

7 Tourism of poverty

The value of being poor in the non-governmental order

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Introduction

This chapter is about a problem, but it is also about a solution. More precisely, this is an analysis of the constitution of a ('South'-wide) problem and its solution, as well as the ways in which those who 'fall into' the problem appropriate and reproduce it in attempting to achieve their own solution. In particular, the problem is poverty – the 'slums', the 'local communities' and in the 'South' – and the solution is tourism.

Concerns about poverty and the poor have long been at the core of conceptualizations of society. Still, it was only in the latter part of the Industrial Revolution that poverty became firmly placed and interpreted as a serious social problem. More recently, as addressed by Arturo Escobar:

One of the main changes that occurred in the early post-World War II period was the 'discovery' of mass poverty in Asia, Africa, and Latin America . . . [which provided] the anchor for an important restructuring of global culture and political economy.

(1995: 21)

Since then, ideas of poverty have evolved and techniques of measurement have become the prime effect in characterizing it (Hagenaars 1991). Poverty became a global statistical process of knowledge that appears to require a solution via expert intervention.

Nevertheless, destitution is far from being unequivocally defined; indeed, poverty is a controversial construct, entangled in social, political, economic and historical struggles, which unsurprisingly originates new imageries, identifications and values. The modernized category of poverty thus surpasses mere communicative practice. It encompasses powerful ideological systems, shaping perceptions, producing workable subjects and making a 'reality'. Can poverty be a value for those categorized as poor? And if so, what do these developments tell us?

My objective is to approach the globalizing and globalized effects of poverty as a socially constructed category within which, and according to which, some

peoples strategize their lives. As we will see, the incorporation of developmental problems and solutions in particular settings in the 'developing world' is fostering new performing spaces and fields of agency. The globalization of normative ideas of socio-economic order and progress, in which a perception of poverty and its solution are an inherent constituent of this order, reproduces local performances of neediness as a market opportunity. In this process, the 'peripheral', 'slummy' and 'underdeveloped South' is being progressively incorporated in the neoliberal economy as a product and producer of a (poverty) problem that matches 'western' cultural imagery; and, thus, is seeking a solution that is morally assigned to 'western' non-governmental expertise.

This is not to say, however, that there is a uniform entity (the 'West') unilaterally inducing other powerless ones (the 'Rest'). Neoliberal and non-governmental regimes might elicit new capacities and statuses to individuals. More than being simply absorbents, the globalization of the imaginary of poverty also provides historically subjugated peoples with new opportunities, stimulating the emergence of new fields of creative agency. The very category of 'slum' and the word compounding that it generates (e.g. 'slum dwellers') represent a good example. 'Slums' are by nature linked to poverty, places where development is necessary in the social moral imaginaries (Taylor 2002), particularly in 'northern' societies. This irresistible association with poverty and the 'will to improve' (Li 2007) generates opportunities for the 'slum dwellers' themselves: 'slum tourism' is one response. How do those categorized as poor react to the developmentalization and touristification of poverty?

This chapter shows that poverty can indeed be apprehended as a value for some of those categorized as poor. The arguments come from a specific approach: the global diffusion of representations of poverty as a problem in 'developing countries' and the social implications of this for those categorized as poor, explored through the lens of tourism. However, to understand the value of poverty or the poor in tourism, one must look at the large-scale ideologies and economic systems in which it is embedded. Therefore, this chapter is about questioning and analysing the processes that make it possible to ascribe value to poverty for the supposed subjugated peoples in the 'South', turning it into touristic capital.

Canhane: a developing case

I began to reflect on the complexities intrinsic to conceptions and manifestations of poverty while conducting fieldwork in the village of Canhane,¹ in the south of Mozambique. According to data from 2006 provided by the community leader, Canhane then had a population of 1,105 residents. Due to the predominance of informal emigration to South Africa, particularly to work in the mines, it is hard to ascertain a precise number of people living in the village. Nevertheless, my estimate is that no more than 650 people currently live in Canhane. The residents speak Shangane, and only a few are fluent in Portuguese, the national language of Mozambique.

Canhane has developed the first 'community-based tourism' project in Mozambique. As a corollary of an initiative of the Swiss NGO Helvetas, the 'community' of Canhane embraced the construction of a lodge located about 7 kilometres away from the village. The tourism project was mainly established by Helvetas with funds coming from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). However, as part of the 'community-based' scheme, the infrastructure of the lodge and the tourism business are owned by the 'community'. The lodge opened its doors to tourists in May 2004. Since then the words 'tourist' ('turista'), 'community' ('comunidade'), 'development' ('desenvolvimento') and 'poverty' ('pobreza') became part of residents' common vocabulary.

