



## **Ozi's Bed and Breakfast** **a case of translation**

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Following actor-network theory, this paper analyses the way a tourism entrepreneur called Ozi tried to collectively promote Malindi (Kenya) as a tourist destination by adopting information and communication technology (ICT). Ozi started his business, Ozi's Bed and Breakfast, in 1985. After a successful start, ethnic violence in the coast region in 1997 and subsequent negative publicity, crumbling infrastructure and inadequate marketing led to a decline in tourist numbers in Kenya in general and at Ozi's Bed and Breakfast in particular. To overcome these drawbacks, Ozi took the initiative to join forces with other entrepreneurs to promote Malindi cooperatively using ICT. However, to translate ICT into the network of Malindi's tourism entrepreneurs a lot of (new) actors and entities had to be enrolled in the network. This paper shows how the introduction of ICT, just like any other new technological development, unfolds alongside social, political and economic dynamics. Poor telecommunication links, conflicts of interests, inadequate information management and sharing, poor relations between key stakeholders, and lack of trust and investors are just a few of the factors explaining the failure of the project. In other words, the entrepreneurs in Malindi were not yet able to fine-tune their activities to create convergence that will enable the collective use of ICT to promote Malindi and themselves. The case study illustrates the obstacles small entrepreneurs encounter in effectively introducing ICT in tourism, as well as the complex ways tourism unfolds as the result of processes of ordering, negotiation, representation and displacement between actors, entities and places.

The tourism industry is a diverse and highly fragmented industry, represented by, on the one hand, a large number of small enterprises (SMEs) and on the



*Picture 1. Ozi's Bed and Breakfast*



*Picture 2. The reception*

the other hand, a small but powerful number of global and national operators (Evans and Peacock 1999; Buhalis 1994, 1998; all in Evans et al. 2001). This paper focuses on the former. In tourism studies SMEs are often depicted as self-employment, small number of employees and there is no separation between ownership and management functions (Shaw and Williams 2002). These characteristics may imply lack of management and marketing skills, low level of capital investment, weak information systems and lack of networking with other actors. These constraints are supposed to weaken their operation and standard of services, and combined with the fact that they lack the resources to employ specialized personnel, they have difficulties in promoting themselves adequately (Bastakis et al. 2004).

It appears that in many instances networks are compulsory for companies to survive (Smith and Holmes 1997, 2). The creation of complex networking relations among entrepreneurs seems to be the central strategy in the development and operations of small-scale tourism enterprises (Joosten and Van Marwijk 2003). Networking is essential for economic success and it enhances political influences. According to Milne et al. (2004), of late, hotels are increasingly utilizing ICTs to communicate and advertise themselves, which has improved information processing and competitiveness in addition to management and marketing skills. Online resources are proliferating and the rapid

uptake of ICT by consumers, business suppliers and partners means that firms are increasingly unlikely to survive if they are invisible in cyber space. Tourists everywhere are exploring the potential for new technologies to improve their travel planning and experiences (Buhalis 2001; Laws and Buhalis 2001; Morgan and Pritchard 2000; Poon 1993; Sheldon 1997; all in Milne et al. 2004, 2).

Even though ICT plays an important role in tourism sector, small and medium sized hotels still encounter obstacles in utilizing ICT effectively. It is claimed that, in contrast to larger and transnational operators, which dominate the application of e-commerce in tourism services, small tourism firms are lost in the electronic marketplace (Evans et al. 2001).

This paper analyzes the development of a collaboration of tourist accommodations and attractions, in which the focal actor, the entrepreneur Ozi, used ICT to promote not only his accommodation but also the destination as such (see also Joosten and Van Marwijk 2003, Ndubi 2005). The paper describes the efforts of implementation, as well as the drawbacks involved. To analyze this innovation process, it uses the perspective of actor-network theory. The paper first briefly introduces actor-network theory. Second it describes the introduction of ICT in terms of four stages of translation as discerned by actor-network theorists: *'problematization, interessement, enrolment and mobilisation'* (see also Van der Duim and Van Marwijk 2006). Third, it discusses the obstacles involved and some of the lessons learned. The paper concludes with the main findings.

