

Non conventional tourism forms

A critical approach

Valeria Pecorelli
Chiara Rabbiosi

Palma de Mallorca
7 - 8 November 2013

Something about us

Valeria Pecorelli, Ph.D. in Geography

Research Fellow at the University of Milan-Bicocca , Sociology dept.

- ✓ political and cultural geography, radical social movements, resistance, fair trade, post colonialism, development, Global South, sustainable and non conventional/alternative tourism.

Chiara Rabbiosi, Ph.D. in Urban and Local European studies

Research Fellow at the University of Bologna (Rimini Campus) Quality of Life dept.

- ✓ space and the social sciences, economy and culture, consumption, capitalism critique, “dual genre” in urban policies, mass and alternative tourism dialectics, post socialist tourism cultures.

Aim of our talk & contents

1. What's in a term? Problematizing NCT
2. NCT: common understanding of the term and overview of experiences
3. Focus on a few case-studies
4. Macro or micro solutions?
5. Limits and contradictions
6. Research challenges

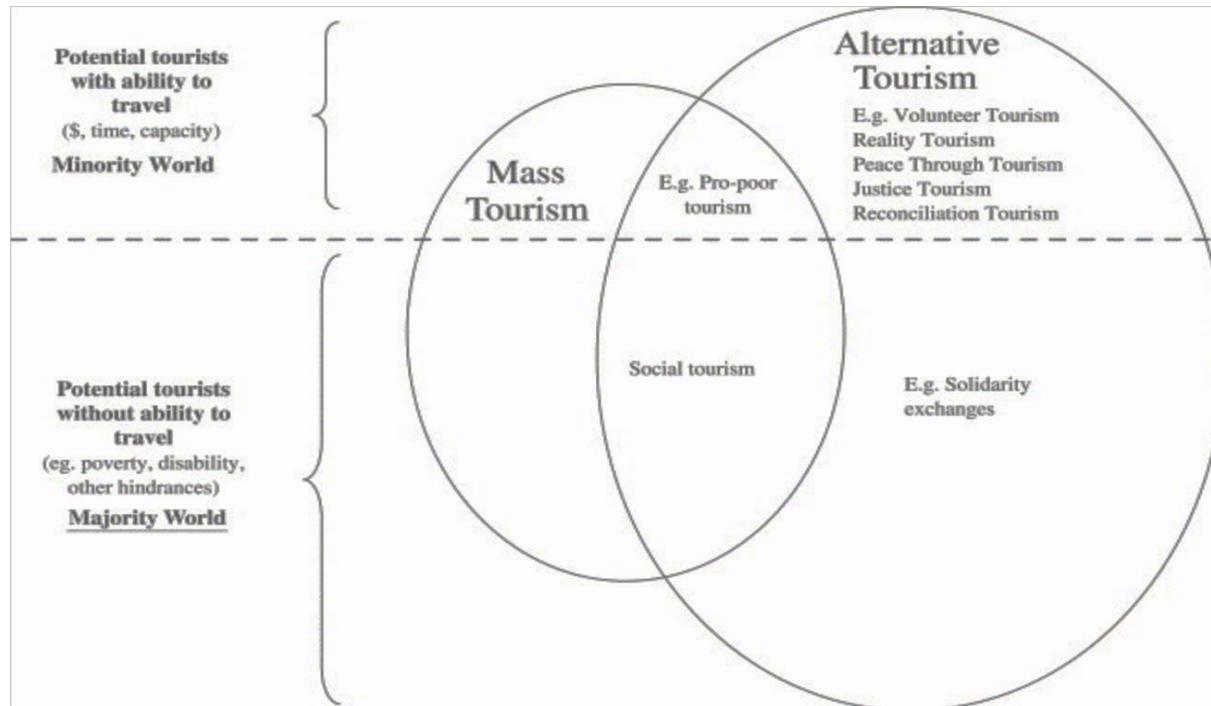
Problematizing Non Conventional Tourism

Forms of tourism that:

