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World Heritage, tourism and sustainable development in Africa: discourses, approaches and challenges

Patrimonio mundial, turismo y desarrollo sostenible en África: discursos, enfoques y desafíos

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Abstract

This paper analyse the combined role that tourism and heritage, particularly World Heritage, can play in Africa's development, and their relation with the principles and imperatives of sustainable development. This issue needs to be addressed by scalar reasoning, although this approach has intrinsic pitfalls, biases and ideologies. Such a question should therefore be broken down into its implicit or explicit parts before new insights can potentially be proposed. First, it will be necessary to call into question the relationships between tourism and development, heritage and tourism and the supposedly more significant role that World Heritage can play in this tourism-based development. Second, the existence of a possible "African specificity" in the establishment of this three-fold "(world) heritage-tourism-development" relationship must be considered. How do the known or supposed specificities of African heritage and of heritage in Africa play a part ? How do these heritage specificities impact tourism, and in turn create development conditions ? Inversely, how do the tourism specificities in Africa contribute to the emergence of heritage as a development factor ? Finally, the question arises as to whether, in such a context, the social, economic and environmental sustainability of tourism- and heritage-based development can be analyzed.

Keywords: World Heritage, tourism, development, discourses, challenges, Africa.

Resumen

Este trabajo analiza el papel que el turismo y el patrimonio, y más particularmente el patrimonio mundial, pueden jugar conjuntamente en el desarrollo del continente africano, y su relación con los principios, incluidos los más estrictos, del desarrollo sostenible. Responder a esta cuestión implica razonamientos escalares que no están exentos de obstáculos, prejuicios e ideologías; por ello conviene diseccionar el tema en sus componentes, implícitos o explícitos, antes de proponer, eventualmente,

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nuevos enfoques. Responder a esto implica, en efecto, plantear en primer lugar preguntas sobre la relación entre turismo y desarrollo; sobre la relación entre patrimonio y turismo; y sobre el papel (que se supone destacable) que el patrimonio mundial puede desempeñar en este acercamiento al desarrollo a través del turismo. En segundo lugar, esto implica interrogarse por una eventual “especificidad africana” en la construcción de esta triple relación “patrimonio (mundial) – turismo – desarrollo”. ¿Cómo intervienen las especificidades, comprobadas o supuestas, del patrimonio africano y del (o de los) patrimonio(s) en África? ¿Cómo estas especificidades patrimoniales impactan en el turismo, creando en torno suyo las condiciones para el desarrollo? ¿Inversamente, de qué modo las especificidades del turismo en África contribuyen a la aparición de patrimonios generadores de desarrollo? ¿Y por último, es posible analizar, en este contexto, la sostenibilidad social, económica y medioambiental, del desarrollo a través del turismo y el patrimonio?

Palabras claves: Patrimonio mundial, turismo, desarrollo, discursos, desafíos, África.

1. Introducción

We have chosen to approach this subject through World Heritage, rather than through heritage in general, because the trends generally observed around heritage are exacerbated on these sites. Today, World Heritage is an important “sounding board” for heritage policies and their reception. It is central to the major stakes involved: image, local marketing, tourism, etc., in addition to the political and geopolitical stakes, which are important considerations because the logic behind World Heritage also interacts with that of the State (Bourdeau, Gravari-Barbas & Robinson, 2012). Furthermore, this approach enables the stakes to be more clearly placed in a comparative approach with other regions in which UNESCO action plays a catalytic role (Salin, 2002), and enables the approaches to be decompartmentalized by geographic area while considering the circulation of concepts, models, experts and expertise (Istasse, 2011).

In recent years, many works have examined the question of the relationship between World Heritage and tourism or gone further to look at those among heritage, tourism and development. The aforementioned literature review carried out by the authors of the present paper (Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2008), which included an analysis of a corpus of relevant articles, studies and reports, revealed the lack of any direct and unequivocal link between inscription on the World Heritage List and tourism development, and, beyond this, local development (Prud’homme, 2008). It is important to grasp and analyze the conditions which enable development.

