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The Limitations of Community-Based Tourism as an Instrument of Development Cooperation: the value of the Social Vocation of the Territory Concept.

This paper contributes to the debate over the validity of community-based tourism (CBT) as a development and poverty reduction strategy in the rural-peasant world. In this debate, researchers tend to compare and contrast specific experiences on which they have conducted fieldwork. This implies limitations in the analysis: conclusions may be biased, leading to circular unresolved discussions. This article introduces a structural analysis, to discover whether CBT has intrinsic characteristics which mean that as an instrument of development cooperation it increases the risks typically involved in social intervention. It applies the concept of the Social Vocation of the Territory (SVT), adapted from Land Suitability concepts used in geography and environmental studies. SVT is a historical process in which land and local society adapt over time to reach equilibrium in specific uses of natural and social resources. Employing this concept on South American case studies, this article concludes that CBT can have limitations as an instrument of development cooperation and poverty reduction, because of increasing peasant differentiation, social unrest, problems with local decision making, lack of local tourism business knowledge and training, pseudo-participation, and work and time restructuring. Use of the SVT concept can help CBT in certain very specific circumstances.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Development Cooperation, Poverty Reduction, Rural Development, Peasant Differentiation, Agricultural Cycle, Community Participation, Social Vocation of the Territory.

Introduction

Proposals for community-based tourism (CBT) have risen in the euphemistically named countries of the South. Some of these proposals have been generated autonomously, without external aid, through community initiatives, or, more commonly, by peasants with some form of capital who have earmarked part of their resources for this new activity[i]. Nevertheless, the majority of CBT proposals have arisen with external technical and financial assistance (Scheyvens, 2002; Fabricius, 2004; Wearing & McDonald & Ponting, 2005). This is because, over the past 10 years, tourism has been increasingly regarded as a sector for development cooperation (Hummel & Duim, 2012; Spenceley & Mayer, 2012). More specifically, CBT is valued as a highly appropriate instrument for development cooperation and poverty reduction in tourism, as it appears to be a strategy that could help conserve natural spaces (WWF, 2001) and help sustain struggling rural economies (Hall, 2005; Cañada & Gascón, 2007; Buckley, 2009; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010; Su, 2011).

However, despite good intentions and potential virtues, CBT as an instrument of development cooperation and poverty reduction also entails difficulties which are often not taken sufficiently into account. In fact, discourse declaring that CBT has serious limitations is gaining ground. Problems claimed include a low level of economic viability (Kiss, 2004; Walpole & Thouless, 2005; Notzke, 2006; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009), that it foments social differentiation and intra-community conflict processes (Morais et al, 2006; Schellhorn, 2010; Tucker, 2010), that it encourages natural resources to be used as commodities (West & Carrier, 2004; Duffy, 2008; Fletcher, 2009), and that the structural constraints of the tourism industry and/or the State – constraints which hamper the local population's control over the activity – are undervalued (Blackstock, 2005; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Lacher & Nepal, 2010; Nelson, 2012).

This article evaluate whether these perceptions are correct. Specifically, it asks whether in interventions of development cooperation in a new economic sector such as tourism, there are factors which imply a greater risk for the local community than in interventions in traditional activities.

Analysis of this hypothesis faces a problem relating to the existing information on experiences and cases. On the one hand, the body of published cases has valued systematisations of good practice above critical assessments. One factor that could explain this phenomenon is that such studies are conducted or commissioned by agents of cooperation – both governmental and non-governmental – who have participated in these interventions or who work in the sector. This may involve a certain degree of bias of which the promoters of these diagnoses are not always aware. But, when presented with cases in which CBT has worked well as a development cooperation instrument, it is equally possible to present other cases in which unwanted effects have been generated, leading to a circular debate with no solution. And, as questioned by Wheeler (2006), it is never clear whether the success stories presented in the specialized literature are truly successful or whether they are a snapshot of the peaking phase in a tourist destination's lifecycle.

