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Sex-tourism as a development strategy

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis is examining sex-tourism as a mean of economic development. The purpose of the paper is to examine how sex-tourism is being used as a mean for development and also why it can be considered to be a part of a countries development strategy. There are many different types of tourism and ways for a country to use tourism as an income source. Although sex-tourism probably not is considered to be a morally legitimate reason for tourism, it does, as we know, however occur and since it is an existing phenomenon it also becomes an income source for the country of destination.

This work has an overlapping theme; using dependency theory as a base it tries to connect the question of sustainable development to sex-tourism. While tourism in general is regarded as a private sector activity where market forces are predominating, the fact is that states are very much involved in the business of tourism. The involvement might vary from country to country but by far all governments are active in tourism and its development, which is why dependency theory has been chosen as the starting point for the thesis, it is also the reason why the concept of sustainability is being connected to sex-tourism.

The paper follows both a broad perspective and a detailed focus. The broad perspective evaluates tourism and sex-tourism in general while the detailed focus lie on Costa Rica. Costa Rica has been chosen as an empirical example for the paper due to its interesting affiliation with sex-tourism and tourism in general.

Key words: sex-tourism, tourism, development, sustainable development and Costa Rica.

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1 Introduction

Traveling in the sense of tourism is something that most enjoy and wish to experience more frequently. The phenomenon of mass-tourism is not an entirely new concept; however the tourism industry of today is growing at a rapid pace and is generating a huge amount of capital. Tourism as defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): “*the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited*” (http://www.unwto.org/statistiques/tsa_in_depth/chapters/ch3-1.htm), does not by far give us the whole picture of tourism. While tourism on the one hand is about pleasure and relaxing it is also about politics, power and about earning foreign exchange.

There are many different forms of tourism and ways for a country to use tourism as an income source. After visiting Costa Rica several times it became apparent to me that also sex-tourism can be an activity that has a great part of a country’s economic development when using tourism as an instrument. Sex-tourism was of course something that I knew about from before, but the thought of it as a mean for development had never occurred to me. Therefore this paper will further explore sex-tourism as a type of tourism, as well as a mean for development when tourism is a part of a country’s development strategy. Connected with development lies the concept of sustainability, and although sex-tourism and the prostitution that sex-tourism implies probably can not be considered to fall under a country’s sustainable development, sex-tourism does as we know however occur and since it is an existing phenomenon it also becomes an income source for the country of destination, and hence therefore it is also a part of a country’s economic development, whether it is considered to be sustainable or not. The dilemma of sex-tourism and prostitution in general is that it involves a lot of complex issues, such as moral and legal questions concerning prostitution. In Costa Rica, which is the country that in this work will be used as illustration, prostitution is legal and the country is in fact a growing sex-tourism destination, which however does not necessarily imply that the country is using sex-tourism as a part of its development strategy although it might be a possibility. Furthermore what does it exactly mean to use sex-tourism as a development strategy and what does it imply for the women working in the industry. Can sex-tourism change the conditions for women working in the sex-industry or is it just an expansion of an already existing prostitution. Questions like these are what made me wanting to further research the subject of sex-tourism.

1.1 Delimitations and Aims

When exploring sex-tourism, questions about the relationship between sex and power, men and women, developed and developing countries, and also the relations across national, racial and cultural boundaries needs to be asked (Skelton and Allen 1999 p 109). The aim of this paper, however, is not to explore all of these dimensions of sex-tourism, although they are all important questions to ask and get answered. This paper is not trying to define or assess sex-tourism as a phenomenon nor is this paper dealing with the ethnics and moralities involved in discussing prostitution. This work is looking at sex-tourism as a development mean for a country, and what this might imply for the women involved, it has an overlapping theme; using dependency theory as a base I try to connect sex-tourism to sustainable development. I believe that the creation of sex-tourism destinations, which usually are countries in development, are being created due to outside pressure from developed countries that are in control of the flow of tourist and hence therefore of the foreign exchange. This pressure sometimes changes and takes on a moral side and countries that are considered to be sex-tourism destinations are then forced to change their behavior towards the sex-industry in order to keep a fixed flow of tourists traveling to the country.

Sustainable development is a concept that has arisen during the last decade or so. The concept will be further explained and connected to women, tourism and sex-tourism in chapter two of this thesis. However I feel it necessary to clarify the concepts here somewhat in order to explain the purpose of this paper as well as to clarify my line of thoughts throughout this work.

Sustainable development is usually connected to environmental or economic development and in simple terms it can be said to be about development with both the present and the future in mind. The concept of sustainable development is a complex one and it is far from value free. I will in this paper argue that sustainable development in fact is a part of all areas of development of a country, being economic, environmental, social or cultural. Further more I believe that a country cannot truly develop without having sustainability in mind. It is, in my opinion, a precondition for development, which means development in all areas and levels of a country. Sustainable development is an ongoing process; it is about changing conditions in the present but also in the long run, in this case being the development for women. Looking at development this way, the question that then pops up regarding this paper, is if sex-tourism can, if used as a development tool, be considered to be sustainable development. Since I believe that countries using sex-tourism as development strategy are not in control of neither the industry's development nor the development of the individuals involved, and this because the phenomenon has been created through outside pressure and not from inside the country. If I am right in these presumptions then sex-tourism can not be considered to be sustainable development for a country or the women working in the industry. This because sex-tourism is then not seen as integral part of a country's development strategies and therefore not a part of the country's development in general. In order for prostitution that sex-tourism implies to be sustainable,

women to begin with have to have equal access and the same equal rights as men and unfortunately this often is not the case in countries where sex-tourism is a fact.

As indicated above this paper will only cover women working in the sex-industry, this is not however an indication to say that men working in the industry are not as affected of the industry's development as women and I do believe that some generalizations can be made concerning other groups involved in sex-tourism from this paper.

Conclusively it is the matters of sex-tourism and sustainable development that are at the core of this paper. I wish to explore sex-tourism as a development tool for countries in development at the same time as I wish to research what that implies for the women working in the industry, and doing this with sustainable development in mind.

1.2 Method and Material

This paper follows both a broad perspective and a detailed focus. The broad perspective evaluates tourism and sex-tourism in general while the detailed focus lie on Costa Rica. This paper is aiming to be eclectic, therefore different perspectives and different resources are being used to guide me when trying to elaborate on my thesis of this paper.

