



Donors on tour: Philanthrotourism in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly NGOs organize trips for their 'major donors' to visit development projects with the aim to enhance funding streams and fortify donor relations. Building on growing discussions of 'philanthrocapitalism' as a novel form of international development financing, we analyze such 'donor trips' as a unique tourism niche termed 'philanthrotourism'. Based on empirical research concerning two such trips to Sub-Saharan Africa, we argue that philanthrotourism allows donors to experience *jouissance*—a particular type of ambivalent enjoyment that includes fascination with dark and horrific elements—as a core motivation to engage in staged development spectacles via their touristic experiences and thereby affirm their commitment to philanthropy. Our analysis highlights the importance of investigating psychological underpinnings of ethical tourism more generally.

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Introduction

This article explores the growing phenomenon in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer trips to visit development projects for 'major donors' to increase funding streams and fortify donor relations. Such travels have become ever more common among development and environmental NGOs, constituting a relatively new type of tourism with a specific focus on wealthy donors. Yet this phenomenon has hardly been investigated thus far within the substantial tourism studies literature. In this article, we address this gap by analyzing two such 'donor trips' to Sub-Saharan Africa that the first author co-organized when working as a large grants fundraiser. Our analysis contributes to existing tourism literature, particularly in relation to 'ethical' tourism, by exploring how such tourism integrates philanthrocapitalism, an ideology in which wealthy philanthropists further business techniques to philanthropic causes, via a psychoanalytic analysis of how the fascination for global inequality creates a very specific type of enjoyment for those participating in donor trips.

Such trips are based on the idea that major donors are difficult to secure and maintain; hence a growing trend to fortify relationships with major donors and thereby increase chances of obtaining future philanthropic support is to travel with them to the sites of development interventions. We name this form of travel 'philanthrotourism', a term that has been briefly mentioned in passing by others in different contexts (e.g. Gillen, 2012; Lunstrum, 2018), but which has yet to be subject to systematic theoretical and empirical analysis and hence remains an under-investigated niche within tourism studies. We argue that philanthrotourism, like philanthrocapitalism generally (Wilson, 2014b), allows donors to experience *jouissance*, a particular type of ambivalent enjoyment (Fink, 1995) that goes beyond 'pure' pleasure to encompass an element of discomfort or even pain in confronting distasteful aspects of the development landscape, such as orphaned children and poverty. In this way, the psychoanalytic concept of *jouissance* functions as a core motivation for donors to engage in development, including through travel and

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tourism. In drawing on psychoanalysis to analyze the important role of *jouissance* in driving philanthrotourism specifically, the present study offers an original contribution to research at the intersection of tourism and development studies. Our analysis also highlights the importance of investigating the psychological underpinnings of ethical tourism more generally.

Philanthrotourism, psychoanalysis and philanthrocapitalism

Within studies of ethical tourism in particular, the relationship between tourism and international development has been analyzed in a variety of ways, but the specific focus on major donors who travel has been limited, often only mentioned in passing (e.g. Holmes, 2011). Most common in studies of tourism and development is a focus on the widespread use of tourism as a strategy to generate foreign exchange and local development (e.g. Fletcher, 2011; Honey, 2008, 2011; Koot, 2021a; Mowforth & Munt, 2016). Researchers have also explored a specific form of 'development tourism' in which tours are organized by (Western) NGOs to their development projects to inspire participants to become more socially and environmentally aware (Salazar, 2004). Others have highlighted a more tightly conjoined 'developmentourism', in which "development and tourism are merged into one singular practice", based on "representations of the international tourists as donors and the international donors as tourists" (Baptista, 2017, p. 22). Furthermore, researchers have discussed 'travel philanthropy' (Novelli, 2016; cf. Honey, 2011), which is focused on people wanting to 'do good' during their travels and has as its starting point the growth of 'volunteer tourism' (Mostafanezhad, 2013). In this way, travel philanthropy has grown into "a form of development assistance flowing from the travel industry and travelers directly into conservation initiatives, community projects and philanthropic organizations" (Novelli, 2016, p. 148; see also Honey, 2011; Novelli, Morgan, Mitchell, & Ivanov, 2016). This has resulted in many volunteer tourism projects all over the world (Mowforth & Munt, 2016), taking place "in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" (Wearing, 2001, p. 1).

While what we term herein philanthrotourism overlaps with these other forms of tourism to some degree, it also exhibits clear and significant differences. In development tourism, for instance, the leisure practice of tourism and the professional practice of development are clearly separated between the development agents and the tourists, and there is no clear focus on major donors (Salazar, 2004; Spencer, 2010). By contrast, philanthrotourism is clearly focused on integrating the role of major donors into development further. Similarly, in developmentourism the core focus is on the development impact of *the tourism itself*, while in philanthrotourism the central focus is on the establishment or perpetuation of the relationship (and funding) between major donor philanthropists and an NGO. Moreover, as philanthrotourism is focused on the wealthy, and the corporate sector in particular, it holds a focus on *major* donors, and some companies use such philanthropy strategically for Corporate Social Responsibility, which often plays an important role in marketing and to increase the involvement of employees (De Graaff & Verwiël, 2018). Developmentourism, on the other hand, tends to encompass a wider variety of participants of varying status and income level, most of whom travel for leisure and in a personal manner independent of their employers (Baptista, 2017).

Philanthrotourism also differs from travel philanthropy and volunteer tourism in that the latter are considered phenomena originating in the tourism industry, whereas philanthrotourism originates from civil society. In philanthrotourism, moreover, participants do not normally 'work' (voluntarily or involuntarily) during the trip, as do the (often relatively young) tourists participating in volunteer tourism. In philanthrotourism, by contrast, major donors join the trip predominantly to gaze at the (staged and spectacularized, see below) development projects they visit, with small and select groups of (potential) donors. A last important defining feature of philanthrotourism is that it is focused on the fortification of the relation between NGOs and major donors, to build a long-term relationship with fundraising in mind. This focus is unique among the various forms of tourism previously outlined.