Further, the assessment of concrete cases is never neutral: it is influenced by the perceptions and ideological approaches of the researcher. One example of this is the assessment of the potential processes of socio-economic differentiation that an intervention in CBT can generate. For authors close to Pro-Poor Tourism approaches, increased differentiation is not important if the project brings some benefit to the poorest people, albeit a marginal one (Ashley & Roe & Goodwin, 2001). However, this would be viewed as an unwanted effect that invalidates the project by those who hold a relativist view of poverty as proposed by Amartya Sen (1981) or Marxist theorists (Townsend & Gordon, 2002). For these authors, poverty and marginality depend less on the amount of income earned and more on the individual's position within the social structure.

In short, attempting to elucidate the potential limitations of CBT as an instrument of development cooperation through casuistic analysis poses serious difficulties, as the existing information on concrete experiences is biased.

Given that limitation, this article tackles the question through structural analysis, examining whether CBT applied as an instrument of development cooperation has specific intrinsic characteristics that imply an increase in the risks typical of any social intervention.

A concept for assessing CBT as an instrument for development cooperation and poverty reduction: the "Social Vocation of the Territory"

This study uses the concept of the Social Vocation of the Territory (SVT) to consider the pertinence of applying CBT in development cooperation interventions.

It is indisputable that any intervention in development cooperation always carries risks: making an impact on social reality is not a neutral activity. The complexity of that social reality and potential unexpected changes to the intervention context means that interventions often have unforeseeable and undesirable consequences. The thesis of this analysis is that, in the case of CBT as an instrument of development cooperation and poverty reduction, these risks may be even greater, because the introduction of a non-traditional activity means a change to the SVT.

SVT is a concept adapted from the "Land Use Vocation" or "Land Suitability" concept used by the environmental sector and within geography. It is used, in planning and zoning works, as an indicator that enables the impact or potentiality of a new activity in a certain zone to be assessed (Ormaetxea Arenaza, 1997). In this field, its use tends to be limited to assessing the natural environment's ability to withstand a new use without upsetting the balance of the ecosystem and without affecting existing traditional economic activities.

The SVT concept used in this paper goes further than this. SVT is the result of a – usually lengthy – historical process in which the land and the society living upon it have gradually changed and adapted until a point of equilibrium has been attained; a point which is manifested in a specific use of the natural and social resources. This use is, in turn, consolidated and governed through specific technology, specific knowledge, specific cultural expressions and through the creation of a series of common law rules legitimized by tradition. For example, in traditionally agricultural societies, SVT is manifested in: a transformed (humanised) landscape which often bears little relation to the original ecosystem but which tends to maintain a certain metabolic equilibrium in the absence of external pressures to hinder it (Grantham, 1997; Tello, 2004; Garrobou & Tello & Olarieta, 2010); agrarian technology adapted to the environment; a use of human resources tailored to that technology; a regulatory system which governs the use of agricultural resources and settles conflicts arising through use or ownership.

It is based on the idea that any change in land use not only means a change in the distribution and exploitation of natural resources – it also carries a social cost, as the population has to adopt processes which can make local knowledge anachronistic as the existing community management mechanisms, power distribution systems and cultural traditions are replaced with new ones. Furthermore, confronting these changes requires adaptation periods and learning processes that are not always feasible and accessible to the community or parts of that community. A change in SVT thus entails a process whose cost must be assessed beforehand, as must the local society's ability to adapt. In this instance, it is the use of CBT which fosters this type of change.

An example of the risks of CBT as an instrument for development cooperation from the viewpoint of the Social Vocation of the Territory

The limitations of an article mean that only particularly significant risks involved in introducing CBT into a community can be presented here: the potential increase in peasant differentiation and unrest, local participation in the decision-making process regarding the management and use of the new resource, and the restructuring of work and of time that is involved in introducing a new activity.

Heightened peasant differentiation and increased unrest

Ignorance of the risks of a new, non-traditional activity like tourism can mean unforeseen and not necessarily desirable changes in the socio-economic structure of the community. There is one particular case, studied in various works (Gascón, 1996, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; and Pérez, Berenguer & Gascón, 1997), which can help us to understand this phenomenon: the case of Amantaní island, the largest and most populated Peruvian island in Lake Titicaca. Its inhabitants, who are Quechua-speaking, are traditionally smallholder peasants, although in recent generations they have diversified their sources of income as a strategy to face the ongoing agricultural crisis.

