NGOs and the making of "development tourism destinations"

The case of "destino Guatemala"

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Summary
This article explores the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the making of global tourism destinations. First, it draws together diverse insights in order to substantiate the importance of NGOs in the making of global tourism destinations and, second, it empirically highlights the role of NGOs in the (re)making of one particular destination: "destino Guatemala". NGOs in La Antigua Guatemala are increasingly engaging with tourism as a NGO resource. In focusing on the NGO touristic practice of hosting storytelling events/activities in Antigua, some of which come to form virtual/actual "poverty tours", the article argues that while Antigua NGOs develop and host these poverty tours as a means of moving "hearts and wallets", they are doing considerably more. Most notably, they are helping to (re)make Guatemala into a "development tourism destination".

Keywords: NGOs, tourism, poverty, Guatemala

Zusammenfassung
Dieser Beitrag untersucht die Rolle von Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen (NROs) bei der Kreierung globaler Tourismus-Destinationen. Dabei werden verschiedenartige Erkenntnisse zusammen getragen, mit der Bedeutung von NROs bei der Kreierung globaler Tourismus-Destinationen untermauert werden. Anschließend wird empirisch die Rolle von NROs bei der (Re-)Kreierung eines bestimmten Reiseziels, nämlich der „destino Guatemala" analysiert. NROs in La Antigua Guatemala betätigen sich zunehmend im Tourismus, um ihn als eine NRO Ressource zu nutzen. Dabei wird insbesondere auf Geschichten erzählende Events bzw. Aktivitäten der NROs in Antigua abgezielt. Einige dieser Aktivitäten stellen virtuelle bzw. reale „Armuts-Touren" dar. Es wird die Argumentationslinie entwickelt, dass die NROs in Antigua, indem sie diese Armuts-Touren als ein Mittel um die „Herzen und Geldbörsen" zu bewegen entwickeln und veranstalten, sie noch deutlich mehr machen. Vor allem helfen sie dabei Guatemala (wieder) zu einer „Entwicklungstourismus Destination" zu machen.

Schlagworte: NROs, Tourismus, Armut, Guatemala

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1 Introduction

Tourism destinations are not "natural"; rather, they are culturally, socially, politically, and economically made. Over the past few decades, "global tourism mobilities" have exploded (Sheller & Urry 2004). More and more people are moving around the world as "global tourists" – those who have the means and the will to travel the globe (primarily "Western tourists") – and, consequently, place stakeholders are increasingly trying to capture some of the economic dividends of this global flow; this is especially seen through the increased use of tourism as a "development tool" (Telfer & Sharpley 2008). Places are, thus, increasingly being (re)made into "global tourism destinations" with the intent of attracting and satisfying global tourists. Literature surrounding the making and selling of global tourism destinations tends to focus on governments and the private sector; they are conceptualized as having the power to make places known, desired, and visited. While not to downplay their importance, recent trends point to another key player in the making of global tourism destinations: non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NGOs are increasingly engaging with tourism. While few have specifically studied the relationship between NGOs and tourism (Spencer 2010) those who have – whether directly or indirectly – point to at least five ways in which this NGO engagement is manifested. NGOs act:

1. as witnesses and attempted ameliorators of some of the deleterious effects associated with certain forms of tourism development;
2. as advocates, consultants, knowledge and policy producers, and developers of "alternative" – hopefully more socially just and/or environmentally friendly – tourism forms;
3. as intermediaries, developers, educators, facilitators, and/or implementers of tourism development projects;
4. as cultural agents influencing tourists' desires and touring practices; and
5. as tourism service providers and tourist attractions/destinations (see Barnett 2008; Butcher 2003/2007; Kennedy & Dornan 2009; Salazar 2004; Spencer 2010; Wearing et al. 2005).

Taken together, these insights point to an emerging NGO-tourism nexus.

In suggesting that tourism destinations are made through ways of touristically seeing, doing, and connecting places both symbolically and materially, the article moves to empirically explore how NGOs are implicated in the discursive and material (re)making of one particular destination: "destino Guatemala". Based on ethnographic research, the article highlights how Antigua-based NGOs are increasingly engaging with tourism as a means of raising global recognition, compassion, and funds for their projects. Three key NGO touristic practices are identified:

1. hosting NGO storytelling events/activities;
2. attracting/hosting volunteer tourists; and,
3. providing for- and non-profit touristic services.

Given space restrictions, focus here is restricted to the NGO practice of hosting storytelling events/activities. In hosting storytelling events/activities in and around Antigua, Antigua NGOs aim to strategically connect to and benefit from global

tourists already in Guatemala. But this NGO practice, it is argued, is doing much more than move global tourists' hearts and wallets. Through sharing stories of Guatemalan poverty with global tourists in Antigua or moving global tourists into spaces/places deemed poor, many Antigua NGOs' storytelling events/activities come to form virtual or actual "poverty tours". These virtual/actual poverty tours help to construct an NGO gaze – a way of seeing Guatemala as a place to do both development and tourism; they help to discursively (re)make Guatemala into a "development tourism destination". More than that, they functionally act as forms of "feel good" development tourism and work to extend "destino Guatemala" by securing and opening "poor", and often "private", spaces/places to global tourists. While remaining sympathetic to the goals of Antigua NGOs, by outlining some of the discourses and power relations which underpin this NGO practice the article highlights its implication in the reiteration of the imagined and real hierarchical differences between Guatemala and the global North, and between Guatemalans and global tourists.