Choosing to analyse development strategies of countries does raise some methodology problems. Development strategies usually consist of a package of politics as well as the fact that these strategies usually have undergone serious political compromising and taken years to form. From my point of view though, this does not necessarily have to be a problem. Sex-tourism or prostitution that attracts tourists has to my knowledge never been an explicit stated development mean for a country; therefore it has not undergone the same political scrutinizing as other development strategies. However, throughout the paper when exploring the relationship between sex-tourism and development, it is important for me to define not only the desired outcome of tourism, namely, "development", but also the means of achieving that outcome.

The theories that in this thesis are being applied are dependency theory as well as the theory about sustainable development. The aim is to evaluate and develop the line of thoughts connected with these two theories. The methodology chosen for this paper is the one that I see best serve the theories. Costa Rica is in this paper being used as an illustration in order for me to empirically evaluate my thesis about sex-tourism as a development strategy. I would however, not call this paper a case study per say, my research of Costa Rica is not thorough enough and neither am I using Costa Rica in a comparing analysis (Esaïsson et al 2005 p 119-120). Also in theory developing studies it is better to use a few or one case, which is why Costa Rica is the main case used in this thesis (Esaïsson et al 2005 p 123).

Since tourism can be viewed as a multidisciplinary subject there is of course an arsenal of methods available to the researcher and includes numerous quantitative and qualitative methods. My approach to sex-tourism and tourism is however a qualitative one rather than quantitative. My aim is not to in numbers measure the sex-tourism industry or its impact in the destination country. The aim is to in a qualitative matter show how sex-tourism is being used as a development mean by countries connecting this to sustainable development for women.

Given the subjects nature it is hard to stay completely objective throughout the thesis, but to promote intersubjectivity I have tried to explain my line of thoughts as thoroughly as possible as well as make it clear to the reader when I am expressing my line of thoughts and when I am citing others.

Before writing this paper I did spent some time in Costa Rica, however not primarily for the purpose of researching this paper, therefore some primary material in form of local news paper articles and interviews as well as general observations on my part are being used in this work. The interviews were conducting as a conversation interviews using open-end question rather than a fixed survey. This because conversation interviews gives a better understanding of the person that are being interviewed than a survey does, as well as it lets them speak more freely (Esaiasson et al 2005 p 279). I chose to interview people form different positions in Costa Rica, and although neither of them is directly involved in the growing tourism machine of Costa Rica, they all provided me with insightful considerations about the business and the impact of tourism in the country. I sought to cover a spectrum of fields involving the tourism industry of Costa Rica, and further my understanding of the importance of the tourism industry as well as different aspect of it. The interviews helped me to advance my research on the topic, through the interviews I got a greater understanding of the tourisms in Costa Rica as well as the interviews gave me more ideas on how to proceed with my research (Esaiasson et al 2005 p 281). Even so, it was not an entirely easy task to persuade people to talk about prostitution or sex-tourism. The subject often gave raise to questions of morality and value, which is not what I wanted to achieve with this paper. Therefore the primary material used in this paper is not as conclusive as I had wished for it to be. Rather it functions as a base for further research using secondary material, mainly in the form of articles and literature on the subject of tourism, sex-tourism and development. Again given the subjects nature there is not a huge amount done on the topic of sex-tourism or sex-tourism as a development tool, however some case studies have been done and these have helped me a great deal in my research and also in my understanding of the issues connected with sex-tourism, prostitution and development.

Internet has also for this paper proven to be a valuable source of information. Most international organizations have easy accessible information on there web-pages which have helped to add to my understanding of the subject.

1.3 Introduction to theory

In the tourism literature there are different approaches to study and research tourism. There are three main positions in the literature that one can make out. There is the study of the impact of tourism, tourism and center-periphery relations (specially the relationship between rich and poor countries) and there is also the alternative tourism theory model, sustainable tourism (Aronsson and Karlsson 2001 p 19).

For the purpose of this paper the theories that are the basic starting point is theories about international economy. The economy of international tourism can be divided into two schools of thought. The first line of investigation, linked tightly to theories of liberal economy, holds that economic interactions usually have positive consequences, and that tourism is a rather natural business phenomenon (Leheny 1995 p 371). Conservative political economy and neoclassical supply-side economics argue against state intervention, and for maximizing market forces and privatizing state enterprises (Jaakson 1998). The second school of thought, a variant of dependency theory, attempts to deal with this very problem, dependency. As wealthy capitalist states expand outward, to provide their business leaders with new markets and investment opportunities, they develop certain sectors, which become politically active, of weaker economies, and thus make countries dependent on the flow of foreign capital (Leheny 1995 p 371). In the dependency model of tourism, developing countries are dependent on developed states and their multi-national corporations (i.e. hotels and airlines) which create the tourism market and control the flow of travelers and foreign exchange. Dependency may also take on a cultural dimension, as when mass-tourism from developed countries introduces new norms and values on a host society, changing behavior (introducing consumerism, for example) and making the host society increasingly dependent on ties to developed countries (Jaakson 1998).

While tourism in general is regarded as a private sector activity where market forces are predominating, the fact is that states are very much involved in the business of tourism. The involvement might vary from country to country but by far all governments are active in tourism and its development (Sofield 2003 p 24). This is also why I have chosen to look at sex-tourism using dependency theory as a starting point rather than a liberal economic point of view; I believe that dependency theory is the best way to further my research about sex-tourism as a development strategy. Dependency theory, in my opinion, offers the best explanation to states acting as they do concerning tourism development. A fundamental approach by dependency theorists has been its conceptualization of the international system as being constituted by asymmetric center-periphery relations. This conceptualization has developed further stating that the international system being a capitalist market system has an internal dynamics which reproduce those asymmetric center-periphery relations as a component part of economic efficiency of the world system (Sharpley and Telfer 2002 p 44). My line of thought throughout this paper is that certain countries have been considered sex-tourism destinations due to dependency on wealthier states that control the flow of capital and

tourists. Center states are controlling the demand while periphery states are acquired to deliver for this demand.

Dependency theory in development including using tourism as a development tool has faced a wide range of criticisms, which mirror its diversity of approaches. Dependency is criticized for being highly abstract, pessimistic, rhetorical and for emphasizing external conditions over internal factors (Sharpley and Telfer 2002 p 40). Since I in this paper, will not be arguing that development is impossible through tourism nor will I argue that tourism as a development mean solely is a form of dependency and also since I am connecting dependency to the theory of sustainable development I feel that I can avoid this type of criticism.