## Actor-network theory

Actor-network theory, also known as the 'sociology of translation', has its origins in the sociology of sciences (see Bingham and Thrift 2000). It became known through the writings of especially Callon, Latour and Law (see Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005; Van der Duim 2004 and 2005). Actor-network theory is sociology of *ordering* rather than order (see also Law 1994). Actor-network theory identifies the process of construction and ordering, in this case the introduction of ICT, as one that requires constant effort, and is always halting. It demonstrates how reality is constructed through processes of translation, association and alliance that strengthen particular positions and practices at the expense of others. Translation generates ordering effects. As Jóhannesson (2005, 147) explains, translation casts light on the *net-work* underlying the various categories we are familiar with. It is the process in which actors attempt to characterise and pattern the networks of the social: the process in which they attempt to constitute themselves as a *collectif* of 'people and things' (Law 1994; Steins et al. 2000). Translation refers to the processes of negotiation, representation and displacement between actors, entities and places. It

involves the re-definition of these phenomena so that they are persuaded to behave in accordance with network requirements and these redefinitions are frequently inscribed in the heterogeneous materials, which act to consolidate networks (Murdoch 1998, 362) The actor-network theorists have set themselves the task to explore the tactics of translation (Steins et al. 2000, 7).

The creation of a *collectif* consists of four stages of translation (see for example Clegg 2003; Gleirscher and Schermer 2003; Hillier 2002; Verschoor 1997; Van der Duim and Van Marwijk 2006). In the first stage, *problematization*, a project like that of Ozi tries to become indispensable to other actors by defining the nature and the problems of the latter and then suggesting that these could be resolved by following the path of action suggested by the project. In the phase of *interessement* the project attempts to impose and stabilise the identity of the other actors defined in the problematisation. Actors exert influence over others via persuasion that their position is the best one (Hillier 2002). In other words, *interessement* is the process of translating the images and concerns of a project into that of a network, and then trying to discipline or control that translation in order to stabilise an actor-network. *Interessement* only achieves *enrolment* if it is successful. Through enrolment actors (in this case Ozi) lock others (hotels, attractions, shops, telecom services etc) into their definitions and networks so that their behaviour is channelled in the direction desired by the enrolling actor (Hillier 2002, 89). It is the successful distribution of roles as proposed (and most probably changed) in the initial problematisation. As a result a new network of interest (*collectif*) is generated. If enrolment has been achieved, then one can speak of the *mobilisation* of the network of entities involved. With mobilisation is meant the successful translation of a network of entities; the new network starts to operate target oriented to implement the solution proposed.

The goal of translation is to bring together complex entities (in this case tourist products and information) into a single object or idea (in this case a common promotion of a tourist destination) that can be mobilized and circulated like a branded commodity or a taken-for-granted fact (Clarke 2001, 6). When the translation is finalized the actors have achieved a stable relation where translation processes run automatically and are not renegotiated anymore case by case.

The success or failure of a translation process can also be analyzed in terms of 'modes of ordering' (Law 1994). In translation processes different 'modes of ordering' (Law 1994) run into each other. In the interaction between different modes of ordering sometimes congruence is created, but they may just as well stay unconnected or conflicting.

What are these modes of ordering? Following Van der Ploeg's (2003, 111) portrayal of modes of ordering in agriculture (so called 'farming styles'), the

work of tourism entrepreneurs can be defined and researched at three different interconnected levels. First of all modes of ordering are to be seen as coherent sets of strategic notions about the way tourism should be operated. They are therefore particular *cultural repertoires*, which enable calculation: it is a *calculus*. Every mode of ordering contains a calculus: a more or less explicit framework of interconnected concepts with which to 'read' the relevant empirical reality (in this case the tourism enterprise and the 'state of tourism' in Malindi in which it is embedded) and 'translate' it into new actions. A calculus is, as it were, the backbone of a particular strategy. It is the 'grammar' of the decision making process. It entails the way in which tourism entrepreneurs evaluate pros and cons (ibid, 137).

Second they entail particular *practices*, an internally and externally consistent, congruous, way of performing tourism informed by a cultural repertoire as well as providing necessary feedbacks, which might modify the cultural repertoire.

