

# Paradise in the Making: The Complexities of Tourism Development in Honduras

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Honduras, like many other Latin American nations, is in a state of transition; it is caught between the troubled remnants of post-colonial dependency on American fruit companies, and the realization of an autonomous position within a globalizing world. As the country confronts the new millennium, it must battle widespread poverty, AIDS, class and racial struggles, and cultural as well as environmental degradation. Meanwhile, tourism is on the rise. For many Hondurans, this is an encouraging prospect, promising economic and social improvement. However, various forces and viewpoints exist, often conflicting with each other, on the subject of tourism development, each with serious implications for Honduras' people, environment, and future. Drawing on ethnographic interviews and participant observation conducted in June and July of 2006, within ten locations in Honduras, this research investigates the problematic nature of tourism development for Honduras. In particular, it focus's on peoples' motivations behind supporting large-scale, traditional tourism, microtourism, or ecotourism, and the particular implications each form of development has for local residents.

*On the global level...modernity has become experimental. We are all, willy-nilly, caught up in a grand experiment, which is at the one time our doing—as human agents—yet to an imponderable degree outside of our control... It is not an experiment in the laboratory sense... more like a dangerous adventure.*

Anthony Giddens, British advisor to the Prime Minister, Economist, and Social Theorist<sup>1</sup>.

## 1. Introduction

Millions of twinkling stars filled the night sky as I sat in a traditional, palm-thatched, open-air, cabana talking with three Garifuna<sup>2</sup> youth on the beach of Tornabé. A warm Caribbean breeze blew off of the sea and my companions spoke of the natural beauty of their beach and the relaxed, “tranquilo” nature of their town. Indeed, the mood was quite “tranquilo,” so I didn’t want to ruin it by expressing the thoughts that were presently troubling my mind. I was thinking of the massive 1600 room Los Micos Beach and Golf resort complex that is currently in the planning and initial development phase right next door to this sleepy Garifuna town, and what implications this development is probably going to have for the citizens of Tornabé. I thought of towering palms being replaced by resorts ten times their height and the hustle and bustle that will accompany the hundreds of cars and tourists that will pass through their town to get to the resort. I wondered, “Isn’t everything they are talking about going to change?” I kept quiet to keep from breaking the mood, but as we were leaving the beach I asked, “Homie, do you want the big hotels they are going to build? Do you want hotels like in Cancun?” Homie’s reply staggered me; he said, “Dame Cancun, somos pobre y necesitamos el dinero” (give me Cancun, we are poor and we need the money).

It is difficult to say exactly why Homie’s response surprised me so. I had been living in his town for three days at this point, experiencing poverty all around me, yet I believed that the people of this town would naturally oppose the large-scale tourism development slated for their communal lands. I thought preserving their present way of life would be the biggest priority, but the truth is, many Garifuna (especially those of the younger generation) are prepared to change their way of life to increase their income; even if there may be environmental and cultural costs.

Hondurans are facing pressure; pressure from poverty, the pressure of development from globalization, and from the influx of tourists seeking a unique experience. Inevitably, globalization presents opportunities for economic improvement, but historically at great environmental and socio-economic costs, contributing to increased separation between the rich and poor, as well as the erosion of cultural tradition<sup>3</sup>. Though experiencing rapid environmental

degradation,<sup>4</sup> Honduras still has many well-preserved ecosystems distributed throughout its countryside, including the largest tract of virgin tropical rain forest in the North American hemisphere<sup>5</sup>. A significant tension exists between the drive for economic development and environmental and cultural preservation. Appropriation of Honduran land for environmental preservation is on the rise, often to the dismay of citizens that rely on such lands for their livelihood. How can Hondurans embrace economic development, improve the quality of their lives, and protect their unique cultures and natural environment? Many entities have stepped up to express their answers to this question, most recently being primarily answers that include some form of tourism development, but these solutions often run contrary to the interests of many Hondurans that stand to be negatively affected by whichever particular form of tourism development they live near.

The viewpoints of those involved with tourism development often oppose each other, sometimes with violent consequences, particularly in the up and coming area of Tela Bay. Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), environmental special interest groups, Honduran activists, and universities, are promoting a model of “sustainable development” that touts ecotourism and microtourism<sup>6</sup> as the preferred vehicles for Honduran economic development, while the Honduran government and powerful investors promote large-scale, high-volume tourism and ecotourism oriented to the affluent. The International Ecotourism Society’s (TIES) website defines ecotourism<sup>7</sup> as, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”<sup>8</sup>.

Between June 8<sup>th</sup> and July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I was in Honduras working with two environmental groups and traveling to various Honduran communities. I joined UNCA’s first International Service-Learning class, which went to Honduras to participate in service projects intended to foster ecotourism-oriented development. It was in the context of this class, and my own additional travel after the class ended, that my research was conducted.

During this service-learning experience, named “International Experiential Learning in Honduras: Global Citizenship in Theory and Practice,” multi-disciplinary UNCA students and two instructors spent three weeks living and working with local Honduran environmental groups in communities and parks around the coastal cities of La Ceiba and Tela in the Atlantida department (state). Three weeks were spent at UNCA in the classroom and three more weeks were spent in Honduras working with the Fundación Cuero y Salado (FUCSA,<sup>9</sup>) and with the Fundación para la Protección de Lancetilla, Punta Sal y Texiguat (Prolansate<sup>10</sup>).

With the two environmental groups, we lived in the Garifuna town of Tornabé, and in the primarily Ladino<sup>11</sup> village of Barro Salado. I stayed in Honduras two weeks longer to continue the research and to experience Honduras’s various stages and forms of tourism, visiting and interacting with locals in popular and “out of the way” places.

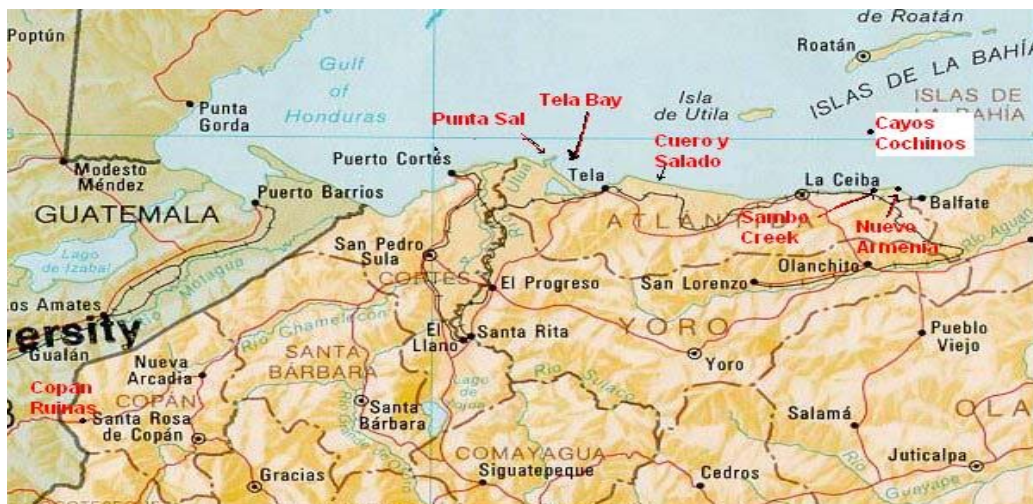


Image courtesy of CIA World Factbook

## 2. Methodology

My methods included participant observation within the context of the service-learning experience and the villages that hosted us. As ecotourism oriented development is already underway in Honduras, UNCA’s service-learning experience provided a medium through which I was able to observe, and participate in, the ground-level tourism development efforts, the environmental groups’ interactions with local communities, and, the primary objective of

the study, to observe the sentiments about tourism development held by community members through conversation, shared work experiences, and formal interviews.

