

# Introduction

## **TOURISM, TOURISTS, AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS AT WORK**

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*The anthropology of tourism is a relatively recent topic area within both academic and applied anthropology, having gotten its start in the 1960s and 1970s. Valene Smith's edited work *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism (1977)* marks the beginning of the field as a serious academic concern. Since then it has grown rapidly. Anthropologists were (and some continue to be) ambivalent about studying tourists, but initially they were concerned with the impact of tourists and tourism on local communities, especially in rural regions. Much of the initial findings suggested that tourism generally had negative impacts on communities that had become tourist destinations. In this volume, the contributing authors were asked to reflect more on the positive and practical contributions of anthropology to the field of tourism studies and to the tourism industry itself. The authors in their various ways have successfully answered their charge. A brief synopsis of the 13 other papers in the volume is given. Key Words: anthropology of tourism, development, tourists, ethnography, applied anthropology*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As an introduction to the topic of tourism impacts mentioned frequently in the pages to come in this *Bulletin*, let me give the reader a flavor of that tourism from my own experience.

It is only 5:00 a.m., and already it is 72 degrees. I am awakened by rustling, squealing, and an occasional thump from the balcony of my Hotel Costa Verde room, near Manuel Antonio National Park on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica.

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I push back the curtains to find a troop of the cutest monkeys I have ever seen scampering back and forth along the balcony's railing. They are squirrel monkeys—an endangered species, I later learn—about two and half feet long from nose to non-prehensile tail tips, with small, fuzzy, brown heads, reddish-yellow hair on their backs, and grey legs. They are jumping from palm tree fronds onto the balcony railing on the way across the hotel building to palm fronds on the other side of the building. Two of them are carrying infants on their backs. My wife hears the noise too and unsteadily rises to join me in our discovery. We happen to have a few bananas left over from yesterday and decide to see if they will take some if we leave them on the railing. One of them on the palm frond looks cautiously at us and when we move back away from the balcony he makes his leap, and scoops up one of the pieces and scampers down the railing. Then another one does the same, and another, and some of the ones that had gone ahead come back for more. They seem relatively unafraid of the curious humans watching them. The recent mothers with infants on their backs are much more cautious and are reluctant to jump from the palm tree to the railing. Eventually, both of them take the plunge but don't stop for bananas. One of the males (we think it is a male) watches them protectively in case we humans do something unexpected. We watch them scamper on their way to other treetops, wondering why they made this amazing visit to our hotel room balcony. As we sit on our mountainside veranda watching the sun rise over Manuel Antonio's misty, white sand beaches, we now understand the reason the Hotel Costa Verde uses monkeys in its logo, which is "Still more monkeys than people," and why U.S. tourists have found this destination a magical one.

We later learn from a local biologist that the Hotel Costa Verde was built in the middle of the trail along which squirrel monkeys and the area's other two monkey species (howlers and white-faced capuchins) move. Thus, the hotel was sited smack in the middle of a traditional feeding area, making the balcony visit by our squirrel monkeys something less than an accident, because the building is in an open, treeless space spanning their tree canopy trail. We also learn from a local wildlife conservation biologist that feeding the monkeys is the worst thing to do, since this trains them to become dependent on tourists and hotel owners for food, which changes their diet (reducing the amount of protein, because they don't have to find as many insects to eat, and increasing the likelihood of tooth decay from bananas and other tourist foods) and makes them less afraid of humans and thus easier to capture. By feeding them we have helped to hasten their extinction!



**FIGURE 1.** Squirrel monkeys being fed bananas.

Later in the day, we walk to the Manuel Antonio National Park itself, originally a United Fruit Company employees' picnic area. Though this is the smallest national park in Costa Rica, with only 683 hectares (1,687 acres), and only about five percent of it is open to the public, it is probably the most popular with tourists. Aside from the postcard-beautiful beaches, it is teeming with exotic wildlife. It seems that the majority of the animals prefer the beach areas, too, where they find plenty of tourists anxious to feed them. To get into the park we have to wade across an inlet (which we later learn is polluted with sewage runoff from local, mostly foreign-owned, hotels, including the Costa Verde, close to the park). At the gated entrance, which is reminiscent of a European grotto, we pay our \$6 fee (payable with U.S. cash, Visa, MasterCard, or Costa Rican *colones*) and get our hands stamped, which allows us to come and go all day long.

For about ten minutes and in sight of the pounding surf, we walk along a narrow trail that lines one of the four beautiful beaches of the park, passing other tourists—most in swimwear, carrying picnic gear. We notice large iguanas basking in the morning sun and hermit crabs, scared by our arrival, lurching suddenly back into their shells. Shower stalls and public restrooms are on the left; on the right, we observe trees gnarled by the ocean breezes and hermit



**FIGURE 2.** Bathers at Beach No. 2 at Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica.

crabs busily scurrying hither and yon. Heavy humidity greets us as we pass in silence. Suddenly, there is some rustling and screeching above us. We look up to find a troop of white-faced capuchin monkeys fighting over some fruit in a tree. Someone in the distance yells in English, “Grab that monkey; it stole my purse!” A guide leads a stunned tour group to find the monkey that stole a bather’s handbag while she sunned herself on a beach towel at the famous Playa No. 1 of the park. We watch the monkeys’ antics before moving on.