And third, as we have seen, modes of ordering imply particular ways of *integrating with other projects* and modes of ordering, as practices have to be realized through the interweaving of divergent projects (Van der Ploeg 2003, 111). They therefore also imply the tactics of translation, the way others are mobilized and enrolled.

So the way – in this case – Ozi's 'mode of ordering' interweaved with projects of other tourism enterprises (hotels, attractions and the like) and of other organizations (Internet providers, telecommunication providers, local Tourist Board, investors etc.) is fundamental for the development opportunities and directions of his ICT project. As we shall see coherence and congruence, which are ordering successes (Law 1994, 110), were not attained.

## The research

The case of Ozi's Bed & Breakfast was part of a larger research project in Malindi during the period 2003-2005. In June 2003 Joosten en Van Marwijk (2003) interviewed 21 entrepreneurs out of a total of 29 small tourism entrepreneurs in Malindi. Ozi was one of the interviewed persons. In July 2004 Van Marwijk interviewed Ozi again as part of a personal visit to Kenya. Ozi was interviewed in September 2004 as well, this time by Ndubi (2005). Ndubi interviewed 19 tourism entrepreneurs and 8 public agencies in Malindi. All interviews were semi-structured and in most cases tape-recorded.

## Ozi's Bed & Breakfast

Ozi's Bed and Breakfast is situated in Malindi, approximately 100 kilometers north of Mombasa at the Indian Ocean. The town has a long history; founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Arabs, and afterwards visited and under sovereignty of Portuguese traders (16<sup>th</sup> century), Galla people from Somalia (18<sup>th</sup> century), the Sultan of Zanzibar (19<sup>th</sup> century) and the British government (1886-1965). The first tourists – Europeans from upcountry – visited Malindi in the late 1920s when the road from Mombasa was greatly improved. After the Second World War the number of tourists began to grow slowly and in the '60s, when it was generally known that Kenya would obtain independence from Britain in near future, more European farmers decided to retire permanently. As a consequence local taxes were introduced, new roads were constructed, electricity introduced, new schools built and a new hospital constructed. With the first charter flights in 1965 tourist arrivals from overseas began to grow rapidly, and German and Italian investors became increasingly involved. Nowadays Malindi is heavily dependent on tourism with approximately 90% of its population estimated to work directly or indirectly in the tourism industry. The importance of the tourism sector in Malindi is reflected by the amount of hotels in and around the town. In July 2003 Malindi counted 47 hotels. The ownership of the middle- and top-class hotels is in most cases in foreign hands, especially of the large hotels (>40 beds). Kenyans, on the other hand, mostly own the low class hotels (Joosten and Van Marwijk 2003). This is a result of the country's open policy to foreign investment and control – although increased participation of Kenyans in tourism has been a long stated goal of the government – to the disadvantage of local Kenyans (Kereithi 2003).

Ozi's Bed & Breakfast started operating in 1985. Before that time Ozi<sup>1</sup> was working in other hotels. In 1983 his family called him back to help in the family business (wholesale and transport). However, tourism was booming and Ozi decided to rather work in the tourism industry and turned a new family owned building into a 32-beds hotel. He received education in England ('quality of food and tourism') where he became acquainted with the concept 'bed and breakfast'. He traveled abroad (Rome, Hong Kong, Singapore, Egypt) and within Kenya and used these experience in managing the hotel and his other businesses. After he opened the hotel, he started a vegetarian restaurant and a boutique inside. Ozi's Bed & Breakfast became the first hotel of this nature in Malindi. At the mid '80s there was a ready market that comprised of the lone traveler – the backpacker – traveling with the 'Rough Guide' or 'Africa on a

<sup>1</sup> Ozi's real name is Asgar Dossaji. However Asgar called himself during interviews Ozi and his friends and relatives use the same name.