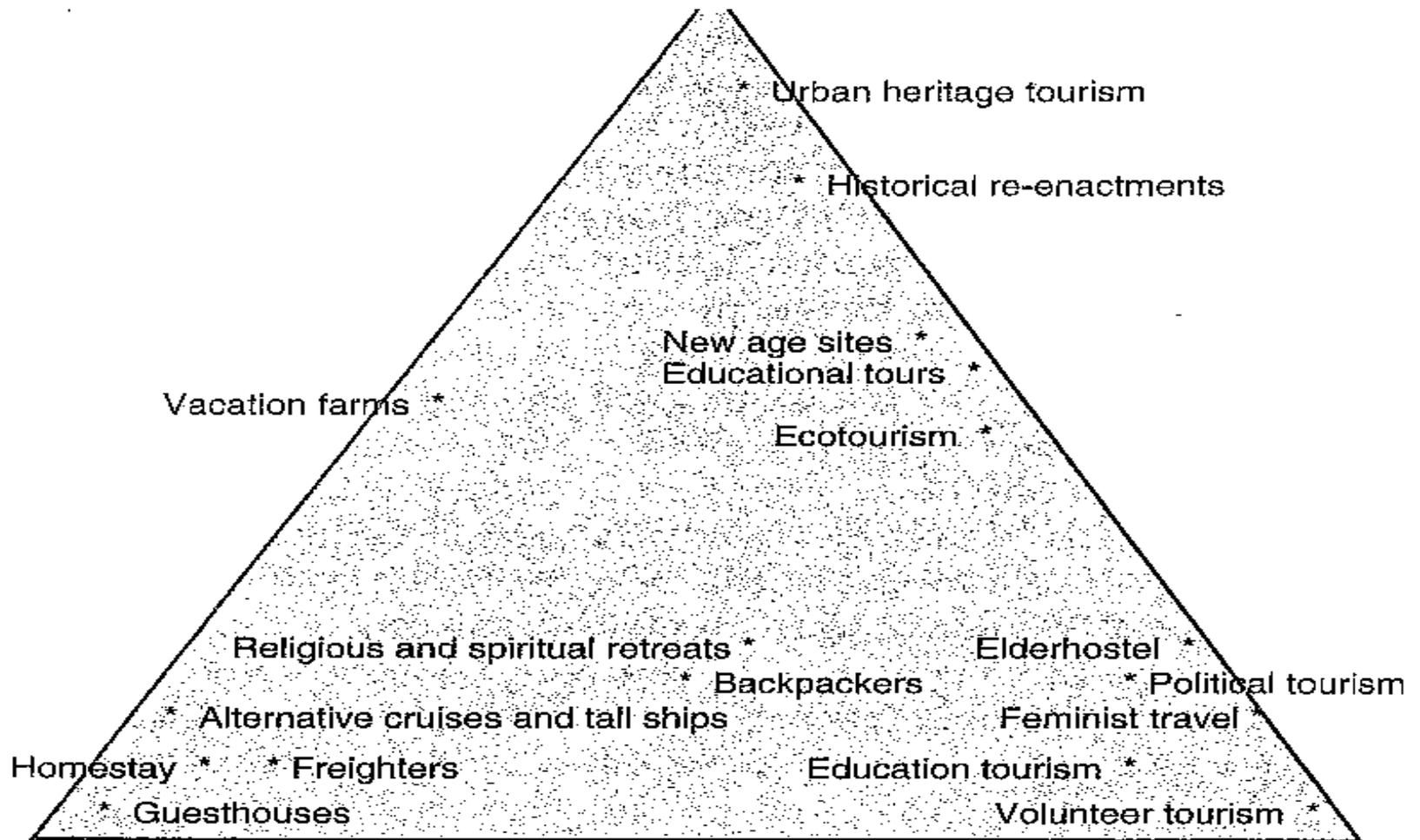
- are more socially and environmentally beneficial to local communities than others forms of tourism
- include and promote a critique to mass/traditional/standard/large scale forms of tourism
- represent alternative pathways to what we may call capitalist tourism

✓ Somehow an “uncomfortable” term...