1.4 Disposition

This first chapter of the paper has been focused on introducing the problem and purpose of the thesis as well as I have tried to give an introduction to the theory that constitutes the base for this work. Methodological and material aspects have also in this first chapter been discussed to give a more profound understanding of the scope of the paper. The following chapters will further deepen the theory on which I build my thesis on, as well as I will discuss the phenomenon of tourism, sex-tourism and in the end apply this to Costa Rica. Throughout the following text I will complement the empirical findings that I have made with thoughts of my own, especially so in the chapter covering Costa Rica. The final chapter of this work consists of a sum up as well as a conclusion where I hope to prove my thesis right.

2 Tourism and Sustainability

Using tourism as a development strategy can be risky and it also naturally leads to an impact on the destination country, either good or bad. One of the advantages of tourism is that it is an earner of foreign exchange; it is also a highly labour intensive industry and therefore a major employer. Although there is immense potential in the development of a country using tourism as a mean, it does however come with some down sides too. Governments of countries using tourism as a development tool must for example be aware of the costs imposed of too rapid development of the tourism industry (Coltman 1989 p 221-222). Sex-tourism is an important economic and social phenomenon of tourism. Sex-tourism can and probably should be analyzed as a static feature if not of a country's economy than at least of the world economy, and thus not investigating it as such neglects the importance of shifts in demand for the shape of the industry (Leheny 1995 p 369).

In spite of tourism's and also sex-tourism's huge importance in the global economy, political scientists have been slow to provide a study of the political economy of international tourism. The discipline of political science has been ordered along lines that have been indirectly embedded with a sense of what topics are legitimate or illegitimate for research. For example, the traditional conceptions of "high politics" emphasize the competition of military conflict or rational economic redistribution, and implicitly or explicitly downplaying other perspectives or activities in politics. Tourism has generally been seen within this realm of "low politics," despite its clear relevance for economic strategy in many states (Leheny 1995 p 369).

The extent to which tourism contributes to the national or local economy or, more generally, to the development of a country varies according to a variety of factors, however, in all cases, it is evident that the contribution or outcome of tourism development is usually measured in the quantifiable terms of tourism receipts, contribution to exports, contribution to GDP and employment levels. Whilst these are without doubt indicators of the economic contribution of tourism, it is less clear whether they are indicator of a country's development in other aspects (Sharpley and Telfer 2002 p 20). Even though economic development naturally is important for a country, development and well-being can and should, in my opinion, also be measured by other markers.

2.1 Sustainable development

In general development concepts have evolved from a primary focus on considerations and measures of political and financial equality (Jaakson 1998). The term development is, however, no longer considered to be synonymous with growth, there is an increasing recognition that a community can develop, i.e. evolve, without necessarily having to grow in a material sense. The Brundtland (The World Commission on Environment and Development) report of 1987 introduced a new approach to development, the sustainable development paradigm. The formal definition of sustainable development in this report is “[...] *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* [...]” (WCED 1987). There are several additional definitions of sustainable development available (Jaakson 1998). However, the definition in the Brundtland rapport is widely accepted and for that matter used (Rao 2002 p 28).

The concept of sustainable development can be shaped to fit a spectrum of world views. The word connecting the different views and perspectives seems to be the word balance. It is however safe to say that the term of sustainable development as well as the term of sustainable tourism (see below) is not value free (Harris et al 2002 p 9-11 and 18). Every researcher puts his or her own values and experiences into the concept of sustainability, my understanding of sustainable development will be further explained under heading 2.4 of this chapter.

The sustainable development interpretation debate has and is revolving around inter-related issues as for example: the role of economic growth in promoting human well-being and the criticality of various components of natural resources and the potential for substitution to name a few (Harris et al 2002 p 8-9). Today the concept of sustainable development has almost a universal magic aura around it. The term is used by all involved groups, opinions and ideologies with different meanings. Some speak of “sustainable economic growth” others about “sustainable social development”. What seems to be clear is that sustainable development in fact contains all of these issues and that all of them needs to be taken into account in order for development and progress to be sustainable (Baumgartl 1997 p 27). Sustainable development thoughts have also had a considerable impact on tourism development theory. “Sustainable tourism” has emerged as a concept which attempts to capture the principles of sustainable development (Jaakson 1998).

2.2 Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism like sustainable development has different interpretations and meanings, and just like sustainable development the word connecting the different interpretations seems to be balance. But unlike with the scope of sustainable development there is no general interpretation of sustainable tourism. The differ-

ent types of interpretations are usually scale depended and could be applied to tourism at different levels, from the individual business up to national tourism development plan or policy statements (Harris et al 2002 p 12). Sustainability in tourism, and probably in general to some extent, is not definable, except in terms of the context, control and position of those who are defining it (Mowforth and Munt 1998 p 105). It is fairly safe to say that sustainable tourism has traditionally been given more focus to aspects related to the environment and economic development than to the community involvement. The condition of economic and environmental sustainability is of course important. But referring to sustainability in terms of for example economic gain should be done without violating any other aspect of sustainability (Mowforth and Munt 1998 p 111).

In 1995, Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry was developed by the World Travel and Tourism Council as the travel industry's response to the Earth Summit's Agenda 21(see below). This World Travel and Tourism document outlines priority areas for action and objectives for moving the tourism industry closer towards achieving sustainable development (Honey 1999 p 32). Also 2007 seem to according to the World Tourism Organisation be the year of recognizing women in tourism. The slogan of the year being; *"tourism opens doors for women"* (<http://www.world-tourism.org/>).

2.3 Sustainable development and women

The Brundtland Commission was seen by many as solely an environment Commission. But in fact, poverty and social problems were an equally important concern for the Commission. Issues of gender equity were also addressed in the Report (Basse 1996 p 29). Hence, environmental, economic and social questions and factors are all to be seen as equal parts of the concept of sustainable development. The final agreement from the United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, Agenda 21, proposes actions to strengthen women's role in sustainable development by eliminating obstacles to their equal participation, particularly in decision making and equal access to education. Further more in Millennium Development Goal No 3, the UN states that gender equality is a human right and at the heart of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is a prerequisite to overcoming hunger, poverty and disease. This means equality at all levels of education and in all areas of work, equal control over resources and equal representation in public and political life. Gender equality is also by the UN identified as an essential component of good governance (Lambrou and Laub 2004 p 6).

Equality of rights for women is also a basic and fundamental principle of the UN. Article 1 of the UN Charter proclaims that one of the purposes of the UN is to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to sex. By the terms of the Charter, the first international instrument to refer specifically to human rights and to the equal rights of men and women, all members of the UN

are legally bound to strive towards the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Bohlin 1999 p 6).