In following this agenda, this article adds to the literature surrounding NGOs and tourism in five main ways:

1. it identifies and provides a first attempt at mapping the emerging NGO-tourism nexus;
2. it highlights the importance of NGOs in the (re)making of global tourism destinations;
3. it expands accounts of NGO-types involved in tourism by focusing on small, locally embedded NGOs rather than international and/or voluntourism NGOs;
4. in *not* focusing on ecotourism or voluntourism, it extends understanding of the different ways in which NGOs are engaging with tourism/tourists; and,
5. it provides an account of NGOs and virtual/actual poverty tours in the context of Guatemala, which, to this author's knowledge, has yet to be done.

2 NGOs and Tourism

The global proliferation of both NGOs and tourism mobilities are rarely spoken about in conjunction; indeed, with the exception of a few notable scholars (Barnett 2008; Butcher 2003/2007; Kennedy & Dornan 2009; Salazar 2004; Spencer 2010; Wearing et al. 2005) and organizations (e.g. NGO Tourism Concern), few have specifically written about the relationship between NGOs and tourism (Spencer 2010). That being said, one can uncover considerable insights regarding the increasing role of NGOs in tourism in wider tourism-related literature, such as that surrounding ecotourism (Duffy 2008) and voluntourism (Conran 2011; Mostafanezhad 2013a/b). But why, how, and what kinds of NGOs are engaging with tourism? And, most important here, what does this mean for the (re)making of global tourism destinations?

2.1 The Emerging NGO-Tourism Nexus

First a definition of NGOs. NGOs are highly diverse and hard to define (Ahmed & Potter 2006). Very broadly they can be conceptualized as belonging to the "third sector" – that is they are not part of the state or the market – and they are

often concerned with issues surrounding social justice and poverty reduction (Lewis 2007). NGOs "can be large or small, formal or informal, externally funded or driven by volunteers, charitable and paternalistic or radical and "empowerment"-based" (Lewis 2007, p. 13); some work in "campaigning and policy advocacy" while others provide direct services to their target populations (p. 1). While NGO-like organizations have existed since antiquity (Salamon 1994), it was only after the Second World War and through the United Nations system that such organizations were given the title "NGO" (Ahmed & Potter 2006). Since then, and especially since the 1990s, there has been a considerable proliferation of NGOs around the globe. Although the actual number of NGOs in the world remains unknown (Ahmed & Potter 2006), estimates reach into the hundreds of thousands (Kennedy & Dornan 2009).

NGOs of various types have long been *indirectly* involved with tourism as witnesses and attempted ameliorators of some of the deleterious effects associated with tourism development (e.g. displacement, environmental degradation, labour exploitation, sex trafficking, etc.) (Salazar 2004; Spencer 2010). More recently, they have increasingly become *directly* involved. In general, one can broadly distinguish between two NGO types which are directly engaging with tourism: "tourism-oriented NGOs' (Kennedy & Dornan 2009) and general NGOs (i.e. those not readily associated with tourism). Tourism-oriented NGOs make influencing tourism discourses and practices their main goal. Starting from the perspective that much "mainstream tourism" – or the "trans-national corporate approach to tourism development" (Wearing et al. 2005, p. 426) – is socially, culturally, and/or environmentally harmful, they use various methods to educate tourists and public/private tourism developers of the deleterious effects tourism can have, as well as advocate for and consult on "alternative" forms of tourism which are thought to be more socially just and/or environmentally friendly (Barnett 2008; Wearing et al. 2005). But not all tourism-oriented NGOs are the same. Rather than being *tourism*-focused, "Voluntourism NGOs' (Kennedy & Dornan 2009) may be better described as *tourist*-focused. Voluntourism NGOs primarily see themselves as providing "aid in the form of [volunteer] service to developing countries" (Kennedy & Dornan 2009, p. 194). In this sense, (re)producing the global flow of voluntourists – a touristic flow premised on engaging in non-remunerated activities deemed helpful to the places/peoples visited – is their prime raison d"être.

But many general NGOs of various types are also increasingly engaging with tourism and, thus, becoming, at least in part, tourism- and/or tourist-oriented (see Butcher 2007; Spencer 2010). One explanation for this is the increased priority given to tourism by development agencies, which can be linked to neoliberalism. Neoliberalisation has seen national economic development reconceptualised as "successful participation in the world economy" (McMichael 2004, p. 155) with the "slogan" of the day being: "Find your niche in the global marketplace" (p. 165). Understood to be rich in "natural" tourism resources, the global South is thought to have an inherent competitive advantage in the export of tourism; indeed, tourism is often presented as the global South's only "realis-

tic development path" (Telfer & Sharpley 2008, p. 17). Neoliberalism has also seen NGOs constructed as the preferred development partners of global aid donors, who channel funds to NGOs as a means of bypassing (supposedly) inefficient, weak and/or corrupt states (Ahmed & Potter 2006). As a result of these processes, NGOs' roles in international development have increased at the same time as tourism has been constructed as the global South's key "development tool". Following, many general NGOs are now involved in international tourism development projects (see Butcher 2003/2007).

However, some general NGOs are also turning to tourism strategically; for these NGOs tourism represents a means to other ends. This occurs in at least two, often interconnected, ways: NGOs promote and assist tourism development as a way of achieving their wider aims, whether conservation or poverty reduction and/or, given the increasingly competitive NGO funding environment (Cameron & Haanstra 2008), various general NGOs have institutionalized tourism into their funding/operations models. The first strategy sees NGOs give touristic value to, for example, the natural environment, as a means of helping to conserve it (Butcher 2007). The second strategy sees NGOs engaging with "Northern publics" (Cameron & Haanstra 2008) as global tourists; indeed, it would appear that NGOs have found that moving hearts and wallets is easier if you also move bodies. By bringing Northern publics to the global South, NGOs aim to create changes in the way people think about and engage with development issues (Salazar 2004; Spencer 2010), as well as benefit from global tourists' cultural, social, and/or economic capital. In their engagement with tourism, general NGOs end up doing many of the same activities as tourism-oriented NGOs, such as developing and implementing various alternative tourism projects and encouraging and facilitating the movement of voluntourists. Indeed, the tourism-oriented/general distinction may become redundant (if it is not already) as diverse NGOs increasingly engage with tourism.

