

CHAPTER FIVE

Alternative Tourism as a Path to Alternative Globalisation

5.1 Introduction

As this thesis has documented, numerous analysts have drawn attention to the negative impacts wrought by capitalist globalisation's over-emphasis on the market and associated values to the detriment of both society and ecology. Such analyses suggest that we need to transform our system from the marketisation of capitalist globalisation to a more humanistic form of globalisation (Sklair, 2002) perhaps secured through an "eco-humanistic" vision as propounded by Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b). Only thus could we avoid social and ecological crises of unacceptable proportions.¹ Accepting the logic of this analysis, this chapter asks what role alternative tourism might play in such developments. As suggested in the preceding chapter, alternative tourism can be viewed in the context of an increasingly vigorous challenge to the impacts of corporatised tourism and spreading capitalist

¹ Such an assumption is based on the evidence of ecological damage through carbon-induced climate change, the depletion of water resources, the collapse of fisheries and the extinction of species. Evidence of sociological dysfunction includes the prevalence of civil conflicts, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems and inter-state conflict. Ecological and social crises are also inter-related as resource degradation and scarcity causes resource-based conflicts.

globalisation. The question that concerns this chapter is whether the alternative tourism movement or any of its facets fosters the “eco-humanism” envisioned by Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b) and thereby dovetails with the more humanistic globalisation that Sklair envisions (2002).

As will be demonstrated, the alternative tourism movement is a complex and diverse phenomenon and comprises numerous niches including ecotourism, sustainability, fair trade in tourism, pro-poor tourism, community-based tourism, peace through tourism, volunteer tourism and justice tourism.² This chapter will provide a review of these manifestations of alternative tourism in order to determine if the alternative tourism phenomenon might point the way to an alternative globalisation.³

5.2 Origins of alternative tourism

The era which saw the rise of mass tourism (particularly with widespread ownership of the automobile in the United States in the 1950s) was a time of great optimism and enthusiasm not only for holidays themselves but also for the developmental potential of tourism. Despite the predominance of “boosterism”⁴ in the tourism arena (Hall, 2000, p. 21), the limitations and damages of tourism became apparent as early as the

² Alternative tourism discussions usually include such niches as adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, etc. This discussion instead highlights a different set of alternative tourisms selected because of their potential contributions to the development of an eco-humanism. Mowforth and Munt (2003) identify many of these as “new tourisms” rather than alternative tourism perhaps because some of these phenomena can be associated with mass tourism, whereas alternative tourism is often considered to be distinct and opposite of mass tourism. This thesis discusses these phenomena as alternative tourism with the meaning that they entail an alternative way of doing tourism rather than they are an alternative to mass tourism.

³ For a wider ranging analysis of alternative tourism, works such as Mowforth & Munt (2003), Douglas, Douglas & Derrett. (2001) and Smith & Eadington (1992) are invaluable.

⁴ Hall defines “boosterism” as a “simplistic attitude that tourism development is inherently good and of automatic benefit to the host” (2000, p. 21). Proponents of boosterism are typically governments which are pro-growth and industry which stand to gain financially from the spread of tourism.

1970s with the degradation of Mediterranean coastal resorts and the overdevelopment of spots like Waikiki. As a result, mass tourism was called into question. Negative impacts included crowding, environmental degradation, pollution, urban sprawl and loss of habitats. Economical disenchantment with tourism arose as the benefits that are assumed to accompany tourism development were often counterbalanced by leakages, inflation and the costs of associated damages of both an environmental and socio-cultural nature. Socially, tourism could damage a culture by commodifying it or undermining it through the impact of the demonstration effect.⁵ People could be displaced from their land, land might be taken from alternative productive usage and workers and other community resources might be diverted to cater to tourism. These negative ecological, social and economic aspects are magnified with the explosion of tourism in recent decades. Alternative tourism has been proposed as a response that can provide solutions to the economic, ecological and social difficulties that can accompany uncontrolled mass tourism.

5.2.1 Definition of key concepts: Mass, alternative and corporatised tourism

One of the major critiques of alternative tourism analysis is the overwhelming tendency for its advocates to equate it with all that is positive and enlightened while simultaneously condemning mass tourism. This analysis distinguishes mass tourism, alternative tourism and corporatised tourism.

⁵ The demonstration effect refers to the tendency of the locals of the “host” community to imitate the behaviours of the tourists they encounter.

Mass tourism refers to modern, industrial tourism where large numbers of tourists are transported, accommodated and entertained inexpensively by large mainstream tourism enterprises in pre-packaged and highly organised tour arrangements. The tourism industry is able to achieve standardisation and economies of scale through the organisational abilities of large corporations that feature in the modern, mass tourism era.

Alternative or special interest tourism in part grew out of a reaction to the sheer numbers and accompanying damage of mass tourism. It is ascribed such attributes as limited-scale, low-impact, community-based and raised-awareness or education and is frequently presented as the antithesis of mass tourism. More complex aspects of alternative tourism will be discussed later in this section.

Corporatised tourism is the phenomenon described in this thesis. It includes the power demonstrated by the TNCs that have achieved “vertical integration” through ownership of such diverse sectors of the tourism and travel industry as travel wholesalers, travel companies, airlines, currency exchange, computer reservation systems, accommodation providers and travel book publishers. Examples discussed in Chapter four include the Thomas Cook Travel Group and TUI A. G. Their role is criticised in this thesis because, due to the predominance of neoliberalism, these powerful TNCs and their TCC cohorts are able to manipulate tourism to maximise their profits and provide exclusive holidays for elite tourist clients to the detriment of local communities. The logic of corporatised tourism is based on exploitation and commodification of all factors of production including people, cultures and

environments. Both alternative and mass tourism can be corporatised as each sector is a lucrative source of profits in a diversifying market.

Rather than being uncritically damning of mass tourism, this analysis recognises that both alternative and mass tourism have their roles to play in the social and environmental re-balancing of tourism. For instance, a good deal of social tourism (tourism provided to the disadvantaged as public welfare) discussed in Chapter two would be more compatible with mass tourism as the equity requirements of this sector necessitate accommodating and serving large volumes of people. As section 5.3.4 will show, pro-poor tourism can be serviced by the mass or alternative tourism sectors.⁶ Additionally, in some instances mass tourism can be more appropriate and sustainable than alternative tourism as it occurs in already developed areas with existing infrastructure to cater for tourists whereas ecotourists are attracted to fragile, pristine environments where even their smaller numbers may have significant negative environmental impacts.

If the interface between mass and alternative tourism is sometimes ambiguous, the definition of and correct terminology for alternative tourism are equally contentious. Labels for the alternative to mass tourism include “alternative tourism” (Smith & Eadington, 1992), “responsible tourism” (Harrison & Husbands, 1996; Wheeler, 1991), “new tourism” (Krippendorf, 1987; Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Poon, 1993), “soft tourism”⁷ (Krippendorf, 1987; Sharpley, 2000a), “low-impact tourism” (Wearing & Neil, 1999, p. 5), “special interest tourism” (Douglas *et al.*, 2001) and

⁶ See Figure 2.1 “Capacity to facilitate transformative experiences” (p. 49).

⁷ “Sanfer tourismus”, or soft tourism, is a concept with very specific origins. It comes from the Alpine European states and describes tourism that has minimal environmental and socio-cultural impacts and is viewed as the “antithesis to mass tourism” (Sharpley, 2000a, p. 547).

“sustainable tourism” (Wheeller, 1993). Cazes observes that analysts frequently use the “alternative” in tourism as a synonym for “...integrated, adapted, controlled, endogenous, responsible, authentic, equitable, convivial and participative” (2000, p. 20), a diverse list which demonstrates the range of characteristics attributed to alternative tourism. This has led to alternative tourism being the subject of debate in academia (Lanfant & Graburn, 1992, p. 89) and its meaning remaining contested. Confusion results as some use the language of alternative tourism to refer to a polarised opposite of and substitute for mass tourism (e.g. Cazes, 2000; Weaver & Lawton, 2002); others refer to the new niche markets arising from the demands of “new” consumers (e.g. Douglas *et al.*, 2001);⁸ and yet others speak of a transformation in all tourism towards more benign forms (e.g. Butler, 1992; Harrison & Husbands, 1996).⁹ Lanfant and Graburn characterise alternative tourism as an ideological project of opting for the “Aristotelean mean” in avoiding “the dilemma of having to decide whether to reject tourism completely or accept it unconditionally” (1992, pp. 88-89).

Because alternative tourism is difficult to define, it is often characterised by the attributes most frequently associated with it (e.g. de Kadt, 1992). For those that are concerned to contrast alternative tourism with mass tourism, small-scale attributes are emphasised, such as use of existing facilities that serve the local community, the low volume of tourists that is catered to and limited development. An example of this is found in the policy of the Himalayan nation of Bhutan that admits only a few

⁸ Douglas *et al.* call alternative tourism “special interest tourism” and describe it as “...the provision of customised leisure and recreational experiences driven by the specific expressed interests of individuals and groups. A special interest tourist chooses to engage with a product or service that satisfies particular interests and needs, so SIT is tourism undertaken for a distinct and specific reason” (2001, p. 3).

⁹ I view alternative tourism as the ideal site for tourism as a social force. Alternative tourism can provide educative and interactive tourism experiences to counter the hedonism, materialism, individualism and uniformity that is associated with corporatised tourism.

thousand, high-spending tourists per year.¹⁰ In a related vein, alternative tourism is frequently associated with fewer negative impacts, whether environmental, social or cultural, and is often contrasted to mass tourism. Thus mitigating negative environmental impacts is the primary focus of “soft tourism” (Pearce, 1992, p.18). Another frequently mentioned attribute of alternative tourism is the more prominent role of the local community in tourism development and management, ranging from consultation to involvement and ultimately control. Lastly, alternative tourism is deemed to be important for raising the consciousness of participants (tourists, locals and industry) to important issues. For example, many analysts expect ecotourism to foster environmental awareness or educate tourists. It should also foster a conservation ethic among the local community to distinguish it from the broader category of nature-based tourism (e.g. Page & Dowling, 2002, p. 67; Richardson, 1993; Weaver, 2001). Krippendorf’s description of alternative tourism gives a sense of how these attributes come together as a package:

...alternative tourism is not a well-defined notion, but the term is coming to be used increasingly for various modes of travel: educational trips, adventure holidays or the solitary journeys undertaken by globetrotters. The term is most often used for travelling in, or to, the Third World, but sometimes it is applied to other countries. The guiding principle of alternative tourists is to put as much distance as possible between themselves and mass tourism. They try to avoid the beaten track, they want to go to places where nobody has set foot before them; they want to do things which will bring them a sense of adventure and help them to forget civilization for a while. Alternative tourists try to establish more contact with the local population, they try to do without the tourist infrastructure and they use the same accommodation and transport facilities as the natives. They also want to get more information before and during their holiday. They travel alone or in small groups (1987, p. 37).

In fact, the alternative tourism phenomenon could be understood by categorising the diverse ways its advocates envision its purpose. For those concerned about the

¹⁰ Lord Howe Island, some 230 miles northeast of Sydney operates on the same basis of restricted, low-impact tourism.

negative impacts of mass tourism, alternative tourism offers a way to prevent or mitigate these impacts and reform tourism to more benign forms. Additionally, there are those that envision alternative tourism as an opportunity to gear tourism to the attainment of ends other than economic profit for business or enjoyable holidays for tourists. Such purposes include shifting tourism from its hedonistic focus to a more educative concern; ensuring that tourism delivers benefits to local communities through community-based ventures; and fostering tourism more attuned to the responsibilities of the tourists and the industry, and managing tourist impacts to benefit the societies and environments they access.

An examination of alternative tourism from a more critical perspective identifies additional purposes behind its promotion. The tourism industry has eagerly engaged with alternative tourism in order to tap this lucrative new niche market. Alternative tourism allows high-spending, privileged tourists to secure their elite consumption practices without the company of ordinary, mass tourists. Lastly, promotion of alternative tourism can be understood as a corporate strategy to offset criticism and avoid burdensome regulation. Each of these critical aspects of alternative tourism will be discussed below. Before this is done, it would be useful to place alternative tourism in the context of alternative development which arose to challenge the prevailing development paradigm premised on economic growth and market values to the detriment of society and ecology.

5.2.2 Alternative tourism in the context of alternative development

At the end of World War II and the advent of the de-colonisation movement in the 1950s and 1960s, concern grew with how to achieve development in societies around the globe. Since that time there has been a plethora of paradigms each with its own vision on the meaning and means of attaining development. Earliest was the modernisation paradigm which posited that societies occupy various points along a continuum between tradition and modernity and that economic growth was the key to progress along the continuum to an advanced modern society (Rostow, 1960).¹¹ This position was challenged by the dependency school of thought prominent from the 1960s which held that “capitalist development in the core, metropolitan centres perpetuates underdevelopment in the periphery as a result of economic surpluses in the periphery being expropriated by foreign enterprises, misused by the state or squandered by the traditional elites” (Sharpley, 2000b, p. 5). As a result this position encouraged societies to adopt socialist-led (Sharpley, 2000b, p. 5) and “inward-oriented” development strategies based on industrialisation geared to import-substitution (Brohman, 1996). From the 1980s, this paradigm was challenged by the rise of the neo-classical, neoliberal economists who advocated development through engagement in globalised free trade and an export-led development strategy. This would enable developing countries to exploit their comparative advantage in non-industrial sectors such as primary commodities and tourism. The final development paradigm evident is alternative development which rejects the linear and economic-growth focused agendas of the other paradigms (Sharpley, 2000b, p. 6). Instead, it

¹¹ Sharpley notes that despite the modernisation paradigm being superseded by the other paradigms under discussion here, tourism continues to adhere to the modernisation paradigm’s reasoning: “despite widespread acceptance of the principles of sustainable tourism, tourism’s role in development continues to be justified for the most part on the narrow basis of economic growth, contradicting more recent development theory” (2000b, p. 4).

advocates a grassroots, community-concerned development plan which respects environmental limits and fosters human welfare in its broadest form by focusing upon basic needs.¹²

The origins and nature of alternative development and alternative tourism can only be understood in the context of the rise of the environmental movement in the mid-twentieth century.¹³ For instance, Honey notes how ecotourism grew in the 1970s as an offshoot of environmental consciousness that had been awakened by green movements, which were active in alerting people to what was interpreted as an impending ecological crisis (1999, p. 19). Critical thought disseminated in such works as Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968) and Arne Naess' eco-philosophy of deep ecology (see Sessions, 1995) were catalysts to these developments. Organisations such as the World Conservation Union and the Worldwide Fund for Nature were founded in this period to channel action on the environment (Hardy *et al.*, 2002). The threat of nuclear war that loomed during the Cold War, the effects of industrial pollution, deforestation, desertification, overpopulation, soil erosion and degradation and loss of biodiversity concentrated minds and indicated that human pressure on the environment was becoming increasingly unsustainable.