Our service-learning group assisted the environmental organizations with various projects on a daily basis. In the other communities I visited, I experienced widely varying stages and forms of tourism; from a palm-thatched loft in a Garifuna village of fifty, to a bustling Danish-owned hostel in Copán Ruinas, the tourist town that grew up around the famous Mayan ruins of the same name. In addition, I spoke with, and conducted interviews with people involved in the two environmental organizations, the UNCA participants, and spent countless hours speaking and “hanging out” with community members and tourism entrepreneurs. Being in class with the UNCA participants for three weeks (prior to departure for Honduras) elicited extensive dialogue along the subjects of Honduras: history, poverty, foreign dependency, developmental concerns and obstacles, and about the role of ecotourism and environmental groups in Honduras today.

In the next section, Honduras in a Global Context, I assess Honduras’ history and current economic position within the world, providing a context for the sections Why Tourism? and Tourism in Honduras. Following discussion of Honduras’ forms of tourism, I discuss, briefly, the problematic role of waste management in Honduras and the resulting implications for tourism development. Next, I explore the factors contributing to people’s sometimes ambivalent, sometimes conflicting, desires for the course of tourism development. Within this section, titled Factors Motivating Involvement with Tourism Development, I name poverty, globalization, environmental and cultural degradation, violence and fear, and alienation and distrust as the responsible factors. In the conclusion, I summarize these complexities and, though I cannot directly offer solutions to bring all parties into agreement, I offer suggestions that may help improve the effects that tourism development has on local people.

I think it is important to convey what was probably the largest roadblock in the course of my research: My comprehension and fluency in Spanish had a limiting effect on the depth of my conversations with Hondurans. On average, I encountered about one person a day that spoke English (except in the Bay Islands where English is more widely used than Spanish). Though I can understand most of what people say in Spanish, my ability to convey complex concepts is limited and requires general terminology made complex by circumlocution and metaphors. Therefore, my conversations required patience on the part of the people I spoke with. People were not always willing to give me such patience and I understand. That said, I must say that Hondurans seem to have a lot of patience because most of the time, if I were to make the effort to communicate and show that I do know some Spanish, people would listen and engage in a conversation with me.

### 3. Honduras In A Global Context

The region, today called Honduras, was absorbed by Spain during colonization and remained a Spanish colony until 1821. Honduras became known as a “Banana Republic” because U.S. companies, United Fruit (Chiquita), and Standard Fruit (Dole), invested heavily in the country to supply the U.S. market with bananas and other tropical fruit. Because Honduras lacked infrastructure to access significant quantities of other internationally-marketable commodities, the fruit companies came to dominate Honduras’ landscape and economy<sup>12</sup>. Since 1899, the companies have been the backbone of Honduras’ economy, giving them incredible power in the country’s politics, power the companies used for their advantage. This condition shaped the course of Honduras’ evolution for the last century, making bananas the country’s only choice; all of Honduras’ metaphorical eggs were in one basket, a fruit basket. With nowhere else to turn for foreign revenue, Hondurans were absolutely dependent on the American fruit companies and market. United and Standard Fruit built infrastructure such as railroads and power plants and supplied income (direct from the U.S.) for the country’s citizens. The city of Tela was built around United Fruit’s headquarters, since moved to the industrial capital, San Pedro Sula. You can actually stay in the complex that used to house United Fruit’s top American executives; it has been converted into the Villas Telamar, a grand beachfront resort with a pool, a 9-hole golf course, and many other amenities.

In *Modern Latin America*, Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith outline the implications of dependent relationships between Latin American nations and members of the international market:

By its intrinsic character, “dependent development” generated inequities, allocating benefits to sectors participating in the world market and denying them to other groups. A typical case might involve a country whose economic growth relied on a *single export crop*, such as coffee or sugar. A national landowning elite, the planters, would collaborate with export-import merchants, often foreign, to sell the goods on an overseas market. Most profits would be restricted to those groups. The planters would use much of their

money to import high-cost consumer goods from Europe or the United States, and the merchants (if foreign) would remit profits to their home countries. The export earnings would therefore provide precious little capital for diversifying the local economy, thus creating a situation that some observers have labeled “growth without development” (emphasis added)<sup>13</sup>

The effect of these dependent relationships is hindered development of self-sufficiency. With inhibited self-sufficiency, dependent countries cannot break free of their dependent relationships; it becomes a vicious cycle<sup>14</sup>.

Alison Acker, author of *Honduras: The Making of a Banana Republic*, exemplifies United Fruit’s ambitions to dominate Honduras’ land, economy, and politics. She quotes an alleged letter, written in 1920, by United Fruit’s vice president, to the company’s lawyer. The letter outlines ten instructions designed to secure the company’s success in Honduras. Acker quotes:

1 So that our great sacrifices and enormous investments will not be made in vain, we must acquire and control as much national and private land as we can afford and absorb...

4 We must obtain concessions, privileges, franchises, exemption from obligations which might restrict our profits and those of our associates. We must put ourselves in a privileged position in order to impose our commercial philosophy and defend our economic interests...

9 We must disrupt the growing economy of this country and increase its problems in order to favour our own aims. We must prolong its tragic, stormy life, plagued with revolution; the wind must blow only upon our sails and the waves wet only our keels<sup>15</sup>.

Indeed, United Fruit seems to have been successful in carrying out these plans, but in the 1950’s, union activities began to erode the power of the fruit companies<sup>16</sup>. Though their power was in decline, the fruit companies continued to dominate Honduras’ exports and economy. The relationship made the fruit companies rich, but unfortunately, it didn’t make Hondurans rich. Just for a point of reference, the consumer price for a pound of bananas, at least at my grocery store, is \$0.49. Acker comments on the country’s social conditions when she says Honduras “sits at the bottom of the Central American list in terms of literacy, health care, nutrition, per capita income, life expectancy, and unemployment”<sup>17</sup>.

The Honduran government faces seemingly insurmountable foreign debt at \$3.1 billion. This equals 135% of the country’s export income and over 300% of its central government’s revenue<sup>18</sup>. Mauricio Diaz Burdett, Coordinator of the Social Forum for External Debt and Development in Honduras (FOSDEH) states, “The international community has pushed Honduras to the edge. If we don’t reach completion point now and get debt relief to implement social programmes, increasing poverty and social unrest will absorb the country”<sup>19</sup>. In 2000, in response to the widespread international outcry over the condition of developing nations’ international debts, the IMF and WTO approved a debt relief package for Honduras that is a part of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The plan spans over 20 years, and will save Honduras around \$900 million in debt service<sup>20</sup>. This is a long awaited indicator of a rise in compassion across borders. With Honduras’ debt relief in process, now is the time to pursue economic independence. Many people, both Honduran and foreign, support tourism for movement toward economic independence.