As part of this endeavour to seek new sources of income, and taking advantage of the fact that Lake Titicaca is a must-see attraction for tours exploring southern Peru and eastern Bolivia, in the late 1970s the people of Amantaní considered developing tourism activity at the wishes of a governmental body seeking to encourage tourism and with the occasional support of development cooperation. Believing that this new resource had to benefit the whole community, a rotation system was set up among the families who wished to house visitors in their homes. First these families had to refurbish one of their rooms to the requirements demanded by the State and pay a tax. The outlay this involved meant that most households declined and settled for other benefits which were going to be managed communally, such as the sale of handicrafts. Nevertheless, a large number of families made the investment and, with accommodation permit in hand, were included on the rota.

The people of Amantaní had huge hopes for tourism, but soon discovered its limitations. Insufficient promotion of their offer was joined by successful competition from the neighbouring island of Taquile, which had begun to develop tourism earlier, being closer to the city of Puno, where tours of the lake began. The armed conflict between the army and the guerrillas of the Shining Path and the MRTA plunged the Peruvian tourism sector into a major crisis from the early 1980s for c. 15 years. Few travellers arrived on Amantaní and this, together with the relatively high number of inhabitants, meant the rotation failed. A particular social sector, the boat operators, took control of this scant tourism because they also controlled transport between the city of Puno and the island: they transported the tourists and housed them in their homes or in the homes of their friends and relatives. The rest of the population was excluded from the bulk of the profit generated by tourism.

As well as becoming the central factor in community conflicts, the monopolisation of the new resource by a small sector of the population and the unequal distribution of the profits formed the axis around which socioeconomic differences between the Amantaní families was structured. Other activities, such as farming or temporary emigration, played a larger economic role in the economy of the island, although the distribution of these resources was

more homogenous. In this situation, the fact that a small group obtained extra income enabled them to establish themselves as the most economically well placed social group. This group also ended up controlling the island's main political institution, the *Gobernación*, as well as the Municipality following the dismantling of the traditional *varayoc* system in the 1970s. This was possible because it entailed major costs for the person who assumed it and, as such, was accessible only to the most economically powerful sectors.

Besides the frustration and the financial loss that a large part of the population suffered as a result, the process also increased peasant differentiation. It can be argued that an increase in the earnings of part of the population does not have to lead to a worsening of the living standards of the rest, if this increase is based on the emergence of a new resource and not on the seizing and hoarding of pre-existing resources. But that was not the case. An increase in socio-economic differentiation brings redistribution of power in favour of the benefiting sector; the sector not benefiting loses capacity in the decision-making processes leading to a reduction in their standard of living (Sen, 1981). In the Amantaní case, the group who most profited from tourism, the boat operators, monopolised the top political post of island governor, allowing the resources controlled by that post to be earmarked in favour of group interests: repairing and maintaining jetties, media campaigns, rebuilding tourism infrastructures, establishing festivals to promote the island, etc.

This situation fanned increasing unrest within the community, which was relayed to its political landscape. In the 2002 municipal elections, 12 candidates stood in a district of 2,500 voters, with the winner not gaining even 20% of the votes cast. Also, elected mayors tend to be frequently voted out (Remy, 2005).

The tendency for peasant differentiation and conflict to increase as a result of development proposals is not exclusive to tourism (Pérez Berenguer & Gascón, 1997). However, it does seem that the risk is greater when the intervention is made from a non-traditional sector, a sector in which there is no SVT. Ignorance of its characteristics means the people cannot participate with full knowledge of its design and management. To this should be added the lack of traditional mechanisms to channel the unrest generated by the new activity – mechanisms which tend to exist for traditional activities. In rural-agricultural societies there are unwritten laws passed down from generation to generation and known by the entire population governing the use of community resources. This is not, however, the case when managing a non-traditional sector such as tourism.

