

学位論文の要旨

Abstract of Thesis

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学位論文題目 Title of Thesis (学位論文題目が英語の場合は和訳を付記)

REFRAMING COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AS A SOCIAL PROCESS: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT FROM THE CONTEXT OF VIETNAM

コミュニティベースの観光業を社会プロセスとして再構成する：ベトナムの事例からの批判的検討

学位論文の要旨 Abstract of Thesis

Tourism (mass) industry has emerged as an enormous revenue for many countries worldwide. However, this industry, although considered smokeless, has faced criticism for its detrimental effects on the environment, depletion of natural resources, and unequal distribution of profits, primarily benefiting the affluent. Consequently, several initiatives have been introduced to tackle the challenges posed by mass tourism. One such initiative is Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which gained recognition in the 1970s and was popularized in the 1980s (Novelli, Klatte, & Dolezal, 2017; Reid, Mair, & George, 2004). While there is no consensus on the concept, CBT can be understood as a form of tourism managed, operated, and owned by the local community, ensuring that the majority of benefits directly accrue to them. CBT is often seen as a sustainable alternative, promising socioeconomic and cultural benefits by empowering communities and promoting responsible tourism practices. However, CBT has also faced criticism, with concerns raised about its resemblance to mass tourism, potential cultural assimilation, imbalanced benefits, and social disorder (Blackstock, 2005a; Cuong, 2020). These concerns raise questions about the true sustainability of CBT and the extent to which it can achieve its goals.

In Vietnam, the emergence of CBT can be traced back to the 1990s when Western tourists began visiting ethnic minority communities in the northern mountainous region, following the country's opening-up policy in 1986 (Tran, 2005). The popularity of CBT surged in the late 2000s, especially after the introduction of the tourism law in 2005. In this country, CBT is closely aligned with government regulations and aims to alleviate poverty by leveraging local resources, including cultural and ecological assets. The significance and commitment to CBT in Vietnam were further reinforced in 2017 when the country's tourism law underwent revision, officially integrating the concept of CBT and its related aspects. Over the past three decades, the field of CBT has attracted considerable attention from scholars, both domestically and internationally. While many academics recognize the positive impacts of CBT (Mai, Rahtz, & Shultz, 2014; Pham, 2020), there are opposing viewpoints that highlight its potential unsustainability, suggesting the risk of cultural assimilation over time (Cuong, 2020; Michaud & Turner, 2000). Undoubtedly, skepticism surrounding the practical effectiveness of CBT remains prevalent, fueling an ongoing debate. Consequently, there is a pressing need for further exploration of social impacts, power dynamics, and stakeholder collaboration, which can provide valuable insights into the unique context of CBT. Moreover, given that tourism is perceived not only as an industry with economic focus but also as a catalyst for social force (Davidson, 2004), encompassing community empowerment, poverty alleviation, and local governance, it becomes imperative to assess the sociocultural dimensions of CBT, considering its intricate nature.

In that context, the primary aim of this dissertation is to undertake a critical analysis of the social transformation

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brought about by CBT programs in Vietnam. By adopting a critical perspective, this study seeks to identify the social impacts of CBT and explore its potential to effect societal change, particularly in traditional rural destinations. To accomplish this overarching goal, four specific objectives have been outlined:

- (1) To examine a systematic literature review to analyze existing discourses on CBT among scholars, as well as policy perspectives of the Vietnamese government (Chapter 4);
- (2) To investigate the dynamics of collaboration between local communities and external sectors throughout different stages of CBT development (Chapter 5);
- (3) To identify the challenges and limitations faced by local communities during the implementation of CBT, with a focus on factors such as external collaboration, cultural considerations, local governance structures, and power dynamics (Chapter 6); and
- (4) To discuss the long-term prospects of CBT initiative by considering it as a social process rather than a purely economic industry, where appropriate, policy recommendations will be proposed to promote the sustainability of CBT in the future (Chapter 7).

To accomplish the specified objectives, this dissertation conducted three primary case studies focusing on CBT destinations situated in Thua Thien Hue province, namely Hong Ha, Thuy Bieu, and Quang Loi. The research methodology employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including participant observation, informal conversations, and interviews with a range of stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in the tourism industry. These stakeholders included homestay owners, local authorities, tourists, and local residents. In total, the study encompassed interviews with more than 120 local households, 6 focus group discussions (FGDs), and 12 in-depth interviews with individuals who possessed substantial knowledge on the subject matter. Sociological and co-participatory methods were employed to ensure an optimal and effective research process. Furthermore, the dissertation relied on secondary sources such as policy analyses and pertinent academic publications on CBT in Vietnam spanning the years 1986 to 2021. These sources supplemented and augmented the primary data gathered, contributing to a holistic analysis.

