

CHAPTER FOUR

From Globalisation to Corporatised Tourism

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter investigated globalisation and proposed that, because of its significant impacts, it is capitalist globalisation that “matters most”. The dynamics of this system analysed by Leslie Sklair in his “the sociology of the global system” provides a model against which the processes of contemporary tourism can be analysed (2002). This chapter takes up this task by focusing on the transnational practices of contemporary tourism, the institutional structures and organisations which are effective, the roles of the transnational capitalist class and its various “fractions” in tourism and the culture-ideologies operative in its conduct. The question will then be explored: to what extent do Sklair’s “twin crises” of class polarisation and ecological collapse apply to the tourism sector. Lastly, Sklair’s proposition of an alternative to capitalist globalisation begs the question: is there an alternative to corporatised tourism that might contribute to avoiding the impending “twin crises”?

4.2 Context of the global tourism industry

While some promoters of tourism such as the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) describe it as the world's biggest industry, this claim is open to some challenge and debate.¹ However, the relevant statistics fully confirm that it is a force of increasing global significance. In 2003, international tourism receipts represented approximately 6 per cent of worldwide exports of goods and services (as expressed in US\$) according to the UNWTO (no date a). If service exports are analysed exclusively, the share of tourism exports increases to nearly 30 per cent of global exports (UNWTO, no date a). Tourism is credited with creating more than 234 million jobs worldwide – almost 9% of the world's workforce (WTTC, no date a). Forecasting by bodies such as the UNWTO and the WTTC predicts extraordinary growth in tourism. For instance, the UNWTO's *Tourism 2020 vision* forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.56 billion (the current volume being 694 million) by the year 2020 and

East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa are forecasted to record growth at rates of over 5 per cent per year, compared to the world average of 4.1 per cent. The more mature regions Europe and Americas are anticipated to show lower than average growth rates. Europe will maintain the highest share of world arrivals, although there will be a decline from 60 per cent in 1995 to 46 per cent in 2020 (UNWTO, no date c).

With globalisation as the focus of attention, analysts tend to concentrate on international tourism. However, it should not be forgotten that domestic tourism is by far the larger phenomenon with about 80% of tourist trips coming from the activities of domestic tourists (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2005, p.

¹ Pleumarom calls it “the self-proclaimed biggest industry” (no date b), perhaps concurring with the conclusion of Leiper (1995) discussed in Chapter two that tourism advocates are exaggerating its size and import in order to gain political influence.

4). While the majority of this domestic tourism is within the wealthier nations of the OECD, some of the wealthier countries of the developing world also have significant domestic tourist sectors including Mexico, Thailand, China, India, Brazil and South Africa.² In addressing international tourism, it must also be recognised that the majority of tourists originate from and travel between developed countries (Harrison, 2001, p. 10). However, the place of developing countries in global tourism is worthy of focus because as Harrison argues, it is clearly evident that tourism to the less developed countries (LDCs) is “significant and increasing”, with 1997 seeing 30% of international arrivals and 30% of international tourism receipts occurring there (Harrison, 2001, p. 11).³ Under the logic of the neoliberal system, development is meant to be achieved by embracing the global market and focusing upon exporting. Thus engaging in international tourism is now seen as one of the most important paths to development for developing countries as it is an export activity. When one considers that the majority of international tourists to the developing world originate from the developed countries (Harrison, 2001, p. 11), one can see how concerns with associated structures of globalisation and issues of social justice become very relevant contexts for discussion.

² Interesting statistics on this phenomenon include the fact that in 1995, 75% of hotel patrons in Mexico were domestic visitors; in Thailand there were 42.5 million domestic trips compared to 7.4 million international tourists trips; and in 1999 Chinese domestic tourists accounted for 90% of total tourism and 70% of revenue (UNWTO, 2002b, p. 19). David Goldstone (2005) has written a much needed and valuable analysis of the nature, size and importance of domestic tourism in developing countries with a particular focus on Mexico and India.

³ Diaz-Benavides provides some very useful statistics and insights into the impacts of tourism on the LDCs in the late 1990s, notably that almost 24% of world tourism revenues in 1999 went to developing countries and for at least one-third of developing countries (and 24 of the LDCs), tourism is the main source of export income (2002).

4.3 Globalisation and tourism

That tourism is also an ideological phenomenon should not be underestimated.⁴ The following quote by a representative of the TCC Conrad Hilton illustrates this point when he claims “each of our hotels is a little America” and “we are doing our bit to spread world peace, and to fight socialism” (cited in Crick, 1989, p. 325). Translated into the current context, Hilton and his cohorts in the TCC might claim that their hotels and businesses are doing their bit to spread market ideology and consumerism. Previously in Chapter two, Friedman was quoted as stating “...globalization is globalizing Anglo-American-style capitalism and the Golden Straightjacket” (2000, p. 380). Hilton’s observation infers that tourism has its role to play in this endeavour. This is why the proposition that tourism might serve as an ideological support for the advance of capitalist globalisation is worthy of further exploration.

The symbiosis that has formed between corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation is one of the defining features of our era. Some analysts of globalisation have attempted to explore the nature of this relationship and analyse its effects. For instance, in his discussion of the culture-ideology of consumerism, Sklair noted that tourism is a promising candidate for further study of the effects of global consumerism (2002).⁵ Cohen and Kennedy argue that “... international tourism has an outreach greater than other powerful globalizing forces, even TNCs” (2000, p. 213). Considering tourism’s scope, volume, organization and impacts, they observe that:

⁴ Hall (2003) argues that the political nature of tourism has largely been either neglected or ignored within mainstream tourism research.

⁵ This suggestion follows his four case studies (smoking, baby formula, pharmaceutical drugs and cola wars) of the culture-ideology of consumerism in Chapter seven of his *Globalisation, capitalism and its alternatives* (2002).

It is possible to argue that tourism may also exercise a cumulative effect that is considerably greater than any other single agent of globalization. While a similar claim has been made about TNCs, which have rightly been seen as carriers of technology, capital and the 'culture-ideology of consumerism' (Sklair 1995: 147), the numbers of TNC personnel who move in order to work in foreign countries is quite small. Moreover, their operations normally require or encourage relatively few individuals to engage in direct, face-to-face social interactions across national boundaries (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, pp. 213-214).

Similarly, Wahab and Cooper assert "tourism is at the forefront of the creation of a global society" (2001b, p. 319). Lanfant and Graburn have claimed:

International tourism is not just an international extension of domestic tourism, nor just a major contribution to foreign exchange, but it is also a 'transmission belt' connecting the developed and underdeveloped worlds. Tourism policy has become part of a global project which lumps together seemingly contradictory economic interests: the organization of vacations (an idea originating in rich countries) and the aspirations for development of economically weak societies (1992, pp. 95-96).

Pleumarom charges that tourism is one of the most competitive and centralised industries and that "hardly any other economic sector illustrates so clearly the global reach of transnational corporations" (1999b, p. 5).⁶

Britton's work (1982) using dependency theory to explain the dynamics of international tourism is vital to any analysis of how contemporary tourism and contemporary globalisation support and reinforce each other. He succinctly describes the international tourism hierarchy operating in developing country contexts: at the top are the large tourism corporations of the "metropolitan market countries"; in the middle are the "branch offices and associate commercial interests of metropolitan firms operating in conjunction with their local tourism counterparts"

⁶ However, it must also be recognised that the vast majority of tourism enterprises around the globe are small to medium enterprises (see Fayos-Solá & Bueno, 2001, p. 55). However, while proportionally smaller in numbers, the issue is the power that the large TNCs can exert to shape the operations of the tourism industry in their interest.

in the developing country; and lastly, there are the small to medium enterprises (SMEs) of the developing country which are dependent on the middle layer but marginal to their interests (1982, p. 343). Thus we see that the international tourism trade is based upon an inequitable structure and this is what creates the imbalanced outcomes of international tourism in a global capitalist economy.⁷ Britton explains:

The degree of penetration by foreign capital, or conversely, the extent of a colony's incorporation into the global capitalist economy, is the most important cause of structural distortions. A form of economic growth (not 'development') is encouraged which, through 'spin-offs' and 'trickledown effects,' marginally improves absolute per capita standards of living. But it does so in a way that overwhelmingly transfers the great proportion of accumulated capital and welfare benefits to ruling classes and foreign interests (1982, p. 348).

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has also voiced concerns about these issues as it has argued that the "trickledown" impacts of tourism are negated by "the predatory practices and anti-competitive behaviour" of the big tourism operators in developing countries (cited in Vivanco, 2001). This results in financial leakages (loss of foreign exchange through purchase of imports to supply tourists) and unbalanced and unfair trade outcomes.

In fact, Britton's analysis of the experience of states in the Pacific Islands indicates that incorporation into the global tourism system correlates with past colonisation by a metropolitan power. This suggests that capitalist exploitation through tourism is a continuation of the dynamic of colonial exploitation to extract surplus wealth.⁸

McLaren has argued more recently that "tourism increases local reliance upon a

⁷ For a more recent exposition applying dependency theory to mass tourism development, see Khan (1997).

⁸ Hall and Tucker (2004) have edited a volume of works investigating the relationship between tourism and postcolonialism which suggest that colonial patterns of exploitation and dependency still resonate in contemporary tourism.

global economy” (1998, p. 17). It does this by undermining subsistence living; promoting the accumulation of debt to construct the infrastructures and facilities that tourists require; relying on foreign investment and commercial presence; requiring products and services from outside the local economy and by psychologically drawing locals into the culture-ideology of consumerism.⁹ Burns (1999, p. 132) reminds us that unlike in the developed world, tourism in developing countries does not usually evolve from natural economic and social processes in these countries and it is for this reason tourism is frequently accused of being an imposed and exploitative force.

The role of institutional structures in promoting the dynamics of corporatised tourism should not be underestimated. Britton argued over two decades ago that “The World Tourism Organization, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, World Bank and UNESCO, among others, set the parameters of tourism planning, promotion, identification of tourism products, investment and infrastructure construction policies often in conjunction with metropolitan tourism companies” (1982, p. 339). It is these institutions which establish the structures that foster the growth and development of the international tourism industry and in effect support the wider development of capitalist globalisation. Some of these institutions will now be examined in greater detail in order to see how they might support the processes of capitalist globalisation as described by Sklair (2002).

⁹ On this latter point, Pleumarom argues that one factor in the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s, was that many Asians imitated tourists in a “free-spending frenzy” on luxury goods. The result in Thailand was an unleashing of “greed and consumerism [that] devastated whole communities” (1999b, p. 7). Such behaviour has been eloquently described as “injecting the behaviour of a wasteful society into the midst of a society of want” (Boudhiba cited in Crick, 1989, p. 317).

4.4 The World Tourism Organization

One of the most prominent institutions in any consideration of international tourism is the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In 2005, it had a membership of 145 states, seven territories and more than 300 Affiliate Members from the public and private sector (UNWTO, no date a). This organization has a very tall mandate; it is a specialised agency of the United Nations entrusted with

promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, with the aim of contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. In pursuing this aim, the Organization pays particular attention to the interests of developing countries in the field of tourism (UNWTO, no date a).

The UNWTO has a very long history as an international organisation. It began as the International Union of Official Tourist Publicity Organizations in 1925 based at The Hague and became the International Union for Official Tourism Organizations (IUOTO) in 1949 with a move to Geneva. These were both technical, non-governmental organisations whose members included 109 National Tourism Organisations and 88 Associate Members from both the public and private sphere (UNWTO, no date a).

However, the 1960s saw significant changes that impacted upon this organisation. Tourism had developed into a major phenomenon and became increasingly international in character. As a result in 1967, IUOTO members passed a resolution to transform the organisation into an inter-governmental organisation with a mandate to deal with tourism issues on a global scale and able to liaise with other relevant

organisations, including such bodies of the United Nations as the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (UNWTO, no date a).

In 1975 the IUOTO was renamed the World Tourism Organization and made its headquarters in Madrid on the invitation of the Spanish government. In 1976 the UNWTO became an executing agency of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in 1977, it signed a formal agreement of cooperation with the United Nations.

The change in the 1960s to make the UNWTO an inter-governmental organisation rather than stay as a non-governmental organisation reflected the realities of modern tourism as it became a significant economic sector in many countries. The UNWTO on its website refers to “the unstoppable growth of tourism” (no date a), resulting in it becoming one of the most important industries in the world. This economic power, coupled with the environmental and social impacts that can accompany uncontrolled mass tourism indicates the necessity of having governments at the forefront of international tourism policy. In 2003, the UNWTO became a specialised agency of the UN. The Secretary General of the UNWTO, Francesco Frangialli, stated this would

constitute a remarkable step forward, which can be characterized by three words: recognition, effectiveness, and impetus. Recognition, because it acknowledges the fact that travel, leisure and tourism constitute a powerful part of modern society that cannot be ignored. Effectiveness, because, due to tourism's multidisciplinary nature, many agencies and organs of the system are involved in its expansion in the performance of their own specific responsibilities. Transforming the WTO [UNWTO] into a specialized agency would mean greater coherence by increasing the synergies among those different stakeholders and enhancing the coordination carried out by ECOSOC. And impetus - because we expect to achieve greater visibility that would

prompt governments as well as multilateral institutions, especially the Bretton Woods institutions, to pay increased attention to an industry that brings development (UNWTO, 2002a).

This quote indicates one of the most significant roles that the UNWTO plays, which is to serve as a “booster” for the stature and recognition of the tourism industry. As part of this effort, the UNWTO has programs focused on the statistics and measurement of the tourism industry.¹⁰ Such an effort effectively emphasises the importance of economic analysis in the tourism sector and supports the “tourism as industry” discourse that was discussed in Chapter two. As the UNWTO claims:

Accurately measuring the impact of tourism on national economies can give the industry greater influence with government and the prestige it deserves. That is why the WTO-OMT [UNWTO] has been working with an international group of statistical experts to develop global standards for reporting tourism economic data (UNWTO, no date d).

The UNWTO has long advocated the use of tourism satellite accounts (TSAs) to accurately measure the full size and import of the tourism sector (TSAs are discussed more fully below). Its effort paid off in 2000 when the UN approved the TSA methodology which according to the UNWTO made “tourism the world’s first sector to have international standards for measuring its economic impacts in a credible way” (UNWTO, no date a). As discussed in Chapter two, this parallels the tourism industry’s effort to create a notion of the “tourism industry” intended to serve the interests of the tourism business sector. Pleumarom has criticised the UNWTO’s and WTTC’s success in getting the TSA accounting system accepted, claiming critics say it is “a statistical exercise mainly aimed to improve the image and stature of the

¹⁰ On the website, there are five headings on UNWTO’s programmes: Education; Market intelligence and promotion; Quality and trade in tourism; Statistics and economic measurement of tourism and Sustainable development of tourism (see <http://www.world-tourism.org>).

industry and to conceal the considerable economic losses tourist destination countries are experiencing in the face of worldwide growing volatility and progressive liberalization policies” (Pleumarom, no date b).