There is a prevalent ordered way for tourists to encounter the residents and visit Canhane: the 'village walk'. The village walk is basically a tourist product that can be purchased at the lodge. As a staff member of Helvetas said:

That tour represents what we really want for tourism there: tourists who are interested in the community. The five-star tourists who used to go to coastal areas, and who don't want to know about local cultures, are not our aim.

(6 October 2008)

As the main form of encounter between tourists and the residents of Canhane, the village walk is an inherent component of the 'front side' (Goffman 1959) of the 'community' and supports the social constitution of tourist sights. It institutionalizes ordinary places, materials and people as tourist attractions. However, the touristification of specificities in the village was not random. They were chosen as tourist sights because of their potential to represent the logic behind the implementation of the 'community-based tourism' project: that is, poverty eradication via tourism. Let me illustrate this with a short example.

One of the spots most visited by tourists in Canhane is the shallow well, which is a hole dug in the centre of the village to allow access to water. At the shallow well, the visual impact of shortage is strong and authenticates (a) poverty. Tourists experience there what many call 'real tourism' in the sense of their 'notion of a genuine local experience' (Smith and Duffy 2003: 114). They experience 'real people' and 'real situations' in a circumstance that is often shocking, but also part of a recognizable imaginary for them – it is a poverty show. On one occasion, a 41-year-old British woman remained immobile for two minutes, seated on a rock, under strong sunlight, looking at the setting of the place. I asked her: 'Are you okay?' 'When I see these same situations on TV or on the computer screen', she said, 'I'm not close enough, so it's easy to turn off feelings. But now that I'm here . . . It's impossible to ignore it' (29 January 2008). She confirmed what some authors have suggested: 'There has always been a nagging inadequacy around the assertion that one cannot sell poverty, but one can sell paradise. Today, the tourist industry does sell poverty' (Salazar 2009: 92). Canhane is an example of that.

But Canhane is also an example of self-entrepreneurship initiatives and of social progress, and also encompasses non-poverty settings. Nonetheless, tourists are not led to such sites. The only manifestations of betterment that tourists have access to in the village are those that have had, precisely, tourists' direct contribution. That is, they see sites/sights of 'community development' that were endowed by the profits of tourism, thus suggesting (and confirming) to tourists that local poverty solutions are possible and being implemented because of tourism. In the tourism arena, the crucial indicators of well-being or destitution informed by the Canhaners' own social mores – cattle, agricultural fields, family relatives – are kept separate from the exhibition of themselves. Specifically, the tourists visit mostly two sites/sights embodying developmental solutions: the primary school and the water tank. Both display a way of 'developing' the community in which the revenues of the tourists are morally justified. The cartography of signifiers of poverty – the problem – and the potentialities to solve it through tourism predetermine the physical and psychological itinerary to be toured in the village. Yet the narrative of poverty and its (tourism) solution in Canhane are constructed in conjunction with other narratives about Mozambique and Africa where the same problem and solution are placed.

Nonetheless, and perhaps even more effectively, Canhane can be acknowledged and realized by its non-poverty attributes in many other places and circumstances. For example, I met a man who implemented a system close to his house that allows other residents to watch South African football matches. He acquired a generator that provides energy to a television that is inside a hut with a parabolic antenna outside. Confronting the dire material conditions in the village, the technological attribute of the hut obtains the significance of social progress; or, more concretely, it has the potential to embody, in contrast with most of the sites/sights visited by the tourists, non-poverty characteristics. However, no tourist had ever visited the hut where the television is located. The question that therefore arises is: why are the tourists persistently led to the shallow well and not to the hut where Canhaners watch television? I believe the answer to this simple question gives evidence about the broader context of the recent emergence of many other 'community-based tourism' settings in the 'developing world'.

Although understanding the very category of poverty is empirically problematic, my intention here is to approach the making of poverty as a discursive and imaginative object that spans the 'developing countries'. The subject of poverty will be thus referred to in terms of how it orders, classifies and constitutes social units (e.g. 'slums', 'local communities'), leading to the institution of global regimes of meaning. Moreover, this chapter intends to analyse how such an imaginary of poverty is apprehended and appropriated by some of those categorized as poor in the same social units. Geographically speaking, I extend the space of problematization further than the empirical case brought by my fieldwork in Mozambique. This approach bears upon an understanding of anthropology that may be gained from a critical analysis of

an array of multi-local angles, together with an assessment of the global forces at work.

The recovering of a hope in developing: the tourist

Academic approaches to tourism began during the 1960s. They were described largely in terms of economic development, and were seen almost entirely in a positive light (Crick 1989). However, 'despite the early hopes, tourism as a "passport" to macroeconomic development did not pan out quite as planned' (de Kadt 1979, in Stronza 2001: 268), and the pessimism about tourism became common in academia. Rather than alleviating poverty, tourism was declared as one of the causes.