Shoestring' guide. Many others followed his idea: eventually a lot of similar places arose. However, over the years the demand went down. According to Ozi, *“Our market is the lone traveler, but they don't come anymore because of insecurity. Package tourists are still there, but because they are in numbers, they go to a hotel.”*

In August 1997 ethnic violence erupted in the coast tourism region and hundreds of people lost their lives and property. Malindi remained relatively quiet; only the curio market opposite Ozi's Bed & Breakfast was burned down. As Ozi explained, *“It was 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1997. The next morning I was empty. And I have never recovered again”*. Until that time Ozi employed ten persons, in 2004 only four, all of which were local people.

Tourists stay on average a single night. Both domestic and international tourists come to Ozi's, but during low season (May to July). Ozi's catered mainly for domestic tourists. He does not close during low season because of the hassles that accompany the re-opening of the business, such as cleaning. Most big (international) hotels do close during low season, which causes unemployment among local people.

Ozi was and still is member of quite some business- and social organizations: he was the chairman of the Mombasa and Coast Tourist Association, member of Malindi Museum Society, the SKAL club, Greentown Movement, District Environmental Committee, District Development Committee and Rotary Club. Furthermore he was patron of the scouting group. All these enabled him to meet and get to know a lot of people. According to Ozi tourism can thrive if well managed or collapses if it is not managed properly. In order to enhance his hotel business in the current tough circumstances, he decided to adopt the use of ICT. His strategy was to collectively promote Malindi as a tourist destination, which would in the end also positively affect the feasibility of his own hotel. Ozi wanted to start a major portal web site acting as a gateway to the destination. This is important, since in the global marketplace customers require one-stop shopping (Rita 2000).

## **Introduction of a Malindi website**

In 2002 Ozi decided to develop a website<sup>1</sup> ([www.malindikenya.com](http://www.malindikenya.com)), a tool to market Malindi as a tourist destination, in order to *“create unity”*. Another goal of this website was to bring together investors who would communicate and share ideas on various issues that affect their businesses. Therefore Ozi had to develop an ICT infrastructure that included a technical and organizational infrastructure, combined with the knowledge, competence and skills that

<sup>1</sup>In 2006 this website was no longer accessible.

are necessary to develop, maintain and use the infrastructure (Grotte et al. 2000). To integrate various players and products, Ozi needed to translate other actors into his project.

The main problem Malindi was facing is the declining number of tourists since 1997. According to Ozi, a visionary and articulate entrepreneur, there are several reasons why it became more difficult to sustain a tourist enterprise.

First, the clashes of 1997 negatively affected the image of national security, which was spread through international media. This negative image not only affected tourists, but also investors, resulting in a further decline in both the quality of services and maintenance of tourism facilities, especially infrastructure (Kareithi 2003). The government's budget deficits lead to infrastructure related problems, which according to Ozi have not been overcome yet.

Second, since no single authority was and is responsible for tourism, *"tourism in Malindi is so unorganized"*. Ozi was also dissatisfied with the way the government promoted Kenya, and especially tourist regions. The Kenya Tourist Board (KTB) constructed brochures only of the country as a whole, and not for specific regions. *"For example, if you go to ITB Berlin and you ask for information on Malindi, what do you get? A whole Kenya booklet!"*

Third, Ozi also complained about the product of Malindi itself. *"Over the years, I have known in Malindi nothing new has come up. The same marine park, the same falconry, the same Gede Ruins, the same Mida Creek"*. Ozi assured Malindi needs some drastic changes in the product; *"...otherwise it is a dying destination. We need new things coming up, innovation. But we need to open up in an organized fashion"*.

In short, according to Ozi, Malindi was facing problems related to a negative image (insecure), the unorganized character of the industry, the way KTB was marketing Kenya and its tourist regions, and new products and activities that remain undeveloped. Therefore Ozi decided to develop a website to promote Malindi collectively – in other words, seeing the website as a solution towards the problems Malindi was facing – by offering complete information on its history, hotels, tour operators, places of interest, activities and services. In principle this can be extremely important for SMEs, who can use websites to present consumers their own image and information, not the imposed images chosen for tour brochures and national tourism marketing (Evans and Celverdon 2000 in Evans et al. 2001). Moreover, since small firms traditionally lack both capital and research and development resources and capability to invest in ICT (ibid.), a cooperative initiative seemed to have a lot of potential. The 18 large hotels in Malindi (which means having over 40 beds), that tend to employ younger and more qualified staff, were more likely to use ICT than smaller hotels. They promoted themselves – being up market hotels – already individually by means of their website. Moreover, since all but one are foreign owned (14 by Italians),