2.4 Gender equity, sustainable development and sex-tourism

As seen above the concept of sustainability both in terms of development and in terms of tourism is a complex one and it is a concept possible to fill with endless interpretations. For the purpose of this paper sustainable tourism and development will be interpreted as discussed by the Brundtland Commission of 1987 in their report on sustainable development. Using this report as a starting point is however not free from complications, the Brundtland definition is a broad and general one, without any tangible way of measuring sustainable development or sustainable tourism. It is however in my opinion a good starting point to for researching sex-tourism and its correspondence with sustainable development for women working in the industry.

Equity implies attempting to achieve or attempting to meet all basic human needs and, perhaps also, the satisfaction of human wants, both now (intragenerational equity) and in the future (intergenerational) (Harris et al 2002 p 9). Of course, the interpretation of human needs and wants vary, which complicates the debate on sustainability even more and is also an important part of it. In order to promote and enforce sustainable development and good governance, meaning sustainable management of resources in legal, institutional, political, economic, social and ultimately cultural terms, politics and law need to intricately intertwine. This because creating sustainable development is an ongoing process that takes time and probably never ends. The sustainable development perspective is an overall perspective on the worldwide realization of social justice and environmental equity on the basis of democratic participation, the rule of law and the protection of human rights (Ginter et al 1995 p 9).

The main focus for this paper is the want and need for sustainable development for women, within this of course lays the want for realization of equality between men and women. The values of human rights are relevant to the social goals of sustainable development but also for the economic goals of development. Fulfilling the economic, social and cultural human rights is exactly what sustainable development in my opinion is about. Imbedded in the international principal of sustainable development therefore lays the right for human rights for women. For a country to really achieve and work towards sustainable development equality of rights and equal access must be supported and enforced at all levels of the country. Sustainable development for women is at the heart of achieving sustainability in any area; women make up more or less half of the world's population and therefore naturally should have the same odds and development possibilities as the other half.

3 The Big Business of Tourism

Tourism as we know it today is a twentieth-century phenomenon. The creation of commercial airlines and the development of jet aircraft in the 1950s was the starting point for the rapid growth and expansion of international travel. This growth led to the development of a major tourism industry. International tourism has become of great concern to a number of governments around the world, this because not only does tourism provide new employment opportunities, but it also provides means of earning foreign exchange. Tourism has a significant importance for a country in both economical and in social terms (Theobald 1994 p 3). The creation of international air agreements has helped tourism to become the major industry that it today is for a lot of countries (Coltman 1989 p 73).

In the widest sense, tourism is a form of trade, not of goods perhaps, although the talk of the “tourist product” can now be said to be established and accepted (Mowforth and Munt 1998 p 113) and it is used in a variety of political purposes and there is a wide range of external influences as well as internal controlling the industry (Mowforth and Munt 1998 p 280). Needless to say tourism is not only a social phenomenon and an interaction of people, it is also big business with a lot of money involved and a lot of political power at stake.

3.1 The power in tourism

The politics of tourism is no different from politics in any other arena. Politics is about power and therefore it is about who gets what, when and how. Whatever political philosophy is leading within a state, it seems clear that those holding power decide who gets what, when and how. The development of tourism policy usually come later (Lickorish and Jenkins 1997 p 182). Governments in most countries usually have both a direct and an indirect involvement in a country’s tourism industry. Governments often have no choice but to help finance many tourism supply components, such as roads, airports and utilities. Governments also own parks, airlines, art galleries, museums, buses, ferries and so on. Obviously, much of what the government does is not directed exclusively at tourism, but rather, towards its broader objectives (Coltman 1989 p 75). However, apart from tourism, it is difficult to think of any other sector of a nation’s economy that is affected more by governments and this from the lowest to the highest levels. Even though tourism in it self brings foreign exchange to the country, tourism is also costly, the infrastructure might have to be expanded, and hotels needs to be built etc., and for this reasons many countries in order to finance their tourism in-

dustry look abroad for investments. This can become a problem for a country in development. Using tourism as a mean for development might end up meaning that the country becomes dependent on more developed countries, both in the sense of foreign direct investment and in the form of the flow of tourists generating to the country of destination. The need of tourists and foreign exchange for its development process creates a dependent relationship on the supplying country.

It is quite apparent that not only the governments of the host country are possessing control in the tourism industry of a country. Also the governments of the tourist's home country possess a great deal of power. This power can for example be revealed in a manner of which the tourist home government is putting "don't go" warnings on certain countries. Most of these warning are usually directed to Third World countries, and the warnings can also be connected to other political agendas of the tourists home country. We are also constantly reminded by the media of the hazards of traveling in the Third World and by implication then also the critical nature of the politics of tourism. Countries promoting tourism (both mass and new) can be influenced by a range of factors, from decisions of First World institutions and tourists, to the way in which particular tourism destinations are perceived in other countries (Mowforth and Munt 1998 p 282). A country that is using tourism as a development mean has to stay on the good side of the economies/countries that are supplying the capital and tourists, in order to keep the flow of tourists and capital. Putting to much emphasis on tourism as development can then become fairly risky.

3.2 The power of tourism

It must be recognized that the relationship of economies to environmental and social issues and politics in tourism is a complex one. Often economic policy is determined at the regional or national level, yet the impact of that policy is felt at a local level (Theobald 1994 p 88).

Tourism, both international and domestic, brings about an intermingling of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and also a considerable spatial redistribution of spending power which has a significant impact on the economy of the destination area (Theobald 1994 p 73). Socio-economic benefits derived from the tourism development, such as business and/or transport services enhancing the competitiveness of traditional production sectors, can contribute to poverty reduction in host developing countries. Many developing countries consider tourism as an important and integral part of their economic development, and sometimes it is even perceived as a panacea for their fragile economies (Endo 2006 p 601). The problem with using tourism as a development strategy is essentially one of resource allocation and of whether or not the development of a tourism industry offers optimum usage of the resources available (Theobald 1994 p 77), recurses then not just meaning resources in a material sense. Whether or not tourism creates greater development for a country depends on what terms

development is being measured. If we are strictly speaking of development in economic terms, tourism can probably at a general level be said to have a positive impact on a country, providing work opportunities and bringing foreign exchange to the country, to name a few. If measured in other terms, as for example in social terms, tourism might not have such a great impact on a country.

3.3 The prostitution in tourism

Sex tourism can be defined as tourism for which the main motivation or at least part of the aim of the trip is to consummate or engage in commercial sexual relations (Ryan and Hall 2001 p 1). For the purpose of this paper I have chosen to follow this definition of sex-tourism and this because I believe that purchasing sexual services does not have to be the sole purpose of the trip for it to be called sex-tourism.