¹² With the growth of the environmental movement from the 1960s, alternative development thinking gradually combined with concerns for sustainability to form the sustainable development paradigm. This sought to wed the needs for balanced development with the need to conserve the environment (Hardy, Beeton & Pearson, 2002; Sharpley, 2000b). Sustainability in tourism is discussed in section 5.3.2 of this thesis. Mowforth and Munt (2003, p. 32) present a slightly different schema of development theories and outline the key attributes of each development paradigm.

¹³ Hardy *et al.* (2002, pp. 476-477) discuss this in terms of the "development of a conservation vision" which they trace as far back as ancient Mesopotamia but ground its modern roots in the mid-19th century romantic era.

The green movement, like all social movements, is not of one ilk. Ideological differences have frequently been described in dichotomies such as soft versus hard greens; proponents of shallow versus deep ecology; environmental reformers versus radicals, or blue-greens versus deep greens (Duffy, 2002, pp. 7-9).¹⁴ The main difference between these dichotomies lies in their philosophical approaches to the environment. The soft greens could be labelled as pragmatic and utilitarian, advocating the propriety of human use of the natural environment but within the limits of sustainability. In the book *Environmental politics*, Robert Garner describes their views: "... [this] position holds that environmental protection can be effectively incorporated within modern industrial society, without fundamentally threatening economic growth and material prosperity" (1996, p. 3). This group places confidence in science and technology to solve environmental problems that might arise from human interaction with the environment.

The hard greens call for a complete transformation in the thinking on humanity's place in the environment; humans are but one species with no more or fewer privileges than any of earth's other species. As Garner describes the radicals:

Here there is a consensus that mere tinkering with the structures of modern industrial society – a few palliatives to mitigate the worst effects of industrial society – is not enough to forestall environmental catastrophe. Rather, fundamental economic, social and political change – nothing less, that is, than the creation of a new kind of society with different institutions and values – is required both to deal with the severity of the crisis and to enable people to live more satisfying... lives (1996, pp. 3-4).

¹⁴ See Doyle and McEachern (2001, pp. 31-52) for a brief but useful overview of the varieties of green thought ranging from supporters of sustainable development to deep ecology, social ecology, eco-socialism, eco-feminism and ecological post-modernism.

The first group could be labelled as advocates of reform through allegiance to sustainability while the latter advocate revolution in human culture and society.

Garner opts to focus his discussion on the reformists "...since this is the context of the 'real' world in which government responses to environmental problems are located and in which environmental groups must operate" (1996, p. 4).

In effect these differing standpoints on the environmental continuum reflect the conflicts within the alternative development paradigm because of its precarious attempt to wed the human need for economic development with the desire to conserve and maintain environments. The more shallow, reformist end of the environmental movement accepts an anthropocentric view of human relations with nature and emphasises managing human use of the environment for economic development in an environmentally-friendly manner. The radical deep ecologists advocate a biocentric view that demands humans adjust to the intrinsic rights of nature and change their patterns of production and consumption accordingly.

This dichotomy between the reformers and the radicals is also apparent in alternative tourism. Lanfant and Graburn contend that alternative tourism originated in the visions and critiques of tourism NGOs such as the ECTWT and the Tourism European Network (1992, pp. 89-90) which were strongly influenced by the 1960s counterculture movements:

These movements wanted to promote a counterculture by rejecting consumer society. Alternative tourism, in rejecting mass tourism, is a similar radical attempt to transform social relations and is thus part of the larger movement. Is tourism a new kind of

development strategy, or more powerfully, a prime force within a new range of international relations? (Lanfant & Graburn, 1992, p. 90)¹⁵

Holden of the ECTWT argued for the latter standpoint when he described alternative tourism as "... a process which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality amongst participants" (cited in Pearce, 1992, p. 18). In recognition of such views, Lanfant and Graburn contend that "... for some, 'alternative tourism' is not just another kind of tourism, but aspires to become *the* tourism in the promotion of a new order" (1992, p. 92). Thus we can see that for some proponents and contributors to the alternative tourism phenomenon a radical agenda motivates their work as they seek not only to overturn an inequitable, unjust and unsustainable tourism system but envision such efforts as a catalyst to securing a more humanistic form of globalisation.

De Kadt is highly critical of these radical expressions of alternative tourism and alternative development whose motivations he characterises as "ideological" and "based on moral indignation and utopic blueprints" (1992, p. 64). In a wide-ranging discussion in which he offers an analysis of the issues of alternative tourism in a complex policy-making context, he concludes:

...the somewhat strident advocacy of Alternative Development and Alternative Tourism, by movements on the political fringe and more often based on a moral indignation than on sound scientific arguments, has made way for a broader concern

¹⁵ Cohen presents a typology of tourists which includes countercultural alternative tourists (backpackers and drifters) who reject "modern mass consumerism" but who are engaged in a more self-centred and hedonistic experience than the concerned alternative tourist who seeks a just form of tourism in which locals and tourists interact in an equal and mutually beneficial manner (1987, pp. 13-16).

for sustainability underpinned by a growing body of scientific and analytical work (de Kadt, 1992, p. 75).

His analysis leads to the conclusion that alternative tourism is best regarded not as a polar opposite to mass tourism but rather as part of the same continuum (1992). De Kadt contends that because mass tourism may deliver more of the requisite economic benefits to developing communities, realistic focus may best be placed on developing sustainability at the mass tourism end of the continuum. Thus we can see how his analysis fits the reformist mould and presents a stark contrast to the call for systemic change by radicals.

From this brief contrast, it is apparent that there is an important difference between the advocates of alternative tourism who see it as a tool for mitigating some of the negative impacts of mass tourism and would drive the latter towards sustainability, and those who see alternative tourism as a vehicle to a different, more just world order. Returning to Stilwell's model (Figure 2.3), alternative tourism and alternative development can thus be described as a reconsideration of the appropriate balance between the economy, society and ecology. The reformers contend that the economy needs to be made more green and equitable by using technology and sound management principles to reform current processes. The radicals argue that the current order premised on marketisation disturbs these relationships so deleteriously that nothing short of revolution will secure equity, well-being and environmental integrity. The key thinkers explored earlier in this thesis (in particular Sklair, 2002; Stewart-Harawira, 2005a, 2005b) are empathetic to the radical perspective as they conclude that the impacts of capitalist globalisation are so pernicious that nothing

short of systemic change can transform the production and consumption system sufficiently to secure ecological and societal security.

However the critical analysis of alternative tourism by Mowforth and Munt (2003, p. 35) cautions against categorising phenomena as binary opposites as this may be too simplistic an approach to do justice to a social phenomenon as complex as tourism. In the analysis that follows, therefore, alternative tourism will be discussed in both its reformist and radical attributes with a view to developing a deeper understanding of its transformative potential. Such an analysis must first begin by outlining the key facets of alternative tourism that hold potential transformative capacities in the ecological and/or social realm and the promises they offer. These include ecotourism, sustainability, fair trade in tourism, pro-poor tourism, community-based tourism, peace through tourism, volunteer tourism and justice tourism.

5.3 Types of alternative tourism

5.3.1 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is viewed as one of the optimum ways of combining economic development with environmental sustainability. Ecotourism is generally attributed to have been first defined and designated by Hector Ceballos-Lascuráin in the 1980s and has been a prominent catchphrase ever since. Ceballos-Lascuráin defined ecotourism as "travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas" (1987). This is one of the earlier and less rigorous

definitions of ecotourism as it fails to include accepted aspects of conservation, education and sustainability.

In a popular guidebook to ecotourism opportunities, Janet Richardson describes ecotourism as: "Ecologically sustainable tourism in natural areas that interprets the local environments and cultures, furthers the tourists' understanding of them, fosters conservation and adds to the well being of the local community" (1993, p. 8). This is a more comprehensive definition that serves to delineate ecotourism from the wider phenomenon of nature-based tourism.

Ceballos-Lascurain's definition became the basis for the World Conservation Union's (IUCN)¹⁶ definition which added the requirement that the activities be environmentally sound in nature and locally beneficial. It reads:

Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2001).

Ceballos-Lascurain contends that this definition has received widespread if grudging support as a universal definition which addresses the key aspects of the ecotourism phenomenon (2001). Nonetheless, a commonly agreed definition remains elusive.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ceballos-Lascurain in an online forum stated that the IUCN, as arguably the conservation organisation with the widest membership and greatest influence, should lead the way in defining ecotourism so that agreement could be secured on a universal definition, and discussion could proceed further than continual definitional arguing (2001).

¹⁷ However, the definition of ecotourism is subject to continuous evaluation and sharpening. A global forum convened under the IYE 2002 initiative (discussed in Section 4.8.3) resulted in the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism which described ecotourism as upholding the following principles:

- Contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage

For instance Butler has provided a much more biocentric checklist to ecotourism, demanding it:

- Be consistent with a positive environmental ethic, fostering preferred behaviour,
- Not denigrate the environmental resource,
- Concentrate on intrinsic rather than extrinsic values,
- Be biocentric rather than homocentric in philosophy, accepting nature on its own terms,
- Benefit the resource,
- Provide a first-hand experience with the natural environment,
- Provide satisfaction to the tourists in the form of appreciation and education rather than in thrill-seeking or physical achievement,
- Possess high cognitive and affective dimensions, requiring a high level of preparation from both leaders and participants (J. Butler cited in Weaver, 2001, p. 6).

Because of the multitude of definitions available, many analysts simply highlight the essential attributes of an ecotourism product or service. Wearing and Neil argue that movement towards a definition can be accomplished by designating the following requirements for ecotourism: it involves travel from one location to another, the experience should be nature-based, conservation-led and must involve a role for education (of the tourists, the local community and the tourism industry operators) (1999, pp. 7-8). Blamey proposes three essential criteria: nature-based, environmentally educated and sustainably managed (2001, p. 6). Buckley adds another attribute to those outlined by Blamey: conservation support through ecotourism (1994). This is an important criterion particularly for those who justify ecotourism for its contribution to conservation and environmental protection, whether through the tourist paying a park entry fee or through the volunteer conservation work of *Earthwatch* clients. Perhaps one of the more rigorous

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- Includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation and contributing [sic] to their well-being
 - Interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors
 - Lends itself better to independent travellers, as well as to organized tours for small size groups (UNEP & UNWTO, 2002).

checklists comes from Wearing and Neil who have elaborated upon “ecotourism travel essentials” to include such attributes as: encourages an understanding of the impacts of tourism, results in a fair distribution of the benefits and costs of tourism, generates local employment, contributes to local development, generates foreign exchange, assists in the diversification of economies, incorporates participation of all locals in decision-making, improves local infrastructures, provides recreational opportunities for locals and involves comprehensive planning and management (1999, pp. 8-9).

At a minimum, true ecotourism provides a reformist force in tourism by gearing it away from its marketised focus to environmental and community benefit in the ways that Wearing and Neil outline above (1999).¹⁸ However, its more substantial potential lies in its educative capacity to revise both the tourists’ and the hosts’ perceptions of the local environment and perhaps nature in general. Through this educational role, ecotourism can develop environmental knowledge that is a key component in the transformation of environmental attitudes and the development of an environmental consciousness which could result in changed environmental behaviours. Weaver has included this as one of the key indirect benefits of ecotourism and has documented surveys in which participants in ecotours have attested to a change in their environmental awareness (Weaver, 2001). For instance a survey conducted in Lamington National Park in Queensland by Weaver and a colleague found 83 % of respondents felt their ecotourism experience made them “more environmentally conscientious” (Weaver, 2001, pp. 104-106). Referring to

¹⁸ Khan asserts that ecotourism provides an antidote for developing countries to dependency on the capitalist economy because “with its small-scale development, [it] provides opportunities for local empowerment, encourages the use of local knowledge and labor, promotes local ownership, perpetuates local identity, and strengthens equity” (1997, p. 990).

Epler Wood's concept of "ethic transfer" which describes the changed consciousness that ecotourism can engender in the host community, Hamilton states that ecotourism development transferred a conservation ethic to developing communities such as Belize, Costa Rica and Ecuador, "where a steady stream of ecotourists and scientists have transferred some of their knowledge and enthusiasm to local people" (Hamilton, no date). It is this educational element of ecotourism which contributes to the development of an environmental consciousness that Stewart-Harawira (2005 b) sees as a key factor in fostering eco-humanism and through it, a better alternative social order.¹⁹

5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism

The application of sustainability principles to tourism is the predominant issue in current tourism discourse.²⁰ Its profile is confirmed by any brief survey of tourism textbooks, tourism brochures, institutional websites of organisations such as the UNWTO, annual reports of global tourism players such as British Airways, as well as in the discourse of ordinary travellers who are increasingly aware of their impacts on the environment. The drive to sustainability was prompted by the development of general concern with sustainable development as well as interest in developing alternatives that might make the mass tourism market more sustainable.

The definition of sustainability in tourism is contentious; the proper terminology is not even subject to agreement as some analysts use the simple term "sustainable

¹⁹ Perhaps the ultimate potential of ecotourism is to foster recognition of the intrinsic rights of nature (see Nash, 1989).

²⁰ There have been some substantial recent publications on sustainability in tourism, e.g. Aronsson, 2000; Hardy *et al.*, 2002; Miller & Twining-Ward, 2005; Mowforth & Munt, 2003.

tourism”, others specify “ecologically sustainable tourism”²¹ (Dowling, 2000, p. 160), while others view “sustainable development in tourism” as more appropriate (Wall, 1997a, 2000a, p. 567). Additionally, confusion is added when some analysts use the terms alternative tourism, ecotourism and sustainability in tourism as if they are synonymous, leading to imprecision, confusion and failure to address important concerns in tourism (Shaw & Williams, 2002, p. 302). As Figure 5.1 shows, ecotourism is a subset of sustainable tourism while there is currently a strong relationship between sustainability, alternative and mass tourism as all factions of tourism are called upon to implement sustainable practices. Therefore, despite the views of some analysts, sustainability is not a type of alternative tourism.



Figure 5.1: Relationship between sustainable, alternative, mass and ecotourism (Weaver, 2001)

²¹ This term emphasises the integrity of the environment in locations where tourism is developed rather than on sustaining the economics of tourism or the needs of the host community.

It is included in this discussion because sustainability has been a main driver of doing tourism differently by focusing on environmental impacts and limits to tourism. Butler provides a useful and concise definition of sustainable tourism as “tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” (1999b, p. 36). He differentiates this concept from “tourism in the context of sustainable development” which he describes as:

Tourism which is developed and maintained in the area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes (Butler, 1999b, p. 35).