it was easier for them to reach potential tourists in the owner's home country. The 29 registered small hotels on the other hand, are mostly Kenyan owned (20 of them) and rated as low or middle class establishments (Joosten and Van Marwijk 2003). They are often weakly managed and marketed, since they lack the resources on the one hand to employ specialized personnel, and on the other hand to promote themselves adequately (Bastakis et al. 2004; Buhalis and Cooper 1992; Joosten and Van Marwijk 2003). For Ozi ICT became a strategy he sought to use in promoting both his hotel and Malindi as a tourist destination and to interact with other stakeholders in the tourism industry. He envisioned that all the hoteliers would back him in order to promote their businesses together under one umbrella, rather than each hotelier doing it on its own.

The first step Ozi undertook was to contact Swift Global, an Internet service provider, whose technicians helped him to set up an online link. This called for investment in both hardware (computers, modems, network cards, etc.) and software programs to run these hardware installations. In order to be online, he had to make sure that the telecommunication links were reliable, hence the importance of making sure his telephone connections were always in proper condition. Swift Global was hosting his website, "*doing all the dirty work*", which assured Ozi to have reliable links. In the process, he also had to improve on his computer skills and those of his staff in order to run his computers and ICT applications successfully.

The next step for Ozi in the process of translation, the process in which he tried to enroll other entities, was to collect information that he could inscribe on the website. Moreover, the information had to be accurate and reliable, thus Ozi needed to liaise with various agencies, especially the Tourist Office, the Municipal Council of Malindi, and the Malindi Museum Society. This was necessitated by his awareness of the sophistication of clients since with developments in ICT a click on the button enables them to know where they are going and what they are getting into. Because of good personal relations with the tourist officers, counselors, and members of the Museum Society, Ozi could easily collect information.

Third, Ozi tried to form a strategic alliance with other investors, especially with other small-scale hotels. Since most of them are poor in human, financial and material resources, they are highly dependent from external sources for scientific and technological information (Fink 1998). This seems an important factor to enhance the project's feasibility. However, he had to convince other hoteliers that cooperation between businesses can help reducing the unequal access to electronics, and contribute to more competitive businesses (Peters 2004). According to Verschoor (1997, 19), the vitality of small enterprises lies in the trust engendered by networking, the effect of which is shown by collective

efficiency through clustering, co-operative competition, and an increased ability to adapt and innovate. This meant that he had to highlight other hoteliers' problems and how these could be resolved. This called for instituting the association between the different stakeholders in the tourism industry in Malindi and their envisaged relationships, interests, expertise, duties, accountability, recognition and reward (Giroud 2003). Ozi tried to enroll other small hoteliers in order to articulate their grievances, but this did not work out, despite the opportunities that effective uses of ICT imply. Together with Africa Online, an Internet access service center, Ozi organized a presentation on the possibilities of joint promotion. He wrote 99 letters to stakeholders, only 14 of them turned up to the meeting. "*It didn't work*", Ozi explained.

In terms of actor-network theory the translation process failed. Although some organizations and 'things' were successfully enrolled and mobilized (like the Internet Service Provider, computer hard- and software, money, information to be inscribed on the website, skills related to the use of Internet), others, necessary for the successful conclusion of his project, were never interested or convinced to follow the path of action suggested by Ozi. What went wrong?

Obviously there were reasons related to the technical feasibility of the project. For example poor telecommunications infrastructure in Malindi made some of the investors skeptical about the viability of this project. And although Ozi gathered information to put on the website, he realized that "*most of these telephone numbers are out of order. They change a lot, so the tourists won't be able to get in touch.*" Moreover, in most cases email addresses were not included, as other entrepreneurs not actively enrolled in the project.