#### 4. Why Tourism

Though Honduras can no longer rely solely on bananas, tourism is proving to be a fruitful industry for many. In 2005, the total number of tourist arrivals to Honduras was 749,500, increasing by 138,900 since 2003. The annual revenues increased by US \$58.1 million, for a total of US \$431.3 million per year<sup>21</sup>. Costa Rica leads Central America in visiting tourists with 1,452,926 annually<sup>22</sup>.

Honduras’ previous president, Ricardo Maduro (term ended in early 2006), was so serious about tourism development as a vehicle for economic independence, he commissioned a 47 page “Investment Kit” outlining his vision for Honduras’ tourism development. This kit identifies dozens of key areas and projects that the government is promoting to foreign investors and describes, in detail, the project plans<sup>23</sup>. Maduro states: “Tourism has become one of the world’s largest industries, and the revenues it generates have grown increasingly important for the global economy. That is why my administration has made tourism a priority, believing that the industry will not only

benefit the country by creating new jobs and bringing in foreign currency, but also by strengthening our national identity, increasing development and competitiveness, and giving Hondurans a higher standard of living”<sup>24</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, many entities are expressing interest in tourism development. With various forms of tourism development available to Honduran people, tensions are rising between the groups that support one form over another for particular areas.

## 5. Tourism In Honduras

Tourism development is well under way in Honduras. Chris Humphrey, author of *Moon Handbooks: Honduras* claims that the Bay Islands and Copán are leading the country in sheer numbers of visitors, but the mainland’s north Caribbean coast comes in close behind<sup>25</sup>. I visited all three of these areas and the forms of tourism that I experienced can be generally classified into three categories: large-scale tourism, microtourism, and ecotourism; of course variations occur within these categories. The following three sub-sections discuss these forms and give specific examples from within Honduras, as well as identify each form’s positive and negative consequences.

### 5.1 large-scale tourism

“The phenomenon and growth of mass tourism has led to a range of problems, which have become increasingly evident and well publicized over recent years. They include environmental, social and cultural degradation, unequal distribution of financial benefits, the promotion of paternalistic attitudes, and even the spread of disease”<sup>26</sup>.

In the case of Honduras, investors see large income potential in an up and coming tourism market. The logic is impenetrable: get in while prices are low, hold out until they rise, and already have a foothold when the “boom” occurs. Therefore investors (implying those who have the capital to be investors) are strongly in support of large-scale development, and are often those who are making it happen. In Honduras, these are generally either foreign investors or those who are in the upper echelons of society. Their interests are obviously going to come first where returns on the investments are the priority and their power grants them influence over others. In an article promoting Honduras as a lucrative country to invest in, Gladys Acosta writes: “Honduras is a beautiful Central American country filled with opportunities. It is a beautiful place to live, to build a family, to own a home and to start a business. Honduras is an underdeveloped country on its way to development, growing by leaps and bounds. As a result, home and property values are growing. It is predicted that within 20 years Honduras’s population will double”<sup>27</sup>.

With large-scale tourism, foreign companies build massive resorts, hotels, and other tourist destinations, dominating and overwhelming the local areas. It does bring large numbers of tourists, and their money, but much of the income from the American resort comes back to the American economy. This is referred to as “leaking,” and it is estimated that in developing nations, over 50% of the income of foreign owned tourism projects is leaked<sup>28</sup>. American tourists bring American ideals, and cultural idiosyncrasies that find their way into local attitudes. These cultural exchanges, that are largely one-way, begin to change the local cultures as they adapt to cater to the tourists on the tourists’ terms, and to embrace the materialistic ideals of tourists with much more money and privilege. Hordes of tourists bring with them heavy demands on the local infrastructure and the local environment.

Unfortunately, this form of tourism development serves to alienate locals and create social divisions. The following story, taken directly from my field notes, highlights a case of alienation between foreign owned hotels, and the coastal community of Sambo Creek:

We arrived in Sambo Creek to find a boat to the Cayos Cochinos [archipelago]. As the bus drove through this Garifuna town, there were little or no signs of tourism. The end of the line for the bus was in front of the Hermanos Restaurante y Hotel, the only hotel we could find. The room was very small and grungy. It seemed like security may be an issue as the door didn’t lock. Our standards haven’t been very high on this trip, but these rooms were downright depressing. For the sake of security, we inquired if there was any other place to stay in town. The teenager that was showing us the room told us that we could walk up the beach a few minutes, and find two hotels owned by Canadians. So off we went. We walked across a little channel (luckily it was only thigh-deep) and past a group of Garifuna women and children playing and washing clothes in the brackish water flowing into the ocean. At this point, we acquired three young Garifuna boys.

When we got to the side-by-side hotels, the first thing I noticed was the eight-foot tall, iron fences that surrounded them. After giving the boys ten lempira for showing us the way, we entered while the boys remained standing at the gate. It was apparent that they believed they should not enter. This is significant, it points out an inside/outside dynamic between the hotels, and the community in which they are situated. Only about a half kilometer from Sambo creek, the hotels, the “Canadien” and “Emily’s Place,” were a stark contrast to the town. I later learned that there is little interaction between the hotels and the community; limited to seafood transactions, and occasional arrangements for trips to the Cayos Cochinos. To me, the most noticeable difference was the coloring. Sambo Creek had an overall tan, brown, yellow theme, while both hotels were predominately white, interlaced with green foliage and blue pools. Another noticeable difference was the absence of trash on the hotel grounds, contrasting the trash littering the streets and beach of Sambo Creek. Regardless, the Canadien had one Garifuna employee, but it seemed like we were in a completely different culture inside that fence.

On the bay island of Roatan, adverse results of large-scale tourism development were studied by Stonich, Sorenson and Hundt. Mowforth and Munt summarize their findings and report the following adverse affects: “increased social differentiation as a result of tourism developments; the assignment of the majority of Ladinos and islanders to low-status, low-paid, temporary jobs; reduced access for local people to the natural resources on which they depend for their livelihoods; escalating prices; land speculation; increased outside ownership of local resources; [and] deterioration of the biophysical environment”<sup>29</sup>.

Unchecked and rapid tourism growth on the Bay Island of Utila threatens an endemic Iguana species and the very reefs that are the island’s main tourist attraction. Only in the last four years, has Utila acquired 24-hour electricity, a fact made clear by the residual advertisements painted on hotel walls saying “we have 24-hour electricity.” The tourism industry is booming on this island, faster than the infrastructure can keep up. Waste management seems to be a major problem. I asked one resident what Utila did with its trash and she replied “I’m pretty sure they just collect it in a truck and then dump it in the mangroves.” Indeed, this seems to be the case. Taken directly from my field notes, the following describes my observations regarding trash management in Utila:

Walking in to the front of the motel, everything was clean. The buildings were white, the crushed coral driveway was white, most of the people were white, and there was no trash to be found. When we got to our room, I looked out of the window onto a marsh behind the hotel. I saw trash, tons of it, filling the edges of the marsh, extending into it from the back of every lot. The breeze coming in the window smelled putrid, like a landfill. Then I noticed the houses across the marsh. They were more like crumbling huts and I could see local islanders coming and going from them, probably off to work in a hotel, gift shop, or restaurant. It looked like complete squalor.