In all these related forms of tourism, however, the classic dynamic of 'staged authenticity' plays a crucial role, in which 'backstage' issues are hidden from participants, who only get to see the public 'frontstage' (MacCannell, 1976; cf. Goffman, 1959), which in this case is the presentation of a 'successful' development project (or at least its potential to become successful). Baptista (2017), for instance, describes how a dysfunctional water tank is presented to its tourist donors as a success and evidence of the good use to which their tourist dollars have been directed. Such spectacles are important in ethical tourism more generally, in which what matters most in contemporary consumer society is the *representation* of 'authentic' development projects (Debord, 1967), and in particular the success or potential of this development.

As previously stated, while the term philanthrotourism has been mentioned in two existing studies (Gillen, 2012; Lunstrum, 2018), it has yet to be subjected to sustained empirical and theoretical investigation. In particular, analyses have not yet explored philanthrotourism's embodiment of the particular pursuit of the crucial psychoanalytical concept of *jouissance*, a dynamic that has also been identified in tourism delivery more generally (Buda, 2015; Fletcher, 2014; Fletcher & Neves, 2012; Kingsbury, 2005; Koot, 2021). We therefore elaborate on this key concept and its contribution to our analysis in the next section.

Psychoanalysis and *jouissance* in tourism

Thus far, psychoanalysis has played a fairly small role in tourism studies (for notable exceptions, see e.g. Buda, 2015; Fletcher, 2014; Kingsbury, 2005; Koot, 2021). The same is true for related fields such as development studies, where a small but growing body of research draws on psychoanalysis to highlight the significance of the unconscious and irrational or affective aspects of the international development regime largely neglected by previous research (see e.g. De Vries, 2007; Kapoor, 2018, 2020).

Our use of the term *jouissance* in this article is grounded specifically in Lacanian psychoanalysis, in terms of which it is commonly translated as ‘enjoyment’ (e.g. Žižek, 1989) but is more accurately described as a mixture of pleasure and pain or an ambivalent ‘excitement’ (Fink, 1995). Our Lacanian conceptualization of *jouissance* is the one most frequently employed in previous research concerning philanthrocapitalism (more on this below), but others have employed the term in different ways beyond this original usage (see e.g. Barthes, 1973, who reworked *jouissance* in a modernist literary context, or Cixous, 1999, and Irigaray, 1977, for a specific feminine conceptualization).

More than an affect or emotion, *jouissance* in this sense is derived from “the raw libidinal energy of the bodily drives, which is only experienced as enjoyment when structured by specific fantasies that underpin our sense of reality” (Wilson, 2014b, p. 113). In philanthrocapitalism, such fantasies are predominantly based on colonial ideas of the ‘white savior’ in Africa (Pailey, 2020). Such fantasies serve to channel desire for *jouissance* in particular directions by attaching it to specific objects that claim capacity to provide it. Due to this fundamental ambivalence, however, *jouissance* promises a satisfaction it can never actually deliver: the pain one experiences in the pursuit of pleasure turns into pleasure in the experience of pain. *Jouissance* thus offers a taste of enjoyment such that actors are motivated to continue to pursue it based in the further fantasy that eventually the negative aspects can be transcended and pure pleasure experienced. In this way, unresolved desire is sustained over time, and thus “[i]n the fantasy-scene desire is not fulfilled, ‘satisfied,’ but constituted” (Žižek, 1989, p. 132). Rather, “through fantasy, *jouissance* is domesticated” (Žižek, 1989, p. 138). Consequently, fantasy’s promise to deliver the desired satisfaction at some future point serves to conceal the impossibility of this promise and motivates continued pursuit of *jouissance*.

Philanthrocapitalism and the enjoyment of inequality

Especially since the Cold War ended, development and humanitarian NGOs have erupted worldwide, leading to the creation of a ‘global civil society’ in a context in which expansion of capitalism through privatization, government cutbacks, the information economy and intensification of globalization have all led to “the ascendancy of neoliberalism” and an increasing number of “private-public linkages between Western states, UN agencies, private firms, militaries, and NGOs” (Kapoor, 2013, p. 88 and p. 89). An important aspect of such neoliberalisation in the realm of international development has been the rise of ‘philanthrocapitalism’ (Bishop & Green, 2010; Edwards, 2008), via which both civil society organizations and private sector firms assert that reorganizing development aid according to neoliberal market principles holds the key to reforming development moving forward (see also Farrell, 2015).

The term philanthrocapitalism is obviously derived from and closely connected to such ‘philanthrocapitalism’, concerning which a growing body of research has developed, a portion of which highlights the key role of *jouissance* in this phenomenon as well. Philanthrocapitalism refers to

the renaissance of giving and philanthropy, led by the world’s most successful wealth creators. *Philanthrocapitalism* describes how they give, by applying business techniques and ways of thinking to their philanthropy. It also describes the growing recognition by the leaders of capitalism that giving back much of their fortune to improve society is as much a part of the system as making the money in the first place.

[(Bishop & Green, 2010, p. xii, emphasis in original)]

From the perspective of philanthrocapitalism, previous forms of philanthropy are generally regarded as largely ineffective because they lack grounding in sound business principles (Bishop & Green, 2010; Farrell, 2015). Philanthrocapitalist projects are typically characterized by quantitative goals, commercial management styles, short term targets, and technical solutions for environmental and social challenges (Edwards, 2008). Well-known philanthrocapitalists are, among many others, Warren Buffet, George Soros, Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates, all of whom gained their wealth in the corporate or financial sectors. Part of the philanthrocapitalist strategy entails civil society organizations courting major donors whose philanthropy concentrates on in-kind gifts and relatively large financial donations when compared with small private donors. These include corporations, lotteries, foundations and (wealthy) private donors, most of whom have made their money through corporate activities.

