

Original Article

**Social Relationship Transformations During Kilimanjaro Treks,
Since 2005 To 2019**

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Abstract

Adventure tourism developed during the 1970s and 1980s and attracted a wealthy clientele. Trekking combined quickly with ascent of low difficult summits, and the first specialized travel agencies are created. After the Alps, where the logistics of travel is easy to organize, other destinations, extra-European, are issued in tourism. During the 1990s, this market is booming and many agencies were created. It is in this context that the great summits of the continents have become tourist destinations: Mt-Blanc, Kilimanjaro, Aconcagua, Everest, etc. The study is based on the participation in four treks in Kilimanjaro from 2005 to 2019. It is a question of analyzing the management, by the agencies, of the relations between Western clienteles and the local workers, within the framework of an intercultural situation. It highlights how, during this period, the management of the tip issue evolved from the adventure field to the written formulation / formalization.

1. Introduction

It was during the 1970s and 1980s that adventure tourism was established and developed, inviting customers to travel on foot. Rather quickly, trekking is allied with the ascent of passes and / or summits that are technically difficult to climb, through organizations in associative or entrepreneurial form with specialized travel agencies such as Terres d'Aventure for example. The destinations are in the Alps, where the logistics of travel are quite easy to organize because of the ancient existence of refuges and mountain huts that allow roaming. Other destinations more exotic and distant were organized for tourism to. The locations must then be rigorous in order to offer the clientele the change of scenery and the meeting of other desired cultures, a certain dose of sports activity through walking and ascents, all in the context of an organized trip where the hazard must be absent or at least minimized. Hence the following sentence highlighted in a tour operator's catalog: "Adventure is

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too serious a thing to be entrusted to adventurers” (Allibert, 2001, p.1). At the end of the 20th century, some of these destinations acquired the status of "mythical" rather quickly, as they referred to the history of sporting adventure in a given culture, such as the “Tour of Annapurna” for French people (Lejeune, 1987).

During the 1990s, the adventure market is expanding and many travel agencies are created, specializing in certain destinations. As a result, a number of these destinations – summits and peaks -, which previously involved expeditions organized by amateurs for their own account or by mountain clubs, are gradually being put into tourism by public and private operators. This created a coherent “local order” allowing “organized action” (Friedberg, 1993) to the benefit of the destination, thereby contributing to the economic development of the territory in question.

If the first mountaineers considered themselves as adventurers on unusual paths, they later became day-trippers for whom first, primary infrastructure, then more comfortable, were erected: the refuges or mountain huts (Joutard, 1986; Bourdeau, 1988). Growing in number, they turned into tourists. This alpine model was more or less exported to the other mountains of the world, when the topographic, meteorological and resource conditions for the structure allowed it.

It is in this context that most of the great summits of each of the continents have been somehow put into tourism. Since the Mont Blanc (4810 m) which attracts every year about twenty thousand candidates for its ascent (Rts Info, 2012), to Mount Kilimanjaro (5895 m), Cerro Aconcagua (6962 m), and Mount Everest (8850 m) which attracts between eight hundred and one thousand (Télérama / Le Monde, 2016; Bousquet, 2017).

Among all the world's peaks, Kilimanjaro is now a popular destination for adventure tourism, marketed by local or foreign specialized travel agencies. This destination, like the other three, is also part of the list of "Seven Summits", that is to say the highest peak of each of the "seven" continents, which for a number of happy few further enhances their attractiveness. To climb each of these seven summits has become a challenge and a wanted achievement, even by the greatest mountaineers like, for example, Reinhold Messner (born in 1944), the first who climbed the 14 Himalayan peaks above 8000 m (without oxygen bottle supply).