What is perhaps most unique and eye-catching about the UNWTO is the close relationship that this international organisation has with industry. “WTO is the only inter-governmental organization that offers membership to the operating sector and in this way offers a unique contact point for discussion between government officials and industry leaders” (UNWTO, no date a). While the UNWTO currently has 145 state members and seven territories that hold associate membership there are additionally numerous affiliate members from airlines, hotel chains, tourism operators, consulting firms, tourism professional associations, tourism boards and educational institutions.¹¹ What is strikingly missing from this list of affiliate members are non-government organisations, particularly those that are critical of tourism, perhaps because the yearly membership fee is \$US1700 (Hall, 2000, p. 110).¹² Advocating against the corporate rule of tourism, Pleumarom has called on activists concerned about tourism to join the new movements challenging capitalist globalisation and oppose a UNWTO hitched to the corporate agenda (Pleumarom, no date b). She has stated that the accession of the UNWTO to status as a specialised agency of the UN provides an opportunity to force the UNWTO to adhere to the human rights, developmentalist and interdependency agendas of the wider UN body, particularly should a “citizens charter” be negotiated in the near future (Pleumarom, no date b). However current membership and voting patterns see the UNWTO emerge as a strange hybrid, where it acts officially as an intergovernmental

¹¹ See http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_affiliate_directory.html

¹² The rare exception is the International Bureau of Social Tourism (BITS).

international organisation (as only member states and territories vote); whereas the affiliate members from the tourism business sector wield tremendous weight and influence, particularly through the Business Council (discussed below).¹³

Because membership of the UNWTO is dominated by developing countries, this organisation wields strong rhetoric on the contributions tourism can make to development. The UNWTO liaises with other international bodies focused on development, including the UNCTAD and the UNDP. One of the primary functions of the UNWTO's various regional wings is to "... act as a liaison between tourism authorities and the United Nations Development Programme to create specific development projects" (UNWTO, no date a). The UNWTO also views the transfer of tourism know-how to developing countries to be one of its "fundamental tasks". It is charged with the duty of providing assistance to members in securing finance, obtaining experts and carrying out tourism development plans for new or existing tourism destinations. It is involved in long-term, strategic planning such as developing a tourism master plan for Pakistan in 2001, development of national parks in Rwanda in 1999 and an integrated development plan for the Palestinian Authority in 2000 (UNWTO, no date a). It has also undertaken short-term specific projects such as assisting Syria with tourism legislation and developing an ecotourism plan for Lithuania (UNWTO, no date a). In general though, it could be said that the UNWTO serves the purpose of encouraging Third World countries to open up to tourism as they pursue economic development. Pleumarom (no date b) argues that the tourism industry members of the UNWTO form part of the system of

¹³ Interestingly, at a Tourism Policy Forum convened by the UNWTO in 2004, the Washington Declaration on Tourism as a Sustainable Development Strategy was pronounced. This made a commitment "to recognize the uniqueness of the business perspective as different from that of the public sector and to communicate effectively in business language" (UNWTO & George Washington University, 2004).

“corporate rule in tourism” along with the WTTC, the tourism TNCs in the World Economic Forum and associated supranational governance bodies such as the OECD, the IMF and the World Bank. All are committed to promoting liberalisation in the tourism sector as being good for developing countries while simultaneously serving their own corporate interests.

However, it is the UNWTO’s Business Council (WTOBC) which is of most interest when examining the UNWTO’s institutional role in supporting capitalist globalisation. It is important to reiterate that of all the UN’s specialised agencies and affiliated organisations as well as other international organisations, the UNWTO is unique in having its membership open to the “operating sector” (UNWTO, no date a). It is in the Business Council that the tourism operating sector is most influential, as “airlines, hotel chains, tour operators, trade associations, consultants, promotion boards and educational institutions make up approximately 350 members of the UNWTO Business Council (UNWTO, no date a). The WTOBC views its mission as “representing and fostering the views of business stakeholders in tourism” (WTOBC, no date). Two of the objectives that support this mission include:

- Ensure private / public sector dialogue and cooperation, both inside and outside WTO [UNWTO] and ensure private sector participation in WTO [UNWTO]... meetings and seminars.
- Assist WTO [UNWTO] in creating the global framework within which the tourism industry operates efficiently, by representing private sector views within that policy dialogue (WTOBC, no date).

The WTOBC is the section of the UNWTO that holds the representatives of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) and expresses the views of the transnational

corporations (TNCs). While the WTOBC, like the rest of the UNWTO, expresses a commitment to sustainability and poverty alleviation, what emerges from its activities is full support for the liberalisation agenda of capitalist globalisation. This includes granting an increased voice and representational power for the private sector in the institutions of governance, as well as forceful pushing of TNC agendas such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services discussed below. Pleumarom notes that UNWTO documents have described the WTOBC as “more active and vocal” in the UNWTO’s meetings and programmes and she suggests that this is evidence of “corporate power in tourism” being visibly exercised (Pleumarom, no date b). While the UNWTO may claim to be supporting the development agendas of its membership base, a majority of whom are developing countries, the influential role of the WTOBC sees the UNWTO act as an international lobbying body for the powerful tourism TNCs in contradiction to its obligations to a majority of its members.

This disjunction between mandate and effective implementation is also apparent in other spheres. The UNWTO has made a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. On its website, the environment section claims:

Its message of encouraging low-impact sustainable tourism development rather than uncontrolled mass tourism has been embraced in recent years by WTO [UNWTO] members. They understand that government, in partnership with the private sector, have a responsibility to keep the environment in good condition for future generations and for the future success of the tourism sector (UNWTO, no date d).

As part of this effort, the UNWTO has participated in such major events as the 1992 Rio Summit on Sustainable Development and the Environment and “...former WTO [UNWTO] Secretary-General Antonio Enriquez Savignac ... was instrumental in

getting tourism included in Agenda 21 as one of the only industries capable of providing an economic incentive for preservation of the environment” (UNWTO, no date d). However, how genuine this commitment is to sustainability when the agenda of the UNWTO, like its industry members, is focused on continual growth in tourism, remains open to question (and is questioned further in Chapter five). The Secretary General of the UNWTO stated at the ITB Berlin Travel Fair in 1996:

With very, very few exceptions, we are paying only lip service to the ideals of protecting the environment through sustainable tourism. At the same time, we are repeating the same mistakes of the past by going after big numbers, regardless of their impact on the environment or social structures.

Our fragile planet cannot take it and our increasingly sophisticated travellers will not stand for it. How much longer will it be before a new generation of travellers decides to stay at home rather than deal with a crowded resort? (Antonio Savignac cited in Elliot, 1997, p. 263).

Despite this observation from one of its leaders, the UNWTO actively promotes growth in the tourism sector. While the UNWTO is primarily financed by the membership fees it charges, it is increasingly driven to seek other sources of revenue such as consultancies and is pushed to further cooperation with industry which Hall suggests may affect the “focus of WTO [UNWTO] organisational policies” (2000, p. 110). In fact, one of the main interests of industry which the UNWTO supports is growth. According to Burns “it is clear...that the WTO [UNWTO] is actively promoting the expansion of tourism at a global level. WTO [UNWTO] survives not so much through its membership fees but through spin-off activities such as consulting and project management. It therefore actually needs more tourism!” (cited in Hall, 2000, p. 112). One can easily identify this support for the continued expansion of tourism from the “tourism enriches campaign” which is a public marketing initiative of the UNWTO to promote tourism growth by fostering

“communication about the benefits of tourism as the most prospective economic activity for the local communities and countries” (UNWTO, 2004). Such an agenda demonstrates the dynamics of the “growth fetish” which underpins capitalist globalisation (Hamilton, 2003) under the guise of promoting economic growth for the host countries.

An assessment of the power and influence of the UNWTO must also acknowledge important countries in the global community that have not yet joined, including the USA and the UK. When Hall wrote his book on tourism planning, the USA, UK, Canada and Australia were non-members of the UNWTO and Hall surmised that lack of interest in subscribing might be due to both an assumed lack of benefits from membership and perhaps an inability to “influence the direction of WTO [UNWTO] policies and undertakings as they might wish” (2000, p. 110) since developing countries represent a majority of members. However, alternatively, it might have demonstrated these governments’ lack of insight into the importance of supranational action in the tourism arena or alternatively that the important activities that secure the interest of their large TNCs are occurring elsewhere, such as in the negotiations of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and WTTC. The fact that Canada and Australia recently joined might indicate that the stature and importance of the UNWTO (and perhaps tourism itself) are on the rise. It could be anticipated that the UNWTO’s full integration with the UN would enhance such an effect.

4.5 The World Travel and Tourism Council

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) is another important institution of international tourism. The WTTC describes itself in this way:

The World Travel and Tourism Council is a Global Business Leaders' Forum for Travel and Tourism. Its Members are Chief Executives from all sectors of [the Tourism] Industry... Its central goal is to work with governments to realise the full potential economic impact of the world's largest generator of wealth and jobs - Travel & Tourism (WTTC, no date b).

Its members include some of the most powerful TNCs in the tourism industry including British Airways, American Express, the Thomas Cook Group, Touristik Union International (better known as TUI A. G.), the SABRE Group and Hilton Hotels Corporation. To achieve its goal of promoting travel and tourism growth to the world's governments, it pushes for the removal of barriers to the growth of the tourism industry. As an unabashed advocate of tourism growth, it can be seen as complicit in the rapid expansion of global tourism destinations and a contributor to the growth fetish evident in tourism.

The WTTC currently has several initiatives underway which provide an insight into its role in capitalist globalisation. Perhaps most prominent is the *Blueprint for new tourism*, initiated in 2003. It is here we find the WTTC emphasising and perhaps exaggerating the importance of the tourism industry in order to garner greater government support, which as Leiper suggested in Chapter two, was indicative of the "greed" and quest for power of the large tourism TNCs (1995, p.109). Two features predominate in this document: an emphasis on growth and a call for governments to take tourism more seriously. It sets three agendas which include government

recognition of travel and tourism as a “top priority”; the need for business to balance “economics with people, culture and environment”; and all parties to share “the pursuit of long-term growth and prosperity” (WTTC, 2003). Under each of these areas, the WTTC sets out a list of responsibilities for governments and industry to bring about this “new tourism”. These include:

1. *Governments must recognize travel & tourism as a top priority.*

To meet this first condition, governments must:

- Elevate travel & tourism as an issue to the top level of policy making
- Create a competitive business environment
- Ensure that quality statistics and data feed into policy and decision-making
- Invest in developing the appropriate human capital
- Liberalise trade, transport, communications and investment
- Build confidence in safety and security
- Promote product diversification that spreads demand
- Plan for sustainable tourism growth, in keeping with cultures and character
- Invest in new technology, such as satellite navigation systems

2. *Business must balance economics with people, culture and environment*

To meet the second condition, the industry must:

- Expand markets while protecting natural resources, local heritage and lifestyles
- Develop people to narrow the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’
- Provide traditional tourism products sensitively
- Reduce seasonality and increase yields with imaginative new products
- Improve quality, value and choice
- Agree and implement quality standards at all levels
- Transfer skills and best practice throughout the industry
- Increase the sophistication of information, to make better business decisions
- Communicate more broadly and more effectively

3. *All parties must share the pursuit of long-term growth and prosperity*

To meet the third condition, all the main stakeholders must:

- Ally best practice in tourism with government policy
- Prepare sustainable master plans for entire destinations
- Create locally driven processes for continuous stakeholder consultation
- Restructure national tourism boards
- Set environmental policy goals that can be met
- Develop and deploy skills effectively
- Collaborate on information requirements
- Collaborate on security
- Develop confidence on all sides (WTTC, 2003).

An evaluation of these lists clearly indicates the growth agenda of the WTTC and even though one of the key agendas is for business to “balance economics with the interests of people, culture and environment”, only two items under this heading are not related to fostering more growth, that is “develop people to narrow the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’” and “transfer skills and best practice throughout the industry”. Under the lead injunction that “governments must recognize travel & tourism as a top priority” one can clearly see the capitalist globalisation agenda as even the discussion of sustainability is phrased in terms of “sustainable tourism *growth*”. What is really disturbing about the *Blueprint for new tourism* when read with a critical eye to uncover the dynamics of capitalist globalisation, is the appropriation of alternative tourism terminology by the WTTC. Adopting the language of “new tourism”, the WTTC evokes an image of a sensitive and more sustainable tourism, when what is evident in the detail is an agenda for accelerating growth and profit to the tourism TNCs that make up the WTTC.

Another main activity of the WTTC is promotion of research into the tourism satellite account (TSA). TSA is a method of estimating the size of the tourism industry which has been promoted by the UNWTO and the WTTC. As said previously, tourism requires a special accounting system in order to address the fact that it is a complex phenomenon that overlaps with other economic sectors and is not

defined by its product but rather by the consumer of its goods and services. The WTTC's TSA includes personal travel and tourism expenditure by an economy's residents, the export income that comes from international visitor spending in the local economy, business travel, government expenditure (on such things as cultural museums, national parks, aviation administration and marketing campaigns), capital investment and exports of consumer or capital goods to tourism and travel providers (i.e. cruise ships, airplanes, food, etc.). The WTTC states:

Travel and tourism is an industrial activity defined by the diverse collection of products (durables and non-durables) and services (transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, government services, etc.) that are delivered to visitors. There are two basic aggregates of demand (Travel & Tourism Consumption and Total Demand) and by employing input/output modelling separately to these two aggregates the Satellite Account is able to produce two different and complementary aggregates of Travel & Tourism Supply; the Travel & Tourism Industry and the Travel & Tourism Economy. The former captures the explicitly defined production-side 'industry' contribution (i.e. direct impact only), for comparison with all other industries, while the latter captures the broader 'economy-wide' impact, direct and indirect, of Travel & Tourism (WTTC, 2005b, p. 11).

Focus on the TSA allows the compilation of statistics and predictions. Thus tourism's global contribution for 2006 was predicted to provide:

- US\$ 6,477.2 billion of economic activity,
- 10.3% of total GDP,
- 234,305,000 jobs, or 8.7% of total employment (WTTC, no date a).