As the above insights indicate, there appears to be an emerging NGO-tourism nexus, whereby NGOs are increasingly affecting tourism discourses/practices and tourism is increasingly infiltrating NGOs' agendas/operations. While clearly much could be said about this emerging nexus, the focus here is on what it means for the (re)making of global tourism destinations.

2.2 NGOs and the (Re)Making of Global Tourism Destinations

Drawing upon mobilities scholars, tourism destinations are conceptualized as made through ways of touristically *seeing*, *doing*, and *connecting* places both symbolically and materially (Sheller & Urry 2004). As argued here, NGOs are helping (in)form ways of seeing, doing, and connecting *certain* places in the global South to the global North as "development tourism destinations".

NGOs have long been charged with helping create ways of seeing the global South within the global North. Unlike state-led development which relies upon taxes, NGO-led development relies upon winning competitive grant processes and attracting global recognition, compassion, and funds from Northern publics (Camer-

on & Haanstra 2008). Through fundraising campaigns, "NGOs constitute one of the most important faces of development – and forms of development education – that is presented to Northern publics." (Cameron & Haanstra 2008, p. 1486). Such campaigns have often relied upon stories and images of global poverty, including the iconic image of the "starving baby" (Manzo 2008) and/or the "Third World woman" (Dogra 2011). Rather than seeing these representations as reflecting the "truth" about the global South, drawing on Escobar (1995) they can be understood as helping to (re)produce the "Third World" – and, thus, the "First World" – in the Western imaginary. Along with these geographical categorizations come hierarchical identities: Northern publics come to see (especially child/female) "'others' in the South as passive, helpless and sub-human victims" (Cameron & Haanstra 2008, p. 1478) and themselves as "beneficent and as possessing the wisdom and agency needed to help Southern 'others'" (p. 1486). In other words, NGO representations of poverty can be understood as producing what Mostafanezhad (2013b) calls a "humanitarian gaze" – a binary way of seeing the world which reproduces a "hierarchy between givers and receivers, as well as circumscribing who is a legitimate benefactor of aid", thus contributing "to the perpetuation of an 'us' vs 'them' power dynamic" (p. 489). Along with this comes a global "geography of compassion" (Mostafanezhad 2013a) whereby the "Third World" and the "Third Worlder" are (re)constructed as both poor and deserving of Western compassion and humanitarian help. Put differently, in their aims to help the global poor, largely Western NGOs effectively (re)produce the world through post-colonial ways of seeing.

While such NGO practices may help to (re)create the objects of, and the Western compulsion for, "development", they do not necessarily create touristic desire for the global South – indeed, such representations may be seen as antithetical to tourism. However, as NGOs are increasingly engaging with and relying upon tourism they are also increasingly enrolled in the (re)production of touristic ways of seeing some places in the global South. The most obvious and direct example comes from voluntourism NGOs. In Keese's (2011) analysis of voluntourism NGO websites he found that along with emphasizing poverty and need, they also include touristic images and descriptions of the places and people where and with whom they have programmes. For example, along with images of iconic tourism symbols, such as Machu Picchu, places are described as "exotic" and "beautiful" and people as "'friendly', 'warm', 'gracious', and 'welcoming'" (Keese 2011, p. 273). Indeed, voluntourism NGOs appear to take advantage of pre-existing touristic representations and desires in planning where to develop such programmes in the first place. As one voluntourism NGO Director states: "'It's hard to recruit volunteers to go to places that no one has heard of, that have little natural beauty, and that lack interesting places to visit during the programme' [...]" (Interview cited in Keese 2011, p. 276). Consequently, it is not necessarily the places in most objective need which become the objects of voluntourism NGOs; it is the places that are – at least partially – already symbolically and materially constructed as tourism destinations.

While less explicit, the activities of other tourism-oriented and general NGOs (e.g. conservation and development NGOs) also appear to be contributing to touristic ways of seeing the global South. This occurs through, for example, their advocacy and promotion of "alternative tourism", such as ecotourism and voluntourism. While alternative tourism exists everywhere, it is most associated with the global South (Wearing et al. 2005). A key argument behind the promotion of such tourism forms is that the global South is "undeveloped" and "traditional" and that, somewhat paradoxically, alternative tourism can help develop and/or conserve it. Conservation NGOs, for example, advocate heavily for and promote ecotourism in the global South as a means to conserve "pristine" [read: undeveloped] environments and "traditional" [read: not Western] cultures (Butcher 2003/2007). Rather than making conservation their main goal, development NGOs, on the other hand, may advocate and promote voluntourism in the global South as a means of bringing development to the "undeveloped" (Simpson 2004). In either case, these activities tend to (re) present the global South as the last bastion of "true" authenticity (MacCannell 1999 [1976]). Indeed, places and people which are perceived to lack development – places and people which are deemed "poor" – are often represented as more "authentic" and, thus, become touristically desirable (Dyson 2012; Whyte et al. 2011).