Problematizing Non Conventional Tourism



It is an umbrella term sometimes used as synonym for sustainable, ethical, eco, responsible, reality, political volunteer, justice tourism.



Problematizing Non Conventional Tourism

More recently the term “tourism-off-the beaten-track” entered literature to pinpoint for:

- ✓ sub/peri-urban tourism
- ✓ creative tourism
- ✓ participative tourism
- ✓ slow tourism
- ✓ tourism of the everyday

Problematizing Non Conventional Tourism

- Mailand and Newman (2009) – but not capitalism critique

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, IREST/EIREST

Université Paris III

Université Paris Est (UPEM et IFSTAR, laboratoires ACP, Lab'Urba, LIAT, LVMT)



ASTRES

4th International Conference of the association ASTRES

(Research and Higher Education in Tourism)



– May 21st to 23rd 2014 Paris

Paris and Ile de France

TOURISM OFF THE BEATEN TRACK:

BACK, INTERSTICE TERRITORIES

The growth of tourist practices and products defined as alternatives has contributed to the emergence of new tourist forms. Over the past decades, mass tourism has been largely questioned by a more diverse, fragmented and individualized offer. Tourism is being definitely impacted by metropolization, globalization and the hybridization of tastes. The focus is now on the everyday, the fact of life, on contextualizing the holiday stay and on social interactions.

These new practices which are shaping new relations between centres and peripheries are known as sub/peri-urban tourism, creative tourism, participative tourism, slow tourism, tourism of the everyday.

The conference will investigate the tourist practices and branches emerging off the beaten track and generating new tourist territories derived from backstage, interstice and peripheral areas.

Far from opposing mainstream tourism to a more selective form of tourism, the aim of the conference is to apprehend how the new tourist territories, practices, products and temporalities are building up from interstitial spaces and backstage practices.

The emergence and dissemination of tourist innovations born from the practices of « pioneering » tourists and creative players or from the introduction of alternative products will also be addressed.

- Novy and Colomb (2013) – relationship with the ‘just city’
- Already coopted by the tourism industry?

Focus on a few case studies

- ✓ Dr. Pecorelli: political tourism in Chiapas, Mexico
- ✓ Dr. Rabbiosi: tourism off-the-beaten tracks in Paris, France

Political tourism in Chiapas, Mexico

Mexico is commonly represented by tourism brochures:



- Magic Mexico, Mexico Express, Mexico y Libertad
- Tequila, Tacos and ancient temples
- A mix of authentic indigenous traditions and flourishing nature
- Colourful buildings, blue wide sky, white sand, green jungles, black eyes of the indigenous smiling children

Zapa-Tourism in Chiapas, Mexico



- Zapatista uprising has become an opportunity to develop tourism in Chiapas (Coronado, 2008)
- The zapatista movement has been incorporated in the local tourists offer producing Zapatourism
- “mud, sweat and radical chic” Chiapas as a “fashionable” stop on the “international leftist travel circuit” (Preston, New York Times, 1996)

- Zapa-tourists are attracted by the Zapatista rebellion places and meet the Zapatista performance through symbols, images and gadgets
‘revolution is in the air
- Search of the romance and rebellion by the ‘mysterious’ masked members of the EZLN
- The Zapatista Chiapas is often another attractions on top of others in the journey

Performing revolution?