The WTTC has overseen the development of TSAs for numerous economies in the global community in order to underscore the economic impact of tourism and improve the lobbying potential of tourism industry supporters that comprise its membership. What is difficult to reconcile is the positive rhetoric of official

documents with the negative outcomes as manifest in economic leakages and costs exposed in several studies such as Brohman (1996), Duffy (2002), Patullo (1996) and Pleumarom (1999a). Because the WTTC is interested in the global trading practices of tourism, represents big tourism TNCs and is in effect a global corporate lobby group, the TSAs are selected as a tool to serve the corporate interest in promoting the tourism sector and gaining governmental support to expand tourism. They do not however tell the (failed) developmental story of leakages nor the negative human impacts of tourism that concern such analysts as Brohman (1996) and critics such as Pleumarom (1999a).

In addition to these initiatives, the WTTC has also undertaken a “competitiveness monitor” which “tracks a wide range of information, which indicates to what extent a country offers a competitive environment for Travel & Tourism development” (WTTC, no date a). The WTTC describes its purpose as aiming “to stimulate policy-makers, industry investors, academics and all other interested parties to recognize the crucial role they play in maximizing the contribution of Travel & Tourism for the benefit of everyone and to ensure that the development of the industry is sustainable” (WTTC, no date a). This monitor is therefore perhaps more logically seen as a tool the WTTC provides for TNCs to plan their most profitable and successful investments in a range of countries lured by the promise of tourism.

Additionally, the WTTC has a corporate social leadership initiative. It is in this domain that the WTTC claims a long affiliation with the sustainability movement and boasts of its support for applying Agenda 21 to the travel and tourism sector, its latest support for the poverty alleviation agenda of tourism, its creation of the

Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and its alliances with groups such as Green Globe, CyberDodo and the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre in Australia (WTTC, no date a). The sustainability and poverty alleviation agendas will be critiqued in greater detail in Chapter five. For the moment the WTTC can be challenged on whether its commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) represents a change in business practice or whether it is merely geared to good public relations. The WTTC publication *Corporate social leadership in travel and tourism* (WTTC, 2002) provides useful material for analysis. This document features a focus on the business case for commitment to CSR agendas. It emphasises the “new consumer”, or tourists with a conscience, who are increasingly discerning of corporate business practice who therefore present a lucrative business opportunity.¹⁴ More significantly, the content of some of the case studies which are presented as exemplars of corporate leadership represent little advance on ordinary corporate charity and do not indicate a rethinking of corporate social roles (see for instance the cases of Radisson SAS Hotels & Resorts, TUI A. G. and Uniglobe) (WTTC, 2002).

It is also telling that this report states categorically that “a voluntary approach is crucial... attempting to regulate social responsibility would not only be impractical, given the diverse needs of different communities, it would undermine the personal commitment and creativity that fuel it” (WTTC, 2002, p. 5). Such voluntary approaches amount to corporate self-regulation. Naomi Klein argues that corporate self-regulation gives “unprecedented power [to corporations]...the power to draft their own privatised legal systems, to investigate and police themselves, as quasi nation-states” (2001, p. 437). In terms of tourism, Mowforth and Munt argue that

¹⁴ This phenomenon is analysed both in the report and also prominently addressed in the first appendix of the publication.

corporate social responsibility and codes of conduct can be seen as “exercises in public relations” and attempts to court the ethical consumer (2003, p. 194); they can also be seen as attempts to pre-empt government regulation of tourism activities. Thus we can see that the WTTC effectively restricts the movement for corporate responsibility to the confines of TNC control while sustaining the corporate interest (see section 5.4.6).

Along these same lines, the WTTC was the initiator of the Green Globe program that was created to implement the principles applicable to the travel and tourism industry under Agenda 21 from the 1992 Earth Summit at Rio. It provides information on environmental improvement projects, achievement awards, and a certification process to achieve Green Globe status which is wholly voluntary (Green Globe, no date). The Green Globe project has nevertheless had its critics: in the Green Travel internet discussion forum, some have seen the Green Globe awards merely as “greenwash”; others have noted that it has evolved positively by separating from the WTTC and promoting environmental sustainability in a pragmatic manner and that it therefore needs and deserves the support of “responsible operators” to succeed (Green Travel, 1999). In their political analysis of tourism, Mowforth and Munt argue that Green Globe is an example of the WTTC and the UNWTO advocating self-regulation in order to secure their members’ interests and avoid outside regulation (2003, pp. 184-185). They conclude:

Self-regulation led by bodies such as the WTTC and the WTO/OMT [UNWTO], whose stated aims are the promotion of the tourism industry rather than its restraint, is likely to lead to policies which further the pursuit of profits in a business world where profit maximisation and capital accumulation is the logic of economic organisation (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 185).

Thus similar to the way in which the World Economic Forum, the IMF and the WTO support transnational practices and the interests of the transnational capitalist class that underpin capitalist globalisation (Sklair, 2002), there is evidence that the UNWTO and the WTTC support a corporate tourism agenda that is symbiotic with capitalist globalisation.

4.6 The World Bank and World Economic Forum: Non-tourism institutions foster the corporate tourism agenda

For a decade, between 1969 and 1979, the World Bank Group maintained a special department focused on tourism in recognition of the rapid growth of tourism and its importance to the foreign exchange earnings of many of the Bank's member countries (Davis & Simmons, 1982, p. 212). While the World Bank disbanded this tourism section over 20 years ago when it abandoned its support of direct tourism development projects after receiving much criticism (Richter, 1989), it has remained very active in the promotion of tourism for development. In 1998, it co-hosted with the UNWTO a conference entitled "Tourism Visions for the 21st Century" to raise the profile of tourism in development planning. Whether the tourism projects supported by the World Bank in recent years are more successful than those devised by its tourism department in the past is subject to debate; however what is clear is that such support goes to develop infrastructure and tie an economy into the international tourism economy, and in many cases adds to a developing country's debt burden.¹⁵

¹⁵ For instance in 2005, Madagascar was given a "credit" of nearly US\$130 million to develop tourism in a growth-pole strategy in two underdeveloped regions, Nosy Be and Taolagnaro (World Bank, 2005).

Ideologically, therefore the World Bank's intervention in tourism can be seen to be part of the capitalist globalisation process described by Sklair (2002) and a component of the "market fundamentalism" described by Gill (1995). A representative of the UNWTO in an interview stated "we have some of the same goals as the international finance community ... tourism is a great way of generating foreign currency, improving a country's roads and public works, and creating jobs in rural areas, where tourists like to go" (World Bank News, 1998). Taken at face value, this statement seems innocent enough, but when making the connections between "the neo-liberal market civilisation" that Gill describes and the tourism structure which contributes to it, the statement of coincidental interest of the UNWTO and the international finance community is more concerning; it is referring to the radical shift of economies to full integration into global markets. World Bank-sponsored tourism projects have also come in for criticism because their investments are less geared to developmental outcomes for locals than serving the interests of powerful entities in the corporate sector, governments and/or rich-world tourists. As Mowforth and Munt have remarked international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank have power over any country that requires financial assistance and under the market system, tourism is treated "much the same as any other cash crop" (2003, p. 261). There are numerous examples that illustrate the impacts of such developments. For instance, a World Bank sponsored ecotourism program (co-sponsored by a Japanese aid agency) in Thailand has seen illegal and inappropriate developments in protected areas (supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand) catering to the Thai elite and wealthy international tourists despite the protest of locals and laws prohibiting such developments (Tourism Investigation & Monitoring

Team, no date a). Similarly, Mowforth and Munt discuss the case of Grenada in the Caribbean, which prior to US destabilisation and invasion in the early 1980s, was set to implement a socialist-inspired tourism program (2003, pp. 259-260). After the US intervention, Grenada became a model of corporatised tourism as the US development agency, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), intervened to establish tourism infrastructures and developments attractive to TNC investors but with poor developmental outcomes for the populace (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, pp. 259-260).

It is also important to note that the travel and tourism sectors have received some attention from the World Economic Forum (WEF), a non-government organisation that is made up of “the world’s 1,000 leading companies, along with 200 smaller businesses” including global giants such as Unilever, Pfizer and Nestle (WEF, no date). The WEF is the target of virulent opposition from the “anti-globalisation” movement because it is seen as a vital agent of anti-democratic capitalist globalisation and as a facilitator of the interest of the TCC. A look at the WEF’s website indicates its support for corporate-led globalisation and corporatised tourism.¹⁶ For instance, the WEF held a forum on liberalisation in the civil aviation sector in 2004 in Jordan at which the tourism industry agenda was effectively promoted by various speakers. Geoffrey Lipman, a special adviser to the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, advocated the growth of aviation and tourism suggesting they can be catalysts for peace. Thomas R. Pickering, representing Boeing, predicted the Middle Eastern region was ripe for tourism growth (and therefore presumably “ripe for” for buying Boeing’s planes) (WEF, 2004). In fact, one WTTC document

¹⁶ <http://www.weforum.org/site/knowledgenavigator.nsf/Content/Travel+and+Tourism>

claimed that in 2005, “WTTC and the WEF continued to support each other in their respective ventures this year” (WTTC, 2005a, p. 27). This simple statement suggests how global tourism institutions interact and reinforce the institutions fostering capitalist globalisation and the marketisation agenda. In other contexts, we have already seen that such trends do not prioritise grassroots development or an equitable share of proceeds from tourism.

4.7 Transnational capitalist class - a case study

Sklair’s analysis of capitalist globalisation suggests that critical analysis of TNCs is insufficient to understand the effects of capitalist globalisation as the roles of the TCC are also very significant (2002). One prime example of a member of the TCC who operates in the sphere of corporate tourism is Geoffrey Lipman who has wielded great power and influence.¹⁷ Lipman has held numerous posts of influence within the travel and tourism sector including serving as president of the WTTC and executive director of the International Air Transport Association. He is currently serving as a special adviser to the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, has been a prominent advocate of liberalisation in the aviation sector and has taken part in WEF events concerned with tourism.¹⁸ Lipman has also chaired Green Globe 21 (applying Agenda 21 standards to the tourism sector) and currently promotes the International Council of Tourism Partners whose focus is on alleviating poverty through tourism. As Chapter five suggests, such initiatives can be interpreted as public relations efforts to head off the criticism that tourism and globalisation receive due to their role in fostering ecological and sociological crises (as described by Sklair, 2002).

¹⁷ Lipman is an example of a member of both the state and technical fractions of the TCC during his varied career (see Sklair’s typology, 2002, p. 99).

¹⁸ See: <http://www.weforum.org/site/knowledgenavigator.nsf/Content/Lipman%20Geoffrey>

Whether TCC leaders such as Lipman are sincere in their roles is not the point; they probably are in some cases. What is the point is how their efforts in forums such as the UNWTO and WEF serve the interests of the corporate class (TCC) and advance the success of capitalist globalisation. For instance, Pleumarom (1999b, p. 5) has noted how Lipman, when serving as President of the WTTC, visited Thailand to campaign for privatisation of state-owned enterprises. At the same time, WTTC members British Airways and the British Airport Authority made investment bids for Thai Airways and Thai airports which were seen as a corporate assault on the Thai travel and transport sector (Pleumarom, 1999b). Tourism consultants like Lipman epitomise the role of TCC “globalising professionals” as they promote and foster the interests of corporate tourism in various forums such as the WEF and the GATS negotiations as well as to governments around the world.

Sklair’s typology of the TCC also applies to groups engaged in tourism. For instance, a study of the activities of various fractions of the TCC operating in the travel and tourism sector could shed light on how they promote transnational practices and foster the advance of capitalist globalisation. As hotel, resorts and restaurants sign up to franchising agreements, a study could be made of how global corporate leaders from the headquarters interrelate and cooperate with local affiliates and how such interactions support the agendas of capitalist globalisation.

Additionally, the role of the state fraction of the tourism TCC is exposed in reports of the Tourism Investigation and Monitoring Team (TIM-Team) on how the Tourism Authority of Thailand has collaborated in using World Bank social investment money for inappropriate and wholesale tourism development in national parks in violation of Thai laws (TIM-Team, no date a).

Merchants and media (called the “consumerist fraction” of the TCC by Sklair, 2002) also play a vital role in fostering the culture-ideology of consumerism as people have to be urged to contribute to the continual growth demanded by capitalist globalisation and corporatised tourism. This in turn underpins the ability of the TNCs and the TCC to achieve ever higher profits. Such roles are fulfilled by travel publishers such as Lonely Planet Books,¹⁹ the producers of travel magazines such as Conde Nast Travel, as well as individual journalists and television presenters such as Susan Kurosawa in Australia and Michael Palin who publicise global travel opportunities to entice tourists.

Additionally a study could be made of the roles of entrepreneurs such as Richard Branson of Virgin and “Screw” Turner of Flight Centre to show how their approaches add more than flamboyance and brashness to the tourism industry. They have in fact created global corporate empires built on fostering the consumerism of youth. This thesis has not engaged with these case studies because of its primary concern to maintain a macro-level analysis of global structures and dynamics. We thus return to some of the examples of transnational practices operating in the corporate tourism sector to see how the dynamics of capitalist globalisation are evident here.

¹⁹ For example Tony Wheeler, publisher of Lonely Planet, advocated travel to Burma when human rights organisations and other travel businesses were calling for a boycott.

4.8 Tourism transnational practices

4.8.1 Liberalisation under the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS)

For decades, the transnational capitalist class and other supporters of capitalist globalisation have been pushing a free trade agenda and open access to the world's wealth and resources through multilateral trade talks such as the Uruguay Round and since 1995, through the institutional structure of the World Trade Organization (WTO). More recently, attention has focused on the services sector, including tourism, through the promotion of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). As the NGO Equations²⁰ has suggested, the highest rates of growth in tourism are being achieved in developing countries as “new tourists” are drawn to their natural and cultural attractions. As a result, the big TNCs are keen to liberalise the tourism sector so that they can pursue the profit opportunities arising in the developing world (Equations, 2001).

