiences (p 11). For example, Rawlins Plantation and Ottley's Plantation on the island, considered 'gracious, elegant and unique' in much tourism promotional literature are able to charge high rates for a unique experience – often 2-3 times that of a regular hotel room rate. "…the St. Kitts Scenic Railway, which is better known as the "Sugar Train" uses the same tracks originally built in 1912 to carry sugar cane from more than 300 sugar cane estates to the mill in Basseterre in the days when the sugar trade was the island's primary industry. Many of these old sugar estates have been converted into idyllic plantation inns, offering some of the most elegant accommodations on St. Kitts" (Schultz, 2004). For a destination, the very natural and cultural resources which originally attract the tourist need to be protected and offered to the consumer as an experience rather than just a product. "Experiences are a distinct economic offering, as distinct from services as services are from goods" (Pine & Gilmore, 2004: 9).

Pine and Gilmour may be correct that the most effective strategy may lie in the creation of demand for unique products that can differentiate St. Kitts from other destinations. "Each concept [or destination] may have something valuable to say about how the environment has changed but none really address the core problem: people have become relatively immune to messages being broadcast at them. The way to reach your customer is to create an experience within them" (2004: 5). Pine and Gilmour offer the way to achieve this is by treating the product [or destination] as a 'distinct economic offering' rather than solely a marketing effort. In order to achieve this, St. Kitts must not copycat market other islands but find the unique value amenities that can be found nowhere else.

Implications for Future Tourism Development

Issues that the destination faces include lack of long term planning and the focus on short term numbers rather than yield. Measures of the effectiveness and success of tourism policy to date are invariably set according to the numbers of tourists that arrive at destinations rather than the net benefits that tourism brings to a destination. There also needs to be a change in government's role in tourism from solely promotion to long term economic benefit as well as social and environmental protection and awareness (Hall, 1994; Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Elliot, 1997). For example, the government of Singapore has recently announced a plan to fund a holistic approach for the training of new tourism workers and enhancing service levels. This is part of a wider tourism strategy that aims to achieve an increase in tourism yield as well as numbers (Travel Daily News, Nov 2007). St. Kitts is focusing a great deal on foreign investment which, although beneficial for foreign exchange earnings in the short term, may have longer term implications as this focus is also a function of choice and markets. As declared by Hartley & Hooper (1992), society sometimes accepts the outcome of private markets which, left to

themselves, may fail to function properly as externalities surface cumulatively over time such as environmental alterations and social intrusions.

Because of the nature of tourism development in St. Kitts, a number of challenges are apparent if tourism is to move towards long term sustainability. In order to achieve a holistic and integrated approach for tourism development, a number of key factors must be incorporated. These include:

- Participation and accountability of multiple stakeholders (ranging from the general public to politicians).
- Having a long term/holistic view for sustainable tourism and its implementation.
- Political will/good governance.
- Educating politicians and the general public about sustainable tourism.
- Integrating tourism policy into a wider framework.
- Adaptive management (used to ensure a long term and integrated approach).

Stakeholder Participation

Effective policy formulation mechanisms need to be open and to encourage active participation from all sectors of the policy community to engage their support and see-through the implementation of policy objectives. It has to be dynamic, manage the continual tension between tourism development and sustainable development and involve a focus on communication, cooperation and the exchange of information and research, all with the objective of avoiding or solving conflict and gaining support for sustainable development (Elliot, 1997). Wilkinson (1989) also claims that government involvement in integrating tourism into national and regional planning is much needed as multinational hotels, tours and airline companies often have their own agendas and are not sensitive to local issues. Collaboration of stakeholders alone is not sufficient to address power issues which arise. All stakeholders must be accountable for elements of policy implementation and adaptive management techniques should be considered as tourism is dynamic and the marketplace is continually shifting. The advantage of adopting an adaptive management approach is that it requires the collaboration and identification of shared values (Reed, 1999) which may help to overcome barriers of inadequate stakeholder involvement, values held by different stakeholders and coordination between government sectors. Additionally, collaboration and participation are needed to address the overall concept of public good as well as environmental and social concerns in the context of development rather than solely market interests.

Long-Term View

Cooperation between Authorities and Ministries must be undertaken to ensure cooperation and advancement although often cooperation has been a hindrance to policy implementation (Dodds, 2007a & b, Bianchi, 2004), and a 20-30 year time frame for resource management and longevity of the industry considered. Governments must realize that it needs to mobilize the private sector and public community to undertake sustainability initiatives and that buy-in to the long term vision is imperative. With the increased competition for the tourism pie, especially in an island, a long term strategy which takes into account a holistic framework for development is essential.

Integration & Education

Sustainable tourism must be closely linked to sustainable development and that sustainable tourism must be set within this larger context as it cannot be separated from the wider debate on sustainable development (Stabler & Goodall, 1996). Tourism is a fragmented industry and dependant on other sectors and therefore it is the strength of these linkages which determines the success of tourism and policy. Although there is an argument that policy must be implemented at the local level, there needs to be support and higher level direction from regional/national areas for it to be successful. Territorial, resource, education and transportation plans and policies are dependant on regional frameworks and municipal and sustainability efforts are more wide reaching than just the immediate destination. Many local policy enforcements need to be supported from the regional and national levels – a national policy should provide the outline and legislation for integration. For example, in St. Kitts, there is currently no environmental plan for protection of marine areas. As dive tourism is one of the island's key attractions, there is a need to ensure recognition as well as integration of environmental planning with tourism planning. The need for integrated sustainable tourism is ever present as economic and environmental forces clash to create social conflicts and industry inefficiencies (Ritchie, 1999, Manning, 1999). While the

need for an integrated framework seems relatively straightforward in theory, it must be noted that social and environmental agendas are played off against each other and the links between the two are not always made clear.

Political Will & Good Governance

Researchers have concluded on various occasions that the level of external or government control affects development stages and the authenticity of the destination. Many destinations have fallen for the vision of economic gain with little or no consideration to long term negative effects. Tooman (1997) links this notion to Butler's model by suggesting that tourism has become the dominant industry in many areas accompanied by a general decline of agriculture so that economic diversity of sources of primary income and control is lacking.

In order for sustainable tourism development to be achieved, there needs to be a political will to achieve it. A focus on tourism yield instead of solely numbers and long term planning is imperative. Enlightening government requires finding a balance between social, environmental and economic issues; however, there is no perfect solution and therefore compromise and balance must be felt. Policy implementation in tourism has various complexities such as the conflicting and different definitions, uncertain tourism growth predictions and the short-term view of operations within the tourism industry. Who implements policy depends on market forces and what type of government is in power. For good governance to take place, the political will of a dynamic, charismatic leader is needed to influence various stakeholders to participate and support sustainability initiatives and to raise awareness of the benefits of environmental and social integration into policy issues and the benefit of a holistic view. As Trousade (1999) states in his examination of Boracay Island in the Philippines, "Better governance should clearly delineate local, regional and national roles and incorporate community input to mitigate against the adverse effects of tourism development while maximizing benefits" (p. 840).

Conclusion

Experience from the life cycle literature suggests that sustainable destinations must constantly innovate to maintain and grow their position in a changing global marketplace. For islands like St. Kitts in the consolidation stage of development -facing instability and intensifying competition at the crossroads between past reliance on the traditional sun lust formula and mounting new directions- this means a strategic shift toward diversifying its product and identity. In recent years St. Kitts has begun to turn the corner with the development and marketing of its plantation legacy, Brimstone Hill Fortress, and natural onshore amenities. In addition, it is just beginning to reap the international recognition and financial benefits from its first-rate cricket complex, thus adding sports tourism to its industry portfolio. The work that remains is to integrate those and other new initiatives (along with its traditional marine attractions) into a comprehensive planning framework that both mobilizes all key tourism stakeholders and provide the basis for establishing a fresh destination identity that its citizens will embrace and that will help distinguish St. Kitts from its nearby Caribbean competitors.

To achieve such a sustainable tourism that is socially acceptable, economically viable, and environmentally compatible requires serious effort and long-term commitment. It calls for consistent sets of policies, practices and programmes that move towards more sustainable tourism implementation. For this agenda to be promoted, each stakeholder group must play a critical part. Participation, although fundamentally a positive approach, is not enough without accountability and the actual formulation as well as implementation of tourism master plans. In short, it requires two indispensable ingredients mentioned in a recent review of the sustainable tourism literature (McElroy & Dodds, 2007: 3), namely "proactive and strategic planning over the long-term [and] public environmental education and community participation in tourism decision-making."

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Ecotourism as a Means of Community Development: The case of the indigenous populations of the Greater Caribbean

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Abstract

There are many types of tourism on offer in the world market, with tourism types being as diverse as the kind of experience that the visitor demands. Destinations characteristically engage in tourism models that cater to the needs and wants of the tourist market they attract. However, research and experience have shown that different tourism models affect the local people of a destination in different ways. For example, some models favor greater participation of historically marginalized communities than others. This paper focuses on two tourism models: ecotourism and community-based tourism. It is conceptual in nature and builds on previous academic research and secondary data in addressing the very topical theme of the use of ecotourism as a means of community development. It presents successful case studies of community-based ecotourism, making particular reference to the indigenous populations of the Greater Caribbean to make these connections. There is reason to believe that the lessons derived from these case studies will be of interest and use to other indigenous communities in the Greater Caribbean and similar geographical regions in search of an alternative path of development that conserves natural areas while capitalizing on the opportunity for social welfare development and economic diversification for present as well as future generations.

Key Words:
Ecotourism, community development, poverty alleviation, indigenous peoples, Greater Caribbean

Resumen

El mercado mundial ofrece muchas clases de turismo con tipologías tan diversas como las experiencias demandadas por los turistas. Los destinos se especializan en modelos turísticos que satisfacen las necesidades y deseos del mercado turístico al cual atraen. Sin embargo, la investigación y la experiencia han demostrado que los diferentes modelos turísticos afectan de diferentes maneras a la población local de los destinos. Por ejemplo, algunos modelos favorecen la participación de comunidades históricamente marginadas más que otros. Este artículo se centra en dos modelos turísticos: el ecoturismo y el turismo basado en la comunidad. De naturaleza conceptual, se construye sobre investigaciones académicas previas e información secundaria aplicando el tópico del uso del ecoturismo como medio de desarrollo comunitario. Presenta exitosos estudios de casos de ecoturismo basados en la comunidad, haciendo una referencia especial a las poblaciones indígenas del Gran Caribe para establecer dichas conexiones. Hay razones para creer que las lecciones derivadas de estos estudios del caso serán de interés y de uso para otras comunidades indígenas en el Gran Caribe y similares regiones geográficas en búsqueda de una vía alternativa de desarrollo que conserve las áreas naturales al mismo tiempo que capitalice la oportunidad para el desarrollo del bienestar social y la diversificación económica, tanto para las presentes generaciones como para las futuras.

Palabras clave:
Ecoturismo, desarrollo comunitario, reducción de la pobreza, población indígena, el Gran Caribe

Introduction

There are many types of tourism on offer in the world market, with tourism types being as diverse as the kind of experience that the visitor demands. Destinations characteristically engage in tourism models that cater to

the needs and wants of the tourist market they attract. However, research and experience have shown that different tourism models affect the local people of a destination in different ways. For example, some models favour greater participation of historically marginalised communities than others (Ashley, 2006).

Alternative forms of tourism that seek to enhance the benefits of tourism while reducing its disbenefits are seen as the best way forward in this regard. Unlike conventional mass tourism, alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism are characteristically supplied through small and medium operators and are most likely to bring direct revenue and benefits to rural communities, indigenous communities and the poor. Moreover, the upsurge in interest in the equity dimension of sustainable development within recent years has led to considerable attention being paid to the community as a critical element in achieving sustainable development goals (Hall, 2007:112).

Thus, in the face of burgeoning poverty levels, two tourism models - the ecotourism and community-based tourism models - have gained widespread attention in the Greater Caribbean primarily because of their potential to bring meaningful benefits to historically marginalised communities. The prospect of merging these two models into what is known as community-based ecotourism presents a valuable opportunity for several communities in search of an alternative path of development that conserves natural areas while capitalising on the opportunity for social welfare development and economic diversification for present as well as future generations.

The International and Greater Caribbean tourism landscape

Tourism has assumed prominence as the largest business sector in the world economy; the world's leading source of export earnings; and among the world's largest employers. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the number of international tourist arrivals has experienced an average growth rate of 6.5% per annum between 1950 and 2006. In 2006, there were 846 million international tourist arrivals with international tourism receipts totalling US$ 733 billion, or US$ 2 billion a day; tourism accounted for approximately 35% of the world's export of services and over 70% in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Moreover, international tourist arrivals are forecasted to reach 1.6 billion by the year 2020 (WTO, 2007).

Many governments have realised and have even lauded, the potential of tourism as an economic development tool to the extent that tourism continues to be adopted as a priority development option for many struggling economies searching for viable alternatives (Cattarinich, 2001:1). The Greater Caribbean circumstance is a case in point. The development of tourism –especially international tourism– has been identified as a priority by many governments, with governments generally being attracted to tourism on the strength of its potential to create jobs, provide much needed foreign exchange, and opportunities for economic diversification. In 2007 for example, the Caribbean received 19.3 million tourists or 20% of world arrivals. The travel and tourism industry accounted for 16.4% of the region's GDP; and provided 2.6 Million jobs which equals 15.5% of total employment (UNWTO 2008).

Tourism and poverty alleviation: prospect and peril

Notwithstanding the existence of extreme poverty in many developing countries around the globe, it is not uncommon that these countries have also experienced substantial growth in international tourist arrivals and receipts (Cattarinich, 2001:1). For example, in 2001, tourism was a significant sector in eleven of the twelve countries in the world which were home to 80% of the world's poor (Cattarinich, 2001:1). Moreover, "developing countries received US$177 billion in tourism receipts in 2004, with tourism being the primary source of foreign exchange earnings in 46 of the 49 poorest nations that the UN describes as the "Least Developed Countries" (eTurboNews, 2005a in Hall, 2007: 114). This has led some observers like the World Tourism Organisation and the World Travel and Tourism Council to regard the tourism industry as playing a vital role in poverty alleviation on the merit of its labour intensive nature and its inclusion of historically marginalised groups such as women, the informal sector, rural communities and the poor, who have few other employment generating opportunities.

Others have adopted a more tempered outlook on the issue, suggesting instead that major challenges exist in unlocking the potential of tourism to contribute meaningfully to the poverty alleviation agenda. Research and experience has shown that some tourism models favour greater participation of local communities and people than others (Ashley, 2006). Several valid points have been put forward in this regard. It is widely accepted, for example, that tourism is inherently a commercial activity that is governed by the laws of supply and demand. As such, the possibility of the creation, and it seems, the perpetuation of economic and social inequities within

this tremendous sector exists. In many developing countries around the world, it has been observed that there has traditionally been unequal social benefit distribution within the sector. Of key concern is the fact that the consumption of tourism remains the domain of the wealthy; and so too has its production (Hall, 2007:116). This is because the traditional structure and organisation of international tourism trade has seen a pattern of ownership which favours inputs and participation from the formal (and often times foreign owned) sector such as international airline operators, foreign-owned hotels, large scale external travel distributors, and ancillary tourism businesses owned by a small cluster of local elites. To date, there are several cases in which local, economically marginalised communities (whether poor, indigenous, rural or a mix of all these) that account for most of the socially disadvantaged of this world, have found it difficult to participate meaningfully in such a system.

Problem definition

Dependency on Tourism

It has been observed that "for poor countries and small island states, tourism is the leading export - often the only sustainable growth sector of their economies and a catalyst for many related sectors" (eTurboNews, 2005a in Hall, 2007:114). The Greater Caribbean region's tourism statistics reflect a profound dependency on the industry: tourism is the single largest earner of foreign exchange in 16 of 28 countries in the wider Caribbean; directly or indirectly employs one in four people native to the Caribbean; and generates income for the region in excess of US$ 2 billion per year. It accounts for approximately one-third of the region's GDP, reflecting nearly 30% of all jobs and more than 75% of all the investment in the Caribbean (Griffin, 2007).

Chronic Poverty among some Social Groups

However, like many other parts of the world, the growth in tourism numbers has not necessarily translated into economic, social or environmental benefits for many Greater Caribbean territories. Although many examples of shortcomings exist in each of these categories, one area of disparity stands out for the purpose of our discussion – the fact that in tandem with the growth of tourism in the Greater Caribbean has been the persistence of poverty in the region. According to Bourne (2005), surveys of living conditions conducted in many Caribbean countries between 1996 and 2002 revealed that several countries were positioned at various points along the poverty incidence spectrum. Haiti and Suriname for example, were at the high end of the spectrum of poverty incidence with an estimated 65% and 63% respectively of their populations below the poverty line; Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines had poverty incidences of 30%-40%; while Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands were between 20% and 29% (Bourne, 2005).

Indigenous people and ethnic minorities are particularly at risk as among some of the poorest groups in the world. Duffy (2002) for example uses the case study of the Mayan communities in Belize to make this connection. She argues that "Mayan communities have the highest rates of infant mortality, illiteracy, poverty and malnutrition in Belize... Most Mayan people experience social, political and economic marginalization, and even exclusion" (Duffy, 2002:113). Torres (1997) concurs in her reference to the Mayan Indians who inhabit the peripheral *Zona Maya* of Quintana Roo, Mexico as 'the poorest of the poor'. Eight years later in 2005, little improvement has been made. Torres et al. (2005) relates:

> "Most of Quintana Roo's inhabitants are still Mayan Indians. The *Zona Maya* is the most marginalised and impoverished region in Quintana Roo, with over 75% of its inhabitants speaking Maya. The Mayas of this peripheral region are the 'poorest of the poor'".
>
> Torres, 1997

Torres et al. (2005: 276) describes "the general lack of economic opportunities in Mayan villages" and in doing so presents alarming socio-economic statistics: adults with education above primary school account for only 27% of the local population; illiteracy is at 13%; while infrastructure is severely lacking. There is only one hotel in Felipe Carillo Puerto and it does not qualify to receive a single star (Torres et al., 2005: 275).

Failure of Some Tourism Models to Bring Grassroots Benefits

Geographically and politically speaking, the Greater Caribbean is highly diverse and complex. Within this region there are several opportunities for the natural and cultural to be displayed and for the tourism industry to provide access to these benefits of such activity. Yet, the Caribbean tourism landscape is one of successes and

failures in tourism with many models of tourism failing to live up to their promises of equitable tourism benefit to all sectors and communities within host societies. In general, as Zhao et al. (2007) note: "policymakers usually pay considerable attention to the expansion of the tourism sector, but much less to the real issue - to what extent tourism development in practice contributes to poverty alleviation" (Zhao et al., 2007: 120).

Torres et al. (2005) uses the example of (state or master) Planned Tourism Development (PTD) to point to the fact that PTD has "failed to stimulate significant backward linkages to other economic sectors, notably agriculture and small scale industry. PTD has not significantly improved, appreciably, the socioeconomic conditions for the majority of Quintana Roo's original rural Mayan inhabitants" (Torres et al., 2005: 260). Her study of Cancun, Mexico's first PTD resort and its impact on the different social groups and regions within Quintana Roo concluded that "while the resort has generated profit for the Government, transnational corporations and entrepreneurial elites, it has failed to improve conditions for the region's most marginalized populations" (Torres et al., 2005: 260). This case study reflects what others have already noted, namely that "the disadvantaged socioeconomic status of the poor, characterized by lack of human and financial capital, greatly constraints their abilities to identify and pursue well-rewarding employment opportunities in the tourism sector" (Liu & Wall, 2006 in Zhao et al., 2007: 127-128). Thus, "it is not uncommon that in many destinations of developing countries, nearly all or most well-remunerated management positions are occupied by foreign professionals; in addition, local small enterprises and vendors could be easily squashed out of the market by multinationals and other better-standing competitors" (Brohman, 1996; Brown, 1998 in Zhao et al., 2007: 128).

Lack of Community Involvement in Tourism Development

One way to overcome this general deficiency is the meaningful involvement of local people and communities. In fact, "since the 1970's, 'community participation' in tourism has become an umbrella term or a supposedly new genre of tourism development intervention" (Tosun, 2001). "Community participation is often suggested as an essential ingredient in improving the quality of tourism's contribution to national development" (Novelli et al., 2007: 449). "Local participation is believed to be able to create larger and balanced economic opportunities for the local poor, increase local tolerance and positive attitudes to tourism development, and facilitate the implementation of the principles of sustainable tourism" (Tosun, 2005 in Zhao et al., 2007: 126).

Tosun's typology of community participation is based on three levels of community participation going from the lower 'coercive participation' through the middle 'induced participation' to the higher 'spontaneous participation' which he defines as 'an ideal mode of community participation' (Novelli et al., 2007: 448-449). "Full managerial responsibility and authority to the host community is believed to be a form most beneficial to locals in comparison to induced participation and coercive participation" (Tosun, 1999 in Zhao et al., 2007: 128). However, the concept of community participation "is tricky, not easy either to define or to accomplish" (Tosun, 2001: 616). For instance, it has been observed that real mass public participation actually seldom happens to the poor (Zhao et al., 2007) as "increased participation of indigenous communities actually means involving low-income groups and people in rural and urban areas, who are not normally involved in the process of government" (Novelli et al., 2007: 449).Thus, in developing countries it is not uncommon that "involvement is more likely located on the lower rungs of the ladder" (Novelli et al., 2007: 449).

Taking an 'Alternative' Approach

The upsurge in interest in the equity dimension of sustainable development within recent years has led to considerable attention being paid to the community as a critical element in achieving sustainable development goals (Hall, 2007:112). Moreover, many have called for a tourism-based approach to sustainable development that demands an examination of the extent to which tourism development contributes to poverty alleviation not just in theory, but more importantly, in practice. Van der Duim et al. (2005) cite Milne and Ateljevic (2001: 374) who argue that 'community-based' approaches are central to many tourism development plans around the world and there is a growing realization that localized cooperation, trust and networking are essential ingredients in providing the right mix for successful tourism development outcomes (Van der Duim et al., 2005: 287). In addition, they point to Mowforth and Munt (2003) who are also hopeful of communities being able to take control over the development of tourism (Van der Duim et al., 2005: 287).

Alternative forms of tourism that seek to enhance the benefits of tourism while reducing its disbenefits are seen as the best way forward in this regard. Unlike conventional mass tourism, alternative forms of tourism are characteristically supplied through small and medium

operators and are most likely to bring direct revenue and benefits to rural communities, indigenous communities and the poor. Ecotourism and community-based tourism models represent alternative forms of tourism that fit this mold in many ways.

Ecotourism

The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and the natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of the natural resources beneficial to the local people" (Epler Wood et al., 1991: 75). According to Ross et al., (1999), the multiple goals associated with ecotourism are reflected in this definition. Thus, the fundamental functions of ecotourism are protection of natural areas, production of revenue, education and local participation and capacity building" (Ross et al., 1999: 4).

Participants to the World Ecotourism Summit in 2002 recognised that "ecotourism embraces the principles of sustainable tourism, concerning the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism" (Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, 2002:1). Indeed, in many parts of the world, "ecotourism has provided a leadership role in introducing sustainability practices to the tourism sector" (Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, 2002:2).