But more importantly and generally speaking, different 'modes of ordering' diverged. For example practices of larger hotels (with their own websites and trained staff, not in need of another website) differed from smaller hotels. The Malindi Tourism Office did not facilitate the interlocking of various entrepreneurial projects. Moreover, the 'cultural repertoires' of the actors significantly differed. Decisions to participate or not were not only based on end-given rationality. Emotional reactions as well as other non-rational factors (like prestige or perceived dissimilarities) also played their role (see Thurlings 1975, 162-163).

First, instead of promoting cooperation in terms of Malindi as a shared tourism destination, most hoteliers competed with each other and were therefore suspicious to share information and knowledge (Joosten and Marwijk 2003). According to Ozi there was a "*trade war*". Another hotelier stated: "*Now everybody is fighting his own thing, not trusting each other*". Poor relations between stakeholders made it difficult for them to come together. Therefore, many also suspected Ozi's initiative and only believed that Ozi took the initiative for

his own benefit. According to Ozi: “*They say, oh, it is something creepy, you can never do something good for the benefit of Malindi alone*”.

Second and related, some pivotal actors (potential investors in the project; other hoteliers) also mistrusted Ozi and his active involvement in several social and political networks. For example, the fact that Ozi was chairman of the Mombasa and Coast Tourist Association was not very helpful, as the Association had not been considered very effective in its promotional strategies. Moreover, his close relationship with various government agencies made some also reluctant to participate.

Third, the commercial time horizon of most entrepreneurs in Malindi was short; if something was not immediately rendering money, it was not considered worthwhile pursuing. As return on ICT investments takes time, many were disinclined to endow the project.

Fourth and perhaps most importantly there was no direct connection with the bigger, most Italian owned, hotels. And, as Ozi explains, “*people feel that when it is not an Italian initiative, it is not a good initiative*”. Moreover, Italians, able to invest in the project, did not feel the need to do so, as many of their own businesses were doing quite well. Smaller Italian investors worried about the financial commitments of this venture coupled with the lack of ICT skills of some involved.

## Discussion

Clearly, in terms of actor-network theory, translation did not result in a convergent *collectif*. Contrary, the first stage of translation, *problematization*, where the use of ICT had to be indispensable to other investors and accommodation owners in Malindi’s tourism industry, could not be followed up by succeeding stages of *interessement*, *enrollment* and *mobilization*. This gives credence to the growing divide between those with full access and skills in information technology, and those lacking such access, control and ownership. Evans et al. (2001) describe that inequalities may lead to a form of socio-economic exclusion creating a group of potentially non-competitive business. However, according to Buhalis (1998), effective networking and using information technologies enable small and medium enterprises to develop a ‘virtual size’ and thus empower their competitiveness. Moreover, the marketing and communication functions of small and medium sized enterprises can be improved. From this viewpoint it is unfortunate the SMEs were not interested in Ozi’s solution.

Second, the case of the construction of the Malindi website illustrates that ICT, just like any other new technological developments, unfolds alongside social, political and economic factors. In line with our conceptualisation in terms of actor-network theory, innovations are seen as “*new patterns of*

*coordination between people and organizations, technologies and environmental phenomenon*” (Leeuwis 2003, 9). Introducing a destination website is to be considered as an innovation, materially as well as socially. Even the relatively simple re-ordering of existing socio-material relations in a case as Malindi is characterized by struggles, unpredictability, and backlashes, as translations always face resistance. Innovation implies leaving beaten tracks and room to move. It implies a reordering of existing distributions of possibilities and constraints and the enrolment and mobilization of new human and non-human resources and, sometimes unconventional, alliances. So innovation is complex, volatile, but fascinating (Roep 2000, 23).