More than a trip into the "authentic", in their promotion and provision of alternative tourism forms, NGOs are also helping to (re)make the global South as *the* place to enact "moral" and "cool" tourist identities. Along with presenting the global South as both poor and touristically desirable, NGOs also present "alternative tourism" as being "moral" tourism. "Moral" forms of consumption are growing in popularity in the West. Some scholars (see Butcher & Smith 2010) see this as emblematic of Gidden's (1991) "life politics", whereby politics and identity have moved from production/social class to consumption/lifestyle. Through participating in "moral" tourism, global tourists can discursively align themselves with environmental/social justice agendas *and* distinguish themselves from the "immoral tourism hoards". Indeed, along with altruistic and strategic motivations (Heath 2007; Lyons et al. 2012), the "moralization of tourism" (Butcher 2003) has been linked to the popularity of voluntourism in the global South (Butcher & Smith 2010). Similar processes can be seen in the NGO-led celebritization of development, which has worked to make "development sexy" (Cameron & Haanstra 2008) and going abroad to engage in voluntourism one's chance to "get in touch with their inner Angelina" (Mostafanezhad 2013b). Voluntourism has become "cool". Consequently, NGOs have helped to (re)create the global South as the place to do "moral" tourism and enact moral/cool identities.

Finally – and as already alluded to – NGOs are also key providers of alternative "moral" tourism forms. This can easily be seen through the work of voluntourism NGOs in creating voluntourism programmes. Indeed, although the private sector is also involved, NGOs are the main promoters and providers of voluntourism (Keese 2011; Mostafanezhad 2013a), an increasingly popular and profitable form of tourism (Butcher & Smith 2010; Lyons

et al. 2012). NGOs are also key providers of various forms of ecotourism (Butcher 2007) as well as "poverty tourism" (Whyte et al. 2011), also called "slum", "favela", and "township tourism" depending on geographical location (Rolfes 2010). In encouraging and facilitating the movement of global tourists to and within the global South, NGOs draw upon and help to build global-local networks, connecting and bringing different places closer together.

Following these insights, this article argues that NGOs are helping to (re) make *certain* places in the global South into "development tourism destinations". Thus, as NGOs increasingly engage with tourism they appear to be helping intersect the "humanitarian gaze" with the "tourist gaze" (Urry 2002 [1990]) and, thus, the global geography of compassion with the global geography of touristic desire. This "marriage of gazes" – the humanitarian and the tourist – may be understood as forming an "NGO gaze", a way of seeing which (re)produces some places in the global South – those which come to lay at this intersection – as both poor *and* touristically desirable. This way of seeing the global South is not without its problems. While many NGOs have responded to critiques regarding the post-colonial implications of "poverty stories" and have since diversified their strategies to include positive stories and representations of "Others" (Manzo 2008), "tourism stories" of the global South have also been extensively critiqued on the same grounds (Echtner & Prasad 2003). The NGO gaze engages with both of these discourses, helping to (re)produce certain places and people as both "poor/in need of compassion" *and* "exotic/touristically desirable". In other words, places seen through a NGO gaze become *the* places for Northern publics to "*do*" both development and tourism.

Moreover, NGO-endorsed and provided "alternative tourism" may be better described as "development tourism". While development tourism has been defined as NGO-organized "field trips" (Salazar 2004) or "study tours" (Spencer 2010) to visit the "developing world", by opening this definition up, development tourism may be understood as an umbrella concept for all NGO-endorsed/provided tourism forms in the global South. Thus, what these NGO tourism forms have in common is that they are all premised on and help to (re)construct the imagined, and often real, differences between the "developing" and "developed" worlds. That is, they not only rest on ideas surrounding the "undeveloped" and "traditional" global South, as some scholars have suggested, they also help to extend neoliberalising processes into new arenas, such as privatizing and commodifying international development (Mostafanezhad 2013a/b) and nature (Duffy 2008). While NGO-endorsed tourism is often promoted and celebrated as "moral" tourism, these insights suggest the need for deeper critical reflection on the wider doings of NGOs' touristic practices. Let us now turn to explore these processes in one destination in the global South: "destino Guatemala".

3 Antigua NGOs and the (re) Making of "Destino Guatemala"

Welcome to Guatemala! The Guatemalan government and tourism industry are actively seeking to make Guatemala a

globally competitive tourism destination (Government of Guatemala 2012); in so doing, they draw upon and market Guatemala's "natural" tourism resources, most noticeably its nature, history, and "living Maya culture". However, based on five months of ethnographic field research in La Antigua Guatemala (Antigua for short) in 2013[1], which is further complemented by six months of NGO work experience in the same location in 2010, this article suggests that NGOs are playing a pivotal role in the (re)making of Guatemala into a global tourism destination of a different sort: a "development tourism destination".

3.1 NGO Touristic Practices in Antigua, 'The Land of the NGOs'

Antigua is Guatemala's tourism jewel. Indeed, many global tourists visiting Guatemala only go to Antigua; for them Antigua is Guatemala. At the same time as being Guatemala's tourism jewel, Antigua is also "the land of the NGOs" (Interview: NGO Program Director, 10/09/13). While there is no official data concerning how many NGOs exist in Guatemala and/or in Antigua specifically, Antigua appears to be the "epicentre" of Guatemala's vibrant NGO-scene[2]. Within Antigua one can find both international NGOs (i.e. with projects in many countries) and local NGOs (i.e. only operating in Guatemala). Local NGOs can further be divided between those that are founded and funded by Guatemalans or foreigners, with the latter making up the most prominent NGOs in the community[3]. While the majority of literature on NGOs and tourism focuses on international and/or voluntourism NGOs, this article focuses on local development NGOs in Antigua. Even more narrowly, because of their prominence and engagement with tourism, the analysis is limited to local development NGOs founded and funded by foreigners (from here on out: Antigua NGOs) and consequently all of the NGO workers (from here on out: NGOers) interviewed were of nationalities other than Guatemalan. As a result, the research cannot account for how voluntourism, international and/or local Guatemalan NGOs may engage with tourism in Guatemala differently.