Local participation in decision-making

The ecotourism and CBT manuals deem it necessary for the local population to participate in decisions about implementing a tourism activity in their territory and in the activity's design and execution (Brass, 1996; WTO 2003).This could help the population to benefit and takes in account the principle of democratic ethics, which states that people must have ownership of their own future. There are also other, more pragmatic reasons: the viability of the project is hugely reduced when the local population has not made it their own by design (Murphy, 1985; Steck, 1999; WWF, 2001; Báez & Acuña, 2003; Lash & Austin, 2003; Matarrita-Cascante, 2010).

But all of these recommendations would appear to have been insufficient. In fact, in the past decade and a half, doubts have proliferated over the mechanisms and techniques for

participation used by ecotourism and development cooperation applied to CBT (Mowforth & Munt, 2000; Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Mowforth, Charlton & Munt, 2008; Okazaki, 2008). Much of this criticism pays special attention to the unequal relationships of power that hide behind participation mechanisms (Addison, 1996; Joppe, 1996; Jamal & Getz, 1999; Schyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2000, 2006; Liu, 2003; Butcher, 2007, 2011; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Vargas del Río, 2010; Lyall, 2011; Salazar, 2011). Also, the application of Western models of participation to non-Western societies has been branded ethnocentric (Farrelly, 2011; Nault & Stapleton, 2011). In recent years, there has even arisen debate over the direct relationship between participatory processes and a proper distribution of benefits: a link which had, until recently, been deemed irrefutable (Li, 2006; Ying & Zhou, 2007; Simpson, 2008; Wang et al, 2010).

The Amantaní example demonstrates the limitations of community participation in the context of a lack of knowledge of the tourism trade. The decision to open the island up to tourism was made as a group. The mechanisms and regulations for managing it were established through the community structures. But lack of knowledge about the new activity meant that these decisions were dependent upon the perceptions and proposals of external agents: state bureaucrats and technicians from non-government organizations. Finally, the tourism model which was established was not a specific model, created endogenously: they were copied and predetermined models.

The financial losses suffered by the islanders who invested in adapting their homes but who never received any visitors are explained by a lack of knowledge of the true possibilities that the new activity entailed. This lack of knowledge led them to trust in the proposals of outside agents and in a supposed tourist market which subsequently proved insufficient to fill the number of tourist lodgings set up. The people of Amantaní did not question the premise that tourism would benefit all, as this is what they had been told.

For a proposed intervention in the farming sector, the people would have known – or at least perceived – the real capacity for marketing thanks to the body of knowledge they have learned, retained and transmitted from generation to generation.

For example, as peasants, the people of Amantaní know the factors that affect price fluctuations in the agricultural products market (amount of production harvested, when the product is being sold, product quality, competition from imports, etc.). In a farming development project they could have proposed appropriate strategies based on these factors. However, it would be difficult for them to know how the tourism market worked (competition from other similar tourist offerings, dependence on intermediary tour operators, the existence – or lack – of nearby tourist routes, tendency for crisis in periods of political destabilisation, tourist flows in the country, etc.). They believed that there would be no problem in attracting visitors in sufficient numbers to meet the expectations created and the investments made.

As demonstrated on Amantaní, within tourism, participation in decision-making processes can become a formal process, an empty and hollow ritual. In a population without experience of tourism (which has never systematically received outsiders nor been users of tourist services), their ability to make decisions appropriate to their interests is practically nil. While nowadays there are few social groups who have had no experience with tourist, this does not mean that they understand the complexity of the sector, how the tourist market works,

the role of intermediaries, how demand is created, how to prepare the destination, marketing, planning, visitor management, etc. Nor does it mean that they comprehend what consequences there could be for their social relationships, cultural practices, local political structure or traditional production activities. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for the actual costs of the activity and its potential side effects to be considered. Instead, the decision may easily be dominated by discourses which, like a mantra, the sector repeats over and over (tourism as a quick and easy route to development) and which coincide with the desires of the population. It can happen that, as explained by Butcher (2007), even though the guidelines recommended in any ecotourism or CBT manual are followed with regard to the participation of the beneficiary population, the approaches of the funding organisation (governmental or otherwise) are imposed, to the point where the discourse on community empowerment can serve to legitimise the imbalance of power between the local population and the outside body.