The impacts of the liberalisation of tourism services must be seen within the context of the wider liberalisation process. As tourism is being subjected to liberalisation, so are the sectors with which tourism interrelates including agriculture, financial services, investment, construction, communications, transport and aviation. This establishes a system of “interlocking liberalization” which Williams claims can “create dependency on the market, with impacts on food security...[which] may prove negative for social development” (M. Williams, 2002, p. 12). This “interlocking liberalization” includes a series of agreements that create a structure

²⁰ Equations is a tourism NGO based in Bangalore, India.

which is conducive to corporate interests,²¹ including the multilateral negotiations of the WTO, the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) and the one under discussion here, GATS. These agreements are augmented by numerous regional and bilateral agreements such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). While all of these measures are the result of extensive negotiations to create a “consensus”-based structure of rules on the conduct of global free trade, critics argue that the less powerful countries are forced into agreements that damage their interests and serve the interests of powerful TNCs and the TCC.²²

But it is GATS which is most effective within the tourism domain. At the same time that multilateral negotiations on trade in goods and agricultural produce were being negotiated at the Uruguay round and the WTO in the 1990s, attention was turned to the growing sector of trade in services. This led to the creation of the GATS in 1994 and its continued development through subsequent negotiations has been overseen by the WTO. The most recent negotiations are occurring in the Doha round of talks which began in 2001 and have specifically focused on services. The GATS rests on three key concepts, including most favoured nation treatment, market access and national treatment. The most favoured nation treatment clause commits members to treat services and service suppliers of any other member no less favourably than they

²¹ Mowforth and Munt (2003, p. 266) cite a European Community document of 2000 which describes GATS as “first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business”.

²² For instance, Mowforth and Munt quote the NGO the World Development Movement (WDM) who claim that great pressure is exerted by the developed countries on the developing countries in these negotiations including the inference that if the developing country negotiators do not act as advised, then aid might be affected (WDM cited in Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 266). Williams also notes that liberalisation in the tourism sector of developing countries needs to be understood within the context of structural adjustment imposed by the IFIs (M. Williams, 2002, p. 12). Lastly, Hoad notes that GATS has an expansionary character as member countries are continually pressed to return to negotiations for further commitments: Hoad claims GATS “is the only trade agreement that mandates WTO members ... return to the negotiating table on a regular basis” (2002, p. 224).

treat services and service suppliers of any other country. The market access provision requires members to allow market access to foreign investors in the sectors which they have identified under GATS. The GATS' national treatment clause requires members to treat foreign corporations in the same way they treat domestic companies operating in the specified service sectors under the agreement's provisions. Additionally GATS has a clause on "general exceptions" concerning the right for members to apply general exceptions to their commitments on "public morals and human, animal or plant life or health" (Hoad, 2002, p. 217).

GATS deals with "tourism and travel related services" and divides these into four subsectors including:

- hotels and restaurants,
- travel agencies and tour operators,
- tourist guide services,
- and an "other" category (unspecified).

The GATS liberalisation program was proceeding in ongoing talks of the Doha round under the auspices of the WTO and a target had been set to achieve some locked-in commitments under the agreement by the end of 2005. Proponents of liberalisation like the UNWTO argue that countries of both the developed and developing world will benefit from the liberalisation under the GATS. The former expect greater business opportunities for their corporations and the latter are promised more opportunities for development through the "North-South flows" (UNWTO, 2003b). Such a "win-win" perspective seems illusory, however, since these talks recently collapsed in part because developing countries remain

unconvinced of such promises.²³ The following discussion will highlight some of the difficulties GATS presents for developing countries.

Despite the alleged convergence of interests, there is a clear distinction between the bargaining positions of developed countries such as the United States and the member states of the European Union and the positions of developing countries. In 2000 for example, the United States requested the removal of several barriers or protections that impeded its businesses including such practices as limiting the repatriation of profits, requiring the employment of locals, providing domestic businesses with subsidies and support, restricting the sale or rent of property and restricting the share of foreign investment in joint ventures, all of which assisted developing countries to create a viable tourism sector and ensured that the local economy obtained significant benefits from it (Berne Declaration & Working Group on Tourism & Development, 2004, p. 10). According to Menotti (2002), the European Union likewise made a specific approach to Mexico under the GATS to ask it to lift its requirement that developers of hotels and restaurants hold a permit. This provision was imposed by Mexico as a part of its planning process to promote sustainable tourism practices in its growing tourism sector. In contrast Thailand has expressed support for the liberalisation under GATS but voiced concerns over the ability of developing countries to ensure environmental and cultural protection when opening up to the global economy (Noypayak, 2001). Additionally delegations from Central American countries have raised major concerns during the GATS discussion

²³ In July, 2006, Muqbil reported “the collapse of the World Trade Organization talks in Geneva last week is a major victory for developing countries, as well as the civil society non-governmental organisations which have long been urging them to resist pressure to sign lop-sided deals that may generate short-term gain but ultimately result in long-term pain. The time-out has given developing countries some breathing room to reassess the state of play before deciding if and how to go forward. International relations today are not characterised by level playing fields. Now, governments have clearly indicated a desire to say ‘enough is enough’ to double standards” (2006).

about the anti-competitive practices by tourism TNCs (Communication from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador & Honduras, 2000).²⁴ UNCTAD has identified the main concerns of developing countries that are relevant under GATS:

- the fact that the small to medium enterprises (SMEs) characteristic of the tourism sector in developing countries are likely to be overrun by the TNCs that will take advantage of liberalisation's effects to invest in these economies undergoing considerable tourism growth rates,
- developing countries require a multilateral 'open skies' policy where current charter restrictions, flight density restrictions and high pricing policies could be dealt with and where they can fairly access the computer reservations systems currently controlled by the TNCs of the North,
- developing countries also have issues of access to the facilities of electronic commerce as the global distribution systems are controlled by the major carriers who privilege the major tourism service providers over the SMEs characteristic of developing countries (cited in M. Williams, 2002, pp. 14-15).

Additionally, whereas developing countries would most benefit from the free movement of personnel, the restrictive immigration policies of the developed world make it unlikely that tourism employees of the developing world will find tourism jobs as easy to access in the developed world as developed world tourism workers have found it in the developing countries. Movement of people is under mode four²⁵

²⁴ UNCTAD has described these anti-competitive practices quite precisely: "The liberalisation and globalisation of the travel and tourism sectors have also led to a high concentration of a few international firms in key sectors, including organized travel, international booking, marketing and sales of tourism and related activities. The high concentration in these sectors creates market power and the potential for the abuse of dominance by large international firms. This often translates into exclusionary agreements, price fixing, market sharing among dominant operators or boycott and refusal to deal with operators in developing countries. These anti-competitive agreements and conduct impose enormous costs and eliminate benefits, which developing countries may reap from the liberalisation and expansion of world tourism" (UNCTAD, no date).

²⁵ The GATS distinguishes between four modes of supplying services: cross-border trade, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and presence of natural persons.

- Cross-border supply is defined to cover services flows from the territory of one Member into the territory of another Member (e.g. banking or architectural services transmitted via telecommunications or mail);
- Consumption abroad refers to situations where a service consumer (e.g. tourist or patient) moves into another Member's territory to obtain a service;
- Commercial presence implies that a service supplier of one Member establishes a territorial presence, including through ownership or lease of premises, in another Member's territory to

of the agreement and developing countries have been keen to see access of people from developing countries to short term opportunities in developed countries without such access being tied to commercial presence.²⁶ The requirement of linking access to commercial presence works to the advantage of the developed countries that have rich TNCs that can establish a commercial presence in developing countries (Khor, 2003).²⁷

In sum, because the tourism sector in many developing countries is characterised by SMEs, the only advantages that a liberalisation regime could offer these countries is real technical assistance and technology transfer of such things as computer reservation systems; requisite protection of their domestic sectors until such time as they are able to compete; and movement of tourism personnel to where the jobs are available. A reflection of the seriousness of these diverging concerns is the WTO's efforts to convene symposia and discussions such as the Symposium on Tourism Services held in February, 2001 to address the concerns of developing countries over GATS negotiations (WTO, 2001). It appears that the promoters of the liberalisation agenda fear a failure to forge ahead on fronts such as GATS in a climate of anti-globalisation endangers the entire project. Nonetheless, developing countries have

provide a service (e.g. domestic subsidiaries of foreign insurance companies or hotel chains); and

- Presence of natural persons consists of persons of one Member entering the territory of another Member to supply a service (e.g. accountants, doctors or teachers). The Annex on Movement of Natural Persons specifies, however, that Members remain free to operate measures regarding citizenship, residence or access to the employment market on a permanent basis (WTO, no date).

²⁶ Studies by Alan Winters have shown that "increasing developed countries' quotas for mode 4 by 3 percent of their labour forces would generate annual gains of over US\$150 billion" (cited in Khor, 2003).

²⁷ Khor says that developed countries have "piled on" the pressure on developing countries to commit on mode 3 which allows foreign enterprises to establish commercial presence in a wide range of tourism related sectors while failing to respond to the developing countries' calls to make commitments on liberalising under mode 4 (Khor, 2003).

so far resisted having an unfair GATS agreement imposed upon them (Khor, 2005; Muqbil, 2006).

Another important point of difference between the developed and developing countries arose during the negotiations for the GATS. Originally GATS was meant to proceed in liberalisation in a “positive list” approach whereby each member country made commitments in each of the sectors that it felt prepared to commit to and placed the limitations to these commitments as that country’s interest required.²⁸ However, following an initiative of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Honduras in 1999, some countries began to call for a specific tourism annex to the GATS agreement in which a cluster approach to liberalisation could be undertaken. Under this Annex, the products and services specifically related to tourism will be comprehensively listed so that tourism can obtain clear and comprehensive treatment not provided under the general GATS agreement (Communication from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua & Panama, 2000). While the cluster approach is called a “developing country” initiative, the US, the EU and Australia have come out firmly in favour of it (Equations, 2001) because they oppose the “positive list approach” allowing member countries to approach liberalisation in a piecemeal fashion in order to protect their own national circumstances. They view this as being against their interests since the big investors and corporations they represent benefit from a wholesale liberalisation rather than a gradualist and conservative approach. Developing countries, on the other hand, even those more well advanced such as India and Brazil, benefit more from the “positive list

²⁸ Under the current structure of GATS, some tourism and travel related activities can fall under other sectors of commitment, for instance construction (e.g. construction of hotels), business services (such as tourism rental management) and health-related and social services (such as physical fitness facilities) (Hoad, 2002, p. 215).

approach” so that they can protect weaker sectors (particularly in the informal economy), gather the required information to engage in liberalisation in an informed manner and develop the necessary policies and regulations to secure sustainability and social welfare (Equations, 2001). Therefore, the positive list proposal is a more satisfactory approach for harnessing tourism for the welfare of developing societies, while the cluster proposal suits the supporters of liberalisation who want to liberalise the tourism market which serves the interests of TNCs and the TCC who stand to benefit from new economic opportunities.

Hoad has provided arguably the best academic analysis to date of the provisions of the GATS and its potential impacts on tourism within the context of sustainability (2002). His analysis of the provisions of the GATS in such areas as market access, most-favoured nation treatment, national treatment and general exceptions reveals some of the real problems with the agreement. For instance, the market access provision is hostile to destination countries attempting to limit the number of service providers through quotas or economic needs testing which is a key component of keeping tourism within the bounds of ecological and sociological carrying capacity. The most-favoured nation treatment and national treatment clauses curtail the ability of governments to favour tourism service providers who employ locals or have sound environmental management policies or to reject those who do not. Lastly, Hoad argues that while the general exceptions clause seems to give member countries some ability to limit these commitments on the grounds of social and environmental concerns, past trade disputes reveal that these exceptions would be likely to be judged as discriminatory trade practices and therefore penalised as contravening a country’s obligations under GATS (Hoad, 2002, p. 217). Hoad’s analysis is a

searching investigation of the implications of GATS and reveals why many developing countries and their supporters are concerned with the impacts of its provisions.

GATS has understandably received critical attention from NGOs concerned with the negative impacts of globalisation because of its liberalisation in such vital service sectors as the provision of water, transport, energy and education. However tourism NGOs such as Equations, Tourism Concern and the TIM-Team have argued that while the tourism sector may appear to be less important than these vital sectors, it is arguably no less important (Equations, 2004).²⁹ The fact that tourism is a service sector of major significance to many countries is perhaps apparent from the fact that more commitments have been made in tourism than in any other service industry under the GATS agreement, with 125 of the WTO's 142 members opening up in at least one of the tourism subsectors (Equations, 2001).

Equations has put together an articulate list of concerns about GATS from a developing country point of view which includes the following: the agreement is geared to the interests of the developed countries; its rules are incomplete and unclear; it will create a loss of local government control through centralising trade policy; it will lead to a "race to the bottom in environmental and developmental standards"; and the GATS has a lock-in effect where countries cannot withdraw from commitments without intolerable costs thus making them irreversible (Equations, 2004).³⁰

²⁹ Hoad (2002) provides a useful overview of the positions of GATS supporters and GATS opponents.

³⁰ As a result of the concern with this "locking in" and the penalties that withdrawal could bring, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines have led a call for a "safeguard mechanism that can

One of the key concerns is that the trade negotiators liberalising the services sector through the GATS negotiations fail to understand the distinctive complexity and dynamics of the tourism sector. Such distinguishing traits include its overlapping with other sectors such as agriculture, transport, finance and hospitality which means that liberalisation may have complex and unintended effects. More importantly, tourism is more than just an economic activity, it has attendant sociological and environmental impacts with which the local people must manage to live.

Liberalisation in the tourism sector is expected to have widespread impacts on the environment, labour standards and human rights in a multiplicity of locations. These impacts may be particularly adverse in the developing world where policy, management and regulation of the tourism sector may be underdeveloped to deal with such complex outcomes (Pleumarom, no date a). A Swiss NGO, Arbeitskreis Tourismus Entwicklung (AkTE), has stated “These GATS negotiations aim to dismantle basic political frameworks - including environmental legislation and social norms - in favour of economic growth” (Tourism Concern, 2002). Equations has conducted a detailed analysis of the impacts of liberalisation through GATS on the province of Goa, India, where the dynamics of mass tourism have already had major impacts and concludes that GATS will have significant negative outcomes not only for the environment, society and economy of Goa but will also weaken the ability of local governments to govern for the public good (Equations, 2002).³¹ One fair trade analyst has described GATS as:

be used to backtrack from GATS commitments when a country’s national services enterprises are threatened” (Khor, 2003).

³¹ Also see Pleumarom (no date a).

Designed to ensure that host governments, confronted with powerful transnational corporations who import their own staff and the majority of goods needed for their tourism operation, cannot compel them to use local materials and products to enhance the 'multiplier effect', or to take special measures to secure a competitive base for their domestic businesses (Kalisch, 2001, p.4).

Additionally GATS is predicted to lead to greater concentration in the tourism sector as big tourism TNCs continue the trend in vertical integration which is very evident in places like Germany where the three leading tourism companies control 68 percent of the market (Berne Declaration & WGTD, 2004, pp. 8-9). In developing countries, the dynamics of liberalisation are likely to see SMEs and indigenous enterprises bought out by TNCs seeking investment opportunities in the developing world. Pleumarom describes the likely impacts of liberalisation on the Thai hotel sector as fostering "mergers and acquisitions" (1999b). It should be noted that these impacts are not developmental as they do not create new jobs and economic benefits but instead are likely to increase economic leakages.