Extrapolating from Butler, Wall argues that an important distinction must be drawn between “sustainable tourism” and “sustainable development in the context of tourism” (1997a, p. 486). For Wall, sustainable tourism implies a focus upon tourism as a single force and thereby shifts its meaning to “sustaining tourism”. In contrast, a focus on the latter implies a more holistic perspective encompassing all the sectors relevant to development, with tourism being one tool for development that is utilised as and when appropriate. Thus the former is aimed at sustaining the tourism industry, while the latter is geared to meeting the “greater good” or human needs through tourism (Wall, 1997a, p. 486).²²

²² Exactly whose needs is another issue. Wall asks amongst many thorny questions: “But what is the greater good and what is to be sustained and who is to decide this? These are intractable questions. Should one be trying to sustain individuals, communities, regions or nations; experiences for tourists, incomes for businesses, or life-styles for residents; individual enterprises, economic sectors, or whole economies and production systems; economic activities, cultural expressions, or environmental conditions?” (1997a, p. 486).

Wall identifies three aspects of sustainable development in tourism; they are economic viability, environmental sensitivity and cultural appropriateness (1997a, p. 487). He argues that attention to the latter has been lacking. Mowforth and Munt (2003) discuss tourism sustainability in terms of four aspects of sustainability and an additional three elements. The four aspects of sustainability are: ecological, social, cultural²³ and economic sustainability (2003, pp. 98-103). Additionally, Mowforth and Munt provide three further elements to consider in assessing tourism sustainability: an educational element, local community participation and a conservation element (2003, pp. 103-105).²⁴ However, in most usage of the term sustainability, it is the environmental aspects and use of ecological resources which are the predominant interest, with economic and social aspects only emerging as a growing concern (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 18).

Hunter suggests that a “sustainable development spectrum for tourism” would offer a more effective way of achieving sustainability (1997). This spectrum ranges from very weak sustainability principles (i.e. an anthropocentric and utilitarian approach to natural resources which allows free reign to the market); to weak sustainability (also

²³ Importantly, the authors distinguish between the social and cultural aspects of sustainability because the former refer to the effects of tourism upon the social order and maintenance of social harmony, while the latter draw attention to the cultural degradation that can occur due to impacts such as the demonstration effect. They define social sustainability as “...the ability of a community, whether local or national, to absorb inputs, such as extra people, for short or long periods of time, and to continue functioning either without the creation of social disharmony as a result of these inputs or by adapting its functions and relationships so that the disharmony created can be alleviated or mitigated” (2003, p. 99). Cultural sustainability refers to “...the ability of people to retain or adapt elements of their culture which distinguish them from other people” (2003, p. 99). The other two components of sustainability: ecological and economic, are much more frequently addressed in the literature.

²⁴ In this discussion we can see how Mowforth and Munt’s analysis overlaps with descriptions of ecotourism. Whether this is a case of analytical misunderstanding as ecotourism becomes confused with sustainability or whether they are rightly asserting that these ecotourism benchmarks should be applied to “sustainable tourism” is open for debate. If we follow Butler’s assertion that the principles of sustainable tourism should be applied to all tourisms including mass tourism (1992), and considering the findings by Ryan, Hughes and Chirgwin (2000) at Fogg Dam conservation park that most visitors were only seeking enjoyment and not education, to expect all tourism to achieve an “educational element” may be setting the benchmark too high.

anthropocentric and utilitarian but with some recognition that some natural assets are critical to protect); to strong sustainability (a more ecocentric perspective that places human resource use second); and lastly a very strong sustainability position also described as “bioethical and ecocentric” because it acknowledges nature’s rights and is against ceaseless economic growth (Hunter, 1997, p. 853).

From this conceptualisation, Hunter proposes four approaches to sustainability which should be selected according to the prevailing circumstances and include: sustainable development through a “tourism imperative”, sustainable development through “product-led tourism”, sustainable development through “environment-led tourism” and sustainable development through “neotenous tourism” (Hunter, 1997, pp. 859-863). The formulation of a “tourism imperative” represents a scenario where tourism development is fully promoted because local poverty results in environmental degradation and tourism represents a better path to development than more damaging options.

The second scenario of “product-led tourism” might apply to destinations such as Majorca which are saturated tourism destinations, very dependent on tourism and already damaged; the strategy here would be to try to improve the environment and re-package for newer, more up-market tourism. The “environment-led tourism” scenario would apply to new, undeveloped tourism locations where types of tourism are chosen which are very dependent upon a “high quality natural environment and/or cultural experiences” (1997, p. 861). Hunter suggests the sub-Antarctic islands as examples. The final category is “neotenous tourism” which applies to areas where tourism should be “actively and continuously discouraged on ecological

grounds” (Hunter, 1997, p. 862). This is based on the very strong sustainability perspective that some environments should be protected or even barred from visitation completely.

The sustainability of tourism development requires a flexible approach that allows adequate handling of the complexities presented by tourism. Cater’s analysis points to some of the issues that require attention including: the fact that communities are not as cohesive as some present them; that intergenerational equity in tourism may be difficult to achieve when some communities need to “exploit” their environments for survival or to pay off pressing debt burdens before proper measures of protection can be implemented; effective control is difficult for some communities to exercise due to the power structures of international tourism; and best paths are more difficult to implement in practice than in conceptualisation (1995). For example, a “mass tourism” resort might provide sewerage treatment that a locally-owned guesthouse cannot. Hunter argues that sustainable tourism should be an adaptive paradigm that incorporates a variety of approaches which are chosen according to the specific contexts of a destination or situation (1997). His model is thus presented as a broad spectrum of sustainable tourism. Thus, while umbrella conceptualisations of sustainable tourism such as Butler’s (1999b) are pronounced at the global level, they must be adapted to specific approaches at the local level. It is much easier to assess the integrity of sustainability locally where activities and impacts can be monitored and assessments made.

The environmental movement has advocated adoption of the precautionary principle to ensure the achievement of sustainability. Fennell and Ebert have explored the

application of the precautionary principle to tourism, described as “a controversial future-focused planning and regulatory mechanism which mandates that to protect against threats of serious and irreversible damage, precaution should be exercised even before harm can be scientifically demonstrated” (2004, p. 461). While the more biocentric advocates of sustainability would support application of this principle, as will be discussed in section 5.4.4, the tourism industry opposes such limitations on tourism development.

The concept of sustainability offers a conceptualisation of limits on tourism in the interests of the environment and society.²⁵ Thus it can be viewed as a reformist effort to develop a more balanced form of economic development. We can see from Hunter’s formulation that there are some locations where tourism should not occur or be severely limited and controlled. Additionally Hunter’s analysis suggests that factors other than economic growth must be admitted into the decision-making processes of tourism development.

5.3.3 Fair trade in tourism

The fair trade in tourism movement needs to be understood in the larger context of the fair trade movement’s challenge to the free trade agenda of capitalist globalisation which goes as far back as the 1950s. Ransom, a journalist with the magazine *The New Internationalist* provides an insight into the global inequities of trade which sparked a demand for fairer structures:

²⁵ As Michael Hall has suggested “arguably, the only truly form of sustainable tourism is local tourism - visit your own country, connect with your locale, perhaps take the train or public transport, but most of all be mindful of one’s actions” (2005, p. 344).

Big business aims to buy cheap from producers and sell dear to consumers, enhancing its profit margins and 'shareholder value' as it goes. Nothing unusual about that, you might think. But 80 per cent of the world's resources are consumed by the richest 20 per cent of the world's population, most of whom live in the North. An increasing proportion of the world's resources, on the other hand, is produced by the 80 per cent of its population who live mostly in the South. That means making monarchs of Northern consumers and wage slaves of Southern producers – hence the notion of 'consumer capitalism' (2000).

As a result, churches, NGOs and other concerned bodies have formed alternative trade organisations (ATOs) to foster ties which would create fair trade practices and overcome the inequities of the mainstream trading structure. Since this time, a Fair Trade Federation has been established and certification schemes have been developed so that fair trade has received a significant prominence, particularly in primary products such as coffee, tea, cocoa and bananas.

Recognising the inequitable distribution of tourism largesse between the tourism generating regions of the developed countries and the tourism receiving regions of the developing countries, many proponents of responsible tourism have advocated measures to rectify this imbalance. Suggested measures of redress have ranged from strategies to limit economic leakages, creation of alternative tourism structures, responsible tourism codes for tourists, to avoidance of tourism development altogether.

One recent measure is the fair trade in tourism movement which developed in the United Kingdom from the collaborations of the NGO Tourism Concern, the University of North London and the UK government's Voluntary Service Overseas development initiative (Cleverdon, 2001, p. 347). This initiative sought to develop research into the practicability of applying the fair trade principles developed in other

areas like primary agricultural products to the tourism sector (Cleverdon, 2001, p. 347). The main focus of this research is to identify ways that the trading relationships between the tourism businesses in developed countries and their suppliers in developing communities can be made more equitable and sustainable. The founding premise of this effort is that mainstream tourism is underpinned by exploitative trading structures that have emanated from the colonial era and continued through the neoliberal capitalist system. It is therefore connected to the debate that concerns tourism's role in development (or underdevelopment) in developing countries, that is modernisation theory, the "trickle down effect" and theories of comparative advantage versus the rival perspectives of dependency and underdevelopment (Cleverdon & Kalisch, 2000, p. 172). The proposition is that:

Fair trading relationships between northern consumers and intermediaries, and between tourist destinations in the south, present particular advantages over the free-market system prevalent in international tour operations, where 'market failure' through the unsustainable life-cycle, short-term contract and trading horizons and small profit margins is perpetuated (Evans & Cleverdon, 2000, p. 141).

Just as fair trade precepts were developed to challenge free trade advocates' plans for trade with the developing world in agriculture, natural resources and light manufactures, tourism was examined in the 1990s for ways that the structural factors inducing unequal exchange, dependency and exploitation might be overcome. Support for the fair trade movement comes not only from advocates of social justice such as NGOs, but also from corporate recognition of pressures for ethical trade and investment, corporate social and environmental responsibility (or the triple bottom line approach to business) and human rights obligations, as well as a recognition of the competitive advantage to be gained and possibly a genuine commitment to social

obligations on the part of some businesses (Cleverdon & Kalisch, 2000, p. 172).

Additionally, there is a growing consumer awareness of and concern with corporate practices which has resulted in some notable campaigns and has indicated some changing consumer trends. Certainly the fair trade in tourism movement must look to the considerable success that the larger fair trade sector has achieved as a source of optimism. Ransom records that two percent of all coffee sales in the Netherlands and Germany are fair trade coffee worth perhaps \$100 million in annual turnover and that global annual fair trade products exceeds \$200 million (2000). Fair trade products such as coffee and cocoa sit on the supermarket shelves of major stores beside mainstream products, particularly in Europe where some 45,000 different points of sale for fair trade products exist (Ransom, 2000).

Writing in 2000, Cleverdon and Kalisch did not provide a precise definition of fair trade in tourism because they argued that such a definition must result from a process in which the “South” holds the determinant role and at that point, “...the concept of fair trade is largely infused by a northern perspective” (2000, p. 178). What they provide instead is a list of prerequisites for fair trade in tourism which has been derived from consultation with “southern organisations”; this includes access to capital, ownership of resources, distribution of benefits, control over representation in the tourist-generating countries and transparency in tourism operations, including pricing and working conditions (2000, pp. 178-180).

Evans and Cleverdon (2000) outline two approaches to establishing a “fair trade relationship”. One approach originates in the developed countries, the “North”, that generate most consumer demand for tourism experiences. It would be sparked by a

consumer education campaign to raise the profile of fair trade tourism experiences, initially targeting the niche market of alternative tourists and fair trade supporters (Evans & Cleverdon, 2000, p. 144). This approach could be backed by accreditation and certification schemes that could be overseen by such bodies as the Association of Independent Tour Operators in the United Kingdom and/or concerned NGOs (Evans & Cleverdon, 2000, pp. 143-144). The second approach comes from the developing countries of the “South” that are the recipients of the tourists from the developed world. It could harness fair trade in tourism for local economic development by connecting local small to medium enterprises with tour operators and NGOs who are willing to form fair trade tourism relationships (Evans & Cleverdon, 2000, p. 144). Evans and Cleverdon assert that these two approaches are not exclusive and that both are needed to achieve the “full benefits of fair trade” (2000, p. 144).

Fair trade in tourism draws attention to the fact that contemporary international tourism occurs in a context of global inequality and unfair trade structures. It is an attempt to reform the terms of tourism trade in a way that ensures more equitable outcomes for developing communities.

5.3.4 Pro-poor tourism

The pro-poor tourism (PPT) initiative is one of the most recent phenomena in tourism and it originates in the poverty alleviation agenda that was adopted in the 1990s. PPT is described as “tourism that results in increased net benefits for poor people” (PPT, no date). Thus pro-poor tourism is not a specific niche of alternative tourism but rather is any kind of tourism, from mass to alternative, which is designed to deliver both economic and non-economic benefits to the poor in the location

where tourism happens. However, as a result of this focus it tends to overlap strongly with community-based tourism, sustainability and the various niches of alternative tourism. The origins of PPT are two-fold: the earliest effort originated from development agencies in the United Kingdom, followed by a more global vision promoted by the UNWTO. The first catalyst to the PPT phenomenon was the cooperation between the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), the International Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on practical strategies for PPT in the late 1990s, funded by the Economic and Social Research Unit of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (PPT Partnership, no date). The Overseas Development Institute was motivated by the lack of concerted engagement between the development sector and the tourism sector to identify the ways in which tourism could be harnessed to achieve developmental aims (ODI, no date). This development agency's engagement with tourism has been on a very different basis from the private sector's as it has adopted a:

... 'livelihoods approach', which emphasises that the impacts of tourism on the poor go well beyond economic impacts, employment and wages. Instead, a wide range of negative and positive impacts on peoples' environment, household activities, access and use of assets need to be explored (ODI, no date).

This contrasts with another initiative undertaken in 2002 in the international arena led by the UNWTO. This is the corporate-led promotion of PPT which will be discussed more fully in Section 5.4.4.

