

TOURISM IN THE PERUVIAN RURAL SPACE

At Crossroads between Economicism and Sustainability?

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This article focuses on the debate over the role of “sustainable tourism” projects in rural spaces. While their apologists consider them effective tools to improve the quality of life of populations classified as “poor”, its critics accuse them of being a mechanism from the dominant “world order” to impose its hegemony. Rather than fixing a favoring or rejecting position over this subject, the article’s objective is to think over: (1) the local actor’s position, (2) the scope of tourism initiatives financed by the international cooperation, and (3) the feasibility of reaching sustainability in the areas where they are implemented. In order to investigate it, a case study is created from the tourism component of a project denominated “Perú Biodiverso”, which was executed in Peru’s northeast (San Martín province). This research combines autoethnography and participant observation methodologies. It appertains to a wider study (doctoral thesis) that examines, through domestic and international policies related to tourism, globalization and “sustainable development” in rural spaces.

KEY WORDS: ecotourism, hegemony, sustainability, rural areas.