



# **Volunteer Tourism: Popular Humanitarianism in Neoliberal Times (New Directions in Tourism Analysis)**

*Mary Mostafanezhad*

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Crossing disciplinary and chronological boundaries *Volunteer Tourism: Popular Humanitarianism in Neoliberal Times* is the first full length treatment of volunteer tourism from a longitudinal ethnographic perspective. Volunteer tourism is a type of tourism in which tourists pay to participate in conservation, humanitarian or development oriented projects and it is now one of the fastest growing niche tourism markets in the world. Unique in combining a comprehensive and comparative study of Thai host community members', NGO coordinators' and international volunteer tourists' perspectives, the book shines an ethnographic lens onto the complexities as well as the contradictions of the volunteer tourism experience in northern Thailand. Drawing cross-disciplinary perspectives in anthropology and geography as well as development, tourism and cultural studies, this book illustrates how the focus on sentimentality in the volunteer tourism encounter obscures the structural inequalities on which the experience is based. In doing so, volunteer tourism is situated vis-a-vis the commodification and sentimentalization of development and global justice agendas that hail the new moral consumer. As a result, questions of structural inequality are reframed as questions of individual morality, and volunteer tourism-albeit inadvertently-contributes to the continued expansion of the cultural logic and economic practices of neoliberalism.

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