This dissertation presents three main findings structured into three chapters, each revealing a distinct story. The first story (Chapter 4) provides a comprehensive overview of CBT studies published in Vietnam from 1986 to 2021, based on the analysis of 59 relevant academic articles. Within this analysis, three predominant perspectives are identified: "development supporters," "protectionists," and "community developers." Our findings highlight a notable evolution in CBT publications in Vietnam, characterized by a shift from the initial dominance of Western authors to a more localized academic landscape in subsequent years. During this process of localization, it is important to acknowledge that domestic scholars have displayed a bias towards research perspectives that prioritize economic growth such as income improvement and economic empowerment (development supporters). Additionally, the study briefly examines tourism policies associated with CBT in Vietnam, revealing that the biases presented by Vietnamese authors are closely intertwined with tourism policy. This alignment stems from the government's aim to position CBT as a distinctive form of tourism that enhances the visitor experience, drives tourism revenue, and ultimately improves livelihoods for individuals directly and indirectly involved in the industry. While acknowledging the significance of economic transformation, it is crucial to recognize that CBT also instigates social and cultural change. Therefore, we advocate for a more inclusive and balanced approach to comprehensively assess the benefits and impacts of CBT on communities. Based on these observations, our study emphasizes the significance of adopting a balanced approach within Vietnam to enrich CBT policies and research endeavors. By expanding the scope of analysis beyond the economic aspect, we can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of CBT on social changes, thereby promoting sustainable and inclusive development. This requires incorporating lenses such as gender studies and environmental sociology, which have received relatively less attention in the field of CBT research in Vietnam. Therefore, the forthcoming field studies in this dissertation, comprising the next stories, align with these findings by aiming to fill these knowledge gaps and enhance our understanding of social dynamics in relation to CBT.

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The second story (Chapter 5) explores the paradoxes in CBT initiatives through two case studies of Hong Ha and Thuy Bieu. It delves into the complexities of collaboration between the host community and travel agencies. Primary data for this analysis were gathered through face-to-face surveys conducted in 2018 and online interviews in 2020. The data were then analyzed using the three-stage framework of CBT development. The findings reveal two implicit paradoxes that give rise to challenging situations during CBT development. Firstly, the results highlight the dilemma of external private actors, who can play both heroic and villainous roles. While the private sector provides substantial support for tourism growth, their excessive control can lead to issues such as elite capture, wage gaps, unfair competition, and challenges related to authenticity. Secondly, although tourism companies aim to transform community resources into unique tourism offerings, they often overlook crucial aspects such as local trust, norms, and identity. As a result, the host community tends to react negatively to these enterprises. Despite occasional unintended backlashes that impact tourism success, collective action and the preservation of traditional norms allow host communities to uphold their values of integrity, customs, and beliefs, thereby avoiding excessive dependence on external forces. These findings underscore the importance of balancing the involvement of the private sector in tourism development, incorporating local values and norms, and fostering collaborative approaches between the host community and travel agencies. By addressing these implications, stakeholders can work towards a more sustainable and mutually beneficial CBT model.

The third story (Chapter 6) presents a comprehensive case study conducted in Quang Loi, aiming to identify and analyze the challenges and unpredictable consequences associated with CBT initiatives in Vietnam's practical context. This study involved interviews with 54 local respondents, two tourism experts, one NGO, and one travel agency. A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized during two fieldwork trips, conducted from August to September 2019 and June to July 2022. Additionally, two group discussions and an interpretive approach were employed to gain a qualitative understanding of the communities' experiences with CBT. The findings highlight significant challenges faced by CBT initiatives, including elite capture, social exclusion, disruption of community solidarity, and the disproportionate workload burden on women. These outcomes underscore the dynamic nature of CBT's practical implementation, which often deviates significantly from its theoretical principles and necessitates a flexible approach for effective execution. The study emphasizes the importance of contextualizing CBT initiatives and advocates for a nuanced and critical approach to tourism development that recognizes the intricate power dynamics and social structures at play.

Upon examining three case studies from the perspective of social transformation, it becomes evident that CBT in Vietnam has not fully achieved the expected outcomes in practice. This dissertation argues that crucial tangible/intangible assets necessary for CBT development, such as social capital, natural resources, and cultural heritage, may be gradually eroded as a consequence of CBT itself. The findings reveal significant areas of criticism, emphasizing the necessity for further efforts to ensure sustainability as a fundamental principle. Expanding on these findings, it is clear that the study of CBT should not solely concentrate on the economic aspect but should adopt a holistic perspective that encompasses societal and cultural dimensions. This is exemplified by the analysis of social change in this study. CBT faces numerous challenges in its pursuit of sustainability, leading to some recommendations and implications provided to limit these difficulties. These recommendations are tailored to specific regions and target groups, as discussed in the respective chapters. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that CBT should be considered as an additional source of income rather than a substitute for traditional livelihoods, such as agriculture and fishing. Therefore, before implementing any strategies or programs targeting the community, it is essential to carefully consider the potential impacts of such social changes. The nature of CBT in Vietnam has been adapted from external models and must be adjusted to suit the unique characteristics of each audience, socio-cultural context, and political landscape. It is crucial for CBT projects to comprehensively consider the socio-cultural complexities surrounding gender roles and relationships within the local specific context. A one-size-fits-all strategy should be avoided, as it may have adverse effects that disrupt social dynamics, and relationships, and ultimately result in inequality and unsustainability.