Despite considerable hype surrounding its rise, philanthrocapitalism’s effectiveness has thus far not been proven, while it has also been critiqued for concentrating wealth and power among the rich and thus lacking democratic decision-making (Edwards, 2008; Reich, 2018). Moreover, philanthrocapitalism is seen to instill principles of competition within civil society and ignore attention to broader structural issues promoting the inequality it intends to address (Dean, 2005; Edwards, 2008; Giridharadas, 2018; Reich, 2018). This is seen to translate into a lack of accountability and political legitimacy for philanthrocapitalists. As Kapoor (2013, p. 65) asserts, through deregulation and privatization “a clique of private individuals” can now make decisions about public causes, “according to their own priorities, prejudices, or idiosyncrasies, what causes matter, how much to spend on them, and in what manner”. While philanthrocapitalism is mainly associated with the ‘very rich’, the ideology underpinning it is more widespread and includes promotion of ‘popular philanthrocapitalism’ as an ideology in which ‘all’ can participate (Bishop & Green, 2010; Koot & Fletcher, 2019). As such, it is “not just billionaires and their mega-foundations that command attention” (Reich, 2018, p. 9), but it is equally important to investigate how the ideology ‘travels’ (Peck & Theodore, 2015) in society more broadly.

Philanthrocapitalism is explicitly presented by Bishop and Green (2010) as a legitimization of growing global inequality and an argument *against* state-based redistribution of wealth. The rich need to be seen as generous and hence are in a position to manage inequality through philanthropy (rather than have their wealth appropriated by states for social programs). Against this backdrop,

Wilson (2014a, p. 1146) argues, the “ideological formation” of philanthrocapitalism conceals the discourse of global inequality while also providing a *visceral enjoyment* of this inequality by mobilizing a specific experience of *jouissance* (Wilson, 2014b, emphasis in original). In his analysis, philanthrocapitalism is an ideological formation that discursively frames and structures enjoyment through the use of economic language of poverty alleviation and ethical language of saving lives: it mobilizes the *enjoyment of global inequality* for (mostly Western) consumers (Wilson, 2014a, 2014b). Underneath this benevolent rhetoric, however, mobilization of *jouissance*, the arrangement of social relations, and the organization of institutions in service of philanthrocapitalism create social fantasies that structure relations of domination in such a way that they can foreclose or displace recognition of the formative role capitalism itself plays in generating the inequality philanthrocapitalism aims to tackle (Wilson, 2014b). Philanthrocapitalism can thus be understood “as an ideological formation devoted to producing and sustaining a specific social fantasy” (Wilson, 2014a, p. 1146), based on a colonial ‘white gaze’ in which the development donor is the benevolent ‘savior’ of marginalized and oppressed black Africans (Pailey, 2020).

This philanthrocapitalist fantasy also draws donors to Africa through the specific type of travel we term philanthrotourism. In relation to celebrities (many of whom also often function as philanthrocapitalists), Kapoor highlights how through their gaze on the Third World they “become disproportionately attached, perversely *enjoying* her/his assertive and privileged relationship to it” (Kapoor, 2013, p. 34, emphasis added). A similar ‘gaze’ can be identified when donors travel: doing philanthropy generally strengthens donors’ position as global social and economic elites, creating a situation in which inequality is the starting point of the enjoyment. Thus, when donors travel, as in philanthrotourism, they are not only involved in philanthropy, but in philanthrocapitalism specifically, since it is the inequality generated by capitalism itself that provides for enjoyment in the first place.

From such a privileged position, donors experience *jouissance* through enjoyment of the pleasure/pain nexus: capitalism provides them with lives in which they enjoy and promote capitalism, while their position as dominant saviors also provides for covert enjoyment of the pain that capitalism inflicts on a majority of other people (cf. Kapoor, 2013). As Kapoor (2013, 2020) explains, contemporary discourses on poverty tend to de-historicize the phenomenon, positioning it within contemporary capitalism without addressing its root causes such as colonialism and the continuation of inequality through the global capitalist economy (see also Fletcher, 2012). Poverty is generally regarded as caused by cultural practices and irresponsible others, corrupt leaders, dishonest civil servants or simply unfortunate circumstances. Capitalism is regarded as given, an inevitable system to which people and institutions have to adapt. In addition to de-historicization, such a focus also leads to a *de-politicization* of structural issues more broadly, addressing the symptoms instead of core problems (Kapoor, 2013). This allows for the perpetuation of global inequality under the guise of redressing it. As such, “development transforms poverty into a particular type of opportunity –*the opportunity to enjoy*” (Kapoor, 2020, p. 273, emphasis in original).

In this way, acts of charity are accompanied by experiences of enjoyment also beyond staged tourism spectacles. Numerous examples of these can be found in Bishop and Green’s (2010) original book *Philanthrocapitalism: How giving can save the world*. The authors claim, for instance, that giving provides a ‘*jouissance*-laden’ ‘warm glow’ to donors, which feels “as a source of joy more important than sports and music [...] responsible for doling out the dopamine-mediated euphoria often associated with sex, money, food, and drugs” (Bishop & Green, 2010, p. 39). However, “[j]ust as we are encouraged to vicariously enjoy the wealth of the philanthrocapitalists, we are equally invited to experience extreme poverty through their eyes” (Wilson, 2014b, p. 115), since logically the two cannot be separated. The Third World, and in particular Africa, are described as places where ‘the Other’ experiences immeasurable suffering and pain. Africa occupies a privileged place among philanthrocapitalist development initiatives, since here philanthrocapitalists can reproduce the colonial representation of the continent as submissive in contrast to the ruling West. Such presentations of the continent, in which suffering children and adults are victimized as hungry people without agency, ignore crucial contradictions of capitalist development. Importantly, the representation of Africa in this way mobilizes *jouissance*, providing for both conventional enjoyment as well as the enjoyment and fascination of horror and revulsion, resulting in an attractive and simultaneously repelling fantasy (Wilson, 2014b), worth travelling to so that one can gaze at this representation (or spectacle) and enjoy it.

