

## **EFFECT OF TOURISM ON MALEKU CULTURE IN NORTHERN COSTA RICA**

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This paper examines the impacts of tourism on the Maleku indigenous community of the Guatuso Indigenous Reserve, Costa Rica. During a five week period of ethnographical field work, I used semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and daily conversations to explore the theme of tourism, which has been introduced to the community in the form of selling crafts and receiving tourists at a traditional rancho. Through my research, I attempted to discover community opinions regarding tourism and explore the effects of tourism from a positive and negative perspective. I suggest that tourism has substantially aided the Maleku economically and culturally, but inevitably creates some issues as well. Tourism has provided a community in desperate need of work with a new form of income. It has also provided a community that has lost many of its cultural practices with a revival of those practices, and has created new ways of expressing themselves culturally through crafts. However, because it is not something structured communally, it creates tension among those who benefit from the industry and those who do not. In the end I suggest that this negative impact can essentially be eliminated if tourism is changed to a community project, as seen in Palenque El Sol. A communal project such as this has the potential to improve community relations and create the cooperation necessary to tackle other issues the Maleku face.