This condition exemplifies what can happen when tourism development outpaces economic improvements. Speaking with people who have visited other third-world tourist destinations confirms that similar conditions exist elsewhere. Though possibly avoidable, large-scale tourism is a dramatic contributor to increasing separation between the rich and the poor.

On the other hand, large-scale tourism brings jobs, infrastructure, and most importantly, lots of tourists and their money. President Maduro’s Investment Kit claims of the planned Los Micos Beach and Golf Resort project: “Two primary benefits will be the creation of new jobs and access to training programs for local residents. The principal direct social benefits that will accompany the project have been estimated as follows: The creation of 1,350 directly related jobs and an additional 3,760 indirectly related jobs for the Tela Bay zone. Approximately \$12 million in salaries for the zone. Improved quality of life for the Tela Bay population in areas such as sanitation, health and education”<sup>30</sup>.

In a statement on the Los Micos project’s official website, Thierry de Pierrefeu Midence of the Honduran Institute of Tourism said: “The ‘Los Micos Beach & Golf Resort’ has been conceived as a part of the Government’s long term strategy to promote tourism as a vital element for expanding our country’s economy. A newly created ‘Tourism Incentive Law’, a major cruise ship facility planned for the neighboring city of Tela, and an integrated regional development plan for the area surrounding ‘Los Micos’ are all key elements aimed at attracting investment in the hotel and residential development which will comprise ‘Los Micos’”<sup>31</sup>.

The Los Micos project's claims are difficult to ignore and certainly sound promising for much of Tela Bay's poverty stricken population. However, the location of the project (between the Garifuna town of Tornabé and the, still isolated, traditional Garifuna village of Miami) surely guarantees dramatic environmental and cultural change in these communities over the years to come.

## 5.2 microtourism

On the tourism spectrum, microtourism, perhaps occupies the complete opposite end from large-scale tourism development. Travelers that participate in microtourism are interested in a much more cultural experience than traditional, sun, sand, and resort tourism. With microtourism, local communities provide tourism services, including food, lodging, and guide services.

The only example of microtourism that I experienced in Honduras was my trip to the Cayos Cochinos (The Pig Islands). My travel companion, Libby, and I found two other travelers to share a hired boat from the Garifuna town of Sambo Creek to take us to the Cayos Cochinos, a small archipelago of lush, mostly undeveloped islands. There are two Garifuna villages, one resort, a scattering of vacation homes, and the Cayo Menor Marine Research Centre in the Cayos Cochinos. The islands were designated a marine national park in 1994. Since then, the only development to occur has been the research center, although construction is underway on a new small resort; just a sandbar away from Chachahuate, a sandbar that connects the islands during certain times of the year.

The boat arrived at the beach in front of our hotel at seven in the morning. It was a medium sized fishing boat, about fifteen feet long, with a crew of two Garifuna men. After boarding, the boat throttled straight out to sea. After a few minutes and introductions, the driver had his partner take over the controls while he unraveled a roll of fishing line into the sea behind him. Sure enough, a few minutes later, the boat came to an abrupt stop and the driver pulled in a small tuna. The journey took us an hour and a half, and twenty-five miles into the Caribbean Sea before we reached the Cayos Cochinos. Our first stop was at the Research center's dock where we each paid an armed Honduran soldier our US \$10 park entrance fee (It is US \$5 for Hondurans). Next was on to a tiny coral cay for three hours of snorkeling. Intricate networks of coral reef surround and connect the roughly fifteen islands of the Cayos Cochinos, all in remarkably excellent health. When we got hungry, the boat driver took us to the Garifuna island-village, Chachahuate, where we were greeted by several children holding sticks draped with handmade shell necklaces. Upon inquiring about a place to sleep for the night, we were quickly taken to Karol's house.

The room was in the loft of Karol's palm-thatched, small house, and was the only place to stay on the island. There was no electricity or running water, but somehow they were able to supply cold drinks and a car battery supplied power to a small light bulb to eat dinner by. The cool sea breeze kept the loft at a reasonable temperature. For about US \$50, I stayed for one night, had two meals, and was taken by a local guide, Orelío, to Cayo Mayor, the largest of the islands, to search for the locally famous Pink Boa. This price also included a boat ride to Nuevo Armenia, back on the mainland.

This example of microtourism suggests that all tourism in Honduras doesn't have to be a grand development project, yet can directly benefit the people of a small community. The money I spent on this excursion went directly to: two Sambo Creek residents, the Cayos Cochinos Marine Research Centre, and a few families in Chachahuate. If I would have gone with a tour company, the overall price would have been much higher, and it would have gone primarily to a La Ceiba or Roatan based tour operator.

However I do not want to suggest that microtourism will solve the country's problems, nor can I say that this form of tourism appeals to everyone. The simple fact is that for most vacationers, tourism is exactly that, a vacation; the amount of work and uncertainty that comprised this journey far exceeds the work and uncertainty involved with traditional tourism. In addition, the existing infrastructure supporting such tourism is minimal, to say the least. If there had been any other tourists staying on the island, we simply would not have been able to stay there.

Even if microtourism projects expanded across Honduras, the number of tourists that could be supported would not come close to the numbers possible with large-scale tourism development. I asked Orelío what he thought about tourism in the Cayos Cochinos. He said that most people only come for a few hours and stay either at the resort, or somewhere on the mainland. I asked Orelío what he thought about the lobster regulations and whether tourism is making up for the loss in income. He stated: "when they made us reduce the number of lobsters we catch, our income dropped a lot. Since then, I still catch lobsters but not as many, we try to make that money through tourists, but there are not enough. We're lucky if they buy a necklace and a soda."

### 5.3 ecotourism

Donald Reid, author of *Tourism, Globalization and Development: Responsible Tourism Planning*, says, “Ecotourism operations developed in a manner that protects the natural resources it takes advantage of, and educates visitors about their fragility, are seen by many environmental organizations as often the most appropriate use of the resources in question”<sup>32</sup>. Ecotourism tends to focus on the cultural aspects of a destination more than large-scale tourism does and less than microtourism does, although the natural environment is ecotourism’s main focus. Among Honduras’ natural and cultural virtues are: virgin rainforests and cloudforests, colorful and friendly people, beautiful beaches, a large amount of “unspoiled wilderness,” and archaeological treasures.