It can be argued that it is the job of the programme's technicians to train and explain to the local population the features, potentialities and risks of the new activity. Nevertheless, it is such a complex activity (understanding how the value chain works, training costs, use of natural resources, working hours required, the seasonal nature of the new activity and how it fits with the traditional labour cycles, etc.) that such training will always be scarce, and usually purely theoretical. No matter how much time is invested in training, it is unlikely that the local population will have sufficient grounding to make decisions consistent with their interests and expectations.

This does not happen when an intervention is proposed in a traditional economic activity. In this case, local knowledge is extensive. Even when an agricultural activity may be in crisis as a result of macroeconomic policies (dumping, opening of markets under disadvantageous conditions, downward price control, subsidised imports, etc.) and new interventions are proposed in this sector (participation in new markets, fair trade or organic products, food processing, etc.) or in new production capacity (irrigation systems, etc.), the peasant population has a knowledge of this activity (production, processing and marketing) –passed down from generation to generation– enabling them to participate in informed decision making.

No matter how participatory and democratic the decision process proposed in relation to CBT, if the community has no in-depth experience of tourism the CBT process cannot be democratic or participatory. And, if only certain parts of the population has experience, the project can increase socioeconomic differentiation within the community (Mowforth & Munt, 2000).

In short, when an intervention in CBT is proposed where there is little SVT, the indigenous population's actual capacity in the decision-making process is notably reduced. In fact, we cannot speak of participation when the levels of ignorance of the new sector (how the value chain works, how the new activity is managed, etc.) and ignorance of its consequences (the work involved, the use of resources required for its operation, etc.) are so high. It is very difficult, in these circumstances, for the local population to grasp what the new activity entails. It is, therefore, also difficult for them to make decisions – right or wrong, but with full knowledge – as happens when the intervention is in a traditional sector that forms part of the SVT.

Restructuring of work and time

There is a conception of rural labour according to which there are, over the course of the year, times of greater and lesser work intensity. It is not difficult to find this conception – explicitly or implicitly – in the body of works specialising in CBT or ecotourism. An example is provided by the following passage quoted from a manual widely circulated in Mexico and Central America:

> "It is well known that, due to agricultural cycles, there are leisurely periods for peasants. Said leisurely periods may be used so that country dwellers can devote themselves primordially to ecotourism activities, avoiding the need for seasonal or permanent migration to the city" (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1998: 50)

This is a mistaken conjecture focusing solely on what could be called the "agricultural cycle of work necessary in the short term", which almost exclusively comprises work to prepare the soil for sowing, the sowing itself, and harvesting. However, this cycle is complemented by other tasks, which could be called the "agricultural cycle of work necessary in the medium term" and which are usually performed in the post-sowing and post-harvesting periods. Typically this work maintains the agricultural ecosystem and the operation of the productive process: the repair and construction of agricultural infrastructures (irrigation channels, terracing, farm tracks, etc.), tool repair, home improvements, woodland clearing, etc. Furthermore, the statement that rural labour goes through periods of unequal intensity is a statement that is gender blind as it does not consider the role of women peasants, whose labour cycles tend to be much more uniform and intensive: running the home, tending livestock, collecting firewood and water, etc. (Boserup, 1970)

Tourism activity in the peasant world must therefore fit within a pre-existing labour cycle that is generally saturated. This is a complicated matter (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Two undesirable consequences are examined which may arisefrom this situation: the first affects the agricultural ecosystem and the second the working conditions of women.

Peasant agricultural ecosystems are humanised ecosystems. They require human involvement for their upkeep. Reducing the amount of work invested in the ecosystem may upset that balance and cause a reduction in its production capacity. This has been demonstrated by the need of peasants to temporarily emigrate in order to balance their domestic economy – a phenomenon widespread in the rural societies of countries of the South since the mid-20thCentury. This is because peasants often take on non-traditional work *not* as a clever strategy in the face of an existing supply but as the result of a pressing need to obtain extra income within a politico-economic context which is increasingly aggressive towards the farming world and the rural economy. A progressive and increasingly accentuated crisis has hit the rural sector of countries of the South since the mid 20th century due to the belief that development and modernisation require a reduction in the role of the primary sector within the national economy, that agro-industry and its technology, heirs to the Green Revolution, are more efficient than the peasant system of production, and the acceptance of international trade rules imposed by the central countries to facilitate the export of their farming surpluses to the detriment of local production (Shiva, 1993; Lappé et al, 1998; Martínez Alier, 2002; Rosset & Patel & Couville, 2006; Patnaik, 2008; Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009). In this context, temporary emigration may balance the domestic economy but in the medium and long term it impoverishes resources and systems.