PPT is not a specific product or niche sector of tourism but an approach to tourism development and management that “enhances the linkages between tourism

businesses and poor people, so that tourism's contribution to poverty reduction is increased and poor people are able to participate more effectively in product development" (PPT, no date). While pro-poor tourism has only been explored since 1999, case studies are numerous including projects associated with Wilderness Safaris and Sun City in South Africa, the St Lucia Heritage Trail and the Uganda Community Tourism Association. Proponents of PPT have described its impacts thus:

Emerging though limited indications of the impacts of the current PPT initiatives suggest that for the poor, where it happens, PPT interventions are invaluable. A few are lifted out of income-poverty while many more earn critical gap-fillers. More still are affected by the non-financial livelihood benefits that emerge as very significant though highly varied, such as improved access to information and infrastructure, pride and cultural reinforcement. While some initiatives are yet to deliver on the ground, there are a few that affect hundreds directly and thousands indirectly (PPT, no date).

Harold Goodwin, one of the main proponents of pro-poor tourism hopes it can improve the quality of life for people in local communities (1998). Goodwin states: "International agencies should assist in the development of those forms of tourism, tailored to particular destinations, which are integrated into the local economy, where tourism can complement existing livelihood strategies and where the distribution of benefits will contribute to the elimination of poverty" (1998).

While fair trade in tourism is focused on a more macro effort at changing the rules of tourism engagement between businesses and tourists of the developed world with the organisations, businesses and communities of the developing world, pro-poor tourism is geared to change conditions at the local destination. PPT attempts to ensure that tourism investments in poor communities are encouraged to provide opportunities to the disadvantaged in the destinations receiving tourists. Goodwin

sees it as a tool to use in creating a diversified and balanced economy geared to meeting human welfare.

5.3.5 Community-based tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT, also known as community tourism) while considered a component of alternative tourism is more appropriately described as a question of who initiates and/or controls the tourism activity (which may be alternative or mass). It is significant to this discussion because a study of the dynamics of CBT reveals a capacity to contribute to sociological transformation in the conduct and impacts of tourism.²⁶

The impetus to community-based tourism originated in concerns associated with alternative development and alternative tourism movements. For instance, one of the concerns of the critics of ecotourism is that it promotes an environmental sensibility which can neglect or even be detrimental to the interests and needs of the local community where the ecotourism occurs (i.e. McLaren, 1998, 2003; Pleumarom, 1994). The proponents of ecotourism who want to secure environmental protection and conservation of wildlife and fauna have found that they need the local people on board to be successful in these outcomes. This is one of the reasons that the evolution of the definition of ecotourism began to incorporate notions of “benefits for the local community” and education of the locals in the benefits of conservation.²⁷ It is not at first apparent that the local community’s interests could

²⁶ Analysts such as Murphy (1985), Pearce, Moscardo & Ross (1996), Reid (2003) and Scheyvens (2002) have given extensive attention to the community-tourism nexus.

²⁷ Scheyvens (1999, 2003) has proposed an empowerment framework for ecotourism to ensure that it delivers not only benefits but also control to local communities. Scheyvens empowerment framework has several dimensions including economic, political, psychological and social. Scheyvens views this

clash with those of ecotourism promoters and their supporters over the issue of environmental protection but a look at a few cases show how these diverse interests can diverge considerably. For instance, in various parts of Africa, the creation of national parks, game reserves and tourism resorts has meant the removal of the local people residing there and/or their inability to carry out traditional hunting and subsistence practices.²⁸

It was the opposition that such dynamics could arouse that led to engagement with the concept of community-based tourism. One of the seminal works in rethinking the role of the local community in the tourism system was Murphy's *Tourism: A community approach* (1985). Murphy advocated much more concentrated consideration of the role of the "local community" within the system of tourism development (1985). However, Murphy's interest was possibly not so much as a community advocate but as a proponent of the longevity of tourism. His interest in community involvement is instrumental to this goal as is evident in the following statement: "Public opinion and political power must be courted and won if the industry is to continue to rely on government support and community assets for its survival and success" (1985, p. 176). With increased analysis of alternative development, other observers began to advocate for more grassroots, community-led development to overcome the failures and problems that accompanied top-down, imposed development in the modernisation framework.

framework for ecotourism development as particularly useful for Indigenous and other marginalised communities (1999, p. 249). This, however, is a different yet perhaps complementary effort to the Indigenous rights movement discussed in Section 6.3.

²⁸ Olindo has written about such issues in Kenya and how the government has adopted some revenue-sharing schemes with groups such as the Maasai to mitigate these conflicts (1997). Also see Mowforth and Munt (2003, pp. 237-240).

Tourism analysts interested in sustainability have also paid attention to the importance of community involvement to its achievement. Hardy *et al.* have looked at sustainable tourism and argued that much prior analysis focused on the twin concerns of environmental integrity and economic development but omitted the third pillar of community involvement (2002). Place's examination of nature tourism in Costa Rica's Tortuguero National Park argued that the park's contribution to rural development could be further enhanced and that the local community needed to be better involved through community-based tourism initiatives (1991). Recent work by Cole has both theorised and empirically demonstrated how sustainability in tourism can be secured by moving from the current orthodoxy of community participation to a stronger vision of community empowerment (2006).

Community-based tourism refocuses attention on the fact that the purpose of tourism is to serve the people who engage with it. As Reid notes: "Tourism development can be a bottom-up activity, one that allows for control at the grass-roots level, and provides an improved standard of living to those engaged in it, particularly those at the community level" (2003, p. 21). As Margaret Swain claims in her discussion of Indigenous responses to tourism: "A hypothesized or fantasized indigenous tourism type would be controlled by the group themselves, sustainable and in harmony with an indigenous mixed economy, society and cultural values. The Kuna [of Panama] have actually done this..." (1993, pp. 49-50).

Also relevant is Barkin's proposal to develop rural and social tourism in Mexico, a country known for its large-scale, mass tourism model of development focused on attracting international tourists (2000). He envisions "rural producers as potential providers of low-cost large scale facilities for a new type of tourist service designed

specifically for a market oriented explicitly to ‘social’ or working class and middle sector tourists, including public schools and senior citizens” (Barkin, 2000). Barkin views such a development as an opportunity to pursue a different path to the ecologically and socially damaging processes of capitalist globalisation. He claims:

The several examples that illustrate the alternative model examined in this paper offer an important counterweight with considerable benefits for rural communities and the Mexican working class. In this way it would contribute substantially to braking [sic] down some of the obstacles to building a more balanced national society. A program of mass social tourism would open a new model for decentralized development that would respond to the urgent needs of present-day society. Well organized, it could be financed much more readily than the international model and offers more employment and an inexpensive way to improve the quality of life for both consumers and providers (Barkin, 2000).

CBT refocuses concern on the host community receiving tourists in a context of the globalised tourism industry where agendas are often those of the TCC, TNCs and affiliated governments. As Scheyvens (2003, p.231) argues, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 1999) only stipulates that local communities should benefit from tourism and be informed of tourism development plans; it does not recognise their right to control tourism. A truly alternative tourism would have to privilege the host community’s right to control because it is they who ultimately must bear the impacts of tourism development. The unique power of CBT that is rarely acknowledged is the ultimate right of communities to refuse engagement with tourism at all. Reid goes even further by suggesting that corporate globalisation will be replaced by a people-driven, bottom-up globalisation and that the community-based tourism phenomenon will have its role to play in the formation of an alternative vision (2003).²⁹

²⁹ For instance, there is also some evidence that destination communities engage in tourism for global solidarity. According to the Talamanca Association for Ecotourism and Conservation in Costa Rica:

5.3.6 Peace through tourism

Peace through tourism focuses on the kinds of tourism which are conducive to promoting more peaceful relations. It thus overlaps with such subsets of alternative tourism as responsible tourism, ecotourism, volunteer tourism, cultural tourism, pro-poor tourism and philanthropic tourism (D'Amore, 2005). Because of its focus on the ways that tourism can foster peace, it is obviously an important tourism phenomenon to examine in the attempt to assess tourism's potential in fostering an alternative globalisation.

Perhaps the highest aim set for tourism is the contribution to or achievement of peace. It has been a topic for discussion since the establishment of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) in 1986. This organisation is the brainchild of Canadian Louis D'Amore, who in the 1970s developed this vision during his consultancy work on tourism. With the rise in terrorism in the 1980s and the tensions of the Cold War, he managed to show the tourism industry that "without peace there is no tourism" (IIPT, no date). In 1988, his efforts resulted in convening a conference, "Tourism: a Vital Force for Peace", in Vancouver sponsored by the Canadian government and Air Canada and attended by some 800 delegates from 72 countries and addressed by the American President Ronald Reagan and the Pope, John Paul II (by video). Since this time, IIPT has continued to convene conferences and Global Summits and expand its activities in the promotion of the link between peace and tourism and particularly the idea that tourism promotes peace. According to D'Amore, the "unstated aim" of the IIPT is to determine "what's possible when an

"Ecotourism means a constant struggle to defend the earth and to protect and sustain traditional communities. Ecotourism is a cooperative relationship between the non-wealthy local community and those sincere, open-minded tourists who want to enjoy themselves in a Third World setting" (cited in Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 96).

entire industry – the world’s largest industry – gets behind the idea of peace: peace within ourselves; peace with our neighbors in the global village; and peace with nature” (D’Amore, 2005). D’Amore’s IIPT has a dual-pronged strategy to promote peace through tourism: one is to engage the tourism industry to become the “World’s first Global Peace Industry” and the second is to engage the tourist as an “Ambassador for Peace” (D’Amore, 2005).

D’Amore and IIPT are apparently very successful in this effort as major global declarations and codes have repeated the credo that tourism promotes peace with increasing frequency since the 1980s. For instance, the Manila Declaration on World Tourism states that not only does tourism develop in a “climate of peace” but also that “world tourism can be a vital force for world peace and can provide the moral and intellectual basis for international understanding and interdependence” (UNWTO, 1980). The Acapulco document of the UNWTO describes tourism “as a vehicle for peace, harmony and mutual understanding among peoples and for knowledge of the world and its truth” (UNWTO, 1982). The Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code claims tourism’s role as “central and decisive” not only in economic development but also in “international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observation of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all...”(UNWTO, 1985). This document also asserts the importance of tourism “to improving mutual understanding, bringing peoples closer together and, consequently, strengthening international cooperation” (UNWTO, 1985). The most recent document that is meant to guide current global tourism policy and practice, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, claims “that through the direct, spontaneous and non-mediatized contacts it engenders between men and women of different cultures

and lifestyles, tourism represents a vital force for peace and a factor of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world” (UNWTO, 1999). Article one of this document is entitled “tourism’s contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies” which claims “the understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism” (1999). It then delineates the key obligations of tourists, host communities, tourism professionals and governments which are requisite to securing these harmonious relations.

What peace through tourism means exactly is contentious. The founder of the peace through tourism movement, Louis D’Amore, described it in multidimensional and positive terms: peace within ourselves, peace with other people, peace between nations, peace with nature, peace with the universe and peace with our God (1988, p. 9). The most conventional way to interpret the relationship between tourism and peace is to assert that the cross-cultural encounter of international tourism fosters more harmonious relations. An interview with D’Amore provides a good example of this type of definition:

Shortly after 9-11, in an address at Georgetown University, former U.S. President Bill Clinton said: ‘don’t you think it’s interesting that in the most modern of ages, the biggest problem is the oldest problem of human society - the fear of the other. And how quickly fear leads to distrust, to hatred, to dehumanisation, and to death.’

Travel is the one social and cultural phenomenon that can overcome the ‘fear of the other.’ It can shatter the isolation and ‘fear of the other’ to which President Clinton refers. Travel provides us with the opportunity to experience the welcome and hospitality of other peoples and cultures - their human values and qualities - their kind deeds - and to experience what is different in their lives. It can be one to one citizen diplomacy in its finest form, serving as a means of dialogue at a personal level (D’Amore, 2005).

A more ambitious interpretation would see tourism contributing to securing peace between nations or societies in conflict. Again D'Amore of the IIPT asserts that historical evidence supporting such a claim can be uncovered in cases where tourism is credited with contributing to the avoidance of war:

It may be difficult to establish that historically war has been avoided due to tourism, however the European Travel Commission (ETC) was formed with the idea of promoting travel among Europeans following World War II so that people might come to know one another; the Federation of Youth Travel Organizations (FYTO) was founded to bring young French people to Germany to meet and interact with their peers; and the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) was established by student leaders for this same purpose.

The Joint Statement of President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev following the Geneva Summit of 1985, read in part: 'There should be a greater understanding among our peoples and to this end we will encourage greater travel.'

It was 'Ping Pong' diplomacy (Sports Tourism) that paved the way to opening the doors to China during the Nixon Administration in the 1960's (D'Amore, 2005).

While analysts such as Litvin (1998) have challenged such bold assertions, peace through tourism nonetheless suggests that promising capacities of tourism as a social force. The concept offers the promise of tourism geared to more benign social and environmental values and holds the tantalising promise that it can be used to achieve perhaps the most vital outcome of all in a globalising world, peace.

5.3.7 Volunteer tourism

Stephen Wearing was the first to comprehensively analyse the phenomenon of volunteer tourism which he labelled "...a new form of alternative tourism" (2002a, p. 257). Wearing sets out to firmly distinguish volunteer tourism from either tourism or volunteering for its ability to contribute to transformation of self through the volunteer tourism experience (2002a, 2002b, 2004). He defines volunteer tourism as

applying to those tourists “...who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that may involve the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment” (2002a, p. 240). From this definition, it is apparent that volunteer tourism has the potential to address both the ecological crisis and the problem of social polarisation which result from capitalist globalisation (Sklair, 2002).

Examples of volunteer tourism include such undertakings as Earthwatch tours, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Habitat for Humanity’s Global Village Work Camp program and Youth Challenge International (one of Wearing’s major case studies in his book entitled *Volunteer tourism*, 2001). Earthwatch provides a useful case study of a volunteer tourism opportunity focused on tourists contributing to environmental conservation work. Earthwatch Tours are administered by the Earthwatch Institute which “engages people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment” (Earthwatch, no date). Earthwatch accomplishes this by providing “financial support and 4000 field assistants/volunteers to over 140 field research projects each year for scientists to address critical environmental and social issues at local, national and international levels” (Earthwatch Institute Research Program, no date). It has had a considerable impact as since 1971, it has placed over 65,000 volunteers in 118 countries to assist with 2,800 field research projects. Earthwatch’s estimated economic impact includes providing over 10 million volunteer hours valued at £35 million (Earthwatch Institute, no date). In contrast, the volunteer tours offered by Habitat for Humanity are focused on development work in places where

need for assistance in housing is identified. Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit, Christian ecumenical organisation focused on a “housing ministry” as its mission is “to eliminate poverty, housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action” (Habitat for Humanity, no date). Volunteers with their Global Village program undertake short trips to engage in house-building projects with local people in places as diverse as North America, Africa, Asia/Pacific and Europe. Its impact is evident from Habitat’s statistics: “Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses around the world, providing more than 1,000,000 people in more than 3,000 communities with safe, decent, affordable shelter” (Habitat for Humanity, no date).