To date, scholars researching alternative tourism forms in Guatemala have tended to focus on cultural [read: Maya] tourism (Little 2004; Tegelberg 2013), ecotourism (Bascomb & Taylor 2008; Hearne & Santos 2005), or voluntourism (Vodopivec & Jaffe 2011; Vrasti 2012), with the role of NGOs only sometimes specifically highlighted. But the role of NGOs cannot be ignored. Given the ever more difficult funding environment, many Antigua NGOs, for example, are increasingly seeing global tourists as a potential NGO resource. To them global tourists represent: listeners and spreaders of NGO stories; global contacts, which can augment NGO email lists and social media followers; potential voluntourists and child sponsors; sources of skills and donations/funds; and consumers of NGO touristic offerings. In their strategic aims to link to global tourists, Antigua NGOs are engaging in three key touristic practices:

1. hosting NGO storytelling events/activities;
2. attracting and hosting voluntourists; and,
3. providing for- and non-profit touristic services, such as running NGO lan-

guage schools, restaurants, and the like. Due to space restrictions, here focus is placed on the NGO touristic practice of hosting storytelling events/activities in and around Antigua.

3.2 Hosting NGO Storytelling Events/Activities

Imagine you have just arrived in Antigua and want to know what there is to do. You will probably turn to Antigua's two widely distributed touristic magazines: *Revue* and *Qué pasa*. Published every month, these magazines let both locals and tourists know "what is going on". A quick flip through either magazine on any given month and one can find feature articles on the work of different Antigua NGOs, as well as many announcements for NGO storytelling events/activities ranging from: public lectures/talks; cultural performances and art exhibitions; film screenings; fundraising evenings, such as dinners, wine tastings, music and pub nights, and parties; garage sales and raffles; charity sporting events, such as runs or hikes; and NGO tours. If not found in *Revue* or *Qué pasa*, information about these NGO events/activities can also easily be found on bulletin boards and information points in popular cafes and restaurants throughout the city. Indeed, it would be hard not to come across an NGO story or an announcement for an NGO event/activity while visiting Antigua. Far from being peripheral to "mainstream tourism", there are different NGO events/activities on offer every week in Antigua helping make it a dynamic and interesting place to be.

Often held exclusively in English, NGO storytelling events/activities can be conceptualized as strategically constructed touristic spaces to tell NGO stories of Guatemalan poverty to global tourists (and other foreigners) in Antigua, highlight the work that Antigua NGOs are doing to address this, and get global tourists emotionally and financially involved. Consequently, NGO storytelling events/activities start from three implicit assumptions: that global tourists in Antigua already see Guatemala through a tourist gaze; that global tourists in Antigua do not know but will be interested in knowing "real Guatemala"; and, that once global tourists know the facts about "real Guatemala" they will care and want to help. Put differently, by sharing stories of Guatemalan poverty with global tourists, Antigua NGOs aim to *add* a humanitarian gaze to global tourists' presupposed tourist gaze. In so doing, as suggested below, they (re) make Guatemala through an NGO gaze – a place to not only do tourism, but also development. Furthermore, these NGO storytelling events/activities also functionally act as forms of "development tourism". That is, in either bringing representations of Guatemalan poverty into Antigua for the consumption of global tourists or moving global tourists to places/spaces deemed "poor", they come to form virtual or actual "poverty tours".

3.2.1 Virtual Poverty Tours: Bringing "Poor Guatemala" to Global Tourists in Antigua

According to many NGOers, Antigua is not representative of "real Guatemala", which to them is "poor Guatemala". As one NGOer clearly proclaimed: Antigua is a "tourist bubble"[4]. Consequently, even if

global tourists are already in Guatemala, if they remain in Antigua, NGOers suggest that they have not really seen or done "real Guatemala". To use MacCannell's (1999 [1976]) terminology, relatively wealthy Antigua is seen as a tourism "front-stage" full of "staged authenticity". Another NGOer states:

[...] if people come here and they just come to Antigua and they sit in the park and they drink a latte and they like, you know, buy a necklace and a table cloth and go zip-lining, you know, they haven't seen Guatemala and they have a very rose coloured view of what is going on here. (Interview: NGO Consultant, 04/09/13).

Antigua NGOs assume that if global tourists stay in the bubble of Antigua their "rose coloured" views of Guatemala will not to be challenged. They will continue to see Guatemala through a tourist gaze and not come to know "real/poor Guatemala". They will, furthermore, not come to understand why and how they can, and should, help Guatemala and Guatemalans. In efforts to introduce "real Guatemala" to global tourists and inspire them to help, many Antigua NGOs bring "poor Guatemala" into Antigua through offering *virtual poverty tours*.

The concept of virtual poverty tours speaks to the symbolic movement of "slums" into consumptive spaces/places. As noted by various scholars, "slums" move and are globally consumed through movies (Diekmann & Hannam 2012), art exhibitions (Linke 2012), and by becoming trademarks which work to brand consumptive spaces/places and products (Freire-Medeiros 2013). The "travelling slum" allows Northern publics to tour places of poverty figuratively and imaginatively; tour participants' bodies remain removed from actual poverty. Through their storytelling events/activities, Antigua NGOs engage in the movement of Guatemalan "*asentamientos*" (shantytowns) or "*pueblos pobres*" (poor villages) – in the form of stories, photos, artefacts, and sometimes even "live beneficiaries" – into touristic spaces (e.g. cafes/restaurants/bars/hotels) in Antigua. In so doing, they create new (non-profit) touristic experiences to be consumed by global tourists in Antigua.