An example can be found in the Andean world, where technology developed over the centuries enabled mountaintops and vertical landscapes to be farmed using complicated systems of walkways and terracing. These terraces are complex structures which require maintenance work every year – work which is traditionally done after the harvest. The reduction in the work invested in this labour as a result of temporary emigration has meant that most of the terraces that were fully functioning 50 or 60 years ago in Ecuador, Peru or Bolivia are now dilapidated and irretrievably lost (Gonzales de Olarte & Trivelli, 1999). A similar situation has been described among the Kuna Yala people of Panama, who have lost agricultural resources as a direct result of the time and effort required by tasks relating to tourism (Pereiro Pérez & Smith Inawinapi, 2007; Pereiro Pérez et al, 2011).

Also in the Andean world, the temporary emigration of the men folk compels the women to take over their work, meaning the women have to reduce the time invested in tasks traditionally associated with their gender according to the existing gender-based division of labour. One of these tasks is tending livestock. A reduction in the time devoted to this activity means the women do not drive the livestock all over the available grazing land but intensify the use of the pastures closest to the settlement. So, when the herds cannot find leaves they devour stems and stalks, and when the stems and stalks are gone they scratch down to the roots. This scratching around, combined with rain and wind action, encourages soil erosion. Meanwhile the furthest pastures, now underutilised, are lost through neglect. Likewise, women in many rural societies clear woodland through the gathering of firewood. In a similar process, the women will tend to overexploit the woodland resources closest to home and to neglect those furthest away, resulting in an increased risk of fire in the latter (Collins, 1988; Weismantel, 1988; Paulson, 1998).

Although there is as yet no research studying the relationship between the restructuring of domestic tasks and the tasks involved in tourism in rural economies, it is logical to think that this new activity generates processes similar to that described for temporary emigration, as these processes are due to an increase in domestic work, whatever the cause (emigration or tourism-related tasks).

Another possible unwanted consequence of introducing the tourism labour cycle regards the necessary restructuring of working hours within the domestic group. This restructuring is rarely established with a view to an equilibrium of efforts. As shown by Ester Boserup (1970), the rise of new labor cycles in peasant economies usually means an overload of work for the women.

Various case studies have demonstrated that tourism has contradictory effects on gender relations (McKenzie, 2007; Diaz Carrión, 2010; Fuller, 2010). It seems to generate opportunities to reassess the rules governing gender relations; it can bring greater autonomy for women. But, the roles that fall to women in tourism are an extrapolation of their traditional domestic roles and involve a second set of working hours. A study conducted on the coast of Galicia (Spain), where rural tourism has developed since the 1990s, discovered that this activity provided additional income for the family unit but also reinforced the traditional role of women, assigning them homemaker tasks (cleaning, cooking, customer service, etc.), burdening them with a greater workload and extending their working day. The time that women could devote to leisure and to maintaining social relationships was reduced (Sparrer, 2003). More recently, a comparative study of two rural communities of Turkey and Uganda has shown that tourism created a double burden of work for the women (Tucker y

Boonabaana, 2012). Furthermore, it is the interests, projects and earnings of the head of the family that will tend to dominate the allocation of the family benefits obtained from tourism (Wilkinson & Patriwi, 1995; Long & Kindon, 1997; Prieto, 2011).

Thus, the introduction of labour cycles which do not form part of the SVT, such as tourism, necessarily brings adjustments to the use of available labour. And the consequences are not always desirable.

Conclusions

The question originally posed at the beginning of the article could be expressed as follows: Are there structural factors within CBT which limit its capacity as an instrument for development cooperation and poverty reduction? From the SVT perspective, it can be concluded that placing efforts into traditional economic activities involves fewer risks than in an unprecedented activity such as tourism.