Table 1. *The “Seven Summits” (Reinhold Messner’s list).*

Summit	Altitude	Continent	Country
Puncak Jaya (or Carstensz’s Pyramid)	4884 m	Oceania	Papua-New-Guinea
Mount Vinson	4892 m	Antarctica	Chilean Territory
Mount Elbrouz	5642 m	Europe	Russia
Mount Kilimanjaro	5895 m	Africa	Tanzania
Denali (or McKinley)	6190 m	Nor	USA (Alaska)
Cerro Aconcagua	6962 m	South America	Argentina
Mount Everest	8850 m	Asia	Nepal / China

This activity is a niche economy, uncommon with mass tourism, which drains hundreds of thousands of tourists in certain places: cultural tourism of major sites, seaside tourism, winter sports tourism industry... For example, in France, in

2014, there were 1,751,046 visitors to the Arc de Triomphe, 1,243,104 to Mont-Saint-Michel, 1,067,190 to the Sainte Chapelle, etc. (Bertrand, 2015).

However, the networking of actors is essential for the efficient operation of these destinations, especially since the clientele is ready to pay a lot the services provided: several thousand euros for a trip to Kilimanjaro, to several tens of thousands of euros for Mount Everest. The clientele of adventure tourism is financially well off, and ready to accept difficult living conditions given its objectives that are the challenge, the dream or the “enchantment of the world by travel” (Passavant, 1996). However, this clientele is not ready to accept anything, and has enough cultural resources to spread her satisfaction and dissatisfaction, especially in the era of social media and globalization of the media.

2. Materials and methods

This research consisted of four treks on Kilimanjaro destination (5895 m, Tanzania), spanning a period of fifteen years (2005-2019). The object consists in the analysis of the management, by the emitting and receiving travel agencies, of the relations between the tourists, for the most part Western (here, French/Francophone) and the native workers. The aim is to understand and highlight how, over this period, the management of the crucial issue of tips has evolved, passing over time from the field of adventure to that of written formulation/formalization.

The hypothesis consists in the fact that the travel agencies, if they consider the hazard as an element included in the trip, they cannot however make their customers feel uncomfortable about the difficulty what does this mean for the always delicate moment of the distribution of tips to staff. Also, will be analyzed the socio-logical - economic and cultural - that lead to such a development, within the framework of national and international competition, as part of a global evolution of North-South socio-political relations, and the development of international tourism, ethical, responsible and supportive, materialized by different charters expressing these values.

Table 2. *Trips and field observations in Kilimanjaro*

Period	Location	Duration	Summit	Agency	Clients	Staff
02/ 2005	Tanzania	15 days	Mt Meru, Kilimanjaro	Allibert	6	2 staffs
02/ 2010	Kenya, Tanzania	15 days	Lenana Pk, Kilimanjaro	Allibert	15	2 staff: 35 people on Kilimanjaro
02/ 2013	Tanzania	9 days	Kilimanjaro	Allibert	8	1 staff
12/2018- 01/2019	Tanzania	10 days	Kilimanjaro	Atalante	5	1 staff: 32 people

From a methodological point of view, field surveys were carried out in several phases, corresponding to several treks, which gave the opportunity to collect a set of information through the participant observation, but also by formal

and informal interviews with a number of stakeholders. These compilations of information were supplemented by bibliographic and documentary researches (catalogs and datasheets trips of the agencies) and the visit of the institutional websites (Tanzania National Parks Authority and Kilimanjaro National Park).

3. Results and discussions

Adventure trip can be defined as a trip whose content is programmed but which, under certain circumstances, may have its original architecture modified according to the hazards that occur. This type of trip requires the customer to have a particular spirit, as described in the quote that follows:

“The adventure, even prepared with the greatest care, keeps (fortunately) its share of surprises and unforeseen events. They must not be able to destabilize you by giving them an exaggerated importance. Nevertheless, before registering for a far trek, it is better to be aware of your ability to adapt to unusual situations. Going to Kenya to deplore on the spot that the tracks of the savannas are dusty and that the vehicle is no longer of first youth, is detrimental to your trip and the general atmosphere of the group. In this type of adventure, extraordinary things can happen to you such as consolidating a footbridge, repairing an axle, or offering you with the benevolence of the world a large bowl of bitter tea topped with a high dose of salted butter. In the latter case, your guide will not be able to do anything for you.