Similarly, academics and practitioners alike have commented on the value of ecotourism as an 'alternative' approach to conventional tourism development models (Cater, 1994, Norris et al., 1998; Epler Wood, 2001). Unlike mainstream models, the ecotourism model offers the prospect of:

- Tangible economic, infrastructural and social welfare benefits;
- The generation of both formal and informal employment and income through small-scale, locally owned and managed initiatives that cover a broad spectrum of tourism related activities including (but not limited to) the operation of small hotels and guest houses, restaurants, ground transportation, souvenir holdings, guiding and interpretive programmes;
- The protection or conservation of natural areas by creating sources of employment and income that depend upon keeping the natural and, by extension, the cultural patrimony intact;
- Grassroots participation through the use of nature-based attractions, amenities and activities closest to the rural poor; and
- Community education and empowerment through capacity building that strengthens the ability of communities to fully participate in the industry by engaging in alternative income generating activities that generate revenues both for conservation of the community's natural assets and the upliftment of the community's quality of life.

The prospect for using ecotourism as a means of community development is brighter now than ever before. One reason for this is the fact that ecotourism is reported to be one of the most rapidly increasing segments of the tourism industry. Though the figures on ecotourism are difficult to compile, the WTO estimates that global spending on ecotourism is increasing steadily by 20% per year, approximately five times the growth rate of the tourism industry as a whole (Garraway, 2007). The increased demand for ecotourism can be attributed in part to the wave of global environmental consciousness. Important too, is the desire of the tourist to take experiential, multi-activity holidays engaged in the natural, archaeological, historical or cultural heritage of a destination. The statistics support this trend. They indicate that during the last ten years, there has been a shift in preferences for nature-based destinations in developing countries over the traditional European destinations. The growth in international market demand for ecotourism experiences, which depend on natural and cultural resources, makes it possible to include communities in the Caribbean with access to these resources directly in tourism development (CANARI, 1999).

The Community-Based Approach

The increased demand for ecotourism has coincided with yet another trend - that of communities having the desire to take the lead in the planning, development and operation of tourism development. For example, community based tourism (CBT) is being identified as a tool for development in Namibia (Novelli et al., 2007) while in some territories, like Kenya, community-based enterprises are preferred (Manyara et al., 2007).

And this is perhaps for the best. As we have noted, there is a relatively short history of the community-based, participatory approach to tourism development in the developing world (Novelli et al., 2007; Zhao et al., 2007). The reality is that, by and large, local, economically marginalised communities have remained outside of the circle of the tourism economy, and that tourism means very little or nothing to them (Zhao et al., 2007: 126). Indeed, for tourism development to be sustainable,

local people at the grassroots level must be involved in all decision-making on how the tourism product is developed, participating in the development of the product as well as the ongoing management of tourism activities. Zhao et al., (2007) speak of public participation that makes the voice of the poor heard in full consideration as different from participation by employment which is mainly driven by individual endeavors to reap economic benefits tourism brings and thus has more direct impacts on the life of poor households (Zhao et al., 2007). In line with this, Novelli et al. (2007) explain that "community participation in tourism can take a number of different forms in terms of types of enterprises (i.e. accommodation, tour guiding, consumptive and non-consumptive safaris, craft, etc), level of involvement (possibly from mere employment to ownership or joint-venture operation with private investors) and nature of participation (individual – i.e. small B&B or collective - i.e. community guiding at heritage sites)" (Novelli et al., 2007: 452).

Community-based Ecotourism and Poverty Alleviation in the Greater Caribbean context

The involvement of communities in ecotourism development has led to a convergence between ecotourism and community-based tourism (CBT) approaches. Community-based ecotourism (CBET or CBE) is a concept that implies more explicit involvement of local communities and community empowerment in the development of ecotourism (Scheyvens, 2002 in Palmer, 2006). Community-based ecotourism is tourism that reflects ecotourism objectives, is community-based and involves local people. It seeks to achieve a balance between commercial success, the preservation of the cultural patrimony, and the conservation of the natural environment to the benefit of local and indigenous communities.

According to Epler Wood (2001), "community-based ecotourism (CBE) is a growing phenomenon throughout the world. The CBE concept implies that the community has substantial control and involvement in the ecotourism project and that the majority of benefits remain in the community" (Epler Wood, 2001:12). She makes reference to Wesche and Drumm (1999) who have identified three main types of CBE enterprises. "The purest model suggests that the community owns and manages the enterprise. All community members are employed by the project using a rotation system, and profits are allocated to community projects. The second type of CBE enterprise involves family or group initiatives in communities. This based upon voluntary participation. The third type of CBE is a joint venture between a community or family and an outside business partner" (Epler Wood, 2001: 12).

In the face of burgeoning poverty levels, the ecotourism and community-based tourism models of tourism have gained widespread attention in the Greater Caribbean, primarily because of their potential to bring meaningful benefits to local, economically marginalised communities. The prospect of merging these two models into community-based ecotourism presents an opportunity for several communities of the Greater Caribbean. Epler Wood (2001) noted that at that time, ecotourism had been "chosen by thousands of communities in the region as the preferred development alterative". In fact at that time, there was a large demand especially in Latin American for assistance to communities seeking to develop local ecotourism products (Epler Wood, 2001: 12).

Today, many positive examples of community-based ecotourism already exist. Amongst them, Maroon communities in the Misty Blue and John Crow Mountains of Jamaica; Mayan communities of Punta Allen and Xcalak in Quintana Roo, Mexico; and the Toledo district of Southern Belize. These communities share a common experience in using ecotourism as a strategy for community development, one that not only satisfies the tourists' desire for adventure and comfort, but also satisfies the basic socio-economic needs of the community while conserving the natural assets upon which these communities and the industry depends.

Maroon communities in the Misty Blue and John Crow Mountains of Jamaica

A positive example of community-based ecotourism can be found in The Youth Poverty Alleviation through Tourism and Heritage (Youth PATH) project - a UNESCO supported initiative that was started in 2000 and is nearing its completion. Youth PATH is a program designed to empower young people from economically marginalized communities through tourism. Youth PATH provided participants with opportunities to establish tourism businesses to improve their livelihoods while preserving their natural and cultural heritage.

UNESCO's work with the indigenous Maroon community of the Misty Blue and John Crow Mountains that come from the rural St. Andrew communities of Irish Town, Middleton, Charlestown and Red Light is of particular interest. The participants were trained in tour guiding, crafts, bird monitoring, macro invertebrae sampling, plant inventory, in the use of plants for food, craft

and medicinal purposes, in the use of plants and recycled materials in the production of quality items for sale at the Holy Well Gift Shop, and in the development of tourism product skills for the promotion of the National Park.

Mayan communities of Punta Allen and Xcalak in Quintana Roo, Mexico

A study conducted in the three Mayan communities of San Juan, Punta Allen and Xcalak all located in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico in December 1998 produced a good example of the benefits of community-based ecotourism. The results also gives insight on exactly how some indigenous communities feel about community-based tourism.

Carballo-Sandoval (1999) relates: "In December 1997 in the village of San Juan, as a result of the hard work of a local NGO and the villagers, an ecotourism-cultural project was launched entitled "San Juan - Living Culture" (San Juan - Cultura Viva). This involved the participation of around 70 local villagers and portrayed the traditions and aspects of Maya culture. Forty persons can be accommodated in the jungle in order to experience this event. Each tourist is charged $35 US dollars per play, including a meal. At the end, the financial benefits are equally shared between the participants.
Although only 140 tourists attended this play between December 1997 and December 1998, the general consensus is positive. The participants are satisfied with this cultural project. All were in agreement concerning the economic, social and cultural benefits that it brings for the community in general. The main economic benefits arise from the opportunity for women to prepare food for the tourists, and thus obtain some income. They also have the opportunity to sell their home-made crafts to tourists. The main social benefit voiced was of promoting a strong feeling of unity amongst the villagers, and the main cultural benefit being that through these presentations Mayan traditions can be conserved for generations to come. Of special note is the fact that Mayan children and young people can also admire, take a pride in, practice and follow their traditions (Carballo-Sandoval, 1999: 12-13)."

Carballo-Sandoval (1999) emphasises that a consistent finding of his study has been that "the inhabitants of all three villages recognise that ecotourism is good for the community because of the economic advantages it brings… The majority of respondents (89.2% in Punta Alien and 80% in Xcalak), had noticed positive changes in the community as a result of tourists visiting the area, and 71.4% in Punta Allen and 100% in Xcalak, felt that ecotourism activity was the best option for the development of the community compared with other economic activities" (Carballo-Sandoval, 1999: 22).

The work of the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) amongst the Mayan communities of the Toledo district of Southern Belize

Some observers (Timothy et al., 1999; Duffy, 2002) consider the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), a grassroots initiative to empower the Mayan communities in the Toledo District of Belize to sustainably manage and use the district's natural resources, to be a notable case worthy of emulation based on the strength of its equitable distribution of tourism benefits as well as the project's resilience over the years. TIDE, a community based umbrella organisation, was initiated by local, indigenous residents in 1997 and still continues to be managed and controlled at the grassroots level.

It is good to note that TIDE has won an International Eco-tourism Society award for sustainable eco-tourism development (Duffy, 2002: 107). Regardless, such has been the success of this initiative that in making reference to this example, Timothy et al., (1999: 226) concluded that "sustainable tourism initiatives in developing countries can be conceptualised and operationalised at a very small scale, improve the lives of residents, provide enjoyment for tourists, and protect the natural and cultural environments". Although conceding that the programme satisfied the criteria of success, at the time of writing the authors were hesitant to judge whether or not the project was sustainable.

Duffy (2002:106-125) aptly describes the Toledo, Belize case study and the work of TIDE. She speaks of the geographical remoteness of parts of the Toledo District, its relative lack of development, its reliance on subsistence agriculture and the small scale of its revenue-generating ventures. Native to this district are Mayan communities that live mainly in the Southern districts of Belize, and constitutes most of the population in Toledo District. Fortunately, "the Tourism Strategy for Belize identified the development of community-based initiatives and micro enterprises as part of the key to a successful eco-tourism industry…In particular, the Toledo District was highlighted as a possible eco-cultural zone to attract international visitors, using a Mayan heritage trail as a marketing tool…As a result, Toledo markets itself as fly-fishing, kayaking, trekking and cultural tour destination" (Duffy, 2002: 106).

"In eco-tourism terms, Toledo is particularly known for

its Mayan village accommodation, where ecotourists are encouraged to spend time in a Mayan village as part of cultural tour of indigenous peoples" (Duffy, 2002: 107). TIDETours, a subsidiary of TIDE, was established in 1999 to promote ecotourism in the Toledo District. Its primary objectives are to provide an alternative and sustainable means of livelihood for area residents, to help reduce poverty in the Toledo District by introducing more profitable economic opportunities, and to generate funding for TIDE's conservation work. TIDETours takes the lead in providing training to local residents to enable their participation in the ecotourism industry. One of its most successful programs has been tour guide training and certification courses. As the result of this project, TIDETours has assisted a number of former fishermen to move into more sustainable and more economically profitable work as fly-fishing and wildlife guides. TIDE estimates that fly-fishing can earn a good tour guide US $200 per day, an enormous contrast to the US $25 per day for commercial fishing. TIDE approaches local hunters to become wildlife tour guides, since they know how to find pacas and jaguars which ecotourists are eager to pay to see, in the rainforests and mangroves" (Duffy, 2002: 107). TIDE Tours also serves as an in-bound tour operator service, providing package tours of the Toledo District. It contracts with individual tour guides and small-scale tourism businesses to provide the necessary services, carefully ensuring that it works with as many individuals as possible on a rotating and equal basis. It owns kayaks, snorkeling gear and other sports equipment that it provides to local tour guides to assist in operating their tours. As part of its work, TIDETours also undertakes marketing efforts to promote the Toledo District, actively working to expand the tourism industry in the area.

These examples illustrate the potential of community-based ecotourism. The process of planning, developing and operating community-based ecotourism programmes is not without its challenges and problems and some valuable lessons have been and are yet to be learnt. However, cases like these speak to the promise of the community-based ecotourism model, a model that if carefully implemented and managed, presents a valuable opportunity for community empowerment and poverty alleviation.

Limitations

Community-based ecotourism can be considered as a viable option towards sustainable tourism development, but there are important qualifications. Ross et al., (1999) examine the all too common gap that exists between ecotourism theory as revealed in the literature and ecotourism practice as indicated by its onsite application while Epler Wood (2001) notes that the mislabeling of ecotourism by businesses and governments seeking to cash in on its perceived market allure as a very thorny problem. Where local communities are concerned, Novelli et al., (2007) make reference to Tosun (2005) regarding the "short history of the participatory tourism development approach in the developing world" while case studies have been presented that provide evidence of the struggle for local control in ecotourism development (Palmer, 2006).

Moreover, tourism as an economic activity may not necessarily be desirable or feasible for every destination or even for every community within a particular destination. Nor as Zhao et al. (2007) argue, should tourism or its models/forms be viewed as a panacea for such long-standing and complex socio-economic problems as poverty. Tourism is one of perhaps many other viable approaches to poverty alleviation. As such, it should be recognised for its own merits as a *tool* and used in tandem with other sustainable income generating activities.

Conclusions

Since the 1990s, attention has shifted towards alternative forms of tourism that characteristically generate net benefits for the poor. Research and experience on the issue has shown that some tourism models favour greater participation of historically marginalised communities than others (Ashley, 2006). Although tourism is not going to be the sole savior of any community, the significant contribution that tourism presently makes and can make to Greater Caribbean communities in the future ought to be recognised.

In the Greater Caribbean, tourism is a major industry with considerable potential for further development, although there are geographical and socio-economic disparities in the extent of development. With new non-traditional markets such as ecotourism emerging and growing, opportunities exist for participation and the generation of employment and income opportunities at the community level, especially near a natural resource (CANARI, 1999). It is therefore not difficult to understand why many believe that community-based ecotourism is the type of tourism that presents some of the best opportunities, when compared to other sectors, for the direct and long term economic impacts on local, economically marginalised communities, so that these become the beneficiaries and not the victims of tourism development (Garra-

way, 2007). It is hoped that communities plagued by poverty and economic marginalisation within the Greater Caribbean will seriously consider community-based ecotourism as a viable option towards sustainable development.

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Caribbean Delight: Moving Beyond the Sustainability Discourse in Tourism

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Abstract

In the tourism literature a lot of attention is paid to different approaches towards tourism development, especially when it comes to developing countries. Often it is argued that it is necessary to come to a sustainable approach, whereby it is stressed that attention should be paid to the way tourism organizations influence (and are influenced by) the natural environment as well as the cultural, and economical context in which they are situated. Although the debates on sustainable forms of tourism development are a positive direction for the tourism field, we will argue in this paper that these debates will not really contribute to the progress of the field as long as there is a lack of local accounts of actors in such tourism destinations. By presenting empirical data from Belize and the Dominican Republic, the aim is to move beyond the dominant 'sustainability discourse' in the field of tourism in which mass-tourism is per definition 'bad' and small-scale tourism is 'good', and gain an insight into what is actually going on at the micro level.

Key Words:
Belize, the Dominican Republic, Sustainable Tourism, Micro Perspectives, Local Entrepreneurship

Resumen

En la literatura del turismo se presta mucha atención a los diferentes acercamientos al desarrollo del turismo, especialmente cuando nos referimos a países en vías de desarrollo. Se sostiene a menudo que es necesario un enfoque basado en la sostenibilidad, por lo cual se remarca que se preste especial atención a cómo influyen las organizaciones de turismo (y cómo son influenciadas) tanto por el entorno natural como el cultural y el económico en el que se sitúan. Aunque los debates sobre las formas sostenibles de desarrollo turístico son un camino positivo para el sector turístico, en este artículo analizaremos porqué estos debates no contribuirán realmente al progreso del sector mientras haya una carencia de agentes locales de tales destinos turísticos. Presentando datos empíricos sobre Belice y la República Dominicana, el objetivo es ir más allá del dominante discurso sobre la sostenibilidad en el ámbito turístico, en el que el turismo de masas es por definición "malo" y el turismo a menor escala es "bueno", y hacer una incursión en lo que realmente está sucediendo a nivel micro.

Palabras clave:
Belice, República Dominicana, turismo sostenible, perspectivas micro, espíritu emprendedor local

Introduction

When it comes to the Caribbean most people think about sunny, white beach paradise islands, colourful cocktails and lively music. By many Western tourists it is seen as a dream destination: a luxury cruise or tropical beach vacation. However, there is more to the Caribbean than this bounty image. In fact, the region is very diverse and there are many destinations that offer more than sun, sea, sand (Roessingh et al., 2005).

What is common for most Caribbean destinations (if not all) is that their tourism industry "is vested in the branding and marketing of Paradise" (Sheller, 2004: 23). Whether beach paradises or Gardens of Eden with exotic vegetation and adventurous caves, it is all about selling a certain image to attract tourists.

These images increasingly employ concepts such as 'sustainability', 'eco-tourism', or 'green-tourism', since there is growing awareness of the costs of tourism when it comes to the environment, local cultures and the difficulties for the local communities to benefit from the tourism industry. Coined with a wider globalization/neo-liberal discourse, the international tourism community, together with governments of tourism destinations (especially in the developing world) are actively stimulating and promoting alternative forms of tourism that

are (supposed to be) more sustainable (ecologically, culturally, and economically). Although these attempts certainly deserve credit, there are some important limitations and problems with this sustainability trend.

Over the years numerous scholars and practitioners have stated that the concept of sustainable development can be applied to all types of tourism development, activities and environments, regardless the size and scale (Clarke, 1997; Inskeep, 1991; Saarinen, 2006). Nevertheless, the concept of sustainable tourism is, more often than not, being attached to specific types of limited size tourism, thereby implying that these are 'better' than conventional forms of tourism or better yet, 'mass' tourism (Butcher, 2003). According to Fennel (1999: 9) alternative tourism is "a generic term that encompasses a whole range of tourism strategies (e.g. 'appropriate', 'eco', 'soft', 'responsible', 'people to people', 'controlled', 'small scale', 'cottage' and 'green' tourism) all of which purport to offer a more benign alternative to conventional mass tourism". Brohman (1996: 63) even argues that "the concept of alternative tourism has emerged as one of the most widely used (and abused) phrases in the tourism literature" as it has come to "mean almost anything that can be juxtaposed to conventional mass tourism". On the whole, those types of tourism are expected to be devoid of the assumed detrimental effects of most forms of mass tourism, which is often foreign controlled, enclavic, unplanned, short-term, culturally destructive and environmentally unsustainable (Brohman, 1996: 66).

Definitions of sustainable tourism within the academic literature are manifold, as it was generally assumed that sustainable tourism could only be achieved after gaining understanding of what the concept actually means (Garrod & Fyall, 1998). Those descriptive attempts have been followed by numerous prescriptive models of good practice. Less attention has been paid to a critical analysis of issues of sustainability and tourism within practice (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Stronza adds to this that although anthropological studies in tourism include "excellent descriptions of what can go wrong when tourism is introduced into local communities, the analysis so far has been strangely devoid of local voices" and therefore "we have learned relatively little about how locals themselves perceive the array of pros and cons associated with tourism" (Stronza, 2001: 269). This seems odd, since one of the central aspects of sustainable tourism is said to be the way the local community of destinations is able to take part in and reap the opportunities that are created through tourism development.

In this article, we aim to shed a light on the perceptions of the local people involved in tourism in two different destinations in the Caribbean Basin, Belize and the Dominican Republic. Both countries, like most Caribbean countries, have a high dependency on the tourism industry. A large part of the local workforce is directly or indirectly involved with tourism. However the two countries are very different when it comes to the size of the industry and the kind of tourists they attract. With regard to tourist arrivals (cruise ship arrivals not included), the Dominican Republic is currently the largest tourist destination in the Caribbean (with 3,965,055 tourist arrivals between January and December 2006) before Cuba, Jamaica, Cancun (Mexico), Bahamas, and Puerto Rico (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2007). Belize, in turn, is one of the smallest (partly due to the small size of the country, its dense vegetation, and low level of population), but also one of the fastest growing destinations with 247,308 tourist arrivals between January and December 2006 and 655,931 cruise ship arrivals (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2007).

While the Dominican Republic attracts mainly mass-tourists seeking the famous sun-sea-sand vacations, Belize's tourism industry is mainly aimed at 'alternative' ways of attracting tourists, by offering all sorts of adventures and small-scale accommodations. Although there are certain areas that could be classified as sun, sea, sand areas (for example San Pedro and Placencia at the Caribbean coast), generally the Belizean tourism industry might be better summarized by 'three Rs' (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 1-3) than the famous Caribbean 'three Ss', since 'rainforest, reef and ruins' better encompass the Belizean tourism assets than 'sun, sand and sea'.

The specific focus of this article is twofold. First it aims to describe the situation these two countries find themselves in, operating in specific sectors of the tourism industry but both at a turning point in the process of development. The Dominican Republic has a well-established tourism industry, but few expansion possibilities, while Belize finds itself between two markets: involving small-scale nature and adventure tourism and the increasing popularity of cruise tourism. The article concentrates on observations of everyday experiences in two apparently different countries, in order to learn about how the concept of tourism is being shaped in daily practice. Second, the article focuses on the way people who work in the tourist industry, such as entrepreneurs or tour guides, reflect on matters as tourists, local participation, foreign investments, sustainability, and the way the government deals with these matters. The data presented in this article are the result of ethnographic research conducted in the Puerto Plata region from August 2003 until February 2004, and various ethnographic research projects conducted in Belize between 2003 and 2006. In most of these projects, the focus was on the micro-stories of a specific group of people, such as small-entrepreneurs, local hotel-owners, tour-guides, etc. In all cases, the researcher spent a significant period amongst the research population in their everyday settings, employing a combination of several qualitative research methods. These include (but are not limited to) participant observations, interviews with all kinds of stakeholders, numerous more or less informal conversations, and document analysis.

The authors have previously included part of the data resulting from these research projects in a collection of case studies from four different destinations in the Caribbean Basin (Roessingh et al., 2005). These case studies from Belize, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Suriname were aimed at showing the diversity of these four destinations, as well as to highlight a number of important issues and problems that local entrepreneurs in such destinations are confronted with.

In this article, the specific aim is to compare local accounts of two very different tourism destinations, in order to move beyond the dominant discourse in the field of tourism in which mass-tourism is per definition 'bad' and small-scale tourism is 'good', and gain an insight into what is actually going on at the micro level. In the next sections, first the development of the tourism industry in Belize is described, followed by the story of local entrepreneurs in one particular region (Cayo Disctrict) in Belize. Then, the tourism industry of the Dominican Republic is introduced, in order to set the scene for the story of local entrepreneurs in the Puerto Plata region. Finally, in the concluding section, some of the most important issues from the empirical data will be highlighted and some more general conclusions will be drawn.

Tourism Development in Belize: Nature is calling

Belize's tourism industry started out in the 1960s, mainly with divers that were attracted to the second longest barrier reef in the world. Pearce (1984: 293) describes this first period as a development characterized by "individual effort and initiative and a general absence of planning and coordination". Private entrepreneurs took a leading role. This occurred in San Pedro, on Ambergris Caye, where small, mainly American investors started promoting Belize as a fishing, diving and snorkelling paradise (Barry, 1995: 52). The plans of the entrepreneurs from San Pedro reflect the active use of what the island and the barrier reef had to offer, as Sutherland (1998: 96) points out: "Their goal was to establish nature recreational tourism (sport fishing, wind surfing, sailing, snorkelling, diving) as well as some hunting-and-gathering tourism (hunting deer and peccary, shell collecting, archaeological ruins)". San Pedro today is a well-developed tourism town. But questions have been raised about the impact of tourism on the social and natural environment. Sewage problems, destruction of the reef, economic leakages and increasing cost of living amongst others, are major issues of concern. 'The case of San Pedro' is often cited as an example of growth without control, where the government could and should play a regulatory and facilitative role to diminish the negative impacts and increase the positive ones (Dachary & Arnaiz B., 1991; McMinn & Cater, 1998; Sutherland, 1998).

