Title: The allocation of cultural value to tourism products and its contradictions

Author: Pilar Jimeno Salvatierra
Title: Professor
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Ctra. Colmenar Viejo, km.15
C. U. de Canto Blanco
28049-Madrid
Tlf – 91497.85.45 / 38.88
e-mail: pilar.jimeno@uam.es
Cell: 609.780.140

Abstract
We are witnessing times in which the value offered by tourism products is predominantly cultural; although tourism takes place in natural landscapes, these spaces are culturally incorporated in tourist offerings. The new allocation of values goes hand in hand with a shift from an agricultural mode of production to a mode based on urban consumption and the service sector. This is clearly reflected in the tours, offers, and products designed for tourists.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze some of the characteristics of the processes associated with tourism in combination with the elaboration and transmission of culture. This paper draws on P. Thompson's theory on oral transmission and E. Hobsbawm's and T. Ranger theory on the construction of history to further analyze the contradictions associated with rural tourism.

Key words: Allocation of value, valuation of tourism spaces, valuation of rural culture, identity of tourism’s object and place, culturalization of nature.

1. An Anthropological Perspective
The peasant society that proceeded the current era was common in most of Europe. One of its most important characteristics was seasonality; this included a balance between the festive and commemorative activities and production and conservation with respect to the cycle of nature. In addition to festivities, the reproduction cycle, also known in anthropology as the vital cycle, was also coordinated with the production cycle. The main rituals of this reproduction cycle were linked to the main phases of human growth (i.e., birth, marriage, and death) and have been classified by some theorists as rituals of separation and incorporation. They are also known as transition rituals (Van Gennep, 1986, Turner, 1969).

Because they were coordinated with the environment and the seasons, these festivities and rituals evolved into religious events. Changes in these festivities were caused by the different religions and political currents that in turn uniquely shaped these societies
Thus, the main role of these festivities from a social and ecological perspective was to transmit valuable information to participants and to regulate the ecological system by countering imbalances. Different rituals responded to different extraction and production forms, thus building a religious calendar adjusted to these social forms that remained for many centuries. Today, our societies still reflect these rituals through the most important seasonal commemorations, particularly those related to the solar calendar (i.e., winter and summer solstice as well as spring and fall equinox). I believe the reason for the longevity of these commemorations is that over the last two centuries, these celebrations have been less affected by the various forms of appropriation, extraction and production and their respective changes.

The modern age, together with its associated accelerated process of industrial production, has provoked urban agglomeration with great maladjustments in its main variables: environmental, demographic, etc.; this has in turn destroyed the ecological system and, therefore, the festive schedule. This drastic change in productive forms was caused by mechanization, which has led some authors to categorize societies simply as either pre-industrialized or industrialized. The term “postindustrial” appears in this context, and theoretically, this term also applies to societies in the final years of the 20th century.

The modernization processes undertaken by European societies, which materialized in the 19th and 20th centuries, progressively weakened peasant societies, and by the middle of the 20th century, radical oppositions had developed between rural and urban spaces (Foster, 1967, Southall, 1973, Hanner, 1993). The theoretical distance between these spaces within the social sciences continued to increase until the mid-eighties, when the new “global” phenomenon was embraced by academics; it positioned the economy as a principal axis and once again generated a single worldwide geography.

In Spain, institutions have unified sectors that were previously separated; agriculture, animal husbandry, and tourism are connected through subsidies in a process that for the first time in centuries ties together rural and urban realities as one project. (PAC, European Comisión, 1985, 1988).

The rural culture that had already been crushed and broken by constant and progressive migration to cities, which continued unabated from the middle of the 18th century to about the end of the 20th century, is now wholly undermined, much like the rural society that preceded it centuries ago (Geertz, 1963, Wolf, 1975, Scott, 1977, Roseberry, 1985, Ravnborg, 2002).