The choice of a special edition dedicated to World Heritage in Africa was based on the hypothesis that analyzing African cases can throw new light on tourism-, heritage- and sustainable development-related issues. Consequently, this is not only a “regional” approach, which would be problematic though its continental limitations¹. The kind of heritage in Africa that is inscribed on the World Heritage List leads to specific issues linked to the definition of the nature/culture distribution, or to the colonial origins of many of these sites (Khadi, 2005). Many World Heritage sites are connected to particularly painful periods in history linked with colonialization or slavery. With the sites of both the colonisers and the colonised being made to coexist on the same list, this creates specific issues as regards their tourism presentation, interpretation (Dann, Seaton, 2001) and, more generally, the related narratives on power and domination in a postcolonial context.

This introductory text is organized into four sections. The first section will outline and address the concept of heritage and World Heritage in Africa the second will discuss the relationship between tourism and heritage, particularly World Heritage in Africa; the third will

explore the relationship between tourism and development, with a particular focus on the involvement of local communities and the capacity of tourism and heritage to create empowerment dynamics ; and the fourth will present the crosscutting themes addressed in this edition.

Beyond simply presenting the texts brought together in this special edition, our aim here is to find new ways of looking at the multiple relationship of “heritage, tourism and development” via these territories. We need to ask whether we are dealing with approaches that extend what we know of tourism and heritage based on Northern countries, or if there is evidence of a theoretical “southern turn” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2011). Without becoming bogged down with an aesthetic of a different African heritage or with a supposed pragmatism of tourism reality, the objective is to create “food for thought” that can help us revisit the heritage-tourism relationship paradigm, such as it has been written, since the creation of Western Europe over two centuries ago.

2. World Heritage in Africa: aporias of an imperfect global distribution.

The modern notion of heritage, as has been defined in Western literature over recent decades (Choay, 1992 ; Andrieux, 2011; Harrison, 2013) encompasses a group of selected and rearranged elements enabling societies not only to reconceive and reimagine their past (Ashworth, 2008) but also to represent their present. Far from being the result of neutral and decontextualized approaches and processes, heritage is the fruit of negotiations, selections and renegotiations involving multiple actors in power-based relationships (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). Tourism development as a producer of value-creation processes for artefacts and mentifacts (emotional, historical, symbolical, economic, etc.), obeys diverse dynamics according to its social, spatial and temporal context (Di Giovine, 2009 ; Orbasli, 2007). The historical roots of this notion are clearly European (Babelon, Chastel, 2008 ; Gravari-Barbas, Guichard Anguis, 2003) and, until very recently, they appeared to show the direct opposite, “territories of emptiness”, in other geographical contexts.

Therefore, Africa appeared to escape the “heritage folly” (Jeudy, 1990) that characterized the Western World in the second half of the 20th century (Choay, 1992), despite the heritage policies that were implemented in the context of colonial empires, either through the protection of “natural” sites, such as Victoria Falls (McGregor, 2003) and “archaeological” ones (Galitzine-Loumpet, Gorshenina & Rapin, 2012) or the identification of historical monuments and traditions (Arrif, 1994 ; Girard, 2006). More generally, several studies (Calas, Marcel & Delfosse, 2011) highlight the lack of heritage institutionalization in Africa, including in urban contexts, which is supposedly more conducive to heritage-making : “Most African cities do not have museums worthy of the name. Few have established a proper inventory of their natural and cultural heritage. Many do not have mechanisms for the classification or safeguarding of their heritage. Very few are aware of the World Heritage Convention. We can legitimately talk here of a ‘spirit’ which, as is the case for other sectors of the economy and society, puts Africa at risk of being marginalized.” (CRATerre-ENSAG, Convention France-UNESCO, 2006).