Ecotourism promotes a locality’s unique natural features; it doesn’t create a generic resort experience. This is not to say that ecotourists never stay in resorts. Nor does this mean that there aren’t eco-resorts; like the far from generic Lodge at Pico Bonito. Humphrey states,

One of the finest hotels in Honduras, Lodge at Pico Bonito, provides a taste of what tourist development can look like if done well. Nestled up against the emerald-green flanks of the Pico Bonito range are 22 wood and stone cabins. . . . The location is really superlative—hundreds of species of birds as well as occasional troops of monkeys and other animals frequently venture down from Pico Bonito to sample the fruit trees around the lodge<sup>33</sup>.

Prices run between US \$95 and \$125 per night; this is about twice the cost of a room in one of the largest hotels in La Ceiba, the Hotel Gran Paris, and ten times the price of a room at an average locally owned hotel. A few eco-resorts being the exception, ecotourism in northern Honduras primarily takes the form of “eco-tours.”

Most eco-tours that I experienced, or learned about, were day trips, departing from cities with city-based companies and guides. Two companies are leading northern Honduras down the ecotourism path, providing (mostly) day trips to the area’s national parks, Garifuna Tours of Tela and La Moskitia Ecoaventuras of La Ceiba. Garifuna Tours’ website describes a day-trip to Laguna de Los Micos:

As a unique specialist tour, this excursion involves a launched tour by ferry of the country’s second largest lagoon, as well as an afternoon’s stay at the most typical Garifuna village in Honduras, Miami – both situated right on the ocean’s edge. The lagoon derives its name from the white-faced monkeys or ‘micos’ which frequent the mangroves. Laguna Los Micos is truly an astounding birdwatcher’s paradise, with over 350 species sighted. A tour of the channels and islets will reward you with both an eco-adventure, and the chance to see the skillful Garifuna fishermen at work, casting their nets.<sup>34</sup>

This tour is typical to those offered by Garifuna Tours. Lodging is limited to the cities in which the tours originate. With no places to stay at the end destinations, the only income generated for the communities that are visited is in exchange for lunch, and in some cases, a local guide. In other words, the communities situated the closest to the eco-tour destinations are, quite often, barely benefited by the tourism.

La Moskitia Ecoaventuras offers trips that are more adventurous. The company’s proprietor, Jorgé, offers expeditions up to 14 days in some of the most remote regions of Honduras. A short, solid, energetic man, Jorgé took me whitewater rafting on the Rio Cangrejal; a river flowing out of Pico Bonito National Park, through a rainforest gorge and into La Ceiba. He had two guides and a driver that helped with the trip. In the case of his multi-day trips, Jorgé takes his customers deep into wilderness areas where they stay in small, isolated towns when not camping.

Jorgé’s tours bring income to villages that are situated far from development. Some of these villages are so remote, large-scale tourism is not even an option. For example, Las Marias, a village visited on Jorgé’s Mosquito Coast expedition<sup>35</sup>, sits a day’s journey up the Rio Platano by motorized dugout canoe (locally known as a “Tuk Tuk”). The village is a Miskito and Pech<sup>36</sup> community deep inside the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve, far removed from “civilization”<sup>37</sup>.

Though ecotourism in Honduras is living up to its definition – environmentally responsible and improving the well-being of locals – the income it produces is only significant for a small proportion of the population, generally limited to the agencies in charge of the National Parks, a few people in a few villages, and a few employees.

Citizens of Tornabé, located along the Laguna de los Micos and in close proximity to an ecotourism jewel, Punta Sal, receive little in the way of ecotourism revenues, a fact made penetratingly clear by one young Garifuna man's statement that he had "not seen a tourist in Tornabé for a month" whereas, tourists line the streets every day in the nearby city of Tela and visit the point of Punta Sal. As responsible and promising (for some) as ecotourism seems to be, dramatic and widespread economic improvement through ecotourism does not appear to be a reality, or even likely, for most local communities.

## **6. Waste Management's Implications For Tourism**

In western cultures waste management poses a set of problems only for people whose job is to manage waste; non-rural citizens generally do not have to worry about the things they throw away. Trash cans are all over our cities and towns, curbside trash pickup is also standard in our cities and towns, and intricate systems exist to get the trash out of sight, and out of mind. Therefore, we have developed an ideal that places should be clean of trash and that it is immoral to "litter." As a result, western tourists leave their home countries and expect the same convictions in their destinations.

The situation could not be any more different for most Hondurans. Systems for managing waste vary from place to place in Honduras, yet they are never as intricate or comprehensive as average western waste management systems. In most of the places I visited, trash was literally everywhere. I constantly smelled burning trash and witnessed countless examples of people dropping their trash on the beach, in the water, on the streets, in the graveyards, etc... without a second thought. I speculate that this is because there are very few public trash cans and dealing with waste is a moderate amount of work for most. Working with FUCSA in Barro Salado, our group spent a total of about 40 man hours digging pits and burying trash while contending with termites, scorpions, and underground bees.

Honduras' waste management issues present problems for tourism, especially for ecotourism and microtourism; where nature and immersion in local towns and villages bring tourists face to face with the issues. In my opinion one of the most striking contrasts between Copán Ruínas and other Honduran tourist destinations was the absence of trash on the streets. High-volume tourism puts pressure on Copán's citizens to keep their town clean. Trash cans are on nearly every street corner and in the early mornings, one can observe people sweeping the streets.

On the island of Chachahuaté, there were signs, in Spanish, posted on trees around the village reminding locals to keep their island free of litter, for the sake of tourism and the environment. Indeed, it seemed to work, as the island was mostly free of litter. I asked my guide to Cayo Mayor, "What does Chachahuaté do with their trash?" His response was: "We used to take it out into the sea and drop it off our boats, but one day, the sea started bringing it back to our beach. Now we take it to the mainland and put it in Nuevo Armenia's dump." I did not see Nuevo Armenia's dump, but I imagine it is similar to other "dumps" I saw in Honduras; piles of trash in the forest, over a steep incline, or in a swamp.

If Honduran communities are aiming to increase tourism in their communities, especially ecotourism and microtourism, they will likely need to follow Copán's and Chachahuaté's examples. Alternately, large-scale development projects will bring infrastructure upgrades that may present structural solutions to many local waste management issues.

## **7. Factors Motivating Involvement With Tourism Development**

What motivates the varying opinions about the course of tourism development in Honduras? What drives people to participate, or to not participate in tourism development in their area? The answers to these questions suggest that it is an issue of perspective. Life experiences condition people to value some things over others; contributing to perspectives that shape people's opinions about tourism. In this section, I identify the factors that motivate people's participation in Honduran tourism development, and the corresponding perspectives that characterize the people subject to these factors.

### **7.1 poverty**

Honduras has nearly 10% inflation per year, down from 23% in 1990, after America's involvement in the Contra wars. 66% of the nation's people live in poverty<sup>38</sup>, and their per capita GDP is only \$2,900 USD<sup>39</sup> with 28% unemployment<sup>40</sup>, so it is understandable that Honduras' citizens desire an increase in their standard of living<sup>41</sup>. I visited five villages that did not even have electricity or running water; two of these, Miami and Chachahuaté, were Garifuna settlements, two were indigenous villages, and the other was Barro Salado, a Ladino village.