Tourism, one of the currently emerging sectors, particularly rural tourism, faces the challenge of capitalizing on cultural assets and offering them as a tourist product. But, does culture offer have a place in rural tourism? Is the place for culture planned? Has this place been debated in local forums? Or does it only depend on private initiatives? How do local processes and European forums connect with each other about this topic (2000, 2003)? How can the provisional character of the execution of tourist projects be taken into account as a potentially chief obstacle?
2. Some characteristics of cultural elaborations in tourism

Generalizing, we could affirm that cultural tourism is one of the most clear cases through which to see how knowledge processes effectively integrate production forces, particularly modes of production in which tourism takes on an independent, specific form. Here, I refer especially to cultural tourism, which allows for cultural behavior to acquire economic value insofar as a cultural product is incorporated into what some authors define as the “tourist industry” (Mathieson & Wall, 1986/90; Pearce, 1986; Santana, 1997); alternatively, some have called this a post-productivity economy (Cohen, 2005).

I believe that in rural tourist zones, the valuation of culture takes into account rural cultures in all their manifestations, but valuing tourist products does not necessarily integrally work in this context. We can see that within rural zones of Spain, monumental historical patrimony is valued and capitalized upon if there is a core group that possesses it or if it is in the outskirts of the rural area. Traces of rural culture can be represented by the different work cultures of these zones, such as mining, wine industry, cereal, olives farming, or horticulture. If all these different cultures were well represented in rural tourism, this would indicate that these cultures were extant, if not thriving; however, that is not the case. Generally, there are no adequate social networks within these cultures because migration to cities throughout the last century has broken the preconditions of rural work and its associated manifestations. With few exceptions, we are currently witnessing unclear reconstructions as well as new constructions of rural work that are mainly conceptualized and developed for the sake of rural tourism. The main reason for this is that there is discontinuity and a lack of immediate economic viability in the primary sector (agricultural sector).

From the perspective of material culture, cooking is worth considering due to its importance with respect to cultural restoration. There has been a clear attempt to recuperate quality traditional cooking as a very important element to attract tourists. But in reality, with few exceptions, quality cooking has not been generalized as an important differential element in the most depopulated zones of tourist development. Nevertheless, this could attract would-be tourists to an alternative, non-mass tourism. Cooking directed at tourists may be new, but in most cases, particularly with regard to nature tourism, it represents the conservation of old natural products (or “products of the earth”) that in light of this fact are considered more valuable.

This thus constitutes one of the most visible and immediate challenges for any kind of tourism. Here, the tourist industry both suffers and increases all the contradictions that affect feeding in the urban world, because tourism is the hypertrophied reflection of the society that produces it. In this sense, I believe that only by incorporating new and old elements and by developing charisma with respect to traditional cooking can cooking be saved as a tourist product.

Other, more specifically characteristic cultural products, such as historic festivities, may be politicized (1) or internationalized (2). Meanwhile, theaters, medieval markets, and shows have become important elements within villages and secondary cities with respect to tourist projects in the country. Another manifestation of tourism is the creation of shows for tourist consumption, such as reenactments of historic events (3) and the dramatization of classic plays in the theater (4). The uniqueness of certain
festivities is also considered a powerful element for attraction, but this facet is a difficult characteristic for rural tourism to draw upon (5). Finally, it is important to consider recently-developed festivities that are becoming relevant for this kind of rural tourism of interior impoverished zones (6).

Broadly generalizing, we could affirm that most of these festivities are difficult to develop as tourist products because the social network that had kept rural societies together has changed. As a central characteristic of current rural societies, depopulation prevents the recuperation of these cultural practices because the original population is no longer present. There are also internal partisan disputes among political parties on the boards of autonomous communities as well as among the parties that control power. Partisan disputes are also present in local development plans, which consequently affect tourism. In this context, a successful example from an ecological standpoint is the withdrawal of a tourism plan for Puerto of San Glorio in the province of León, which was cancelled by the Board of Castilla and León due to the negative environmental impacts that were not adequately considered by the developers. We must consider, however, that in other instances, information may not reach authorities on time, and in other cases, political interests prevail. Taken together, these factors contribute to a lack of capitalization of cultural products that could otherwise be very useful in tourist re-conversion. We also note the predominance of economic interests.