A clear example of such virtual poverty tours are the Antigua NGO lectures held every Tuesday at a popular tourist cafe. As one NGO lecture announcement states:

TALK: [NGO name][5], come learn about the problems facing the families of Guatemala and the ways in which [NGO name] is working every day to help solve them. Donation Q25. [...] (Revue, March 2013, p. 28)

In teaching global tourists about "the problems facing the families of Guatemala", such announcements and their corresponding lectures do a lot more than raise compassion and funds. Promoted and held within Antigua, they help to discursively reconstruct Antigua as not representative of "real Guatemala" in the minds of global tourists. Tourists coming across such NGO announcements are implicitly told that if they really want to know Guatemala (i.e. have an "authentic experience"), they need to attend an NGO lecture to "learn". Furthermore, through these announcements and their corresponding lectures Antigua NGOs position themselves as having special access to and a genuine willingness to share "real/poor Guatemala" – or "backstage Guatemala" – with global tourists. Indeed, in conversation with one NGOer they suggested that the Govern-

ment and for-profit tourism sector want to hide the "bad part" of Guatemala and not "make tourism out of the poor, of the reality of Guatemala" (Interview: NGO Tour Guide, 22/04/13). Conversely, in their efforts to strategically link to global tourists, Antigua NGOs are willing to show the "bad part" and, thus, *are* willing to "make tourism" out of "real/poor Guatemala".

But virtual poverty tours do not only offer global tourists "authentic" glimpses into "real/poor Guatemala", they also actively tell global tourists what they can and should do while in Guatemala. This is well-illustrated by another NGO lecture announcement:

TALK: [Founder name] founded [NGO name] in September 2011 out of a clear need to assist an indigenous family in [town name…]. [Founder name] helps them link to services such as health, employment, and education. Like so many, they want to create a better life for themselves and their children. […] Hear [founder name] talk more about this project and how you might help this family and others in [town name]. Q25. […] (Revue, April, 2013, p. 24).

While global tourists may attend a NGO lecture to learn about "real/poor Guatemala", scholars have noted that NGO representations of poverty have also been linked to feelings of "pity", "guilt", and ultimately "compassion fatigue" (Cameron & Haanstra 2008, p. 1479-80). Rather than evoke negative feelings and reactions, Antigua NGOs aim to empower and motivate global tourists to help. Indeed, many such lectures end with an invitation to join the NGO's email list, share the NGO story, come to visit the NGO (i.e. move from a virtual to an actual poverty tour), volunteer, donate and/or fundraise. Furthermore, such events are sold and consumed as "moral" tourism. Thus, global tourists attending such events – which usually ask for a small donation – are thanked for their contribution towards Guatemalan development (i.e. their contribution to the NGO). Without ever leaving their roles as tourist-consumers, global tourists can "feel good" about their role in Guatemala and enact "moral" tourist identities.

Yet not all NGO storytelling events/activities are so sombre. Other events steer on the side of touristic entertainment rather than education; instead of challenging the tourist gaze they embrace and utilize it. This is well-seen through the various cultural performances that Antigua NGOs host. As one NGO announcement states:

BENEFIT DANCE: Mayan dances by indigenous children from [NGO name] a local charity dedicated to helping more than 30 indigenous children in [town name]. They are working hard to keep these children in good health, to educate them and to preserve the local Mayan traditions such as the language and dance. Donation Q25. […] (Revue, February, 2013, p. 24)

The Maya, especially Maya women and girls who still wear their traditional clothing, have long been the key touristic signifiers of Guatemala (Little 2004); they are also one of the most disadvantaged groups in Guatemala with many NGOs dedicated to helping them. NGO storytelling events/activities such as the one advertised above can be understood as engaging in the non-profit commodification of the Maya; they draw upon tourist fascination with the "exotic Maya" as a means of attracting donations to be used to help the "poor Maya". The Maya become the

primary objects of the NGO gaze; they are seen as the most "in need" *and* the most "attractive" to help.

While not wanting to deny the transformative potentialities (especially for NGOs and global tourists) within these NGO-created educative/affective touristic spaces, it is also important to highlight how virtual poverty tours are embedded and implicated in the reiteration of various unequal imaginings and social relations. For example, through such poverty tours, global tourists are (re)produced as powerful and moral agents of development, whereas Guatemalans are largely (re)produced as poor, needy, and exotic victims. Indeed, such divisions remain unquestioned, as do the global structural inequalities which allow certain people to be sitting in a tourist cafe in Antigua learning about how they can and should help "Guatemalan Others". This NGO practice is, furthermore, not only implicated in the privatization and (non-profit) commodification of development, but also the touristification of the "objects of development". This is clearly highlighted by the "poor" children who are enrolled in touristic performances of Maya culture as a means of earning money for their sponsoring NGO.

3.2.2 *Actual Poverty Tours: Moving Global Tourists into "Poor Guatemala"*

Besides bringing "real/poor Guatemala" to global tourists in Antigua, some Antigua NGOs are also moving global tourists into "real/poor Guatemala"; they are offering *actual poverty tours*. The NGO rationale behind offering actual poverty tours is the assumption that the "firsthand [read: embodied] experience" of Guatemalan poverty and NGO projects will help create a stronger emotional, and thus financial, link between the tourist and the NGO. Some NGOs appear to bet on this. Thus, while many NGO tours are fee-based – and are thus used as a direct NGO fundraising mechanism – some are free or by donation only. Whether fee-based or by donation, Antigua NGO tours often follow a similar format. Hosted by NGOers, they take global tourists on a tour of the communities in which the NGO works; provide a description of the living conditions and challenges faced by the community; offer a look inside some spaces not usually open to tourists; visit the NGO project itself; provide information about what the NGO is doing to help; and, tell global tourists how they can help and/or get involved.