More recently, though, societies all over the world have been presented with an ideology shift, and the harmful character of tourism has progressively been replaced by one more benign. Alarmist insights and general antipathy towards tourism have led to contemporary calls for ethical tourism and for the incorporation of development, pro-poor principles by the tourism sector. As addressed by Mowforth and Munt, 'the start of the twenty-first century has seen efforts to stimulate development through tourism', and the overriding goal of poverty alleviation has generated 'a long line of terms and types to attract attention, funding and energy' in the tourism industry (2009: 335). While ethical tourism initiatives tried to minimize harm, tourism activity was now integrated into the solution mechanisms in poverty contexts. Tourism became inscribed in the global discourse of good governance in the developing world. What this has caused in practice is the beginning of new types of tourism, commonly called 'new tourisms' (Mowforth and Munt 2009). The 'community-based tourism' in Canhane is one of them.

Although the term emerged during the 1990s and has been widely used since then, there is no single and unanimous definition of 'community-based tourism'. Its definition has been blurred by commonplace ideas of promoting welfare for so-called rural, poor and economically marginalized populations. For example, according to a 'toolkit' published by the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), 'Community-based tourism [CBT] is a type of sustainable tourism that promotes pro-poor strategies in a community setting. CBT initiatives aim . . . [at] alleviating poverty' (2007: 7). In a report involving a legion of researchers and consultants on *Sustainable Tourism and Poverty Elimination*, produced for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), 'community-based tourism' is acknowledged, among other things, as 'creating a supportive policy framework and planning context that addresses needs of poor producers and residents within tourism' (Deloitte & Touche *et al.* 1999: 14). To Patullo *et al.* (2009, in Tourism Concern 2009: 7), '[c]ommunity-based tourism is where visitors stay in local homes, have a glimpse into traditional life, and most importantly, where management and benefits remain with the community'. While to NGO Planeterra, 'community-based tourism [brings] . . . the financial benefits of tourism to the local

economy' (Planetterra.org 2012). In sum, 'community-based tourism is a hope to fight poverty' (Suriya 2010).

Despite the variety of perspectives and meanings of 'community-based tourism', there is a single aspect we can attribute to it, and that is the nature of the concept, which arose from non-governmental ideology as a means of poverty reduction through tourism. Consequently, international aid agencies have increasingly encouraged and financed NGOs engaged in it (Butcher 2003). As the director of the Mozambican NGO working in Canhane's tourism business once said, after he attended a three-day local workshop, 'now everybody wants community-based tourism: it seems that it's the new fashion!' (27 October 2008). Indeed, one thing is certain at the present: 'CBT, undoubtedly, remains the option of choice for most NGOs and governmental agencies that include tourism in their developmental [solution] portfolio' (Weaver 2010: 206). The corollary of the developmental significance attached to 'community-based tourism' is that a myriad of travel agencies have embarked on such representations and have moralized their tourism business. Following the communication approach of many others, Asia Adventures, for example, says that it 'is proud to be supporting community based tourism in South East Asia, helping those less fortunate help themselves, and [thus] alleviate poverty' (Asia Adventures 2012).

Regardless of the desirability of poverty eradication, what seems to be at the heart of this model of coalition between 'hosts and guests' (Smith 1989) is meaningful participation; more concretely, the sale, production and consumption of meaningful participation. This participation, however, can take many forms, and the subject of poverty can serve as the moral motivation for it. Consider the example of Canhane.

Two years after the lodge opened to tourists, the residents of Canhane started building and organizing a water supply system. 'Water is the biggest priority to solve our poverty', said a middle-aged resident at the early stage of the water planning (6 September 2006). Poverty and the water effort were implicitly linked to a moral matter that appeals for tourists' empathy and, therefore, their participation in 'community development'. The materials used for the constructions, which were powerfully aestheticized as part of the tourist experience, were purchased with the incomes of the lodge. This means that it was the money the tourists spent and donated that was being directed towards the social betterment of the 'community'. The allocation of tourists' spends and donations was prominently announced at the reception and in the rooms of the lodge. The tourists were informed from the start about their meaningful participation in 'community development' and poverty eradication, which in this case took the form of consumption.

However, behind the physical apparatus of the water efforts, there is another version to be told. Due to local ways of ordering the social structure, the implementation of the water supply system was doomed to failure even before it was established. After the system was operational, it was used only a few

times by the residents, becoming a controversial issue in the village. The placement of the new source of water had to respect technical requisites, which led to the positioning of the water tank out of the purview of the community leader. In practice, however, this challenged the customary practices of control over the commonality, thereby fostering social upheaval in Canhane. Yet, this version was missing from the touristic experience. In the end, Canhaners continue to resort to the communal shallow well or the Elephants River, around five kilometres from Canhane, to access water (for an ethnographic description and analysis of this case, see Baptista 2010).