A bit farther down the trail, another nature guide who is leading some tourists through the park has his telescope out and is pointing up in another tree. Excitedly we ask in English what have they found, and the U.S. tourists tell us that the guide has spotted a three-toed sloth. They let us look in the telescope and we spy a hairy, cute-faced miniature Sasquatch ever so slowly moving its arms to reach some flowers on a tree branch. We don’t wait for all 25 or so members of the group to look through his imported Swarovski spotting telescope; we move along, wondering what else we will find here. Suddenly we emerge into a wide cove where placid blue water laps at a white-sand beach shaded by palm trees and flanked by volcanic rocks. It seems like *déjà vu*—probably because we have just bought a postcard with the same scene on it at the gift shop near the park’s bus stop. As we set out our towels among the hundreds of other tourists to relax for a while, we look at each other and smile,

silently acknowledging that we sure did make the right decision to spend some quality vacation time together in this wonderful, “natural” setting!

Exotic locales have long been the staple of the received wisdom in anthropological folklore: places where tourists should fear to tread. Costa Rica once might have been such a place. Today, formerly anthropologist-only, exotic, and peripheral four-S (sea, sun, sand, and sex) tourism locales in countries like Indonesia and Costa Rica—the poster child for ecotourism—have become so penetrated by tourism that anthropologists have to study the role of tourism because it is so ubiquitous. I have spent many summers studying the impacts of the four S’s on the Costa Rican society and environment. From what I have seen, the speed at which Costa Rica’s mass tourism has grown has been stunning. By the 1980s it was already the most deforested country in Central America (Evans 1999:39); every day, more forest and swampland is being removed to make room for hotels and vacation homes.

In many of the well-known cultures and societies in which anthropologists have conducted research over the last century, tourism has become one of the main industries. Indeed, it is often said that tourism is the world’s biggest industry, at least in terms of labor and investments.<sup>1</sup> For example, the only export that matters in much of the Caribbean is tourism (Wilkinson 1997:2). In Costa Rica in 2002, there were nearly 1.2 million tourist arrivals—one tourist for every three residents—and the country’s tourism sector accounted for 22 percent of exports (UK Trade and Investment 2005:1).

## **THE GROWTH OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF TOURISM**

As a field of study, the anthropological study of tourism has grown very rapidly since the 1970s and early 1980s when Valene Smith (1977), Malcolm Crick (1985, 1989), Dennison Nash (1977, 1981), Nelson Graburn (1977, 1983) and Erik Cohen (1974, 1979a, 1979b, 1984), among others, first brought this very important phenomenon to the attention of anthropologists. Earlier anthropologists may have been reluctant to investigate this phenomenon because tourism is too close to what anthropologists do themselves when they are in the field (Crick 1995). There may have appeared to be too little difference between travelers’ accounts and anthropological accounts of social and cultural phenomena. Since we anthropologists are professionals by definition, and travelers are not, it was important to distinguish ourselves from mere tourists. Crick (1995:207–208) states that our colleagues are embarrassed to be associated with

tourists, for whom tourism is all about a “ludic” state, as contrasted with anthropologists, who are “serious” researchers studying the native perspective with cultural sensitivity, respect, and diligence. Anthropologists denied that there were tourists who might have as much or more knowledge of local cultures than did anthropologists. To admit this would have been threatening, as it might invalidate the entire anthropological belief system. In short, tourism was off limits as a legitimate area of study until Valene Smith’s book (1977) was published, institutionalizing the terms “host” and “guest” in the anthropology of tourism. Ten years later, when she published a second edition of the book (Smith 1989), the anthropology of tourism was on its way to becoming a more popular and more seriously regarded area of study among anthropologists and their graduate students. By the publication of a third, completely revised edition (Smith 2001), tourism was a regular topic in the paper sessions of most of the discipline-wide professional anthropology meetings (SfAA, AAA, etc.) and it was widely taught in the United States. In fact, the graduate program in applied anthropology at the University of Maryland now has had a tourism track for at least a decade.

## **TOURISM AS A NEGATIVE PHENOMENON**

Anthropologists already have made a mark in the field of tourism studies. Jafar Jafari, an anthropologist and the editor of *Annals of Tourism Research*, the main journal for this very multidisciplinary field (Jafari 2001:34),<sup>2</sup> advises that anthropologists have submitted as much as 15 percent of the accepted manuscripts for it (Jafari 2004, personal communication). Smith (1989[1977], 2001), Edward Bruner (1995, 1996), Malcolm Crick (1985, 1989) and Dennison Nash (1981, 1996), to name only a few, are well known throughout the field of tourism studies, far beyond the confines of the discipline of anthropology. Increasingly, anthropologists who study tourism have gone beyond the classroom and into a varied range of applied settings, bringing their anthropological expertise to complicated, multisited scenarios, as is shown by the case studies presented in many of the articles printed here. But it has taken a while to get to this point.

In the second half of the last century, anthropologists researching and doing fieldwork in towns and villages distant from urban centers were shocked to see “their” communities become tourist destinations. Consumed with concern about how traditional cultures would fare against the arrival of

tourists, unschooled in anthropology, who sought an authentic experience, anthropologists saw this “invasion” as part of an unwanted globalization process. Almost without thought, anthropologists began to study the “impact of tourists and tourism” on local communities. One of the most famous (perhaps notorious) examples of this kind of study was Davydd Greenwood’s article (1989[1977], 2004) on the Alarde ritual in Hondarribia, Spain (see the paper by Douglass and Lacy in this volume). His now oft-quoted study itself had great impact on the focus of what anthropologists began to study in tourism. In a recent postscript to his study, Greenwood (2004:166–167) states that he wrote the article out of concern and anger, and that today he finds himself troubled by his judgments—not because they were wrong, but because the way he “researched and delivered this judgment” was “professionally self-serving.” Furthermore, he writes,