Finally, the cultural conversion of natural assets is, in contrast, one of the most common characteristics of the European projects that finance rural tourism, as this conversion is aligned with natural tourism. The most typical example includes the building of routes, such as transhumance routes or royal trails (7), although we believe that some of these routes can be detrimental to the environment. Here we note that the most important contradiction that affects our country with regard to tourism development, namely, the clash between projects aimed at developing European tourism, which constitute the majority of projects (including PRODER, LEADER, LEADER II, LEADER +, and so on), and the endogenous development advocated by ecologist parties or municipal corporations in different tourist enclaves.

3. The concept of authenticity as applied to cultural tourism and the selection of cultural objects
Several theorists frequently use the term “authentic” or “false” to refer to cultural products in the context of tourism (Pearce and Moscardo, 1986). Even though the opposition between authenticity and imitation seems self-evident, we note that there is no such thing as a “false” product in the collective production of culture. The true differences are in relation to the time periods in which people produce these cultural manifestations. In addition, there is also more value attached to ancient expressions as opposed to more recent ones; the former becomes synonymous with authenticity. When applied to cultural elements, this conception of authenticity (or pureness) increases the value of cultural-tourist products if these are connected to a historical period; the more ancient this period is, the more valuable the product is. In addition, the greater the length is that this period lasted, the more consolidated is the associated cultural product, as if one were dealing with social identities.

Cultural objects produced by and for tourism seek to project an image of culture that provides an identity and a sense of differentiation regarding close competitors. A culture
that utilizes tourism is not necessarily something authentic in regards to new constructions that are considered to be “false” because there is no single differentiating element other than time. A culture from the past is not more authentic than a present one because of cultural expressions. In particular, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) have developed these arguments; they contend that the present time and its agents are the ones who write history. Therefore, tradition is always modified or invented (depending on the purpose of those who write history) in the present. The same applies with regards to the scrutiny of different cultures. In a similar sense, Thompson (1988) explains the conditions, characteristics, and efficacy of oral transmission. Thompson concedes more relevance to oral tradition as the most authentic component of history and proposes one of the first methods to survey it.

In opposition of these theories, other authors mention that a re-traditionalization occurred in Europe towards the end of the 20th century, one that frequently accompanies cultural elaborations as asserted by Boissevain (1992). Regarding tourism, it is evident that the majority of its reconstructions are characterized by this re-traditionalization; sociologists in particular have substantiated this phenomenon. In order to develop a position regarding this issue, it is necessary to analyze the life cycle of the cultural products of tourism. What were they in the past? What are they at present? And above all, who pulls the strings with respect to their reconstruction and their new uses?

Back to the running of discourse, we could define a specific culture as the conglomerate of deeply-rooted practices of one or several modes of appropriation, provisioning, production, reproduction, and specific forms of being in the world that also depends on the awareness and political practices across the groups and subjects of a particular culture. Culture refers to the place in which individuals locate themselves and their practices (Roseberry, 1988; Bourdieu, 2007)** In studying culture, it is useful to examine different strategies and expectations that subjects use and consider adequate with regard to such an awareness.

Bourdieu and especially Baudrillard (1978) state that culture and politics currently coincide. Above all, they refer to the simulations that current societies construct in transforming culture into a show with diverse goals, one of which relates to tourism attractions. Collins (1990), a sociologist, also presents a similar thesis, referring specifically to rituals as a privileged element of culture, which is a notion developed previously by Bourdieu and, before that, by human ecologists american. However, we must differentiate between the debate about culture and the political debate that could suggest that concrete cultural products be taken from the culture of the past for exclusive tourist consumption in a way that is tied to our subject, as this latter debate implies an analysis of the direct links that give value to culture in terms of tourism. In this sense, we must consider that the tourism industry itself produces an ideology that usually develops values related to culture, the environment, conservation, and sustainability; these products in turn are not always valued objectively insofar as they depend on the interests of those who have produced them. This, along with the expectations associated with tourism, has a significant importance in the development of cultural products. Perhaps the so-called “call” effect is present in the diffusion of advertising tourism, sense as a foreseen kind class of tourism; other important qualitative and economic considerations are also likely to be relevant.