Even though some authors focus on the need to look at tangible and intangible heritage (Bouchenaki 2004) in its continuity or co-production (Goody, 2004) rather than its opposition, the different characteristics of heritage development in Africa and, a fortiori, the specificities of African heritage – less endowed with monuments, and more marked by its living and evolving side – are often highlighted (Gravari-Barbas & Guichard-Anguis, 2003; Maurel,

2012). As the former Benin Minister for Culture² underlined, tangible heritage only represents a small part of African cultural heritage : “Africans allowed themselves to be possessed by the spirits rather than investing in monuments. They chose a less tangible heritage, one dominated by dance, music, singing and narratives”. Thus, in World Heritage policies, different categorical changes (living cultural landscape, intangible heritage) have emerged, all as a means to include the heritage sites of new geographical areas (Taylor & Lennon, 2010) that are less marked by the notion of historic monuments.

Despite a broadening of the notion of World Heritage in a way that incorporates these intercultural stakes (Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2013), and the willingness of different international organizations to maintain a themed and geographic balance of heritage recognition, the composition and number of African World Heritage Sites causes specific difficulties.

The characteristics of this composition are (i) a significantly lower number of sites than in Europe and, to a lesser extent, Asia or the Americas, (ii) the predominance of natural sites, which directly or indirectly suggests a difficulty or reticence to recognize cultural heritage and (iii) a certain vulnerability, emphasized by the number of World Heritage Sites inscribed on the World Heritage in Danger List.

One hundred and twenty eight properties in Africa located in 37 countries⁴ were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2013. The number of sites ranges between nine for Ethiopia or Morocco and none for 14 other countries that have ratified the convention but have not yet submitted any sites for inscription (or which are limited to the inscription of sites on the tentative list). The first African sites inscribed on the list since its conception in 1978 were cultural ones : the Island of Gorée in Senegal and the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia. In other respects, Africa has the highest percentage of sites inscribed on the World Heritage Sites in Danger List ; nearly 13 % of African sites can be found on this list, representing 44 % of all sites inscribed on the Danger List). Reasons for inscription on this list vary⁵, but mainly seem to indicate management-related issues with the properties.

Despite UNESCO action over recent years to rebalance regional disparities in a list initially designed according to the standards and expertise of the Western world (Harrison, 2013), the pace of change is slow, at least at the quantitative level. Several researchers have focused on the imbalances that continue to characterize the World Heritage List (Frey & Steiner, 2011; Frey & Lasse, 2012), despite UNESCO initiatives (in particular the “global strategy for a balanced heritage list that is both representative and credible” put in place in 1994)⁶. Steiner and Frey (2011) showed that not only is the imbalance striking, but that it has been in effect since the implementation of the global strategy. These difficulties were highlighted at the Thirty-fifth Session of the World Heritage Committee (2011), which studied the Global Strategy and PACT initiative. In other respects, Bertacchini and Saccone (2011) pointed to the fact that inscription on the World Heritage List depends on institutional and economic conditions and is subject to a consideration of estimated benefits carried out by the States and experts who participate in the selection process. Furthermore, they point to the highly political nature of the selection process and the role of participating States and experts in the world Heritage Committee (Brumann, 2012). In this quasi-competition for inscription on the list, in which European countries were historically involved and whose most recent ? and particularly active ? entrants are countries like China, most African countries, including the “heavyweights” of African tourism, seem less powerful.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted in 2003 forms part of an effort to change the current state of affairs (Smith, Akagawa, 2009). The initiative launched at the Marrakech meeting in 1997, ratified by proclamations of Heads of State between 2001 and 2005, then by the application of the 2003 Convention, raises the issue of linking heritage and communities by safeguarding the practices, rituals and traditions that form the basis of intangible heritage. The Jemaa el-Fna Square in Marrakesh, is one African heritage site that made a significant contribution to the conceptualization of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (Schmitt, 2008). According to Loulanski (2006), this square marked a shift towards an anthropocentered and functional notion of heritage, comprising three major aspects that are closely interrelated : man-made monuments, functional objects and, consequently, sustainable and developmental preservation. Heritage is no longer limited to objects, nor is its main aim to safeguard their material preservation, but it is moving towards a notion synonymous with “all that fulfils the function of cultural heritage” (Muller, 1998 : 399). As such, heritage is becoming increasingly closely linked to its social context, perceived as a social construction, produced and defined by individuals and social groups.