In the Alarde I found what I took to be an almost perfect microcosm of the destruction of all that is culturally good and authentic by the “state” and “world capitalism.” My response was to denounce this from a position of professional authority—as an [ethnographic] “expert” on a . . . place in a way that has long been conventional for anthropologists. [2004:167]

With regard to tourism studies in anthropology, what followed the publication of Greenwood’s article, at least initially, was an investigation of the effects of tourism on native communities, usually under the assumption that tourism had primarily negative effects. In addition, ethnographers felt justified in having no association with tourists and tourism, as it might taint the legitimacy of their own work and diminish their professional academic status. One brief example illustrates. Edward Bruner, a highly respected academic anthropologist who is a frequent contributor to tourism research, wanted to investigate how different populations, genders, and classes travel; and how travel affects them in producing stories, knowledge, and theories about their experiences and observations. To do this, he decided to be an insider, a tour guide to Indonesia for an upscale group of moderately well-educated tourists (see Ingles and Blundell in this volume for other examples of anthropologists as tour guides). Arriving in Bali, he visited a specific temple with which he was familiar and happened upon Hildred Geertz, another well-known ethnographer with long-term research ties to Indonesia. To his chagrin, she was uncomfortable with meeting the tourists he was guiding, and asked to meet him separately after the event. Bruner (1996) concludes from this event and others like it, “To ethnography, tourism is indeed like a poor country, or an illegitimate child

that one chooses not to recognize” (Gmelch 2004:226). The disregard for the seriousness of tourism research among anthropology colleagues is also found among colleagues from related fields in the social sciences and humanities. One year I applied for a research grant to study the role of tourism in Hungary’s transition to a post-socialist economy. The reviewers were colleagues from nine liberal arts departments. The grant application was turned down. The following year I revised the project slightly and submitted it again, this time without “tourism” in the title. It was funded.

Even though the anthropological study of tourism is gradually achieving some grudging recognition among academic colleagues in anthropology and other related disciplines, tourism itself continues to be regarded suspiciously by most. Even among anthropologists who regularly study tourism there continues to be an uneasy ambivalence about the subject. This ambivalence is well reflected in a new, interesting, interpretive ethnography of tourism by Sally Ann Ness based on her work in Davao City, Philippines:

The question [of] whether tourism is a nightmare or a godsend or some combination of the two in a given location is not one that currently can be foreseen with any certainty. It depends on an array of circumstances too vast and complex to model in general terms . . . . Regardless of the questions of goodness or evil, however, tourism must be recognized as a subject that brings unique, even vital, insight to the study of contemporary cultural phenomena. [2003:22]

Ness reminds us that tourism is a very complex phenomenon—one that is hard even to describe. Putting a definition on tourism is somewhat akin to the problems evoked by cultural anthropologists trying to define “culture.” There is certainly a question of boundary regarding who is a tourist when, where, and how (when engaged in what kinds of activities). For example, a pilgrim visiting the Lourdes shrine seeking a cure is simultaneously a pilgrim and a tourist, as is the Mecca hajj visitor. Both Mecca and Lourdes have developed facilities for those visitors, and though the nature of their destinations is quite different, so have Orlando (Disney World) and Anaheim (Disneyland), two of our most important secular “meccas.”<sup>3</sup>

Post-modernist perspectives, too, have been very important in the development of the anthropology of tourism. The works by sociologists Dean MacCannell (1976, 1989), John Urry (1990) and anthropologists Clifford (1997) and Castañeda (1996) are evidence of researchers becoming much more concerned about the “tourist superorganic” (a kind of tourist culture whose specifics are shaped both by the travelers tourists meet and by the cultures tourists have



left behind) and the effect of a socially organized, systematized tourist gaze that patterns the relationships among the tourists and the toured (Urry 1990:1).

Regardless of their theoretical perspectives, anthropologists have always had strong concerns with tourists and their effect on small native communities. The famous film *Cannibal Tours* (1987) by Dennis O'Rourke is frequently cited by anthropologists as an example of how tourists have negative effects on native peoples. O'Rourke himself writes:

I like to think of *Cannibal Tours* not so much as a film about the negative effect of mass tourism on fragile cultures, which should be obvious to everybody; but more as a philosophical meditation set in the milieu of this kind of tourism. The film is much more about the whole notion of the "the primitive" and "the other," the fascination with primitivism in Western culture and the wrong-headed nostalgia for the innocence of Eden. [1999:8]

The underlying assumption is that tourism is bad and that it has negative effects for local communities. A new book by Donald Reid on tourism and development begins with a definitive statement that "Tourism is a dynamic force homogenizing societies and commodifying cultures across the globe" (2003:1) and refers to tourism as a "cancer" (6). Reid also notes that as a form of community development, despite its promise of bringing major economic benefits, tourism in fact brings an uneven development package, with developers and outside entrepreneurs garnering most of the benefits and leaving the local people to bear the cost of development without adequate rewards.

Thus, tourism, seen from the vantage of social scientists like Reid (following Greenwood's 1977 perspective) is doubly cursed. Such scholars believe that tourism does not provide real benefits to local people, that it has a detrimental transformative role in changing local socioeconomic relationships, and that it also destroys local cultural practices and artifacts by converting them into commodities that can be bought and sold.