Any intervention in development cooperation carries risks and may generate processes such as those explained. Increased socioeconomic differentiation and scant control of and participation in the project are not phenomena exclusive to cooperative interventions in tourism. However, everything indicates that these risks are greater when dealing with sectors outside the SVT.

Thus, the beneficiary population's ignorance of the operation and characteristics of the new activity will always be greater and its insertion into the traditional labour cycles more difficult. The incursion of tourism into rural societies carries risks for traditional systems of knowledge by introducing a new "language", the language of managing the new activity, involving a different way of understanding reality and social relations (Wearing and McDonald, 2002).

This lack of knowledge and experience in the new activity present in the local population is not gauged sufficiently well when considering tourism projects. It is normal to see education and training activities in cooperative tourism projects given a similar weight to those in projects involving traditional sectors such as farming, in which the population has deep-seated knowledge transmitted from generation to generation and adopted since childhood. Logically, education and training in tourism should be notably more intensive (Drumm & Moore, 2002). As a result, situations of dependence are often generated. It is not unusual to see the external organisation feel the need to support the new activity by acting as tour operator, as the local population is incapable of performing this task given its ignorance of the marketing system and of access to the markets (Gascón, 2009).

We return once more to Lake Titicaca, but this time to Taquile, an island neighbouring the Amantaní. During the 1980s and 1990s, Taquile was an example of "good practice" (a recurring concept in the development cooperation sector) in self-managed tourism (Healy & Zorn, 1994; Mitchell & Reid, 2001; Zorn, 2004; Ypeij & Zorn, 2007). However, things began to change in the 1990s. From the outset there had been conflict situations between the people of Taquile and outside travel agencies for the control of tourism and profit distribution. Over time a balance was reached which benefited the people of Taquile, who controlled the tourism value chain from the start point at Puno: profits were distributed with a certain degree of equality on the island. This balance was reached thanks to the role played by other external agents (researchers, priests and members of NGOs) who had spent long periods on Taquile. A context little favouring the maintenance of this *status quo* (neoliberal

policies defending corporate rights over community/unwritten rights), together with the departure of the mediators, caused the collapse of the historically achieved balance in favour of the travel agencies in Puno. And the community mechanisms for regulating the activity were also plunged into crisis: profits were increasingly concentrated among a few islanders (Zorn & Farthing, 2007). Thus, when the context was unfavourable, three decades of a united community successfully involved in tourism were insufficient to enable the people of Taquile to impose their interests in the face of external agents and to maintain the social capital achieved[ii]. Therefore, what can be expected from fledgling or less established experiences of CBT seeking to make their way in this same neoliberal context? The host population's difficulty in controlling the tourism sector has been reflected in various ethnographical studies (Liu, 2006; Pastor Alfonso, 2011).

This paper does not propose a structuralist vision which shuns change and conflict. Quite the opposite: change must be the essence of development and that conflict is an engine which can drive this change. There are, however, cases in which tourism has a subversive character strong enough to rupture an existing social structure. A classic case is that of Kotzebue (northwestern Alaska), studied by Valene L. Smith (1989) over 30 years ago.

The case studies used in this article illustrate the risks which CBT can pose to a local community from the point of view of SVT but they cannot be generalised: they are only the extreme expression of what can happen if those factors are not taken into account. In the case of labour cycles, for example, the risk of CBT causing a reduction in the time and effort devoted to the traditional economic sectors over and above the minimum requirements needed to ensure their viability may not materialise when there is a surplus of labour available: on the contrary, in such a context the rise of a new activity can reduce the tension created by an underemployed workforce. Let us recall that peasant domestic groups make elastic use of the workforce available (Chayanov, 1974; Shanin, 1988). And this situation has not been unusual in regions of Southeast Asia or Latin America since the mid 1950s, as there has often been a drop in the person:land unit ratio in these places due to population growth, inequitable land distribution and a divisive inheritance tradition.