There are also efforts to create volunteer tourism experiences which are actually designed to combat the ravages of conventional tourism. One example of this is the “alternative spring breaks” offered by certain American universities which are designed to give college students safer opportunities for spring break holidays than the typical Cancun or Fort Lauderdale break (where dangerous drinking and casual sex are the attraction) and at the same time having a volunteer tourism experience (American Medical Association, 2002).

Volunteer tourism stands out as a unique form of tourism where the tourism activity is geared to achieving positive social and environmental benefits for the places and people who receive these tourists. The growing niche market interested in volunteer tourism experiences suggests that a growing number of people wish to utilise their holiday time to contribute to the achievement of a better world. Wearing (2001)

suggests that in offering “experiences that make a difference”, volunteer tourism de-stabilises the wider societal structures built on selfish individualism.

5.3.8 Justice tourism

Earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that one vision of alternative tourism is that it become “the tourism in the promotion of a new order” (Lanfant & Graburn, 1992, p. 92). The niche of alternative tourism most obviously conducive to such a task is justice tourism. Holden’s description of justice tourism is “... a process which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality amongst participants” (Holden cited in Pearce, 1992, p. 18).

Scheyvens has provided the most valuable analysis of justice tourism to date (2002). She describes justice tourism as “both ethical and equitable” and says it has the following attributes:

- builds solidarity between visitors and those visited;
- promotes mutual understanding and relationships based on equity, sharing and respect;
- supports self-sufficiency and self-determination of local communities;
- maximises local economic, cultural and social benefits (2002, p. 104).

An even more comprehensive listing of key attributes is found in Scheyvens’ extensive quote from an Australia tour agency called Just Travel which outlines “just travel” from the point of view of the traveller as providing:

- the knowledge that s/he is not an agent of oppression but is attempting to participate in the liberation process;
- a travel experience that will offer genuine possibilities of forming meaningful relationships with people of different cultures;
- an opportunity to experience firsthand what other people are doing to create new life possibilities for themselves and others;
- adequate preparation for their travel (Wenham & Wenham cited in Scheyvens, 2002, p. 104).

Additionally, “just travel” from the point of view of the “tourist-receiving communities” (host community) promises:

- travellers will be people who are coming to share and not to dominate their lives;
- local accommodation and infrastructure will be used. As far as possible the services of foreign-owned and operated companies will be avoided;
- tourist sites and shows which degrade or debase the culture will be avoided. Opportunity will be given for local people to develop a real presentation of their culture with pride and dignity;
- travellers will be required to observe standards of decency and will not be tolerated if their presence is offensive to local people (Wenham & Wenham cited in Scheyvens, 2002, p. 104).

Scheyvens outlines five forms of justice tourism which include the “hosts” telling their stories of past oppression, tourists learning about poverty issues, tourists undertaking voluntary conservation work, tourists undertaking voluntary development work and revolutionary tourism, providing some examples and a critical evaluation of each (2002, pp. 105-119). Kassis adds that at the global level “justice tourism is a social and cultural response to the policy of cultural domination as reflected in the globalization of tourism” (no date).

Justice tourism is visible in the “*tourisme solidaire*” that is particularly strong in France where it has the support of the national tourism association, Union Nationale des Associations de Tourisme (UNAT), as well as government ministries for tourism,

foreign affairs and development (UNAT, no date a). It is described very similarly to “just travel” described above: it is “responsible” and “equitable”, but more directly associated with solidarity projects where the traveller may support development activities, or where part of the travel cost may financially support associated social or rehabilitation projects. Solidarity tourism particularly insists on:

- sensitising the tourists (to issues) and travel preparation;
- opportunities for contact with the local population: meetings, cultural activities, homestays;
- environmental issues: sensitising and obligating travellers to respect waste and resource management guidelines;
- involvement in one or several development projects determined by the host community;
- local economic returns (Tourisme Solidaire, no date).

Solidarity tourism is conducted in developed countries, for example urban-rural solidarity tours, as well as between developed and developing countries. The support for solidarity tourism is particularly strong in Europe but extends internationally as major national associations such as UNAT are joined by international organisations and NGOs such as the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Program, the International Bureau of Social Tourism, Conservation International, the International Ecotourism Society as well as responsible tourism NGOs such as Tourism Concern, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism and the Tourism European Network. Additionally there are specific partners operating in developing countries such as the Kathmandu Environmental Education Project and the International Porter Protection Group (UNAT, no date b).

The reality tours of the American NGO Global Exchange (GX) provide a great illustration of what justice tourism looks like in specific tourism experiences.

Founded in 1988, Global Exchange is an international human rights NGO dedicated to “promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world” (Global Exchange, no date b). Its involvement in tourism is geared towards justice education and activism:

The idea that travel can be educational, transformational and positively influence international affairs motivated the first Reality Tours in 1989. Unlike traditional tourism, Reality Tours promotes socially responsible travel as our participants build true ‘people to people ties’. Reality Tours are founded on the principles of experiential education and each tour focuses on important social, economic, political and environmental issues. When you journey with us you will meet the people, learn the facts first hand, and then discover how we, both individually and collectively, contribute to global problems and how we can enact positive change (Global Exchange, no date f).

The variety of tours offered by Global Exchange are numerous and changing. One recently developed tour is the “Beyond Tourism” tour to Jamaica which focuses on the reality of this tourism-dependent economy. Its promotional blurb reads “Inspired by the recent ground-breaking film, ‘Life and Debt’, about the crushing effects of World Bank & IMF policies on the people of Jamaica, GX is offering this new study tour to examine this universal crisis which is impacting all developing countries” (Global Exchange, no date d). The 2006 tour to Bolivia focuses on the issue of privatisation and aims “to explore one of the first ‘water wars’ of the 21st century, debunk the corporate-led model of development through privatization of natural resources, and learn from communities who continue to exercise direct democracy for the right to survive” (Global Exchange, no date a). Equally relevant is the tour to India entitled “the Fight Against Globalization: Models of Economic Democracy” which visits the Vandana Shiva Centre and a myriad of non-profit, community-based organisations in order to show grassroots action for just development (Global Exchange, no date c). Other itineraries include Cuba, Afghanistan, Venezuela,

Chiapas (Mexico), Iraq, Palestine, China and many others. In addition to these tour itineraries around the globe which examine the faultlines of injustice and conflict in particular countries, Global Exchange also organises tours that coincide with the World Social Forum, a meeting of representatives of global civil society movements which gather to strategise ways to oppose corporate-led globalisation (discussed in section 4.11 and more fully below). This particular tour is one of the more obvious points where one can see Global Exchange's commitment to use the tourism opportunity to work towards change in the global system. Lastly, it must be noted that this American NGO which is dedicated to raising the awareness of Americans to important global issues, does not neglect organising tours within the United States to indicate human rights violations and injustices occurring at home. For instance the tours of California and the US-Mexican border area suggest how the dynamics of capitalist globalisation results in immigration, violation of immigrants' rights and the growing prison population in the United States so that tour participants become activists for justice within the United States.

Global Exchange provides participant comments on many of their tours as well as links to some of the many weblogs these participants have created to share what they have learned from their experiences. These provide some indication of the impact that justice tours are having. One illustrative comment from a participant on the "What's behind our food tour?" in the Americas said:

The trip made me think so much about where my food comes from, the injustices that exist that I had never known much about and how harmful some farming methods are to workers, the Earth, and also the consumers of the food. I was made aware about the farmworker struggle and the injustice, lack of voice, and dangerous conditions workers are exposed to, things I had never really heard about before (Global Exchange, no date e).

Another interesting example of justice tourism is the Community Leadership Program organised by the Australian NGO Oxfam Australia (formerly called Community Aid Abroad) which takes participants on an extended tour of India to learn about community development and to return committed to contribute to community development on their return to Australia. Its vision statement reads:

The vision for the Community Leadership Program not only encompasses a combination of workshops and project visits overseas but is hopefully an ongoing process of building effective community involvement in Australia around issues of human rights, international justice and sustainable development. To this end, participants will be encouraged to give some voluntary time in the 12 months following their return to become involved in locally based social justice issues. The Community Leadership Program will provide the auspice and some further assistance with this (Oxfam Australia, no date).

One of the things that sets this program apart from many others is the underlying ethos that people from developed countries can learn and benefit from implementing the sound community development practices created by people in developing countries. Also this NGO describes its goal in this program as seeking to “build a strong and effective supporter base in Australia and to be an integral part of a global movement for social justice” (Oxfam Australia, no date). This is a clear indication that some organisers and participants in the justice tourism movement are deliberately describing their efforts as seeking an alternative and more just form of globalisation.

In fact some specific examples of justice tourism such as Oxfam Australia’s Community Leadership Program indicate that the global change that is required is not only how to help the poor in developing countries achieve better standards of development but also how to change the lives of the privileged in developed

countries by suggesting ways they might re-orient their consumer and market-driven lifestyles. The need for such an effort is underscored by the pronouncements of the United Nations Environment Program which has declared “our present course is unsustainable - postponing action is no longer an option” and claimed “the continued poverty of the majority of the planet’s inhabitants and excessive consumption by the minority are the two major causes of environmental degradation” (UNEP, 1999). But as Dr Klaus Toepfer, Director of the UNEP suggested, it is perhaps most imperative to address the over-consumption of the rich: “a ten-fold reduction in resource consumption in the industrialised countries is a necessary long-term target if adequate resources are to be released for the needs of developing countries” (Kirby, 1999).

We can thus see the relevance of justice tourism in promoting alternative consciousness as a catalyst to alternative globalisations. Such a shift is evident in the observation of a young volunteer tourist who said “It [the volunteer tourism experience] made me a lot more critical of a consumer’s [sic] society. I think there are a lot of things here that are all very nice and convenient and are good for status. But there are a lot of things we just don’t need” (cited in Wearing, 2002a, p. 250).

The Ladakh Project of the International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC) demonstrates the other impact that justice tourism can inspire, that is changes in the people who are “subjected” to the impacts of corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation. Ladakh is a region in the Himalayas with a strong, vibrant culture which began to experience outside influence through the international “development” process in the 1970s. ISEC describes Ladakh thus: “This is an extremely harsh

environment, yet for centuries it was home to a rich and self-sustaining culture. ‘Life was very simple, but people always had enough, and more than anything they were happy’, says Tashi Rabgyas, Ladakh's leading poet, scholar and philosopher” (International Society for Ecology & Culture, no date). ISEC grew concerned that the cultural impacts of external development were changing the autonomous and proud traditions of Ladakh. ISEC asserts that external influences such as the advice brought by development experts created “idealised images of western consumer culture - undermining the local economy and eroding cultural self-esteem. The result has been increasing community and family breakdown, unemployment, sprawling urban slums and pollution” (ISEC, no date).

To counter these influences, the Ladakh Project was developed as an educational and cultural exchange program designed to provide the Ladakhi people with alternate insights into the lifestyles of the “West”. The objective was to counter the idealised images portrayed by tourists, expatriates, television and media so that the Ladakhi could make informed decisions about the future they wished to create for their community. One aspect of the project is to conduct “reality tours” for Ladakhis which take them to developed countries so they can see how these societies and their people live and organise themselves. The response of one of these Ladakhi reality tourists provides an interesting insight into the impact of this experience:

Spending time in the West showed me a side of Westerners I never imagined. I found that they have lots of money but they don't have time for each other. Many of them are looking for community and a life closer to nature - a Ladakhi lifestyle! - Stanzin Tonyot, ISEC's Farm Project Co-ordinator (ISEC, no date).

Of all the forms of alternative tourism under discussion here, justice tourism is clearly the most focused on overturning inequitable and unsustainable tourism and global structures in order to secure a future more in alignment with the eco-humanistic vision (as propounded by Stewart-Harawira, 2005a, 2005b). Justice tourism will be addressed again in a later section focused on the transformative capacities of tourism. However, before the transformative capacities of these forms of alternative tourism can be fully evaluated, it is worth considering how alternative tourisms are usurped and/or undermined by the forces supporting corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation.

5.4 Undermining and usurpation

It is apparent that alternative tourism in its numerous forms holds considerable promise in fostering eco-humanism and perhaps could thereby foster an alternative globalisation. However, it was alleged earlier in this chapter that the tourism industry and privileged tourists have been accused of usurping alternative tourisms for their own ends and thereby undermining their potential.³⁰ This section will consider some of the ways that these alternative tourisms are undermined.

5.4.1 Usurpation of the environments of others

Because the “new” tourists are interested in “authentic” cultures and pristine natural areas, the frontier of tourism is being pushed further and further afield (Cohen, 2002, p. 272). Various forms of alternative tourism, particularly ecotourism, stand accused

³⁰ Chapter four provided a preliminary indication how initiatives by the UNWTO and the WTTC such as sustainability under Green Globe, pro-poor tourism and the IYE 2002 are manipulated to secure the interests of their affiliated TNCs and the TCC.

of usurping the environments of others. According to Lash and Urry: “International tourism is a process by which the affluent countries, having mined their own environments, now scavenge the earth to consume those of other people, particularly those environments consistent with images of ‘natural’, ‘unspoilt’, and ‘green’” (1994, p. 303).

Pleumarom describes the power behind the promotion of ecotourism in particular locales as “militarisation” since defence and security services are utilised to protect ecotourism reserves and ecotourists from displaced locals. Her examples include the “shoot-to-kill” policies carried out against poachers in Kenya’s game parks and the forceful removal of Indigenous people in many southern African countries to create nature or game reserves (1994, pp. 144-146).³¹

Critiquing sustainable tourism, Cohen argues that in areas being opened up to tourism development, external agents such as state agencies and private entrepreneurs are able “to take control over valuable sites or attractive cultural practices in the name of sustainability, at the exclusion of the local population or under imposition of restrictions upon it” (2002, p. 268). As Cohen so well describes it, sustainability in tourism development can be seen as “an instrument of power in the struggle over rare and valuable environments or cultural resources” (2002, p. 274). For Cohen, the promotion of sustainable tourism raises important equity issues

³¹ While many environmentally concerned people would laud the protection of habitats, flora and fauna that such efforts are argued to secure, what is hidden from the debate is the abuse of the local people while others enrich themselves on the revenue generated by tourists. Pleumarom quotes one old man displaced in South Africa: “Where do these people take the right to make money out of our land? We don’t want compensation, we want our land. I’ve lived here for more than 80 years... until now, we could kill a snake when it devoured our animals or a hippo when it destroyed our fields. But what is this now, where hippos have all rights, and we have none? They say they want to protect nature. But aren’t people also part of God’s nature?” (1994, p. 145).

as some of the locals in the destination community are marginalised and dispossessed in this power struggle.