Nearly ten years after its ratification, this “secondary”⁷ list comprises a comparatively small amount of African properties (19 inscribed in 2012 out of 250 properties worldwide). More than just ‘the UNESCO World Heritage List’, it is also a poignant witness to the arduous construction of a heritage policy in Africa that is simultaneously both notional and operational.

Nevertheless, this situation seems to be changing. An increasingly active, even militant, recognition of heritage sites in Africa is being noted. This is the result of several processes currently underway in which UNESCO action, thanks to its vast international projection, plays a central, even determining role, despite the “overall” difficulties involved in the application of the most ambitious values of the World Heritage List. These transnational exchanges and expertise in progress also result from the bilateral relations that have developed as a result of the decentralized cooperation programme between World Heritage Sites (CraTERRE-ENSAG/Convention France-UNESCO, 2006), e.g., between Albi and Abomey, or the Val de Loire and Niger. Therefore, heritage is becoming a “circulating reference” (Istasse, 2011), a condition for the possibility of these exchanges and transnational adaptations. These new heritage realities can also be seen in a significant number of recent publications both by researchers and academics (Anderson & Grove R., 1987 ; Dieke, 2000 ; Akama & Sterry, 2002 ; Boswell & O’Kane, 2011 ; Calas, Marcel & Delfosse, 2011) and actors on the ground or the NGOs, in particular UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre (Aveling & Debonnet, 2010 ; White & Vande weghe, 2008 ; Craterre-ENSAG/Convention France-UNESCO, 2006).

Several initiatives seek to place heritage at the core of social, cultural and economic issues in Africa. In 2003, UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre officially raised the issue of heritage with African local governments⁸ thus marking the latter’s growing interest in their heritage and its development.

It can be seen that inscription on the World Heritage List has been strengthened in Africa over recent years, albeit geographically differentiated on the continent, raising the issue of the relationship between World Heritage inscriptions and tourism strategies, national ones in particular, and beyond this, the current instrumentalizations of World Heritage at different scalar levels.

3. Tourism and heritage in Africa: challenges, ambiguities, issues.

Several studies associate world heritage with the tourism development of the African continent (AIMF, s.d ; Spenceley, 2005), pointing out the potential for (world) heritage to become a driving force behind tourism and, furthermore, for local development in Africa. At the same time, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)⁹, Africa participates fully in international tourism growth : the number of international arrivals passed from 10 million in 1987 to over 50 million in 2010, with the continent's growth rates conforming to global trends. International tourism in Africa experienced an annual growth rate of 6 % between 2005 and 2012 (UNWTO, 2013).

However, it must not be forgotten that it is difficult, or even virtually impossible, to speak in general terms about tourism in Africa and its relationship with heritage and development (Boswell, Kane, 2011) because of the very different situations for the continent's 54 countries. The gaps between the most highly developed countries for tourism and those that are less developed (some even not at all) are much more pronounced than those observed between different European countries.

Even though Kenya in East Africa, Mauritius and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, Morocco and Tunisia in Maghreb, South Africa and Zimbabwe¹⁰ in the South or Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal in the West are examples of sometimes considerable tourism development, other countries, if not most, lag behind in terms of tourism flows (Dieke, 2000 ; Rogerson, 2007). Furthermore, as highlighted by Richards (2000), with the exception of the Maghreb, even the African countries that are tourism "success stories" are developing an undiversified international tourism product that is limited to safaris and spa tourism, or directed at target tourist populations. Richards also states that countries such as Côte d'Ivoire or Senegal which have developed heritage tourism, are addressing a market segment that is essentially composed of African-Americans or other diasporas.

The question of the relationship between tourism and heritage is specifically being raised in the African continent because tourism heritage and tourism development concepts have shown different patterns. Tourism in Africa, having mainly sat on the sidelines of the major tourism movements that characterized the second half of the 20th century, is now supposed to embody, at best, the new tourism paradigms that are worlds apart from so-called mass tourism. Therefore, written reports and analyses on tourism in Africa often set out its "sustainable", "participatory" and "ethical" side, while at the same time warning against tourism development that follows the European model and development of a tourism system founded on the promotion of monumental heritage resources to the detriment of a more diffused and shared approach (Principaud, 2010).