In other, increasingly less infrequent cases, tourism does not appear to be an option for a particular rural space: it is an existing reality instead. This happens in communities located within the sphere of influence of an established or rapidly growing tourist destination. In these cases, development cooperation cannot be separated from reality through the restrictive application of a misunderstood precautionary principle. Development cooperation will be forced to work with this sector and propose management models appropriate to the interests of the local population. There are cases in which CBT has become an element which has rallied and united local opposition towards foreign capital tourism models which plunder their resources and violate their rights (Ruiz, 2002; OIT, 2008).

The utility of the SVT concept, therefore, does not lie in declaring that it is never a good and appropriate idea to support CBT proposals with cooperation funds. Instead, its utility is three fold:

Firstly, it has an analytical use which can help explain the problems of a considerable number of CBT proposals (lack of economic sustainability, intra-community differentiation and conflict, for example) which scientific works have been gradually discovering and describing over recent years (see introduction). It can explain these problems using

structural elements, and not only as the result of a specific context or particular local circumstances. It can thus aid the theorisation and generalisation of certain processes within the field of CBT.

A second use is to combat what Luciano Carrino (2009) calls “sectorialism”: the false belief that the sphere of action itself is the be all and end all, the axis around which everything must revolve. Given that global development aid funds are always limited, it is necessary to apply scarce resources to multiple objectives. Faced with this reality, agents of development cooperation would tend to ask, as a question prior to identifying a potential project, which is the most appropriate sector in which to intervene ? But for many specialised agents, putting forward proposals for development cooperation in tourism has become a maxim beyond questioning. For them, the first question is not in which sector to act: it is taken for granted that this sector must be tourism. They then proceed directly to study the viability of the proposal or the most effective design for the project. Even when it may be feasible to introduce tourism activity in a certain community, perhaps it would be more appropriate and less risky to assign available resources to sectors which form part of the SVT. It is not enough for a project to be well designed, with a potentially viable subsequent action, in order to go ahead with it: the possible alternatives must also be studied to select the most appropriate and effective option. SVT can, therefore, help remind us that the implementation of a tourism proposal in a particular community is not an end in itself: the end is to improve the economic conditions of its inhabitants.

Finally, a third use of the concept of SVT is to highlight the complexity involved in introducing a non-traditional activity, like CBT, into the rural-peasant world. SVT is a concept which can provide guidelines when it comes to applying the Precautionary Principle. More than in any other traditional sector of development cooperation, an intervention in tourism ought to consider the Precautionary Principle (Fennell & Ebert, 2004): a principle which states that, among other factors, consideration must be given to the need for decision-making processes not to develop in circumstances in which the local population has no knowledge of the characteristics of the new activity, or that preventive measures should be taken when the pre-existing economic sectors could be adversely affected.

Notes on the Contributor

Jordi Gascón has a PhD in Social Anthropology from Barcelona University, specialising in economics and agrarian policy. His fields of research are the impact of tourism on the rural world, the use of tourism as an instrument of development cooperation, and peasant social movements. He is a coordinator for the Catalonian NGO Acció per un Turisme Responsable (Action for Responsible Tourism) and a university lecturer.

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1. [i] The classic definitions of peasant, such as the structuralist definition by Kroeber (1948) or the Marxist definition by Wolf (1966), sought to be "intentional definitions"; in other words, static definitions which enumerate the properties an element requires in order to be considered as such. But subsequent observation showed it was impossible to precisely define a historical social group which has had multiple evolutions and whose characteristics vary enormously from region to region (Shanin, 1990). In fact, the idea has now been accepted that the peasantry is an ideotype; one which is characterised by various factors (control of production resources, tendency towards autonomy, patterns of cooperation, pluriactivity, closed energy cycle, etc.) but which in reality does not exist in pure form. We should therefore talk of levels of "peasantness", which can rise and fall depending on the context and the current strategy of the producer (Kervin, 1988; Ploeg, 2008; Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009; Sevilla Guzman, 2011). Throughout the article, this dynamic concept of peasant shall be understood and used.

2. [ii] Social capital is understood as the level of collaboration and cohesion of a collective based on variables such as the existence of rules or operation in social networks. The greater the social capital, the greater the benefit on an individual level and the more equitable its distribution (Bourdieu, 2000). Other authors have already detected that CBT may undermine this social capital (Jones, 2005).