An added feature of this tendency for alternative tourism to usurp the environments and resources of others is seen in the accusation of “biopiracy” levelled at ecotourism. With concern growing about such intractable illnesses and conditions as HIV-AIDS, cancer and obesity, multinational pharmaceutical companies scour the world for ingredients for the lucrative medicines they might patent, develop and market to wealthy consumers. Developing communities and Indigenous peoples who have not cleared their natural environments have maintained biodiversity which may be instrumental in developing new medicines, while their indigenous medicinal knowledge may instruct how to tap such resources.³² Activists and NGOs are concerned that activities such as ecotourism may be used as a cover to “bioprospect” (Pleumarom, 1999b; “Ecotourism – a Cover for Biopiracy”, 2002). One case in point is the accusation that environmentally concerned organisations such as the British NGO Society for Environmental Exploration which run volunteer tours are guilty of removing plants and insects from Vietnamese parks and reserves without permission (Pleumarom, 1999b).³³

Even the more noble motivations such as the philanthropy of pro-poor tourism have been accused of sheltering a paternalistic and appropriative attitude. Burns and Barrie’s research in Lumphasi, South Africa reveals “an unwarranted sense of

³² An interesting aside is that the Ngarrindjeri people of South Australia whose experiences are the subject of the case study presented in Chapter six assert that their knowledge of the birth control properties of a native plant was stolen from them over four decades ago by questioning outsiders they were leading across their country.

³³ Pleumarom has provided an introduction to this issue in her discussion of biopiracy through new tourism (1999b).

‘proprietorship’” on the part of some donors (2005). While Burns and Barrie (2005) rightly point out that this criticism must be balanced with the benefits the community receives through such initiatives, it nonetheless must be acknowledged that such interventions undermine local autonomy and allow others to usurp decision-making and control.³⁴

5.4.2 Class

Mowforth and Munt challenge the wholesale support of “new tourisms” such as sustainable tourism by asking “...exactly what is sustainable tourism seeking to sustain and for whom?” (2003, p. 58). Such a challenge is warranted given a 1993 UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism, which described sustainable tourism development as that which meets “the needs of present tourists and hosts regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future” (cited in Butler, 1999a, p. 14). Such a definition supports Mowforth and Munt’s charge that sustainability discourse largely reflects an effort to protect the interests of privileged consumers (2003, p. 140). As part of this effort, others must be excluded: “... the drive towards sustaining the opportunity and ability to consume authenticity and exciting experiences ... simultaneously necessitates the exclusion of other types of tourists” (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 140). Butler addresses alternative tourism similarly, stating:

...one might argue that at the root of much of what is being proposed as alternative tourism is really disguised class prejudice. Large numbers of middle and lower class

³⁴ Browne’s (2006) recent text on aid is illuminating as he argues aid is geared to donor interests and hidden agendas of globalisation resulting in poor developmental outcomes for recipient nations. He suggests a focus on cancellation of debt, fair trade and responsible economic governance would be more beneficial.

tourists are not welcome, nor are 'hippies' in any number, but small numbers of affluent, well educated and well behaved tourists are welcome (1992, p.40).³⁵

Wheeller attacks ecotourism for this same tendency: "For eco-tourism, read ego-tourism. We are more concerned with maintaining our status, massaging our own egos and appeasing our guilt than with addressing the actual issues involved" (1993, p. 122).³⁶

In a more sustained analysis of the role of social class in fostering tourism to the developing world, Mowforth and Munt argue that the formation of new middle classes in the developed (and developing) worlds results in a geographical spread and a change in the social role of tourism (2003). The attraction of travel to and within the developing world for these "ego-tourists" is its ability to confer difference and distinction in the "competition for uniqueness" that characterises the struggle for class differentiation (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, pp. 122-123). According to Mowforth and Munt, aspects of this phenomenon include the use of travel to obtain cultural capital as a worldly individual, use of travel for "curriculum vitae building" (which effectively converts travel's cultural capital into economic capital), the professionalisation and intellectualisation of travel, but even more importantly, a sustained attempt to exclude other types of tourists from the new destinations they have "discovered". Mowforth and Munt contend that this analysis

...provides a rather different understanding of the current debate over sustainability. This debate can be recast, in part, as the drive towards sustaining the opportunity and

³⁵ Butler adds that, while not all academic proponents of alternative tourism are guilty of elitism, since the alternative tourist is generally characterised as affluent, educated, mature and white and most academics fit a similar description, this might explain their propensity to advocate alternative tourism and support the alternative tourist (1992, p. 40).

³⁶ Mowforth and Munt speak of the "new tourists" as "trendies on the trail" (2003, pp. 115-140).

ability to consume authenticity and exciting experiences, which simultaneously necessitates the exclusion of other types of tourists (2003, p. 140).³⁷

Not only is the elite class of “ego-tourists” attempting to exclude ordinary mass tourists from sullyng their alternative tourism holidays, they are also a part of the process of the usurpation of others’ environments described above as they demand privileged access to fragile environments increasingly subject to restrictions and protection as sustainability discourse takes hold. According to Cohen, this results in “the creation of islands of luxurious living in remote locations, often surrounded by an impoverished population, which had in some cases been removed from its grounds and prevented from exploiting the natural resources located in them” (2002, p. 273). Wheeler concludes: “Responsible tourism is a pleasant, agreeable, but dangerously superficial, ephemeral and inadequate escape route for the educated middle classes unable, or unwilling, to appreciate or accept their/our own destructive contribution to the international tourism maelstrom” (1991, p. 96).

If these analysts are correct and the ecotourism phenomenon is being usurped by the elite to secure their exclusive and exclusionary holidays, then the revolutionary potentials of ecotourism to transform consciousness and thus transform the ways in which humans interact with their environment are substantially undermined. In light of Sklair’s critique of the culture-ideology of consumerism under capitalist globalisation as the catalyst to the impending ecological crisis that humanity faces

³⁷ Basing their analysis on surveys of participants in Earthwatch Tours in Australia between 1988 and 1991, Weiler and Richins identified a new typology of the “extreme ecotourist” who they describe as “extreme, extravagant and elite” because s/he desires a challenging and meaningful eco experience and has both the time and income to satisfy this interest (1995).

(2002), ecotourism which is diverted to secure luxurious and elite consumption actually augments the threat rather than resolves it.³⁸

5.4.3 Lucrative niche market

The various alternative tourisms are being seen as lucrative niche markets which the tourism industry is keen to tap for sources of continued profits. For instance, ecotourism is claimed to be growing at a rate of thirty percent per annum (when a less rigorous definition is utilised), so many tour businesses have boarded the ecotourism bandwagon in the hopes of securing their slice of this bonanza. This has resulted in the definition of ecotourism being watered down as tourism businesses claim the label inappropriately (see section 5.4.4). There are numerous examples of a disjuncture between word and practice in ecotourism; from the blasting of a coral reef to enable boat access to a so-called island eco-resort in Belize (Pleumarom, 1994, p. 144; Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 282) to the promotion of large-scale marinas and golf courses as ecotourism sites (Weaver, 2001, p. 98).

Volunteer tourism is the new alternative tourism success story. For instance, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) recently issued a press release entitled “Meaningful tourism: Education travel and voluntourism” trying to tap this lucrative niche market (TAT, 2006). This press release quotes Nick Ascot of North by North East Tours who describes a growing number of “travellers who want to expand their

³⁸ The research conducted by Ryan *et al.* on ecotourists visiting Fogg Dam Conservation Area in Australia’s Northern Territory indicated that ecotourism may be more geared to the demands of consumption than the requirements of education and conservation (2000). The implications of their findings led them to question the assumptions behind the ecotourism push: “Its proponents argue that it represents a new approach that will create sustainable tourism, a way forward whereby the industry may continue to grow. But if, on the other hand, ecotourism is simply another form of consumerism whereby the tourist legitimizes the act of consumption, then what may be a real need to stop development for reasons of conservation will not be considered” (2000, p. 161).

horizons and perspectives, to have a life-changing experience” (TAT, 2006). Demonstrating growing awareness of this sector, the British government has reviewed the potential of volunteer tourism to serve diverse ends³⁹ and recently allocated £100 million to support gap year experiences⁴⁰ for its citizens (“Gap Years”, 2005, p. 7). At an event convened by Tourism Concern in 2005 entitled “Gap years: The new colonialism?” volunteer tourism undertaken during gap years was subject to critical scrutiny. Tourism Concern advocated “more accountability in the way that volunteer tourism and the gap year sector is developed” (“Gap Years”, 2005, p. 7). Of critical concern was that the fact that support for gap year volunteer experiences could be packaged as development aid for developing communities when according to Tourism Concern “aid should focus on the needs of local people rather than those of tourists” (“Gap Years”, 2005, p. 7).⁴¹ Such a situation would also supply the private sector tourism industry with valuable opportunities to service this sector.

Here in a microcosm we see the dynamic of alternative tourism being usurped by the tourism industry to reap profits: young tourists undertake distinctive holiday experiences at the expense of real development in the developing world, while the British government can claim kudos for contributions to third world development.

³⁹ Such diverse ends might include addressing youth unemployment, obtaining youth training, assisting charities, reducing government welfare spending by securing provision of community services through the voluntary sector and if involving developing countries, claimable as development aid assistance. A report entitled *Next steps on volunteering and giving in the UK* (Her Majesty’s Treasury and the Home Office, 2002) is helpful in understanding this new policy development.

⁴⁰ Gap year is the term the English use to describe the extended period (often, but not always, a year) taken from full-time education following the completion of secondary school before returning to education at college or university, or also between college or graduate school and professional work. Some students spend the time travelling while others include work in their travel by undertaking an international working holiday or a volunteer tourism experience.

⁴¹ Thai and Maasai representatives at the event charged that volunteer tourism advertising perpetuated negative stereotypes about the developing world’s capabilities and Maasai campaigner Resiatio Martyn claimed “volunteer tourism is just another colour bandage on the wound of tourism” (“Gap Years”, 2005, p. 7).

This provides a demonstration of how the system of capitalist globalisation is supported by the culture-ideology of consumerism within the tourism arena. The tourist and the industry collude to secure their mutual self-interest, the former to enjoy their privileged consumption and the latter to profit from it. In this process alternative tourisms become increasingly less alternative and more corporatised.

5.4.4 Greenwash

Both ecotourism and sustainability stand accused of being “greenwash” as the tourism industry adopts their language but effectively continues business as usual. For example, Shaw and Williams claim ecotourism promoters in the industry have been charged with employing “...a promotional discourse using the language of ‘greenspeak’” (2002, p. 299). Wall has characterised much of ecotourism as “new wine in old bottles” and alleges that the tourism industry has endorsed it to promote a “clean and green image, which is occasionally deserved but, more often, is little more than a marketing gimmick” (1997a, p. 487). Weaver states that “...deliberate misrepresentation [of ecotourism] is commonplace, given the current lack of accreditation schemes that are familiar to the public, the public’s lack of familiarity with ecotourism criteria, and the absence of restrictions that govern the use of the term in the tourism industry ” (2001, p. 98).

As Butler (1999b) and Wall (1997a) have asserted (see section 5.3.2), contemporary definitions of sustainability in tourism can be interpreted as meaning sustaining the tourism industry rather than limiting it to protect the environment or cultures and societies. Butler has noted the tendency of the tourism industry to ignore the implications of the limits that the sustainability concept implies, including limiting

tourist numbers, infrastructure development and landscape changes (1999a, p. 15). Fennell and Ebert say that a call to apply the precautionary principle to tourism “has led to a backlash... because it accentuates the process of pulling back the reins on unfettered growth” (2004, p. 475). Hostility to limits of any sort is evident in the work of Bob McKercher who warns that ecologically sustainable development principles stand as a threat to the survival of tourism for their role in fostering “pernicious land management policies that effectively restrict tourism access to and use of public lands” (1993, p. 131). It is also apparent in the opposition of the tourism industry to the use of the limits of acceptable change (LAC) model for planning tourism on Kangaroo Island, South Australia⁴² because it implied limiting tourism development. What the tourism industry secured was the development of a Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM)⁴³ which instead of designating limits identifies and sets “optimal uses” of resources for tourism (Jack, no date). Because of this resistance to restrictions, limits and costs, tourism’s approach to sustainability has been labelled greenwash.⁴⁴

It is Wheeler’s criticism that might be of most interest to this discussion of tourism within the system of capitalist globalisation. Calling alternative tourism “responsible tourism”, Wheeler states “unfortunately responsible tourism seems to be being adopted more as a marketing tool than as a sensitive planning mechanism” (1991, p. 94). Like Butler (1999a), he argues that the real issue in tourism is how to address the significant impacts of mainstream tourism and that the focus on fostering

⁴² An iconic tourism resource for South Australia which is known for its natural environment and its community which wants to protect their environment and control development.

⁴³ The South Australian government is disseminating information about TOMM widely. As a result, wider application of the TOMM is likely. Representatives of TOMM have been invited to present on the project in Australia, Brazil, Japan and Scotland. See: <http://www.tomm.info/>.

⁴⁴ See Beder for a brief insight into the “spin” of sustainability in the wider arena as business tries to usurp the discourse of sustainability in its own interests (2000, pp. 269-270).

responsible tourism is a diversion. Wheeler suggests that such diversionary tactics may be intentionally employed by tourism bodies and authorities as they frequently cite examples of the “positive management of the tourist influx” at specific locations and try to create the impression that such examples point to a wider transformation of tourism to a more responsible form (1991, p. 94). Wheeler contends that the tourism industry promotes management policies (such as spreading tourists both spatially and seasonally) as an enlightened response to tourism’s damages, but such policies also serve their interests by fostering the growth of tourism (1991). While alternative tourism may have been developed for legitimate reasons by concerned players, Wheeler’s analysis suggests it has been co-opted by the corporate tourism industry as a cover to actually pursue even higher growth rates and their attendant profits with the full collusion of “thinking tourists” who hegemonically assert their right to consume the desirable spots free of pesky mass tourists (1991).