---

**Bourdieu uses the concept of 'habitus'.
4. Material conditions: space, social networks, associative fabric, and new technologies

There are negative and positive elements regarding the material conditions in which rural tourism takes place. A positive condition in tourism is the need for a fixed space, which is an element that has been stressed by several theorists (Urry, 1990). This is a very important element, as it is a necessary condition under which a lost territory with respect to peasant production can be revalued as a tourist space (given, of course, certain other conditions for the implementation of rural tourism).

Another element of extreme importance is the resources for tourist investments in infrastructure, employment, services, travel, tourist operators, and so on. Despite this availability of resources, we often find in rural tourism that there are European-financed projects that have a difficult time initiating high-quality, sustainable tourism. The main reason for this is a lack of available social networks at the time of project implementation. An associative network, except in rare cases, is something that has yet to develop. Associations for tourist businessmen and businesswomen are very few; rather, they remain novel, and often they confront many difficulties in terms of basic operations. Other partnerships that depend on government help (i.e., boards or juntas, commonwealths, consortiums, and so on) have only measured effectiveness; thus, local decisions affecting infrastructure and the functioning of tourism are limited. Therefore, this associative fabric is still not completely structured. It could be developed through new information technologies; for example, the Internet could be used to fill certain communication gaps. However, where these technologies have been implemented, a curious phenomenon occurs. Initially, websites are created that make information available on tourist enclaves, travel agencies, and so on, but the network itself is not available to connect up users. Therefore, the knowledge created widens the information gap instead of filling it. However, we must consider that places without electronic communication versus areas with electronic communication cannot compete on equal footing with respect to tourism. Some tourism specialists even say that a network must be used in all rural accommodations, which would in turn form a reserve network for booking simultaneous accommodations, for example. By working directly with rural operators, this option would speed the processing of bureaucratic paperwork in reserve centers. Sociologists have already pointed out that this rural networking would represent an important element of change in the configuration of a world already interconnected through network models (Castells 1997). Networking can thus be applied to tourism with similar results.

Contradictorily, in cases of already-developed tourism, there have been calls for the unification of tourism websites, since confusion has been caused by multiple tourist websites. Thus, these new information technologies could be integrated for tourism development, thereby incorporating the knowledge produced through these techniques as a material element that is capable of quickly multiplying resources for development in real-time.

In addition to the existence of public-private partnerships in certain enclaves, there is a conflict of interest due to different subsidies. In other situations, there are problems related to ecologic sustainability that are faced by private companies in the construction sector involved in tourist development. Even the infrastructure projects requested by park rangers to improve the flow of visitors and their security usually conflict with
ecological viability. It seems that environmental conservation management and tourist development in rural zones are in conflict and thus subject to several contradictions that affect their functioning. Consequently, we can identify a need for endogenous development as opposed to a development model planned for large areas. In addition, we should not forget that the need to open rural areas of our country to tourism is one of the consequences of the eradication of former productive zones. The European Community condemned these areas to extinction through demands such as so-called “origin denominations.” Other reasons for their decline included a lack of competitiveness in the market and, above all, a lack of profitability in agricultural production that in turn pushed farmers into cities. In other words, the acquisition of some parcels by particular interests for the construction of infrastructure such as city town halls in certain areas terminated rural production in several ways and thus provoked emigration to cities as a survival measure. This mobilization is barely compensated by new residents new-ruralits?, that sporadically return to these villages only when they see the potential profitability of the tourism industry or the possibility to engage in sustainable exploitation.

