

**Another World is Possible:
Tourism, Globalisation and the Responsible
Alternative**

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Summary

Utilising a critical theoretical perspective, this work examines contemporary corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation. This analysis suggests that marketisation limits the understanding of the purposes of tourism to its commercial and “industrial” features, thereby marginalising wider understandings of the social importance of tourism.

Sklair’s conceptualisation of capitalist globalisation and its dynamics, as expressed in his “sociology of the global system” (2002), is employed to understand the corporatised tourism phenomenon. This thesis explains how a corporatised tourism sector has been created by transnational tourism and travel corporations, professionals in the travel and tourism sector, transnational practices such as the liberalisation being imposed through the General Agreement on Trade in Services negotiations and the culture-ideology of consumerism that tourists have adopted. This thesis argues that this reaps profits for industry and exclusive holidays for privileged tourists, but generates social and ecological costs which inspire vigorous challenge and resistance.

This challenge is most clearly evident in the alternative tourism movement which seeks to provide the equity and environmental sustainability undermined by the dynamics of corporatised tourism. Alternative tourism niches with a capacity to foster an “eco-humanism” are examined by focusing on ecotourism, sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, fair trade in tourism, community-based tourism, peace through tourism, volunteer tourism and justice tourism. While each of these

demonstrates certain transformative capacities, some prove to be mild reformist efforts and others promise more significant transformative capacity. In particular, the niches of volunteer tourism and justice tourism demonstrate capacities to mount a vigorous challenge to both corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation. Since the formation of the Global Tourism Interventions Forum (GTIF) at the World Social Forum gathering in Mumbai in 2004, justice tourism has an agenda focused on overturning corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation, and inaugurating a new alternative globalisation which is both “pro-people” and sustainable.

Following the development of these original, macro-level conceptualisations of tourism and globalisation, this thesis presents a micro-level case study of an Indigenous Australian tourism enterprise which illustrates some of these dynamics in a local context. Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre established and run by the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal community of South Australia has utilised tourism to foster greater equity and sustainability by working towards reconciliation through tourism. The Ngarrindjeri have also experienced conflicts generated from the pressures of inappropriate tourism development which has necessitated an additional strategy of asserting their Indigenous rights in order to secure Ngarrindjeri lifeways.

The case study analysis suggests that for alternative tourism to create the transformations that contemporary circumstances require, significant political change may be necessary. This includes fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights to which a majority of nations have committed but have to date failed to implement. While this is a challenge for nation-states and is beyond the capacities of tourism

alone, tourism nonetheless can be geared toward greater equity and sustainability if the perspective that corporatised tourism is the only option is resisted. This thesis demonstrates that another tourism is possible; one that is geared to public welfare, human fulfilment, solidarity and ecological living.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed

B. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles

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Glossary of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| AI | Amnesty International |
| AIATSIS | Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies |
| AITO | Association of Independent Tour Operators |
| AkTE | Arbeitskreis Tourismus Entwicklung |
| ALT | Aboriginal Lands Trust |
| ANTaR | Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| ATA | Aboriginal Tourism Australia |
| ATC | Australian Tourism Commission (now Tourism Australia) |
| ATO | Alternative trade organisation |
| ATSI | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander |
| ATSIC | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission |
| BITS | International Bureau of Social Tourism |
| CAA | Community Aid Abroad |
| CAR | Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBT | Community-based tourism |
| CDEP | Community Development and Employment Program |
| CI | Conservation International |
| CNP | Coorong National Park |
| CPR | Common pool resource |
| CSD | United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development |
| CSR | Corporate social responsibility |
| CWL | Coorong Wilderness Lodge |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| EAA | Ecotourism Association of Australia |
| ECOSOC | United Nations Economic and Social Council |
| ECOT | Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (formerly ECTWT) |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ECTWT | Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism |
| ETE | Ecological Tourism Europe |
| EU | European Union |
| EZLN | Zapatista Army of National Liberation or <i>Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional</i> |
| FTT | Fair trade in tourism |
| G8 | Group of 8 industrialised nations |
| GATS | General Agreement on Trade in Services |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| GTIF | Global Tourism Interventions Forum |
| GX | Global Exchange |
| HIB | Hindmarsh Island Bridge |
| HREOC | Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Australia) |
| IBA | Indigenous Business Australia |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| ICRT | International Centre for Responsible Tourism |
| ICTP | International Council of Tourism Partners |
| IFAW | International Fund for Animal Welfare |
| IFI | International Financial Institution |
| IGO | International governmental organisation |
| IIED | International Institute for the Environment and Development |
| IIPT | International Institute for Peace through Tourism |
| ILC | Indigenous Land Corporation |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INGO | International non-government organisation |
| ISEC | International Society for Ecology and Culture |
| ITRI | Indigenous Tourism Rights International (formerly RTP) |
| IUCN | World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) |
| IUOTO | International Union for Official Tourism Organizations |