Like all transactions, sex-tourism is both an economic and political phenomenon, this because it must have a market and the transactions must be considered indirectly or directly socially and politically legitimate (Outshoorn 2004 p 267). Studies indicate that in recent years, the number of men (and women) traveling to foreign destinations usually in the Third World seeking sex-tourism has increased tremendously (Ryan and Hall 2001 p 23). In the past, destinations for sex tourism have mainly been the Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia (Law 2000 s 9). Today, sex-tourism has spread to other regions of the world including Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Costa Rica, Eastern Europe and a number of African countries such as Kenya, Tunisia, South Africa and Gambia (Clancy 2002 p 75).

While most countries have prostitution, legal or not, certain destinations have, as stated above, become linked with sex-tourism. What makes sex-tourism, in my opinion, so interesting to study is the complexity of the fact that tourism constitutes the main trading and source for foreign exchange for many of these “sex destination” countries. Within the tourism industry we find sex-tourism and whether or not prostitution is considered to be legal or morally defensible, the fact remains that sex-tourism is a source of income for many countries.

3.4 The prostitution of tourism

Prostitution is an institution that states have tried to control throughout many historical periods; today most states have some kind of prostitution policy, even if it is not actively enforced (Outshoorn 2004 p 3). Depending on the dominant definition of the issue, the control by governments is being done in different ways. The definition determines the goal of state intervention: is it about maintaining law and order, preserving morals, preventing the spread of sexual transmitted diseases

or is it about protecting women from exploitation. The dominant interpretation also determines in which political arena and policy system the politics of prostitution is fought, which actors are able to get in or are excluded, and what interest groups are formed around the issue. Prostitution is often perceived by many authorities as a law-and-order problem, a phenomenon giving rise to disorderliness and drunken behavior, generally causing public annoyance in the surrounding neighborhood and threatening the peace (Outshoorn 2004 p 6). While this might be so, when it comes to tourism, prostitution seems to be a welcomed phenomenon as long as it draws tourists to the country and it does not create a bad reputation for the designated country. The prostitution in Thailand for example, has for years drawn Western male tourist to the country, but as the country's status abroad started to decline the country was forced to recognizing the "problem" of prostitution (Jeffery 2003 p 152). The demand for sex-tourism of a particular destination is probably not a static one and although sex tourism remains a big draw among many travelers to certain destination, pressure from wealthier states that the country of destination is dependent has an impact on the constraints to which policymakers of the host country must respond. Changes in government behavior toward the sex industry may not be happening in spite of tourism, but rather because of the changes in foreign pressure.

Some tourism researchers go as far to say that tourism in it self in fact is prostitution. Poorer nations are encouraged to open their frontiers and their dwellings to the foreign visitors and are pressured to engage in commercial transactions of a very particular type in which they offer their culture, their heritage, their traditions and even certain members of their population to visitors (Kibicho 2005 p 258).

3.5 Sex-tourism, economics and sustainable development

Due to its nature, sex tourism has been perceived largely as having a negative impact on society. However, there is another side to it. Sex tourism can generate income, both for the country and for the individuals working in the field. Some women that have risked prostitution have been able to earn a better living and maybe buy a (new) house or provide an education for their children. This is largely because earnings from prostitution are often more than from other alternative employment opportunities open to women with low levels of education in many developing countries (Kibicho 2005 p 276). Sex-workers also contribute to the national economy by boosting the profits of many international and national hotels and airlines, small street vendors who sell ornaments, hotel staff, taxi drivers, brothel owners, and many other intermediaries. The police, the state, as well as local and international enterprises are all aware that sex has a market value even though they might proclaim that prostitution is immoral (Ryan and Hall 2001 p 147).

Sex tourism is a very lucrative industry that spans the globe and it seems to be one of the segments of tourism industry that is growing. While the numbers of course remain speculative, the overall international sex industry, including prostitution, magazines, videos, the Internet and phone services, has been estimated to be worth at least \$20 billion in 2002 (Clancy 2002 p 72). Hence the prostitution in tourism is big business that generates a great deal of income for far more than the sex-worker.

Although the aim of this paper is not to explore the gender roles of sex-tourism and neither is the aim to take an essential stand for or against prostitution some has to be said about the two in order for me to connect sex-tourism with sustainable development.

Few things have divided feminists so much as the sex-industry. Theorists who agree on a number of issues, economic equality, affirmative action, even sexual liberation, often find themselves bitterly opposed over pornography and prostitution. The major divide is between those feminists defining prostitution as sexual domination and the essence of women's oppression and those who maintain that prostitution is work that women can optimize to strengthen their position (Outshoorn 2004 p 9). The main concern for this paper is that prostitution in the form of sex tourism is steadily increasing as the tourism industry expands. This means that more and more women are being incorporated in to the business of prostitution. In addition to its financial power the tourism industry also outlines the roles and identities of its producers and consumers, or hosts and tourists, than does perhaps any other industry. Gender roles are among those to be most forcefully affected by interaction between tourists and hosts (Leheny 1995 p 367). The international sex-tourism highlights, advertises, and otherwise deepens power relationships that are inherent in the sexuality. Even so, the tourism industry itself is not static, and the imperative to construct images that will appeal to tourists suggests that when those tourists change, the images should as well. In the case of prostitution for example, although nearly always involving heterosexual men buying sexual services from women. Prostitution is yet often defined in gender-neutral ways, such as moral depravity or a threat to public health (Outshoorn 2004 p 3).

Also the sexual division of labour in general operates at all aspects of tourism and travel related industries. Increased tourism may mean more jobs for women however questions must be raised about the nature, quality and type of work activities available for women and also the differential access of men and women to such opportunities. In line with the thought about sustainable development equal rights for women and men in all contexts and areas must be considered and in my opinion at least also tried to be fulfilled in order for a country to claim sustainability in any area. In the aspects of sex-tourism this means that the concept of sustainability needs to be applied to prostitution in general. Prostitution must be defined and incorporated in to sustainable development. Whether or not prostitution is legal; it has to be seen as more than a law and order problem. Prostitution as an income source has an impact on those working within the business, whether this is a positive one or a negative one I remain unsaid, I however believe, that the women working in the industry can not be said to have the same

opportunities as men concerning sustainable development if prostitution is not being recognized by the state and/or discussed at a political level.