## **THE FOCUS OF THIS VOLUME**

Academic anthropologists are more attracted to this negative perspective than to one that suggests, as I believe, that tourism is one of many change factors and thus is neither good nor bad but must be recognized for its role as one of the world's largest and most global "industries." In any event, as we have seen above, there are multiple reasons why the negative view of tourism has prevailed

among anthropologists. The authors in this issue of the *NAPA Bulletin*, however, reflect a more nuanced view of tourism, one in which tourism is seen as one kind of strategy for change that can have both positive and negative consequences. They also demonstrate ways in which anthropologists can contribute to neutralizing the negative aspects of tourism development projects without losing their wariness over the potential for harm that unrestrained tourism can cause, especially in smaller communities. The authors were specifically asked to find examples from their own work in tourism, illustrating ways in which anthropologists might provide effective and ethically appropriate input into tourism project development. They were also asked to reflect on the impacts their work has had in local communities.

The authors have responded with an extensive examination of issues, ideas, and specific cases from their experience as applied anthropologists working in tourism and with stakeholders (tourism entrepreneurs, travel agency owners, hotel personnel, owners, managers, developers, workers, local community members, etc.). Some of the papers illustrate ways in which the potential for negative impacts can be reduced, while others provide examples of how applied anthropologists working in tourism can assist local communities or help tourists enhance their experience while encouraging sustainable tourism practices. Instead of the usual Sturm und Drang about tourism, what we find in these papers is a different, less impact-focused take on:

1. How anthropology provides context and helps clarify the sometimes different meanings the various stakeholders in tourism assign to the same situation;
2. How the potential roles for applied anthropologists—as researchers, analysts, consultants, advocates, and even as tour guides—vary depending on a context involving multiple actors with differing world views within an ambiguously defined applied setting; and,
3. How universities and academia-based applied anthropologists are often able to leverage huge amounts of resources in the form of human and social capital, sometimes converting this capital into sustained, real-world, tangible resources for the benefit of local communities involved in tourism.

In this *NAPA Bulletin*, we see applied anthropologists putting anthropological concepts and ideas to use in tourism, not only from the perspective of the local community members—as we would expect anthropologists to do—but also from the perspectives of tourists and tour guides, of travel agents and community planners. Tourism, in the view of the contributors, is a very important,

common, human phenomenon that needs to be understood in all its complexity. By bringing theory and practice together, a praxis is possible that assists the development of a formal study of tourism and helps tourists—and the people who live and work with tourism—to better understand and control the changes that are connected with the growth of the industry.

## **TOURISM IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE**

This issue of the *NAPA Bulletin* is divided into three sections. The first section concerns the connections between the anthropology of tourism and its practice. The papers here discuss topics of ethics, theory, fieldwork, conservation, ecotourism, archaeology, and the basic elements of “responsible tourism.” The second section presents a set of papers dealing with case studies from applied anthropologists who worked in the development of tourism projects. Here we read about anthropologists as consultants, teachers, internship advisors, project researchers, analysts, community development workers, and brokers between NGOs or private enterprises and the community. The issues and themes discussed in the first section—ethical dilemmas, methodological approaches, examining and evaluating project impacts, and the nature of praxis—are exemplified in the work of these authors. The papers in the third section treat the anthropologist as an actor within the tourism sector, primarily as a tour guide or travel agent. The line between anthropologist and tourist begins to blur here, yet it is important to see how anthropology can be applied directly to the tourism industry. In addition, one of the papers provides concrete information about where the jobs in the tourism industry may be found. Now let us turn to the first section and briefly review what lies ahead of the reader.

### **Tourism as Praxis**

This section forces us to take a close look at how anthropological theory and practice (*praxis*) converge in providing important theoretical and practical insights from the study of tourism and applied work in tourism. The first paper gives us many clues about how the knowledge anthropologists have gained about human behavior can be applied to our own tourism experiences. The author of this paper, Erve Chambers (1997, 2000), is a pioneer in the applied anthropology of tourism and is one of the founders of the tourism track in applied anthropology at the University of Maryland. He believes, as do most

anthropologists, that tourists often behave irresponsibly. In his paper he lays out a series of tips and suggestions that can make us all better, more responsible tourists. We see from his work that he shares the concerns of Deborah McLaren (1998), whose influential work, *Rethinking Tourism and Ecotourism: The Paving of Paradise and What You Can Do to Stop It*, challenges tourists to rethink the way they travel, where they take vacations, and what they do when they reach their destinations. Both Chambers and McLaren strongly believe that tourists must research their destinations very carefully before taking their vacations, especially when traveling abroad in a different culture. They both worry about unrestrained tourism development in ecologically sensitive areas and in places where tourism is out of the control of local communities. Chambers draws upon anthropological concepts to provide straightforward suggestions about how to guide responsible tourists while on vacation. He asks—and answers—the question “Can anthropology actually teach us anything with regard to becoming better tourists?”

In the second paper, Kathleen Adams is concerned about the ethics of tourism-related studies: a concern arising out of the ethical dilemmas of the research process itself. The anthropologist doing research in tourism might find herself being recruited by her informants; collaborating with local governments, community leaders, business officials, and others to provide a legitimized version of heritage-related events, artifacts, or performances; or even be asked to help promote specific tourist venues in the locality of her research. This presents an ethical dilemma for anthropologists, Adams says, and the refusal to cooperate could produce “unanticipated reverberations.”