As such, a "prescriptive" literature on African tourism is developing, which should, in order to fulfil its newly allocated role as an engine of development and poverty reduction¹¹, be based on the specificities of African heritage. Furthermore, the "living" nature of African heritage means that its development depends on the "good health" of craftsmanship and traditions, with the tourism-heritage relationship putting local communities first through the promotion of capacity-building (Koutra & Edwards, 2012). The development of tourism and of heritage is generally considered (Spenceley, 2004, 2005) to be an opportunity to ensure the empowerment of local populations, contributing to a shift led by international organizations towards the reconciliation of tourism, heritage and sustainable development (Hawkins & Mann, 2007; Galla, 2012). Assuming that tourism development will not be called into question by future economic, social and environmental challenges, several studies state that Africa has great

potential for tourism development (Christie, 2001; Akama & Sterry, 2002). Thus, tourism is vested with an important mission : to participate in the African continent's economic and social development.

World Heritage plays a central role in these processes, both because of its visibility and through the virtuous effect (anticipated and performance) of inscription at a time when the World Heritage Centre is increasingly linking heritage and development objectives via the presence of tourism in the media¹² (Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2013). World Heritage Centre publications accentuate the qualities of African tourism development based on culture and heritage and have assigned tourism with a mission : "tourism will, therefore, assist in removing existing stereotypes and misrepresentations of indigenous African cultures. In this regard, cultural tourism may well contribute to the promotion of international harmony and cross-cultural understanding" (ATLAS, 2000, p. 14). In contrast to these approaches that are certainly hopeful, but also prescriptive and have yet to materialize, several researchers point to more nuanced realities. Tourism, as a "glocal" phenomenon, is just as much a result of local initiatives, even micro-local ones, as realities driven by globalization. As outlined by P. Urquhart (s.d.) "the growth path of tourism in African countries often depends on the precarious interaction of small businesses with the giants of the global economy and the unpredictable forces of globalization". As an overall product of Late Capitalism, tourism is becoming an important sector for foreign investment in Africa, one that could result in exclusivities (Akama, 2004; Meyer, 2010).

Some researchers believe that UNESCO's founding principles of "building peace in the minds of men" have little in common, in fine, with what happens on the ground (Edson, 2004). Boswell and O'Kane (2011) suggest that tourism and heritage, especially world tourism and heritage, contribute to the transformation of areas into a kind of mosaic in which highly-concentrated tourism areas exist next to others that remain insular and isolated, on the sidelines of economic dynamics. In the context of the African continent, this needs to be connected to the postcolonial context (Hall, Tucker, 2004), which characterizes a large part of cultural heritage in Africa. Heritage projects that develop in postcolonial contexts are not exempt from the new storytelling used to (re)write history : "In the postcolony, heritage is also an important memory device" (Anheier & Isar 2011, cited in Boswell and O'Kane, 2011). As such, despite the fact that this could cause traumatic memories to resurface, the heritage of colonial domination still resonates : "heritage remains vitally important to local senses of self. Even contested (i.e. colonial) heritage cannot be easily erased so that a 'new' narrative, which excludes the painful recollection of slavery and colonisation, can be realised" (Boswell & O'Kane, 2011]. This may encourage the necessary ownership of traumatic heritage by local populations, but only if the new resorts take into account the diversity of heritage messages and of their recipients, that are simultaneously local and external. In Africa, the development of tourism around world heritage is a process that faces various difficulties. Firstly, the political context makes it difficult, if not impossible, for tourism to develop in some parts of Africa, including those places that just a few years ago seemed to be in a situation of credible and promising economic development, as shown by D. Cissouma Togola and S. Al Karjousli (n° 1/2014) who discuss this in the geopolitical context of the rise of terrorism.