Poverty, the lack of any expendable income, leaves most Hondurans powerless to take tourism development into their own hands. They certainly can not afford to compete with foreign investors. Therefore, besides activism<sup>42</sup>, and choosing (sometimes) who to sell land to<sup>43</sup>, Honduras' poor have little control over the course of tourism development, sometimes even in their own back yards.

In the case of Tela Bay, Americans have historically been the major investors with United Fruit. Therefore, it is Americans that have brought roads, railroads, electricity, and other additions to the local infrastructure. The whole time, the Garifuna have been at the whims of the investors. In Tornabé, I was talking with an older Garifuna man about Americans coming to his town; tourists, environmentalists, and other volunteers. I asked him if he thought that white people come to his town and tell him how to live, what to value, and what his future will be. He agreed that this is what they do, but when I asked him how he felt about this, he shrugged and said "I let them do what they want to do, they only bring good things and what can I do about it anyway? So I don't say anything." When I asked what good things white people were bringing, his answer was "money." Herein lays the reality. Poverty is a major issue for many Hondurans, especially for the Garifuna. Nearly anything that promises more money is regularly seen as good. It is the "whites" who have money in this case, "wealth," in fact. I recall being called "rich" by a child one time after I declined his request for money. When I asked him why he thought I was rich, he replied that "todos de los Americanos son ricos (all Americans are rich)." In truth, I *am* rich compared to most Garifuna, whether I can give to every child that asks for money or not. Regardless of *how* I got the money to travel to Honduras, simply that I could do it, and that most Garifuna can barely afford the bus to go to Tela (about US \$1.50), and that I had a camera, a voice recorder, and a car back in the states, makes me, by default, comparatively rich.

I was discussing poverty's role in development motivations with an American friend when she gave me an example from her own experiences in Puerto Rico. Driving with a Puerto Rican friend, she passed a stretch of road lined with hotels that, in years prior, had been an undeveloped stretch of beach. My friend mentioned that she thought it was sad that this stretch of beach was developed and her friend replied that it was a good thing, that he doesn't see a loss of nature, but a gain of income.

As discussed earlier, the Los Micos Beach and Golf Resort promises jobs, infrastructure, and income to the Tela Bay area's poor, while ecotourism only benefits a few. The thing that many western and/or middle-class opponents to large-scale tourism development fail to give credit is that people who are this poor face daily logistical issues. Many people reading this have probably, at some point in their life, been financially broke and uncertain about when, or from where, they will receive money. This is a daily concern for Honduras' poorest people. Only 9.53% of Honduras' land is considered arable<sup>44</sup> and of that land, fruit companies and the country's affluent land owners own most of it<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, land is scarce for people with no money; agriculture must be supplemented with purchasing food, which requires income. The money earned by the existing ecotourism infrastructure in the towns of Tornabé and Miami is sporadic and limited to those few Garifuna who were lucky enough to get involved with Prolansate or Garifuna Tours, namely a few guides and cooks. To make a long story short, when someone constantly wonders where their next meal will come from, and entire days must be devoted to earning enough money to eat, anything promising more access to money begins to look quite attractive. The simple and unfortunate fact is that Ecotourism and Microtourism are showing poor Hondurans little in the way of economic improvement while high-volume tourism produces significant Lempiras (the Honduran currency) and, even better, American Dollars.

## 7.2 globalization

In a historical sense, globalization is nothing new. What is relatively new, is the much more penetrating form of globalization today, characterized by free-market capitalism, international investment, and nearly instant exchange of information via television and the internet; we can be anywhere around the world within a day. Globalization has hundreds, if not thousands, of implications for unique cultures all across the world. Many times, the implications may generally be understood as good, such as the sharing of technological advancements or international movements for human rights. Other times, globalization's implications are generally considered bad, like when cultural tradition is drastically threatened or degraded. I picture Islamic fundamentalists with rocket launchers and McDonald's in Tibet.<sup>46</sup>

Not only are the media and corporations advancing globalization, huge numbers of tourists are too. Even my small service-learning group was responsible for some "Americanization." The children were infatuated with the iPods and digital cameras that people in our group were using. Toward the end of our stay in Tornabé, one of the many children that had been interacting with us throughout the week snuck into a dorm room and stole a digital camera. With help from some local friends we made, the camera was recovered a day later, after the entire neighborhood descended on the Prolansate bunk house/community center for the impromptu "trial" of the accused children. The

Tela Tourism Police even came and then left with one of the children. I saw him the day we left Tornabé. I asked him why he took the camera. He told me that he was going to sell it in Tela because he didn't have any money. Unfortunately, my conversation was cut-off at that point because the bus arrived to take us to Tela.

Several older generation Garifuna people I talked to expressed concern over the trend in Garifuna youth to be more materialistic, desiring clothes and electronics represented in media images from the US. Most of the English spoken by the Garifuna teens that I interacted with was song lyrics. They expressed fascination with our culture and the things we brought with us. Many "thug" mannerisms depicted in American pop-culture were portrayed by these young Garifuna.

What the Garifuna elders consider to be a threat to the perpetuation of their culture, is also a threat to the environment. The kind of money required to buy the things that we so often take for granted does not come easily for most Garifuna. Therefore, the Garifuna youth that I talked to favored large-scale tourism development, an industry historically detrimental to the environment. Recall the Garifuna youth saying "Dáme Cancun" (Give me Cancun). This sentiment seemingly contradicts their pride for their naturally beautiful Caribbean surroundings. Nevertheless, the primary objective seems to be to increase their income, understandably. Therefore, high-volume, large-scale, tourism seems the most promising. The number of tourists that visit is what truly decides the country's income, and resorts inevitably bring more tourists than eco-tours do.

There is a flip side to the globalization coin however. Along with western ideals of materialism, individualism, and success, may come ideals of environmental and cultural "preservation." However, in light of the extreme poverty experienced by many Hondurans, environmental preservation may seem quite like a "luxury" rather than a necessity.

### 7.3 declining quality of the environment and cultural degradation

Activists, concerned for the declining environment and threats to cultural preservation, feel the need for economic development and for protecting their cultural distinctions. Therefore ecotourism and microtourism are popular answers posed by this group. Commonly, those who have the ability to devote time and energy to these interests represent Honduras' middle class and therefore don't necessarily have the perspective held by those in extreme poverty. That said, Honduras' environment *is* under threat.

Deforestation and environmental destruction are not only immediately harmful to the environment, but have serious implications for the future. A natural disaster like a hurricane is compounded when there is a lack of forests to absorb the heavy rains. Runoff causes massive erosion and flooding. In 1998, hurricane Mitch caused \$2 billion in damage and killed 5,600 people in Honduras alone, as it dropped over 36 inches of rain on the country. 70% of the country's crops were destroyed<sup>47</sup>. These astronomical figures would have been even greater if the country were any less forested<sup>48</sup>.

Though poverty stricken, Honduras is a land with many environmental assets<sup>49</sup>. At 112,500 km<sup>2</sup>, and 5.5 million people, the country has around 107 federally protected areas. Among these are 15 national parks, 12 natural monuments, 11 biological reserves, 10 wildlife refuges, and 7 planned protected areas. The largest tract of virgin tropical rain forest in the North American hemisphere is in Honduras; a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve is 525,500 hectares<sup>50</sup>.