Methodology

The study focuses on two donor trips that the first author co-organized or initiated when working as a large grants fundraiser for the Chances Foundation (a pseudonym) in the Netherlands. This is an NGO that at the time was mostly government subsidized, which enabled them to support a large variety of educational projects globally, with a strong focus on Africa. However, like so many other development NGOs, Chances also became subject to cuts in government subsidies for public causes, particularly for development aid in the fight against poverty, a global trend that continues today (Lamble, 2019). Therefore, the organization’s dependency and focus on private funds and initiatives has increased (De Wilde & Meijs, 2014). The NGO is currently headquartered in the Netherlands with country offices in Uganda, Malawi, Kenya and Ethiopia. They aim to provide marginalized children and young people in the Global South with basic education and vocational training, all in accordance with their four key themes: vocational education, quality basic education, equal opportunities for boys and girls and education in emergencies. Since the first author worked for the Chances Foundation between 2007 and 2012, the exact countries and key themes have modestly changed, but the central focus on education remains.

Despite this focus on a few discrete organizations and representatives, our exploration should be understood as a more general analysis of dynamics of philanthrotourism rather than a critique of specific organizations, companies or people. Although some organizations involved in the article have allowed us to use their names, we therefore decided to anonymize everyone involved.

Data collection

The first trip took place to Kenya between 7 and 15 November 2009 at the request of one donor, the Future Foundation (also a pseudonym). The travel party consisted of the philanthropist couple behind the foundation, the project manager for Arts and Education, the Future director of Education and Leprosy, the Chances Foundation director, a project manager from the Chances Local Expertise Centre in Kenya, his assistant and the first author. The second trip took place to Ethiopia between 14 and 22 January 2012. Here the Chances Foundation initiated the trip comprising seven people together representing four major donors, four Chances Foundation employees and one colleague joining from Chances' Ethiopian counterpart the Development Expertise Centre. The major donors in this article are all directly or indirectly corporate actors, in the sense that they are either representatives of companies (in some cases these companies started their own foundation) or wealthy individuals who made their money with their own business (some of whom also started their own foundations). They all supported the Chances Foundation, financially, in-kind, or both.

Because the first author played a central role in the organization and also participated in the trips, these experiences can be considered a form of 'autoethnography' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This adds a unique insight from a practitioner's point of view. However, the trips took place between nine and 12 years ago. Although memory is an important tool in autoethnography, it is not always reliable for factual data, and ideas change over time (Koot, 2016). In order to address this important issue, the first author visited a selection of the donors/travelers, Chances Foundation employees and local representatives again to conduct 10 semi-structured interviews between 2015 and 2018. Nine out of the 10 interviewees have joined either the trip to Kenya or to Ethiopia, and one interviewee represented the Future Foundation but had not joined a trip with the Chances Foundation (but she had with other NGOs). Of the nine interviewees who joined one of the trips, five were major donors of the Chances Foundation at the time, one was the Chances' program coordinator for Ethiopia, one was Chances' director, one was a former fellow major donor fundraiser and one was the Ethiopian director of the Development Expertise Centre Ethiopia. Former relationships with all these people made it relatively easy to organize these interviews that contained general questions about the trips—and in some cases other, similar trips that the interviewees had undertaken—as well as changes taking place in the international development landscape more broadly. The findings thus go beyond the specific trips to Ethiopia and Kenya in which the first author participated.

In addition to autoethnography and semi-structured interviews, the first author has also analyzed a variety of documents in relation to the two trips, including a group travel journal in which donors wrote about their experiences in Ethiopia every day, a film (about Ethiopia) and two photo albums (about Kenya) distributed after the trips. To demonstrate the widespread nature of the philanthrotourism phenomenon we analyze, we also situate our analysis within discussions of a variety of similar contemporary excursions offered by other organizations.

In the next section, we employ the conceptual framework outlined above to explore how philanthrotourism as a particular form of philanthrocapitalism mobilizes *jouissance* to stimulate donors' engagement by staging spectacular touristic encounters with development projects and their recipients.

Donors on tour in Africa

In this section we first show that philanthrotourism and 'donor trips' are a growing global phenomenon, after which we explore in detail the two donor trips organized by the Chances Foundation to Kenya and Ethiopia, respectively. A well-known example of an NGO that organizes donor trips is the infamous World Wildlife Fund for Nature. They even offer full travel packages to (potential) donors (World Wildlife Fund, 2021), and the Dutch branch of the World Wildlife Fund used to offer 'extinction tourism' for wealthy people; in 2018 it was possible to book a luxurious seven-day fly-in safari to Namibia to visit black rhinos and desert elephants, with a focus on fundraising (Wereld Natuur Fonds, 2018). Likewise, Conservation International offers private luxury trips, including renting yachts and cruises to please potential philanthropists, through their in-house luxury travel firm to their conservation sites, e.g. in Melanesia and Gabon (Holmes, 2011). Development NGOs such as We Charity (Global News, 2021), Plan International (Plan International, 2021) and Simavi (Simavi, 2021), among many others, have also organized tours for their major donors. In fact, today some commercial travel operators offer to fully organize such trips: Philanthropy Without Borders, for instance, states that "[b]y offering your donors a transformative experience in the field they will be ready to deepen their commitment" (Philanthropy Without Borders, 2021), while the responsible tourism operator Elevate Destinations, which claims to have "been working with nonprofits to design seamless site visits since 2005", appeals specifically to NGOs "to win your donors' hearts through travel" (Elevate Destinations, 2021b). Among Elevate Destinations' 'donor travel partners' are heavy hitters such as Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, the Barr Foundation, Union Bank of Switzerland Wealth Management and the Laird Norton Family Foundation (Elevate Destinations, 2021a). They further explain:

Your organization does amazing work abroad. It reaches people in the world's most remote and vulnerable areas. How can you showcase the living, breathing outcomes of your work to donors? Get up-close and firsthand. Connect them to the place. Take them there.