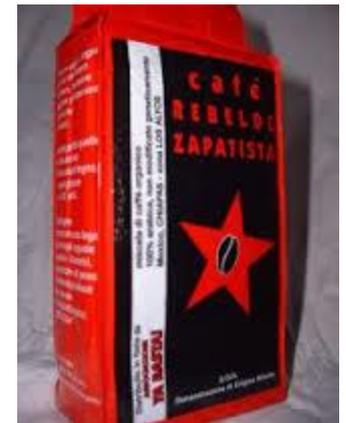
Political tourism is a form of justice-volunteer tourism

(Scheyens, 2001)

Political tourist:

- actively involved in the Zapatista cause and critique to capitalism there and here doing/taking part 'Zapatismo at home' as forms of political activism
- works -shoulder to shoulder- with and for the Zapatista cause in the communities, living and respecting rules, times and customs of the locals
- learns and practices alternative political principles of autonomy and mutual solidarity
- needs political credentials by associations 'trusted' by the Zapatistas (eg Ya Basta in Italy-www.yabastamilano.it)
- is trained by political subjects* in Europe in political solidarity, zapatista principles, behaviours to be held in Mexico and in the autonomous communities.

Taking part to a piece of revolution?



Tourism off-the-beaten-track in metropolitan Paris, France

- ✓ A “world tourist city” where heritage and commercial tourism have traditionally met tourism-off-the-beaten-track ”
- ✓ Urban Paris as an hyper-tourist centre – especially certain roads and neighbourhoods
 - In these neighbourhoods, tourists patron local shops, cultural venues, restaurants and cafés, they have increasingly been perceived as a source of nuisance (e.g. litter, overcrowding and noise).
 - Conflicts among populations
- ✓ The urban fringes (in/outside the city) have for long being portrayed as shabby, poor, dangerous and distant. The role of *peripherique* in marking the urban city and the suburbs is perceived and practiced as limit, not as a border
 - Representation conflicts; local development; space/place conflicts

Tourism off-the-beaten-track in metropolitan Paris, France

Main actors:

✓ Tourist individual

“creative class” trips / temporary staying to former workers neighbourhood, use of non-classical tourist facilities

✓ Specialised tour operators

develop “alternative itineraries”, propose “unknown locations”, mediate between tourists and b&b, artisans, etc.

✓ Civic networks

Tourists meets residents / residents meets tourists based on social work or volunteering

✓ Local administration

Provide support in participatory tourism, mainly by

Tourism off-the-beaten-track in metropolitan Paris, France

✓ Civic networks

Tourists meets residents / residents meets tourists



The screenshot shows the website for 'Parisien d'Un Jour', a service provided by the 'global greeter network'. The website features a navigation menu with links for 'Accueil', 'Envie d'une balade ?', 'Livre d'or', 'Vos dons', 'Votre séjour', and 'GGN members'. Below the navigation menu, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email. The main content area is titled 'Venez en visiteur, partez en ami...' and contains text describing the service: 'Un séjour à Paris hors des centres touristiques, c'est le moment de rencontrer un Parisien bénévole, un Greeter. Lors d'une balade gratuite en petit groupe de 1 à 6 personnes, votre flânerie vous mènera à la découverte d'un autre Paris, celui que nous aimons et que nous souhaitons vous faire connaître et partager. Nos quartiers de balades s'étendent sur tout le réseau du métropolitain : Paris intra-muros et communes périphériques desservies directement par le métro. La vie quotidienne d'un Parisien n'aura plus de secret pour vous.' A green button labeled 'Rencontrez un Greeter' is positioned at the bottom of the text. To the left of the text is a photograph of a group of people, including tourists and a local resident, gathered in a Parisian street.

PARISIEN D'UN JOUR

global greeter network

Accueil Envie d'une balade ? Livre d'or Vos dons Votre séjour GGN members

f t ✉

Venez en visiteur, partez en ami...

Un séjour à Paris hors des centres touristiques, c'est le moment de rencontrer un Parisien bénévole, un Greeter.

Lors d'une balade gratuite en petit groupe de 1 à 6 personnes, votre flânerie vous mènera à la découverte d'un autre Paris, celui que nous aimons et que nous souhaitons vous faire connaître et partager.

Nos quartiers de balades s'étendent sur tout le réseau du métropolitain : Paris intra-muros et communes périphériques desservies directement par le métro.

La vie quotidienne d'un Parisien n'aura plus de secret pour vous.