However it was only in the 1980s, when the government changed seats for the first time in the electoral history of Belize, that the Belizean Government started to pay attention to tourism as a serious option for development. Until then the ruling People's United Party (PUP) had been resenting tourism, mainly driven by anti-colonial feelings (Barry, 1995: 53). Belize had to deal with many economic setbacks once it had acquired independence. In this period (the eighties) Belize's export consisted mainly of products from the agricultural industry, such as sugar, molasses, citrus fruits and bananas. Due to high oil prices, low sugar prices and a declining world market, the country was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1981 (Barry, 1995: 39). According to a tourism study from the United Nations, the government at that time "virtually frowned on the industry and from all accounts, did its utmost to discourage its development" (Woods et al., 1992: 83). This radically changed when in 1984, the United Democratic Party (UDP) embraced tourism as an option for development.

The UDP government, forced by the World Bank and IMF to diversify the Belizean economy after the worldwide recession, started to develop tourism as a potential sector for economic growth. The tourism industry was raised from seventh to second in the overall development plan of the country. Funding and loans were provided to improve the tourism infrastructure (Barry, 1995: 52; Woods et al., 1992: 82). The Ministry of Tourism was established and integrated with the Ministry of Environment. This already reflected the government's focus on the rapidly growing eco-tourism market. Tourist attractions were identified and a strategy plan was defined with recommendations for the institutionalization of the sector, the protection of national resources and the promotion of the industry as a whole (Berl-Cawtran Consortium, 1984). The preparations paid off. Ten years later this period was even referred to as the 'golden' years for Belizean tourism: "Although reasonably reliable tourist arrival estimates are not available until 1991, it appears that after twenty years as a diving destination Belize, in the late 1980s, entered a "golden" period of tourism growth coinciding with its appeal to the "new" ecotourism market. Arrivals grew rapidly, from less than 77,000 in 1991 to more than 100.000 by 1993" (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 1-3). Between 1993 and 1997 tourist arrivals stagnated at approximately 100.000 annually and concerns were raised that without targeted action, the industry would further decline (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 1-1).

In 1997 the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Belize Tourism Board saw the need for a long-term development plan. A study was undertaken by the Blackstone Corporation, resulting in a National Tourism

Development Plan for the next ten years; also known as the 'Blackstone Report' (Blackstone Corporation, 1998). The guiding principles were similar to the earlier strategy and action plans with a focus on a strong environmental ethic and a preference for smaller-scale development. Attention was paid to public-private partnerships, price competitiveness and market-driven strategies. In 2003 this resulted in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Development. The latter reflects what the development of tourism in Belize is all about "a catalyst for economic growth" (Belize Tourism Board, 2003).

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) was revitalized as a statutory board under the ministry and since then is responsible for marketing and public relations as well as tourism product development. Functioning as an executing government agency, the BTB communicates with the private sector, represented by The Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA). The BTIA (officially recognized in 1989) communicates the interests, views, needs and priorities of the private stakeholders in the Belizean tourism industry by marketing and promoting Belize as a tourism destination and by influencing the development of the tourism sector through the representation of the private sector, lobbies and by providing a network and forum to address tourism related concerns. Public-private partnership is highly valued by both sectors in Belize and together they engage in the concept of 'sustainable-eco-cultural tourism' as a market-driven strategy.

Though still focusing on eco-tourism Belize started promoting 'responsible tourism'. Responsible tourism refers to a way of doing tourism rather than a type or segment of tourism. It encompasses what can be called eco-tourism, but also 'natural heritage' tourism, diving and marine-oriented tourism as Belize's specific niche markets. It refers to an ethic and a set of practices that chart a sensible course for all types of tourism (Belize Tourism Board, 2003). It is expected that the 'new enlightened tourist' that forms Belize's most important existing and potential future market, will be attracted by the image of 'a destination that cares' (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 4-1 & 4-2). Responsible tourism thus serves both as a concept for sustainable development and as a marketing image to attract tourists.

One of the main attractions for local and national tourists (besides the reef) is the rich Maya heritage of Belize. Visitation numbers for major Mayan sites in Guatemala, Mexico and Honduras are evidence of the increased popularity of the Mundo Maya (Maya World) circuit amongst tourists. Belize however did not have a strong position in the Ruta Maya and was primarily serving as a through-way for tours between Mexico and Guatemala with minimal stops in the country itself (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 5). Caracol (situated in the Maya Mountains, Western Belize) is recognized as an 'anchor destination' for its potential to 'rival' with major sites like Chitzen Itza in Mexico, Tikal in Guatemala or Copan in Honduras (Blackstone Corporation, 1998: 9-5). In order to put Belize on the Mundo Maya tourism map, a project was established for the development and conservation of the major archaeological sites. In 2000 the Inter-American Development Bank provided Belize with an $11 million loan to strengthen the tourism sector and to preserve and protect environmental and cultural assets (Inter-American Development Bank, 2000).

An increasingly important segment of the Belizean tourism industry are the cruise-ships arriving to the country. With a growth of 564.4% in cruise visitor arrivals in 2002, Belize has been one of the fastest growing cruise tourism destinations in the region (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2003). The rapid expansion of cruise tourism business in Belize has led to increasing tension between different actors, especially since the cruise industry is generally not compatible with the 'green' image of Belizean tourism (Berendse & Roessingh, 2005). In general, the opinions of different groups of stakeholders diverge when it comes to the costs and benefits of the tourism industry, as becomes clear from the following case study, in which the relations between local and foreign entrepreneurs in the Belizean Cayo District, as well as with the central government are discussed.

Cayo District: Springboard for Indiana-Jones-like adventures

Visitors coming from Guatemala are most likely to arrive at the western border of the Cayo District. The border town Benque Viejo del Carmen itself is a rather small town and most tourists will directly continue to the district town of San Ignacio. This town serves as a springboard for Indiana-Jones-like adventures in what some people call "Belize's inland playground" (Cutlack, 2000: 52). This means that most of the tour guides and hotel owners live and work in this little town.

Cayo is undeniably the main destination for all tourism on Belizean mainland. Over 60% of the Cayo District has been set aside as either a Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park or Forest Reserve (Belize Explorer, 2003). The Mountain Pine Ridge is a forest reserve full of rivers, pools and waterfalls. The Cayo region is home to numerous caves as a result of the abundance of limestone. Most of these caves were used by the Maya, which adds a cultural aspect to the adventurous tours. Hidden in the jungle of Chiquibul National Park you find Caracol. This ancient Maya city is assumed to have rivalled the famous city of Tikal (Guatemala) in the past (Bradbury, 1996: 150-153). With the popular ruins of Xunantunich and the easily accessible Cahal Pech in San

Ignacio, the region offers a lot for the archaeologically minded visitor.

Cayo has a long tradition of eco- or responsible tourism. Guides take visitors into the jungle for birding, national history or jungle survival trips. Belize's first jungle lodge, Chaa Creek, is located on the banks of the Macal river, close to San Ignacio. The lodge has become internationally recognized for its sustainable tourism concept. Amongst others it hosts a national history centre and a butterfly farm. Former neighbour Ix Chel Farm was known for its rainforest medicine trail based on the knowledge of Mayan healer Don Eligio Panti. Situated in the same valley, DuPlooy's jungle lodge operates the Belize Botanic Gardens. And further south on the Hummingbird Highway is Ian Anderson's Caves Branch jungle lodge, famous for its cave and wilderness rescue training and wilderness first aid. These lodges represent the broad range of activities available in the district.

Just as in Northern Belize, the atmosphere and culture in this part of the country is mainly Hispanic as a result of (recent) immigration from the surrounding countries (Peedle, 1999: 16). An important group of inhabitants in this area are a conservative religious community of Mennonites. Mainly on market days you can see them driving along the Western Highway in their horse-drawn buggies heading to San Ignacio to sell their commodities. The more progressive community of Mennonites from Spanish Lookout, north of the Western highway are important contributors to the agricultural economy with their poultry and dairy business (Roessingh, 2007). In addition they craft wooden furniture and merchandise auto parts and other mechanical devices that attract people from all over Belize because of the low prices (Bradbury, 1996: 190-191).

Next to tourism, citrus and cattle farming, Cayo is a governmental district with the new capital of Belmopan lying at the junction of the Western and Southbound Hummingbird Highway. It took almost ten years to build this artificially created capital and the result is a "tidy, well planned but, according to many, also dull" town (Cutlack, 2000: 44). Most tourists will not go further than the bus terminal. Heading South, the Hummingbird Highway provides for a "gorgeous and dramatic drive over the Maya Mountains and through foothills and valleys of citrus plantations" (Miller Carlstroem & Miller, 2002: 184). Passing the Blue Hole National Park, followed by the Caves Branch River system with ample opportunities for cave explorers, the road leads you to the junction of the Southern Highway and the turnoff to the East coast village of Dangriga in the Stann Creek district. Yet, most tourists instead take the bus in Belmopan to visit Belize City, also on the east coast. Many tourists also travel to Caye Caulker or San Pedro, the two most popular 'sun-sea-sand' and diving destinations of the country, and one of the most established tourism areas. In this case study we focus on the tourist entrepreneurs of the Cayo district. In contrast to Caye Caulker and San Pedro, the tourism industry in the Cayo District is not yet clearly established. While Caye Caulker and San Pedro have a clearly recognizable image, the tourists that visit Cayo do not really fit a demarcated type. A hotel/restaurant owner in San Ignacio puts is as follows:

> It's mixture tourism. At first, our tourism industry focused on basic and budget travelers. I love them; they are interesting people, educated too. They are really interested in the community and the culture of Belize and San Ignacio. A budget traveler is not automatically in the low-income category. I get people here who are very rich, they are doctors, professors or layers, but they want to get to know the real life, really down to earth. I think this is very important, I like these people. They come to see what the real world is about. Nowadays you also find a lot of middle-income tourist over here. They come here for the environment and to relax.
>
> Carolyn, 55, hotel/restaurant owner

The lack of a clearly recognizable (and marketable) image makes it hard for entrepreneurs in the Cayo Disctrict to adapt their business strategies to the type of visitors and clients they receive. This is especially true for the local entrepreneurs who lack the international experience and contacts that many foreign entrepreneurs do have. It becomes clear that many local entrepreneurs in fact clearly dissociate themselves from foreign entrepreneurs. They perceive their business as inherently different from foreign entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. This attitude is reflected in the following statement from a (foreign) resort owner:

> The majority of the locals do not think of themselves as capable to be an entrepreneur. They think this is only possible for the foreigners. This needs to be changed in order to stimulate local entrepreneurship. Education is of utmost importance to achieve this.
>
> George, 38, owner resort chain

Most local entrepreneurs in the tourism industry consider themselves to be active in local business, without being a tourism entrepreneur. They are rather skeptical of the possibilities to gain a stable income from tourists. The tourism business is rather new and the confidence in the sustainability of the sector is still not very high. Therefore they remain to focus a large part of their business strategies on local clients:

> Local business is more sustainable than tourism. That's why I first focus on locals. Tourism in San Ignacio can always go down the drain… at least I have my local guests.
>
> Louis, 42, restaurant owner

This skeptical attitude among locals is related to the dominant position of foreigners in this branch. Those 'outsiders' come into the country and are able to invest

capital into this kind of industry. On the one hand locals see the advantages of these foreigners and their investments, because it creates jobs and opportunities, on the other hand they are critical because the foreigners take a niche in the tourist arena which is hard to compete with. Vice versa, the foreign entrepreneurs are critical towards this attitude among locals:

> The foreigners are helping to develop tourism and are working on basis of high quality and service. This could challenge the Belizeans to provide better service. Beside this, the foreigners give the Belizeans a good impression of what the international market needs. This will raise the standards. There is some kind of jealousy towards foreigners, but this is based on individual frustration. This is not right.
>
> George, 38, owner resort chain

Apart from the tensions between the local and foreign entrepreneurs, the government plays an important role in the tourism arena. They are responsible for policy development, decision-making and the legislation for tourism in the country. As such, the government is trying to create the most beneficial climate for tourism development in Belize. Nevertheless, this is very complicated and it is difficult to take all interests from different groups into account. In general there is a difference between the specific concerns of private (foreign and local) entrepreneurs and the government's general public concern. Though both benefit from developing a prosperous tourism industry, the interests of the public and private sector are not always the same and sometimes they even contradict, for example with governments allowing and disallowing specific practices or encouraging growth in certain areas rather than others. An informant stated:

> The government does not support the entrepreneurs in any way. If you do not work hard enough, according to the government, you do not get a penny. Sometimes the BTB and the government are in contradiction. I remember that one day the government wanted to raise the taxes for hotel-owners. The BTB, however, was against this proposition and came to action. Thanks to them, the taxes were not raised.
>
> Basilia, 46, hotel owner

Keune and Dahles argue that, ideally, the government not only has to be active in developing "sound conditions for the expansion of tourism sales potential, but also in embedding that sector in conditions and interests that offer guarantees for sustainable development in the broadest sense of the word" (2002: 158). Nevertheless, as was argued in the introduction of this paper, the concept of sustainable development is rather problematic, and it is very difficult to create a proper balance between different aspects and interests. With their case study of competing entrepreneurs in the Cayo district, Volker and Sorée (2002) show that government interference can lead to quarrels on the local level. This also becomes clear from the reactions to the growing arrivals of cruiseships in the tourism arena in Belize. In principle, it is the task of the government to monitor and guide these changes, but in practice this is very difficult because despite the (economic) benefits from cruise tourism, most local entrepreneurs are very critical and the cruise industry is perceived to be contradicting the (responsible) image of Belizean tourism:

> Cruise tourism damages Belize. It is too much pressure on what we do. It needs to be organized in a smaller way; it is far too big now.
>
> Cesar, 54, restaurant owner

> Cruise tourism can lead to the discouraging of overnight tourism. But still, the government encourages this cruise tourism, because they earn a lot of money from the taxes. This is quick money instead of long-term developments.
>
> George, 38, owner resort chain

In general, entrepreneurs in the Cayo district are focused on issues as Maya culture, nature and activities like canoeing, bird watching. These (small-scale) activities are closely related to the 'eco' reputation of Belizean tourism, which is very much embedded in the universal dominant discourse of small-scale tourism versus mass-tourism. This is very much reflected in the stances towards the growth of cruise tourism in Belize. Most entrepreneurs distrust the government because they think that the government is more interested in "easy money" and not in the local opportunities of the Cayo district. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine whether or not this is actually beneficial for the local community. As became clear in the examples above, local entrepreneurs in the Cayo District find it hard to establish themselves in the tourism industry and compete at the level of the foreign entrepreneurs. In the next case study, situated in the Puerto Plata region of the Dominican Republic, we will take a look at the situation for local entrepreneurs in a typical 'sun-sea-sand-sex', mass-tourism destination.

Tourism in the Dominican Republic: From Standardization to Diversification

Like Belize, the Dominican Republic started relatively late with the development of its tourism industry, compared to other countries in the Caribbean. This can principally be attributed to the political instability of the country during the dictatorship of Trujillo between 1930 and 1961. It was not until 1967 that the Dominican government started to take an interest in the tourism industry as a means of development for the country

(Freitag, 1994: 538). In that year a special Ministry of Tourism was created and the government implemented a number of measures to stimulate both private and public investments in this new, promising industry. An example of such a measure was the so-called 'Tourist Incentive Law', which offered tax benefits for private investors who entered the tourism industry (Freitag, 1994: 540). The goal of the development of this new industry was to improve the economic situation in the country and to raise the living standard of its poor population.

In order to make the development of the tourism industry possible, the Dominican government had to make far-reaching decisions to allocate land and resources to this industry, at the expense of other sectors in the economy, like agriculture (Freitag, 1994: 541). The government and Central Bank joined their forces and created a public organization called INFRATUR in order to stimulate and coordinate the development of the necessary infrastructure in those areas that the government had designated as tourist zones (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992: 90). The first region to receive wide attention from the government through this organization was the Puerto Plata zone (the 60-kilometer stretch of northern coastal land from Maimón to Cabarete), mainly due to the location of the cruise terminal in the port of Puerto Plata. Many inhabitants of the area saw an opportunity in the upcoming business and shifted from other industries (mainly agriculture) to try their luck with a career in tourism (Roessingh & Duijnhoven, 2004). Going back in the history of this region, the first tourist activities took place as early as the 1940s. Many Cuban and Spanish cruise ships would make a stopover in the port of Puerto Plata. It was not until the 1970s however that the regular stops of cruise ships turned Puerto Plata into a real tourism destination (Camarena, 2003: 402), creating a lively business of souvenir-salesmen, restaurants and other small tourism businesses. By the 1980s there were six transatlantic cruise lines that used the Puerto Plata port as a regular stopover.

Initially local investors and entrepreneurs dominated the Dominican tourism industry. In the mid-1970s, La Romana (in the southeast of the island) was the first destination in the Dominican Republic to have a foreign investor build a resort, the Casa de Campo (Dogget & Connolly, 2002: 162). It was not until the 1980s however that foreign investors started to show a wider interest in the Dominican tourism industry. Even as late as 1987, it was estimated that only 21% of the hotel rooms in the Dominican Republic were foreign owned (Freitag, 1994: 540). Today there is still a high level of locally owned tourism enterprises, although the major resorts generally belong to an international chain.

The tourism development in the Dominican Republic has always been primarily based on the all-inclusive resort development model, which means that special resort areas were created with all the necessary ingredients to attract tourists. From the beginning of the tourism development in the 1970s, many resorts offered package holidays that included flight, transfer, accommodation and most of the meals (Vial et al., 2002). Because most developing countries, like the Dominican Republic, lack the necessary infrastructure to be able to attract large number of tourists, the choice of an enclave resort-developing model is considered to be the best option. The costs of developing the infrastructure and services in a few enclosed areas are much lower than developing the entire country in a random way (Freitag, 1994: 541).

By the late 1980s, the tourism industry had become an important source of income for the Dominican Republic and it was at that time that a private investor decided to develop the unpopulated area on the east coast into a luxury resort area. In the next decade this area (the Punta Cana/Bávaro zone) rapidly became the number one tourism destination of the Dominican Republic with its luxury hotels and white sandy beaches. What was different about this area was the use of an 'all-inclusive' system; a market trend in tourism that became popular in the Caribbean in the late 1980s. The all-inclusive concept originates from the famous Club Med in France in the 1950s (Piñeiro, 2001) and was soon being implemented in tourism destinations around the globe. In the Caribbean this concept was introduced in the late 1960s, first in Jamaica and later also in other destinations. The difference with the all-inclusive concept today, which is so widely spread throughout the Caribbean, is that the array of services has expanded significantly. While initially the packages included meals and maybe some activities, "hotels now offer a range of services including meals in informal or formal in-house restaurants, daily and nightly entertainment, and day excursions" (Vial et al., 2002: 25). Furthermore, the number of all-inclusive hotels has increased significantly and the low prices have given these destinations a low-class image, instead of the association with luxury and exclusiveness that the earlier resorts had (Patullo, 1996). Although there are variations between the different resort complexes and the services they offer, the basic ingredients are very similar and the trend is to offer all elements of a vacation in one package (Lumsdon & Swift, 2001). For tour operators, the all-inclusive concept is appealing because it allows a high level of standardization of the products, which is cost-efficient and therefore the prices can be driven down to enhance the competitiveness of the products (Lumsdon & Swift, 2001; Patullo, 1996).

Because of the competitive prices in the Punta Cana /Bávaro zone and other Caribbean destinations, due to this 'all-inclusive' structure, the remaining destinations in the Dominican Republic, like the Puerto Plata region, were forced to follow this new trend in tourism. This development meant another setback for the local businesses, as this all-inclusive system resulted in a further loss of business for the small shops, restaurants and hotels because tourists were provided with all the ser-

vices they needed within the resort. Most tourists do not even leave the premises at all during their stay. Up until today the all-inclusive system is dominating the Dominican tourism industry although in some areas (in particular the older tourist areas like Sosúa and Cabarete) small entrepreneurs still aim their business at attracting tourists that do not care for the all-inclusive holiday. Nevertheless, as becomes clear by a number of studies, these small entrepreneurs have a hard time competing with the large (foreign-owned) resorts and hotel chains (Duijnhoven & Roessingh, 2005), and increasing evidence indicates that this all-inclusive system has a number of negative effects on the destinations, such as a negative image surrounding these highly standardized, massive holidays (Pot et al., 2005). The all-inclusive concept is considered to be of little benefit to the local community, as many resorts are foreign-owned and there is a high level of leakages (e.g. Fennel, 1999; Lumsdon & Swift, 2001; Patullo, 1996; Weaver, 2001). The large degree of vertical integration (Crick, 1989; Lea, 1988), and the fact that food and drinks are paid for in advance make it extremely difficult for the local community to participate in the tourism industry. "Once a resort supplies a variety of complementary services to its guests there is little market for outside providers to capture. Over time the result is a cycle that reinforces all-inclusive packages" (Vial et al., 2002: 25).

The critiques and problems surrounding this type of tourism have given rise to debates about and growing attention to alternative types of tourism. Among these are approaches and initiatives belonging to movements/labels like eco-tourism, community-based tourism, ethical tourism, and sustainable tourism (Smith & Duffy, 2003: 135). In the Dominican Republic these discussions have also led to increasing attention for alternative tourism enterprises. Although the country is still mainly focussed on and known for its mass-tourism holidays, since a few years the government is starting to emphasize the possibilities for alternative forms of tourism (Secretaría de Estado de Turismo, 2003), and to at least change the marketing strategies towards more emphasis on natural beauty, adventures and Dominican culture to attract tourists.

Puerto Plata: Springboard for Foreign Investors and Resort Tourism

The stereotypical description of the Dominican Republic as a tourism destination is one of massive, cheap, luxury vacations whereby tourists come to enjoy the three S's without having to bother to get to know the local culture or to participate in any exciting adventures. Although this sounds rather extreme, this comes rather close to the reputation of the Dominican Republic. According to a foreign tour-operator, stationed in the Dominican Republic, the country's tourism industry was caught in a downward spiral through a number of negative accounts in Western media, displaying the country in line with the above.