Adams cites Edward Bruner (1995), who recounts his participant-observation research methodology and experience as a tour guide in Indonesia. In Bruner’s article, he is conflicted about his role as interpreter and arbiter of authentic Balinese and Indonesian art and cultural performances. He asks whether he is a closet tourist playing at ethnography or a closet ethnographer working at tourism (Bruner 1995:231). Bruner (1996) is also shocked to find the extent to which anthropological research by earlier researchers—such as Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, among others—has influenced the both the art and the practice of art and dance in Bali:

The gifted group of intellectuals and artists who lived in Bali in the 1930s, including Spies, Covarrubias, Belo, McPhee, Bateson, and Mead, were captivated with the barong [a dance form involving trance] and, in collaboration with the Balinese, commissioned new forms of the barong dance. The famous Bateson-Mead film, *Trance and Dance in Bali*, which is usually regarded as an

early photographic record of a Balinese ritual, was actually a film of a tourist performance for foreigners commissioned and paid for by Bateson and Mead . . . [The barong ritual filmed by Bateson and Mead was not ancient but had fairly recently been created during the period of their fieldwork, and the story performed had been changed from the Calon Arang to the Kunti Sraya, a less dangerous form. The Kunti Sraya barong dance, after various transformations since the 1930s, is still performed for tourists to this day. Further, for the film, Bateson and Mead changed the dance by having women rather than men hold krisses, and they commissioned the dance during the day, when the light was good for photography, rather than having the performance in the evening.] [Gmelch 2004:227–228]

While Bruner notes the unwitting, uncomfortable role of ethnographers in affecting the course of tourism development, archaeologists have sometimes been willful promoters of tourism development and sometimes woeful about what has happened to key archaeological sites overrun by tourists. The tourism dilemma for archaeologists, too, can be great. Archaeologists are key players in interpreting historically significant but fragile archaeological sites and reconstructions while protecting the location's integrity and reducing the impact of the tourist "footprint." In her article on archaeological tourism in Mexico's Yucatan, Cameron Walker describes the importance of tourism both for and in archaeological research, interpretation, and reconstruction. Some of the major funding for archaeological research comes from governments and NGOs that see reconstruction of ancient sites and pyramids such as those in the "Mundo Maya" region of Yucatan and Central America as intimately connected with tourism (cf. Ford 1997; Buettner 2003). Archaeologists face the same kinds of ethical and moral choices as cultural anthropologists in determining when, in what manner, and under what conditions it is appropriate to provide their expertise to projects that may become tourist attractions. While funding for tourism may promote important archaeological research, the commitment to reconstruction of a site for tourist visits may lead to rapid deterioration of key heritage sites by attracting excessive numbers of curious vacationers. Take for example the Late Horizon Inca site of Machu Picchu, Peru's number-one tourist destination. Machu Picchu is one of the most awe-inspiring, ancient destinations in the Western Hemisphere, but overrun by tourists.<sup>4</sup> MSNBC News recently ran a headline entitled, "Tourist glut threatens Machu Picchu: UNESCO calls for drastic reduction in number of visits" (MSNBC News 2003). Each day more than 1,500 people trek the ancient Inca Trail to the ruins, and another 4,000 tourists arrive by train and walk the walls and paths of the site. The daily impact of such numbers is taking a heavy toll. Compare this

to the few hundred people who continuously inhabited Machu Picchu in the 16th century. What ethical responsibilities do archaeologists have to protect the site from further deterioration, and how should they respond to governmental pressure to keep it completely accessible to tourists? Walker frames this debate in her paper and shows that archaeological research at the service of the tourism industry is both a responsibility and dilemma for the archaeologist.

Another key area of responsibility and dilemma for anthropologists relates to ensuring that communities participate in the decisions involving tourism and tourists. Applied anthropologists have long held the belief that no applied project can succeed, or should succeed, without some community input. In an article based on her research in the Bay Islands of Honduras (cf. Stonich 2000), Susan Stonich discusses the difficulties of achieving community-appropriate projects in ecotourism, especially since much of the current work in ecotourism is intimately bound up with conservationism. Stonich points out that conservation NGOs often have money to spend but do not want to spend it on humans. Conservationists mainly are interested in biological and ecological issues and often see local people as obstacles to their conservation strategies. American conservationists seem to prefer what Donald Brockington (2001) refers to as the “fortress conservation” model (Igoe 2004:69). By this, Brockington means a model in which the area to be conserved is treated as an exclusion zone—one in which native, non-human life is protected while humans are kept beyond the perimeter of the protected area.

Clearly, anthropologists are among the most outspoken on the side of allowing local residents to have an important role in deciding how their cultural and material resources are to be employed—and whether any of these resources should be used for tourism development. This is especially critical in areas where ecology and nature are the main elements that attract tourists. Ecotourism is seen as a way to protect fragile ecosystems while providing some economic benefit to local communities (Honey 1999), yet the promised benefits have not been as great as expected (McLaren 1998:101; Honey 1999:85). In fact, the term *ecotourism* has been taken over by large tourism companies promoting “alternative tourism,” which is merely mass tourism with a different label (Wall 1994, 1996). First World tour operators (including hoteliers and travel agencies) are now mining Third and Fourth World localities for new destinations for the Post-Fordist, alternative tourists from the developed countries of the West. A part of the tour operators’ “mining process” is gaining economic and political control over the natural resources of economically poor but environmentally rich communities (cf. Mowforth and Munt 1998). In this way,

locations like Ranomafana National Park in Madagascar—set aside largely for the conservation of lemurs—can be reserved for a few well-heeled, elite tourists and endowment-funded scientific primate researchers. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of local people are fenced out of prime forest land they have foraged for generations, jailed when they harvest firewood or crawfish, and denied promised medical benefits. Sometimes they are deemed undeserving of basic governmental services when their traditional farming or hunting systems do not fit within the conservationists' range of acceptable behavior (Harper 2002).