In the case of a more serious hazard involving decision-making that will change part of the program, the guide will need your support. For several days or weeks, you will live in a group, which will require a resolutely positive mood to generate a friendly atmosphere and foster lasting friendships” (Allibert, 2001, p. 1).

In addition, it must be taken into account that a trek requires a specific organization because it brings together different types of actors: the (Western) tour operator who invents the trip, and by his own travel agency, markets it; its service providers such as incoming travel agencies and air and local carriers. The trek management leads to forms of organization that can be characterized as follows:

- There may be (almost) no direct human link between the customer and the Tour Operator or the issuing travel agency, all being done more and more via the Internet;
- Human links are only woven with the teams on the spot (agencies, various staff on the trek), and this in the vast majority of cases ephemeral way;
- Finally, no initiative is left to trekkers, at least on the course of the trek, and very little outside (possibly during a half day or an evening in town).

As for the functioning of the organization on the spot, it is very directional on the part of the management staff (the local guides), the only space of freedom which can be a short free time in city (Nairobi, Arusha), with a strong incentive to precautions (security). So, as in any organization, there are two forms of organization: a formal organization (Crozier & Friedberg 1977) and a "local order", here and now (Friedberg, 1993). Concerning the formal organization within the trek, it is structured around three fundamental aspects:

- Respect for hierarchy and authority (in the field: the leader guide, the assistant guides);
- Submission from trekkers / tourists (due to lack of knowledge of the terrain);
- And a major constraint to be respected which is the National Park's rules (to follow the managed trails, existence of big animals in freedom...).

The stakes of the organization are the ones of a "local order", here and now.

A "local order" following Friedberg's analysis (1993) is how local actors fit together to resolve a "common problem". Regarding the organization of a trek in Kilimanjaro, the common problem to solve in the context of a local order (shared interest) is to ensure that all trekkers reach the top. Acclimatization summit when there is one (during a two-week trip: Mt-Meru, 4565 m; or Lenana Peak, 4985 m, with obligatory crossing), and of course Kilimanjaro (Uhuru Peak, 5895 m), the essential, objective and subjective reason for the purchase decision. To do this, it is developed a form of authority by the hierarchy (the guides), more or less flexible depending on the circumstances, these being related to the quality of the group, number of trekkers, weather conditions.

A particular alchemy exists, because of the presence of a multiplicity of types of actors, with interests that can be divergent, because they assume different functions within this organization, the trekkers, the staff (the guide and his assistants, the cook and his assistant, the porters).

- Trekkers are there for various reasons: because they are "on vacation", to live an experience (altitude), realize the challenge of climbing Kilimanjaro, take pictures, marvel, take pleasure, discover landscapes and people and their "exotic" life, see animals "in real life", create memories and tell them in their social circles.

- Support staff are there to make a living, but there is a very specific hierarchy between guides, cooks and porters. Inside these staffs, there is the coexistence of two worlds: one who is in direct contact with foreign clients (guides and cooks) and who is an elite; and the rest of the team (the porters). Because the chief guide has received a specific guide training through the KGA (Kilimanjaro Guides Association). This training consists mainly of the following five points: 1) first aid, 2) interpretation of physical resources, 3) customer service and guiding ethics, 4) training of Kilimanjaro with its natural attractions, 5) ecology and geology. It has nothing to do with the formation of high mountain guide UIAGM (Union Internationale des Associations de Guides de Montagne). The assistant guides who will one day be guides, and the cooks who are potential future guides (many are the guides who were previously cooks on the treks). All of these people speak English, and some other languages to (French, German...). These elite is only 10 to 20% maximum of the management team. The other part of the team is constituted by the porters, who assume the sole function of transporting (the collective equipment, as well as the personal bags of the customers - each customer carrying however his own bag of the day). The porters leave as soon as possible, but for some after everyone and must arrive before everyone to set up the camp, mount the tents. It is a work of extreme hardship, grueling, in very hard physical

conditions, sometimes physically dangerous (falls).