Poverty and the attraction of the 'slum'

The subject of poverty and the model of coalition are not a privileged theme restricted to 'community-based tourism': 'slum tourism' also carries with it the potentialities of the discourse of poverty and the participatory model through which the tourists relate to the subjects they visit. Perhaps more than 'communities' in the 'South', 'slums' are defined in public discourses almost solely by poverty and precariousness. Such discourses channel them as 'different'. Fundamentally, the notion of 'slums' is embedded in the sense of governmental unwillingness to improve local socio-economic conditions. This, in turn, facilitates the emergence of a new cartography of power and intervention: 'slums' as non-governmental arenas.

One of the most influential theses of Foucault (e.g. 2008) is that the mechanisms of power cannot function unless knowledge is formed, organized and put into circulation (made visible). Tourism is a privileged field in which to test such a theory. Taking Foucault's thesis into consideration helps us comprehend why, as in 'community-based tourism', the subject of poverty is not the only subject on display in 'slum tourism': charitable and development projects are popular destinations for 'slum' tours. Referring to the politics of 'township tourism' in Cape Town, for example, Rolfes says: 'the tour operators intentionally present the poverty and developmental potentials of the townships at the same time' (2010: 430). Many authors have indeed noted that the negative preconceptions associated with 'slum', 'township', 'favela' or 'ghetto' are challenged and nuanced by the tourists when they visit the local developments taking place (e.g. Freire-Medeiros 2007; Meschkank 2011). Such developments are normally run by NGOs using tourism incomes to support their activities. As in 'community-based tourism', poverty in these cases is converted into an incentive for tourists' meaningful participation in 'developing', which can take the form of donations or consumption; and therefore 'slum tours' gain the aura of non-governmental solidarity, and tourism becomes a catalyst for 'local development'. Clear examples of this, which can be multiplied endlessly, are the NGOs 'Reality Gives', created by Reality Tours and Travel in Mumbai with the purpose of canalizing part of the profits from 'slum tourism' into charitable work; or the non-profit 'Salaam

Baalak Trust', which uses the revenues coming from 'slum tours' to fund medical care and schooling projects in India.

The aestheticization of urban poverty has become fashionable even beyond the realm of tourism. The experience and imaginary of urban precariousness, adversity and marginality are inspiring many artists, originating what has been widely called 'slum chic'. Lorraine Leu, for example, has noted that the imaginary of the 'favela' and its peculiar 'culture' is being used internationally, in advertising campaigns for various products (Freire-Medeiros 2007: 64). Why, it seems reasonable to question, has such a contemporary symbol of poverty become so valued? One possible explanation is that the enchantment of neglected spaces and peoples mirrors the desire of the wealthy 'West' for the unmapped, different, illegal and disordered. Such a trend, particularly evident in tourism, seems to lie less in the pleasant experience of (a) poverty per se than in the 'inversion' (Graburn 1983) that it offers to its consumers. Graburn (*ibid.*: 11) argues that tourism 'is one of those necessary breaks from ordinary life that characterizes all human societies', meaning a privileged space for what he calls the 'ritual inversion' from everyday life. This perspective throws light on to tourist attractions as reproducing (the sensation of) difference for the visitor. For this reason, situations of social, spatial and economic disadvantage, such as the 'slum life' in urban contexts or the 'community life' in the countryside of the 'South', become competitive tourism markets for the different experience available to the tourist. Put in this way, more than the fields of exoticism, pleasure, authenticity, liberty, responsibility, education or awareness, the contemporary 'new tourisms' mentioned by Mowforth and Munt (2009) are arenas of consumption and production of difference. This perspective offers perhaps the most appropriate avenue for understanding why 'negative' conditions, such as the poverty of 'the slum' or 'the local community' in the 'South', have become so powerfully aestheticized and turned into tourist attractions.

Therefore, we should not lose sight of the fact that at the heart of the rising popularity of 'slum tourism' and 'community-based tourism' is a common, omnipresent reference: poverty. As Julia Meschkank clearly demonstrates in her empirical study on the Indian urban area of Dharavi, 'Tourists perceive the slum first of all as a *place of poverty*', which is, at the same time, 'positively linked with the value of community' (2011: 55; emphasis added). Meschkank's conclusion represents a broader tendency in tourism: the 'slumming' of urban neighbourhoods, together with the imaginary of the 'pure' 'local community' in the 'South', legitimizes the tourism-related organizations' efforts to capitalize on poverty. This capitalization, she continues, is supported and reinforced by a pre-existent and natural state of homogenization in tourism. In practical terms, preconceived expectations of poverty influence the 'reality' that tourists ultimately experience and recognize in the tourist space. In the same way that celebrity tours in Beverly Hills are driven by tourists' imaginary of wealth, 'slum tours' and 'community-based tourism' are embedded in a