Additionally, Wheeler contends that the tourism industry has appropriated the language of sustainability in order to achieve public relations outcomes: “while dovetailing perfectly with notions of a quality caring industry that has developed a self-rectifying mechanism, globally, it is patently obvious that the ‘bugger it up and pass it down’ ...philosophy has been employed” (1993, p. 125). He unveils the future of tourism as heading to “mega-mass tourism” as tourists and travel destinations proliferate with the promotion of global tourism. The reality globally is “a capitalist society with inbuilt growth dynamics and a ‘get it while you can’, grab mentality”, but the rhetoric of alternative tourism with its “slow, steady, selfless, cosy, back to nature, sustainable, eco-friendly, controlled small-scale solution to tourism problems” (Wheeler, 1993, p. 126) continues to be deployed to deceive. He

asserts that the proponents who advocate sustainable tourism as the answer to the problems of mass tourism are right:

Sustainable tourism does provide the answer. Unfortunately it is the wrong question. Rather than effectively addressing the complexities of tourism impact, what it is actually achieving is the considerably easier task of answering the question – ‘How best can we cope with the criticism of tourism impact?’ – as opposed to the impact itself. In essence then, the solution has been conjuring up an intellectually appealing concept with little practical application. One that satisfies the immediate short-term wishes of some of the main protagonists in tourism’s impact debate, avoids sacrifices and enables behaviour in much the same way as before – but with the veneer of respectability and from a higher moral platform (1993, p. 122).

As Sklair shows, capitalist globalisation is premised on a culture-ideology of consumerism which demands continual economic growth, utilises environmental resources to sustain this growth and manipulates the global trading structures to expand and appropriate the resources of others. Chapter four demonstrated that a corporatised tourism industry supports and benefits from capitalist globalisation and so its ideological focus is also upon growth and expansion. Limits to growth and geographical restrictions are contrary to the operating ethos of corporatised tourism and so we can see the hegemonic assertion of power to usurp the sustainability phenomenon in the corporate interest.⁴⁵

Industry support for the peace through tourism phenomenon can also be characterised as a case of using such efforts for public relations purposes rather than

⁴⁵ Indicative of how little things have changed despite the longevity of sustainability discourse, “environmental watchdog” Responsibletravel.com alleged “operators [are] paying only lip service to sustainable tourism” and criticised three major European operators, TUI, Thomas Cook and MyTravel, for failing to shift to sustainable practices in their relationships with tourism destinations (Travelmole.com, 2004). See Higgins-Desbiolles (2005) for a brief analysis of tourism industry practice suggestive of “greenwash”.

significantly changing industry practice and commitments.⁴⁶ Major tourism industry bodies such as the WTTC, UNWTO, Pacific Asia Travel Association, Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association and major tourism TNCs speak the rhetoric of peace and sponsor or present papers at world conferences and global summits organised by the IIPT on the themes of peace and tourism. This then becomes part of their publicity demonstrating their alleged commitments to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability. For instance, Richard North, chief executive officer of Six Continents Hotels, delivered a keynote address at the second Summit for Peace through Tourism in Geneva in 2003 on how tourism can help to alleviate poverty and was awarded a replica of World Peace Gong (InterContinental Hotels Group, 2003). This is reported in the Financial News of the InterContinental Hotels Group as part of their media and marketing to demonstrate their support of “worthy causes”. The World Airlines Clubs Association, a supporter of the IIPT, also utilises the rhetoric of peace tourism as one of its stated goals is “demonstrating to the public the important contribution the international airlines are giving for better understanding among the peoples of the world” (World Airlines Clubs Association, no date). Smaller, individual tour companies also wield the power of peace tourism rhetoric to good effect. For instance an “eco-adventure safari company” sells its “One journey, five faces” tour with the line that “cross-cultural exchanges are one of the lasting ways to create worldwide understanding and tolerance” (Loehr, 2001).⁴⁷ Litvin suggests that those wielding the peace rhetoric are “guilty of over-glamourising the industry and of championing arguments that simply do not ring true” (1998, p. 66).

⁴⁶ The assertion that tourism contributes to peace is a controversial one, with some asserting it is a tourism industry cliché. Debate on the topic of peace through tourism has centred particularly around whether peace and tourism are related in a causal or a co-relational way (Litvin, 1998) and on whether or not tourism contributes to attitudinal change in peoples travelling between hostile nations (e.g. Pizam, 1996).

⁴⁷ This tour’s itinerary includes a “traditional safari” as well as a visit to a “local Kenyan village” providing the “best of both worlds”.

In light of the predominance of peace rhetoric found in global codes and documents on tourism (see section 5.3.6), such public relations efforts could be seen as a strategy to justify ongoing support of tourism development and to forestall criticism of its inequities.⁴⁸

Lastly the pro-poor tourism (PPT) initiative could be viewed as another public relations strategy employed by the corporatised tourism industry. The PPT project is one of the most high profile in contemporary global tourism. The UNWTO and the WTTC have made PPT central pillars in their publicity. It is not accidental that the poverty alleviation commitment of the WTO coincided with the virulent protests of the “anti-globalisation” movement which has threatened the momentum of the marketisation agenda since 1999 in Seattle. Not unexpectedly, the UNWTO mirrors the WTO in calling its pro-poor agenda “liberalization with a human face”. Much like sustainability, the pro-poor initiative could be characterised as good public relations to prevent measures that might otherwise be imposed with negative impact on the industry’s interests and operations. Certainly there is evidence that key representatives of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) in the tourism sector are using pro-poor tourism slogans to advocate in the tourism industry’s interest. For instance, Geoffrey Lipman, mentioned earlier as a classic example of a tourism member of the TCC, has advocated that tourism be placed at “the heart of development programs and at the core of PRSPs [poverty reduction strategy papers formerly known as structural adjustment programs]” (Travel Wire News, 2004). If

⁴⁸ The peace through tourism movement has been the subject of criticism. For example, the second IIPT African Conference on Peace through Tourism received scathing comments from invited speaker Navaya ole Ndaskoi, Coordinator of Indigenous Rights for Survival, who described the gathering as “a brutal freak show for money” in a letter rejecting the invitation (Alcantara, 2003). Amongst other criticisms, Ndaskoi challenged the hypocrisy of promoting a pro-poor agenda while using a five star venue in Dar es Salaam to hold the conference (Ndaskoi, 2003).

implemented, such a move would ensure TNC access to the economies of developing countries perhaps with subsidies and support from IFIs and the “host” governments.

Another insight is provided by looking at how the tourism industry campaigned for politicians’ attention in the aftermath of the G-8 Summit (Group of eight wealthiest countries) in Gleneagles, Scotland in 2005. This summit was focused on debt cancellation and aid to Africa and became a focus for a public campaign of the “Make Poverty History” coalition as well as an awareness raiser on poverty led by Sir Bob Geldof who organised the “Live 8” concerts. Key leaders in the tourism arena chastised politicians for not including tourism in their talks on development issues (Travel Wire News, no date).⁴⁹ In an effort to remedy the situation the International Council of Tourism Partners wrote a letter to those meeting at the G8 Summit and asked them “to work with international financial institutions such as the World Bank to provide increased support for tourism and transport” so that tourism can help developing regions such as Africa (Travel Wire News, no date). Thus we see tourism bodies connecting specific poverty agendas like those of the “Make Poverty History” campaign to tourism’s alleged contributions to development in order to gain further support for the tourism industry itself particularly in terms of market access, but as indicated below, also perhaps in terms of subsidies and supports through foreign and development aid. In September of 2005, the UNWTO presented a declaration to the UN General Assembly calling on governments and development agencies to support tourism and give it a “key role in the overall achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015” (UNWTO, 2005).

⁴⁹ Paul Freud, chairman of the Institute of Travel and Tourism surmised the reason may be due to the “ignorance of politicians about the value of tourism in any country’s economy, and ignorance on the part of the travel trade about how to lobby effectively and make politicians better informed. Tourism is the world’s biggest industry and it is growing” (Travel Wire News, no date). This statement is a classic example of the rhetoric of boosterism being used for industry advantage.

Certainly the UNWTO's report *Tourism and poverty alleviation* (2002b) states the UNWTO's self-interested agenda quite clearly, and concludes: "The WTO [UNWTO] considers that tourism is a legitimate recipient of development co-operation and direct foreign aid where it can be demonstrated that the tourism industry can assist in achieving development objectives" (UNWTO, 2002b, p. 98).

Despite the prevalence of pro-poor rhetoric, the key root of poverty currently ignored is the role that the capitalist global system plays in creating the very impoverishment that the PPT initiative is directed at solving. As Mowforth and Munt's brief but insightful critique of the PPT initiative points out, it needs to be viewed in the wider context of promoting the "expansion of capitalist relations" (and the growth of the tourism sector) and how this might "undercut 'sustainable livelihoods' and exacerbate, rather than alleviate, poverty" (2003, p. 273). It also needs to be critiqued in light of the fact that one representative of UNCTAD is quoted as indicating that some developing countries may be subsidising the tourism experiences of tourists from wealthier countries (Diaz Benavides cited in Berne Declaration & WGTD, 2004, p. 6) because economic leakages and the inequity in the current global tourism system⁵⁰ leave little economic benefits for the host community.

This pointed assessment in a recent text about tourism and global environmental change challenges us to not forget the context in which these alternatives operate:

The fundamental goals of the World Tourism Organization (2001) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (2003) are to encourage and promote tourism mobility,

⁵⁰ Thus for example TNCs are able to force governments to grant tax holidays, allow repatriation of profits and subsidise infrastructure in order to secure the investments required.

perhaps with somewhat of a green tinge so as to assuage industry and individual guilt, because then you can travel to help people through pro-poor tourism or help the environment. Please forgive the editors for what may seem academic cynicism. It's not...For tourism to really contribute towards security and sustainable development it needs to be placed within the bigger picture of human mobility, lifestyle, consumption and production. The consumption and production system that seeks to use 'pro-poor tourism' by those from the developed countries to help those in the developing world is the same consumption and production system that has often led to the situations that have contributed to inadequate development practices and poverty in the first place. The most sustainable forms of tourism in many cases may well be no tourism at all, rather focussing on other dimensions of development and a full consideration of alternatives (Gossling & Hall, 2006, pp. 314-315).

5.4.5 Ecological economics

By putting an economic valuation on natural assets, ecological economics attempts to bridge the divide between ecological and economic perspectives on the appropriate relationship between the environment and development. In tourism, some proponents of sustainability and ecotourism laud the application of economic principles to natural assets in order to underline the win-win situation that can be achieved for conservation, economic development and local community welfare. An example of the application of these principles to tourism includes the compromise secured between the Maasai people and the authorities running the Amboseli National Park of Kenya. This saw the Maasai being compensated for the loss of cattle and grazing land to wildlife protected by the park's authority. Calculation established that the park gains \$500,000 per year from the use of Maasai lands while the Maasai achieve an income eighty-five percent greater from this agreement than they would from their cattle herding alone (Sherman & Dixon, 1997, p. 199). Similar thinking is behind the effort to quantify the value of wildlife and environments to show that ecotourism is the optimum strategic use of these "resources". Weaver has reviewed some of this data:

...three classical savannah studies, including one by Western and Thresher from the early 1970s ... valued land supporting big game populations at US\$40 per hectare, and land supporting grazing at just US\$0.80 per hectare. Another study by Western and Henry in the late 1970s estimated that lions in Kenya's Amboseli National Park were each worth US\$27,000 per year as an ecotourism resource, and an elephant herd was worth US\$610,000. The third study undertaken in the late 1970s by Thresher calculated that a maned lion was worth US\$960-1325 as a food and hide source and US\$8500 as a big game trophy, but US\$515,000 as an ecotourism attraction over an average life span of 15 years (Sherman & Dixon cited in Weaver, 2001, pp. 100-101).⁵¹

While Sherman and Dixon project a win-win outcome from this technique, there is a real risk that Indigenous values will not be properly recognised and protected in the process. Thus what is ignored in this accounting is the “invaluable” place of cattle herding in Maasai culture as it is essential to Maasai identity. In effect environmental accounting applies western and economic values to “resources” such as the environment and culture. This may well undermine the other values that they represent, such as Indigenous ones. Will the young Maasai of the upcoming generations be able to sustain the values of their ancestors when the ledger sheet is presented to them in this way; or will they become tourism operators, park rangers or urban migrants seeking economic opportunities? While many would advocate that the ethical issue here can be addressed by facilitating individual choice and empowerment so that Maasai can choose to take up or reject such opportunities, what is not addressed from this Western perspective is the right of a collectivistic and non-Western culture to not be engulfed by Western “sustainable” systems of development.

⁵¹ Another area where economic valuation has been applied is that of viewing marine mammals such as whales and dolphins. For example, in a national context, tourism researcher Mark Orams has evaluated the value of whale watching to Tonga's economy and concluded that a humpback whale is worth \$T30,000 per year and \$T1.6 million over its average lifespan (Orams, 1999; Whalewatch, 1999). The whale watching industry provides \$T1 million annually to Tonga's economy (Orams, 1999; Whalewatch, 1999).

Weaver indicates another drawback in the propensity to promote ecotourism through the economic valuation of nature. He argues that this anthropocentric process of economic valuation "...poses its own environmental risks" (2001, p. 113). He contends:

Ideally, an entire setting or habitat should be interpreted and experienced as a single interrelated ecosystem, but in reality many ecotourists are only interested in observing charismatic megafauna or other specific components of those ecosystems. A maned lion or cheetah, accordingly is 'worth' more than a gazelle or hippopotamus. Slime moulds and dung beetles by this logic have no worth, or even a negative value, despite their critical role in ecosystem maintenance. This approach may encourage managers to maintain high levels of visitor satisfaction by giving priority to charismatic species at the top of the monetary hierarchy to the exclusion or suppression of less charismatic species... This approach can lead to ecological disequilibrium and therefore it is desirable that product interpretation and education strive to convey a holistic appreciation for the entire ecosystem (Weaver, 2001, pp. 113-114).

While one of the key transformative capacities of ecotourism is the raising of environmental consciousness through holistic interpretation and education, contemporary tourism premised on hedonistic tourist enjoyment and entertainment mitigates against this in many cases (see Ryan *et al.*, 2000).

Weaver also briefly mentions that there is a broader ethical question "... whether any kind of monetary value should be placed on something that might be regarded as inherently invaluable (such as the natural environment)" (2001, p. 114). Those that view the role of ecotourism and sustainability as leading tourists and tourism to a more biocentric perspective obviously would reply negatively to this question. The solutions that ecological economics offer in fact demonstrate the prevalence of

market values and principles in the drive for environmental protection.⁵² As a result, ecological economics seems more set on reconciling the environment to the market-based system than vice versa. Markwell's brief analysis of ecotourism under the challenging question of "nature protected or nature commodified" supports this conclusion and challenges an overly optimistic appraisal of ecotourism to deliver on its environmental promises when it is so intimately tied up with consumer society (1998).