> The Dominican Republic had a very bad image for a while, caused by several very negative reports in the media in Western countries. For instance, I saw a TV programme from [a Dutch TV station] a couple of years ago in which all kinds of elements from the Dominican culture were completely taken out of proportion. It was a horrible account of a number of extreme incidents and that was displayed as if the whole country was like that. That kind of representations can really harm a destination like this.
>
> Susan, 38, representative of a foreign tour operator

The introduction of the all-inclusive system in the Dominican tourism industry has lead to a rapid expansion of the number of visitors, making use of the negative image of the country to promote the safe and comfortable environment within these luxurious resorts. People were told that it was not safe to go out of the resort unless with a guided tour (organized by that specific tour operator) or that the food outside the resort was dangerous and unhygienic. A local beach vendor who used to work in a big resort told us:

> I have seen how the representatives of the large tour operators tell the tourists that it is better to stay in the resorts. They tell them that it is dangerous to go outside because the locals will swindle or even rob them. The food and water is unhealthy and the restaurants unhygienic. This is of course not true, but the large foreign enterprises are manipulating the tourist to stay inside the resort, buy all the souvenirs there, and only participate in the excursions they organise. It's all for their own profit.
>
> Antonio, 42, beach vendor in Puerto Plata

The rise of the all-inclusive business has created a lot of problems for the local businesses in the tourism arena. Traditionally, from the start of the tourism industry in the Puerto Plata region, a large amount of local entrepreneurs shifted from their previous business (usually agriculture) to try their luck in the tourism business. Restaurant, bars, and shops were opened, street vendors and individual tour guides became a regular sight in the port area, and the (motor) taxi business grew significantly. Many of these entrepreneurs were forced to start working in the tourism industry simply because there was no alternative. As a local owner of a *colmado* (small bar/restaurant), who had to change his business due to changes in the economy, stated:

> The whole region depends on tourism, we had no choice, all the other industries were taken away from Puerto Plata during the [Trujillo] dictatorship and later

> because of tourism. The only option for us to earn some kind of living was in tourism. I used to be in the import business, I imported all kinds of goods from Europe, like butter, cheese and salami, there was a lot of trade in this region, but later all this business moved away and I had to do something else.
>
> José, 68, local restaurant owner

For a while, small-scale tourism businesses appeared to be successful and the region was prospering thanks to this new industry. This apparent success is seen in many developing countries where the initial development of tourism takes place before this industry becomes a point of interest to the government, thus leaving the development up to the initiatives of the private sector (Dahles, 1999). Nevertheless, as soon as the tourism industry becomes more established and the government becomes more involved, the environment for local initiatives changes. Since countries like the Dominican Republic offer highly substitutable products, the governments are forced to adapt their policies and strategies on the demands from the dominant actors in the international tourism industry, creating a tendency among these governments to favour the large-scale development of (multinational) tourism enterprises. The idea behind this strategy is that, apart from international clientele, such enterprises usually bring along large investments, knowledge and technology, and therefore contribute more to the economical growth of the country (Kamsma & Bras, 1999).

In the case of the Puerto Plata region, this meant that small entrepreneurs increasingly encountered difficulties to sustain their businesses and to continue to be able to compete with international entrepreneurs. Apart from the fact that tourists from the resorts are 'kept' inside the resorts (Pot et al., 2005), those tourists that look for more independent forms of vacationing in the Dominican Republic generally book their trip through international tour operators and remain out of reach for local entrepreneurs. The foreign hotels are either owned by multinational chains or small foreign entrepreneurs with the 'right' connections in the important tourist markets, knowledge about the demands and standards of these western tourists and money to invest; all assets that the local entrepreneurs did not have, making it difficult for the rest of the entrepreneurs:

> Initially I got some guests from a Western tour operator because the demand was so high due to a very rainy summer in Europe and they would otherwise have to cancel guests. I thought this would be the same every high season and was very excited about the future; I even made plans to buy a second building. The next year, however, things were very different. I had mysteriously disappeared from the tour operators' list. They told me that that was because my building was too far from the resort where all the other accommodations are located, while it's only 15 minutes away. Later I found that it was because all the other hotels belong to international chains and they profit from selling only those accommodations. The only tourists that come here now are satisfied guests who return or tell about my place to friends and relatives.
>
> John, 56, foreign owner of an apartment building

The level of exclusion of small entrepreneurs in the tourism industry became even higher when, in the early 1990s, the multinational resorts introduced the all-inclusive structure. By this time the number of hotel rooms in the Dominican Republic had grown to some 56,378 (Banco Central de la República Dominicana, 2003), the vast majority of which belong to large hotel chains, indicating the immense market share this type of tourism holds within the sector. These hotels work together with international tour operators and local independent hotels have a hard time reaching the tourist because they cannot compete with the prices offered by the strong network of resort hotels and international tour operators. One of the major criticisms is that all-inclusive resorts have very little association with their environment. They appear to be enclaves or bubbles (Cohen, 1972) that are shut off from their surroundings by high protective walls and armed guards. These bubbles "confine and isolate mass tourists by 'protective walls' of the institutional and other arrangements of the travel and hospitality industry, the physical places created for tourists and – significantly – the attitudes and beliefs of tourists" (Jaakson, 2004: 44-45). The question is whether they are designed to keep the outside out or the inside in. There seems to be a mutual misunderstanding between the resort tourists and the local community. The small entrepreneurs have a hard time maintaining themselves in the local tourism arena. Unless they have some sort of arrangement with the tour operators from the large all-inclusive hotels, they are experiencing difficulties in attracting customers. At the same time it makes it clear that the tour operators have a very powerful position because they can decide to a large extent where their guests go and what they do.

Increasingly, there is attention for the problems related with the tourism development in the Dominican Republic. Although the tourist arrivals are continuing to be growing for the country, there are signs of saturation. Furthermore, it is recognized that the benefits for the local community are small, due to the dominance of foreign hotel chains and the monopoly position of the all-inclusive resorts. According to several tour operators, there is little room for growth left in the current situation. The government also recognizes this and is working on tourism development plans that focus on diversification and competitiveness. The director of the National Competitiveness Council argues that "In order to beat competition, we should move on to promote a tourism that balances luxury with authenticity" (Dominican Today, 2007a). According to another article in the Dominican Today, the Dominican tourism industry will increasingly move away from promoting

traditional sun and beach holidays and instead focus more on health tourism, diving, golf, culture, etc. (Dominican Today, 2007b). The question is the extent to which such initiatives will be able to move beyond the application of diversified labels and marketing a different image, and actually changing the current situation in the Dominican tourism arena (as well as in other destinations).

Conclusion

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the comparison of these two cases can be divided into three different levels of analysis. The first level is that of the governments of these countries. It becomes clear that they have a very critical position when it comes to the direction of the tourism development in the country. Influenced by the dynamics in the international tourism industry, these governments tend to invest in specific projects or segments of the tourism business that can generate the biggest economic benefit for the country. In that sense, they tend to operate at the macro level and with a short-term planning in mind. This attitude is stimulated through the dominant actors in the international tourism arena, who have access to the largest groups of prospect clientele and important resources.

Here we come to the second level, the international investors and international entrepreneurs. This group of actors has a very specific interest in the development of tourism business in these countries. They are working together to construct different tourism destinations, with different reputations and opportunities, in order to control the flows of tourists and resources. They create paradise and have an interest in keeping it this way. This might seem a rather harsh and normative judgment of this group of actors, but at the end of the day their goal is to earn a living, and the most effective way to guarantee their business is to control the market.

This brings us to the third level of analysis, the level of the local community. Some locals are able to obtain a position within the tourism market, while others would like to enter the market but due to diverse reasons are not able to compete. What becomes clear in this article is that although these different groups of actors all participate in the same tourism arena, they are operating on rather different levels, creating boundaries between them.

The problems resulting from the lack of mutual understanding between the different levels of actors are increasingly recognized; nevertheless, the discourse resulting from this situation focuses on the creation of alternative forms of tourism development, that should consider the multiplicity of positions and interests. However, the solutions that are developed are mainly based on the perspectives of the first two levels (governments and the international tourism community), since they are the most influential in the arena and as such have the power to define the criteria for these alternative forms of tourism. The result is that the strategies for creating alternative tourism are manifested mainly on the level of marketing and promotion. Tourism products that employ labels like eco, green, authentic or small-scale, are deemed to be better or more sustainable than large-scale, luxury resorts, regardless the actual costs and benefits for the environment, economy or local community. The perspective of the local community is hardly included, despite the fact that local participation is one of the pillars of alternative, sustainable forms of tourism.

When we take a closer look at the micro level of two destinations at each end of the continuum (one mass-tourism destination and one eco-tourism destination) it becomes clear that the differences are not as apparent as might be expected. In both countries conflicts and tensions between government, international entrepreneurs and investors, and local entrepreneurs are abundant. This supports the suggestion to look beyond the images and labels connected to the different destinations in light of the sustainability discourse and include perspectives from the micro level to gain an understanding of what is actually happening. When we want to move the tourism industry forward in a responsible direction, all three levels of actors should be equally regarded in order to create a dialogue and mutual understanding of each of the standpoints and interests.

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Financial Markets, Microfinance and Tourism in Developing Countries

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Abstract

Many developing countries consider promoting tourism as a main strategy for achieving economic growth. The tourism sector at destinations is mainly organized through micro and small-scale enterprises. In developing countries, these lack access to credit and other finance: financial markets do not consider them as clients and government support is mainly aimed at attracting foreign direct investments (FDI), not oriented towards expansion of domestic business in tourism.

Financial sector modernization in some developing countries has been pushed in recent years through so-called Microfinance Institutions (MFIs). These deliver credit to micro- and small enterprises and contribute to poverty reduction by providing poor people access to financial services.

Until now, in tourism destinations, these MFIs do not seem to close this aforementioned finance gap in supply and demand for finance. Given their lack of access to credit, domestic (tourism) micro- and small enterprises in developing countries are unable to compete against large international suppliers of accommodation and tourism services. As a consequence, the potential of positive local economic impacts from growth through tourism is not fully used in most developing countries.

Further research is required to develop appropriate (tailor-made) financial instruments that fit the needs of these tourism micro- and small enterprises. These should include investment subsidies, tax measures, long-term loans, and leasing and insurance products. Commercial banks could play a leading role in innovating financial markets in tourism destinations, and make use of the experience of MFIs when it comes to uncollateralized lending techniques.

Governments in developing countries that emerge as tourism destinations should facilitate the reform of their domestic financial sector and the delivery of specific financial products oriented towards micro and small-scale tourism enterprises. This could well be done through specific credit lines, just like agricultural and industrial

Resumen

Muchos gobiernos de países en desarrollo están promoviendo el sector turístico como estrategia principal para impulsar el desarrollo económico de su país. La actividad turística en gran parte está ofertada por micro-empresarios y pequeñas empresas, que sin embargo no tienen acceso a crédito y otros productos financieros. Los bancos comerciales no consideran las micro y pequeñas empresas como sujeto de crédito y la política turística de los gobiernos nacionales no da suficiente apoyo a la comunidad empresarial del territorio.

La modernización de los sistemas financieros en países en desarrollo ha sido promovida en los últimos años a través de los así llamados Institutos de Micro finanzas. Estos se especializan en el desarrollo y la entrega de crédito y productos financieros a micro-empresarios, y con ello están contribuyendo a la reducción de pobreza.

La oferta de micro finanzas y la profesionalización de este sector ha avanzado en los últimos años. En destinos turísticos las organizaciones de micro finanzas todavía no han sido capaces de cerrar la brecha entre oferta y demanda por crédito de parte de micro-empresarios turísticos. El sector empresarial doméstico, que está compuesto por dichas empresas, no está capacitado para competir con empresas turísticas internacionales como operadores turísticos, empresas de transporte etc.

Se puede concluir que países que son destinos turísticos, no utilizan el enorme potencial para lograr impactos positivos económicos y sociales (generación del empleo, etc).

Es necesario analizar más a fondo esta brecha entre demanda y oferta de micro crédito en destinos turísticos. Se requiere el desarrollo de productos financieros especializados para micro-empresas turísticas, incluyendo acceso a créditos a largo plazo, subsidios específicos de inversión, productos de seguros, leasing, etc. Los bancos comerciales podrían tomar dicha iniciativa, tomando en consideración la experiencia de entidades

development banks that have supported agribusiness and industrial development in the past.

Key Words:
Microfinance, propoor tourism, financial markets, developing countries

de micro finanzas en el desarrollo de productos de micro crédito. Por otro lado, gobiernos de países emergentes como destinos turísticos, podrían facilitar la modernización del sector financiero, así como apoyar el desarrollo de estos productos financieros para micro- y pequeñas empresas turísticas. Esto podría incluir líneas de crédito especiales para el sector de turismo.

Palabras clave:
Micro créditos, propoor tourism, mercados financieros, países en desarrollo

Liberalisation, access to financial markets and growth through tourism in developing countries

The tourism industry is seen as a promising sector for developing countries. Evidence of successful growth through tourism in developing countries is usually given by increased numbers of international arrivals and gross tourist expenditures in hard currencies. International tourism arrivals to developing countries have increased by 6.5 per cent annually since 1988, a higher rate than average world growth of arrivals. Income through international visitors is representing a large component of international exports in the Least Developed Countries (Denman et al., 2004, WTO 2005. Tourism ranks first, second or third among all export sectors in 19 LDCs. These data seem to support the hypothesis that positive macro-economic impacts in developing countries can be achieved while promoting tourism as a competitive service sector.

Others however have indicated that tourism on its own cannot be an explanation for specialised tourism countries achieving higher growth rates. It appears that faster growth rates are more related to the fact that some economies are more open and liberalized than others (Lozano et al., 2005). Tourism is a service industry and benefits strongly from liberalized and open economies. Also specific factor productivity plays an important role in materializing growth, e.g. the extent to which tourism growth leads to more demand for human resources and human capital accumulation (Neves Sequeira and C. et al., 2005). So it is not tourism per se that relates to economic growth.

The liberalization of developing economies usually starts with the modernization of their domestic financial markets. There appears to be a positive relationship between open and modernized financial markets and poverty alleviation. When it comes to the relationship with poverty alleviation, the main topic is to provide poor people with access to financial services. This is mainly promoted through Microfinance Institutions (MFIs). Microfinance refers to `small-scale financial services – primarily credit and savings- provided to people who farm, fish or herd; operate an income generating activity, small- or micro-enterprise where goods or services are produced, recycled or sold; who work for wages or commissions, who gain income from renting out small amounts of land, vehicles, draft animals, or machinery and tools; and to other poor individuals or groups at the local levels of developing countries, both rural and urban´ (Robinson, 2001). Microfinance initiatives have been successful in many rural and urban markets. Simply through improved access to financial markets, the poor are able to achieve considerable increases in their income situation.

The relation between tourism growth, poverty alleviation and access to financial markets by the poor has hardly been analyzed. Are financial flows in tourism destinations different than in other locations? How can these flows be made more accessible for the poor? Could the financial sector do more to enhance poverty alleviation in tourism? Why is the promise of massive income redistribution not met in tourism destinations receiving so many tourists spending so much?

Developing countries have specific constraints when attempting to compete through liberalizing and opening their markets. Especially the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), lack the infrastructure or competitive strength to participate in most liberalized service industries like ict and banking. It is not strange that most liberalization attempts have lead to more uneven national income distribution and increased numbers of poor (Kohl et al., 2000). Governments efforts in developing countries to stimulate foreign tourism investments, might improve their Balance of Payments. This however is not per se leading to economic growth, or a better income distribution.

Effective growth in tourism is mostly depending on those foreign direct investments in which large Transnational Corporations dominate (Endo, 2006). Countries may benefit from the participation in vertically integra-

ted tourism networks of transnational companies but run the risks of these companies taking the benefits from tourism growth figures (Van der Sterren et al., 2006). So far there have been hardly any studies indicating that foreign tourism investments are contributing more to GDP growth of the Least Developed Countries than investments in other sectors, like modern agro-industry or Information and Communication Technology. But examining the scale of Foreign Direct investments (FDI) in all segments of tourism-related industries is hardly possible: industry classification used in statistics does not correspond to the range of activities that tourism covers.

Developing countries are not popular for Foreign Direct Investors in tourism. The only real tangible investments in real estate, hotels and restaurants in tourism destinations are not visible as these companies make use of non - equity forms of investments. Hotel investments are included in overall real estate investments and hotel companies only arrange management contracts or leasing arrangements (Endo, 2006).

The domestic financial sector in developing countries is involved only to a limited extent in these real estate investments. Banks are willing to support real estate, but lack the specific knowledge to support a tourism value chain, in which accommodation, distribution and attractions are supported to enhance tourism growth. These investments are seen as too risky.

So the tourism financial flows appear to be "hard to catch" for the poor. With limited access to these real estate finance, and a tourism sector in which massive growth mainly depends on foreign investments, the only strategy poor people have to take their share of the increased tourism arrival numbers and related cash flows, is by trying to access the sources of the cash flow itself: the tourist.

In order to facilitate improved access to finance and better income for poor from tourism, it is important to analyze tourism micro and small businesses in tourism destinations, their place in the tourism value chain and their income strategies.

Financial sector development and poverty reduction: scope and limitations of microfinance

A well functioning financial sector is one of the cornerstones of long-term economic growth in a national economy. Financial services are the "gearing oil" of an economy. It can have positive impacts on *capital accumulation* and on the rate of *technological* progress. In order to support and stimulate economic growth in an economy, financial intermediaries like commercial banks and savings- and credit cooperatives are needed to the effect of (DFID, 2004):

- Savings mobilisation.
- Provision of loans to stimulate and facilitate economic growth.
- Management of risks.
- Provision of information on investment opportunities.
- Monitoring of borrowers.
- Facilitation of exchange of goods and services.

A well functioning financial sector contributes positively to the level of economic growth. Also, it has been indicated that a well functioning financial sector is contributing to a better income distribution and thus can be seen as having pro-poor effects (Beck et al., 2004). This however, only will occur if poor have access to credit and savings services provided by banks. This will enable them to get their share of the potential capital accumulation.

This is not the case in most LDCs, where commercial banks are not meeting the financial needs of the poor. Banks take their credit decisions for providing services to clients on *perceived* risk and information on *creditworthiness*. As poor people usually operate in informal, non-legalized nor formalized businesses and markets, they lack instruments to inform the financial system about their creditworthiness. This information asymmetry about borrowers as well as high transaction costs (Phillips et al., 2005), result in imperfect financial markets and less efficient credit rationing in LDCs. As a consequence, banks generally assume that providing small loans and deposit services is not profitable and poor are excluded from formal financial markets.

From a commercial bank's perspective located in a developing country, historically there have been obvious reasons for not lending to poor clients or small businesses. It was considered to be a wise business decision and in line with their conservative client policy and central banks prudence guidelines on supervision of provisioning and lending policies. The gap between supply and demand of financial services, especially credit, has affected the poorest segments of the populations as well as business development in general.

The recent success of the "Microfinance Revolution" has proved banks and central banks in developing countries to be wrong. Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) are not banks, but they specialize in providing financial services to poor people. They have demonstrated that these, when addressed with the right financial products, pro-

vide a stable and profitable client base to financial intermediaries. Poor people pay back more timely their loans and it has proven to be a myth that they are not capable of saving (Robinson, 2001). Especially the provision of savings through MFIs enables poor clients to accumulate funds and anticipate future large investments or expenses. Access to savings and other financial services reduces vulnerability of the poor and has a long lasting impact on income and family social welfare. MFIs are capable of delivering financial services to very poor people as well as providing constant returns to investors (Robinson, 2001). They appeal to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility in the financial sector and have contributed to the understanding that financial sector development indeed is not only positive for growth but also for alleviation of poverty. As a consequence, modernization of financial sectors in developing countries is taking place.

LDCs are hosting the biggest and most professional MFIs: some of them have developed into commercial banks, challenging the existing financial institutions by offering a variety of financial services to poor clients. The most well known example of this is the Grameen Bank, initiated by recent Nobel Prize winner Professor Mohammed Yunus. Grameen Bank has delivered 4,5 billion USD to its client's base (more than 3,7 million).

Actually, it is estimated that some 70 million poor clients worldwide have access to financial services: credit, savings and micro-insurance products (Robinson, 2001). Though an impressive number, it is still only a tiny proportion of the potential demand that exists for these services worldwide. Also, access to financial means, is no guarantee for poor people to improve their economic situation. The relative impact of microfinance services on poverty *reduction* has been limited. Still MFIs are reaching a small minority of the total banking population in developing countries.

Tourism and micro and small enterprises: features and constraints

Most of the tourism services at the level of a destination are delivered through micro- and small enterprises. In the accommodation sector alone, it is estimated that 80% of bed capacity is held in small, usually family run establishments (WTO, 2005). Small businesses provide the crucial linkages between different components of the tourism value chain: local transportation, food and beverages, small-scale accommodation, shops and retail services etc.

To analyze the complexity of business linkages and financial flows, it is helpful to use the following conceptual framework and apply this to the tourism sector (ILO 2003).

Figure 1. Types of enterprises

Type	Nr Employees	Characteristics	Asset base for accumulation
Self-employed poor	0	Mostly part-time labour, temporary, sometimes seasonal activity, family based labour Main aim= additional family income	No permanent asset base, no capital accumulation, permanent cash shortage. Business only as survival strategy
Micro enterprise	1-9	Not focused on economic expansion Fixed business premises, limited fixed assets. Family labour, informal or formal status. Little orientation to growth Tourism is one of multiple family income sources	Permanent availability of liquid assets, some savings. Little capital accumulation. Business as main strategy. Income stabilization as main purpose.
Small enterprise	10-49	Partially formalized, operating license Profit / growth oriented Specialized tourism business possible	Business as main strategy, non-permanent availability of fixed assets, capital accumulation, income and return oriented

Tourism self-employed poor

Many examples of self-employed poor in tourism are commonly seen in tourism destinations: street vendors, massage, luggage-carriers, and shoeshine boys. Mostly these poor are working on an irregular basis (depending on the potential number of visitors and related sales that can be made); mainly they are not producing but merely trading services or products. In most destinations, self- employed poor combine tourism income with agricultural labour activities in the off-season. Self-employed poor will hardly employ fixed assets nor accumulate capital. Their business is not operating with a strategy but as a need to survival, entrepreneurial (marketing and technical) skills and quality of service are usually no distinctive characteristics.

Self-employed poor have a permanent shortage of cash for consumption purposes as well as maintenance of their business activity. Their income strategy is based on meeting these shortages by whatever means. A boy cleaning cars at the national airport will need enough daily sales to pay for new washing soap, as well as contribute to the family income. The most urgent financial services needed are those that help to eliminate the shortage of cash and provide for working capital.

Non specialised tourism micro-enterprises (0-9 employees)

As opposed to the self-employed poor, micro-enterprises operate with a business strategy. Though not necessarily specialised, in tourism destinations their main income might come from this sector. Examples of tourism micro-enterprises are taxi drivers, small restaurants, food and beverage producers, trading shops. Indirect services might be supplied through pharmacies, photocopy shops, etc. Starting micro-enterprises are in need of finance for investment in working capital and (sometimes) fixed assets. Mostly, some initial funding can be found through family and friends, but this is not enough to start operating. In developing countries these clients are targeted by Microfinance Institutions.

Specialised tourism micro-enterprises

As opposed to other businesses, specialized tourism micro-enterprises are only operating with the tourism sector. Guide services, small spa and massage-facilities, specialized bakery and pastry shops, coffee shops, etc. souvenir- trading and crafts shops, travel agencies, small tour operators, small lodges rented. The main feature of these enterprises is that their income depends on seasonal and irregular sales. At the same time, they will always have to employ fixed assets from the start of business. Specialised tourism micro-entrepreneurs need access to sufficient amounts of working capital for covering seasonal fluctuations, but also to finance:

- The purchase and maintenance of a minimal level of stock of raw materials or final products;
- Payments of regular operational costs (light, water, fuel, transportation, salaries etc.);
- Promotion and marketing of products and services;
- Payments of suppliers;
- Payments of office rent.

The combination of both features: irregular sales and the need for fixed asset investments, increases their vulnerability and as a consequence these enterprises are having difficult access to financial services. This lack of finance puts a strong constraint on the competitive strength of these enterprises in the tourism industry. On top of this, their income flows largely depend on tourism seasonal influences. Most commercial banks in developing countries will not facilitate the start up of these businesses even if they have a potentially successful service to deliver. This is due to the following possible reasons:

- Lack of information on client's history.
- Lack of guarantees or collateral for lending.
- Absence of business plan or market analysis.
- No business registration nor tax information.

Small specialised tourism enterprises (9-49)

In more developed tourism destinations (large tourism numbers and stabilized tourism demands), most tourism products and services are delivered through small tourism enterprises. Examples are diving schools, language schools, production companies of processed agricultural products like milk, cheese factories, lodges, small hotels, larger restaurants, recreation businesses, bus companies, tour operators, etc. At this level, enterprises might be specialising in some tourism services, products or specifically target segments of tourists markets. When successful, small

enterprises will hire employees, register their business, and invest in fixed assets like land and buildings. As a rule, these businesses are not owned by poor, who will mainly benefit from this segment of enterprises through labour or delivering subcontracted services or products.