In any case, it is important to note that the tourist industry is not capable of compensating the rural population formerly living in the traditional sector, because rural tourism provides employment for very few people. In addition, new information technologies cannot provide jobs either; in contrast, industrialization has continued to substitute jobs in an accelerated fashion since its emergence in the 19th century (Marx, 1867, 1946).

Contradictorily, this abandoned rural territory that expels its inhabitants from their original places (recall that this is the typical image of the agonizing peasant mode of production) is now revalorized as land for tourism; tourism is thus a new industry within postindustrial capital that begins to value this territory as “fixed capital” useful for tourism development (Cohen, 2005). Additionally, there is the so-called “information society” phenomenon, according to which new technologies play a relevant role in tourism through communication as well as the “incorporation of knowledge to productive forces” (Castells, 1997). Another advantage of new technologies is that users can control these technologies and use them to their favor. The lights and shadows as advantages and disadvantages of these novel technologies will depend on the social and political uses that they will have.

5. Tourist images and the need for identity: Local identity, product identity, and the allocation of value

One of the key features of tourist products relates to the identity of the enclave or production zone. Examples show that this “denomination of origin” almost always refers to the name of the region from which a product originates. Consequently, a tourist offer must make visible a product with distinctive attributes that will in turn convey a unique identity. This identity is often represented by the territory; new tourism representations vary according to geographical configuration. We can see this phenomenon in the provinces of Lugo and Orense (especially among the municipalities of Ribeira Sacra), where geographic and symbolics limits are clearly defined by the river. Currently, however, because of the “denomination of origin” of the Ribeira Sacra wine, there has been an attempt to unify this territory in connection to wine production. I consider this to represent one of the most successful examples of the construction of
tourist identity, since it implies the deepening of a deeply-rooted local activity that would correspond to a form of rural development, possibly induced by the proximity of areas of endogenous development (studied by Vázquez Barquero, 1987), which can also be turned into tourist development. This process makes it possible to directly assign value to this kind of development.

Once again, this phenomenon illustrates the frequency with which this kind of development directly generates identity, depending in this case on endogenous development. In enclaves in which tourism coexists with an endogenous production in the primary sector, it is interesting to take into account the predominant economic accumulation model with respect to exploitation as well as the local stakeholders in order to evaluate the role of tourist entrepreneurs (Arocena, 2001). In similar cases, conflict has arisen between endogenous development and the emergence of the tourist industry. This is one of the social contradictions that must be addressed and negotiated in order to prevent future conflicts.

The identity of rural tourism frequently relates to megalithic zones or natural parks, where the exclusive tourist product involves visits by tourists, who usually spend the night in the nearest city. In such cases, rural tourist development is pursued, but it is costly and has limited sustainability, which is why it is imperative to strengthen the relevant product identities for tourism. Identities, however, are based on differentiating elements that can be distinguished. In the end, these differences result in symbols that represent identities that are sometimes “of origin” (i.e., regarding typical food or consumption products) but are other times strictly cultural or historical. These symbols include representations about a product that presumably enhances the brand or image of the product. Thus, through the construction of identity, tourist agencies and entrepreneurs can create a tourist product that would otherwise be hard to disseminate.

The dissemination of new brands of tourist identities is difficult, except through the limited resources dedicated to promoting autonomous communities on TV stations. This dissemination seems broad but means little when compared to the substantial need for diffusion for rural tourism in impoverished spaces. This diffusion can enhance the development of particularly beautiful natural spaces, but it is difficult to share the population in a sustainable way by means of tourism. Tourism of this kind thus competes at a disadvantage with tourist areas that are already consolidated because the latter presumably have more beautiful and more demanded landscapes. If we also consider the increasing scarcity of water, we can see that this is a factor that limits not only tourism but also the ecologic system.