Tourism Concern, among other NGOs, has pointed out how the GATS provisions fail to take into account agreements and obligations negotiated in other forums including sustainable tourism, commitments on biodiversity (through the Convention on Biological Diversity), on labour standards (through the International Labour Organization (ILO)), poverty reduction agendas as well as the rights of Indigenous peoples and other minorities (Tourism Concern, 2002).

Hoad's analysis of GATS in 2002 evaluated the impacts of liberalisation on tourism and in particular its effects on tourism sustainability (2002). His critical positioning is evident from his use of sources such as a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report that described increased trade activities promoted by trade

liberalisation as having “serious negative environmental and related social impacts” (UNEP cited in Hoad, 2002, p. 220). Hoad’s work has provided much needed focus on the impacts of tourism liberalisation under GATS on capacities to secure environmental protection and sustainability. Hoad’s analysis (2002) has been followed by the work of Bendell and Font (2004) who read the GATS agreement in a “pro-sustainability” way and argue that environmental protection does not have to be regarded as trade restrictive under the GATS protocols. Lastly, there is the empirical analysis of the impacts of liberalisation on the social and environmental conditions in Turkey undertaken by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) which found that while it was difficult to ascertain how the Turkish tourism industry fared under liberalisation, there was some evidence of environmental degradation and lack of social benefit (WWF, 2001).

In fact, the effects of liberalisation under GATS should be seen in the broader context of major inequality between the developed and developing world. Many developing countries have been subjected to structural adjustment programmes (SAPs)³² by IFIs which have put them on the liberalisation juggernaut whether it is in their interest to do so or not. Part of the SAP portfolio in many developing countries has been the promotion of tourism as an avenue to development. Subject to crushing debts, dependent on development assistance and subject to financial crises due to the financial speculation and ease of movement of capital, some developing countries are compelled into forums such as GATS when it might not be in their interest to do so, and they are compelled to make commitments before the implications are clear.

Pleumarom exposes how powerful TNCs take advantage of such situations to obtain

³² SAPs have been renamed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 28) perhaps as a result of the criticism that anti-globalisation activists have levelled at IFIs such as the IMF and World Bank.

corporate advantage. Specifically, she discusses the roles of finance giants Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch in the conduct of structural adjustment in developing countries and in the liberalisation of the Thai travel and tourism sector (1999b).

Not unexpectedly, the UNWTO has come out in full support of liberalisation under GATS. The UNWTO takes its role of advocating for the tourism sector very seriously, and following the 2003 trade meetings in Mexico, the UNWTO chastised trade negotiators for the fact that agreement on agriculture was secured while tourism was neglected at these talks despite the fact that tourism makes a greater contribution to world trade (UNWTO, 2003a). In its press release, the UNWTO emphasised that liberalisation through GATS would boost the economies of the “world’s poorer nations” by expanding “North-South flows”, while “developed countries would not lose anything either because their enterprises will [sic] benefit from increased trade resulting from greater liberalization” (UNWTO, 2003a).

The UNWTO bases its claim that liberalisation of tourism helps poorer nations on the fact that as an export, tourism provides jobs and investment and that poorer nations are likely to attract higher tourism growth rates than developed countries because their underdevelopment means they have more pristine and exotic natural and cultural attractions. This argument ignores the high leakage factor in tourism in developing countries³³ and contradicts the view of such NGOs as Equations which regard the liberalisation agenda a serving the interests of the business sector. Indeed,

³³ Crick’s description of the leakages seen in developing countries is succinct and useful as he argues that vertical integration between airlines, hotel chains, travel agencies, rental car companies, etc. sees the TNC retain the majority of tourist spending and the “host” community receive very little. This is even worse with “all-inclusives” which are packaged holidays where the tourists pays for transport, accommodation, food and services in advance so that “much foreign exchange does not even reach the destination country” (1989, p. 316). In some countries leakages can be as high as 90%; Caribbean nations average 70% leakage (Patullo, 1996, p. 38). In the latter case, this means for every dollar earned in foreign exchange, 70 cents is lost to pay for imports.

the UNWTO does not recognise the more fundamental question of the unequal status of developing countries to developed countries (and the TNCs who lobby and set their agendas) in negotiations. This discrepancy has been recognised by UNCTAD and NGOs such as Equations which have raised it as a major source of concern. A comment on the Doha talks of 2001 by Mowforth and Munt illustrates what this unequal status looks like “on the ground”:

The mechanism for reaching agreement by consensus appears to be given as a major justification of GATS. But whether genuine consensus was achieved at the Doha Ministerial meeting in Qatar in November 2001, called to discuss GATS, or at previous similar meetings, is highly debatable: for instance, the 481 delegates from the G7 nations present at the Doha meeting was almost double the 276 delegates from the 39 Least Developed countries, and it is difficult if not impossible to achieve consensus agreement in such unbalanced circumstances... in general, the GATS appears to reflect and reinforce rather than challenge the existing unevenness and inequality in the global economic system (2003, p. 266).

As Vellas and Becherel argue, the liberalisation of tourism under the GATS will indeed “contribute to the global development of tourism” (1995, pp. 268-269), but its effect can be translated as contributing to the growth and expansion of the tourism sector with the bulk of benefits accruing to the TCC and TNCs of the tourism sector. As discussed in Chapter two, Clive Hamilton has convincingly argued that the “growth fetish” is one of the key features of neoliberalism (2003). The GATS agreement is well set to deliver the continuous growth that the TCC and TNC supporters of capitalist globalisation seek to ensure for their ongoing profit and wealth accumulation. Whether the GATS delivers on the promises made to developing countries is another question.

4.8.2 More TNPs - vertical integration and leveraging

Despite the fact that the majority of tourism businesses operating around the globe are SMEs, tourism is perhaps one of the most consolidated industries operating in the global community. Large TNCs such as TUI A. G.,³⁴ Thomas Cook, Hilton Hotels and British Airways dominate the international tourism and travel sector. Horizontal and vertical integration characterise the dynamics of tourism TNCs most of which originate from developed countries. Airlines invest in travel agencies, tour operators, computer reservation systems, accommodation as well as other airlines in an effort to extract more profit by dominating the sector and dictating terms. A good example is the Thomas Cook group, the third largest tourism and travel group in the world, which owns airlines, travel agencies, tour operations, foreign exchange bureaus, a publishing house and a television channel.³⁵

Badger, Barnett, Corbyn and Keefe have claimed “power is increasingly in the hands of these large northern-based companies, who can direct flows of international

³⁴ TUI A. G. describes itself thus: “TUI has an excellent position in its core tourism business. With a turnover of around Euro 13.1 billion, the Group is the unchallenged market leader in Europe. The European tour operators within World of TUI reach over 80 per cent of European holidaymakers. In 2004, the Group had around 18 million customers. TUI now includes about 3,200 travel agencies, more than 100 aircraft, 37 incoming agencies and 290 hotels with 163,000 beds in 28 countries. Around 12,000 business travel professionals in over 80 countries also look after the Group’s business customers” (see: http://www.tui.com/en/ir/group/brief_portrait/).

³⁵ For an excellent insight into the Thomas Cook group see its corporate website at <http://www.thomascook.com/corporate/press.asp?page=presspack>. Specifically, the company tells why it has pursued a path of vertical integration which has resulted in its formidable position: “A vertically integrated company usually owns all or many areas of the value chain, including the supplier, the manufacturer and the retailer. In the case of travel companies, the supplier is the transport company (e.g. the airline) and/or the accommodation unit; the manufacturer is the tour operator who buys supplier components in bulk and produces the ‘package holiday’; and the retailer is either a travel shop, a call centre or a website. By creating this structure, a travel company has the advantage of influencing the distribution of its products and services to make sure that profits stay ‘in-house’. Benefits to the consumer include better prices through the economies of scale that are achieved through more efficient buying, a one-stop shop for all travel products and services and a consistent level of customer service throughout the supply chain”. Unfortunately the benefits for the company and the tourists also coincide with losses and negative impacts for the host community and its national service suppliers.

tourists to particular destinations because of their high-tech globalised reservation systems. An estimated 80 per cent of all tourists travel with a tour operator package, so it is easy to appreciate the power of the tour operator vis-à-vis the host country” (1996, p. 22).

The impacts of such a situation are not negligible and reveal much about the dynamics of capitalist globalisation. For instance, in 2003 the UK’s Kuoni Travel asked 200 Asia-Pacific tourism suppliers to cut their rates by twenty percent in the high season in order to stimulate an economic recovery in the tourism sector following the downturns caused by SARS and security concerns (Colson, 2003). Kuoni’s plan was to offer a “dedicated Far East special offer brochure” with bookings conducted in the September to March high season and it invited its suppliers in the region to agree. Both Thailand and Hong Kong tourism managers and operators reportedly responded negatively questioning whether Kuoni was bullying and taking advantage of circumstances for corporate profits (Colson, 2003; Sinclair, 2003). Perhaps bullying is evident in Kuoni’s communications with Thailand representatives when Francis Torrilla, chief of products for Kuoni, claimed “Thailand’s position as the number one destination for [Kuoni] was being challenged by the Maldives” (Colson, 2003). Colson claims that actual growth figures for the UK outbound market did not support Torrilla’s statement and so it would seem that the Kuoni representative was manipulating the precarious position and intense competition between developing countries to intimidate Thai tourism managers into accepting Kuoni’s “request”. Such cases demonstrate the power exercised through TNP’s which underpin the corporatised tourism system and enable the TCC and TNCs to reap profits and secure their interests to the detriment of the developmental

capacities of tourism.³⁶ Another less obvious tourism TNP to address is the practise of global marketing of tourism through UN declared international years such as the 1967 International Year of Tourism, the 2002 International Year of Ecotourism and the 2002 International Year of Mountains. We now turn to a case study of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 to demonstrate how such events are used to secure the corporatised tourism system.

4.8.3 International Year of Ecotourism 2002 - celebration or review?

The International Year of Ecotourism 2002 (IYE 2002) was designated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1998 (through resolution 1998/40) to highlight the potential of ecotourism to contribute to economic development and environmental conservation. The UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UNWTO were jointly assigned oversight, in partnership with three “northern” NGOs, the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Conservation International (CI) and Ecological Tourism Europe (ETE) (Vivanco, 2001). In advising the direction of IYE 2002 activities, ECOSOC called upon the Secretary-General of the UN together with the UNEP, UNWTO and the WTTC to compile a report at the close of IYE 2002 activities detailing:

- (a) Programmes and activities undertaken by Governments and interested organizations during the Year;
- (b) An assessment of the results achieved in realizing the aims and objectives of the Year, particularly in terms of encouraging ecotourism in developing countries;

³⁶ See Wahab and Cooper (2001a) for an academic analysis of the pressure on large tourism companies to vertically, horizontally and diagonally integrate in a globalised and competitive economic context and brief case studies of Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

(c) Recommendations to further advance the promotion of ecotourism within the framework of sustainable development (ECOSOC, 1998).

These aims reflect an agenda of promotion and expansion of ecotourism. By combining the UNEP with the UNWTO, the UN was apparently hoping to underscore how ecotourism combines the need for economic development with environmental protection and conservation. However one also can see the origins of the dual and competing aims of the IYE 2002 initiative in this combination; the UNEP is charged with ensuring environmental protection while the UNWTO, as argued earlier, is focused upon fostering tourism development and growth - ideally within the bounds of sustainability if the rhetoric is accepted at face value (something challenged in Chapter five). One might think the balance in the program tips in favour of the “eco” in “ecotourism” given the involvement of the three environmental NGOs: TIES, CI and ETE in the IYE 2002 program, but Pleumarom has charged “corporate industry and large nature conservation/ecotourism organizations have colluded to lobby for the UN endorsement of ecotourism and now want to exploit it for self-serving purposes (e.g. to get free promotion or funding for their projects)” (2000).³⁷ Vivanco also refers to a 2000 meeting on the Convention of Biological Diversity where TIES was criticised “as one of the large nature conservation and development organizations that has consistently ignored local peoples’ concerns in its drive to promote ecotourism” (2001). Additionally, the Rethinking Tourism Project (RTP)³⁸ representing Indigenous peoples charged “that international environmental NGOs and ecotourism organizations will benefit

³⁷ Beder is useful in explaining the effect of capitalist globalisation on large environmental groups. See her book *Global spin: The corporate assault on environmentalism* (2000).

³⁸ RTP is now known as Indigenous Tourism Rights International (ITRI).

financially from the IYE - not communities” (RTP, 2000).³⁹ Whereas the involvement of TIES, CI and ETE in the IYE 2002 program was presented as a sign of good collaboration with the NGO sector in the development of the event, numerous less powerful NGOs which are much more critical of tourism could have been consulted and were not. This led to the charge that the IYE project was developed “behind closed doors”. In fact, the promoters of the IYE 2002 initiative were accused of prematurely and uncritically “celebrating” ecotourism, despite its alleged dubious record.⁴⁰

As a result, this initiative came in for early criticism from the NGOs fostering a developing country perspective on these events. The Tourism Investigation and Monitoring Team (TIM-Team) of the Third World Network (TWN), a non-governmental organisation representing views from the “South”, called for “an international year of reviewing ecotourism” because they suspected the IYE 2002 to be a public relations exercise rather than a thorough review of the difficulties as well as the benefits of ecotourism and because of the non-transparent manner in which the initiative came about (TIM-Team, no date b).⁴¹ As preparations for the IYE 2002 began, the TIM-Team made a representation to the UN which stated:

In the process [of developing IYE 2002], a clear division has developed between actors favouring promotion and commercialization of ecotourism as a major goal of the IYE, and a growing worldwide movement of public interest and indigenous peoples organizations that reject IYE as a promotional and business-oriented campaign” (TIM-Team, no date b).

³⁹ RTP also specifically charged CI with opposing any criticism of ecotourism at the 1999 meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity (RTP, 2000).

⁴⁰ For instance, see the TIES website where the IYE 2002 is discussed in terms of “celebration” (<http://www.ecotourism.org/index2.php?about>).

⁴¹ Such activities as the use of World Bank Social Investment Project funding for inappropriate and illegal ecotourism development in Thai protected areas mentioned earlier provide reasons for the TIM-Team’s suspicion of the ecotourism agenda (see TIM-Team, no date a).