Stonich's article illustrates the disconnect between the public rhetoric of international environmental organizations and their true intent. Stonich forcefully argues for the necessity of an integrated, community-based conservation and development approach rather than the use of exclusion zones, and she provides key suggestions on how such an approach might be realized. Furthermore, she says, anthropologists can play important roles in identifying the stakeholders and facilitating the mediation process in tourism development projects.

Quetzil Castañeda, in his contribution, attempts to dissect the fabric of ethnography in the anthropology of tourism by separating the threads of research from the threads of application, or, as he says, "understanding the entanglement of the anthropologist and the anthropologies at work during ethnographic investigation." In particular, he explores the consequences of a middle path between application and theory, describing an experimental fieldwork technique he used during his work in Pisté, Mexico, located in the shadow of the famous Post-Classic ruined city of Chichén-Itzá, Yucatan. While studying the toured-tourist relationships among Chichén Itzá-dependent Pisté residents, Castañeda wanted to understand how tourist art is converted into "Art." He thus encouraged the opening of an exhibit of local Pisté artists to see how tourist art production might be converted to developing forms for art collectors. The experimental methodologies he chose had consequences, and he discusses these in his paper. His experimental anthropology falls in the interstices between theory and applied, fitting what Baba (2000:26) defines as *praxis*—a method where theory and application connect.<sup>5</sup> Castañeda wonders about the ethics of his work, and finds himself in situations similar to those discussed by other anthropologists studying tourism, including those who wrote for this *Bulletin*.

### **Applied Anthropologists as Tourism Consultants, Advisors, and Brokers**

The papers in the second section of this volume describe how applied anthropologists have been working in tourism as consultants, researchers,

analysts, and mediators. All of them work with local cities and communities in developing tourism projects, some of which are aimed at heritage tourism while others deal with ecotourism that affects indigenous populations. Heritage tourism and ecotourism are both important, major facets of the modern tourism industry and provide opportunities in which the work of applied anthropologists is especially apt.

As independent consultants working in tourism, anthropologists must deal not only with weighty political issues but with significant ethical issues as well. William Douglass, a renowned Basque scholar writing here with Julie Lacy, became both intrigued and suspicious when he was offered work as a consultant in developing a Basque-heritage theme park in the town of Urnieta, Spain. Since any heritage park would be required to seem “authentically Basque,” Douglass’s involvement would lend authenticity to the project. His enthusiasm for the project was tempered by concern—the angst mentioned in the title of his paper. The mixing of Basque and non-Basque elements might not find favor with traditionalists, especially if the project were to become a Disney-fication of Basque culture.

MacCannell (1989[1976]) was one of the first authors in the field to write specifically about the problem of understanding what *authenticity* means in modern tourism. MacCannell (1989:95) suggests that the search for a travel experience with “the Other” (non-home) is important to many tourists escaping from the pressures of their daily routine. With travel, they can break out of the routine and experience a “real” (but largely imagined) life and let their “inner children” escape from the confines of normal social strictures. Sometimes tourists are satisfied with an almost authentic experience, what MacCannell calls “staged authenticity” (1989:98). This staged authenticity is different from what Boorstin (1961:99) calls “pseudo-events” (MacCannell 1989:103),<sup>6</sup> which are activities or events reflecting the flavor of local culture but in which the natives are quarantined from the tourists, who are thus able to view things in the comfort to which they are accustomed at home.

Douglass and Lacy, like all the anthropologists who write in this issue, are very concerned about the representation of native culture, the tourist gaze, and whether they might inadvertently contribute to the organization of a tourist gaze that would negatively impact the toured. They teach us that much must be considered before undertaking a consulting role in tourism development.

One person who seems to have successfully learned this lesson is Mary LaLone. In her paper, she describes a technique she calls “anthro-planning” that systematically assists Appalachian communities in planning and designing their





**FIGURE 3.** Civil War heritage re-enactment at Ft. Macon, North Carolina.

own local heritage tourism sites. Several years ago, LaLone organized a group of applied anthropology students at Radford University in western Virginia into a research and planning consulting group. The students were to work with a small Appalachian community that had requested assistance in capturing some of the local tourism, develop plans for showcasing appropriate tourism sites, and suggest ways to exhibit traditional mountain culture. LaLone was so successful that she has been frequently sought out by both communities and regional governmental planning authorities to repeat her successful “anthro-planning approach to local heritage tourism” in new communities. In her article, she provides a simple model that other industrious applied anthropologists could employ with their students, either as a group, class project, or internship. She also gives some wonderful ideas about how to effectively incorporate applied tourism research into our teaching and internships. Her status as a university professor enables her to marshal considerable resources for the communities in her work.

Another participatory “anthro-planning” model for heritage tourism emerges from the work of Amanda Mason, trained in applied anthropology at the University of Maryland, who discusses aspects of her employment by the Western Erie Canal Planning Commission. She emphasizes how difficult

but essential it is for anthropologists to convince politicians of the importance of community participatory involvement in developing heritage tourism projects. In fact, the ethnographic research and analysis components of the job appear to be the easiest parts, while the internal and external politics affecting decision-making are what really challenge the skills of the applied anthropologist working in tourism. Mason and her team of ethnographers struggle mightily to provide regional commissioners with the ethnographic data and analysis that will persuade them to become more heavily involved with the local communities in designing tourism projects along the Erie Canal Corridor. Unfortunately, the anthropologists find it very hard to catch the ear of the politicians. Mason shows us how hard it can be to work with local government officials but also how rewarding it can be when the community responds to ethnographic and community-partnership work.