When it comes to their income and finance strategies, these businesses are mainly treated by regular commercial banks and not by Microfinance Institutions who cannot support their funding needs for fixed asset investments. However, when looking to the segment of very small hotels, the proportion of their fixed to total assets remains very low. They seem to depend more on cash and current assets for their operations than other micro businesses. As these hotels and restaurants have little or no access to trade creditors, they depend much more than other businesses on cash funding for their growth. This again puts constraints on their growth potential; it requires that financial institutions develop specialised financial products in which long term fixed asset investments are combined with flexible short term funding to cover seasonal cash flow fluctuations.

This category of small enterprises is crucial for economic development, but lacks sufficient support. Many studies have been undertaken to assess the financial needs of this category.

A comparative study for African countries summarizes the following constraints for SMEs when it comes to access of finance (Beyene, 2002):

- High interest rates (up to 30-40% per annum).
- No access to long term loans.
- Lack of collateral and guarantee schemes.
- Bureaucratic bank procedures.
- No information on available finance sources (lack of transparency in financial markets).
- Concentration of finance in urban areas.
- No diversified financial products (insurance, equity finance, foreign exchange transactions).

Some organisations like United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) refer to this business segment as the "missing middle". The number of firms falling within this range in developing countries is extremely limited, whereas their importance for long term economic growth and capital accumulation is considered to be strong; GDP growth in East Asian countries can be attributed to the presence of a large segment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), whereas the role of very small firms in these countries has tended to decline (Bannock, 2005).

Governments in developing countries tend to forget the first two segments in their economies. They value especially the enterprises ranging between 9-250 employees. The main argument is that these enterprises, on average, achieve decent levels of productivity (especially capital and total factor productivity) while generating relatively large amounts of employment. It is thus better on the productivity front than the self-employed micro-enterprise and better on the employment-generating front than large enterprise (Berry et al., 2003). Though this justification for government support towards this segment seems clear and they contribute to employment generation, there is no demonstrated causal effect of SMEs on income distribution or the alleviation of poverty (Bannock, 2005).

Tourism micro- and small enterprises and their access to finance: three examples

As a result of the successful Microfinance Revolution, in many developing countries the financial sector is gradually changing. Supervision policies are modernized to allow MFIs as well as banks to include poorer client segments. Commercial banks are increasingly convinced of the fact that engaging in microfinance is good business sense.

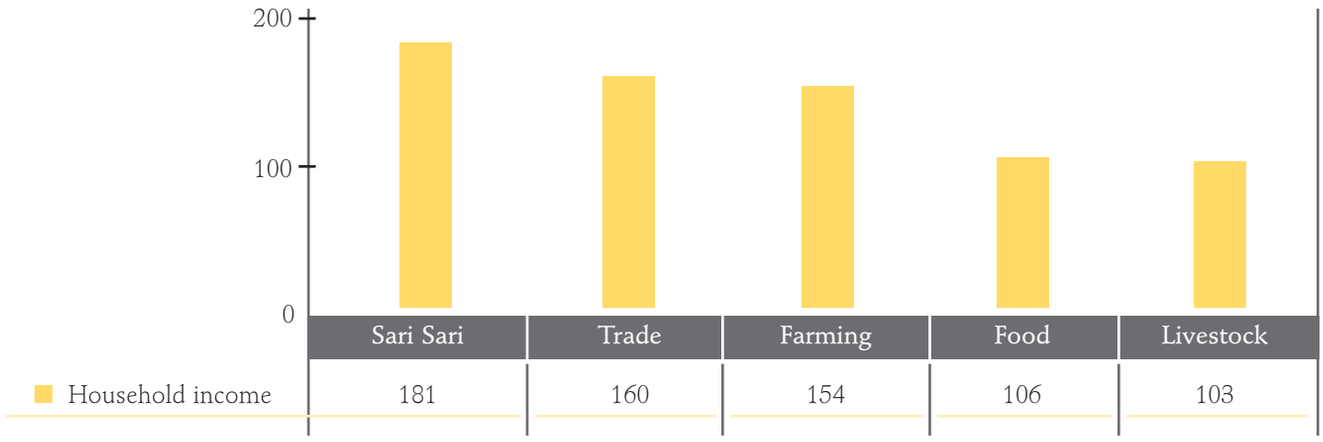
Still, when looking to the reality of tourism destinations, financial sector modernization could be deepened as we hope to show by analyzing three examples of countries in which financial sector improvement can be related to their tourism markets: The Philippines, Nicaragua and The Dominican Republic.

The Philippines

In The Philippines micro, small, and medium enterprises make up 99.6% of total industries and employ 70% of the Philippine workforce. In 2003, from a total population of more than 80 million, almost 4 million families or an estimated 25 million people were living below the poverty line (MCP, 2006). The microfinance sector in this country is rapidly growing. Almost 600 microfinance providers (banks, cooperatives and non governmental organisations, NGOs) are serving app. 1.8 million clients (Almario et al., 2005). The average loan amount per client is approximately USD 80, which indicates the level of poverty that is actually reached and targeted by microfinance institutions.

The majority of microfinance loans have to be repaid within 6-12 months. Most MFIs operate in urban or semi-urban areas; very few have offices in the main tourism areas in the Philippines like Boracay and Palawan (MCP, 2006). Empirical evidence in the Philippines shows that most of the microfinance clients are not moving away from simple trading activities. A recent client survey of existing microfinance clients in frontier areas showed the same trends with a concentration of business activity in sari-sari stores or simple trading businesses (Llanto, 2006). This survey is based on a total of 424 respondents from "frontier areas" - 144 NGO clients, 128 cooperative clients, 152 rural bank clients (Alaban et al., 2006).

Figure 2. Sources of income microfinance clients Philippines



The largest suppliers of microfinance in the Philippines still are NGOs, which have no permission to handle banking transactions. One of the reasons for MFIs not delivering higher loan amounts to their clients is that the Central Bank of the Philippines has defined that USD 3.000 is the maximum amount to be considered a microfinance loan, which was calculated to be the asset size of micro-enterprises (Almario et al., 2006).

When related to the tourism classification mentioned earlier, actually, MFIs in the Philippines are only serving the self- employed poor, the lowest end of their potential client base.

In major tourism areas this lack of access to finance can be observed. Tourism arrivals to the island of Boracay have increased to more than 500.000 annually and the island of Palawan receives approximately 140.000 visitors per year. Despite these numbers however, in both these tourism destinations, specialised tourism micro- and small businesses have tried to survive. There are no specialised credit arrangements available, which help them to overcome seasonal cash flow problems. As a consequence, these families are obliged to fall back un multi-income strategies and are unable to develop high quality tourism services.

Especially investments in software, reservation systems and website developments are needed to attract the high end segment of tourists that would help them improve their business performance. These credit needs are different from the typical microfinance products supplied through MFIs. Financing for tourism should be combining current account and overdraft facilities, insurance and leasing arrangements as well as fixed asset financing arrangements. Only through these financing arrangements micro and small tourism enterprises can go up the value chain to increase the efficiency and earnings of their enterprises (MCP 2006).

Despite the professionalisation and commercialisation of the microfinance sector in this country and with increased competition between MFIs in some urban areas, there appears to be hardly any drive for MFIs to move into tourism areas in The Philippines.

Nicaragua

Similar evidence can be found in Nicaragua. Out of a total of 500.000 microfinance clients, the vast majority is located in urban markets, and the average loan is around USD 1.000. When analyzing tourism areas like Masaya and Granada, the vast majority of the handicraft producers or small enterprises supplying foods and beverages to hotels and restaurants, do not have access to appropriate finance. The colonial city of Granada in Nicaragua received almost 300.000 tourists in 2006 (WTTC, 2006) which leads to poten-

tial sales markets for the 7.000 local micro-entrepreneurs.

Research among 1.400 clients of a major MFI in Granada, Asodenic, shows that these clients receive a maximum loan amount of USD 500 which they merely use for short term working capital shortages in their trading business, like food preparation, small shops, clothing trading, sewing and embroidery.

Though there is an increased demand from the tourism industry (local hotels, restaurants) for these and more specialized tourism products, these businesses are not capable of addressing this demand (Mayorga, 2005). It would require larger loan amounts and investments in fixed assets. Within the MFI credit scheme these clients only have access to credit amounts less than USD 500 that come with compulsory weekly repayments. Commercial banks are not willing to lend to these tourism businesses as they consider tourism markets to be too volatile (Van der Sterren, 2006).

Dominican Republic

In this major tourism destination, receiving more than 3 million tourists per year, the largest Microfinance Institution is called ADOPEM. This MFI delivers microfinance services to more than 50.000 female clients. The loans are given to small groups of women and the average amount borrowed by clients is around USD 240.

There are more than two thousand handicraft producers on the island that survive through tourism markets. One could say that this is a large market potential for Adopem, but the MFI is only delivering credit to some 100. The reason for this low penetration in this segment is that the income of handicraft producers depends to a large extent on traders and intermediaries that sell their products to tourism resorts. Handicraft producers have no access to tourists themselves because they have no marketing facilities and specialized handicraft stores.

The income of these producers could be improved through a combined package of specialised funding, in which long-term investments in equipments and stores are combined with investments in working capital. Also training and capacity development would be needed. Banks and MFIs however are not willing to finance these more risky business opportunities. ADOPEM does give working capital credit to the handicraft traders. Through this risk-avoiding strategy the institution basically impedes the handicraft producers themselves from increasing their income through selling directly to tourists.

Micro-enterprises in tourism destinations and access to finance: some issues for research

The above examples from three different countries appear to show a similar pattern: neither MFIs nor banks are focusing their attention towards micro- and small producers in tourism areas. These areas are either considered to be too wealthy, or too risky.

The potential economic impact of micro- and small enterprises to poverty alleviation (through generating employment and income) is rarely met in developing countries (Bannock, 2005). For the tourism industry, additional constraints appear to exist, in which neither the upcoming MFI sector, nor the commercial banking sector is capable of delivering financial products to help them graduate from poverty and increase their asset base.

Tourism micro- and small enterprises depend on seasonal income and need to invest in fixed as well as current assets from the start. This irregular cash flow does not match the conditions that come with the standardized loan products (group loans, weekly repayments) offered by most MFIs.

This is especially relevant for the segment of hotels and restaurants that need finance for investing in fixed assets: a building, piece of land etc. Also, their need for insurance products, line of credit or overdraft facilities, savings account or international payment transactions cannot be met by MFIs. They appear to be good at providing self-employed poor people and micro-enterprises with required liquid assets needed for consumption as well as business purposes that can be developed (Roman, 2006).

This absence of strong linkages between the financial and the tourism sector in developing countries leads to some interesting questions to be addressed through further research:

- At the level of supply of finance the main analytical problem appears to be that MFIs are mainly *poverty* and not *business* oriented. If MFIs in tourism destinations would be geared towards profit generating credit activities, their microfinance services would include tourism micro and small businesses. Their services could be more effective and would entail a stronger poverty reduction impact in tourism destinations.

- Secondly, when it comes to demand, MFIs and com-

mercial banks in developing countries appear to lack *tourism market knowledge* to develop tailor made financial products for micro and small tourism businesses. These enterprises will benefit from the tourism markets if there is a sufficient volume of visitor streams, but most probably will not specialize in tourism services. Income through tourism will contribute only partially to the family income of poor entrepreneurs. MFIs and banks should invest in knowledge on tourism market trends and assess the corresponding financial needs for family cash flows, in order to develop tailor made financial credit products for tourism businesses.

- A third level of analysis relates to required reform policies of the financial sector and Central Bank supervisory frameworks in developing countries. Though they might be facilitating the growth of Microfinance sector development, these policies are not necessarily conducive to supporting micro- and small-scale tourism enterprises.

Especially commercial banks could be much more effective in tourism destinations. Most self-employed poor and micro-enterprises in tourism destinations are only partially depending on tourism services. If commercial banks would adjust their financial products to seasonality influences and multi-income strategies of the poor, these could make more use of visitor streams and the related income possibilities for survival. Besides this, it is not only about access to finance. Improved management skills, investment choices and viable incomes are also necessary for a sustainable tourism industry. Only through the combination of these efforts will poor people be enabled to capitalize their "sleeping assets" to the favor of tourism development.

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Ética y mediación cultural en el ámbito turístico. Los mediadores del ocio turístico y el animador turístico

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Resumen

La realidad cultural de una zona es argumento más que suficiente para singularizar una oferta turística, aunque por varias circunstancias se realizan prácticas que han llegado a desvirtuar ese potencial inicial, en arras de un beneficio turístico mucho más cercano a una estandarización popular. Este hecho está relacionado con una discutida práctica ética de la industria del ocio y sus promotores.

Las experiencias en este sentido no se limitan a un país concreto, sino que se ha practicado en muchas destinaciones turísticas ya consolidadas. Sus consecuencias en la actualidad pueden ser de un alcance insospechado, ya que el turista cada vez tiene más información sobre el contexto en el que se encuentra la destinación, y tiende a valorar más la autenticidad y la singularidad.

Entre esos atractivos turísticos y los viajeros se sitúan los intermediaros y los promotores; las empresas en las que se emplazan los auténticos vehiculadores de las propuestas, que dispuestos a dinamizar la destinación ponen en valor muchos de los aspectos potenciales de la zona. Es el contexto de los mediadores turísticos que actúan desde tres áreas bien distintas: la administración, las agencias y los establecimientos de alojamiento. De las tres tipologías, la tercera es la que define a los animadores turísticos, uno de los perfiles menos analizados, aunque pieza clave del engranaje turístico.

Sus funciones esenciales (relación, producción y organización) son las que han de posibilitar las propuestas adecuadas, decorosas y reales para que la mediación ejercida sea lo más auténtica y fiel al contexto cultural en el que se encuentra el establecimiento, y posibilitando una óptima dinamización que afecte positivamente al viajero, a la zona y a las intenciones mercantilistas de las empresas que ejercen su mediación.

Palabras clave:
Ocio turístico, mediador cultural, animación turística, ética y responsabilidad cultural

Abstract

The cultural reality of a region is an argument more than sufficient to distinguish a tourist offer, although because of several circumstances some practices have eventually distorted the initial potential for the sake of a tourist benefit much closer to popular standardization. This fact is related to the questionable ethical practice of the leisure industry and its promoters.

The experiences in this sense are not limited to a specific country, but have been carried out in many consolidated tourist destinations. At present, their consequences can be unsuspected, since the tourist has more and more information about the destination's context and tends to value authenticity and singularity more.

Between the tourist attractions and the travellers are the intermediaries and the promoters, the companies that act as real channels for proposals and highlight many of the potential aspects of the region to dynamize the destination. It is the context of the tourist mediators, who act in three different areas: the administration, the agencies and the establishments offering accommodation. The third of these typologies defines tourist entertainers. This profile has not been analyzed in depth, even though it is a key element within the tourism industry.

Analyzing this profile in depth, the essential functions –relationship, production and organization- can be determined. Such functions must lead to proper, suitable, real proposals so that the exerted mediation is authentic and accurate according to the cultural context of the establishment. This should enable optimal dynamization, which has positive effects on the traveller, the region and the mercantilist intentions of the companies that exert their mediation.

Key Words:
Leisure tourism, cultural mediating, tourist entertainment, ethic and cultural responsibility

Introducción

Desde el ámbito del turismo, la cultura y sus elementos se han convertido en los últimos tiempos en el motor más significativo de las motivaciones más tradicionales. En muchos casos la cultura ha sido el escaparate de infinidad de atractivos que una zona ha ofertado como reclamo a posibles viajeros, aunque no siempre se ha hecho desde un punto de vista sincero y decoroso. La intencionalidad real por un lado y una ética posiblemente descuidada por otro, han llegado a dar como resultado el abuso de una fórmula que ha pretendido colocar en el mercado productos con una catalogación de autenticidad, cuando no eran más que meros sucedáneos. Sus consecuencias han sido la razón sobre la cual se han posicionado posturas que defienden la sinceridad y el no enmascarar la realidad, puesto que se ha empezado a comprender que tarde o temprano ese falseamiento se hace evidente, incluso a pesar de los esfuerzos e intenciones enmascaradoras de algunos promotores.

La realidad cultural de una geografía, sea la que sea, es argumento suficiente como para singularizar una propuesta, y no es necesario pretender lo que no es, aunque sí que se requiere un análisis previo y un diagnóstico para proponer correctamente una vía de puesta en valor de sus atractivos que garantice la difusión de los valores de autenticidad (Gartner et al., 2000).

En este contexto se sitúa una de las cuestiones que empiezan a preocupar seriamente a los profesionales del turismo: el uso que hasta ahora se ha dado a la cultura y sus formas en el seno de los establecimientos de alojamiento turístico. No son pocos los investigadores que relacionan los elementos culturales ofertados con una cierta idea de consumismo voraz y escasamente efectivo (Tribe, 2000; Vogel, 2004 o San Salvador del Valle, 2006). En este plano es donde se sitúan los mediadores culturales que las empresas turísticas necesitan para alcanzar una máxima efectividad. Entre ellos, la figura del animador turístico adquiere una relevancia digna de un análisis profundo.

La industria del ocio y la ética

Discernir la frontera entre ocio y cultura en nuestros días es bastante comprometido; las industrias del ocio y de la cultura tienen ya tantos elementos en común que separarlas resulta una misión bastante difícil. ¿Hasta qué punto ir a un espectáculo o leer un libro se considera una actividad de un tipo o del otro? (Cuenca, 2003).

Esta línea divisoria tan borrosa parece ser que es más fácil detectarla desde el punto de vista del productor que desde el consumidor, a riesgo de que en esta dirección sea inevitable cuestionarse otra frontera que paralelamente aparece en las experiencias de ocio; son los temas éticos que preocupan a Sasia et al. (2007).

Estas cuestiones éticas no son exclusivas del ámbito turístico. Así esta problemática también aparece en otros ámbitos y en otras dimensiones, aunque es la industria del ocio quien los acapara y se apropia de todos ellos: deportes, celebraciones, fiestas, eventos, etc.

Los estilos y las formas de vida en la actualidad se sustentan y se retroalimentan de la *industria del ocio*, de eso no hay duda, pero es en su continuidad en donde el turismo pasa a ser un gran paradigma y se convierte en la actividad de ocio por excelencia.

El ocio significa un indicador de calidad de vida (Setién, 2000) , supone libertad, crecimiento, diversión y falta de compromiso, pero también supone en la persona una posibilidad de ser mejor y de ser más feliz, y es así que el ocio se relaciona con la felicidad y el bienestar que produce el lograr hacer lo que se quiere (Sasia et al., 2007).

Este ocio, el más humanista y autotélico, el que aporta tantos aspectos positivos a la persona y al sentimiento de felicidad que experimenta en su práctica (Cuenca, 2003), es el que ha servido como argumento sobre el que la industria ha edificado su base más sólida, ha entendido que es el puntal en el que se sostiene y en donde el "*neg-ocio*" se ha convertido en la piedra filosofal que tiene la capacidad de transformar el plomo en oro, o lo que es lo mismo en este caso, transforma cualquier actividad en experiencia, y cualquier experiencia en un beneficio económico.

La idea de *tiempo libre reparador* se ha ido convirtiendo cada vez más en un tiempo restaurador y estructurador de una forma de vida en la que la gama de actividades a practicar se ha ido ampliando hasta límites insospechados, y tiende aún a ampliarse más, de eso ya se encarga la misma industria, y la turística tiene mucho que decir al respecto.

La esencia del ocio, en cualquiera de sus ámbitos, es hoy día la experiencia de una vivencia que el sujeto percibe positivamente, una emoción susceptible a ser comercializada por la industria turística. Esta posibilidad de emocionarse y de experimentar está también en continua evolución, y por tanto, en perenne búsqueda de nuevas sensaciones que mitiguen con sus hallazgos los efectos de la *utilidad marginal* en el hecho del consumo (Tribe, 2000).

Para la industria del ocio, su camino se abre potenciando el acceso a determinadas vivencias al mayor número de personas posible, aunque tampoco acaba aquí, en los aspectos más autotélicos del ocio, sino que en muchos

casos se le busca a la actividad un elemento muy importante en nuestros días: el potencial grado de ostentación y exhibicionismo que la actividad o la vivencia lleva implícito. Esto es utilizado como un valor añadido que hoy por hoy da muchísimo sentido a una gran parte de las "experiencias" de ocio que la población demanda.

Estas son las bases, sin límites aparentes, en las que la industria y los promotores turísticos son capaces de justificar casi todo en arras de un beneficio económico. Es la base fundamental de un planteamiento mercantilista en que la actividad de ocio no representa una finalidad en sí misma, sino que es un medio por el cual conseguir un objetivo económico: se ofrece una experiencia a cambio de dinero. Desde esta óptica es desde donde el productor ha de afrontar con contundencia la ética en el ocio a través de sus propuestas.

El ocio autotélico y el ocio exotélico en la industria turística

Para algunos autores es obvio que muchos ámbitos del ocio se han convertido en un auténtico producto turístico en sí mismos, y que desde la perspectiva de la industria turística, ésta es una realidad bastante más incuestionable. Para Salvador Antón (2005), especializado en parques temáticos, que como no son una excepción, también van encaminados a satisfacer las necesidades y las expectativas de ocio de los turistas. Para Antón, las propuestas se presentan ante dos alternativas: la primera es la que persigue la autenticidad en sus ofertas, mientras que la segunda centra el interés en la artificialidad. Ambas son fácilmente detectables en el campo que él mejor domina; los parques temáticos.

Su planteamiento nos dirige directamente a pensar en cómo son esas propuestas a nivel cultural y turístico general, y así a posicionarse frente a ellas con los siguientes interrogantes: ¿Qué es más lícito reconstruir un templo griego en medio de un parque temático o restaurar una iglesia románica al más puro estilo de Violet-le-Duc?. La reflexión conduce a la conclusión de que existe una responsabilidad a nivel ético y en la que entran en juego no los perceptores de esas obras, sino más bien sus promotores. Este es el juego ético. Con toda seguridad el argumento que busca defender esta posición es el de que, en algunos de los casos, es mejor tener acceso a la obra a través de esta vía que *recrea* una realidad, que el no poder *disfrutar del original* directamente. Por tanto la opción es bien clara: si no hay posibilidad de acceso a la referencia original, mejor un *sucedáneo* que nada! Aparentemente es bastante lógico, pero ¿qué pasa cuando nos ponemos delante de la muralla de Carcassone o delante de la iglesia de San Martín de Frómista o frente a la fachada de un fuerte en cualquiera de las islas del Caribe?, ¿hasta qué punto son propuestas originales y sinceras o son meros sucedáneos de las cosas a las que remiten?, ¿qué hay de verdad en ellas?

La otra opción es la que se refiere al caso en el que el objetivo de la propuesta se basa en los aspectos lúdicos y huye intencionadamente de la idea de *disfrutar del original*. Su enfoque apunta hacia un planteamiento que persigue la dimensión más lúdica del ocio, desvinculando la propuesta de la idea de *originalidad*. Este caso representa una diferencia importante con el anterior, ya que su pretensión no es dirigirse hacia la dimensión cultural, allí donde se situaría la idea de *autenticidad*, sino que se dirige hacia una experiencia basada en un *simplemente disfrutar*, que va más allá de los aspectos formales a los que puede remitir la obra, ya que aquí supone un mero escenario, una escenografía en la que contextualizar otras vivencias de ocio que, nada o bien poco, tienen que ver con los monumentos que reproducen. Su intencionalidad no se dirige pues a aspectos culturales, sino más bien representan una base lúdica.