The TIM-Team said that because the various stakeholders in ecotourism held divergent views on, definitions of and interests in ecotourism,⁴² the coordinating bodies of the UNWTO and UNEP were incapable of establishing clear representative guidelines and objectives for the year. As a result the TIM-Team recommended that the UN General Assembly set the guidelines on the content and process of the IYE 2002 (particularly involving civil society stakeholders in tourism); that the event be geared to the public interest (i.e. ecological integrity, economic equity, social justice and human rights) and not be dominated by business interests; and that the IYE 2002 be focused on critical “reviewing” of ecotourism (TIM-Team, no date b). A gathering of over 1500 representatives of NGOs, people’s movements and tribal communities in India in 2001, submitted a resolution to the UN claiming that the IYE 2002 is meant to “boost the eco tourism industry” and calling attention to the dangers of the IYE 2002 for developing countries and Indigenous peoples. Particular mention was made of its potential to continue the dynamics of dispossession, environmental damage (such as habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity) and stealing of Indigenous knowledges about medicinal plants by a profit-driven biotechnology industry (Sub-resolution on the UN IYE-2002, 2001).

Arguing that ecotourism particularly threatens the interests of Indigenous peoples, representatives of Indigenous peoples from around the world gathered in Oaxaca, Mexico in March 2002 to discuss Indigenous tourism and respond to the IYE 2002 initiative. This resulted in the Oaxaca Declaration in which they voiced their concerns and stated that “besides destroying the natural environments in which we live, tourism threatens traditional life by permanently altering the social, cultural and

⁴² For instance, environmentalists emphasise conservation, hosts communities emphasise control and industry emphasises access and promotion.

economic systems on which we depend” (Tourism Concern, 2002). The impacts of the IYE 2002 on Indigenous peoples, and particularly the Ngarrindjeri people of South Australia, will be discussed further in Chapter six in the Indigenous case study.

Any assumption that the potential damage inflicted by the IYE 2002 would be limited to the short duration of the program was challenged by some critics of the initiative. For instance, Nina Rao speaking as the Southern co-chair of the NGO Tourism Caucus at the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) said "I really think this is going to be worse than the launch of package tours to the Third World" (cited in Pleumarom, 2000). The coalition of NGOs and other social movements clearly saw the IYE 2002 in terms of an aggressive campaign by the corporate interest against public welfare: “As nature-based tourism is presently seen as one of the most lucrative niche markets, powerful transnational corporations are likely to exploit the International Year of Ecotourism to dictate their own definitions and rules of ecotourism on society, while people-centred initiatives will be squeezed out and marginalized” (cited in Pleumarom, 2000).

The IYE 2002 can also be viewed as a catalyst to the “growth fetish” of capitalist globalisation where ecotourism is touted to be a tool for economic development and ecological protection for all countries around the globe. This gives the big TNCs an excuse, in conjunction with liberalisation initiatives such as GATS, to gain access to the markets of the developing world where tourism is seeing unprecedented growth rates. Pleumarom challenges the assumption that such developments can actually improve the situation of communities of the developing world as oversupply of ecotourism opportunities is likely to result and those who responded to the siren’s

call of the UNWTO and UNEP will find themselves critically worse off (Pleumarom, 1999a, 2000).⁴³ Factors such as debt incurred to develop ecotourism facilities and operations, the securing of TNC foreign investment on unfavourable terms (economically, socially and environmentally) and the abandonment of subsistence pursuits are all ways in which communities may secure worse outcomes from their engagement with the ecotourism phenomenon.

Academic Luis Vivanco has also provided extensive analysis of the IYE 2002 initiative (2001). His critique is perhaps one of the most extensive and well-argued. He concurs that the IYE 2002 initiative bears the hallmarks of a marketing campaign and demonstrates little of the critical reflection that ecotourism calls for. For instance, he makes a rarely insightful comment on one of the main hypocrisies underlining ecotourism in a capitalist context: “ecotourism rarely, if ever, calls into question the consumption-oriented lifestyles that motivate ecotourists to travel in the first place” (2002). Importantly for this discussion, Vivanco sees wider dynamics evident in the IYE 2002 debates:

At the very least, these critics are challenging the IYE’s uncritical foundation on the market-driven and globalist mythologies of sustainable development, while offering alternative ways to think about and engage in tourism. They also exhibit trends in the broader anti-globalization mobilizations of recent years: the emergence of politically and culturally pluralistic coalitions operating in decentralized and horizontal fashion, imagining and generating non-prescriptive alternatives at both place-based and translocal scales (Vivanco, 2001).

⁴³ Pleumarom provides the following example: “According to an article in the Bangkok newspaper *The Nation* (7 Apr. 1999), a comprehensive community development programme, initiated by His Majesty the King in the midst of economic woes, aims to develop eco-tourism - along with other economic activities such as farm produce processing, medicinal herb planting and traditional Thai medicine – in 15,223 villages, involving more than 300,000 families and a population of more than 700,000! This raises the question of oversupply in the face of unpredictable demand, a common hazard in the tourism industry” (1999a).

Vivanco shows how the developments that Sklair and Gill witness in the arena of capitalist globalisation are also playing out in similar fashion in the realm of corporate tourism. But before we turn to the ways in which corporate tourism, like its sister capitalist globalisation, engender opposition because of their ecological and social impacts (and thereby generate the need for alternatives), it is first necessary to briefly examine the way in which the culture-ideology of consumerism can be identified within the tourism realm.

4.9 Culture-ideology of consumerism and the right to travel

Conventional wisdom of current societies sees consumption as an expression of individuality and freedom. Hall suggests that such a perspective is misleading as tourism and leisure consumption in capitalist systems is increasingly commodified, standardised and industrialised; he asserts “the ideology of ‘consumer sovereignty’ disguises the extent to which capital controls leisure” (1994, pp. 192-193).

According to Sklair, the culture-ideology of consumerism is a key linchpin of capitalist globalisation (2002). As Sklair states “consumerism has nothing to do with satisfying biological needs, for people will seek to satisfy these needs without any prompting from anyone, but with creating what can be called induced wants” (2002, p. 166). Tourism is a good example of consumerism as it is clearly one of these “induced wants”. It is mostly a hedonistic leisure activity and is thus an item of optional consumption which the advertising profession and tourism industry continually tells us we need. The major ideological underpinning of consumerism in tourism is the notion of the right to travel and tourism. While this topic was addressed in a preliminary fashion in Chapter 2, where the right to travel and tourism

was posited as a key human right premised on the contributions that travel and tourism make to human fulfilment, cross-cultural contact, understanding one's self and one's society and insight into the global village, this discussion is qualitatively different. As Chapter two demonstrated, the right to travel and tourism is not embedded in a commitment to social tourism which would locate it in the realm of a public good, but instead it is left to the market during this era of capitalist globalisation. This skews the phenomenon in interesting ways. It results in the privileged being able to fulfil their rights while the less privileged work as "servers" or "hosts" to the privileged holidaymakers.⁴⁴ Since the latter half of the twentieth century, the privileged have come to view tourism and travel not as a luxury but a right and a necessity. With capitalist globalisation, this conceptualisation of the right to travel has dovetailed nicely with the culture-ideology of consumerism. Two aspects of the culture-ideology of consumerism evident in the right to travel and tourism that will be explored here: the psychological impact on the "consumer" or the tourist and the neo-imperialistic nature of the relationship it creates between the tourists and the toured or "hosts".

Firstly, the culture-ideology of consumerism expressed through the capitalistic conception of the right to travel has very interesting psychological and sociological impacts on potential tourists and their societies. In addressing consumerism, Sklair uses the phrase "the great project of global consumerism" (2002, p. 196) which an individual can buy into through the small purchase of a can of cola or the more illusive holiday under discussion here. This reveals the psychological and

⁴⁴ As Hall notes, tourism consumption is intimately related to class structures which results in a hierarchy of holiday experiences and holiday spaces (1994, pp. 194-195). He states "tourism is therefore very much part of the competition for and consumption of scarce resources..." (Hall, 1994, p. 195).

sociological effects of current consumerism, that is the individual “buys into” consumerist society and asserts their identity no longer through citizenship but through consuming. Thus for the consuming individual, participating in consumerism goes to the heart of personal and social identity; you are literally nobody if you cannot assert your identity and belonging through your consumption practices. These dynamics also hold true in the contemporary tourism realm. A psychotherapist contributing to the travel section of the *Guardian* newspaper put our current conceptualisation of the right to travel in perspective when he questioned why holidays have become so important to people:

Of course, it's because of expectations, affluence, the media, peer pressure, a shrinking world, etc. You could even say a kind of brainwashing. We feel that we deserve a holiday. In fact, we deserve two or three. Obviously, this has a lot to do with the availability of cheaper travel, and the growth in the time that exists, or we think should exist, for recreation and pleasure. But if you need something in order to be OK, then next time you will need more (Kirsh, 2003).

It is this dissatisfaction, the fact that “next time you will need more”, that drives the culture and ideology of consumerism that underpins capitalist globalisation. The more one experiences, the more one needs and this contributes to the growing profits of the TNCs and serves the interests of the TCC. The inherent dissatisfaction found in consumerism is what spurs the “growth fetish” that Hamilton has found as the most important dynamic of our market system (2003).

Perhaps a sign of the potential pathologies of the right to travel fostered by the culture-ideology of consumerism is the recent phenomenon seen in the UK where

parents, particularly single mothers, abandon their children to go on holiday.⁴⁵ One mother trying to explain her actions to a woman's magazine stated "Everyone needs to let their hair down. My kids want for nothing. They have a wardrobe full of clothes and an attic full of toys" ("Holidaying Mother Charged with Neglect", 2005). One might choose to condemn this as an act of individual selfishness, but a considered analysis of the role of the culture-ideology of the right to travel is also called for. Advertising in all of its forms publicises that we all have a right to consume and holiday and somehow makes us feel less than adequate as people if we cannot. Could this make the underprivileged, of whom single-mothers in developed societies are a clear component, feel desperate to participate in consumer activities in order to give meaning to life and a sense of participation in the "good life" that living in capitalist societies most often denies them?

As Sklair cautions, it is easy to fall into a trap of moralising about what is or is not proper and acceptable consumption but that is not the point of his analysis of the culture-ideology of consumerism (2002, p. 187). The point of such an analysis is to demonstrate that under capitalist globalisation these induced wants are pressured upon people by a relentless torrent of "brainwashing" - pervasive media outlets constantly bombard us with billboard ads on the way to work, commercial television and radio, "women's magazines", film and music. Concerned with the impacts of the culture-ideology of consumerism on the developing world, Sklair contends that "the culture-ideology of consumerism creates a form of cultural dependency" and quotes Elizabeth Cardova's ironic definition: "Cultural dependency means people in

⁴⁵ For instance see reports such as "Holidaying mother charged with neglect" at <http://society.guardian.co.uk/children/story/0,,1534310,00.html>; "Mum jailed for leaving kids behind" at <http://society.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,5088424-108861,00.html>; and "Mother abandons three children in squalor to go on holiday" at <http://www.childalert.co.uk/absolutenm/templates/newstemplate.asp?articleid=135&zoid=1>.

our country have to brush their teeth three times a day, even if they don't have anything to eat" (Sklair, 2002, p. 187). What we see with the "children abandoned for holiday" phenomenon is that the inequities and pathologies of the culture-ideology of consumerism are not limited to the developing world; it is in effect wherever capitalist globalisation holds sway.⁴⁶

As the privileged assert their right to tourism and travel to the less expensive and more exotic destinations of the developing world, the ideology of the right to travel can be characterised as a neo-imperialist phenomenon; the privileged assert their rights while the poor and the marginalised serve and host them on their holidays in order to eke out a living and try to pay off the debts fostered by capitalist globalisation. This is well described by Bauman who claims the tourists "pay for their freedom; the right to disregard native concerns and feelings, the right to spin their own web of meanings... The world is the tourist's oyster... to be lived pleasurably - and thus given meaning" (1993, p. 241). Tourism under capitalist globalisation makes the world's places and peoples a product for consumption; "for the twentieth-century tourist, the world has become one large department store of countrysides and cities" (Schivelbusch, 1986, p. 197). As part of this equation, developing countries are cajoled and pressured into catering to tourists through the pressures of debt and the need for capital, with the result that practically no community is able to completely extricate itself from the tourism circuit.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ As noted in Chapter three, Hamilton (2003) draws attention to the unhappiness found in wealthy consumer societies and advocates a politics of well-being to rebalance lives and societies.

⁴⁷ Crick puts tourism consumption in a capitalist context in useful perspective: "tourism is the conspicuous consumption of resources accumulated in secular time; its very possibility, in other words, is securely rooted in the real world of gross political and economic inequalities between nations and classes. In fact... tourism is doubly imperialistic; not only does it make a spectacle of the Other, making cultures into consumer items, tourism is also an opiate of the masses in the affluent countries themselves (Crick cited in Hall, 1994, p. 196).

The ambiguities and perceived imposed nature of tourism on some communities is poignantly exposed by a Balinese academic who described the Bali bombing of 2002 as a “good thing” because it would stop foreign tourists from coming to Bali temporarily and give the Balinese a chance to reconsider their engagement with mass tourism and perhaps even persuade some to return to traditional and subsistence activities (Ellis, 2002, p. 4). While we could blame the imposition of tourism on vulnerable host societies upon the tourists or upon the governments who offer their people up to the tourism marketplace, MacCannell’s (1992) analysis indicates this might not be a sufficient explanation. In his discussion of the “performative primitive” or “ex-primitive”, MacCannell shows that many people from host communities who find themselves on the tourism circuit willingly engage with tourism and play the role the tourists expect (1992, p. 30). They are not the “exploited” peoples that unsophisticated tourism critics describe since they willingly engage with tourism as a way of accessing the goods and services of the capitalistic economy. For MacCannell, the exploitation lies in the “cannibalism” of capitalist globalisation which forces a “cannibal incorporation” as everyone, both tourist and “performative primitive”, is forcibly brought into the capitalistic system; “the corporations promote this ‘inevitable incorporation’ with an aggressiveness that can only be labelled ‘savage’” (1992, p. 68).

The analysis of the culture-ideology of consumerism as expressed in the right to travel and tourism asserted in an era of corporatised tourism thus points to a system that parallels Sklair’s “sociology of the global system”. Table 4.1 applies Sklair’s conceptualisation of capitalist globalisation to corporatised tourism.⁴⁸ A consumer

⁴⁸Refer back to Table 3.1 “Sociology of the global system” (p. 96).