Tourist products frequently provide a distorted reflection of what a society is and what it produces. For instance, the role of culture with respect to identity is often constructed in relation with the tourist product that a culture may offer, but this construction is usually in the hands of promoters. Culture in this context is no longer the result of a lifestyle with a corresponding mode of production embedded in a productive, reproductive, and subsistence system, nor is it related to a system of family production in a determined historical moment. Rather, cultural features are consolidated around a somewhat false mode of production. Culture thus becomes a disembodied object because the social and economic fabric from which it originated has disappeared. The identity attributed to the product is no longer a consequence of production but rather merely a series of qualities that have been artificially connected with the territory. Also,
this identity relies oftentimes on identity markers as tourism icons, designed merely for the promotion of these products.

We must point out the value of the past is an important element in a tourist product. The past has a directly assigned value, especially in tourism institutions and projects; the more pristine and ancient in time an identity is, the more valuable is the associated product. Moreover, it can be interchangeably called “historic” or “traditional,” as these terms do not signify a notable difference in terms of the identity of the product.

For tourist purposes, work cultures are either hypertrophied or become museum representations for the tourist; while this fosters local identities, these identities are simultaneously turned it into an object that is always available for tourist use. This continues to happen despite the reconfiguration of the traditional museum in 1985 led by the International Movement for New Museology, as articulated by G.H Rivière, the president of the International Council of Museums (Rivière, 1993). This movement attempted to socially contextualize museum objects, linking them to their original world and thereby making the spectator interact with that context, which does not occur in traditional museums. Although this is a positive new development that could connect culture with visitors, comparing rural culture and the museum process would imply that both pristine culture and museums in rural areas be turned into objects available for tourist use, as if they were canned products, which implies a high degree of artificiality. Thus, this process makes tourists suspicious.

For instance, traditional cuisine prepared for tourism implies all kinds of inevitable contradictions, given its complexity. The intense shift of consumption energies and ways for cooking implies, the emergence of new culinary techniques, and the contradictory nutritional information that is often thrust upon mass society. If we take into account the teaching of traditional cooking that occurs in hotel management schools, the result is a complex and contradictory tourist cuisine that could be had in any city.

From a so-called “exclusively cultural” perspective (8), tourist constructions constitute reserved and available spaces, but it is not the people that controlled these spaces, as was the case with festivities and historic rituals. Rather, these spaces assume personalities and are filled with culture that draw on historical dimensions of the past and future (like outer space theme parks) but may nevertheless have the same model, weight, and characteristics, so long as they are consumable objects. This is because social networks are seemingly incapable of reproducing rural culture once it has been broken. Perhaps a few festivities are exempt, such as the summer celebrations during which former and current residents return to their place of origin.

A culture that produces tourism normally generates a reification of pristine social rural life. This reification disconnects culture from its former rural identity because while people generally construct identity themselves, in this case, this territorial identity that has not been demanded or vindicated by rural inhabitants. For tourism, so-called “rurality” has been conceived as a way contain tourists within a rural area, especially for people who do not regularly go to the area and especially for areas that have seasonal tourism. Thus, festivities, rituals, legends, tales, and sayings all very often work as a product available for tourist consumption.
Once created for tourism, cultural products can increase the value of the tourist space, provided that the conditions for sustained tourism are met. Moreover, these places can acquire a new identity because they now embrace cultural tourism. But this cultural tourism may not coincide with any local identity. In such cases, if this tourism succeeds, it will end up generating a type of *sui generis* local identity to which it will attach. In this case, the dynamics and features of local identity are inverted, since in cultural tourism, identities are constructed from outside and preferentially around tourist products. In short, the product comes first, with identity following. This currently occurs with nature tourism, as most European programs favor this paradigm. When tourism is “culturalized” and consolidated, it can also allow non-residents and so-called “members of global society” who live in big cities to seek out pristine identities; as many authors have pointed out, these individuals often becomes are victims of mass deception and rootlessness (Bauman, 2003, 2005, Hall, 2006).

Within the context of the current political economy, which has addressed for decades the concept of the non-paid value of certain jobs and services in the informal economy, we mention the theory developed by Marangon and Visitin (2007), who affirm that a public good, such as the landscape, does not have an assigned economic value in the market economy. The same happens with other activities in our globalized world.