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|-----------------|---|
| IYE 2002 | International Year of Ecotourism 2002 |
| LAC | Limits of acceptable change |
| LDC | Less developed countries |
| LETS | Local Exchange Trading Systems |
| MAI | Multilateral Agreement on Investment |
| MDBC | Murray-Darling Basin Commission |
| MOU | Memorandum of understanding |
| NAFTA | North America Free Trade Agreement |
| NATSITIS | National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Strategy |
| NGO | Non-government organisation |
| NIEO | New International Economic Order |
| NHMRC | National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia) |
| NLPA | Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association |
| NPWSA | National Parks and Wildlife of South Australia |
| NRWG | Ngarrindjeri Ramsar Working Group |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OECD | Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PATA | Pacific Asia Travel Association |
| P-CC | Producer-consumer co-operative |
| PPT | Pro-poor tourism |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (formerly known as SAPs) |
| REKA | Swiss Travel Saving Fund |
| RCIADIC | Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody |
| ROC | Respecting Our Cultures (Indigenous Accreditation Program) |
| RTP | Rethinking Tourism Project |
| SAP | Structural adjustment program (now known as PSRP) |
| SATC | South Australian Tourism Commission |
| SIT | Special interest tourism |
| SME | Small to medium enterprise |
| STCRC | Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism |

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|------------------|--|
| ST-EP | Sustainable Tourism as a Tool for Eliminating Poverty |
| TAT | Tourism Authority of Thailand |
| TCC | Transnational capitalist class |
| TEN | The European Network |
| TIES | The International Ecotourism Society |
| TIG | Tourism Interventions Group |
| TIM-Team | Tourism Investigation and Monitoring Team |
| TINA | There is no alternative (to capitalism) |
| TOMM | Tourism Optimisation Management Model |
| TNC | Transnational corporation |
| TNP | Transnational practice |
| TRIMS | Trade-Related Investment Measures Agreement |
| TRIPS | Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement |
| TSA | Tourism satellite account |
| TUI A. G. | Touristik Union International |
| TWN | Third World Network |
| UN | United Nations |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| UNAT | Union Nationale des Associations de Tourisme |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Program |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund (formerly United Nations International Emergency Children's Fund) |
| UNWTO | World Tourism Organization |
| WB | World Bank |
| WDM | World Development Movement |
| WEF | World Economic Forum |
| WGIP | Working Group on Indigenous Populations |
| WGTD | Working Group on Tourism and Development |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WSF | World Social Forum |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| WTOBC | World Tourism Organization Business Council |
| WTO-OMC | The former acronym for the World Trade Organization |
| WTO-OMT | The former acronym for the World Tourism Organization |
| WTTC | World Travel and Tourism Council |
| WWF | Worldwide Fund for Nature (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) |

Preface

One's perspective on things is perhaps irrevocably shaped by experiences and insights that are gained in one's early years. This is certainly the case for me. I come from a small island just off the coast of North Carolina in the United States and in my heart this is *my island*. When my mother moved to this island just over forty-two years ago, it had a permanent population of some five hundred souls, but these would be joined in summer by (wealthier) people from upstate and interstate who had holiday homes on our island. At that time we still had the swamps and the marshes that were a feature of many southern coastal areas. We had alligators and fresh water turtles, as well as egrets and other marsh birds which thrived on the mud and marsh that sat between our island and the mainland. We also had foxes, bears and even the odd mountain lion in addition to numerous possums, raccoons and squirrels that featured in this area. On the seashore, loggerhead sea turtles would bury their eggs in summer and after nearly two months their hatchlings would then try to make the precarious journey from the shore to the sea. Seashells abounded in these prolific waters. This is how my family made a living, collecting and trading sea shells and selling them to the tourists in the summer season. Locals complained about the impacts of outsiders (among which my family was included), but still built their businesses and jobs on the economic opportunities that these outsiders offered to their small, poor and out-of-the-way community. Life had a rhythm to it: summer brought the tourists and second-home owners, higher prices in our shops and increased traffic on our one road and bridge off the island; but winter followed when life returned to a more sedate pace, prices lowered, we had the island to ourselves and the shells washed up on the shore from the winter storms.

The peak would always be the week of the fourth of July as nearby Southport held one of the country's oldest celebrations. Over the years, visitation for this event escalated from a few thousand visitors, to 1972 when the Fourth of July Festival was declared as the official North Carolina Fourth of July Festival and visitation skyrocketed to tens of thousands more tourists. Today more than 50,000 people are attracted to this small community during this time. It was in my teenage years that I noticed that many locals would choose to stay at home rather than join the long queue of cars that would take hours to reach the highlight of the festival, the annual parade. Most were working long hours during this time in order to make the money that would tide them over in the off-season.