Table 4.1: Sklair’s (1999) model of the sociology of the global system applied to tourism

TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES	LEADING INSTITUTIONS	INTEGRATING AGENTS (e.g.)
<u>Economic sphere</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GATS • Consolidation, vertical integration 	<u>Economic forces</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global TNCs (eg. <i>TUI A.G., Thomas Cook</i>) • World Bank 	<u>Global Business Elite</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conrad Hilton, founder of Hilton Hotels • Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin conglomerate.
<u>Political sphere</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Year of Eco-tourism 2002 	<u>Political forces</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IATA, PATA • UNWTO, WTTC • Tourism Australia 	<u>Global Political Elite</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoffrey Lipman, special adviser to UNWTO
<u>Culture-ideology sphere</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to travel 	<u>Culture-ideology forces</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel agencies, media (<i>Conde Naste, Getaway</i>) • Publishers (<i>Lonely Planet</i>) • Social movements (<i>responsibletravel.com</i>) 	<u>Global Cultural Elite</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Wheeler, founder of Lonely Planet publications • Michael Palin, travel writer & presenter

ideology is first fostered in the tourists by promoting the right to travel and tourism. The “consumer” demand for tourism thus triggered is reinforced by the activities of governments, the TCC, TNCs and global institutions who seek to use this consumerism as a base for a corporatised tourism system. Many governments are coerced or compelled to get their communities to “host” these tourists through the pressures of SAPs, the need for investment and the hopes of development. The TCC and their affiliated TNCs actively promote the corporatised tourism system in forums such as GATS, the IFIs and the UN in order to secure access to profits and opportunities throughout the global community. Institutional structures such as the

UNWTO and the WTTC foster the transnational practices that are instrumental to corporatised tourism under capitalist globalisation. In particular, they promote further liberalisation and foster the importance of the tourism sector while also wielding the rhetoric of sustainability and poverty alleviation particularly when opposition arises to their corporate agendas. These forces create a self-reinforcing system which has the capacity to assert and promote its own growth and longevity (or MacCannell's evocative "cannibal incorporation"). The system confirms the ideological assertion that it is a natural and "good" order to which there exist no other "reasonable" alternatives (see Figure 4.1).

However like its affiliated system capitalist globalisation, corporatised tourism is not entirely successful in this endeavour as it confronts opposition and resistance. This opposition arises from the damaging social and ecological effects of corporatised tourism akin to the critiques of capitalist globalisation (See Figure 4.1).

4.10 Evidence of the twin crises in tourism

Sklair's theory of the sociology of globalisation posits that twin crises of class polarisation and ecological stress result from the processes and impacts of capitalist globalisation. The earlier discussion of the IYE 2002, and particularly Vivanco's succinct description of its dynamics, indicate that corporate tourism dynamics parallel uncannily the developments in capitalist globalisation witnessed by Sklair (2002). Is there further evidence of the twin crises in the realm of tourism?

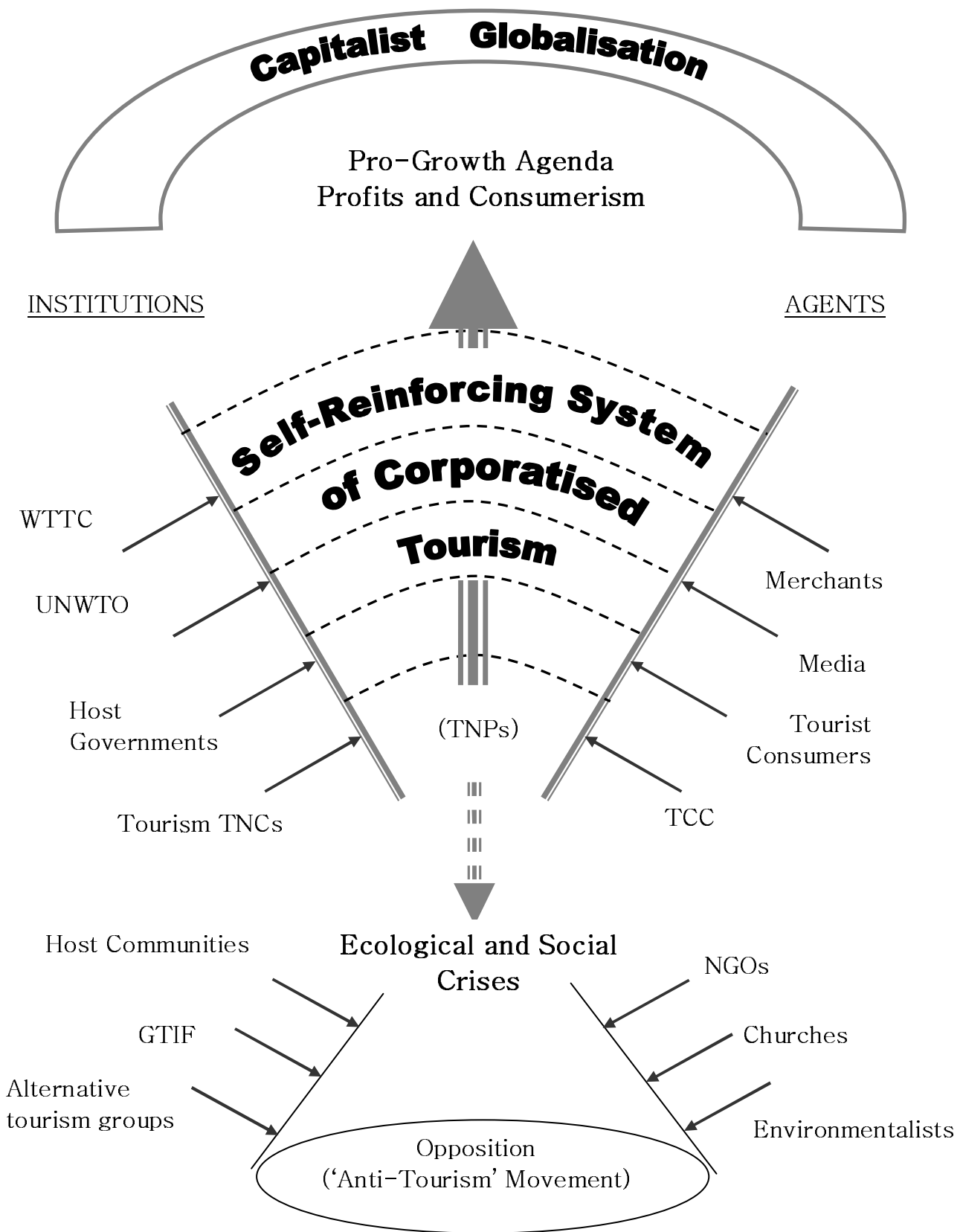


Figure 4.1: Model of the sociology of corporatised tourism

International tourism, particularly between the developed and developing worlds, exhibits the tensions of class polarisation that Sklair has identified as an outcome of the dynamics of capitalist globalisation. Such tension is most evident between tourists and their hosts, as tourists display wealth and consumption patterns unimaginable to some of the inhabitants of the poorer regions to which tourists are increasingly drawn in their search for “authentic”, “exotic” or “meaningful” experiences.⁴⁹ Such a situation is evident in the work of Hutnyk who investigated the “poverty tourism” found in Calcutta, India (1996). He describes the economic power displayed by poverty-gazing backpackers:

The ability to move to conveniently inexpensive market and service centres through the facility of international travel yields a relatively high buying power with attendant ideological, habitual and attitudinal consequences - backpackers who can live like Rajas in Indian towns at low financial costs (Hutnyk, 1996, pp. 9-10).

Such discrepancies in wealth, power and status are particularly apparent in the tourism encounter as the tourist often comes “face to face” with the poor.⁵⁰ Crick has described this as “leisure imperialism” and the “hedonistic face of neo-colonialism” (1989, p. 322). That resentment is fuelled by this situation is apparent in the crime, violence, corruption and hostility that is apparent in many international tourism destinations including Jamaica, India, Sri Lanka, Egypt and Indonesia.⁵¹ For instance, in a rare case of journalism which sought to explain the roots of violence against tourists, Levy and Scott-Clark (2006) explain how rapid societal changes

⁴⁹ It should be noted that tourists often display consumption patterns on holiday that are not evident in their routine lives back home because they save or borrow for the annual holiday splurge. Often the hosts are not aware that the conspicuous consumption of tourists is only a fleeting occurrence and that quite burdensome work routines and stress levels are endured to temporarily enjoy the holiday lifestyle.

⁵⁰ Britton has stated “no printed page, broadcast speech, or propaganda volley can emphasise the inequity in the global distribution of wealth as effectively as tourism can” (cited in Crick, 1989, p. 317).

⁵¹ See Dogan’s analysis of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism (1989).

brought on by tourism development has fuelled a “violent crime wave” on the island of Koh Samui, Thailand. They note how this island moved from a sleepy backwater to hosting over one million tourists every year within the span of two decades and how foreign and elite interests have come to dominate tourism (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2006). Levy and Scott-Clark refer to a submission made by Thai academics to the Thai government which describes a “social and moral implosion” which has ensued as “fewer than 20% of islanders have benefited from the boom, leading to ‘explosive tensions’ between rich and poor residents, mainland Thais and foreigners” (2006). It is also readily apparent in the stories of Australian evacuees from New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in 2005, several of whom were threatened with physical violence if they were given “preferential treatment” by being evacuated before the poor (and mostly African-American) locals (Koch, 2005, p. 6).

The class polarisation generated by tourism under capitalism is more complex than the gulf between tourists and host communities. Tensions are also exacerbated between locals at the tourism destination as different groups are affected differently by the onset of tourism. Tensions pit youth against elders and local elites against the masses (Dogan, 1989). Crick claims:

Benefits from tourism ‘unlike water, tend to flow uphill’...the profits go to the elites – those already wealthy, and those with political influence...the poor find themselves unable to tap the flow of resources while the wealthy need only use their existing assets (e.g. ownership of well-positioned real estate, political influence) to gain more (1989, p. 317).

Under the international tourism system, smaller tourism operators and those from the informal sector find themselves competing with larger and more powerful interests,

particularly the transnational corporations in the era of liberalisation. The interests of these SMEs and informal service providers are not supported or protected by the local elites and governmental authorities who, as local affiliates of the TCC, respond to the dictates of capitalist globalisation and not to the imperatives of national development. In fact, tourism can result in violation of the human rights of beggars, street children and hawkers who are seen as “human litter” and as “so much refuse spoiling things for visitors” (Crick, 1989, p. 317). The aftermath of the Asian tsunami of December 2004 illustrates some of these dynamics in a palpable way. Nesiah alleges that affected governments have collaborated with the tourism industry to secure corporate interests rather than rehabilitation of local communities:

From Thailand to Sri Lanka, the tourist industry saw the tsunami through dollar signs. The governments concerned were on board at the outset, quickly planning massive subsidies for the tourism industry in ways that suggest the most adverse distributive impact. Infrastructure development will be even further skewed to cater to the industry rather than the needs of local communities. Within weeks of the tsunami, the Alliance for the Protection of Natural Resources and Human Rights, a Sri Lankan advocacy group, expressed concern that ‘the developing situation is disastrous, more disastrous than the tsunami itself, if it is possible for anything to be worse than that’ (Nesiah, 2005).

Nesiah tells how Sri Lankan civil society has a long history of opposition to governments that had readily implemented neoliberal agendas demanded under poverty reduction strategy papers (formerly SAPs). The NGOs of Sri Lankan civil society are gearing up for a huge fight as the government stands accused of displacing coastal dwellers such as “fisherfolk”, ostensibly for their safety, while in fact zoning for major tourism facilities which will ensure their displacement (Nesiah, 2005). Nesiah describes it thus: “ultimately, it looks like reconstruction will be determined by the deadly combination of a rapacious private sector and government graft: human tragedy becomes a commercial opportunity, tsunami aid a business

venture” (2005). This is the inexorable logic of capitalist globalisation put in a nutshell and it stands in marked contrast to what redevelopment could have looked like in Sri Lanka if the prevailing logic had been that of a grassroots-needs driven globalisation based on human rights as envisioned by Sklair (2002).

The evidence on the ecological impacts of tourism is wide-ranging and is perhaps a key feature of the tourism literature critiquing the impacts of tourism (e.g. Cater & Goodall, 1997; Duffy, 2002; Gossling, 2002a, 2002b; Pleumarom, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d). Does tourism threaten an ecological crisis comparable to that described by Sklair in his discussion of capitalist globalisation? It is difficult to mount a case that tourism contributes to a crisis because tourism is only one force among the multitude that comprises capitalist globalisation. Thus it is difficult to assert that its impacts on the natural environment are as substantial as the insatiable demands for natural resources that are required to create the consumer products that feed the growth of capitalism. In fact, one of the arguments of bodies such as the UNWTO and UNEP in fostering the IYE 2002 was that ecotourism in particular is an environmentally more benign development choice. However, evidence of damage to coral reefs, soil erosion in alpine environments, deforestation along tourism treks, marine pollution from cruising, noise pollution from marine recreation, introduction of feral species, loss of biodiversity, piling up of solid wastes, ground water depletion, sewerage pollution of water and food sources and curtailing of alternative land uses such as wilderness or agriculture are amongst numerous other negative impacts in places all around the globe that provide anecdotal evidence that the ecological pressures of tourism are considerable if not already describable as a full-blown crisis. Surveys such as Margolis’ (2006) suggest that tourism pressure on

sites around the world is increasingly worrying.⁵² He reports that Conservation International has identified “unsustainable tourism” as the main threat to 50% of heritage sites in Latin America and the Caribbean and 20% of sites in Asia and the Pacific (Margolis, 2006). The recent experience of devastation from the Asian tsunami is indicative of what can result from tourism’s negative impacts on the environment. It is alleged that tourism and other developments throughout the Indian Ocean basin damaged and undermined coral reefs and mangrove systems which could have provided some buffer against the waves that pounded the shorelines of the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and India in particular and perhaps prevented such large losses of life (Nesiah, 2005; Sharma, 2005). Controversially, some have also connected these developments to the wider phenomenon of global warming as reefs are killed and rising waters erode shorelines and coastal defences (Thibault, 2004). Similarly the devastation of hurricane Katrina was allegedly magnified by the loss of wetlands and damage to the Mississippi delta due to urban development.