Next, in Africa, the coexistence of African heritage and heritage of European origin, the latter often being legacies and relics of colonializations (Addo, 2011), complicate tourism development and its objectives. "Thus, at this level, a fundamental difference is being established between the conception of an inheritance-based European heritage and that of an African heritage, whose function, for a large part, has no significance other than its intended use or the symbolism it transfers" (Ouallet, 2003). Boswell and O'Kane (2011) suggest that

indigenous heritage is managed according to types of tourism development and management approaches in line with Western practices and/or run by international actors, resulting in particular relations between heritage and local communities. Reference can also be made to the difficulties involved in the integration of colonialization heritage (Sinou, 2005), including in “tourist countries”. The poor development of interest in colonial architecture in Casablanca (Cohen & Eleb, 2004) or the Democratic Republic of Congo (Robert, n° 1/2013) is an example of these difficulties (even if vernacular and colonial heritage¹³ are no longer opposed to one another in recent World Heritage inscriptions).

Finally, tourism development comes up against particularly vivid European tourism imaginaries (Graburn & Gravari-Barbas, 2011 a, b), that for centuries, have produced consolidated representations of Africa and that which is associated with it. Literature, photography and cinema have all contributed to producing a stereotypical image of African alterity. N. Salazar (2009) underlines that Tanzania’s promotional campaign “Tanzania – Authentic Africa” succeeded in encapsulating Hollywood images of Wild Eden (Adams & McShane, 1996), from Tarzan to Out of Africa, through Gorillas in the Mist, Born Free, or The Lion King. Some authors believe that the development of cultural tourism in Africa still forms part of the continuation and perpetuation of these images (Welsh, 2000) with all the limitations and difficulties that this causes, and in a situation of tension with the fabric of national tourism imaginaries (Fursich & Robins, 2004; Bondaz, 2009).

4. Tourism, World Heritage and sustainable development.

In such a context, it needs to be asked whether tourism and world heritage can create a credible sustainable development scenario in Africa.

The question of “sustainable” heritage through tourism development is introduced here with an emphasis on reflection, and is focused on emergent issues within various international organizations, UNESCO in particular. As such, the World Heritage policy is marked by a growing integration of the stakes involved in sustainable-development (e.g. through the action plan adopted at Paratay in 2010). Such a convergence refers to two things : the taking into account of initiatives “labelled” sustainable (e.g. the World Heritage Centre sustainable development tourism programme) and the taking into consideration of criteria that could ensure sustainable development, in particular through the redistribution of resources and community involvement¹⁴. As such, we address the types of prescriptive and imperative discourse and their effects in the field.

In the case of Africa, the so far modest development of tourism, combined with perceptions of “possible” heritage (diversity of traditions and built heritage, outstanding landscapes), has led to the emergence of new discourse and actions, incorporating tourism as a development factor (Christie & Crompton, 2001 ; World Bank, 2010, The State of Tourism in Africa, 2010). Several researchers believe that the contribution made by tourism to the African economy has often been overestimated (Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Dieke, 2000). The issue emerges of whom ultimately benefits from tourism development and who gathers the international investments on the continent ? Salazar (2009), based on Goodman (2002), states that the mechanisms of redistribution towards the local populations are rare and inoperable. For example, the local benefits of 6,000 daily visitors to the Victoria Falls in Zambia, one of the most important tourist sites in southern Africa, are still particularly limited, despite the site’s “enormous potential : “About 18 hotels and lodges operate around Victoria Falls and most of

them import their food stuffs and supply for guests from Lusaka and neighbouring countries like South Africa” [African World Heritage Fund (s.d.)]. Most examples of World Heritage Sites suggest that this situation is the rule rather than the exception.

Two dimensions are set out in the analyses : (i) integration of a pro-growth-type heritage, with related job creations, enabling to offset poverty problems, and (ii) the pro-poor approach aiming to eliminate the creation of new tourism development-based marginalities, including those in heritage sites. Their meeting point (pro-poor growth policies) (Gerosa, 2003) defines how to take vulnerable local communities into account in development projects.