homogeneous, 'westernized' version of poverty that can be toured. This version of poverty negates particularity and accrues totalitarian meaning. In fact, the narratives of poverty dealing with 'slums' and 'communities' in tourism seem to rely more on the assumption of inter-societal homogeneity, without much regard for their specificities. As Baumann (1996: 8) attests in the context of the Southall area in Greater London: 'by conventionalizing individuals and, I also suggest, poverty 'as "belonging to" . . . a pre-defined "community" [or "slum"]', one runs the risk of tribalising'. This is a process that relies on a high degree of stereotyping based on the conceptualization of the homogeneous Other. Finally, poverty is semantically charged with 'slum' and 'community' culture in the 'South'. The overall point to emphasize here is that the discourses and performance of poverty in 'slum' and 'community-based' tourism fail to integrate other versions and signifiers of poverty than those resulting from an authorized, universal truth. It is this latter suggestion that I want to pursue further. How are the meanings of poverty defined in the global and non-governmental era? And how are these reproduced in tourism?

The constitution of a problem and the homogenization of differences

The supra-national agencies of development have been at the front line of a new globalizing representation of poverty and the poor, targeting what came to be popularly labelled as the 'developing world'. There is a growing body of literature addressing 'the role of development institutions in constituting poverty as the key development problematic' (Green 2006: 2). Most scholars critically addressing this justify their view by resorting to the importance of social processes of categorization in the ordering of social worlds (Law 1993). According to Escobar (1995), the advent of development after the Second World War brought a new regime of representation that shaped the 'reality' to which it refers. It is in this sense that the traffic of meanings, inherent in development discourses, has progressively appropriated poverty as an organizing concept and the object of problematization: the 'slum problem'; the 'Third World problem'; the 'population problem'. However, the incorporation of poverty as the main development problem came to be a mechanism of power and control; it discursively generated a developing geography as a space of thought, problems and intervention in which development industry is self-evident, necessary, and placed with the expertise of the solutions. It is in this sense that Africa as a category, for example, 'enters Western knowledge and imagination . . . through a series of lacks and absences, failings and problems' (Ferguson 2006: 2), 'where a "traditional African way of life" is simply a polite name for poverty' (ibid.: 21); and so, Africa in general, Canhane in particular, or 'slums' especially, become problem cases in need of a solution that justifies the ascent of an opportune industry of solutions.

International NGOs, donors and national ministries with a vested interest in development all share a conceptual framework that allows them to identify poverty reduction as their goal. However, such a developmental framework holds its common adherence through the promotion of an authorized 'western' representation of poverty, which has become firmly entrenched in global and national discourses of modernity. This knowledge production sets the parameters and determines the representations of poverty in and for development, and it is mostly drawn upon to make policies. Consequently, it reduces areas, populations and their needs to instrumental categories to be applied mostly in cross-developing countries' settings. More importantly, such normative efforts contribute to the constitution of a vast 'South'-wide market of poverty begging for a solution to be explored.

The technically required homogenizing character of poverty is evident in the way the experiences of the poor are promoted as similar across differing social backgrounds and geographical areas. This framework is well illustrated by Deepa Narayan (2001), the co-author of an instrumental World Bank study from 1999 that was used to inform the 2000/01 World Development Report on poverty. In the author's own words: 'there is a commonality of the human experience of poverty that cuts across countries, from Nigeria to Egypt, from Malawi to Senegal' (2001: 40). What is important to highlight in this framework is that poverty is not only widely shared as a developmental problem in the 'South', but operates as a sharing representation of an universalized thing in itself; a homogeneous and tangible entity; an object; a 'numericized inscription' (Rose 1999: 212); a 'total social fact' (Mauss 1990) that can be globally located, assessed, measured and compared. The obvious problem here is that such an objectification negates the incorporation of different versions of poverty, particularly informed by those same people categorized as poor. And since developmental conceptions of poverty must necessarily be matched up with a set of quantifiable measurements (e.g., dollar-a-day poverty line), non-quantifiable aspects of poverty tend to be excluded (Tache and Sjaastad 2010: 1169).

Inescapably, though, experiences of poverty differ from culture to culture, from one region to another, and across time. Referring to the Borana Zone in southern Ethiopia, Tache and Sjaastad argue that: 'Livestock holding, particularly of cattle, is the node that ties different aspects of wealth and poverty together' (ibid.: 1171). In studying 35 villages in Rajasthan in India, Krishna states that poverty is locally defined in terms of the following four stages: having food, sending children to school, possessing clothes to wear outside the house, and retiring debt in regular instalments (Krishna 2004). To give a short example from my research in Mozambique, the relative migratory lifestyle of the fishermen in southeastern Mozambique, dependent upon the location of fish, affects their perspectives on wealth and poverty. As I was told by a 25-year-old fisherman, 'The house is only for sleeping at night' (18 February 2008) and is not part of the fundamental aspects that define poverty and the poor. Contrastingly to my findings, however, Mtapuri's research in

Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe indicates that most of the conceptions of poverty by those considered as poor in the region included 'poor dwellings' (2008: 41). This shows how the place of residence, for instance, can obtain different meanings in defining what it is or is not to be poor. Moreover, these two examples of radical disparity come from two neighbouring countries. What this means is that proximity per se does not validate the homogenization of the meanings of poverty. In this regard, in a comparative study between two villages no more than 15 kilometres from each other in western Kenya, Nyasimi *et al.* observed that 'each village had its own indicators of wealth and poverty ... characteristics of poor homesteads in Ainamoi village could feasibly be considered wealthy by the residents of Kanyibana' (2007: 48). More relevantly for our purposes, Shiva writes:

subsistence economies which satisfy basic needs by means of self-supply are not poor in the sense that they are wanting. The ideology of development, however, declares them to be poor for not participating significantly in the market economy and for not consuming goods produced in the global economy.

(2005, in Mowforth and Munt 2009: 336)

In such a view, while turning the poor into objects of knowledge and management, such politics of poverty are aimed, fundamentally, at creating consumers.

All of this empirical evidence and debate poses an intense challenge for convergence discourses on poverty, but does not necessarily determine global convergence accounts as entirely 'wrong'. The developmental discourses that explicitly grade populations and countries on a scale from wealthy to poor, from more to less developed, do at least acknowledge and expose circumstances of economic dissimilarity, many rooted in conditions of deprivation. However, such a comparative perspective, leading poverty to a techno-discursive instrument, immediately raises a number of problems. Clearly it invalidates pluralized understandings and meanings; it ignores contextual economic strategies and tactical resource management; and it does not integrate other relationships between materiality, consumption and individual aspirations than those acknowledged by the dominant rationale.

In this sense, poverty becomes a convenient signifier that justifies external intervention and a means of classifying and disposing continents, countries, regions and peoples. These, in turn, become organized as an under-development that is politically and technically manageable, mostly through non-governmental governance. The homogenization of poverty and its workable character are a consequence of an authoritative knowledge that privileges and only recognizes meaning in terms of its instrumentality (Green 2006); that is, its utility for channelling intervention. The constitution of the Human Poverty Index developed by the UN in 1997, for example, reflects the ahistorical, technical and instrumental dimensions aimed at producing workable

models. Phrasing it better than I could, Green articulates the situation in these terms: 'What constitutes knowledge about poverty and the demarcation of the poor is a consequence of the power of international development organizations and of the national governments with whom they work' (2006: 14). Along these lines, people and cultures are transformed 'as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of "progress"' (Escobar 1995: 44).

The development idealization of poverty does not only place a representation of poverty as the problem in developing countries, but institutionalizes such a representation as a way of seeing, perceiving and imagining the 'developing world': it generates a 'reality'. This powerful process drags the 'South' and its problems into the field of 'western' expert knowledge, in ways that can be thus 'western' and technically manageable. This state of affairs contributes to the creation of cultural expectations mainly, but not exclusively, in the 'North' about the 'South', its 'communities' and its 'slums'. Furthermore, not only is a stereotypical image of poverty produced, but also its solution. It is here that tourism plays its role in generating new hopes for modernity. 'Community-based tourism' and 'slum tourism' are two of the most prominent tourism specialities in this agenda.

Tourism and poverty in the non-governmental order

Having said all that, I believe the answer to the leading empirical question – why the tourists in the village of Canhane in Mozambique are persistently led to the shallow well and not to the hut where the residents watch television – is now easy to see. The shallow well is inelegantly offered as a mark that incorporates convincing aesthetic characteristics to connect Canhane to poverty in the visitors' minds. There, the tourists are introduced to the water scarcity problem in the 'community'. Usually frequented by women, the shallow well is probably the most immediate expression of shortage that matches tourists' imagery of poverty, because it congregates and links everyday life and scarcity in the same place. This is not an outcome of Canhaners' tourism enactment. The shallow well is indeed one of the places where women like most to stay because it is a privileged zone for them to socialize with each other, without being called lazy by men. It is where they share the latest rumours in the village, speak about their dilemmas and reinforce links with other women. In fact, the area is symbolically understood as social and feminine among the majority of Canhane residents. As the spot where Canhaners have access to water in the village, the gender representation of space is a consequence of the social attribution of women as water-givers. Hence, the first impressions that tourists have after reaching the shallow well, as illustrated by what a Belgian tourist expressively told me, is: 'poor women!' (6 February 2008). The experience of 'being there' lifts the tourist to an emotional level and legitimates (a specific character of) knowledge of the village and its inhabitants as poor. That is, the residents of Canhane are

understood through, and inseparable from, a 'western' imaginary such as poverty.