The issue of who decides or leverages the ways in which actual and potential tourism resources are to be used—whether outside researchers, local governments, national and international businesses, or local residents—attracts the attention of many anthropologists working in tourism. The papers in this volume by Amanda Stronza and by Daniela Diamente and myself tackle these issues, albeit with some differences. Both papers deal with issues associated with ecotourism, one of the more controversial types of tourism.

Stronza examines the role of private enterprise in participatory tourism development. Working in Infierno, Madre de Dios, in the southeastern Peruvian Amazon, Stronza studied and played the role of culture broker at an ecotourism destination called Posada Amazonas, a unique partnership between the community of Infierno and the Rainforest Expeditions company. As part of the arrangement, the company would lease Infierno land for 20 years, employ and train local community members, and, at the end of that time, turn the infrastructure over to the community, who would then become the owners.<sup>7</sup> Stronza facilitated the cross-cultural communication between the foreign company and the local community. She was able to alert both sides to the needs and problems presented by the collaboration. Who was to participate in the collaboration, and how, was not clear in the initial contract, but Stronza, in her role as both researcher and broker, was able to assist both sides in grappling with the meaning and practice of *participation*. She also helped to clarify and promote the role of local culture during the evolution of the project. The gradual unfolding of her status as a culture broker, standing as it does at the intersection between applied anthropology and theoretical research, highlights one of anthropologists' common experiences when studying tourism: namely,



**FIGURE 4.** Mayan woman selling handcrafts on the shore of Lake Atitlán, Guatemala.

that when it comes to good applied anthropology and tourism, the distance between applied anthropology and theoretical anthropology is very small (see also Castañeda, this volume).

Whereas Stronza worked with a private company and a small number of indigenous communities, the case study by Wallace and Diamente concerns a private conservation NGO, The Nature Conservancy, and its “fortress conservation” approach to protecting the biodiversity of the Lake Atitlán, Guatemala, watershed. Our work also illustrates the way applied anthropologists can mobilize an array of human resources to facilitate the interaction between foreign conservationists and local native communities. Furthermore, it provides another example of how to provide training opportunities for students who wish to work in tourism, either as community-development leaders or as research analysts.

The Nature Conservancy wanted to accomplish its mission by restricting community use in areas its in-house biologists and ecologists had decided were primary, while officially espousing the importance of providing local economic benefits through ecotourism development. The Conservancy faced a difficult task in persuading the tens of thousands of Maya living in the area to be “protected.” The Maya of the region have a close relationship with the local

environment that has evolved over a millennium, and were not easily convinced to change their land-use patterns. Like Stonich, Wallace and Diamente found that the environmental NGO's efforts in ecotourism development were inadequate for the job. Working under the assumption that the Maya could not have been good environmental stewards, The Nature Conservancy prioritized funding for wildlife biologists whose work would document how local Maya cultural and economic practices had had negative impacts on the environment. The biologists' diagnostic studies were to be used to arrive at the next stage of project: establishing biological exclusion zones—euphemistically called municipal parks—to deploy a “site conservation plan.” No significant funding was provided for community-building, collaborative conservation and ecotourism partnerships. This paper illustrates the necessity of having social scientists—especially anthropologists—involved in ecotourism development ventures, interfacing with both the project developers and members of the local community to ensure that they participate fully in the planning process. Community participation can ensure that conservationists do not neglect local indigenous preferences and wisdom in their sometimes unwisely conceived projects (Chapin 2004:18).

### **Anthropologists, Tour Guides, and Travel Agencies**

Conservation and ecotourism is also one of the themes in the paper by Palma Ingles. Ingles' paper starts the final section of *NAPA Bulletin 23*, which consists of three papers that focus on anthropologists as tour guides. Like Bruner, who was mentioned above, Ingles has spent several summers working as a tour guide on boat tours of the Peruvian Amazon. In this capacity she was able to see how tourism works from both tourists' and local indigenous communities' perspectives. In this blurring of tourist, tour guide, and anthropologist, Ingles argues that anthropologists should be more frequently involved in guiding tours like the one Bruner led. Ingles has reported elsewhere (2000, 2001) on her research into tourism's largely positive impacts on communities she studied in the Peruvian Amazon. Not only does she support the role of anthropologists as researchers and consultants in tourism research; like Valene Smith (see this volume), she also believes there are many such jobs appropriate for anthropologists who wish to work in tourism. As anthropologists help tour companies and tourists reduce unwanted impacts and better understand local customs, the benefits of their work will accrue for both local residents and fragile environments. Ingles is unconcerned about the blurring of the line between

researcher and applied anthropologist because she believes the presence of the anthropologist in tourism has far more positive than negative consequences for tourist and native resident alike.

In contrast to Ingles, who was an employee of a tour company, David Blundell has designed his own tour program. His article describes a very unique case in which he, as an anthropologist, was in the vanguard of designing and conducting tour programs that attempt to break down the stereotypes produced by the tourist gaze. His “traveling seminars” bring together the tourists and the toured and focus on sustainable ecotourism that raises tourists’ awareness of their environment and the people who live in it. His work follows McLaren’s (1998:131) suggestion to encourage development of and participation in alternative tourist programs that revolve around a cultural exchange between the traveler and the indigenous peoples who are visited. Blundell’s program is very interesting for several reasons: (1) it encourages a dialogue between urban tourists and rural indigenous peoples; (2) it emphasizes the role of the tourist in protecting the environment; and (3) it is designed, organized, and led by anthropological concepts. In other words, it puts into practice most of the “tips” that Chambers offers in his paper.