[(Elevate Destinations, 2021b)]

To gain more insight into the dynamics occurring on such trips, we now analyze the two donor trips organized by the Chances Foundation specifically.

Donor trips as a staged development spectacle

Things started for the Chances Foundation when they were approached by their donor the Future Foundation in the first half of 2009 to help organize a trip to Kenya. Because the trip to Kenya was the first time for the Chances Foundation to actually organize a donor trip (and only the second trip for the Future Foundation), this raised some eyebrows within the Chances Foundation at the time. The Chances program coordinator for Kenya, when asked to help organize the trip, made clear she was not working for a travel agent and she would often keep referring to the initiative as a 'pleasure trip' (in Dutch '*plezierreis*') for rich people, while stressing the heavy burden this created for colleagues from the Local Expertise Centre in Nairobi. Such internal resistance is something the first author never communicated with the Future Foundation in these days (but he did in the interviews later). Today, however, Future has stopped asking NGOs to play such a big role in the organization of their travels: "I would find it rather fierce if a donor would ask an NGO to organize a whole week to Kenya and the logistics [...] because you put a very heavy burden on an NGO. I think it is fine to give and take something but there should be a balance" (interview, 1 February 2018). Different interests between fundraisers and program coordinators were an issue at the Chances Foundation in these days: the amount and type of information that fundraisers needed for reporting to their donors does not neatly align with what program coordinators and the national expertise centers could deliver. In fact, one partner in Ethiopia explained that the Chances Foundation's demands for fundraising were simply too much for the funds the partner received considering their limited financial means.

Such different interests are, in tourism terms, a classic 'backstage' issue, while the donors only get to see the public 'frontstage', or what MacCannell (1976); cf. Goffman, 1959) called a situation of 'staged authenticity'. Construction of this staged authenticity did not only take place between fundraisers and program coordinators, but also, and especially, prior and during the trip, when the roles of Kenyan and Ethiopian Expertise Centers were crucial. Not only did these local organizations advise the first author during his preparations before the trips, they also actively explained and framed the projects as successful or having much potential during the trips themselves. They thus acted like 'culture brokers', or cross-cultural mediators in the same sense as tourism facilitators (Salazar, 2004). An exception needs to be made here regarding preparations for the trip to Kenya, in which the Future Foundation representatives co-decided on various projects they wanted to visit in collaboration with the Chances Foundation. Before the Future Foundation representatives went to Kenya with the Chances Foundation, they had gone to Ghana and Togo in 2008 for their first donor trip, which comprised the foundation's four board members, its four employees and two representatives of the recipient NGO. During this trip, they travelled with eight white people, "as if we were on some kind of an organized tourist trip. And for the four board members it was more or less like a holiday, for the four employees it was work and for the NGOs it was even more work" (interview, 19 February 2018). An important reason why these trips are like work, according to this interviewee, is because one has to be very sensitive, especially socially, while the trips have a full agenda: there is a tension between wanting to see as much as possible in a week and going in-depth, a tension well-known in organized tourism. The interviewee explained:

You must be very careful that it doesn't become like watching monkeys, quickly going in and out and very superficially visiting as many projects as you can in a week, what Future is also doing because you want to get as much out of such a week as possible, but what do you then really get out of it? You need to balance that very carefully.

[(interview, 19 February 2018)]

Such quick project visits can promote de-politicization by diverting attention from structural and historical causes of the poverty and inequality encountered on the trips (Kapoor, 2013, 2020). This creates a situation of 'post-democratic' liberal politics, leaving governing elites (in our case a combination of NGO representatives and major donor philanthropists) largely unaccountable for their role in overarching structural social and environmental issues (cf. Kapoor, 2013). Increasingly, NGOs spend part of their budget on marketing in the competition for funds. In this, there is no room for un-photogenic details, the boring daily routines of ordinary people's lives and complicated histories and politics (Kapoor, 2013): development projects in that sense were presented as authentic and staged spectacles, in which social life's representation—in this case as successful or promising development—was more important than everyday life experiences (Debord, 1967). Donor trips have now become an important instigator of such staged spectacles.

The creation of various staged authenticities also took place 'beyond' visits to the development projects, in more conventional tourism settings. For instance, the highlight of the trip to Kenya was, according to the Future Foundation members, a visit to the Loita Maasai area. Here we met 'authentic' Maasai people, including young warriors and the spiritual leader of the area, to whom we gave a bottle of whiskey as a present (as had been recommended by the Local Expertise Centre). Moreover, we stopped at traditional encampments or *manyattas*, visited people at their houses, and joined a Maasai 'traditional jumping dance'. The last part of the visit to the Loita Maasai area was a safari trip to the world-famous Maasai Mara game reserve, where we saw plenty of game in approximately half a day. During the organizational process beforehand, the idea to visit the Loita Maasai area, including the game reserve, had been suggested by the first author's contact from the Local Expertise Centre, who claimed to understand well 'what such people liked'. It turns out that he indeed had a good eye for this: after the trip the Chances Foundation's employees as well as the Local Expertise Centre received two beautifully printed photo books from the Future Foundation, one about the trip as a whole and one specifically about the first three days spent in the Loita Maasai area and the Maasai Mara. Many years later a Future Foundation interviewee would explain: "That was touristic and fantastic [...] we saw so many animals,

unbelievable" (interview, 19 February 2018). And in relation to visiting the people she said: "We were also visiting the Maasai people and went into their huts. That was also kind of touristy, it was really great, but it must all be in balance" (interview, 19 February 2018).