4 Why Costa Rica?

Costa Rica is in my opinion a fascinating country to use as an illustration for my thesis that countries are using sex-tourism as a development mechanism, and the dependency on developed countries that that indicates. In this chapter I will try to show that Costa Rica is a country that is very much dependent on more developed countries for its development and in need of foreign exchange, tourism being one of the ways that this is achieved.

Costa Rica is a constitutional democracy with a population of approximately 4.1 million, it is governed by a president and unicameral Legislative Assembly directly elected in free multiparty elections every four years (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2005). The country is widely perceived as Latin America's most stable and affluent democracy. The combination of steady economic growth and sustained investment in human development has led to a substantial reduction of poverty, which fell from 31.9 percent in 1991 to 18.5 percent in 2003, while extreme poverty decreased from 11.7 percent to 5.1 percent in the same period (<http://web.worldbank.org>). However, the country's economy has been under serious pressure since the late 1970s. Costa Rica's manufacturing industries is and have always been heavily dependent on foreign investment and the country's welfare state and much of its industrial infrastructure is and has been financed through foreign loans. Today, Costa Rica's international debt stands at around US\$ 4 billions, real wages, remain stagnant and there is still need for reducing poverty (<http://devdata.worldbank.org>). The gap between rich and poor in Costa Rica is in fact growing according to the results of the Household Income and Expenses Survey done by the National Statistics and Census Institute released in March 2006. According to this survey, the richest 20% of the population earned 52,2% of the wealth in 2004, compared with 43,1% in 1988. Meanwhile, the poorest 20% of the population earned 4,6% of the wealth in 2004, compared with 6,4% 16 years earlier ((Kimitch 2006 p 1&3). This gap is however according to Whitney J Witteman, chef of the economic department at American Embassy in San Jose Costa Rica, growing, or rather it seems to be growing, because people on a high income level are today paying taxes, which they before were declined not to do, due to harder tax enforcement (Witteman 2006).

Costa Rica is a country of contrast. It is a country that is trying to enroll in the big leads, show its independence and become the first "developed" country in Latin America, at the same time it is becoming more and more dependent on foreign exchange as well as foreign investors in this pursuit. Costa Rica is in fact a country with enormous affinity with the United States. The business community is firmly in the camp of the U.S., which buys about half of Costa Rica's exports. American firms, including Intel Corp., Baxter International Inc. and Rawlings

Sporting Goods Co., are the biggest foreign investors in Costa Rica (Dickerson and Iritani 2006).

As this brief overview of Costa Rica has tried to show, Costa Rica is very much dependent on foreign wealthier states for its development and survival.

During my stay in Costa Rica it also became apparent that this dependency in many ways was a source of irritation among Costa Ricans, not for everyone of course, but when talking to people it was a concern that in discussions generally arouse. People seemed to be annoyed of the many North-Americans coming to Costa Rica for the purpose of exploring the countries wealth and people, buying and exploring the land for the purpose of, for example, tourism. People seemed to feel that they were loosing control over the country and its development.

4.1 Tourism in Costa Rica

Since the mid 1980's Costa Rica has placed considerable emphasis in developing its tourism industry. At the present time tourism in Costa Rica is however at a crossroad. The original focus of the Costa Rican tourism policy has been eco-tourism which has meant low impact development which preserves the natural vegetation of the country, as well as having a low impact on the local communities. Costa Rica has in fact been acknowledged as one of the most important tourist destinations by the specialized media. Modern Bride magazine named Costa Rica as "Best Destination" and as "Best Adventure Destination." Also the magazine RECOMMEND granted Costa Rica the awards for "Best Destination" for Latin America" and "Best Destination for Ecotourism." (<http://www.visitcostarica.com/ict/paginas/novedades.asp>). In the past couple of years there has however been a shift towards large development projects with condominiums, hotel and golf courses catering to mass-tourism (Petersen 2005 p 251). Tourism in Costa Rica has also overtaken the banana industry as Costa Rica's most important source of foreign exchange (Pashby 2000). The hotel sector is a major beneficiary of Costa Rica's international attractiveness. Foreign hotel companies have invested heavily in Costa Rica. Unfortunately, many of the hotels are being built with only short-term profit in mind, and without considering the effect such development will have on the local ecosystems (Pashby 2000). Come 2008, Costa Rica will, if all goes as planned, be home to two new luxury resorts, hundreds of additional hotel rooms, and thousands of new jobs. Strengthening Costa Rica's tourism industry and make the country an attractive option for foreign direct investment is high on the political agenda in Costa Rica (Stanley 2006 p 18).

Costa Rica's government strongly promotes tourism through many programs such as advertising campaigns, travel trade shows, the provision of visitor travel guides and information, and also with the encouragement of foreign direct investment. Costa Rica is obviously hoping to encourage more resort tourists to visit the country instead of just rustic eco-travelers. Consequently, Costa Rican law allows foreigners to purchase land. The Ministry of Planning estimates that

40% of the livable land on the coastline is owned by foreign interests (Kimitch 2006). Clearly the interests and wants of foreign owners in the country are of importance to Costa Rica.

The key piece of legislation that initiated the growth in the investment of tourism related projects was the Ley de Incentivos para Desarrollo Turístico, Tourism Development Incentive Law, which was passed in 1985 and declares the tourism industry to be in the public interest of Costa Rica (Petersen 2005 p 251).

Another stepping stone for tourism in Costa Rica was the signing of the U.S. and Costa Rica open sky agreement in 1997, which allows flights to and from any cities in and out of the two countries. This boosted the tourism flow from the U.S. to Costa Rica. Americans can now fly in to other cities in Costa Rica than the capital San José, this cuts travel time tremendously and gives easy access to many of Costa Rica's more popular beaches on the south coast. Also the airfares from U.S. to Costa Rica have been lowered considerably and it is now more affordable to fly to Costa Rica from the U.S. (Witteman 2006). While Costa Rica host not only tourist from the United States, the country is dependent on the relatively fixed continued flow of tourist from the U.S., also the fact that a lot of U.S. citizens has retired or resettle to Costa Rica, creates a need for Costa Rica keep on the good side with the U.S. Indirectly the open sky agreement has also led to that improvements in the infrastructure has been made to enhanced the communications of the country in order to make it easier for the tourist to travel Costa Rica as well as stay accessible with the home country. Roads are being improved as well as the telecommunication net is expanding (Witteman 2006).