Studies of actual poverty tours have highlighted their growing popularity and suggested that tourists participate in them in their search for "authentic experiences" (Dyson 2012) and/or in their desire for adventure and "thrill" (Steinbrink 2012). As already noted, Antigua NGOs tend to present Antigua as "inauthentic" to global tourists. This is no more clearly seen than through their promotion of their actual poverty tours. For example, one Antigua NGO tour invites global tourists to "Step off the tourist trail... [and] See the real face of Guatemala" whereas another calls itself the "Experience Guatemala Tour", inviting global tourists to "experience the way real Guatemalans live and work!" Through such announcements global tourists quickly learn that "authenticity" starts where Antigua's city borders end. Having already highlighted how Antigua NGOs discursively link "the real" to "the poor",

and how NGO touristic offerings are sold and consumed as "moral" tourism forms allowing for the construction of "moral" tourist identities, here the focus turns to how – through their actual poverty tours – Antigua NGOs are securing and opening "poor" and "private" spaces/places to global tourists.

In Guatemala, known for its high levels of crime and violence (O"Neill & Thomas 2011), "getting-off-the-beaten-track" can be difficult and dangerous. Scholars of poverty tourism in other "dangerous countries" have noted government and tourism industry strategies used for the pacification of place and people making way for touristic consumption (Freire-Medeiros 2013). This begs the question of how small NGOs are able to secure global tourists outside of the "tourist bubble" of Antigua. One NGOer explains their ability to secure global tourists in "tough neighbourhoods" as an outcome of community gratitude. She states:

[W]e have a really, really, really good relationship with the community. [...] we've built up a really strong reputation for our NGO [...]. So when we're there it's kind of, there's like a mutual respect between community members and ourselves, especially when we're walking through some of the tougher neighbours up at the top of the hill where our [NGO school] kids come from. A lot of those families, either the family themselves have somebody, you know, related to them that's going to our school, or they have a neighbour that's going to our school, so there's a lot of confidence in those neighbourhoods that nothing is going to happen. (Interview: NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13)

As this NGOer indicates, the community is imagined as grateful towards the NGO and thus protecting of the NGO tour. But this NGO tour does not only walk around the community, it also brings global tourists into (normally) private spaces, including two family-run businesses. As the NGOer explains, these small businesses volunteered because they are grateful for the help and attention the NGO is bringing to their community; they are, thus, seen as grateful and generous:

[...] *neither of them are families that go to our school, or really have anything to do with our school, other than that they're really generous in letting us come once or twice a week, and take photos in their business. We give them a Christmas present every year [...] but that's really the only benefit that they get from it. They're getting no direct sales or anything. (Interview: NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13).*

These are highly positive interpretations. Without denying gratitude, we must not forget what underpins it. Guatemala has been progressively neoliberalized (Thomas et al. 2011) and "development" has largely been outsourced and privatized in NGOs, resulting in increased violence, poverty, and dependency on NGOs. The construction of positions of gratitude, in short, is highly political. Furthermore, a focus on gratitude – which works to affirm the presence and doings of NGOs and global tourists – may hide other, perhaps less affirmative, feelings.

Besides gratitude, which tends to bring up images of passivity, Guatemalans may also tactically engage with NGO tours as a survival strategy. For example, on one NGO tour I was brought inside a private home that had been built by the NGO. Before entering the home I asked the NGO tour guide how this space was

opened to the tour; he explained that the single-mother had volunteered because she was grateful to the NGO for building her a house. However, the simplicity of this reading was soon thrown into question. After meeting the single-mother, entering her family's one-room dwelling, and listening to the tour guide explain the construction process, the woman explained that she still did not have access to a stove or a source of water in her home; she asked the guide how she might get more help from the NGO. The tour guide deflected her inquiries and told her she would have to speak with her social worker. On the way out, the woman then asked how many more times she would have to host the tour. One interpretation of this interaction is that when further NGO help did not seem forthcoming, the NGO tour was no longer welcomed. While highlighting how Guatemalans may strategically engage with NGOs' touristic practices for their own benefit, the unequal power relationship between the NGO and the woman was made very clear when the NGO tour guide told her that it was *her* responsibility to find a replacement home for the tour if she no longer wanted to host it.

While actual poverty tours may be effective in showcasing NGOs' "good work" and creating emotional reactions in global tourists, they also bring "the private/domestic sphere into the public realm for the consumption of Western audiences" (Dogra 2011, p. 336) and, in so doing, they appear to deny the humanitarian principle of "respect for human dignity" (Manzo 2008). Indeed, due to this very concern, not all Antigua NGOs are willing to bring global tourists into private homes. An NGO tour guide explained that the number one complaint they receive about their NGO tour is that they *do not* take tourists inside a "poor person's home" (Interview: NGO Tour Guide, 22/04/13). As he suggests: tourists want to see "the real; they want to see everything", but at the same time:

They can't really, like, think about what, you know, what is the meaning if there's a group of ten people, foreign people, walking into their house and, like, taking pictures of their daily life and how, how poor they are. It's, they don"t think so much, actually, behind, I don't know. (Interview: NGO Tour Guide, 22/04/13).

However, while this NGO does not bring global tourists into a "poor person's home", it does bring them into another space not normally opened to touristic consumption: their NGO-run school. In fact, Antigua NGOs do not have to rely upon Guatemalan gratitude or generosity to open many new spaces to global tourists; rather, through the NGOization of health and education, they own them. *All* the NGO tours attended, for example, included a stop at their respective NGO projects, including: health clinics, community centres, and schools. One NGOer describes how bringing tourists to their NGO-run school is strategic, as it helps to develop tourists into future donors and/or child sponsors, but, she also states:

[...] it also kind of creates this weird zoo-like atmosphere at the school, where we have suddenly this group of white people like walking though our schools during recess [...] as kind of an outside person that's helping to facilitate this, you do feel kind of weird about the fact that you're like parading these people through to see your kids, when they're just like having a normal school day, you know. Um, so

we struggle with that little bit." (Interview: NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13)

This NGO negotiates the "weirdness" that ensues by asking tourists not to take pictures of the children in the school; they try to dampen the tourist gaze. But not all NGOs express this concern. On another NGO tour the guide specifically encouraged the tour participants to take pictures and interact with the children. This begs the question of how the tour participants (and foreign NGOers for that matter), would feel about global tourists coming to their children's schools to gaze, take pictures, and/or interact with them.