The organization of the trip to Ethiopia proceeded with less resistance at the Chances Foundation, likely because it was the second trip and Chances' program coordinators had become more accustomed to the need, and also because this time the Chances Foundation fully organized the initiative and could thus set up the whole itinerary. During preparations, the Chances fundraisers first broadly discussed the idea with potentially interested major donors at a yearly meeting, where the program coordinator also held a presentation about potential projects to be visited, and once some had agreed to join such a trip, an itinerary was set up by the fundraisers and program coordinator Ethiopia in collaboration with the Development Expertise Centre. Both fundraisers and the program coordinator for Ethiopia met the donors for dinner in an Ethiopian restaurant in the Netherlands. Similar to the trip to Kenya, in Ethiopia the itinerary contained several conventional tourist attractions, such as traditional coffee ceremonies (which were included at various places throughout the trip), Ethiopian Orthodox churches, a public celebration of Christ's baptism (the Timkat festival in the city of Gondar that we ran into by accident), a visit to the famous ruins of castles and churches in Gondar and another baptism ceremony in Addis Ababa. After the trip, one of the donors made the effort to produce and share a 50-minute film of the experience with all participants. Both in Kenya and Ethiopia the donors enjoyed the 'welcoming ceremonies' that were held at all primary schools we visited. Although most considered it a show to some degree, they also felt that it is fine to make people feel welcome: "The way we were welcomed at these projects was really fantastic; all people would come out and with much fuss they came to see us. We were treated as honored guests or even as Gods. That might not be necessary but I guess it is culture" (interview, 18 November 2015).

Including conventional tourism elements, such as visits to national parks and cultural ceremonies, was thus an important addition to visiting the development projects. These greatly contributed to the creation of a staged spectacle to please the donors. However, the development projects were the main reason to visit, and these visits were often framed and set up similarly as conventional tourism experiences. One interviewee specifically emphasized the enjoyment of the touristy elements of the trip, but also the importance of not losing sight of the main reason for travelling: "It was very *enjoyable*, but it should not take away too much time from watching the projects and discussing them" (interview, 19 February 2018, emphasis added).

Travel philanthropy, with its central focus on volunteer tourism, has been critiqued as a commodification of poverty and underdevelopment, which is consequently subjected to the patronizing gaze of tourists, blurring altruism, the desire for social status and individual gain with giving and volunteering within a context of neoliberal development strategies (Mostafanezhad, 2013; Novelli et al., 2016). As the preceding discussion demonstrates, such critiques can also be applied to philanthrotourism. Furthermore, and as Wilson (2014a) found in his research on Millennium Village Projects in Uganda, visits to development projects are constructed in such a way that outsiders such as journalists, celebrities, politicians, tourists, academics and Western donors are invited into a colonial fantasy, a 'holiday camp' where they receive a carefully orchestrated guided tour, all to please the visitors and confirm their paternalistic domination. In this way, a spectacle is staged for visiting donors that "is infused with a complex and obscure *jouissance*" (Wilson, 2014a, p. 1154), based on strong articulations of inequality.

Furthermore, a typical day was also orchestrated similarly to a typical guided tourist trip for groups, in which especially the Ethiopian and Kenyan Expertise Centres' representatives functioned as 'tour guides'. We were served three meals a day together, and there was a morning and an afternoon excursion program. With the exception of the visits to conventional tourist attractions, in between meals we would either travel to the next destination or visit a project (sometimes, if projects were close, two projects were visited on one morning or afternoon). Often, dinners were used to thank each other and speeches were made by Development Expertise Centre and Local Expertise Centre employees, Chances employees, and sometimes by donors too. In fact, the similarity between donor trips and organized packages for conventional tourist groups in general is striking, since both groups met at the Schiphol International Airport in Amsterdam at the start, flew together, were picked up from the airports in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, respectively, and driven around for the whole trip, staying in middle- to upper-range hotels depending on availability. Only once, for the first two nights in the remote Loita Maasai area of Kenya, did we stay at the project director's house.

Importantly, however, there are also significant differences between donor trips and conventional tourism. When 'the tourist gaze' (Urry, 2002) is projected onto subjects of development, as in philanthrotourist excursions, this automatically turns it into a 'development gaze', in which 'the Other' is an important subject of domination, as the one who is being watched and judged by strangers who are not accountable to them (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012; see also Pailey, 2020). *Jouissance* plays a crucial role in this through the spectacle that stimulates excitement (cf. Fink, 1995) when one indulges in the drama, in our case via gazing at impoverished children lacking sufficient education and the urgent calls for action that this sight instigates. This gaze of participatory development, however, is also reversed, since it also seeks out "the Other's gaze as a guarantee for the donor's/convenor's being": to assure social recognition in participatory development, it enables donors "to attract the gaze of the Other—project participants, other donors, the media, the wider public—as an assurance of social recognition" (Kapoor, 2020, p. 157). Essentially, participation (including through gazing at staged and spectacularized project visits) thus "helps shore up the donor's identity, bringing approbation and respectability; it elicits a nonthreatening, manageable, and admiring community gaze; and it is the source of sadomasochistic pleasures that confirm the donor's dominant role" (Kapoor, 2020, p. 159).