In Costa Rica, the tourism industry is regulated and supervised by the Costa Rica Tourism Institute (ICT) which establishes the conditions, prices, and classification of establishments engaged in tourism activities. The ICT has the authority of issuing a "tourism declaration" for companies and activities that meet the requirements stated by law. The ICT's mission, according to the National Development Plan has been proposed in the following terms: "*Promote a wholesome tourism development, with the purpose of improving Costa Ricans' quality of life, by maintaining a balance between the economic and social boundaries, environmental protection, culture and facilities*". (<http://www.visitcostarica.com/ict/paginas/tourismboard.asp>).

The policies of the ICT have long-term implications and should be considered mandatory for the national tourism industry. The concept of sustainability shall be the fundamental axis of tourism activity and shall be considered as the main factor characterizing the national tourism product. Tourism development shall also according to the ICT develop in such a way that it will contribute effectively and constructively against any form of social degradation, generating economic benefits, protecting the environment and respecting the Costa Rican people's culture and values and any kind of tourism activity that threatens the Costa Rican people's habits or puts at risk the physical and moral integrity of human beings shall be fought against forcefully. (<http://www.visitcostarica.com/ict/paginas/tourismboard.asp>). Hence through these statements at a government level it seems clear that Costa Rica wishes to

incorporate the concept of sustainability at all levels of tourism planning and business.

4.2 Sex-tourism in Costa Rica

Prostitution is general rarely considered to be in the best sustainable development interest for a person. Yet, prostitution in Costa Rica is legal for persons over the age of 18, and is practiced openly throughout the country, and has been done so for a long period of time. The concentration of prostitutes today is however, particularly in areas with a lot of tourists. Pimping and child-prostitution are not legal in Costa Rica and particularly child-prostitution is something that Costa Rica has tried to fight hard against. For example the Law Against the Sexual Exploitation of Underage Persons, approved in 1999, establishes penalties for those engaged in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In June 2000 the sexual abuse and corruption offences were also modified to provide greater penalties against the sexual abuse of children and the elderly. Hundreds of investigations were also launched in 2002 by the Special Prosecutor on Sex Crimes, although leading to only a few convictions. Moreover in June 2003, the Legislative Assembly created a special commission to focus on children and adolescent issues. In 1998 a Sexual Crimes Prosecuting Office was also created in Costa Rica in order to fight the child abuse (Goodier 2004). These sanctions were adopted not to stop sex-tourism per say but to stop the exploitation of minors which was and still is a concern in Costa Rica.

There are in fact no specific laws against sex-tourism, which is a growing concern in Costa Rica. But the penal code of Costa Rica does however prohibits individuals from promoting or facilitating the prostitution of individuals of either sex, regardless of the individual's age, and the penalty is increased if the victim is under the age of 18 (article 169 *Codigo Penal*). The sanctions described above were adopted in response to international coverage of the fact that promoters were advertising "sex tours" in Costa Rica (Petersen 2005 p 47). The new law imposes prison sentences from 3 to 10 years (Article 161 and 162 *Codigo Penal* as modified by Law 8002 of June 2, 2000).

Although the Government and tourist authorities in Costa Rica like to highlight the development of eco-tourism and now as well mass-tourism, there is growing sex-tourism in Costa Rica. International media coverage is calling Costa Rica a new global sex-tourism destination (Pashby 2000). Even so politically, prostitution and sex-tourism are not high on the political agenda. Prostitution is hardly ever discussed and even if sex-tourism is being acknowledged due to media cover it is something that the government is trying to sweep under the rug as a trivial problem says reporter Leland Baxter-Neal at the *Tico Times*, Costa Rica's leading English-spoken newspaper (Baxter-Neal 2006).

The world tourism industry has been accused of benefiting from the child sex trade. But as stated above, Costa Rica says it is making a stand. Ordinary Costa Ricans, from taxi drivers to hoteliers, are taking official tourism classes as

part of the country's latest attempt to stop the abuse of children by international sex tourists. Costa Rica is the only country so far to adopt this throughout its tourism industry. Taxi drivers are key to the strategy because they are under fire for helping tourists find under-age girls for sex. In the capital San Jose, there are hundreds of self-employed taxi drivers desperate for any business they can find. Some will take tourists on tours to find under-age girls on the streets or even deliver them to hotels (Wright 2004). While it is extremely good that Costa Rica is taken the exploitation of underage sex-workers seriously. The sex-tourism of women of legal age still exists and is probably a massive indirect income source for the tourism sector in Costa Rica. I say indirect because to my knowledge working prostitutes in Costa Rica do not pay income taxes or does indirect employers of them pay social benefits or general payroll tax.

The sex-tourism is generating capital for Costa Rica in other ways though. Most prostitutes catering to tourist do so out of hotels, casinos or bars, where tourist stays, hangout and spend money. The fact is that Costa Rica through these hotels, bars and casinos catering to tourist is profiting from the prostitution and the tourist they bring to the country. This fact does not, however, have to constitute a problem if the women working in the industry are being given their rightful appropriating, social benefits as well as a choice of working in the industry. In other words sustainable development for women in general must be enforced. In order to consider Costa Rica's profit making out of prostitution in the sense of sex-tourism as a, in my opinion, legitimate development mean there has to be other options for the women working in the industry. An estimated 15,000 adult's work as prostitutes' nation-wide in Costa Rica, legally these sex-workers must report to the Health Ministry weekly to have a medical check-up (Pashby 2000). This to me shows that Costa Rica in fact are not so much worried about the development of the women working in the sex-industry but rather worried about the negative health hazards involved in prostitution. Although health issues of course are a part of sustainable development, mandatory check-ups of sex-workers does not, in my opinion, fall under the category of sustainable development, rather these mandatory check-ups imposes a denigrating view on to prostitutes as health hazards. Women working in the sex industry are in need of more support than mandatory check-ups to have their rightful chance to sustainable development.

4.3 Flow of tourists

Costa Rica's economy is small and as stated several times before highly dependent on foreign trade and investment, about 50% of all business in Costa Rica is being done in dollars (Witteman 2006). The arrival of tourists to Costa Rica generated an income of \$1.589 million in 2005. This amount represents an increase of 17%, \$300 million more, in relation to 2004. The flow of tourists also grew in 2005 the country experienced the stay of 1.671.000 visitors. This figure

represents increase of 15%, compared to 2004 (<http://www.visitcostarica.com/ict/paginas/novedades.asp>).