The major, but latent issue around which the interplay between the different types of actors is formed (and in particular between managers and trekkers), is money, that is the final tip. This, in the context of a very particular situation, because tourists and staff will never see each other again. At the level of the managerial staff, it should be known that the recruitment is done by cooptation, under the direction of the chief guide. There is thus a form of *clientélisme* beyond the requirements of the trek (favor a friend, a cousin...), social constraints related to the existence of several ethnic groups, Christian and Muslim religions, satisfaction with assistant guides, cooks and porters. For example, during the 2010 Kilimanjaro trek, there were fifteen guests, supervised by thirty-five people (Christians and Muslims): a guide and four assistant guides, a cook and a cook assistant, a porter for the summit (and assistant cook), and twenty-seven porters.

Tourists must give tips: this is a triple obligation, both cultural, economic and moral. Cultural and economic because, after the German occupation (of Tanganyika), the British presence instituted this form of remuneration. With the development of tourism and the transformation of the North/South relationships, ethical charters have been introduced by Tour Operators, such as ATR (Agir pour un Tourisme Responsable) or ATEs (Association pour le Tourisme Equitable et Solidaire) at the French level, and EARTH (European Alliance for Responsible Tourism & Hospitality) at European level. All trek staff are normally paid by the agencies. Tipping, however, remains a fundamental element. This, because its amount is related to the satisfaction of tourists for the entire trek and the management team, but also because it constitutes a significant financial supplement. However, these tips are hierarchical and their amounts must respect scrupulously the hierarchy existing within the support team: guides and assistant guides, cook and assistant cook, porters, as Atalante explains it in its technical data: *“It is customary to tip guides and porters. This remains at your discretion and must be provided at the end of the trek. We recommend that you bring several envelopes with you to allocate tips. Our teams are the best paid on the Kili, with the best working conditions (limited weight, etc.: see heading "responsible tourism"). In fact, our porters are more numerous than other agencies (eg: 33 porters for 7 participants). The reason is simple: we scrupulously respect the recommendations of the association of carriers (KPAP [The Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project]) with which we are the only French partner. As a result, the tips we recommend are higher than those mentioned by other agencies. Group all the tips for the porters and put them in one and the same envelope, noting the total amount and per porter (to avoid fraud). Do not mix tips of guides, cook or waiters, which are given in individual envelopes. The tips are paid at the end of your stay”* (Atalante, 2018).

Observations and experiences during this period 2005-2019, within the framework of these four treks, regarding the management of the crucial end-of-trek element that is the distribution of tips, are as follows.

Table 3. *Tipping Pricing*

Statute	Tip	Day (6 or 7)
Chief Guide	30 to 35 US\$	By day
Assistant(s) Guide(s)	20 to 25 US\$	By Assistant Guide and by day
French Speaking Guide	15 to 20 US\$	By day
Cook	15 to 20 US\$	By day
Waiter	10 to 15 US\$	By day
Porter	5 to 10 US\$	By Porter and by day

Source: Table constructed from Atalante information, 2018.

- 2005: ascent of Mt-Meru and Kilimanjaro (lack of knowledge and learning).