Of course, although the element of 'staged authenticity' to create development spectacles plays a pivotal role in philanthrotourism, there are also instances in which dynamics intended to be hidden backstage erupt onto the frontstage. In Kenya, for instance, there was a problem with exactly the project the Future Foundation supported at the time, but they appreciated the Chances Foundation's transparency on the matter after becoming part of the discussions about the issue with the Chances Foundation and Development Expertise Centre. Other examples in which normally backstage matters play an important

role in the trips are also given below (in the section 'Guilt and disrupted enjoyment'), in which a quarrel about marketing among donors is described in Ethiopia, and a situation in Cameroon in which donors simply do not get along well enough with the NGO representative to continue further collaboration.

Gratification and power

The 'reversed gaze', as described in the previous section, thus relates to donors' submission to the Other's gaze, creating an ambivalent situation in which the donor wants to be an authority while also continually seeking recognition of this authority from the Other, and hence inadvertently creating a multitude of potential spaces for political action (Kapoor, 2020). Within this political action field there is much space to find gratification in various ways. *Jouissance* plays a crucial role in this, because donations make one feel instantly gratified, through giving, charity consumption or because one joins an international benevolent community and receives recognition from expert NGOs and recipients, based also partly on this reverse gaze (Kapoor, 2013, 2020). One interviewee, when referring to rich philanthrocapitalists, added that "people like [the philanthrocapitalist donors behind the Future Foundation] truly *enjoy giving* so much money to good causes and for them it is very important to be involved in this" (interview, 19 February 2018, emphasis added).

Simply donating funds, however, is not always enough to achieve gratification, as was articulated by one interviewee especially who elaborated on other donor trips he had made. He explained that he had also been to Malawi on another trip with the Chances Foundation, where he realized "that I did not only want to donate money, but I also wanted to *do something myself*" (interview, 22 September 2015, emphasis added). Subsequently, he wanted to teach voluntary in Malawi, which he explained was in a sense benefiting himself because he was in a position to donate to the Chances Foundation, and therefore he felt more justified to ask for this opportunity for self-fulfillment because "aren't we all looking for that in the end?" (interview, 22 September 2015). However, a Chances Foundation employee had discussed this with another colleague who doubted if her local partner would be happy to have someone visit for a few weeks and whether this would really support the program (also revealing another backstage tension about different interests within the NGO). The Chances employee suggested that "you must ask yourself, am I a social travel agent?" (interview, 18 November 2015).

This search for gratification is based on one's position of power in relation to the NGO and in some cases the local, 'underdeveloped' people. The dominating narrative about tourism in Africa is that tourists are considered privileged, mostly Western and white, who come to gaze at wildlife and the African people, who are in turn considered 'less developed'. Such tourism taps into unequal power relations (Bruner, 2005), and when donors travel these power relations are arguably even stronger in comparison to conventional tourism, because inequality is the starting point of the relation, and thus also of donor trips, where the participants are far more wealthy and powerful than the average tourist. This was also articulated by some of the donors, when asked how they felt about 'welcoming ceremonies' by singing children that were held at almost every primary school we visited. One interviewee claimed to be thankful for the ceremonies, but also related them to the powerful position that donors are in. She explained: "I am very conscious of the fact that I represent money, and generally speaking this means I am most of the time in a *more powerful position*" (interview, 1 February 2018, emphasis added). When 'giving', according to a Chances Foundation representative, one confirms certain images: you give something to the other and thereby you put yourself in a superior position, thus making the other 'smaller', a characteristic highlighted by anthropological analyses of gift-giving generally (Mauss, 2002).

Guilt and disrupted enjoyment

'Giving' is thus full of symbolism and people can interpret the act of giving very differently. This came out strongly during a quarrel between two donors about the ethics of marketing during the trip to Ethiopia. Two of the four donors brought along presents (e.g. soccer balls or bags) to hand over to representatives of the Ethiopian projects we visited, often the headmaster of a school or a teacher. However, a private donor (who donated to the Chances Foundation privately instead of via a company or foundation, although this private money was made through a company) at a certain point reprimanded another donor (representing a company that supported the Chances Foundation predominantly in-kind) for taking pictures with marginalized people (especially schoolchildren), showcasing bags with the company's logo on it. He considered this to be exploitation for the benefit of the Dutch company (he assumed the pictures were to be used in the company's marketing after the trip). Later, he explained that the chastised donor "optimized this trip to the fullest for their own benefit. I would not do that myself because I give based on idealism, free of expectations" (interview, 22 September 2015). Moreover, because the chastised donor was 'only' donating in-kind and not supporting the Chances Foundation financially the interviewee found this behavior even more objectionable. According to him, we (the visitors) should behave much humbler and he felt that the Chances Foundation, as the organizer of the trip, could also have taken more responsibility for this, for instance by providing guidelines for handing out presents beforehand. Interestingly, the chastised donor turned out to agree with him when interviewed three years later, admitting that she might have been overenthusiastic at times, which she believed was maybe more so the cause of the quarrel. Although in her opinion it is not necessarily a bad thing if companies use marketing as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility, she added that this was never her company's intention on this trip: they simply took some bags with them to Ethiopia to hand out because they were left over at the company offices, not because they were intending to use the pictures in their marketing. However, this donor thought marketing should be used to the further benefit of the Chances Foundation or its projects, as she would later indeed explain that it "was such a pity that Chances was not doing more with this" (interview, 23 September 2015), referring to using representations of the trips in the Chances Foundation's marketing. Other donors, however, explained that this was not

necessary, because the trips fitted their aim to get acquainted with the projects (which was regularly mentioned as the aim of the trips by donors). Clearly, such ethical issues can create disruptions in the enjoyment of inequality.