De entrada no es una idea que apriorísticamente sea positiva o negativa en ninguno de los dos enfoques, ya que ambos planteamientos pueden ser positivos o negativos en función de su intencionalidad. Aunque los dos han sido utilizados por la industria turística (y cultural) para incentivar y acelerar el proceso de evolución de un destino o de un atractivo turístico. De nuevo volvemos a encontrarnos en el punto en el que se ha de situar la ética y la responsabilidad, y parece ser que en los dos casos no dependería tanto del sujeto que "consume" el producto como del promotor del mismo.

Con estos argumentos, la industria turística, decíamos que, como cualquier otro tipo de industria basada en objetivos de beneficios económicos, se sitúa en una esfera mercantilista que hace que de alguna manera su planteamiento huya de la idea más puramente autotélica del ocio. El autotelismo no tiene nada que ver en casos en los que la intencionalidad de beneficio económico desplaza el concepto de subjetividad del destinatario (de la Cruz, 2006).

Esto no quiere decir que no la tenga presente, seguro que sí porque, aunque sea de forma inconsciente o involuntaria, el interés que el sujeto muestra ante esa actividad, intrínsecamente será autotélico (Cuenca, 2003) y seguro que el argumento que el promotor utilice para acercarlo a su posible cliente esté basado también en sus principios. El planteamiento mercantilista del promotor va a hacer que se sitúe en el ámbito de las coordenadas del ocio exotélico (Cuenca, 2007), puesto que su propuesta de ocio representará el camino para conseguir un objetivo concreto, bien definido, y concebido como un medio, no como un fin.

Estratégicamente la industria turística ha utilizado estas connotaciones exotélicas para posicionar sus productos

y adoptar una postura de promoción basada en las características de las coordenadas más puramente autotélicas, aunque planteadas como medios para conseguir un elevado índice de consumo de sus productos y un buen rendimiento económico. Presentados y ofrecidos con todas las características más genéricas de este ocio, como el sentimiento de libertad, la autorrealización, el desarrollo personal o el crecimiento, por citar sólo algunas, ser refuerzan y se potencian con estrategias de marketing que han sido utilizadas para conseguir sus objetivos mercantilistas. Esta maniobra se ha practicado en todas las dimensiones del ocio humanista, y así la podemos localizar aplicada a cualquier posible vivencia de ocio susceptible de ser objeto de interés por parte de los turistas. Veíamos como Antón (2005 y 2007) las sitúa en un producto turístico concreto, pero no hay grandes dificultades para detectarlas en otros muchos productos relacionados también con la cultura y el ámbito turístico. Pero a estas alturas ¿quién es el auténtico responsable de una práctica ética?, ¿es el sujeto que la consume o es el promotor que la ofrece?. Para Sasia et al. (2007) las respuestas a estas preguntas no estás exentas de problemática ni de dificultades.

Una gestión responsable del ocio en el ámbito turístico

Hablar de ética en la gestión del ocio turístico conduce a la reflexión sobre algunos aspectos que planteaba Csikszentmihalyi (2001) cuando afirmaba que con demasiada frecuencia se tiene al ocio como un mero producto de consumo, como una oportunidad de negocio, en el que el sujeto pueda llenar sin esfuerzo el tiempo libre del que dispone. Así, en el contexto en el que se encuentra el turista ¿realmente es el responsable último de realizar una actividad u otra?. Sí, es cierto que tiene la última palabra y que es él quien decidirá finalmente lo que hará o dejará de hacer, si toma parte o no, pero con toda seguridad, la direccionalidad de las propuestas que le hayan sido ofrecidas tendrán mucha más incidencia en sus decisiones de lo que a simple vista se podría pensar (Sasia et al., 2007).

Analizando los aspectos que caracterizan la responsabilidad de forma genérica, y aplicándolos al proceso en el que se adentra el turista frente a las propuestas, se puede hablar igualmente de sus tres significados: clásico, intersubjetivo y prospectivo (De la Cruz, 2006).

En el primero, la responsabilidad se entiende sobre lo que subjetivamente se hace. El sujeto es aquí responsable de sus actos. Cuando el turista se ciñe estrictamente a lo que se le propone, puede llegar a interpretar que se descarga de cualquier responsabilidad, ya que ésta recae sobre el promotor. En este sentido es posible que no asuma para sí las consecuencias negativas de las acciones que realiza, ya que no se plantea el atribuirse las consecuencias que puedan originar la actividad que realiza.

En este mismo nivel, la óptica es diferente para el promotor. Aunque sabe de antemano que en muchas ocasiones su responsabilidad es ineludible, sobretodo cuando se trata de efectos alejados y no inmediatos, intenta no acarrear con ellas, hacerlo podría suponer un obstáculo a su objetivo de desarrollo económico propio. En no pocas ocasiones estas consecuencias pueden llegar a ser catastróficas, no sólo para el entorno en el que se actúa sino también para las mismas partes promotoras.

El segundo significado es el carácter intersubjetivo de la responsabilidad. Recoge la idea de presentar la necesidad de equilibrar las implicaciones de derechos y deberes, marcando un énfasis en los segundos. De la misma manera que en el ámbito social, también en el plano mercantil la consecución de los derechos ha hecho que se pierda un poco la noción de que los deberes se han de tener en cuenta igualmente, y que no se han de eludir. Así la responsabilidad hay que asumirla desde las mismas propuestas ofrecidas por los promotores turísticos.

Muy al contrario de ser una barrera, el carácter intersubjetivo se presenta como una oportunidad para con los demás. La responsabilidad empieza aquí, con el promotor, pero se prolonga hasta el sujeto que participa de la actividad. En este punto la figura de los intermediarios adquiere una importancia considerable, y el promotor se plantearía con más claridad la responsabilidad de sus propuestas y tomaría conciencia del deber de potenciar el desarrollo a través de sus propuestas de ocio, sin dejarse caer en la tentación de que el beneficio económico es el único objetivo, ya que aunque se persiga, no es incompatible con otros objetivos, como por ejemplo el social.

El tercer significado es el de la responsabilidad prospectiva. Seguro que es el que mejor representa la idea de sostenibilidad en turismo. Empezando por las empresas y en su misma razón de ser, las consecuencias que en ocasiones pueden provocar, acarrean tales desequilibrios que sus efectos son difícilmente reparables. En este sentido la actividad turística puede alterar tanto el medio, que desplaza las funciones y fines de las demás actividades que soportaban el tejido social antes de que apareciese la actividad turística, haciendo que la dependencia que ejerce sobre el medio en el que se da pueda ser irreversible.

Estos desequilibrios han llegado a ser realmente nefastos, tanto que en muchos casos se ha tenido que regular a través de leyes que impidan algunas de estas actividades feroces, y aunque hoy puedan llegar a parecer auténtica aberraciones, en su momento fueron tenidas como las actividades más progresistas y modernas, sin embargo hoy sabemos que la responsabilidad en este tercer significado va más allá del "no hacer" o del "no

haber hecho", ahora también incluye el "evitar que ocurra", y ésta sí que es una óptica que tiene muy en cuenta al otro, al que acabarán repercutiendo frontalmente las decisiones y las directrices que se tomen sobre una actividad turística. La maquinaria turística no puede dejar de lado las experiencias acumuladas y mirar hacia otro lado.

El interés económico evidentemente no ha de desaparecer, pero por lo que se apuesta es por que sea una actividad responsable a todos los niveles, que se aplique una gestión ética que afecte al desarrollo económico, al desarrollo de la empresa turística y de su entorno, a que se asuma que su actividad ha de poder integrar otros criterios y otros puntos de vista, y que sea consecuente con ellos. Esta es la direccionalidad que tendría que ser planteada para impregnar cualquier filosofía de respeto, de responsabilidad y de ética, que tanta falta hace y que tanto se reivindica.

Está claro que sin una filosofía de respeto y equilibrio que dirija estratégicamente los esfuerzos generales en una dirección, poco hay que se pueda hacer. Sin esa idea macro que marque la esencia de las acciones concretas y que sostenga el trabajo a realizar desde más abajo, desde una escala micro, la evolución y los cambios necesarios van a ser más difíciles y, con toda seguridad, no entendidos ni aceptados por la mayoría.

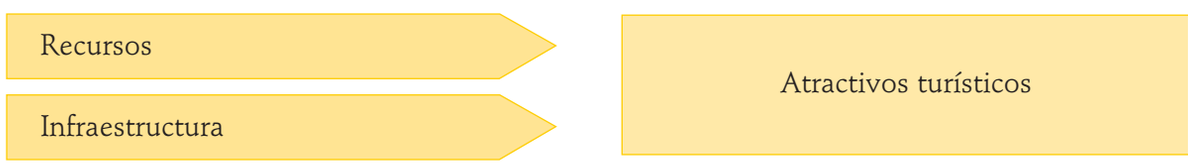
Los mediadores del ocio en el ámbito turístico

En un plano a una escala entre *messo* y micro es donde se podrían acomodar a los mediadores turísticos. Definidos como los profesionales situados entre los atractivos turísticos y los turistas y enmarcados en una estrategia mucho más amplia, cuyos límites han sido definidos por promotores e intermediarios, sus propuestas pueden hacer que los viajeros perciban de una manera determinada y positiva el contexto en el que se encuentran (Puertas, 2007). Vistos así los mediadores se colocan en la parte central de la disyuntiva que plantea la ética en las propuestas turísticas. Son personajes absolutamente imprescindibles en este escenario, aunque con cierta frecuencia no se han tratado con la profundidad que se merecen, sobretodo el caso del animador turístico.

La mayoría de los profesionales mediadores son conocidos y reconocidos, no hay duda, pero hay que añadir que el animador es entre todos el que, seguramente, más contacto directo tiene con el turista, y aunque es la cara más cercana y accesible de la empresa, es el que menos se conoce en el contexto turístico.

Como consecuencia de su desconocimiento, en algunas empresas turísticas al animador se le otorgan funciones que distan bastante de reflejar su responsabilidad laboral real, y se relegan en muchos casos a funciones operativas excesivamente básicas que dejan sin aprovechar el potencial de posibilidades que el profesional puede aportar al establecimiento.

Figura 1. Elementos de los atractivos turísticos

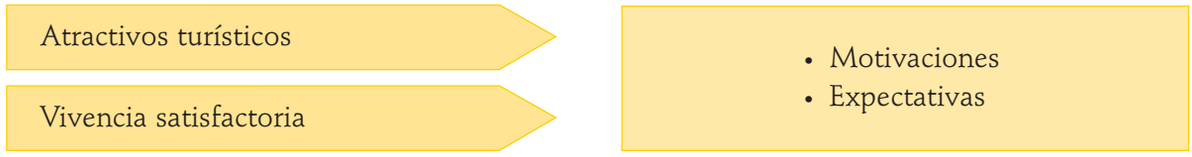


En la búsqueda de la experiencia satisfactoria en la destinación turística, uno de los elementos esenciales para la elección de un destino u otro son los atractivos turísticos, es decir, el potencial turístico con el que cuenta la zona. Estos atractivos, que el turista desea conocer y visitar, son el resultado de la suma de los recursos disponibles y los diferentes servicios que posibilitan y sostienen el flujo (Figura 1). Juntos configuran los atractivos turísticos, entendiendo que los recursos en su forma original no son más que la materia prima de las futuras atracciones, y que como toda materia prima, habrá que elaborarla, función que se reserva a los intermediarios.

Además de los atractivos turísticos, se ha de tener en cuenta que el balance de la satisfacción de la experiencia que el sujeto tiene cuando los vive, es también determinante y está estrechamente relacionado con la educación, el conocimiento y la información previa que los turistas poseen del lugar y de sus atractivos. De todos ellos dependen en gran medida las expectativas, y las expectativas tienen la capacidad de fraguar las motivaciones, en casi todos los casos (Figura 2).

Siguiendo la evolución del turismo, la búsqueda de la satisfacción de la experiencia hedonista a través del viaje se realiza en un principio por cuenta propia, será más tarde cuando aparecerán los primeros intermediarios; profesionales que hoy en día resultan ya básicos para la consecución de esta meta. Ahora es posible conseguir la satisfacción de la experiencia a través de un agente inter-

Figura 2. Motivaciones y expectativas



mediario o facilitador, que agilice y garantice los objetivos deseados (Figura 3). Este podría ser el espacio en el que se mueven los agentes intermediarios, es decir, los promotores y las empresas situadas entre los atractivos y los turistas. Se incluirían tanto a los privados como a los de titularidad pública.

Entre todos ellos destacarían las agencias de viajes (mayoristas, minoristas, receptivos…), las empresas de alojamiento, las de servicios (transportes, restaurantes, etc.), los patronatos de turismo, etc., en definitiva, todas aquellos que ejercen funciones de intermediación y de promoción.

Figura 3. Intermediarios y promotores

Desde el punto de vista más humano estas intermediaciones se basan en relaciones que se pueden definir como burocráticas, puesto que se establecen a partir de requisitos que están sujetos a acuerdos o contratos que configuran los marcos, los límites y las condiciones de cómo hay que llevar a cabo el proceso de intermediación antes de iniciarse el viaje.

Pero una vez realizado el desplazamiento, las relaciones que se establecen han de ser otras. Cuando el turista se encuentra ya en la destinación desea otro tipo de contacto. Ahora reclama ya una relación mucho más humana y humanizada (Valls, 1999). Aquí es donde realmente aparecen los mediadores. En este escenario *en directo* es donde el turista espera encontrar respuesta personalizada a sus expectativas y a sus motivaciones. Los mediadores sociales y culturales del ámbito turístico pueden hacer mucho para conseguir que su vivencia sea lo más satisfactoria posible.

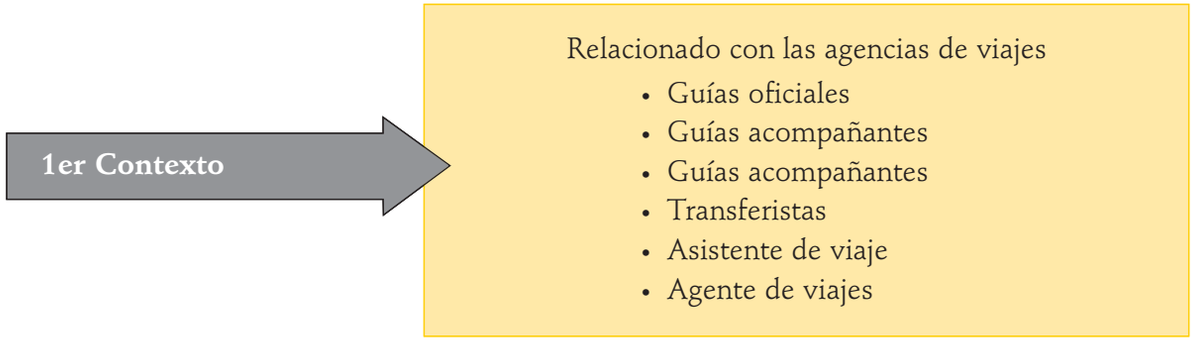
Estos mediadores se pueden localizar tanto dentro del establecimiento como fuera de él, y en función de la relación que se establece con el tipo de empresa y con el contexto en el que se sitúan, se pueden clasificar en tres tipologías: los que se relacionan con las agencias de viajes (primer contexto), con las instituciones (segundo contexto), y con las empresas de alojamiento (tercer contexto).

Con la intención de centrar el papel de los agentes de cada una de las tres formas, éstos se podrían reducir a tres figuras profesionales del turismo (uno por cada tipología), y que podrían ejemplificar a las demás formas del grupo. Serían el guía para el primer ámbito, el agente de desarrollo local (ADL) para el segundo y el animador en el tercer caso.

Así la función básica de estos profesionales es el vincular y facilitar la relación y el contacto entre los turistas con las posibilidades y recursos que posee la zona, además de la dinamización y del desarrollo económico que persigue la empresa, sin dejar de tener en cuenta todo lo mencionado sobre la responsabilidad.

Con la idea de prestar un servicio de calidad, que hoy en día pasa por ser lo más personalizado posible, estos mediadores asesoran a los viajeros sobre un amplio abanico de aspectos relacionados con los recursos de la zona: lúdicos, deportivos, culturales o de cualquier otro tipo. No se limita a museos, exposiciones, espectáculos, monumentos, artesanía, tradiciones, etc., sino que entrarían temas más diversos como la gastronomía, los restaurantes, bares y discotecas, las tiendas especializadas o los grandes centros comerciales. El abanico de posibilidades es absolutamente amplio.

Figura 4. Mediadores del primer contexto



En el primer contexto se sitúa el guía turístico, tomándolo como un guía oficial (Figura 4) habilitado y acreditado. De este grupo sería el modelo más amplio, por lo que englobaría prácticamente las funciones del resto de profesionales aquí enmarcados.

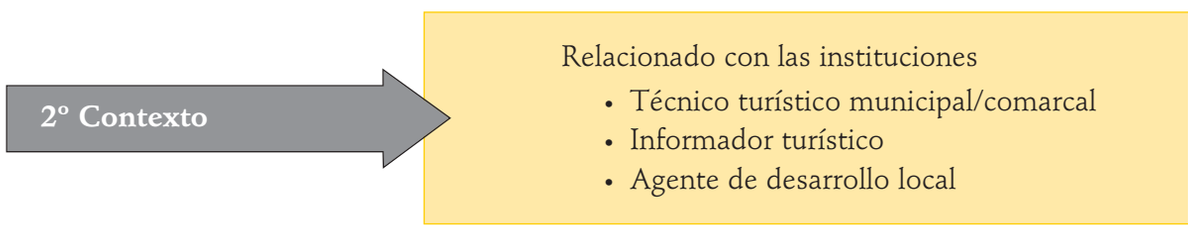
Un guía no ha de tenerse únicamente como un profesional que posee una serie de conocimientos y datos y con una formación cultural más o menos amplia, que lógicamente ha de tener, pero que ha de saber transmitirla de forma adecuada a las personas a las que se dirige (Picazo, 1996). Implicará un conocimiento de lenguas extranjeras y de técnicas que faciliten esa comunicación óptima.

La función principal del guía es la de facilitar la máxima inserción del turista en la zona visitada, significa un nexo de unión importante entre los recursos y el viajero. De la misma manera hay que saber que la acción del guía puede también actuar como una amortiguación que atenúe el impacto ecológico, social y humano que el turismo puede tener sobre la zona, sus ocupantes y el exceso de masificación de la capacidad de carga.

Uno de los condicionantes que limitan a estos mediadores es el hecho de las propias características de los viajes organizados, ya que algunos programas pueden llegar a reducir las posibilidades de intercambio cultural entre el turista y la población, además de limitar el descubrimiento y el respeto por la zona, y aunque las visitas guiadas suelen enfatizar el aspecto educativo del viaje, será gracias al guía que se va a poder conocer mejor y a más profundidad lo visitado, asegura Picazo. Se trata de una figura que puede aportar mucho al cómo se pueden gestionar éticamente los recursos y las relaciones que se establecen a través de ellos, y evitar en lo posible el efecto de *autismo cultural* que se da cuando las propuestas de ocio no contemplan el contexto en el que se encuentran.

En el segundo contexto (Figura 5) aparecen los técnicos turísticos municipales, los informadores turísticos y los agentes de desarrollo local (ADL). Igual que ocurría en la situación anterior, el Agente de Desarrollo Local o ADL es la figura más amplia de los tres casos, por lo que se entiende igualmente que engloba las funciones las demás.

Figura 5. Mediadores del segundo contexto



El ADL es el agente encargado de movilizar recursos en una dirección estratégica al servicio del desarrollo de la comunidad, en descubrir o rehabilitar recursos que no se muestran, que permanecen ocultos o que pertenecen al mundo de lo intangible. Su responsabilidad máxima es el desarrollo de la zona, como su nombre bien indica. También se le atribuyen funciones muy similares a las del animador turístico, incluso en algunas ocasiones se han llegado a definir como animadores o *agitadores* de economías, proyectos y recursos (Izquierdo, 2005). Sus funciones son prácticamente las mismas que las del animador turístico, aunque su diferencia se sitúa en que el ADL se mueve en un contexto geográfico mucho más amplio que el animador, y que de quien depende suele ser un ente oficial.

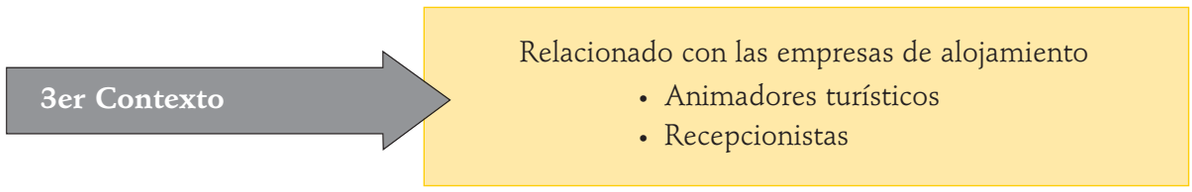
Su relación con los tres significados de la responsabilidad son prácticamente los mismos que el animador turístico, pero en el ADL su profundidad y sus consecuencias son mucho más profundas.

Los animadores turísticos, mediadores poco conocidos

En el tercer contexto (Figura 6) se encuentran los animadores turísticos. Junto a ellos pueden situarse los recepcionistas en su función de atención a los servicios de información que los turistas puedan demandar durante la estancia. Así la relación se entiende como algo extra a las funciones más genéricas de la recepción del alojamiento.

Sobre el animador turístico, decir que representa al auténtico mediador de experiencias de ocio de los establecimientos de alojamiento. Es una figura de la que sus funciones se desconocen bastante y, a veces, lo que se sabe es resulta contradictorio.

Figura 6. Mediadores del tercer contexto



Se suele hablar del animador como el "embajador de felicidad", ya que se le relaciona con un estado anímico que desde fuera parece rozar la euforia. Seguramente es debido a que su contexto laboral se enmarca dentro de las experiencias de ocio más lúdicas y novedosas. De hecho, si se analiza con algo más de profundidad, se llegará a la conclusión de que también se podrían definir de la misma manera muchas otras profesiones, casi todas las relacionadas con el hecho de experimentar alguna sensación positiva, que justamente es uno de los objetivos más importantes del ocio actual, razón por la cual este hecho por sí solo podría definir cualquiera profesión enmarcada en el ámbito del ocio y de la diversión.

Pero esta amplitud se ha de descartar, ya que de lo contrario se corre peligro de no referirse únicamente al perfil de un animador turístico, sino que podría ser extrapolable a una lista casi inacabable de profesiones que no sólo se relacionan con el turismo sino que se podrían referir a muchos otros campos del ocio.

Tradicionalmente se ha creído que el animador turístico se basaba más en unas actitudes que en unas aptitudes, esto también se tendría que empezar a descartar. Posiblemente lo que más contribuya a este hecho es que ahora ya existe una formación reglada que prepara adecuadamente al futuro profesional, y una vez que éste se incorpora al mercado su resultado es bien diferente al que puede aportar una persona sin una formación previa, esto es lógico.

Lo que tradicionalmente se le pedía a un animador era que fuese extrovertido, altamente comunicador, con algún idioma y alguna aptitud relacionada generalmente con el espectáculo, aunque la parte más importante de esta profesión no está ahí, como se ha demostrado con el tiempo. Con estos requisitos no puede haber una proyección de futuro en la profesión, puesto que la base en la que se asienta una buena proyección de futuro es la gestión, el planteamiento de objetivos, la aplicación de una metodología adecuada al establecimiento y sus circunstancias, en donde las actividades serán técnicas, herramientas para alcanzar unas metas, cosa que si no se tiene una formación previa, difícilmente se podrán definir objetivos y metodologías. Las actividades de ocio son el camino para conseguir otro horizonte donde los destinatarios se puedan encontrar y dar respuesta a sus inquietudes y a sus expectativas.

