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Tourism Encounters and Controversies: Ontological Politics of
Tourism Development. Ashgate. 260 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4724-2436-5.

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Many tourism books are written and give insight views of how tourism works for tourists, organisations, societies and so on. However, a book, which looks in a critical view about today's tourism and highlighting the problematic areas of modern tourism, is not often found. In this niche this book is putting its critical review of current tourism practices around the world.

All classical textbooks start with an introduction of the content and the direction of itself. The editors of the book are following the tradition and giving a detailed understanding of tourism and its dark side. They editors are explaining the differences between the truth and the reality, which are the common understanding in every tourist destination. Normally tourists are seeing the good and the bright side of their holiday and do not get in touch with the not so bright side of the reality of the local society. Everybody who goes for a holiday has this special experience, where he or she enjoys the holiday, the hotel or the trip and only sees the good and nice sides of the holiday trip and does not see the struggle of the local community to survive. Based on this

point the book is starting its journey by looking at it with a critical view of tourism and its location and gives a full picture of all parties involved.

The main part of the book is looking at different directions of what tourism encounters and its participants. The first one, which I want to mention, is the involvement of the local community. Several chapters are discussing about how or why not the locals are involved in tourism processes. A good example is the (in-) legal activities of prostitution in Cuba. The author is describing in a really colorful way, how male tourists are been used as a cash machine. Through interviews with the American tourists the explanation of the three different ways of how to pay for the pleasure service is clearly highlighted. The fascinating point is that the money transaction is done after the act and a discussion between both the participants will settle the price. The question is; is the money only for the taxi for going home, or will it be a long time relationship, where the man will send money for the future month or year as a family support / temporary girlfriend fee. But

with this example the critical point of the research is discovered. The author is looking in the process after the money transaction and explains the life style of the local society in Cuba, which three different currencies are used and with which one the life standard in Cuba can be maintained or improved. Besides the prostitution examples, he explains the money exchange system and the double-dealing with tourists and their money. A similar scenario becomes clear that the local society is using tourists as an income support as well as an opportunity of climbing out from poverty.

On the other extreme, the local communities are not involved in tourism at all. The example of developing Greenland is a brilliant chapter, which shows that the local communities are left out in the discussion of tourism development of their region. In this case Denmark and Greenland discussed about how to develop Greenland to increase tourism. The issue, which the author of this chapter discussed is that, through the development until the presentation, the voice and the involvement of the Greenland communities were limited and had a reflection on the presentation to the world as well as to citizen of Greenland. One good example is the idea of building a new international airport, which theoretically is a great plan, but the local infrastructure and communities are not considered in this plan and were questions afterwards.

The former case shows that communication between tourism development and communities are important, but not easy, which the next case will show. The author of Namibia chapter shows a great understanding of how difficult it can be if discussion in and between local communities is started. Namibia is famous for its variety of tribes and culture, but with this varieties carry suspicion alongside with it. To gain an agreement of regional development every step needs to be considered and double-checked. The example, which was given, is that each tribe was only willing to discuss the current issues, if the translator is coming from the same tribe

or a tribe, which is accepted and respected. The working condition under this circumstance was a huge challenge and only could be done in small steps.

Besides the community communication and development a third angle is discussed in this book. The question of the environment is the third key point and it discovers how tourism has an impact on nature itself. One example is the mass tourism to the coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea, where the numbers of diving tourists are increasing, which has an influence of the coral reefs life. Nature activists and the tourism industry found a way to save the coral reefs and still have unlimited number of tourists. The idea is to supporting the ocean and developing new coral reefs to stabilize nature and coordinate tourists' activities to different locations instead of only one. One special action was taken to create an underwater museum where divers can discover the marine life but at the same time see sculptures and sculptures themes.

Another example is the Iceland tourism discussion chapter, where local communities and scientists discussed the overrunning of tourists at specific landscapes. The understanding is how tourism can be structured and nature can be safe at the same time. This project came up with a specific ticket system to navigate tourists to well-known landscapes, but to so famous location to minimize tourist activities at overloaded tourist attractions and preserve the environment.

A final point of view of this book is how today's society is seeing tourists. The case that tourists come to a destination and enjoying their holidays and do not have any interaction with the local culture was and is a myth. Every tourist has his / her impact at the holiday location and change the local culture. The example of tourism in Cuba shows how male tourists are supporting life and lifestyle of Cuban communities as a whole. But another chapter in the book is going further to describe the influence of tourists to local societies. The author of this chapter is using

the metaphor of vampire to explain the role of tourists at tourist locations. His idea is that tourists are part of the local society but at the same time not part of it. Since tourists are interfering local culture mechanism with the present activities, tourists have an impact on local life style. However, at the same time, tourists are not part of the local society. Since they are only there temporally, they do not play a crucial part of the daily life in the visited communities. The example of a vampire (in the chapter the vampire from Twilight Saga) is a part of the living human community. However, the lifetime of vampire is uncertain, the vampire is not part of the society, because

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it sees time coming and going and has to adjust to every new life scenario.

Overall, it can be said that this book is a great example of controversies of today's tourism. With a variety of cases the book is giving an overall picture of pros and cons of tourism and tourism influence in local communities and in the nature.