Threatening these environmental assets, Honduras faces environmental challenges. Among these are, development based on free-market capitalism that takes advantage of the area's lack of zoning and environmental regulation and American companies using chemicals (mostly pesticides like DDT) banned in the US, yet manufactured here<sup>51</sup>.

The Tela Bay is experiencing significantly more tourism than in its past, and many people are excited about this. On the other hand, environmental and cultural degradation is spreading. Some people are noticing this and taking action. The Non-Governmental Organization known as Prolansate (Fundación Para la Protección de Lancetilla, Punta Sal, e Texiguat) focuses its environmental protection efforts solely in Tela Bay while promoting and developing ecotourism. I spent a week working with Prolansate and learned that their environmental protection measures are making a difference in the area. They manage the national parks in the area, develop trails and ecotourism infrastructure, collect park usage fees, and have been the primary environmental activists for the area. They bought and planted hundreds of blight-resistant Pacific Coconut Palms in the park and in the nearby villages, eighty of which the service-learning volunteers planted. Prolansate fought, unsuccessfully, the sale of communal Garifuna lands between Tornabé and the Traditional Garifuna settlement of Miami to foreign investors seeking to build the massive Los Micos Beach and Golf Resort. Golf courses are maintenance intensive and that includes the use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. Just a narrow strip of land between the Caribbean Sea and Laguna de los Micos, the area in question may experience dramatic chemical runoff, reducing the local fish population. These are the fish that local Garifuna depend on for their food and income.

Honduras' protected areas also face the problems associated with undermanagement. A lack of resources to devote to protected areas means that they are underfunded, understaffed, and there is a lack of education about protecting the areas. The lack of resources also permits illegal logging and poaching, and creates an inability to effectively repel widespread slash and burn agriculture encroaching into the country's protected areas.

Some environmentalists, like George Schaller, suggest that even ecotourism development will negatively affect the protected areas. In an interview with National Geographic he says: "There are certain natural treasures in each country that should be *treated* as treasure, and it is up to conservation organizations to fight on behalf of the special places. Too many of these organizations have lost sight of their purpose. Their purpose is not to alleviate poverty or help sustainable development. Their purpose must be to save natural treasures"<sup>52</sup>. Schaller's position is one of complete protection and non-use. He cites his reasoning for this position as preserving biodiversity and maintaining a model of what the forest is *supposed* to look like so that in the future, forest rehabilitation will be an option. This example provides a testament to the importance of perspective. This is not intended to be a criticism against Mr. Schaller; his position is as equally valid as the many other voices in environmental protection and tourism development. However, this position becomes problematic because most westerners do not rely on their protected areas for survival, while many Hondurans do.

In some cases, necessity has caused environmental preservation to be desired by the locals. An example is the Cayos Cochinos. This is a fragile ecosystem, including the lobsters that are a source of Garifuna income. Concern for the declining population of lobsters (being collected by Garifuna and sold to restaurants and distributors) and the fragility of the reef system caused both the Garifuna and environmentalists to support turning the archipelago into a national park. The result is the ensured sustainability of lobster harvesting and protection of the islands' ecosystems. More, in-depth, studies still need to be conducted to evaluate the impacts of these changes on the locals, the Research Center suggests many topics for dissertations, from biological surveys, to ethnographic studies about Garifuna income trends from lobster fishing and tourism<sup>53</sup>.

## 7.4 violence and fear

There are many reasons for Hondurans to stand back from an active role in their country's development. In the Tela Bay region of northern Honduras, violence against environmental and Human Rights activists has been a consistent problem. This aggression has instilled a sense of fear among people who may have, otherwise, chosen to become active voices in discussion with the powerful forces of landowners, the government, and developers.

My discussion of violence and fear takes place entirely within the context of the Tela Bay region of Honduras, though such conditions exist elsewhere in the country. This beautiful bay is inhabited primarily by Garifuna settlements and the small city of Tela. It consists of around twenty miles of mostly undeveloped beach, with the overwhelming majority of tourism development concentrated solely in the city of Tela. Parque Nacional Jeannette Kawas, or "Punta Sal," on the far western end of Tela Bay, consists of the Laguna de los Micos and miles of tropical jungle culminating in a mountainous point; Punta Sal. Fishing in the lagoon is the primary source of food and income for locals.

One of the two founders of Prolansate, Jeanette Kawas, was allegedly assassinated in 1995 by Guatemalan mercenaries representing Honduran land owners up in arms against appropriation of land for the park<sup>54</sup>. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, days after leaving Tela Bay, Jessica Garcia, a community leader of San Juan Tela, had her life and her children's lives threatened while being forced at gunpoint to sign over some communal lands to a real estate company<sup>55</sup>. About a month after my departure from the area, another form of aggression was enacted against an activist in San Juan Tela. Americas.org reports that, "19-year-old Mirna Isabel Santos Thomas, on 6 August [, 2006]... was reportedly taken from her house by a group of men who had their faces covered and were carrying AK-47 rifles. Her body was found by the side of a road outside the village. To date, nobody has been arrested for her kidnap and murder"<sup>56</sup>. She was a member of the Honduran Fraternal Black Organization (OFRANEH), dedicated to stopping the sale and development of Garifuna communally owned lands.

The list of acts of aggression against Tela Bay activists continues with arson, general intimidation and harassment, and bogus drug charges, putting one activist in jail for seven years. The Honduran government, with little prosecution, or even acknowledgement of these crimes, offers little hope in protecting the lives of Garifuna activists<sup>57</sup>. One quickly deduces that fear of persecution may be responsible for non-action on the part of individuals contemplating resistance to the forces of development in Tela Bay.

## 7.5 alienation and distrust

The following examples I pose illustrate various forms of alienation between locals and the people involved with tourism development in their area. Alienation fosters distrust, further complicating relations between those involved with tourism development and those who are not.

In Tornabé, there was general distrust for Prolansate; the community center was relatively unusable to the locals with locked doors and a meeting room literally filled to the brim with items being stored by Prolansate. All but two of the people contracted by Prolansate were Ladino and though I did not observe signs of racism between these groups, racism does exist and is observable between the greater Ladino population and the Black Garifuna population. Libby told me an example of this racism that happened in her presence in Tela: “I was walking with Homie and John [Garifunas from Tornabé] when these Ladino guys came up and said ‘Hey! Why are you blacks walking with that white girl?’”

A dichotomy must also exist between developers of the Los Micos project and the locals; walking toward a villa being built on the edge of Tornabé (the first sign of the Los Micos project being started), I was approached by a truck with two Ladino contractors in it. They briskly asked me where I was going and when I responded that I didn’t know, they directed me to turn around and go back to where I came from.

In Salado, the Visitor’s center is a brand new solar-powered oasis in the middle of a village that has no electricity and few buildings with plumbing. I can only imagine the self-consciousness that arises in the locals’ minds. Unlike Tornabé, the locals here regarded our group with general distrust.