Because of this, these theorists propose the assignment of a “contingent value” that would allow these services to enter the formal economy. But even though this could benefit natural assets in some regions, such as wine zones or other enclaves in which production and tourism are complimentary, this measure could hardly be applied to other rural destinations. I refer, for instance, to natural protected areas with educational value. The issue here is to be able to foresee whether the effects of these measures would benefit a more diversified rural tourism.

6. Futurism and tourist products

Just as the past can confer identity and solidity to cultural elaborations as confirmed in tourist products and quality denominations, there is also another very important time dimension, which is equally humanistic and liberating because it attempts to change the past, present, and future instead of just reproducing them as it the case with most identities or modes of educational socialization (Bourdieu, 1989). Here, we highlight the future, which has been theorized by sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and psychologists. In order to simplify this notion and apply it to theory, we note that the future can be conceived in several ways, namely, as a utopia, as an orientation, as a model, or as a realization or projection.

As a utopia, or rather, as its name indicates in Greek, as a place that is nowhere the Ínsula Barataria in Don Quijote, the future describes an allegory or metaphor of reality. As an orientation, future points the way, in the same way that analysis and calculations do in social sciences. As a previously-foreseen model, the future has a preponderant role in tourism insofar as it is part of a planning that formulates models that become embedded in society, much like ecological, sustainable, urban, and rural models.

Finally, the realization and projection of these models in the tourist infrastructure, such as futuristic theme parks, are present today in rural tourism projects. In this context, it is important to consider how the practice of tourism has shaped space as something fixed.
once tourism has been implanted in a place. This rich feature increases the value of tourist production in its material form in addition to any added cultural value. These values also acquire economic value as a consequence of the introduction of new technologies, which are an important element within the tourist industry.

Another example of this trend is the interactive museums of contemporary art and their continued expositions in culture houses and other public centers.

Nevertheless, although these are still models that refer to the future, it is most common to find identities that commemorate past cultures because the entrepreneurs often consider references to the past as more dependable for obtaining social acquiescence and soundness in the offered products. In other words, the use of the future versus the past depends on ideology and emerges in practice; however, despite its importance, it does not receive adequate analysis.

Another related element refers to the models and expectations of workers, entrepreneurs, companies, and tourist entities with respect to tourist development. Too often these models can be characterized “hyper-developist,” especially those that deal with infrastructure that undermines sustainable ecology, even if such infrastructure is justified. It is easy to lose sight of the many actors involved in tourism development when constantly confronted by limits in infrastructure, especially with respect to communications. Another aspect of the tourism growth process is the increasing relevance of entertainment as a consumable object, even in rural tourism. Although rural tourism involves nature, it is often conceived as “resort” tourism, which is manifested in the near-omnipresence of resorts and spas.

7. The environment as a challenge

The UNESCO declaration regarding the concept of cultural landscape attempts to address the interaction and/or mediation between humankind and nature in any given culture and territory. Additionally, it includes provisions for the Education for Sustainable Development, which fosters visits, the use of protected areas, and rural zones as educational means, which is in line with the Institucion Libre de Enseñanza.

We must consider that, in any tourist venue, elements such as conservation and sustainability must be in accordance with a new allocation of values that mark the development process. However, we must not forget that preference should be given to environmental sustainability, although economic sustainability is also important. These two types of sustainability are very difficult to combine because they are often in conflict. Only specific adaptations to the territory in which tourism takes place that employ an integral perspective can produce relatively sustainable plans. Too often the impact of tourism is not adequately forecasted, and by the time the effects emerge, it is already too late. This is because, once established, economic interests are difficult to eradicate. In these cases, it is only necessary that sponsoring institutions and authorities implement effective controls. Otherwise, we would be in the position of condemning tourism (especially nature tourism) as the direct enemy of ecological viability.