Significantly, the residents are conscious that such an imaginary of poverty is essentially different from theirs, but they nonetheless embody that 'western' representation of poverty in the ambit of tourism. For example, at an informal gathering, an elder commented loudly and cheerfully: 'the wife [his wife] tells me that tourists are impressed when they see her getting water in the hole ...'. He interrupted himself to drink more canhu, a fermented local drink. Before he had time to return to his comment, another man cut into the conversation and, at the same time that he looked at me to estimate my attention, he added in a mournful way: 'ahhh, it's Canhane's poverty!' (20 February 2008). His comment was confirmed through body expressions coming from the rest of the group, most of them shaking their heads affirmatively. The elder who started the topic switched his animated mode and participated in the new sad moment. Like many other residents of Canhane, more than just being aware of the representation that the shallow well has in the visitors' minds (as I perceived in that gathering), they strategically validate (and participate in) it by reproducing such a representation as their own.

Although at first sight this seems to contradict everyday life in Canhane, and their idea of the shallow well as social, enjoyable and positive, there is no ambiguity here: it is the outcome of the new politics of the local that leads to the constitution of 'community fronts' in tourism. Particularly when there is water in the hole, the area acquires a social vitality difficult to feel in other places in the village. In this sense, the shallow well means a source of satisfaction for the residents. However, the integration of Canhane in the global market of tourism and development challenges such local collective meanings and positions the residents with regard to the same area in a different way: a space of poverty. As addressed at the beginning of this chapter, neoliberal and non-governmental regimes might elicit new capacities and statuses to historically subjugated peoples. However, to be successful within these regimes, these same peoples have to experience themselves or, especially in tourism, perform self-identification through such capacities and statuses. To put it plainly, the developmental tourism project in the village requires Canhaners' recognition of themselves as poor.

This means that, for tourism, and thus for development purposes, 'Canhane's poverty' is normalized in accordance to contemporary interests. The new norms and representations that emerge from the implementation of the 'community-based tourism' business are moulded to the local and then incorporated as part of a new system of practice for the residents. Consequently, local poverty signifiers – such as lack of cattle, lack of agricultural fields, and/or adults without sons or daughters, husbands or wife/wives – are removed from the representations of 'Canhane's poverty' in and for tourism, in the same way as emblems of poverty coming from the global technocratic order are integrated. And as these new signifiers are integrated, Canhaners subject

themselves to, but also valorize themselves in accordance with, the global politics of calculation that homogenize poverty.

In practice, Canhaners' general opinion about tourism can be illustrated in the next phrase: 'It's good for us to receive tourists because they support and help the community' (8 March 2008). This comment, expressed by a female elder, but which represents the overall opinion in the village, gives clues about the principle behind the structure of feeling of the tourism venture: helping the 'community' against poverty and towards progress. For this reason the shallow well became one of the most charismatic tourism sights/sites visited in the village, because of its potential to induce in tourists a sense of moral duty – as the elder said, to 'support and help the community'. Curiously, this phenomenon gives expressive hints for answering Urry's 'interesting question whether it is in fact possible to construct a postmodern tourist site around absolutely any object' (2002: 92). Indeed, the touristic success of the shallow well relies on its ability to be a symbol of (a) poverty informed by subjectivities largely driven by the development rationale.

No wonder then that the members of Canhane, as in many other 'communities' categorized as poor in the developing world, adopt and appropriate for themselves the 'in need' attributes recognized in the non-governmental order that hovers upon them as a way to be eligible for funds and, more specifically, tourism income. In doing so, Canhane represents a global, homogeneous version of poverty but also the potential to solve it, which ultimately became a value for these historically subjugated people. As such, Canhaners participate in, and try to capitalize on, a dominant system of representation derived from a transnational discourse. It is in this sense that various Canhaners strategically incorporate, assume and exercise their position as the 'ones who need to be helped' (16 February 2008) in contrast to what they call 'the mulungu' ('mulungu' is used to describe both the white-skinned person and the dark-skinned Mozambican recognized as having social power through business). Paradoxically, this self-distinction can be understood as an aspiration of membership and inclusion in a globalized world where they could be, at least, placed as (re)producers of otherness or of a difference already intrinsic to 'western' imagery. The imaginary of poverty in this context is used as a rhetorical value for their ambitions. Consequently, (a) poverty serves as an attribute, not a limitation, for the 'community-based tourism' business. The obvious problem here is that this implies Canhaners' adoption of representations of themselves supported by extrinsic forms of knowledge drawn by politics of domination. On the other hand, however, by using stereotypes and icons brought by non-governmental ideals and market ideology, 'Canhane's poverty' becomes simultaneously a problem about which the tourist must act and in which the tourist is the solution. In this view, whereas some social and infrastructural traits of the 'community' are promoted, authenticated and performed, others are not. My point is that such selections are not innocent: they confirm an imaginary around poverty that involves the advancement of moral worthy causes in accordance with development and tourism requisites.