Third, although Ozi did not succeed in bringing the small hotels together to form a network that collectively uses ICT, there were some distributed effects. The website did exist until recently and all the hotel names, addresses and contacts were mentioned on Malindikenya.com. It functioned as a regional tourist office’s promotion tool: instead of brochures, Malindi was promoted digitally as well. However, the website was not well maintained and did not create a network of organizations and stimulate cooperation (see also Peters 2004). Another distributed effect of Ozi’s initiative was the establishment of an Internet cafe. Although it was not in his initial plan, it was an important side effect. Other business organizations and people – both related and not unrelated to tourism – increasingly sought ICT related services from this Internet café thus forming another *collectif*, however a weak one. Although the Internet Café was a separate venture, the concept of using ICT was still the same and if well nurtured, the initial goal of using ICT collectively may be realized. Related Ozi improved his ICT skills and those of his staff by seeking training from an ICT training institution, while the tourist information texts were obtained from various agencies. He also had to invest in computer hardware and software and ensure that his potential clients could be able to reach him through his email address. Finally and as a result, through the passage of time actors (both human and non-human) found themselves endowed with new properties. Ozi for example, received inquiries from people who would like to go deep sea fishing, or from Italian people who were looking for jobs. Apparently Ozi had taken some part of the role of the regional tourist office that had no web site to promote Malindi. Other properties Ozi was endowed with were those that belong to the local government. Ozi received inquiries from foreigners who would like to know whether it is possible to buy land in Malindi. This made Ozi to decide to rebuild the site and to include information on business opportunities in Malindi to attract investors. “*As much as you would like our counselors to do things, they don’t do anything*”, according to Ozi.

Fourth, the case of Ozi questions the issue of the focal actor and the ‘tactics’ used in the processes of translation. An important prerequisite for cooperative

behavior is trust (Cassel and Bickmore 2000; in Peters 2004). Exactly trust was lacking. Ozi was not considered as a 'neutral' facilitator of the process and Ozi's strategic notions about the way tourism in Malindi should be operated did not (yet?) match particular cultural repertoires and subsequent practices of others to be involved in the project. In this respect, Ozi could have thought of an external party that played an important role in linking small tourism businesses together, for example the Tourist Office in Malindi. This would have taken away the problem of Ozi's image. Furthermore, he may have needed to *problematize* the issue differently, for example by involving from the start an interested Italian investor who was able to enroll other Italian investors. This would perhaps have broadened the support for and the financial backing of the initiative. In other words, Ozi overestimated his ability to enroll others and underestimated the lack of trust needed for effective cooperation. Although Rao (2002; in Peters 2004) states that the Internet can facilitate trust through a more transparent and open communication between exchange partners – in terms of actor-network theory: computer related technologies substitute the human element – as long as Malindi's SMEs do not share information during face-to-face interaction, the effectiveness of the Internet in this project is doubtful.

## Conclusion

The case study of Ozi's Bed and Breakfast illustrates how entrepreneurs in Malindi were not yet able to fine-tune their activities to create convergence that enabled the collective use of ICT to promote Malindi and themselves. In as much use of the ICT facilitates the structure and the performance of the tourism industry, its associated strengths and constraints have to be negotiated and renegotiated not only in the introduction phase but also during its use. Actor-network theory identifies the process of construction and ordering, in this case the hoteliers' collective use of ICT, as one that requires constant effort. It demonstrates how reality is constructed through the process of translation, association and alliance that strengthen particular positions and practices at the expense of others. The introduction of ICT in SMEs is a continuous process of social learning, ordering, entanglement and disentanglement (Van der Duim 2004, 4). Therefore, in order for enterprises to succeed in use of ICT, the various actors must fine-tune their activities to create convergence that will enable the use of ICT to become successful amongst these enterprises.

However, the case study not only illustrates the obstacles small entrepreneurs encounter in effectively introducing ICT in tourism, but also more generally the complex ways tourism unfolds as the result of processes of ordering, negotiation, representation and displacement between actors, entities and places.

Actor-network theory is able to apprehend and appreciate this complexity and heterogeneity of tourism and to produce new narratives on tourism (see Van der Duim 2005; see also Jóhannesson 2005). Therefore this paper also aims to illustrate actor-network theory to be very valuable methodological approach for the study of tourism. Instead of thinking of tourism as an order (or system, or structure), tourism is considered as multiple and incomplete processes of ordering. And instead of thinking tourism merely as a *social* ordering, tourism is to be considered to be an effect of interactions between human and non-human entities. Actor-network theory enables us to deal with relational materiality, immanent in the concept of translation which highlights the network practices of different actors (Jóhannesson 2005). And by accepting this idea of translation, scrutinizing these processes of ordering becomes the main methodological orientation of tourism scholars.

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*Picture 3. Ozi at his office*