Of the six guests on this trip, none had the experience of a trek in Kilimanjaro, even though two people had already been to Nepal. The day before the last day on the trek of Mt-Meru (top of acclimatization) raised the question of the tip. Discussions between the customers have begun, without being able to agree. One of the trekkers had the unfortunate idea (by naivety), of asking the guide what to give? His answer was immediate: “As for Kilimanjaro”! This answer of course did not satisfy any of the customers. After another discussion, each one added the sum of his own estimate. The next day, joining the 4x4 that were to bring the group to the hotel, the ceremony gathering all the staff accompanying, the author of these lines was instructed by the group to preside over the ceremony. The staff consisted of a guide, a ranger, due to the presence of buffaloes and groups of monkeys in the park, cook and half a dozen porters only, because the camps are composed of bungalows. Without experience or information, it was done exactly what should not be done: give a global envelope to the guide and leave him the responsibility of a fair distribution! The carriers, experienced, understood without need of explanation that they would have nothing, or so little. Of course, the trekkers had to carry their own bags in the 4x4s. This experience was traumatic for the whole group. Back at the hotel, and during the Kilimanjaro trek briefing, questioned, the person from the incoming agency gave the relevant information.

- 2010: ascent of Lenena Peak (Mt Kenya) and Kilimanjaro (dissemination of information and explanation of how to proceed).

During this second trip, five years later, the entire group was uninformed about how to proceed with the distribution of tips. Having gained experience from his mistakes, the author of this article informed the group of the precise modalities of the ceremonial: absolute respect of the hierarchy, announces loudly to the whole assembly the exact sum attributed to each category of staff.

- *Kilimanjaro 2013* (take charge by the guide himself).

During this trip, the terms of distribution of tips have changed (in these first three cases, the Tour Operator was the same). It is no longer the trekkers themselves who are in charge of the solemn ceremony, a ceremony that disappears in favor of a collection by the guide of all the tipping money (with equal contribution for each guest), at the last restaurant luncheon after the returning to Arusha. No doubt, various incidents had to be reported to the Tour Operator to completely relieve the clients of this task!

- Kilimanjaro 2018-2019 (double fare: one announced by the receptive agency, the other by the French Tour Operator).

During this trek, the two agencies (out coming and incoming) had transmitted documents to customers. The resulting problem for the trekkers was that the tips rates were different, and higher for the receiving agency. By mutual agreement, the tourists agreed to take as basic rates those of the French agency with which they had negotiated the dates of the trip. This, while evaluating upward the tip attributed to each of the carriers, the report having been done harassing work carried out by those. It seemed to please everyone, trekkers and support team.

Through the report of these experiences, it can be noted that the management of the issue of tips has evolved, passing over time from the field of adventure to that of the written formulation/formalization. Indeed, Adventure of being “offered with all the benevolence of the world a large bowl of bitter tea topped with a high dose of salted butter. In the latter case, your guide cannot do anything for you” was simply eradicated from the trek. As regards the question of the tip, so money, which refers to a taboo aspect of French culture, this clientele is uncomfortable (no one speaks publicly of the amount of his salary or his income taxes). The intercultural situation (D'Iribarne, 1989; Rey, 2017), in which the trekkers find themselves (French having to act in an environment shaped by the Anglo-Saxon culture), deeply affects their ease and rational decision-making and emotionally detached (how much to give, to whom?). Hence the turnaround of French Tour Operators, and the formulation / formalization of the procedure.

4. Conclusions

In almost half a century, from the beginning of the 1970s until the end of 2010, the adventure has become a tourist product almost identical to the others in terms of organization and customer satisfaction. The latter must suffer the least possible inconvenience, under pain of being dissatisfied, and to let it know (importance of the post-trip satisfaction survey for Tours Operators, use the social network by customers to send their opinions).

Also, as part of the management of such a sensitive moment, for the French culture, that the awarding of tips as part of an exceptional ceremony bringing together all the protagonists (trekkers and staff), sometimes about fifty people, the management of this issue has evolved, passing over time from the field of adventure to that of written formulation/formalization. We are here in the need for the Tour Operator to control the entire chain of components of the trek, to the ultimate problem posed by the tip to avoid any dissatisfaction with the French customer. Also, we can say that “the adventure is too serious a thing to be entrusted to adventurers” (Allibert, 2001), in this case, as regards the management of the collection of the tip and its ceremonial handing over, to the customer himself!

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