In contrast to the shallow well, the television hut in Canhane is an initiative of a 'local community' member. It characterizes 'community development' through a self-entrepreneurship initiative without any support from development organizations and tourism; which means that it does not have the potential to link tourists and development intervention with social betterment in the village; therefore, it is kept out of the tourism experience.

Through the agency of using tourism to project, in the resident's words, 'Canhane's poverty', the subject-position of the Canhaners resides in emphasizing their poverty condition and, in turn, the potentialities to solve it. Their discourse of poverty is informed by a reflexive, self-validating quality in accordance with a 'higher order' that induces such a condition as a market opportunity: a form of social self-positioning in neoliberalism and non-governmentalism. However, this leads to a further set of problems. First, it reproduces orientalism (Said 1978) that serves to essentialize their status and to subordinate them to a transcendent politics of domination. Second, while it gives hope for inclusion in wider socio-economic systems, by adopting processes of representation that others them, they become reduced to products and specialized (re)producers of imaginaries. Although refusing to embark on theoretical visions that conceptualize cultures as isolated entities rather than as phenomena of interconnection, we might contextualize Canhaners' subjugated status as of those, as Mia Couto put it, 'who look to a mirror that was invented by others' (Zanini 2008: 30). Third, as in every specialized system of production or niche market, the Canhaners emerge to the world as dependants of consumers' wishes and development visions. More problematic, however, the rationale behind their (new) dependency is extrinsic to local systems of reasoning, which increments their vulnerable condition. In the end, Canhaners are being organized, and constituting themselves not only as a market, but also as specialized producers in the development and tourism industries. Moreover, it might be possible to integrate this into a framework that induces colonial and dependency outcomes around an idealized solution to poverty. As addressed by Escobar, the modernization of poverty and the consequent transformation of the poor into the assisted signifies the setting in place of new mechanisms of control over those categorized as poor (1995: 22).

Conclusion

The projection of distinctive landscapes of problems in the 'South' by development organizations and travel agencies produces mapped market opportunities. In this context, the term 'poverty' is reduced to a mere rhetorical underdevelopmental expression that projects a positive moral intention. From the perspective of the travel agencies, the mention of (a) poverty and the promotion of solutions in tourist experience is most often a marketing manoeuvre; a communication approach using moral appeals and 'good' reasons in the market segmentation of tourism industry. Furthermore, such packaging

of (a) poverty meets an emergent social and market tendency in modern society: the ethical consumer. It is in this sense that the tourists-consumers who consciously choose to go to 'community-based' lodges or on 'slum tours', and to consume products in which their money reverts to the betterment of the 'local community' or the 'slum', have come to be referred to as inherent components of development programmes. This is inherently related to their ability to alleviate the poverty of the populations they visit. In particular, within the model of 'community-based tourism', poverty is an ideological concept that empowers the development sector via tourism. Moreover, such a discourse of poverty is appropriated and reproduced, among other things, at the national, regional and local levels as an opportunity.

The way the Canhaners speak about their poverty must be understood within the broader situational context that gives it relevance and meaning. As shown in this chapter, by consciously reproducing the development and tourists' ideas about poverty, many Canhaners reinforce conceptions of themselves as 'the antithesis of modern men or women located in the Northern industrialized world' (Smith and Duffy 2003: 120). By doing so, Canhaners validate and participate in development ideologies and make tourists' visits (and spending) a positive experience for them, while in turn Canhaners strategically hope to favour their own aspirations.

Poverty as a category induced by the development industry has become a 'reality' performed, as an opportunity, within which, and according to which, some people in the developing world live. The appropriation and performance of (a) poverty by some of those categorized as poor, in the context of 'community-based tourism' and 'slum tourism', constitutes an aspiration of inclusion in the neoliberal world, a world dominated by 'the commodification of everything' (Edensor 2001: 79), and, therefore, a world in which the embodiment and consequent commercialization of every matter, as a certain imaginary of poverty and its solution, can mean a chance for membership and interconnection, even under conditions of inequality and dependence. For this reason, the mythical 'local community' and 'slum' are (re)produced, sold, consumed, valued and, by extension, as Freire-Medeiros (2007) suggests in regard to the 'favela', trademarked for their potential poverty eradication through tourism. Finally, performing poverty in tourism emerges as a modern opportunity for the peoples in 'slums' and 'local communities' in the 'South', involving as it does varying degrees of dependencies with supra-local agencies and their dominant systems of knowledge.

Note

- 1 This chapter draws upon ethnography research undertaken by the author in the village of Canhane between January and June 2008, and between September and December 2008. The empirical data produced here also draw on several exploratory trips made to the village of Canhane and other parts of Mozambique in 2006 and 2007. During this earlier period, I was in Mozambique for a total of more

than three months. Briefly put, the methodology included: extended periods of participant observation; semi-structured interviews, most of the time taking the form of informal conversations; and bibliographical analysis and archive research, primarily in Mozambique, South Africa, Portugal and Germany.

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