In the final article in this *Bulletin*, Valene Smith—one of the pioneers of anthropology of tourism studies and a longtime travel agency owner—explains why it is important for anthropologists to work in and with the tourism industry. She argues that anthropologists’ involvement in tourism would greatly benefit the United States, which has not done enough to capture the large international tourism market and that, since the events of September 11, 2001, has actually made it harder and less comfortable for foreign tourists to visit. Smith has suggested in another context (personal communication) that more tourism with the United States as a destination would go a long way toward improving our balance of payments. One reason tourism is not as economically potent at home as it could be, she claims, is that the United States has very few trained guides and limited tourist packages for destinations that are off the beaten path—places where foreign tourists might observe “real Americans.” Furthermore, the United States devotes relatively little money to promoting itself as a tourist destination. Smith believes that students with baccalaureate and advanced anthropology degrees could fill some of the tour guide positions, work in travel agencies, and design tour programs that would be better suited for foreign tourists and for the communities that receive them. Smith also gives examples of job training and employment opportunities for anthropologists

in the tourism field, and describes cases in which anthropologists have worked to develop tour packages for local indigenous communities.

## CONCLUSION

Anthropologists can no longer avoid the study of tourism. Tourism is a major factor in bringing change, at home and around the world. Some communities hunger for tourism because they see it as a mechanism by which to formulate, clarify, or validate their cultural identity (through heritage tourism, for example) and bring an economic return to their area. Others, though, experience the darker side of tourism: inflation, crime, drugs, changes in local values and mores, and disruption of the social order, to name a few negative impacts. Tourism also affects tourists themselves. Not only do they “recharge their batteries” but they also learn many things about other communities and other cultures. Sometimes they bring these new ideas and perspectives home and try them out. (Sushi anyone?)

We anthropologists have a better sense of tourism’s impacts on local communities, but we have very little theoretical certainty about tourism’s effects on tourists themselves and the communities to which they return. In many ways, tourism is like a slate on which many different stories can be written. Tourism is neither inherently good nor inherently bad; rather, it is neutral. The problems with tourism come from how it is employed within specific contexts. Anthropologists can bring a great deal to this field. They know how cultures and systems work; they understand that communities and regions offer multiple interpretations of the “correct” way to represent heritage or to produce a tourist attraction; and they know that ideas and behaviors are broadly diffused as both intended and unintended consequences of contact across communities, societies, and cultures. Furthermore, not only can anthropologists provide culturally appropriate guidelines for ethical and responsible tourists and tourism, but they are well situated to assist local people in the decision-making process so communities can together produce, organize, and control tourist activities.

The applied anthropologists writing in this *NAPA Bulletin* share why it is crucial for anthropologists to be involved in tourism and how their applied work simultaneously contributes to theory and practice. As indicated above, anthropologists—applied or not, knowingly or unwittingly—have influenced the development of tourism and can have positive effects on it. Some would say that anthropologists *are* tourists, though most of us would quickly deny that. We cannot deny, though, that we are affected by our travels. The papers

presented here are not only about tourism and what anthropologists contribute to it—theoretically and applied—but also what happens to them in the process of working in it. Not only do anthropologists affect tourism; tourism also affects them. The distance between theory and practice—praxis—is as long as your next vacation or as short as your next research project involving travel.

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## NOTES

1. In much of the relevant literature, tourism is referred to as an industry, although some would argue that the term should be reserved for the manufacturing sector. In *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, an industry can be “any large-scale business activity.”

2. The main researchers in the study of tourism come mainly from the following disciplines: anthropology, economics, geography, history, management science, politics, psychology, regional planning, and sociology.

3. I recently asked one of my anthropology classes how many of them had visited Disneyland or Disney World. Approximately three-quarters of the class had been to either theme park at least once, and one had even worked there!

4. Machu Picchu was rediscovered for Westerners in 1911 by Hiram Bingham, who eventually became a U.S. Senator from Nebraska. Originally thought to be the last city occupied by the Inca resistance to Spanish imperialism, it is now believed to have been a summer residence for the Inca and his court (Thomson 2001:74). I studied in Peru in the mid-1960s and even then Machu Picchu was Peru's major tourist destination.

5. Marietta Baba (2000:26) writes, “Praxis in applied anthropology is a way of knowing that relies on engagement in social reality, on being embedded in the processes of social life. Praxis, is, in part, subjective since the practitioner is not a spectator but an actor. The practitioner is engaged in complex interactions with social reality, as it is lived ‘on the ground.’”

6. According to historian Daniel Boorstin (1961:99), “pseudo-events” are “an elaborately contrived indirect experience, an artificial product to be consumed in the very places where the real thing is as free as air. They are ways for the traveler to remain out of contact with foreign peoples in the very act of ‘sightseeing’ them. They keep the natives in quarantine while the tourist in air-conditioned comfort views them through a picture window. They are cultural mirages now found at tourist oases everywhere” (MacCannell 1989:103).

7. Searching for “Rainforest Expeditions” using Google will reveal a huge number of sites that mention the now-finished Posada Amazonas, the Peru destination that Amanda Stronza writes about. For an interesting contrast with *Infierno* and Rainforest Expeditions, see the film *Cashing in on Culture: Indigenous Communities and Tourism*, 29 minutes (Harrison 2002). This film examines an ecotourism project in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

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