El perfil de un animador turístico profesional es el que pone más énfasis en los conocimientos técnicos específicos requeridos por la profesión que en unas características personales, aunque lo ideal es que sea un mix de las dos (Puertas, 2004). Este perfil se acerca más a la realidad y va a permitir que el profesional de la animación pueda proyectarse en este ámbito, y esto es algo que no sólo lo han de comprender los futuros animadores, sino también los responsables de las empresas y los promotores.

Pero para que el animador turístico se convierta en un verdadero mediador de ocio y represente la clave para conceptuar correctamente el contexto en el que se encuentran viajeros y establecimientos (de alojamiento en la mayoría de los casos), ha de poder asumir una serie de funciones que satisfagan las expectativas y las necesidades experimentales de los turistas y a la vez los objetivos de dinamización económica que los empresarios y promotores esperan obtener de los programas y de

las acciones propuestas por los profesionales de la animación.

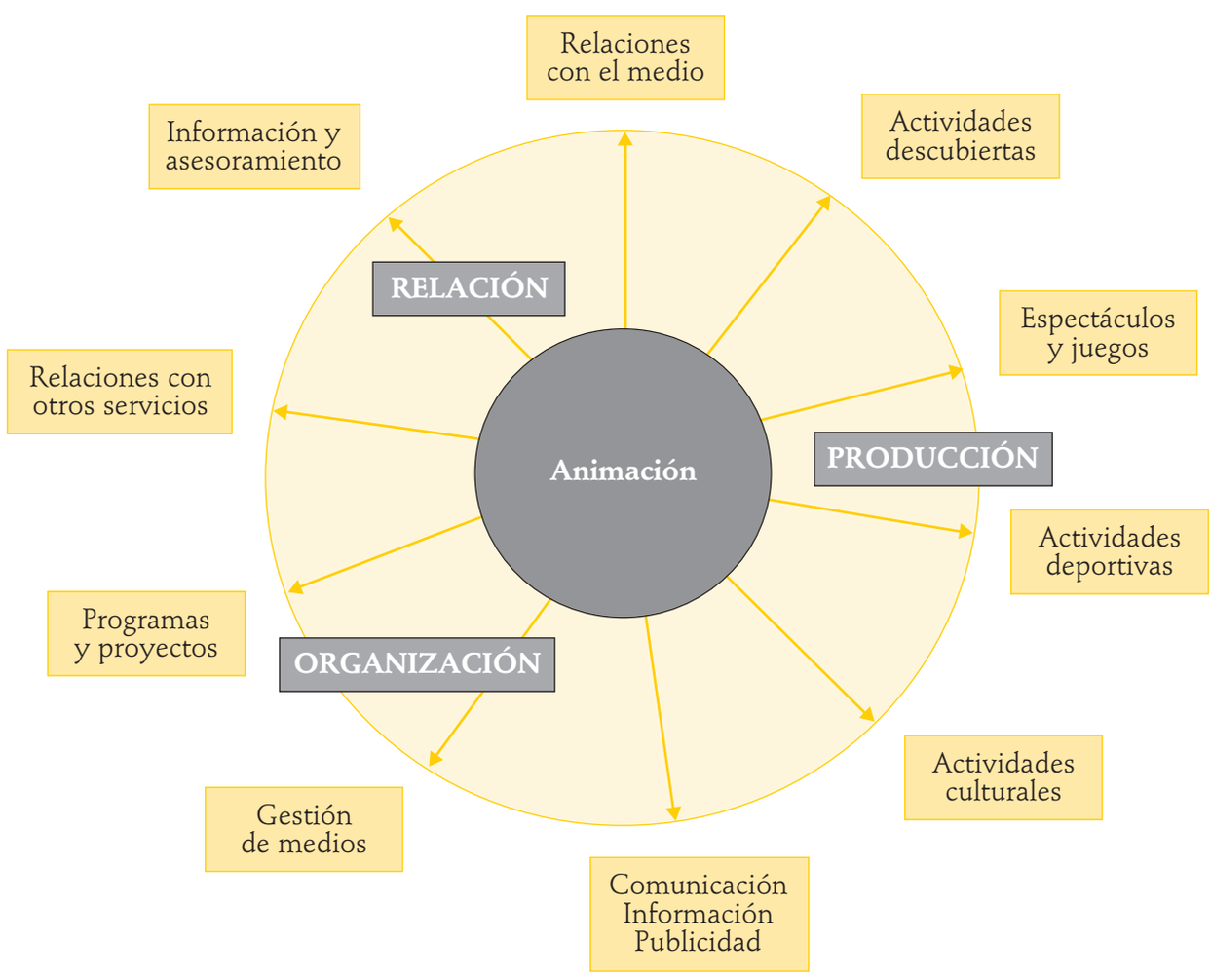
Estas funciones (Figura 7) se agrupan en tres grandes grupos que aunque, aparentemente, se definen como dispares y opuestas, en realidad están conectadas e interrelacionadas las unas con las otras. Estos grupos son las funciones de relación (1), las funciones de producción (2) y las funciones de organización (3).

Los tres grupos pueden enmarcarse en competencias y acciones que pueden asumir varios aspectos referentes a los tres significados de la responsabilidad, además de cumplir con la obligación de evitar el *autismo contextual y cultural* en el que se ven sumergidas muchas de las propuestas de los programas de animación.

La mediación en este caso es entendida como la acción de conexión directa que se ejerce entre un lugar, una cultura, un entorno vivo y un grupo de personas que están de vacaciones. Este hecho implica que hay todo un campo abierto a las necesidades de descubrimiento y de evasión, donde la función del animador es la de aconsejar, facilitar y organizar, si es necesario en algunos casos, el encuentro y la coincidencia de todos estos elementos. Este representa el único camino que aleja las propuestas de ocio de la idea de estandarización que lleva a la creación de los *no lugares* de Adams (2008). La gran herramienta de la mediación serán las actividades programadas que se incluirán en el proyecto de animación de cada establecimiento.

Para algunos este encuentro con una cultura, o con un medio determinado, se reduce a unas danzas folclóricas con las que se la pueda identificar el contexto geográfico, mientras que para otros es un encuentro bastante más activo y sobre el terreno, concretando en lo posible los niveles de responsabilidad referidos. En este sentido, la mediación implicará también el facilitar los intercambios y fomentar las relaciones entre los miembros de los equipos o grupos internos y externos.

Figura 7. Las funciones del animador



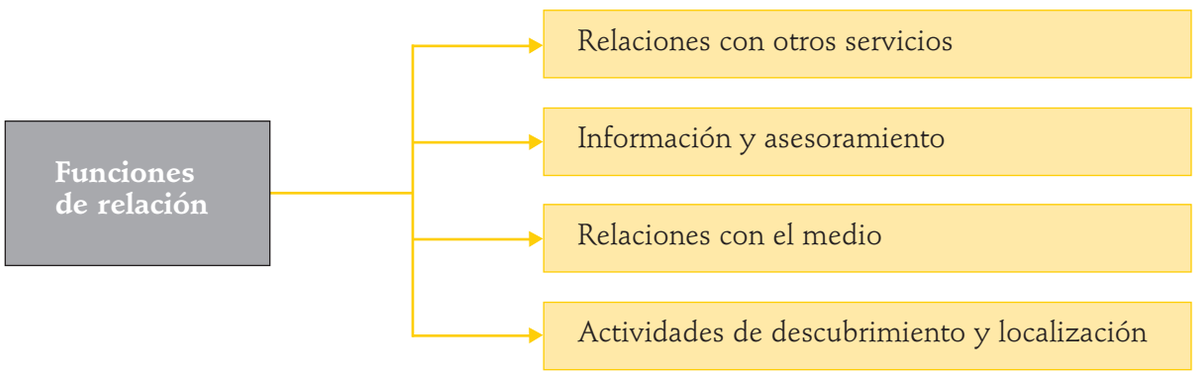
Desde este punto de vista, la mediación apunta hacia la creación de un ambiente idóneo, que además representa un elemento fundamental y determinante en la satisfacción de las expectativas de los turistas y de los empresarios: si se consigue un nivel óptimo de mediación, la vida social queda asegurada, y con ella el dinamismo económico que los inversores turísticos persiguen. Por tanto éste es el equilibrio, la balanza difícil de conseguir en la que unos y otros se sientan satisfechos y en la que los aspectos éticos queden igualmente resueltos en un nivel de responsabilidades asumibles por los animadores, aunque la idea de un ocio exotélico planee sobre todas sus actividades.

Las funciones de relación

El primer grupo de funciones son las denominadas de relación. La relación es entendida como la acción de conexión que se ejerce entre un lugar, una cultura, un entorno vivo y un grupo de personas que están de vacaciones, decíamos, por lo que se convierte en la gran herramienta de la mediación que acabará configurando las actividades de los programas incluidos en el proyecto.

Además, para el animador esta mediación ha de facilitar también los intercambios y fomentar las relaciones entre los miembros de los equipos o grupos que se encuentran en el establecimiento (Puertas et al., 2002). Desde este punto de vista la relación apunta hacia la creación de un ambiente idóneo, ya que representa un elemento fundamental y determinante en la satisfacción de las expectativas de los turistas. Es la demanda del factor relacional a la que Valls (1999) se refiere con los ociotipos. Sólo si se tienen en cuenta las expectativas y las necesidades detectadas en los turistas y se ponen adecuadamente en contacto con el medio en el que se encuentran, las propuestas de animación podrán responder con acierto a la máxima del tiempo de que éstos disponen en la destinación.

Figura 8. Grupo de funciones de relación



Las funciones que se incluyen en este grupo (Figura 8), empezarían con las *relaciones que se establecen con otros servicios*, por lo tanto con la última del grupo anterior (las de organización), pasarían luego a las funciones de *información y de asesoramiento de los residentes*. Continúa con las de establecimiento de relaciones con el medio local próximo y medio, y acabaría con las funciones de *descubrimiento de la zona* que prevén precisamente ese tipo de actividades, las de descubrimiento y localización del medio y de sus recursos.

Las funciones de producción

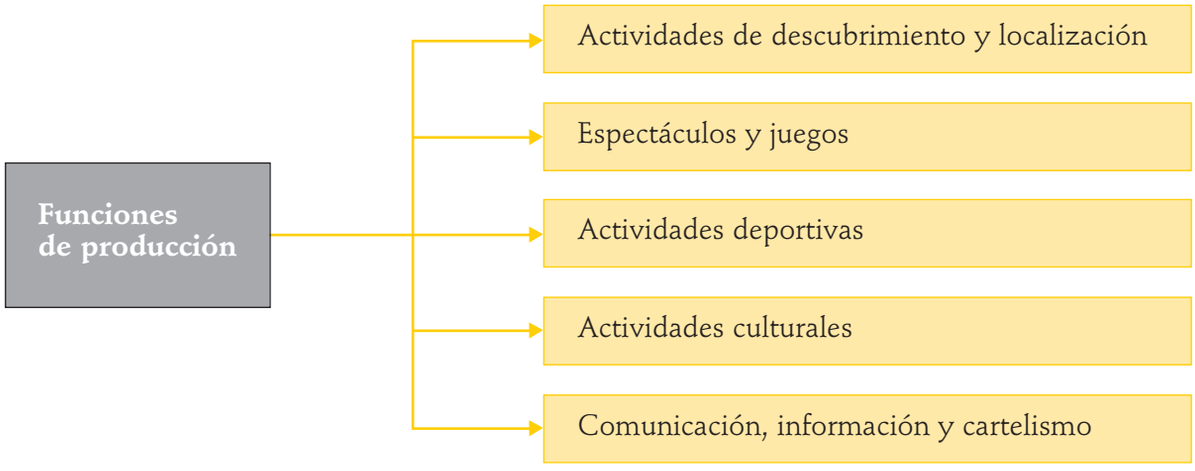
El segundo grupo (Figura 9) se centra en la creación de todo tipo de actividades, espectáculos, manifestaciones, eventos etc., representando la parte más activa de los tres grupos. Se trata de la puesta en práctica de las actividades de animación, que empiezan con la última de mediación, es decir, con las actividades de *descubrimiento y localización* de la zona. Siguen las *actividades lúdicas*, las *deportivas* y las *culturales*, y finaliza con los medios de *comunicación e información*, que serán el nexo de unión con el tercer grupo de funciones, las de organización.

Es importante recordar en este punto que el tiempo de ocio y de recreación de los turistas puede significar tanto el tiempo que se dedique a la producción como el que se dedique a la realización misma de la actividad, haciendo que la creación sea un hecho social en el establecimiento, y que el hecho social sea a su vez una creación.

El rol que adopte el animador y los residentes determinará si las funciones aquí incluidas pueden ser de tipo *de realización* o *de intermediación*.

- De realización. La función del animador consistirá en la producción y realización de la acción. Solo o con otros colaboradores, que generalmente suelen ser también animadores, crea aquellas actividades, eventos y acciones, que, en la mayor parte de las ocasiones serán realizables por el equipo de animación, aunque también lo pueden hacer contrataciones externas, y en las cuales no suele intervenir directamente el animador sino que se limitará a aportar un guión, o como máximo a un rol de presentador o dinamizador que fomente el protagonismo del grupo contratado.

Figura 9. Grupo de funciones de producción



- De intermediación. Aquellas que consisten en ayudar a los destinatarios a producir las actividades, espectáculos, fiestas y juegos, que además de la dinámica que se pueda crear, el animador aportará todos los elementos esenciales de asesoramiento, ayuda y asistencia, y prestación de los medios que se necesiten para su realización.

Las funciones de organización

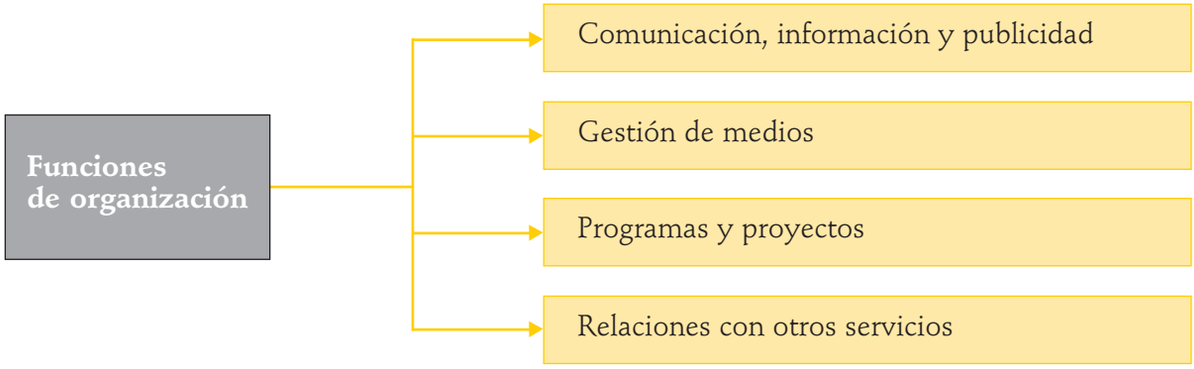
La organización de todos los elementos es tan importante para el animador que representa la condición indispensable para el correcto funcionamiento de las prestaciones y de los servicios ofertados (Figura 10). Se trate de la actividad que se trate, los medios necesarios, sean éstos materiales, económicos o humanos, deberán estar previstos, revisados y hasta montados, si fuese necesario. De la misma manera se afrontará la previsión del tiempo y del espacio, las posibles necesidades de control de la seguridad, y en algunas actividades de forma muy especial, sobretodo si son de gran formato. También se tendría que incluir en esta función la creación de un presupuesto y además de las relaciones que se tengan que establecer entre los diferentes servicios que conciernan a las actividades de animación.

Según el esquema, el círculo de funciones se cerraría con las relaciones que se pueden establecer entre las de *comunicación, información y publicidad* del grupo de las de organización y las mismas del grupo de producción, por una parte, y el de las *relaciones con otros servicios* que también se daban en el grupo de las de relación y que ahora aparecen en el de organización.

Quedan en exclusividad práctica de este grupo las funciones más puramente organizativas que se atribuyen al animador turístico, que son, evidentemente, la gestión de los medios, entendida en toda su amplitud, y la organización de éstos que ha de dar como resultado la creación de los proyectos y los programas, que supondrán las bases más importantes en el desarrollo de las demás funciones.

Retomando la idea inicial con la que se proponía una visión desde la que el promotor de la actividad tendría que ser quien asuma la responsabilidad y descargarla de la persona que la experimenta, habrá que decir que una de las consecuencias más graves del trabajo de un mediador, respecto a este enfoque, es sin lugar a dudas, la coacción que llega a ejercerse sobre algunos turistas en el momento de la elección de la acción o actividad que desea realizar. Es la direccionalidad intencionada. Este hecho es grave en cualquiera de los tres contextos profesionales de los mediadores, puesto que significa una injusta manipulación que subraya aún más el grado de responsabilidad ética de sus propuestas y sus estilos.

Figura 10. Grupo de funciones de organización



Se trata de la persecución a que son sometidos algunos de los turistas, vacacionales sobretodo, forzándoles a que realicen actividades por las cuales no siente ninguna atracción, pero que el mediador sabe que pueden reportar una importante fuente de beneficios propios o para las entidades de las que dependen. Sugerir y motivar por ser propuestas adecuadas, sí, siempre por supuesto, pero en ningún caso por otros motivos pero en los que la sugestión sea su fuerza. La ética y asumir las responsabilidades ha de ser un fundamento esencial para todos los mediadores, aunque la experiencia del ocio acabe convirtiéndose en el medio para alcanzar unos objetivos determinados.

Conclusiones

Desde el punto de vista de los destinatarios de las propuestas de ocio enmarcadas en el turístico, tampoco se puede pasar por alto lo que se apuntaba en las primeras líneas, y es que el ocio en este ámbito se ha convertido también en un fenómeno de consumo y diversión, y así es como lo entiende una gran parte de los *consumidores* de este tipo de producto. Es aquí, en la idea de satisfacción en donde la utilidad total y utilidad marginal del hecho del consumo, les juega alguna que otra mala pasada. Ahora bien, hay una conciencia asumida de que muchas de estas actividades van cargadas de un alto grado de ostentación social y de exhibicionismo. Esto es un hecho incuestionable, pero frente a él cabe cuestionarse hasta qué punto es ético o no lo es: ¿dónde se sitúa la responsabilidad en esta situación?, ¿se podría estar hablado de una responsabilidad compartida?, o ¿es que el promotor simplemente se descarga diciendo que no se obliga a nadie a realizar o a dejar de realizar una actividad?, pero en caso de que así sea, ¿realmente es tan libre como se pretende hacer ver, o es que hay mecanismos que inducen a hacer cosas que en realidad no aportan nada más que un beneficio económico unilateral?. Son cuestiones para volver a empezar y plantearse otra reflexión, y ahora desde otro punto de vista pero en el que los ejes vuelven a ser palabras de Csikszentmihalyi (2001) cuando asegura que el ocio se ha convertido en un vehículo de consumo y que sus vínculos con la creatividad van desapareciendo casi completamente. Frente a estas cuestiones éticas, cabe plantearse si el papel de los mediadores y la mediación ha hecho realmente el esfuerzo de proporcionar una experiencia satisfactoria de ocio en los productos que ponen al alcance de los turistas, y si éstas han sido todo lo sinceras que pretendían ser, dejando al margen las figuras de los mediadores y, sobretodo, relegando a una posición meramente estándar a los animadores, que como consecuencia de no aplicar un método claro y definido, han acabado por aumentar la sensación de que no satisfacían la mayor parte de las expectativas ni de los promotores ni las de los turistas, y éste es un cuestionamiento que no se puede dejar de tener en cuenta para elaborar las ofertas de ocio y de cultura en el ámbito turístico, sobre todo en países que se replantean su posición en un mercado internacional altamente competitivo, en donde muchas son las miradas que apuntan hacia el Caribe. No se pueden crear más *no lugares*, la identidad del destino tiene su máximo puntal en las ofertas que se lanzan desde el ocio, y que han de ser consecuentes con el contexto en el que se enmarcan, y esa es una responsabilidad que han de compartir los intermediarios y los mediadores, conjuntamente, y no cada cual por su lado, ya que se trata de una suma de esfuerzos y de intenciones.

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International Tourism in the Caribbean. Its Contribution over the last 25 years: 1980 – 2005

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Abstract

Over many years international tourism has become a specialisation of the Caribbean region. The question as to whether the contribution from International Tourism Earnings has impacted on the incomes of the people of the Caribbean has evolved into both a theoretical and practical area of study. By structuring the concept of contribution around the notions of causality and elasticity, this article presents various summarised data which are applicable to the whole of the Caribbean and hence looks beyond the diversity that characterises the region. Econometrics of panel data supplies the framework for the observations that follow and the regressions that can be estimated therefrom provide information on the dynamic contribution of international tourism to the revenue of the region.

Key Words:
Contribution, causality, elasticity, panel data

Resumen

Desde hace años el turismo internacional se ha convertido en una especialización de la región del Caribe. La pregunta sobre si la contribución de las ganancias del turismo internacional ha repercutido en las rentas de la población del Caribe, ha generado un ámbito de estudio tanto teórico como práctico. Estructurando el concepto de contribución alrededor de las nociones de causalidad y elasticidad, este artículo presenta varios datos resumidos y aplicables a todo el conjunto del Caribe, por lo que mira más allá de la diversidad que caracteriza la región. La econometría del panel de datos proporciona el marco para las observaciones siguientes y las regresiones que de ellas pueden ser estimadas nos proporcionan información sobre la contribución dinámica del turismo internacional a los ingresos de la región.

Palabras clave:
Contribución, causalidad, elasticidad, panel de datos

Introduction

"In today's world, the Caribbean can be considered as being the region that depends most heavily on tourism […]", stated Jean Holder, the secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) during a speech he made at the Department of Social Sciences in the University of the Virgin Islands on 10th April 2003. Twenty years earlier, the same J. Holder, in le Courrier International n° 80, had condensed the issue as follows, "Tourism is as necessary to us as oil is to the Arabs". Although separated by twenty years, both the above statements echo the conclusion drawn by Vellas (2002), "international tourism can be the basis for economic development in countries where agricultural and industrial growth is insufficient. This enlargement of the tourist sector can and should consequently create a domino effect on the economy as a whole".

These two assertions both justify and underpin the debate that constitutes the key issue within this article: Has the development of tourism contributed to an increase in the incomes for the population of the Caribbean? The question is theoretical because it refers to the issue of export led growth and in particular tourism led growth, but on an economic policy level, the question also has a practical side when we take into account the desired specialisation and the implementation strategy the region chooses to adopt.

The importance of international tourism for the thirty or so countries that comprise the region can be understood statically by looking at the ratio of international tourism earnings to GDP, total exports and the external balance of goods and services. These ratios vary from country to

country - less than 5% to more than 90% for certain countries. Our ability to transcend intrinsic diversity and understand the dynamics that link the region's revenue to its International Tourism Earnings (ITE) is at the heart of the question on contribution. The notion of contribution has essentially three facets and can be structured around the following concepts:

- Causality - has international tourism caused a growth in income for the population of the Caribbean?
- Elasticity - what are the dynamic relationships between growth in international tourism and income for the population of the Caribbean?
- Short term/long term effects - will the effects of international tourism take place over the short term or long term?