Rencontrez un Greeter

www.parisgreeters.fr (accessed 7 Nov 2013)

Tourism off-the-beaten-track in metropolitan Paris, France

✓ Local administrations

The Municipality of Paris (→ within the *peripherique*) supports both civic networks and tourism operators in the frame of supporting creative tourism and participatory tourism

- a way of renew Paris image (city marketing)
- a way of reduce the conflict between tourists and residents in hyper-tourist neighbourhood and balance the carrying capacity of the tourist city
- a way of redistribute wealth coming from tourism by promoting “deprived” neighbourhood

Tourism off-the-beaten-track in metropolitan Paris, France

✓ Local administrations

Tourisme 93 is Seine St. Denis (→ a famous “banlieu”) tourist agency, promoting both participatory walks

visits to manufacturers and artisans
to housing estate built in the 70s

-a way of feed suburban inhabitants sense of place and belonging (answering a social problem)

-organise local stakeholders

-add tourism to industrial production (in crisis)

-foster regional tourist marketing not to succumb to Paris predominance

www.tourisme93.com to know more

Limits and contradictions of NCT

- Traces of
 - ✓ Neo-colonialism and neo-paternalism (learning the “other” how to solve her problems)
 - ✓ Elitism
 - ✓ Personal empowerment (no macro objective)
 - ✓ Reification of the meaning of participation (performing social bond, temporary involvement – *but not always so*, instrumental to performing authenticity)

Limits and contradictions of NCT

Eg:

- ✓ Local community:
 - Passive?
 - Real encounter?
 - What about the power relationships within the local community?
- ✓ Bodies involvement:
 - Physical accessibility
 - Danger/ Legal Persecution (e.g political tourism)

Limits and contradictions of NCT

- ✓ Risk of reproducing socio-economic, gender, ethnic, physical divides that are at the basis of uneven socio-spatial justice
- ✓ Risk of idealising NCT (researchers, activists) and not critically approaching it

Are there alternatives to capitalism through NCT?

- Macro-solution (Harvey 2005) taking the power, changing the world?
- Micro-tactics (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010) making more possible those anti-capitalist political phenomena that experiment alternative political principles (autonomy and solidarity). These own an “emancipatory potential” (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010) that attempts to launch new possibilities for radical social change despite and beyond the capitalist framework.

Are there alternatives to capitalism through NCT?

Some critical questions:

NCT is really more beneficial or is just a new frontier in the green-economy and recession era? Is it just a way to do virtue out of necessity?

Some very critical points:

✓ Recession: open up to non conventional forms of tourism BUT conventional tourism is still practised.

In addition, mass tourism is actually something unconventional for tourists that just recently gains access to travelling (BRICS)

✓ Commercial tourism and tourism off-the-beaten-track coexist: an ambiguous realm that we call the 'dual *genre*' in contemporary policy making;

A real social and cultural challenge:

Does NCT commodify 'the other' (e.g the poor, the banlieu citizen, the native)?

Does it include an effective critique to mass tourism?

A real research challenge:

-Risk of researchers to be patronizing

-Anti-capitalist non conventional research (ex: activists): a privilege of conventional researchers?

-Pro-capitalist non conventional research (private funded research): sword of samocles for younger, precarious researchers?

References

- Chatterton P, Pickerill J, Everyday activism and transitions towards post-capitalist worlds, [Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers](#), 35(4), 2010
- Themed number of *Espaces*, n° 264, November 2008
- Harvey D, *The new imperialism* .Oxford University Press, 2005
- Maitland R, Newman P , *World Tourism Cities: Developing Tourism Off the Beaten Track*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009
- Novy J, Colomb C., '*New*' Tourism in the '*New*' Berlin? Contemporary trends in tourism and place consumption and their implications for urban scholarship, Paper discussed at AAG 2013, Session Tourist Geography II
- Scheyvens R, *Tourism and Poverty*, New York: Routledge, 2011
- Weaver D, *Sustainable Tourism*, Elsevier, 2006