



**«POLICIES OF TOURISM  
AND EMPOWERMENT:  
GENERAL REFLECTIONS  
AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES»  
(«Política de turismo e Desenvolvimento.  
Reflexões gerais e Experiências Locais»)<sup>1</sup>:**

**REVIEW**

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Over recent decades, the theory of development that promised the growth of many non-capitalist societies by the adoption of global trade and the mainstream cultural values of capitalism fell into discredit. Not only the exegetes of development failed to explain poverty and inequality worldwide, but even in some nations who accepted the maxims of IMF or World Bank to struggle against poverty their situation notably aggravated. To what extent tourism plays a vital role in subordinating peripheral economies to center is one debate given in post Marxists circles. Likely because its attachment to profit-oriented paradigms, it was unfortunate that the International Academy for the Study of Tourism is reluctant to accept the criticism of Marxism for the industry, no less true is that we need to assume «the theory of development» as it was drawn in Northern Hemisphere rests on polemic foundations. The idea of tourism as a vehicle to progress seems to be a naïve story nobody believes now.

In this valuable book, «*Política de Turismo e Desenvolvimento*», edited by Jean Costa and Michele de Sousa present an interesting discussion respecting to the intersection of politics and tourism. As something else than the encounter between supply and demand, tourist consumption is tilted at re-organizing the attachment of

locals to their soil in which case reformulating not only the epistemological roots of the discipline, but the policy making-process. One of the challenges to review a full-blown Portuguese-written book is huge. On another hand, to what extent English speaking readers would be interested in a book of this caliber, which they will not read is another questions, which encourage me to make this review in English.

Whatever the case may be, what I have clear is that Costa and Sousa's book represents a valid conceptual platform to discuss further the ebbs and flows of tourism within society. As this argument given, in an ever changing world we are experiencing a real fragmentation of produced-knowledge. Operating in this circumstance, authors who form of this project shed interdisciplinary light on applied-research to call the attention to the fact the tourism research, unlike other disciplines, lack of shared-epistemology nor clear edged-cut methodology to understand «the tourist behaviour». This books reminds the importance in re-defining the contours of tourism beyond the profit-oriented paradigm, introducing new themes which in some cases evince the serious material asymmetries mobilities generate. What this book tries to respond is the question, is tourism a real

<sup>1</sup> **Costa J.H., Sousa M.** Política de turismo e desenvolvimento: reflexões gerais e experiências locais. Mossoro, RN: Fundação Vingt-un Rosado, 2010. 287 p. ISBN 978-858988848-6. Read this book: [https://issuu.com/jeanhenriquecosta/docs/pol\\_tica\\_de\\_turismo\\_e\\_desenvolvime](https://issuu.com/jeanhenriquecosta/docs/pol_tica_de_turismo_e_desenvolvime)

anthropological institution, or as MacCannell observed, a vehicle towards alienation?

With focus on cases geographically located in Brazil, Ariza da Cruz explores the Marxist studies to expand the current understanding of inequality, adjoined to the role of tourism as a producer of symbolic meaning. In this respect, she exerts a radical criticism to the current literature simply because it ignores the negative effects of development and progress as they are formulated by liberal economists. To what extent, tourism may break the centre-periphery dependence is one of the exciting themes of this preliminary chapter. Secondly, we found a text authored by Jean Costa who retains some concern on the modern geography of capitalism. Not only tourism produces some unexpected consequences on environment, but also commoditizes peoples and cultures to the extent to be gazed by «so-distant others». In that way, the tourist space erects as an encounter of dispossession and negotiation processes between hosts and guests. While tourism sell to the imaginary a lost paradise, local workforce is precaritized to the extent to be relegated to peripheral position in the productive system. Third and Fourth chapters are oriented to debate what de Sousa dubbed as «the invention of tourism, which consists in the introduction of the industry of leisure into agrarian communities. Beyond the economic profits and wealth produced by tourism, the problem lies in the ways how this wealth is distributed. Reinforcing previous extractive institutions already-established in Brazil, tourism is far from representing this vehicle for development, policy makers and experts preclude. This activity creates a great gravitation in territory which leads to physical isolation for locals. By means of different tactics, nation-state, instead of helping them, encourages the logic of exclusion or exploitation. In the rest of the book, the same argument remains. While social imaginary adopts sustainability

as a valid method to protect the interest of hosts, investors and capital-owners devote considerable resources to transform the geography of community. In that way, new circles and circuits of exchange are imposed which causes a double-effect. On one hand, it commoditizes the local landscape (by use of marketing and promotion) to consolidate a growing industry that combines environmental concerns with economic progress, but on the other, it impedes local to access produced wealth, as Marxist literature suggests.

To be honest, and this is my opinion, the idealized image of lost-paradise as it was formulated by West not only situates as an idyllic utopia, but also serves to legitimate the authority of status quo. Although this brilliant book does not need further commentaries, two important assumptions should be done. What Costa and Sousa found as a perverse nature of modern tourism in enhancing the inequalities among classes, corresponds with what I have called, «the logic of paradise», which brings the discussion to the legacy of Joseph Campbell & Bill Moyers (2011) who has discovered that the word Paradise, came from Persian pairi+daeza. While pairi denotes the idea of being outskirt, daeza means «exclusion». As a sacred-place the metaphor of paradise reminds not only the original sin but also the needs of surviving. From that moment on, humankind intended to replicate paradise everywhere. Basically, the allegory of paradise is enrooted in Westerners in a manner that tourism industry emulates (Korstanje and Busby 2010; Korstanje, 2014; Cantallops & Cardona 2015). This myth is certainly exploited by global capitalism to instill a psychological need otherwise cannot be rechanneled towards consumption. This is the reason why, a book of this caliber as professors de Sousa and Costa present, invites to much fertile discussion on the nature of modern tourism and its intersection with economy and geography.

#### References:

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