However, as mentioned before, in some rural destinations, we have observed that this element represents a threat to the expectations of several workers and public officers who want more infrastructure, services, and routes. The most serious threat comes from
rural tourism plans that are incapable of properly estimating environmental impacts. From a practical perspective, this is one of the hardest contradictions to resolve. If the industry really intends to implement sustainable tourism, then it must formulate clear proposals for tourist activities. Communicating this information, however, does not seem to be a priority for those involved in tourism planning.

These and other similar contradictions, such as the uncontrolled construction of housing projects and tourism infrastructures in natural areas, threaten the sustainability of tourism as an alternative to urban life.

To conclude, we could say that the development of rural tourism in our country (Spain) must take into account these various contradictions with respect to tourism in general. On the one hand, rural tourism presents the possibility for some recovery of rural culture. On the other hand, there is the issue of environmental risk, given how easily and frequently this type of tourism disrupts important environmental elements. Finally, economic sustainability represents an incentive for every type of private company. Based on these issues, we believe that planning tourism with the involvement of diverse institutions could often result in conflicts of private interests, resulting in maladjusted and uncontrolled construction. And in the end, there are also risks related to temporality, as several projects may be simultaneously sponsored with funds subject to tight execution schedules.
Notes

1- For example, there are disputes about whether to revitalize religious festivities over other celebrations that are not religious and that is often negative for tourism development: Don Benito (Badajoz).

2- This is being sought in the Holy Week of Medina de Rioseco (Valladolid).

3- Examples include reenactments of the royal wedding of Don Dimas in Vitigundio (Salamanca) and the Battle of Moclin en Medina de Rioseco.

4- The Fuenteobejuna theater in Cordoba resembles the work of Lope de Vega, Fuenteovejuna.

5- Those of Hinojosa del Duque (Córdoba) and those of Navalvillar de Pela (Badajoz) in January.

6- This occurs with Alvarada in Cañete (Cuenca).

7- It is important to mention the Route of Don Quijote, the Route of Caballeros de Calatrava in La Mancha, and the Royal Trail between Madrid and Guadalupe.

8- These are cultural products for which the principal components are human behavior.

Final Note: I would like to state that a significant amount of the claims expressed in this paper are based on my analysis of surveys of the rural tourism project Rural Territur (reference number SEJ2005-05586/GEOG) financed by MECD, I + D. The project was executed in impoverished and recently depopulated zones of Spain. (Surveys used from 2007-2008). The author continues to work on these documents.
Bibliography


BAUMAN, Z. (2003), Comunidad, Madrid, s. XXI.

BAUMAN, Z. (2005), Identidad, entrevista a B. Vecchi, Río de Janeiro, Zahar.


BOURDIEU, P. y PASSERON, J. C. (1989), El oficio de sociólogo, Madrid, s. XXI.


BAUDRILLARD, J. (1978), Cultura y simulacro, Barcelona, Kairós.


GEERTZ, C. (1963), Agricultural Involution, Berkeley, Univ. of Callifornia Press.

HALL, S. (2006), La identidad cultural en la post-modernidad, Río de Janeiro, DP & A.

HANNER, U. (1993), Exploración de la ciudad, Madrid, FCE.


MARX, K. (1867/1946), El Capital, México, FCE.


SANTANA, A. y PRAT, LL. (2005), “Reflexiones libérrimas sobre patrimonio, turismo y sus confusas relaciones”, en El encuentro del turismo con el patrimonio cultural: concepciones teóricas y modelos de aplicación, Sevilla, FAAEE, El Monte, ASANA.


THOMPSON, P. (1988), La voz del pasado, Valencia, Edicions Alfons el Magnánim


VÁZQUEZ BARQUERO, A. (1987), Áreas rurales con capacidad de desarrollo endógeno, Madrid, MOPU.

VÁZQUEZ BARQUERO, A. Y MADOERY, O. (2001), Transformaciones globales, instituciones y políticas de desarrollo local, Rosario, Argentina, Homo sapiens/UAM.


WOLF, E. (1975), Los campesinos, Barcelona, Lábor.

Pilar Jimeno Salvatierra
UAM- March, 2008