Another example of disruption occurred when a representative from the Future Foundation explained that on a trip they did to Cameroon in 2012 (organized in collaboration with a Cameroonian NGO), the relationship with the NGO became severely strained because two board members could not really get along with the NGO representative, in contrast to our interviewee (herself not a board member). She explained that it was sometimes a bit hard to communicate with the NGO representative, whom she experienced as not very direct, and during the week she saw the relationship deteriorate. At a goodbye lunch, the two board members were not enthusiastic anymore, so she did the goodbye speech and felt very much caught in between the disputing parties: "I told [the board members] that this man had done so much for us, so that the least he deserved was a good thank you speech, so it was such a shame, I thought he could offer us a lot and had so much knowledge on education, so it can go wrong on trips like this also" (interview, 19 February 2018). It is thus not a guarantee that philanthrotourism always leads to a better relationship with the donor and/or more funding. Beyond the staged spectacles, frontstage elements co-shape the outcomes of donor trips. For instance, in the first few years after the trip to Kenya, no other projects of the Chances Foundation have been supported by the Future Foundation, simply because the latter's focus had shifted away from East Africa. Recently, however, the Chances Foundation and the Future Foundation have renewed their collaboration again in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Furthermore, enjoyment could be disrupted by strong feelings of guilt, especially about one's privileged position in the world. One donor was deeply impressed by how people, despite their poverty, were still able to run a school with few materials at their disposal. He, and some others, were impressed with one project in particular in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), where orphans were allowed into the school but had to spend the night on the streets, which made the donors very aware of the relatively luxurious life the foreign participants on the trip were all living. The children would sing to us: "We love you, we love you, thank you very much, thank you very much!" (film from the trip to Ethiopia). Such stories and interactions often evoked feelings of guilt. As various donors explained, they experienced this visit "with a lump in my throat", "emotionally affected", or as "a special privilege to be allowed to contribute to this cause" (travel journal Ethiopia, 15 January 2012).

More generally, poverty made a big impression on the donors, as was often articulated in the collective travel journal from the trip to Ethiopia and in interviews. One donor explained:

We just had a marvelous meal at a Chinese restaurant. Such an extravagance in this world with such poignant contrasts. And we left so much of the food [...] My mixed feelings of shame disappeared when I learned that the food we left would be given to street children. Another great initiative. Next, we went shopping!!

[(travel journal Ethiopia, 21 January 2012)]

This feeling of guilt/shame based on inequality was sometimes also instigated 'from below', for example through the mentioned welcoming ceremonies but also when we met a group of elders and one of the leaders gave a speech that elevated us by calling us a "message from God" (travel journal Ethiopia, 17 January 2012). The response by the donors was to humbly put us back with both feet on the earth, as one donor fatalistically explained, "we are in the end simply products of Western society and back home we drink our Chablis with our olives while showing the pictures to our friends and family" (interview, 23 September 2015). Some donors explicitly mentioned their feelings of guilt, which came up a lot, and which is also visible in the quarrel about the ethics of marketing as described above, in which the exploitation of the poor (children) was deemed an unethical act that would make us 'guilty' of exploitation. Such guilt accompanying pleasure, an essential feature of *jouissance* (Žižek, 1989), is also prevalent in both philanthrocapitalism (Giridharadas, 2018) and tourism (Kingsbury, 2005) more generally.

Conclusion

The conventional division between 'tourists' and 'donors' is not so clear-cut anymore; in certain forms of tourism the boundaries between these categories dissolve (cf. Baptista, 2017), and this is visible especially when donors travel. Contributing to literature about ethical tourism, we have explored dynamics of 'philanthrotourism', in which travel is focused on wealthy, corporately grounded, major donors in order to specifically court their money. This specific niche in contemporary travel has so far been largely overlooked within tourism studies literature, despite the fact that it exhibits classic tourism dynamics such as staged authenticity (of development) and the centralization of these 'authentic' development spectacles within the trips to accommodate donors' expectations.

Moreover, philanthrotourism exemplifies the expansion of philanthrocapitalism, and is subject to critique on similar grounds, including its concentration of (economic and decision-making) power into the hands of a privileged elite. The landscape of international development has been changing rapidly in the last few decades, and connections with private donors have become increasingly important for NGOs. Philanthrotourism potentially provides for a stronger connection with major donors and hence more funding, but in reality this is not necessarily so easily achieved. Relations can also experience pressure during or after a donor trip. Donors' capacity to influence NGOs' actions in pursuit of funding also increases the concentration of power and encourages the spread of philanthrocapitalist logic throughout civil society. Moreover, the enormous inequality witnessed during donor trips can create strong feelings of guilt, and in that way also disrupt enjoyment.

Of broader relevance to studies concerning ethical tourism in particular is the psychoanalytical concept of *jouissance*, in which the combination of pleasure and discomfort provides for a meaningful total experience. To enable this connection with the

pleasure as well as the discomfort, a particular discourse, based on staged spectacles of development, must be presented to the donors that de-politicizes and de-historicizes the development projects under examination. If *jouissance* describes a mixture of pleasure and pain, philanthrotourism provides for a situation in which the 'pain' refers mostly to others, and to the emotions one experiences about these others: schoolchildren in Africa, orphans, Maasai warriors in need of vocational training, and so on. This can instigate guilt, in relation to which *jouissance* offers covert enjoyment of and in this way helps to legitimize the pain that exists, but far away from the pleasurable lives elites experience at home. Concrete educational projects, as presented by the Chances Foundation and its culture brokers, create such de-politicized and de-historicized encounters, in which structural global inequalities resulting from colonialism and contemporary neoliberal capitalism are disregarded or marginalized. As such, philanthrotourism exhibits similar dynamics as philanthrocapitalism more generally. We thus argue that philanthrotourism is an important way for donors to experience *jouissance*, which functions as a core driver to engage in development, including through tourism. Moreover, *jouissance* provides a productive analytical lens through which other types of ethical tourism can be investigated, highlighting crucial psychological elements in the delivery and reception of such tourism that researchers have thus far largely neglected to acknowledge and investigate.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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