Whether these allegations are valid or not, perhaps one of the easiest charges on which to indict tourism is its contribution to the global warming phenomenon. While the scientific community debates this issue vociferously, prompted perhaps by “corporate-sponsored confusion”,⁵³ some of those most likely impacted, including some governments and insurance companies, seem to be treating the issue seriously. It is apparent that transport and travel are key contributors to global warming and

⁵² Margolis identifies endangered sites around the globe, including Venice, Stonehenge, the Tower of London, the Great Wall of China, Macchu Pichu, Cancun, Angor Wat, the Taj Mahal, the snows of Kilimanjaro, New Orleans and Antarctica as attractions in danger of vanishing either due to the attracting of hordes of tourists or the indirect impacts of tourism such as the effects of global warming (2006). Margolis’ byline reads “the world’s treasures are under siege as never before. So get out and see as many as possible before they disappear” (2006).

⁵³ Beder alleges that corporations have sponsored the think tanks and foundations that have argued against global warming (2000, pp. 233-245).

obviously the tourism sector would be a major consumer for its use of cars in domestic tourism and of aviation in international tourism.

The United Kingdom has been one of the most active countries in the global community to deal with this issue and provides some helpful information to evaluate the impacts of air travel on global environmental degradation. Under the Kyoto protocol only domestic aviation emissions are counted as part of a country's greenhouse gas reduction targets because agreement has not yet been reached on how to divide the emissions associated with international travel. The UK, however, includes both its domestic and international passenger and freight transport sectors in its calculations for reductions. With one in five international airline passengers travelling to or from a UK airport, the UK's interest in this issue is perhaps greater than most. As a result its Department of Transport has drafted a plan to use technical means to reduce this sector's contribution to global warming in order to assist in meeting the targets set in Kyoto in 1997 (Department of Transport, 2004). However, the Green Party has challenged such technical action as inadequate as aviation demand continues to grow sparked by the "growth fetish" of capitalism and because taxpayers are subsidising air transport through many hidden subsidies and costs (Whiteleg & Fitz-Gibbon, 2003). The Green Party's report "Aviation's Economic Downside" claims:

The costs of UK aviation's contribution to climate change are estimated at well over £2 billion a year in 2001. And unless the government radically changes its policy on the matter, aviation's CO₂ emissions will have increased by 588% between 1992 and 2050, and its NO_x pollution by 411%. By 2050, aviation could be contributing up to 15% of the overall global warming effect produced by human activities - with staggering economic costs (Whiteleg & Fitz-Gibbon, 2003).

This brief exploration into global warming shows that tourism does, indeed, play a significant contributing role. This explains why the UNWTO has supported the pronouncement of the Djerba Declaration on Tourism and Climate Change of 2003. But as Gossling and Hall note “air travel is the most important factor negatively influencing tourism’s environmental sustainability” (2006, p. 311). To date the tourism industry has been unable to meaningfully address this threat to corporatised tourism’s growth agenda. These issues are analysed further in Chapter five’s discussion of alternative tourism. For the moment it suffices to say that if global warming is considered as the most pressing crisis of our era, then tourism can be indicted for its contribution to it.⁵⁴

4.11 Opposition fostered by the twin crises

As Sklair (2002) suggests, the crises that capitalist globalisation engenders undermine its future by raising implacable opposition from the “anti-globalisation” movement. This has been most evident at recent global gatherings of TNCs and the TCC convened under the auspices of bodies such as the WTO and WEF since Seattle in 1999. There are also more pro-active and constructive meetings of global civil society groups under the banner of the World Social Forum (WSF) held at the beginning of each year since 2001. The way this group describes itself shows that it clearly corresponds to Sklair’s conceptualisation of a movement against capitalist

⁵⁴ Gossling and Hall (2006, p. 314) document expert opinion that argues that the impacts of rapid climate change are more serious and a greater number of negative ecological consequences have resulted than early analysis predicted. Gossling and Hall’s analysis of tourism’s contribution to global climate change puts it on par with Sklair’s prediction of an ecological crisis: “It would...be strangely ironic if the impact of tourism mobility also becomes the factor that leads to irreversible environmental change that will take not only many species and ecosystems with it, but possibly even humans themselves” (2006, p. 317).

globalisation and is in favour of a more human-centred alternative globalisation. A recent website states:

Peoples' movements around the world are working to demonstrate that the path to sustainable development, social and economic justice lies in alternative models for people-centred and self-reliant progress, rather than in neo-liberal globalisation.

The World Social Forum (WSF) was created to provide an open platform to discuss strategies of resistance to the model for globalisation formulated at the annual World Economic Forum at Davos by large multinational corporations, national governments, IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, which are the foot soldiers of these corporations.

Firmly committed to the belief that Another World Is Possible the WSF is an open space for discussing alternatives to the dominant neo-liberal processes, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances among mass organisations, peoples' movements and civil society organisations (World Social Forum, 2004).

The potential for tourism to undergo a similar trajectory to capitalist globalisation was noted by anthropologist Malcolm Crick as far back as 1989 when he suggested “perhaps tourism, like capitalism, has within it the seeds of its own destruction” (1989, p. 338). Because tourism engenders social and ecological crises as a result of its adverse impacts, it has received vocal and sustained criticism from both the NGO sector as well as a certain sociological segment in academia (Burns, 2005; Crick, 1989). However what we have not seen is sustained protest and resistance to tourism on a global scale that parallels the “anti-globalisation” movement since 1999. Perhaps this is because tourism’s impacts are particularly local and so protests and opposition have focused on particular developments at particular times. However, this is no longer true. At the World Social Forum held in Mumbai in 2004, tourism was put on the agenda for the attention of global civil society and came in for concerted criticism. At the convened Global Summit on Tourism the theme was “Who really benefits from tourism?” and a call to “democratise tourism!” was released. One NGO participant, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT)

called for the WSF to advocate for a tourism that is “pro-people” (ECOT, 2003). Attendees at the meeting formed the Tourism Interventions Group (TIG)⁵⁵ and released a statement of concern which echoes the concerns of other new social movements opposing capitalist globalisation (TIG, 2004). TIG clearly positioned itself in opposition to capitalist globalisation and its affiliated corporatised tourism:

We decided to strengthen and uphold the grassroots perspectives of tourism, which position our interventions against those of the World Tourism Organization (WTO-OMT) [UNWTO], the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and other mainstream definitions of tourism policy and development. As the WTO-OMT [UNWTO] is now a specialised UN agency, we will address its new mandate and take forward civil society engagements to democratise tourism.

A primary concern is the undemocratic nature of the ongoing negotiations in the World Trade Organisation’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that are slated to end by January 2005. We stress the urgent need to bring in experiences from the grassroots on the environmental and social costs of tourism to inform the negotiating positions of governments and underline the need for a rollback in the negotiations (TIG, 2004).

However, the TIG also made very clear what its movement stood for and in doing so, resonated the aspirations of other new social movements participants gathered at the WSF. They claimed:

Highlighting tourism issues within a multitude of anti-globalisation and human rights movements such as those related to women, children, dalits, indigenous people, migrants, unorganised labour, small island, mountain and coastal communities, as well as struggles related to land, water and access to natural resources, is crucial to sharpen local struggles and community initiatives of those impacted by tourism. Networking is at the core of future strategising to identify areas of common concern, forge alliances with like-minded individuals, organisations and movements and influence tourism policy agendas. Democracy, transparency and corporate and governmental accountability in tourism will be placed high on the agenda for concerted action and strategic interventions.

We look forward to working in solidarity with local community representatives, activists and researchers from various parts of the world to strengthen our struggle and

⁵⁵ The TIG has since become more widely known as the Global Tourism Interventions Forum (GTIF). In subsequent chapters the title GTIF is utilised.

develop strategies for a tourism that is equitable, people-centred, sustainable, ecologically sensible, child-friendly and gender-just (TIG, 2004).⁵⁶

This is a tall order, indeed, and brings to mind Sklair's description of socialist globalisation quoted in Chapter three:

Socialist globalisation would eventually raise the quality of life (rather than the standards of living set by consumerist capitalism) of everyone and render the culture-ideology of consumerism superfluous by establishing less destructive and polarizing cultures and ideologies in its place. There is no blueprint for this – if we want such a world we will have to create it by trial and error (2002, p. 325).

We are witnessing this trial and error under way at the World Social Forum.

Interestingly, activists perceive a positive role for tourism in this process.

4.12 A word of caution

Academic Peter Burns has investigated globalisation and tourism from a cultural perspective and his work provides a word of caution for this thesis (2001, 2005, 2006). He calls for a nuanced analysis of both tourism and globalisation. Burns seeks “to strike a balance between the antiglobalisation, antichange [sic] perspective and the other side of that particular coin, which seems to view unfettered markets as a particular salvation” (2005, p. 400). Additionally, he wishes to strike a balance between the overly critical analysts of tourism from the social sciences who tend to

⁵⁶ It should be noted that this tourism gathering at the 2004 WSF is not the only evidence of a global challenge to corporate tourism. Vivanco described the Indigenous Tourism Forum convened in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2002 to challenge the agenda of the IYE 2002 in a similar manner: “the participants therefore regard their growing relationships as a convivial space of intercultural dialogue and encounter, proceeding along mutually-constructed agenda that reject reduction of human experiences and development along a single line or within a single system. This interculturalism and pluralism offers a profound political challenge to globalist aspirations of ecotourism's and IYE's promoters and brings to the forefront questions of cultural and community survival in their deepest senses” (2001).

“view tourism with suspicion” and industry practitioners (as well as academics in business studies) who tend to view tourism as a “business” or a “panacea” (2005, p. 401). Burns’ position is a valuable one, as he is concerned lest the extreme negativity of the critics of global tourism create a defeatist mentality that would discourage those who should be working to shape, plan and manage tourism for “the common well-being” (Burns, 2001, p. 298). Burns’ concedes that local desires for economic and social benefits in given localities can collide with “globally driven capitalism” (2005, p. 401) and tourism should be interrogated with the question “*cui bono?*” or who benefits? (2005, p. 402).⁵⁷ In light of this context, Burns argues in favour of a tourism geared to local benefit through principles of “beneficial relationships, autonomy and self-determination” (2005, p. 402).⁵⁸ Such a tourism “can positively contribute to civic pride and positive social identities by helping decision-making capacity; creativity, solidarity; pride in their traditions; and rightful attachment to their place, space, and identity” (2005, p. 402). Both Burns (2001, 2005, 2006) and Raoul Bianchi (2002, 2003)⁵⁹ model a more holistic and complex

⁵⁷ An example of the balance in Burns’ arguments is this exposition on tourism, culture and globalisation: “In terms of the tourism industry’s nexus with culture, coupled with the forces of globalisation may lead to an approach to development that sees tourism as a set of service provisions rather than a part of a living culture. This will damage social structures as they are forced along a development path that has been determined by external forces rather than discovered by internal progress. If capitalist exchange alone defines the tourism system at a given locale, then the purpose of culture for all players, willing and unwilling, becomes subservient to the needs of the tourism industry; culture then becomes just another part of tourist consumption. This does not mean that an attack on consumerism is necessary. Tourism does not necessarily ‘destroy’ culture or even bits of culture; consumerism as a ‘thing’ is not ‘bad’ but, in planning for tourism (perhaps ‘negotiating’ for tourism is a more apt phrase) we need to understand which bits of culture are for sale (or negotiation) and which bits are ‘off limits’ so to speak” (2001, p. 301).

⁵⁸ Burns’ thesis on tourism and cultures parallels the discussion in Chapter three where we found that analysts of cultural globalisation such as Appadurai (1996) are frequently concerned to demonstrate that cultures and social identities do not simply disappear under the juggernaut of globalisation.

⁵⁹ See Bianchi (2002) for a political economy analysis of tourism and globalisation. He argues that the dependency theory of tourism which emphasises “North-South” patterns of exploitation fails to adequately account for the dynamics of capitalist globalisation which has developed more complicated networks of investment, labour and trade than such an analysis reveals. For Bianchi the critical issue remains however, the power which TNCs can assert in their own interest and to the detriment of destination communities: “the market power of TTCs [tourism transnational corporations] serves to intensify the dominance of transnational capital at the expense of economic diversity and social cohesion within tourism destination locales. The central concern for the political economy of tourism

analysis of tourism at what is called the “local-global nexus” where power is exerted through the global capitalist system but where local agency, diversity and resistance continues.⁶⁰ The case study provided in Chapter six exemplifies this approach.

This chapter has provided a macro-perspective and politically-focused discussion of corporatised tourism. It suggests global dynamics of an unprecedented exercise of power which, when examined in their entirety, threaten significant social and ecological impacts that are of significant concern. This chapter may appear to be an example of the overly critical tourism analysis that concerns Burns (2005, p. 401).

However, the next chapter examining alternative tourisms provides the more nuanced discussion that Burns (2001, 2005) both advocates and models and continues his project of asking what tourism could look like outside of the dominant economic model of neoliberalism and geared to inclusivity and common well-being (2001, 2005).

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has applied Sklair’s (2002) model of capitalist globalisation to contemporary tourism in order to reveal some of the qualities and impacts of corporatised tourism. It investigated the ways in which transnational actors such as the TCC and TNCs, transnational institutions such as the UNWTO and WTTC,

is, therefore, not merely whether or not incomes are rising thanks to tourism or, indeed, whether or not TTCs provide a decent wage for their workers but, rather, the extent to which different modalities of global tourism are leading to a reduction or increase in the inequality of access to power and resources” (2002, p. 297).

⁶⁰ Bianchi (2003) offers such a model through his sociology of tourism development. Bianchi wants to challenge the anti-capitalist strain of tourism analysis by drawing attention to local agency and action because “...the primacy of neo-liberal ideological relations in the current world order and a tendency towards a sense of pessimism with regard to the possibilities for change, challenge us to think about tourism in ways that transcend the existing order of things, but which are sensitive to context and history” (2003, p. 27).

transnational practices such as liberalisation under GATS and the culture-ideology of consumerism create a self-reinforcing system that seeks to secure the interests of the beneficiaries of corporatised tourism and sustain this system in the long term.

While tourism is demonstrably very powerful and is intimately tied to the processes of capitalist globalisation, it is also an agent for change that ironically may contribute to overturning this very form of globalisation. Just as Sklair noted that capitalist globalisation and its attendant crises make space for a socialist globalisation based on human rights, corporatised tourism's impacts and exploitation inspire challenges to develop a tourism that is "pro-people" and based on justice (ECOT, 2003). In light of Mark Twain's assertion that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness..." (Twain cited in Crick, 1989, p. 307) and the fact that tourism is credited with causing the "largest movements of human populations outside of wartime" (Greenwood cited in Crick, 1989, p. 310), one could propose a theory that tourism is capable of changing human relationships in such a way as to make alternative forms of globalisation possible. It is to such a theory that the next chapter now turns, in its critical analysis of alternative tourisms and their potential contribution to an alternative globalisation.