Things changed dramatically during these years. A permanent bridge replaced the floating, pontoon bridge that a drunken barge boat captain knocked out in 1971. Numerous facilities were built to service the tourists which the locals grew to appreciate, including cafes, restaurants, bars, large retail chains, a cinema and entertainment complexes featuring arcade games, water slides and miniature golf. This ameliorated the boredom for youth and mitigated the need for adults to travel some seventy-five miles to access such facilities on the mainland.

As the ranks of second-home owners increased and were joined by other types of tourists, more facilities were developed including golf courses, marinas, hotels and up-market residential developments, some of which attracted the more wealthy locals as clients, but more often provided much needed employment in this rather poor area of the state.

I do not know when it was that I realised that the Island I loved no longer existed.

Perhaps it was the secret joy that hurricanes brought as potential sources of cleansing the coastline which made me aware that my relationship to this place had altered as dramatically as the place itself.

What is this Island (no longer my Island) like now? The marshes have given way to elite coastal properties vying for that elusive “water view”. What place is there now for the alligators and egrets whose habitat no longer exists? Bears and mountain lions have long since gone. Possums still turn up on people’s doorsteps, rummaging through rubbish or pet food, or feature as road kill on ever busy streets. Loggerhead turtles are endangered, but some tourist facilities have fostered conservation projects to protect their nests *for* the numerous tourists who wish to view them in the egg-laying and hatching periods. What peace can laying mothers or hatchlings find on a beach where every bit of the coastline is now privatised and developed; where human activity has increased dramatically and safe habitat has receded? Seashells can no longer be found in much of these coastal waters due to habitat destruction through repeated dredging to deepen channels, and the over-exploitation of shell-collectors, both tourists and professionals. And what about the locals with whom I grew up? They are moving away, inland, leaving the Island to the newcomers. There are a multitude of reasons, including: the loss of social amenity as noise and congestion disrupt well-being; increased costs of living which come from inflation, higher taxes and more costly insurance rates; and perhaps most ironically, a loss of “place attachment” as what they had loved about their island no longer exists and is unlikely to return.

This true, anecdotal story of my childhood is iconic of the tourism phenomenon. There is an inherent tendency for tourism to lay the “seeds of its own destruction” (Crick, 1989, p. 338). As it seeks to capitalise on the attractions of place, people and lifestyle, it inevitably changes the assets that were the original attraction. Numerous reactions can flow from a realisation of such dynamics. Developers attune to a globalised world know that replacement destinations for their investments abound. Local government and others interested in maintaining the place realise that sound planning and management are needed to retain the essence of the attraction and will try to manage and mitigate the impacts of change. Some locals and visitors will embrace the changes as a more upmarket and entertaining place is developed and the unpleasant features of the past (such as smelly swamps, poor infrastructure and dangerous wildlife) disappear. Those who choose to abandon the locality perhaps move on to more amenable places as change brings opportunities to access jobs, education and experiences not available in their former locality.

But my reaction is to ask: what is lost? My place, my culture and my habitat no longer exist. Like the alligator and the loggerhead sea turtle I must adjust myself to changes beyond my control and to my detriment. But it is not just the three of us who are out of kilter with the profound changes upon us. Nor is this simply a personal lament, but possibly an inexorable outcome of present circumstances, for my Island is only one among a multitude of places experiencing the same dynamics around the globe. At the time that my swamp was being slowly stifled by encroaching development, the swamps and mangroves of Cancun, Mexico were being filled in to create a resort destination in a formerly pristine area.

I must emphasise that I am not a “knee-jerk” anti-tourist. As stated, my family were originally tourist encroachers on my Island and we made our enjoyable living from selling shells to the tourists. Members of my family, including myself, have also been frequent tourists over the years, enjoying the habitats of others and perhaps contributing unwittingly to similar profound changes in other places.

The intuition seeded in my youth has sparked my interest in this thesis on contemporary tourism and globalisation. The analysis which follows moves beyond anecdote to examine the dynamics of contemporary tourism under the dominant capitalist system driven by the economic imperatives of unrestrained economic growth and development. It is suggested that such dynamics hold grave implications for our collective well-being and we should ask ourselves whether “another world is possible”.¹

¹ The phrase “another world is possible” became the catchcry of the global justice movement following the Porte Alegre, Brazil meeting of the World Social Forum in 2001. As will be discussed in Chapters three, four and five, the global justice and justice tourism movements oppose capitalist globalisation and envision a more just, equitable and sustainable alternative. See the World Social Forum Charter of Principles for an outline of the contours of this vision at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=4&cd_language=2.