Costa Rica offers many ways for tourists to experience the country and its beauty. Whitewater rafting, tree-top cable tours or guided bird watching trips spread profits throughout the community and bring in up to five times more local-level income than the “sun and beach” resort-style tourism, in which all the money stays in the all-inclusive and usually foreign-owned resorts. ICT statistics shows, also claiming that the majority of tourists in Costa Rica continue to be drawn by rainforests, cloud forests, volcanoes, national parks and rivers (Pashby 2000). The national tourist profile however estimates a stay of ten days and a spending of approximately \$1000 (Morice 2006). Costa Rica is not so much a backpacker destination any longer and meanwhile, it does seem probable that many of the tourists, in this case male, presumably are drawn to Costa Rica for reasons as surfing, water sports, ecotourism, etc also purchase sexual services from local women while in the country, even if this is not the main purpose of the trip.

I believe that prostitution is a great part of Costa Rica’s attractiveness for a lot of male tourists. A former employee at one of the most notorious hotels in San José, tells the stories of groups of men, mainly but not exclusively from the U.S., traveling to Costa Rica for the purpose of engaging in sexual relations with local women as well as taking a trip or two to see the wildlife and nature of the country. A visit to the hotel also tells me that I am not completely wrong in my assumptions.

An extraordinary drive of the tourism industry as the one in Costa Rica means economic development for the country in general, but it should also be a tool for the development of communities and improvement of the quality of life of its members. In Costa Rica the tourism industry obviously is important and plays an important factor in the country’s economy and development, whether it is economic or social development. The issue is not really about what drives the tourists to Costa Rica whether it is the country’s natural beauty, culture or the fact that prostitution is legal, the question that becomes of importance is, if the flow of foreign capital that the flow of tourist as well as the foreign direct investment brings to the country is being distributed at equal levels of participating in the country and is Costa Rica having sustainable development in mind. As showed earlier in the text, through different type of political statements and intentions it claims that it does, I however am declined to believe that is not the whole truth.

5 Conclusion

So what was it that I wished to accomplish with this paper? First of all, it was that the importance of international tourism for a country should not be underestimated as well as the power of and in tourism should not be undervalued. In the case of Costa Rica as well as in many other countries the tourism industry has proved a great source for development for the country and its communities. Tourism as a development tool can, if used right, give a great contribution to a country's development through the generation of income, work-opportunities, cultural exchange etc., the sustainable development must however be carried in mind. The development of the hotels, roads and parks for example must be allowed to progress with time and should be built with the future in mind.

The matter of sex-tourism, which was of main focus for this work, is however a different and more sensitive issue than tourism in general, not only because of the complex issues connected with the phenomenon but also because of its questionable legitimacy. Is it even possible to claim that a country where prostitution is not legal, is using sex-tourism as a development mean? Without moralizing prostitution or the sex-industry, the fact is that a lot of countries are neglecting women working in the sex-industry. This does not only, however, cover the sex-industry, even in the formal labour markets there is the manipulation of the sexual division of labour that shunts women to the lowest paid jobs. What becomes evident is that if development is what the country is hoping to achieve with tourism and the prostitution within the tourism industry is or has become a mean to attract a flow of tourist and then indirect also a flow of foreign exchange, then sex-tourism in fact is a part of the development strategy of a country. The mere fact that prostitution is illegal does not change this. When sex-tourism becomes a draw for a country, and it is generating a flow of tourists and capital to the destination, the sex-industry of the country becomes a development instrument and this whether or not prostitution is legal in the country of destination.

In the case of Costa Rica, sex-tourism clearly seems to be a factor of development for the country. The development as a growing sex-tourism destination might not be what the country is hoping to become, but the fact remains that, due to the flow of tourist and hence therefore also foreign exchange and foreign direct investment that the sex-industry of Costa Rica attracts to the country, sex-tourism in Costa Rica is in my mind to be regarded as a mean for development. Because of Costa Rica's dependency on the continued flow of tourists to the country as a mean for earning foreign exchange, Costa Rica can by not actively doing anything to stop the sex-tourism of legal age be said to be successfully using prostitution in the name of tourism as a development tool. The dependency of the flow of tourists and capital from developed countries creates a market for prostitution within the tourism sector.

When sex-tourism has been established as a mean for development what then crops up is the question that also was the main concern for this thesis, and that is if sex-tourism can be a mean for sustainable development and if the women working in the sex-industry are allowed sustainable development through such a development of the industry.

If women are not given the same development prospects as men, again without getting in to the morality and gender issues of prostitution, then sex-tourism can not be considered to be in line with the theory of sustainable development. However, sustainable development is a never ending process. If sex-tourism is to be seen as sustainable development it is important that equal rights and opportunities for women and men, at all levels and in all areas and aspects of a country, are fully implemented and in the end enforced. Unfortunately sex-tourism and prostitution is rarely seen as an integral part of a country's economical system and traditions, which it in my opinion should be, in order to be able to at least have a chance of giving the women working in the industry opportunity for sustainable development. Sustainable development has to cover all areas in order to be sustainable. Governments of developing countries cannot, in my view, be expected to regulate the sex-industry merely for moral reasons especially if the industry is bringing in the much-needed foreign exchange. What is more needed for is that the women working in the industry are getting there rightful chance to sustainable development. What is important is that those working in the industry are being treated as any other self employed in the tourism sector, enjoying the same benefits and share of the profits generating from the tourism industry. From a positive viewpoint, the sex trade as a profession can generate opportunities for women, more than just an income, such as learning English (or other foreign languages) and experience cultural exchanges. Even so there are of course downsides to prostitution, women, not all perhaps, but many are through prostitution being exploited and used by the industry and also indirectly by some countries as merely an income source. The prostitution in the tourism industry has to be acknowledged as a part of the countries development strategy, in order for sustainable development to be realized.

It is my belief that Costa Rica because of its dependency of foreign direct investment and foreign currency is neglecting to put prostitution and the women involved in sex-tourism on the political agenda and by doing so they are neglecting the women working in the industry as well as making their chance to sustainable development more difficult. It is however also my belief that as soon as the international pressure from governments and other international actors increases, which I am almost certain it will in time, Costa Rica will in the face of modernization and Westernization have to deal with its institution of prostitution. While this seemingly might be in the best interest of the women working in the sex-industry, it all comes down to sustainable development. Will there be new opportunities for women working in the industry if the government of Costa Rica takes a stand against sex-tourism, or will there simply be greater demand for them to act as prostitutes for the local market or to travel abroad to work in foreign markets? Clearly, much more work needs to be done on the matter of this subject to be able to answer questions of this sort. What however does remain clear is the

importance of continuing to enhance women's rights to equal rights and access as men and also the importance of putting sex-tourism and the prostitution that it inhales on the political development agenda of a country. In order for sex-tourism to be remotely regarded as sustainable development for a country and for the women involved it has to be acknowledged for what it is, namely a development mechanism.

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