Some studies seem to empirically demonstrate, and in a range of destinations, the validity of the core thesis of so-called “pro-poor” tourism [namely that the sector may be closely linked to poor populations (Spenceley, 2010) according to the public policies implemented and companies’ behaviour (Meyer, 2007)]. According to the 1999 DFID15 (the UK Department for International Development) report, tourism – which is significant (2 % of GDP and 5 % of the value of exports) in 11 of the 12 countries with the greatest number of poor populations (living with less than 1 US\$ per day) – could be an efficient development tool and a tool to help combat poverty through its contribution to the “redevelopment” of marginalized rural and urban areas, if it forms part of a “pro-poor16” approach (DFID, 1999). Michell and Faal (2007, 2008), in their study on the links between tourism and poverty in Gambia, estimated that over half of the total amount from tourism is spent within Gambia – around 14 % of which is received by poor populations. The authors suggest that the extent of the impact can be explained by “minor expenditures” and the existence of a very active professional association of the informal sector.

Nevertheless, the geographical disparities in the effects of pro-poor tourism have led to warnings against the use of standard diagnostics or political prescriptions. Pro-poor policies often seem insufficient to change the economic dynamics of domination (Harrison, 2012), and instead of implementing redistribution policies, these policies are even integrated into a logic of economic liberalization (Schilcher, 2007). In some cases, an instrumentalization of “the local development argument” can also be identified (Cousin, 2007).

One body of research also raises the question of a perpetuation of inequalities on account of significant foreign investments and of the externalization of the benefits¹⁷, even the way in which tourism can maintain marginal situations. National tourism development policies do not necessarily ensure a balanced local development (Sinclair, 1998).

More generally, according to Chirikure et al (2010), the issue of local community participation in development projects clashes with the fact that the communities do not always feel affected by the heritage sites likely to be promoted, because of the long history of territorial evictions in Africa during colonial occupations that have caused a separation of communities from their heritage. The researchers underline the fact that in Southern Africa, the long history of forced displacements and the National park management system are an obstacle to identifying the communities and actors that can be associated with heritage and tourism projects. Chirikure et al (2010, p. 38) underline the difference of countries like Ethiopia, which is less affected by colonial alienation, or the local communities of Lalibela or Askum that continue to maintain strong relationships with heritage – seen not only as a mediation with their past, but also as a resource that can be used in the present (Bridonneau, this edition).

5. Conclusions

To go beyond these now classic approaches, it is worthwhile deconstructing the question of tourism impacts. An impact analysis, whether positive or negative, seems to be too unilateral (Cazes, 1989 & 1992). Tourists themselves take part in the tourism development process : they are not only “consumers” of the space, they mark it also by diverse forms of appropriation, by their practices, representations, projections of meaning and values¹⁸ (Edensor, 1998 ; Gravari-Barbas, 2012). From an anthropological perspective, tourism also enables the legitimizing of heritage in the eyes of the inhabitants.

Therefore, as regards impacts, Hall and Lew (1998) state that it is rather a question of systematically reading heritage-tourism relationships through their interrelations, and of understanding by “impacts” the expression “tourism-related change”, that enables the simultaneous identification of the interdependence of these phenomena and their multidimensionality. Indeed, tourism is also based on a dual reality (Sharpley, 2011): it is an activity that forms both an integral part of the market economy and which is also a particularly complex socio-cultural phenomenon because it is intrinsically linked to development stakes. The tourism economy maintains a close relationship with the land, the place of expression for culture and its diversity, and where tourists tread, produce and consume. However, this systematic sustainable development-oriented heritage-tourism relationship involves taking local communities into account in “transactions” and exchanges with tourists.

Consequently, studies, especially those conducted by geographers, tend to revisit the established discourse that insists on the destructive role that heritage has had on mass tourism (Deprest, 1997). Heritage only has meaning when it is integrated in society (Gravari-Barbas, 2005). The tourism discovery of heritage is a moment for the world that is particularly marked by true excitement about heritage (Lazzarotti & Violier, 2007). This can be taken to mean a generalized process of heritage development, which takes and refreshes increasingly varied objects, believing it possible to erase the work of time that inexorably endangers the signs of the past.

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