The above three questions are the pillars for the thinking behind this article. We begin with a brief reminder of the importance of tourism for the region (A), followed by a summary of the chosen methodological approach (B) and finally, a presentation of the results (C) supporting the inferences gained from the econometric estimates that relate to the question on the contribution of international tourism to the Caribbean.

Several general observations conclude the article.

The Extent of the Importance of tourism for the Caribbean

The Caribbean can be viewed and defined very differently according to the approach used. If the area is characterised as being a group of countries whose common frontier is the Caribbean Sea, then a number of Central American countries need to be included, such as Mexico. Within this definition we observe that Guyana, one of the founders of CARICOM, is the base of operations for the organisation, and that Mexico is a member of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). A more restrictive definition would be that the Caribbean is limited to those islands containing a coastline that is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. Between Grand Caribbean, Greater Caribbean, the Little Antilles, the Big Antilles, East Caribbean and West Caribbean there are many classifications, especially as individual countries differ in political status, currency, size of territory and population, and finally, in economic makeup, although they all have a shared history when it comes to the origins of the region.

Crusol and Vellas (1996) only include the island communities, a group of 30 countries in all. The list for our research comes from the 34 members of the CTO and brings together 27 countries as listed in Appendix 1. Moreover, given the availability of the data regarding GDP, Curacao, Bonaire, St Maarten, Saint Eustache and Saba have been included under the heading of the 'Netherlands Antilles'. This list of countries almost entirely represents the Caribbean when the following elements are taken into account:

- Linguistic: we have the 4 spoken languages of the region - English, French, Spanish and Dutch.
- Political and economic: a complete representation of political makeup and economic size in the region.
- Tourism: the list includes those countries where tourism makes up the central part of the economy or those where the sector has recently taken off.

Two statistical measures provide us with a global appreciation and/or understanding of the importance of tourism to the Caribbean economy:

- The first is static; it relates International Tourism Earnings (ITE) to total GDP $\left(\frac{\text{ITE X 100}}{\text{GDP}}\right)$. It is an approximation for the weight of the tourist sector within the economy.
- The second is dynamic; using the ratio of the respective variations of ITE and GDP $\left(\frac{\Delta\text{ITE X 100}}{\Delta\text{GDP}}\right)$ we can assess the contribution made by international tourism earnings to growth. This second measure enables us to understand to what extent ITE have been instrumental in the growth of revenue.

The above macroeconomic measures offer, in the case of the Caribbean, a true representation of the data per capita, given the slow population growth. Between 1980 and 2005, the average annual rate of growth for the population was 1.16%. Consequently, analysis of these ratios gives information on the weight of tourism exports in income for the population of the Caribbean and its contribution to growth.

The GDPs and ITE for the Caribbean are assessed in real terms. Appendix 2 shows the sources and the deflator calculations.

When the whole of the Caribbean is taken into consideration (by calculating the ITE and GDP for each country) the static weight of ITE has increased by a factor of 1.5 over twenty five years, therefore the ratio of ITE to GDP has evolved from 5% of GDP in 1980 to 7.8% in 2005. After rising steadily, it reached a maximum in 1994 and has since fallen, also steadily. The dynamic weight of tourism in relation to growth increased by a factor of 3.3, moving from 1.6% of growth in 1981 to 5.5% in 2005. By accumulating the ITE and GDPs over twenty years, we note that ITE make up 8.1% of GDP and 10.1% of growth. Our initial approach hence shows

that international tourism through ITE has established itself as a substantial force for growth. If the static weight of ITE has remained relatively stable over the period (1980–1990: 6.7%; 1990–2000: 9.7%; 2000–2005: 8.3%), its dynamic contribution has continued to fall (1980–1990: 32%; 1990–2000: 13.4%; 2000–2005: 2%).

When we consider the course of the dynamic indicator, it appears to have been an important damper in times of recession during the first part of the period under study (1980-2000). The end of the period is marked by a minimal role for tourist activity. On the strength of this observation we should take into consideration the hypothesis that international tourism is equivalent to a 'kickstart' for Caribbean countries. It is still appropriate to point out that the consequences of 'September 11' have clearly undermined the dynamic nature of Caribbean tourism, the decrease in ITE only being stemmed in 2004.

The average ratios as shown mask the diversity of the situation. The contributions from ITE to GDP and to growth differ from country to country. In 2005, on first examination, three groups stood out with regard to the static weight of ITE within GDP and the dynamic contribution of ITE over the period:

- Those countries with a very strong dependence on tourism - where ITE made up more than 40% of GDP and the growth for that period. Five countries belong to this group: Anguilla, Cayman Islands, US Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands (BVI) and St Lucia.
- Those countries with a limited dependence on tourism - where ITE came to less than 10% of GDP in 2005 and growth. There are four countries: two French overseas departments (Guadeloupe and Martinique), Puerto Rico and Trinidad.
- The other 18 countries constitute the third group, which can be considered as those countries having a varying dependence on tourism.

A more systematic approach via PCA and HAC is explored in depth by (Marques 2003).

Countries that rely little on tourism are in effect those countries with diversified economies. Within this group are two of the four richest countries in the Caribbean. By contrast, the smaller countries (by area and population size) are in the majority when it comes to a heavy dependence on tourism. Three countries from the heavily dependent group (Anguilla, BVI and St Lucia) have rates of growth that are in the top ten rates of growth from 1980 to 2005.

Table 1 shows the static and dynamic weight measures for international tourism in the region. Appendix 3 gives detailed information for both indicators country per country.

Table 1: The weight of ITE for the Caribbean

Year	ITE/GDP	ΔITE/ΔGDP	Year	ITE/GDP	ΔITE/ΔGDP
1980	5.3		1994	10	27.1
1981	5.3	1.6	1995	9.8	3.6
1982	5.3	-2.8*	1996	9.7	6.5
1983	5.4	2.3	1997	9.7	9.8
1984	5.6	19.7	1998	9.5	6.3
1985	6.7	-45.7*	1999	9.5	8.7
1986	6.9	14	2000	9.5	11.1
1987	7.7	37.2	2001	8.8	-5.7**
1988	8.2	22.9	2002	8.1	-16.7**
1989	8.1	5.5	2003	7.6	0.0**
1990	8.3	50.8	2004	8.0	18.8
1991	8.5	-6.7*	2005	7.8	5.5
1992	9	-106.2*			
1993	9.7	114.3			

* : Decrease in GDP ** : Decrease in ITE

The above data allows for an approach to tourism contributions which is both descriptive and all-encompassing. The following two sections expand on the explanatory side, beginning with a presentation of the chosen method.

Econometrics of panel data, elasticity and causality

In adherence with the approach as set out in the introduction, econometrics of panel data methodology is employed in the treatment of the question of contribution. This methodology enables the estimation of explanatory regression for GDP, thereby shedding light on the issue of contribution in relation to the questions posed in the introduction.

Econometrics of panel data

If the double dimension involving individuals and groups is taken into account, the econometrics of panel data approach is particularly suited to the study of the dynamic relationship between ITE and GDP, where the Caribbean is deemed to be a whole unit. Sevestre (2002) details the methodological principles and the means for estimating the regressions from econometrics of panel data. The models used in this study are single fixed effect models. In the latter, the influence of the explanatory variables is identical for each individual, and their heterogeneity is accounted for when the constant b_{0nt} is broken down into $b_0 + a_n$. Consequently the general model is set out as follows:

$$Y_{nt} = b_0 + a_n + \sum_{k=1}^{k} b_k X_{knt} + w_{nt}$$

The coefficients are fixed (hence the name, 'fixed effect models') and the heterogeneity of the individual is shown by a specific constant for each individual. The fixed nature of the coefficients rests on the hypothesis that there exists an identical behaviour for a group of individuals for which heterogeneity must be taken into account. The second part of the model $\left(\sum_{k=1}^{k} b_k X_{knt}\right)$ describes the general behaviour via the explanatory variables, and the constants summarise the specific effects for each of the individuals.

Two estimators enable us to estimate the fixed effect model:

- The intra-individual estimator, which applies OLS to the variable differences in relation to their average.
- The first difference estimator using OLS.

The convergence, measured by the HAUSMAN test, indicates a correct model specification.

The fixed effect model can be rendered dynamic autoregressively when the delayed values of the variable requiring explanation are considered as explanatory variables. The autoregressive fixed effect model is estimated using the following two estimators:

- The Balestra-Nerlove (BN) intra-individual estimator.
- The first difference estimator, which includes instrumental variables to overcome the problems of exogeneity and error autocorrelation. The BN, Hsiao, Anderson and Arellano-Bond first difference estimators can be distinguished by their use of different instrumental variables.

The convergence of the estimators indicates a correct model specification. Questions relative to unit root and cointegration tests have been excluded, following comments by Baltagi (2001), who states that "unlike the single times-series spurious regression literature, the panel data spurious regression give a consistent estimate of the true value of parameters as both N and T tend to ∞. This is because the panel estimators average across individuals and the information in the independent cross section data in the panel leads to a stronger overall signal than the pure time-series case"

By means of the fixed effect models it is therefore possible to consider the influence of international tourism on the region, which over and above the specificities of each country, indicates the common structure for the influence of international tourism. To summarize the previous sentence, it is worth to quote Sevestre (2002) saying "the group of 'unobservable specificities' are linked to differences in economic policies and/or economic characteristics for each country".

A series of econometric estimates

The econometric estimates that provide the framework for the method of approach for tourism contributions, relate GDP to ITE. The latter are therefore considered to be the international tourism indicator which is likely to influence growth. In the light of previous remarks concerning changing populations, the estimates focused on macroeconomic variables and in addition the analysis favoured the macroeconomic dynamics of the region.

Two categories of econometric regression, aimed at determining elasticity and causality, were carried out:

- The first, Keynesian inspired, via the following general equation:

$$GDP_{n,t} = aGDP_{n,t-1} + \sum_{i=0}^{n} b_i ITE_{t-n} + c + w_{n,t}$$

was also carried out in logarithmic form for a direct reading of the elasticities. With ITE being limited to

time t (n=0), multiplier effects are favoured. The introduction of delays for ITE takes into account accelerator effects; 'a' links the other components of demand (domestic Investment and Consumption) to GDP delayed by one period; 'c' symbolises the individual effects. From this regression we can deduce:

- The ITE elasticity of GDP,
- The causality using the GRANGER causality tests.

- The second, directly favouring the dynamic contribution from tourism by differentiating the effects of ITE (delayed or otherwise) relative to the other demand elements which are considered exogenously - GDPWT (GDP without tourism). The general equation which supports this approach is

$$GDP_t = \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i\, GDPWT_{t-n} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i\, ITE_{t-n} + c + w_{nt}$$

This regression assesses the dynamic contribution of ITE relative to the other variables which ensure the formation of GDP. Although this model resides within the Keynesian paradigm in its use of variables of demand to explain growth, its main aim is to study the dynamic connection from an econometrics point of view. Nevertheless, it departs from the usual causal relationships that provide the framework for the Keynesian paradigm (consumption function and accelerator).

Thus, the estimates from the two models below support the discussion concerning the contribution from international tourism towards the growth in income for the population of the Caribbean over the last twenty five years (see both generic models below).

Model 1:

$$GDP_{n,t} = aGDP_{n,\,t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i\, ITE_{t-n} + c + w_{n,t}$$

Model 2:

$$GDP_t = \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i\, GDPWT_{t-n} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i\, ITE_{t-n} + c + w_{nt}$$

The following section shows the results from the estimates.

The results from the estimates and consequent inferences

The results from the estimates comprise the first part of this section; the second part shows the consequent inferences.

The results from the estimates

Using RATS (Regression Analysis Time Series) software, estimates of the real annual ITE and GDP levels were obtained between 1980 and 2005 for the 27 Caribbean countries which make up the study sample.

For type 1 models - the autoregressive dynamic models, the Balestra-Nerlove (BN) intra-individual estimator in GMM was used for all the estimates. The Hausman tests at a 5% threshold confirmed the convergence of the different estimators (in difference, with or without the instrumental variable). According to Sevestre (2002), the convergence of the alternative estimators and the level intra-individual Balestra-Nerlove estimator leads to the retention of the hypotheses concerning:

- The exogeneity of ITE relative to GDP (Their non-correlation with the disruptions)

- The relevance of the modelling.

Thus the initial hypothesis on the modelling approach under review is confirmed - this hypothesis intrinsically sets down the exogeneity of ITE. Furthermore, the regression estimate $ITE_t = f\,(GDP_{t-1}, ITE_{t-1})$ establishes the coefficients for GDP_{t-1}, either significantly non different from 0 at a threshold of 5%, or extremely weak. The level of ITE can therefore be considered as independent of the level of GDP. In other words, GDP cannot be accepted as an explanatory variable for the level of ITE.

Moreover, by following Sevestre (2002), this estimator, when submitted to the Sargan/Hansen test leads to the retention of the hypothesis of non autocorrelation of the disruptions of order greater than or equal to 1.

For type 2 models, the estimates use the intra-individual estimator in OLS. The Hausman test guarantees the convergence with the difference estimators, and hence the exogeneity of the regressors and the relevance of the modelling approach. The Durbin-Watson Statistic ensures the non autocorrelation of the errors.

Model 1:

$$GDP_{n,t} = 1.01 \times GDP_{n,t-1} + 0.784 \times ITE_{n,t} \qquad R^2 = 0.96$$

$$LGDP_{n,t} = 0.815 \times LGDP_{n,t-1} + 0.081 \times LITE_{n,t} \qquad R^2 = 0.92$$

The attempts to introduce the delays in the estimate for this model were unsuccessful - the student's t for

the delayed periods greater to one expressed the nullity of the coefficients at the 5% threshold.

Model 2: The intra-individual and first difference estimators (with Instrumental Variables, in order to maintain the strict definition for weak exogeneity) from the log models were not convergent, and expressed, according to Sevestre (2002), "with a quasi certainty that the model is subject to a specifications error".

$$GDP_{n,t} = 1.36GDPWT_{n,t-1} - 0.36GDPWT_{n,t-2} + 1.66ITE_{n,t-1}$$
$$R^2 = 0.97$$

The contribution of international tourism to growth in the Caribbean

The analysis of the estimated models has led to three sets of inferences that profile the dynamics of international tourism and growth within the Caribbean.

i. Elasticity, weight and dynamic contribution

Model 1 makes it possible, ceteris paribus, to estimate the ITE elasticity of GDP. Thus a variation of 1 point of ITE creates a growth of 0.08% 'on the instant'.

Considering the average rate of change of ITE between 1980 and 2005 (4.2%), tourism generated 0.34%

$$\left(\frac{\Delta GDP}{GDP} = E_{GDP/ITE} \times \frac{\Delta ITE}{ITE} = 0.081 \times 4.2 = 0.34\right)$$

of growth per year. When related to the average annual rate of growth of GDP (2.5%) for the period, international tourism therefore contributed up to 13% of the region's growth - a similar ratio to that arising from the statistical measure for the whole of the Caribbean, i.e. 10.1% (See Section A).

The ITE elasticity of GDP also provides an average estimate of the weight of tourism for the Caribbean economy during the period concerned. By using the derivative of GDP relative to ITE in model 1: $\frac{\delta GDP}{\delta ITE} = 0.78$ and the elasticity resulting from the same model, we arrive at $0.78 = 0.081 \times \frac{GDP}{ITE}$ and hence the average weight of ITE $\frac{ITE}{GDP} = 0.104$, i.e. a similar value to the average weight of tourism for the period, calculated as 8.1% for the whole of the region (see Section A).

ii. The level of ITE is a causal variable of GDP in the Caribbean, indicating a tourist multiplier of 0.8

ITE are a cause of economic growth in the Caribbean. An explanation for the growth in GDP for the countries of the Caribbean goes hand in hand with that of ITE. Indeed, a GRANGER causality test as presented by Bourbonnais (2002), carried out after estimation of a simple constrained auto-regressive model, i.e. $GDP_{n,t} = 1.054GDP_{n,t-1}$, confirms the instantaneous causality of ITE with regard to the level model 1 estimates (value calculated from the sum of squares of the residuals as 104.1, greater than the tabled value from a Fisher table at a threshold of 5% = 3.84). In addition, the composition of a VAR system consisting of a level model 1 variant and an estimate of the explanatory model of $ITE_t = f(GDP_{t-1}, ITE_{t-1})$, estimated separately, gives:

$$GDP_{n,t} = 1.01GDP_{n,t-1} + 0.88ITE_{n,t-1}$$

$$ITE_{n,t} = -0.00946GDP_{n,t-1} + 1.2ITE_{nt-1}$$

The GRANGER test is also conclusive at a threshold of 5% (the value calculated from the likelihood ratio between the residual matrix determinants of the constrained and non constrained models is 37 for a tabled value taken from a χ^2 table with two degrees of freedom equal to 8.99).

Model 1 establishes the value of the tourist multiplier as 0.78 and hence with a leakage coefficient of 22%.

iii. ITE: Short term dynamics

As the introduction of delays was deemed to be unsuccessful, model 1 expresses an 'instantaneous' influence of ITE on GDP. It can therefore be inferred that the GDP/ITE dynamics are also exempt from the effects of acceleration by assimilating the delayed ITE within the accelerator process. Similarly, the second model does not allow the introduction of delays superior to 1. Thus both models limit the influence of ITE over the short term. From this perspective and as a reading of model 2 would suggest, the effects of the variations in ITE appear during the year.

If the adjustment delay of GDP to ITE reaches one year in length, model 2 reveals that GDP is more sensitive to the effects of ITE than to the sum of the other components of demand. This revenue effect from tourism,

which can be expressed over a period of two years by a tourist income multiplier of 1.66 $\left(\frac{\delta GDP_t}{\delta ITE_{t-n}} = 1.66\right)$, confirms the major role that tourism has in the growth of revenue in the Caribbean.

Conclusions

The previous developments have attempted to show the shared dynamics between growth and international tourism in the Caribbean. Fixed effect panel data econometrics has been the main tool of this approach. Indeed it has enabled us to establish the structural modelling for those relationships that can be applied, after specific effects have been removed, to all the countries of the Caribbean. Within the framework of our thinking, the panel data has also allowed us to show the contribution from international tourism via the regression of GDP on ITE.

Three learning points have come out of our study:

- ITE are a causal variable for the level of GDP. Growth in ITE determines the level of GDP in the Caribbean. The income of the population of the Caribbean hence has a causal dependence on the increase in tourist earnings.
- The effects of international tourism have a short term impact: ITE only have a direct effect on GDP for a period of at most one year. From this perspective, the necessity of maintaining a regular increase in ITE is essential for a sustainable growth in GDP based on the region choosing to specialise.
- Finally, on the numbers side, the ITE elasticity of GDP is of the order of 8% for a dynamic contribution of 13%. This data shows an average weight for ITE, representing 10% of the income for the population of the Caribbean. The ITE income multiplier reaches 0.78.

In brief, it would seem opportune to recall that our thinking on the contribution from international tourism, by way of the Keynesian paradigm, constitutes one facet in the analysis of tourism led growth. It would be possible for this field of study to be expanded by theorising on the conditions and mechanisms through which tourism could initiate or be the basis of a long term economic growth.

Appendix 1: List of countries from the sample study

ANGUILLA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUADELOUPE	ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	BERMUDA	GUYANA	ST. LUCIA
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	HAITI	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
ARUBA	CAYMAN ISLANDS	JAMAICA	SURINAME
BAHAMAS	CUBA	MARTINIQUE	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
BARBADOS	DOMINICA	MONTSERRAT	VIRGIN ISLANDS (U.S.)
BELIZE	GRENADA	PUERTO RICO	

Appendix 2: Sources for the data and notes on the deflator

The sources

The assessment of GDP for the region over the long term requires the collection of data from a variety of sources because the Caribbean is not considered as being 'unified' as such by international organisations. GDP data has largely come from the World Bank database (World Development Indicators - WDI). For certain countries, missing data was located by using a variety of online resources from the following organisations: CEPALC, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, CTO and the Central Bank. For the French overseas departments (DOM), the data was taken from different documents as published by INSEE (1993 and 2003). In a bid to make good the GDP data that was unobtainable, we used the ESMOOTH procedure from the RATS econometrics software. This procedure, which is similar to the BOX-JENKINS type uni-varied modelling approach, enabled us to make predictions and extrapolations from former database data using a time series. The different possible modelling approaches can be found in chapter 14 of the RATS manual (Thomas A. DOAN – RATS users' manual – Version 4 – ESTIMA).

Data relative to ITE came mainly from statistical compendiums of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). They have been supplemented for certain countries and for certain years by data extracted from CTO annual reports.

The Deflator

In order to assess the real growth of the Caribbean and overcome the lack of data relative to the growth in prices, we constructed a deflator for the region. This deflator was constructed from the average rate of inflation for the region to the exclusion of those countries that had undergone strong devaluations (Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Suriname). The French Antilles were also excluded from the average rate because of the fact that their economic structures were different from those in the countries where information about the growth in prices was missing. The deflator for the region was applied to those countries where the rates of inflation were missing for significant periods. It revealed an average annual rate of inflation of 3.99% between 1980 and 2005. This average rate is not as high for the second of the two decades (5.04% between 1980 and 1990; 2.9% between 1990 and 2005).

Appendix 3: Weights and dynamic contribution

COUNTRY	ITE/GDP 2005	COUNTRY	ΔITE/ΔGDP
ANGUILLA	71.6	CUBA	327.5
US VIRGIN ISLANDS	53.9	GUYANA	92.1
MONTSERRAT	43.3	ANGUILLA	83.5
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	43.0	US VIRGIN ISLANDS	75.2
ARUBA	42.0	ARUBA	64.6
CAYMAN ISLANDS	40.8	ST LUCIA	48.5
ST LUCIA	40.3	CAYMAN ISLANDS	42.1
ANTIGUE	35.6	SURINAME	39.5
BAHAMAS	33.2	NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	38.5
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	32.9	JAMAICA	36.3
BARBADOS	29.1	BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	36.1
ST KITTS	28.3	ANTIGUE	33.5
ST VINCENT	26.9	ST KITTS	32.8
DOMINICA	19.0	DOMINICA	29.9
BELIZE	15.7	ST VINCENT	28.9
JAMAICA	14.6	BARBADOS	28.6
BERMUDA	14.5	BELIZE	21.1
GUYANA	12.9	BAHAMAS	15.9
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	11.4	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	15.7
GRENADA	7.7	HAITI	8.4
GUADELOUPE	7.5	GUADELOUPE	7.4
SURINAME	7.5	MARTINIQUE	5.7
MARTINIQUE	5.9	PUERTO RICO	3.1
CUBA	4.2	GRENADA	1.4
PUERTO RICO	3.6	TRINIDAD	1.2
TRINIDAD	1.7	MONTSERRAT	-2.8
HAITI	1.0	BERMUDA	-218.2

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Biographical notes

Fred Célimène is a full professor of economics at the University of the Antilles-Guyane. He is the founder and the present director of the centre. He is responsible for two Master's courses, specialising in territorial collectivities and finance respectively; and supervises PhD dissertations. He has also developed practices designed to enhance cooperation in the Carribean area. He is one of the founders and current scientific director of the 'Institut de la Francophonie pour la Gestion dans la Caraïbe' (IFGCar), an international management institute established by the 'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie' (AUF). He has published a considerable number of papers and books dealing with relations between ultra peripheral regions and the European Union.

Bruno Marques obtained his Master's Degree in 2003 with a dissertation entitled: 'Tourism and Growth in the Caribbean - lessons of the last 20 years'. He is now preparing his Doctorate with a dissertation on the theoretical links between international tourism and long term economic growth, taking into account the tourism life cycle and the impact of enlarging tourism clusters.

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