In the rural area outside of Copán Ruinas, Mayan descendants are faced with a poorly planned water system, a gift from an Italian aid agency that cannot bring water up the hill to their village. The system used PVC, rather than more substantial pipes in the middle of the jungle. A nearby village received a brick-making machine that makes cinder blocks flawlessly, but the aid group that donated the machine neglected to consider that there was no road to transport the bricks away from the village. It has taken years for the locals to convert their trail that leads to a highway into a road, and there are still unfinished sections as rock must be cut away by hand. Meanwhile, they can only sell what they can carry for miles on foot. Tourism has not yet reached these folks, only accessible by foot trails.

Who are Hondurans to believe? The environmentalists say that ecotourism is going to bring income and that large-scale tourism is going to bring environmental and cultural devastation. Meanwhile the investors and government say that large-scale tourism is necessary for true economic improvement, even at the expense of environmental and cultural preservation. The western world is sending images of affluence, readily embraced by the poverty stricken populace. Meanwhile strong cultural pride courses through the veins of the Garifuna as well as pride in beautiful lands. Feelings of alienation and distrust seem to cause many Hondurans to elect not to get involved, but in the case of Honduran tourism development, non-action is, action in and of itself.

## 8. Conclusion

Honduras’ post-colonial development has been characterized by foreign dependency and poverty, conditions that have inhibited the country’s chances for self-sufficiency. Tourism is becoming a major contributor to the economy; promoted by Honduras’ citizens and government alike, as well as the international community. The particular models promoted for Honduran tourism development often conflict with each other, representing interests of people with widely varying perspectives about environment, culture, and economy.

Large-scale tourism, microtourism, and ecotourism are the three primary models of tourism development available to Hondurans, each with its own set of implications for the Honduran people and environment; good and bad. Generally, it can be said that people who support large-scale tourism are focusing on structural economic improvement, supporters of microtourism focus on cultural preservation and local economic improvement, and ecotourism’s proponents are focused on environmental preservation and regional economic improvement. Obviously, there can be no singular model for tourism development in Honduras. All three forms I have highlighted will need to be developed further for tourism to produce the kind of income Hondurans desire and to protect Honduras’ environmental and cultural treasures. The true problem is deciding *where* each form of tourism is going to be implemented, and *who* gets to decide.

It seems that many involved in tourism development in Honduras evaluate the issues through their perspectives and tend to avoid a degree of empathy for those that oppose their form of development. I argue that this empathy is exactly what is needed in order for the most environmentally and culturally responsible decisions to be made about

the implementation of tourism development for a particular area. These decisions will not be easy because they will have real and lasting effects on local Honduran communities and environments. Therefore, efforts to educate Honduras' marginalized communities will empower them to make more informed decisions; decisions that have profound effects on their environmental, cultural, and economic futures, as well as make them more competitive in their personal economic pursuits. That said, there very well may be a "healthy mix" of these three forms of tourism development; a mix that ensures increasing income, environmental and cultural preservation, and an increase in local populations' quality of life.

It is time we re-evaluate our perspectives on development in Honduras. Like most problems we face, answers are rarely black and white. The same is true for tourism development in Honduras. The powers behind tourism development must increase their attempts to reconcile the desires of locals, and the locals must increase their attempts to be heard, for it is the locals who have the most at stake.

## 9. Endnotes

1 Anthony Giddens, 2002 p. 59

2 The Garifuna, also known as the "Black Caribes," inhabit a large portion of the Caribbean coast of Central America, from Belize to Nicaragua. They are all descendants of a grand slave ship escape in the waters off of the Caribbean island of St. Vincent. In Honduras, the Garifuna are generally isolated from the majority, with their own villages and towns.

3 Reid, 2003

4 Stonich, 1989

5 Honduras Tips, 2006

6 Microtourism is here defined as travel to destinations where small-scale tourism services are provided by local communities, or community members, and where the income is received directly by the community (or community members). This is opposed to non-local investors, tour operators, and foreign investors owning and managing the local tourism infrastructure. This concept is discussed under the *Tourism in Honduras* heading.

7 A definition for ecotourism that is, perhaps, more appropriate for Honduras is discussed under the *Tourism in Honduras* heading.

8 The International Ecotourism Society, 2007

9 <http://www.geocities.com/fucsahn/>

10 <http://www.prolansate.org>

11 Ladinos, commonly referred to as "Mestizos," make up the majority of the Honduran population. In Central America they are generally considered to be the middle class (between Amerindians and the Ruling Class). In the case of Salado, "middle class" is strictly a title, as their economic power is essentially non-existent. Culturally, Ladinos are the Spanish-speaking descendants of Central American Indians and the Spanish colonizers.

12 Acker, 1988

13 Skidmore and Smith, 2005, p. 8

14 Skidmore and Smith 2005

15 Acker, 1988: 65-66

16 Country Studies 1993

17 Acker 1988, p. 11

18 IMF, 2000

19 FOSDEH 2004, p. 1

20 IMF, 2000

21 Honduras Institute of Tourism *Statistical Overview*, 2005

22 Costa Rica Institute of Tourism, 2005

23 Honduras Institute of Tourism *Investment Kit*, 2005

24 Honduras Institute of Tourism *Investment Kit*, 2005, p. 1

25 Humphrey, 2003

26 Mowforth and Munt 2003, p. 90

27 Acosta, 2005

28 Mowforth and Munt, 2000

29 Mowforth and Munt, 2003 p. 102

30 Honduras Institute of Tourism, *Investment Kit*, 2005

31 Honduras Institute of Tourism *Los Micos*, 2006

- 32 Reid, 2003, p. 116
- 33 Humphrey, 2003, p. 130-131
- 34 Garifuna Tours, 2006
- 35 La Moskitia Ecoaventuras, 2006
- 36 The Miskito and Pech are two indigenous cultures that occupy the minimally developed Atlantic coastal region that extends inland along the border between Honduras and Nicaragua.
- 37 Humphrey, 2003
- 38 IMF, 2000
- 39 One figure of per capita GDP I found was as low as \$1217 USD per year (Latin Business Chronicle 2006).
- 40 Common discussions on Honduras' economy put the rural unemployment rate at over 50%, and the urban, below 20%.
- 41 CIA World Factbook, 2005
- 42 Violence against activists may create aversion to "getting involved." See *Violence and Fear*.
- 43 Threats, corruption, and violence sometimes accompany land transactions, bringing in to question how much choice truly exists. See *Violence and Fear*.
- 44 CIA World Factbook, 2005
- 45 Country Studies, 1995
- 46 To my knowledge, there is no McDonald's in Tibet, though it is rumored that there is.
- 47 Wikipedia 2006, *Hurricane Mitch*
- 48 FOSDEH, 2004
- 49 Stonich, 1989, p. 285-292
- 50 [Honduras Tips](#), 2006
- 51 National Geographic Magazine, September 2006
- 52 Schaller, 2006, p. 41
- 53 Operation Wallacea, 2006
- 54 Prolansate, 2005
- 55 Amnesty International 2006
- 56 Americas.org, 2006
- 57 RightsAction.org, 2005

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