4 Conclusion: Guatemala as "Development Tourism Destination"

Most studies of the making of global tourism destinations focus on governments and the tourism industry. Switching focus, this article argued that more attention needs to be given to NGOs. In taking up this challenge, it started by identifying and mapping an emerging NGO-tourism nexus. As was suggested, NGOs' increased engagement with tourism can be linked to shifts in the global political economy of development, which has seen NGOs become the *key* international development actors and tourism become *the* development tool of the global South. As NGOs have proliferated around the world, so too has competition for global recognition, compassion, and funds. In looking for new ways to maintain their programmes, many NGOs are turning to tourism. Consequently, the privatization of development in NGOs has been accompanied by its (non-profit) commodification.

The article then moved to argue that this nexus is having considerable impacts on how some places in the global South are being seen, done, and connected to global tourism mobilities. As NGOs increasingly engage with tourism they are helping to (re)produce some places in the global South through an NGO gaze – a way of seeing which combines humanitarian and tourist gazes. The NGO gaze, thus, differs from the humanitarian gaze in that it is reserved for those places which have already been, at least partially, discursively and materially constructed as "tourism destinations". Seeing through an NGO gaze helps to (re)produce places to "do" both development and tourism; it helps make "development tourism destinations". Furthermore, in offering "development tourism" forms, NGOs have become key providers of development tourism experiences and, thus, are helping to touristically connect the global North to certain places in the global South. These processes, as was highlighted, can be seen as drawing upon and helping to reiterate both imagined and real hierarchical differences between the so-called "developing" and "developed" worlds and between "Others/Westerners".

Turning to the case study, the article explored the role of Antigua NGOs in (re) making "destino Guatemala". While the Guatemalan government and tourism industry are trying to attract global tourists through highlighting Guatemala's nature, history, and Maya culture – and downplay the "bad side" of Guatemala – as the NGO touristic practice of hosting storytelling events/activities highlights, Antigua NGOs are sharing the "bad side" with global tourists. In their aims to earn compassion and funds, Antigua NGOs tell sto-

ries of Guatemalan poverty to global tourists *already in* Guatemala and, in so doing, they instruct global tourists to not only see Guatemalan "beauty" but also Guatemalan "hurt"; they want to add a humanitarian gaze to global tourists' presuppose tourist gaze. This NGO touristic practice may be particularly potent in shifting ways of seeing Guatemala and Guatemalans. Their non-profit status and direct contact with "poor" places and people imbues Antigua NGOs' representations of "Guatemalan Others" as both trustworthy and authoritative. In learning to see Guatemala/Guatemalans through an NGO gaze, global tourists learn that Antigua is "inauthentic" *and* that Guatemala is a place to do tourism *and* development.

Antigua NGO storytelling events/activities also functionally act as forms of development tourism. More than offering global tourists something interesting to "do" in and around Antigua, they also try to empower and motivate global tourists to get involved in Guatemalan development; in a sense, they ask global tourists to become more than mere "tourists". However, NGOs also link "doing development" to the consumption of their touristic offerings. Thus, without ever having to leave their roles as "tourist-consumers", through the consumption of NGO touristic offerings, global tourists are thanked for their contribution to Guatemalan development, and, thus, can "feel good" and enact "moral" tourist identities. Furthermore, as seen through the case of actual poverty tours, NGOs are also helping make new touristic spaces. In using their powerful positions within the communities they work, Antigua NGOs are securing and opening "poor" and "private" spaces/places, as well as their own projects, to global tourists; they are, thus, helping to redraw the borders of "destino Guatemala".

While it is clear that Antigua NGOs engage in these practices as a means of supporting their efforts to help Guatemala and Guatemalans, even the best of intentions can have unintended consequences. As was suggested, Antigua NGOs' virtual/actual poverty tours help to discursively (re) produce the "developed global North/undeveloped Guatemala" distinction, as well as the hierarchical identity categories of the "compassionate/powerful/moral Westerner" and the "poor/needy/exotic/grateful Guatemalan". Furthermore, such practices implicate Antigua NGOs not only in the extension of neoliberalism through the (non-profit) commodification of development, but also the touristification of the people and places they aim to help. While these interpretations come down hard on Antigua NGOs, the NGOers spoken with also indicated their awareness of some of the problems associated with their touristic practices. They pointed to a "Catch 22", whereby tourism presents itself as a potent way to fund their programmes, but also includes the objectification of poverty and Guatemalans. In trying to attend to this, some Antigua NGOs are drawing borders around where they bring global tourists and what tourists are allowed to do in the spaces/places they bring them. Such critical NGO self-reflection ends this article on an optimistic note: the wider "doings" of the NGO-tourism nexus are open to reconfiguration[6].

Notes:

1 The fieldwork upon which this article is based was undertaken as part of the author's PhD research, which more widely looks at the embodiment of global tourism destination competition. In total, the author held 39 formal interviews and engaged in extensive participant observation in both the profit and non-profit sectors in Antigua.

2 Interviews: NGO Program Director, 10/09/13; NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13; NGO Executive Director, 04/09/13.

3 Interviews: NGO Program Director, 10/09/13; NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13.

4 Interview: NGO Operations Manager, 12/04/13.

5 All names of NGOs, towns, or founders have been removed so as not to draw particular attention, either positive or negative, to any particular NGO.

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