5.4.6 Self-regulation: The industry's tool of preference

Mowforth and Munt provide a helpful outline of the tools for achieving sustainability in tourism (2003, pp. 106-114). These tools include: area protection, industry regulation, visitor management techniques, environmental impact assessment, carrying capacity calculations, consultation/participation techniques, codes of conduct and sustainability indicators (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 107). While this toolkit seems impressively comprehensive and scientifically valid in its holistic coverage of paths to sustainability, Mowforth and Munt indicate throughout their analysis that power and ideology underpin tourism processes. Not unexpectedly, the rhetoric of sustainability works in the interest of the powerful (2003). Thus for example the tactic of industry regulation for attaining sustainability in tourism can come from governmental regulation or through industry's self-regulation as for example, through voluntary codes of conduct or self-monitored certification schemes. In the current context of neoliberalism and its emphasis on small government and free markets, government regulation is giving way to industry self-

⁵² Beder charges "sustainable development is not about giving priority to environmental concerns, it is about incorporating environmental assets into the economic system to ensure the sustainability of the economic system" (1994).

regulation. Williams and Montanari (1999) have provided a useful analysis of the success of self-regulation in Europe and demonstrated its strengths and weaknesses. Mowforth and Munt have weighed up the debate by tourism analysts whether tourism should be subject to external regulation versus the argument that the industry should regulate itself and conclude:

Whether government legislation would really help to reduce the uneven and unequal nature of tourism development may be debatable. But self-regulation led by bodies such as the WTTC and 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 (2003, p. 185).

Given the predominance of neoliberal values, self-regulation becomes an almost unchallengeable path to sustainability in tourism. Noted expert on tourism planning Clare Gunn provides a helpful illustration of this tendency:

The best solution to sustainable development is likely to occur not from advocacy of environmentalists or governments but from voluntary action from developers of tourism. When the fundamental of the dependency of virtually all tourism upon the resource base becomes more apparent to developers, they will see it in their best interests to sustain the quality of the natural and cultural resources. The process by which this is to be achieved is through codes of practice and agreements locally... (2002, p. 82).⁵³

However this ignores the fact that in a globalised, corporatised tourism system where the tourist operators, entrepreneurs and consultants promoting tourism development are able to invest and divest in communities around the globe, their commitment to protecting the “resource base” may be less strong than Gunn visualises. For instance,

⁵³ In contrast, the research of Schluter into sustainable tourism development in Argentina’s Patagonia region emphasises the need for the state (at national and provincial levels) to establish legally enforceable regulatory and control measures to protect natural assets and environments where tourism occurs (2002).

in her analysis of the common pool resources of tourism (the “commons” of the air, the seas, the beaches, etc. that tourism frequently utilises), Briassoulis suggests that it is the places in which tourism invests that are the “losers” because the powerful interests of the tourism industry have “no interest in their long-term vitality and viability” (2002, p. 1074). Pigram and Wahab assert: “Whereas most would agree that it is in the long-term interests of the tourism industry to assure the longevity of the resources on which it depends, relatively little appears to be directed towards maintenance of that natural and cultural heritage” (1997, p. 6). Wheeler puts it in more colourful terms as he describes the *modus operandi* of the tourism industry as “bugger it up and pass it down” (1993, p. 125).

Efforts such as the WTTC Green Globe launched in 1994 to foster environmental sustainability demonstrates the propensity for the tourism industry to pursue self-regulation as a strategy to prevent more onerous imposed governmental regulation. According to Noel Josephides, managing director of Sunvil Holidays and chairman of the AITO Trust:

The underlying reason for [Green Globe’s] launch is to prevent, by having in place a self-regulatory system, any government interference in the working of the industry. There is no doubt that the large global players recognise the increasingly harmful impact the industry is having on the environment, which is now exciting considerable interest and anxiety amongst the media and inevitably the regulators. They also know that this unwelcome interest will interfere with the current freedom and market dominance they enjoy. If they have the Green Globe scheme in place before too many questions are asked, they will be able to hide behind the façade of self-regulation (1994, p. 10).

Another example of industry opposition to external regulation is the 2005 initiative to institute a poverty-alleviation tax on international airline tickets. Led by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio da Silva, Brazil, France, Spain, Germany and Algeria

advocated such a levy with the proceeds directed to poverty alleviation (Green Travel, 2005). The proposition was supported by the gathering of the G8 countries at the Gleneagles meeting, and France and Germany have since planned a pilot for the idea (Smith, 2005). It is suggested that such a levy could raise up to \$10 billion through a mere \$1 levy per ticket (Smith, 2005). The European Union has also supported the initiative as one way to ensure that European Union members attain the benchmarks for development assistance required under the Millennium Development Goals (S. Bianchi, 2005). However, tourism industry spokespersons have opposed the initiative, predicting a decline in airline passengers with a disastrous effect on a struggling aviation sector. For instance, the WTTC stated:

Aviation is a global industry whose benefits reach all sectors of society, and it provides a potential form of income for even the most remote areas. Therefore, encouraging people to travel has a beneficial effect on the economies of developing nations, not only in Africa but in Asia, Latin America and virtually every country in the world. As such, governments should encourage people to travel rather than taxing them for doing so (S. Bianchi, 2005).

The WTTC has been joined in this criticism by members of the aviation sector such as the Association of European Airlines which predicted such a levy could cripple the airline industry. Additionally the Airports Council International, the Asia Pacific Travel Retail Association, the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines, the Duty Free World Council, the International Air Transport Association, the Pacific Asia Travel Association and the Tax Free World Association collectively denounced the plan (Airports Council International, 2005). This suggests that the tourism sector's commitment to poverty alleviation through tourism is limited to voluntary options; regulatory measures are wholeheartedly opposed. However, in terms of both global equity (i.e. taxing the privileged majority who can assert their right to travel to assist

the poor majority who cannot) and environmental sustainability, such a levy is actually a very logical approach. The opposition exhibited by the WTTC, a main proponent of PPT, casts some doubt on the integrity of PPT which emanates from these sources.

5.4.7 Assimilation in the capitalist economy

Countries have long been under pressure to forego subsistence economics and join the global economy through engaging in global trade networks that underpin capitalist globalisation (Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies, 1999; Bennholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas & Von Werlhof, 2001). Tourism has had a special role to play in this effort as developing countries have been encouraged to attract international tourists in order to obtain foreign capital. To do this they have committed to building infrastructure such as airports and roads which are required to entice the TNCs in the hotel and tourism sector who are touted as the source of access to such tourists. The former adds to the heavy burden of debt that many of these countries are under and the latter sees these countries incorporated into the global trading system on unfair terms. Enloe has described this as the “tourism formula for development” (1989, p. 31). She states:

From its beginning, tourism has been a powerful motor for global integration. Even more than other forms of investment, it has symbolised a country’s entrance into the world community. Foreign-owned mines, military outposts and museum explorations have drawn previously ‘remote’ societies into the international system, usually on unequal terms. Tourism entails a more politically potent kind of intimacy. For a tourist isn’t expected to be very adventurous or daring, to learn a foreign language or adapt to local custom. Making sense of the strange local currency is about all that is demanded. Perhaps it is for this reason that international technocrats express such satisfaction when a government announces that it plans to promote tourism as one of its major industries. For such a policy implies a willingness to meet the expectations of those foreigners who want political stability, safety and congeniality when they travel. A government which decides to rely on money from tourism for its

development is a government which has decided to be internationally compliant... (1989, p. 31).

For many of these countries, ecotourism is the niche area where they are seen to hold a competitive advantage as their very underdevelopment implies that they have less damaged environments to sell to the international ecotourist. Pleumarom documents the pressure placed on southeast Asian nations in the wake of the late 1990s financial crisis to implement ecotourism strategies as a way to earn foreign income to service pressing debts (Pleumarom, 1999a).⁵⁴ Vivanco (2002) argues that the promotion of ecotourism parallels the promotion of the “Green Revolution” in agriculture in the 1970s as the newest, best path to development in the developing world. The comparison implies that we might later see drawbacks similar to the ecological and social damages that accompanied the Green Revolution.

Analysts such as Pleumarom (1994, 1999a, 1999d) and Vivanco (2002) see a hidden agenda in the pressure placed on developing countries to implement ecotourism strategies. This agenda includes achieving: debt repayments, sites for TNC investment, integration on unequal terms in global trading relationships, holiday opportunities for elite tourists but more importantly assimilation into the capitalist globalisation order. For instance, Vivanco describes the ecotourism imperative as seen in the IYE 2002 initiative as a coercive and homogenising force. According to Vivanco:

⁵⁴ However Pleumarom cogently warns that recent promotion of ecotourism as an export option by organisations such as the IMF and World Bank to a diversity of communities in a multitude of nations creates a real risk of oversupply (Pleumarom, 1994, 1999a).

After the events of 11 September, the globalisers' delusions of inevitable and universal Western modernity are under threat of collapse. With the drop in international tourism that has resulted from these events, ecotourism's promoters have, as expected, urgently reiterated their mission to bring development to those real and imagined hotbeds of potential anti-Western sentiment, cynically repeating concerns that it is the poor who are truly suffering the drop in tourism. What is worse, they will argue, is that nature's survival is at stake since without ecotourism's revenues people in the South apparently have no alternative to destroying it. We can surely expect that the IYE will now, more than ever, use its global pulpit to argue for ecotourism's central role if not inevitability in combating poverty and nature's demise, and its positive role in creating world peace and understanding. However, to do so would miss the true lessons of the globalist era. The attempt to force people everywhere into the same cultural, economic and political mould (which itself harbours deep contradictions) is bound to generate insecurity, resentment, conflict, and even ecological degradation (2002).

Indeed, many developing countries do use tourism as a means of escaping the constraints of subsistence and engaging with a wider market economy but in a context of an exploitative tourism industry and under pressures such as debt, SAPs and the dynamics of a cut-throat free market. Under such conditions ecotourism becomes an assimilationist force for capitalist globalisation. Such outcomes jeopardise the hopes of environmentalists, development advisers and NGOs to use ecotourism and other alternative tourisms as a method for a sustainable mixing of development with environmental conservation and cultural protection. However, despite the tendency for the tourism industry and elite tourists to usurp the promise of alternative tourism for their own benefit and thereby undermine its efficacy in fostering eco-humanistic transformations, alternative tourisms nonetheless manage to retain some promise when not subject to full marketisation by corporatised tourism.

5.5 Transformations through alternative tourism

The alternative tourism movements discussed earlier in this chapter demonstrate that tourism can achieve more than entertainment and profits. As was shown, ecotourism

CORPORATISED TOURISM

- Growth agenda
- Tourism in isolation
- Commercial profit
- Private sector driven
- Hedonistic focus

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

- Holistic agenda
- Tourism in holistic context
- Equity, justice & sustainability
- Civil society & government driven
- Educational focus

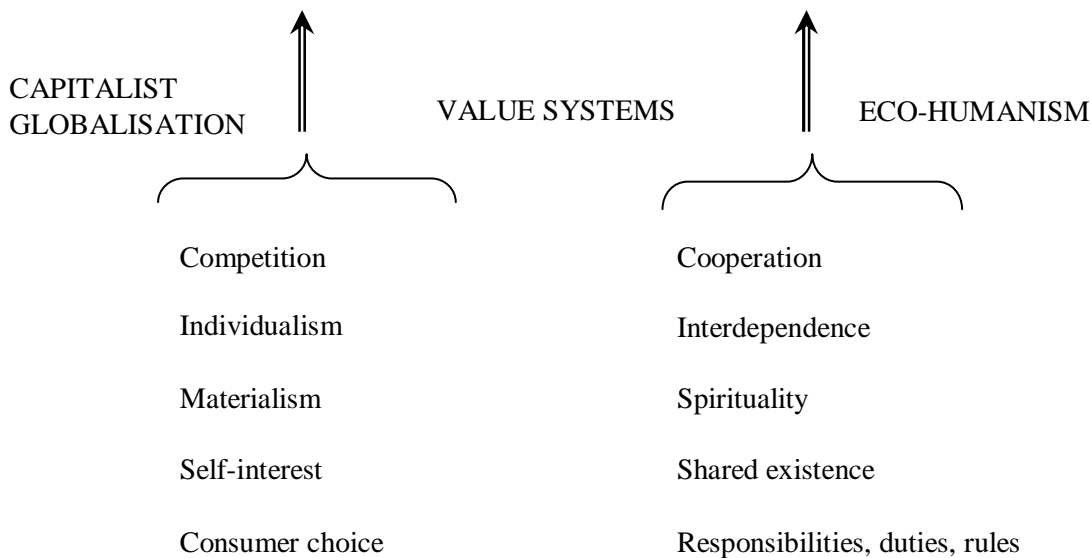


Fig. 5.2: Contrasting value systems for corporatised and alternative tourisms

and sustainability are underpinned by strong visions to develop a sound ecological relationship between tourism and the environment. The equity concerns of pro-poor tourism, fair trade in tourism, community-based tourism and justice tourism seek to overturn the exploitation and social polarisation that frequently accompany corporatised mass tourism. These alternative tourisms make their own unique contributions but they also collectively contribute to global transformation by reforming our understanding of the ways that societies, economies and ecologies can interrelate. Figure 5.2 provides a schema that contrasts the capitalistic values of

corporatised tourism with the eco-humanistic values associated with the alternative tourisms under discussion here.

Some advocates of alternative tourism are promoting it as a catalyst to the formation of humanistic relationships which could challenge the selfish and individualistic ethos of market fundamentalism and consumerism. As Wearing (2001, 2002a) has indicated, volunteer tourism opportunities offer the tourist a chance to reform their self-identity and form a relationship of “self-other” care which extends to the locals at the receiving destination as well as the local environment in which they tour. Such a solidarity could be viewed as the precursor to the global bonds that would be required to secure a truly “global village” (McLuhan, 1962).⁵⁵

Additionally the environmental consciousness fostered by ecotourism and volunteer tourism (Wearing, 2001) may counteract the displacement and lack of connection to place that globalisation fosters. Rather than having to return to traditional ways where many people were tied to the land, held intimate connection and knowledge of their environment and had to live within its ecological limits for survival’s sake, Wearing’s (2001) proposal suggests that contemporary globalised, mobile populations experiencing volunteer tourism can form an attachment to a place on their holidays which fosters an environmental ethic of care. Such a transformation might lead to an extension of this consciousness; that is, if the home and holiday environments are worthy of respect and care then all environments globally are also

⁵⁵ This could see equity move from being the province of national governments to being the province of global obligations. Such a development would provide the equity which is currently missing as the divide between developed and developing nations is exploited in the wealth accumulation process of capitalist globalisation. If wealth were fairly redistributed at a global level (in effect achieving the hope of the “new international economic order” envisioned in the 1970s), then communities would not be faced with the Hobbesian choice of abandoning all other traditional endeavours in order to sell themselves on the international tourism marketplace.

worthy of such care. Such a development could assist in the development of eco-humanism and thereby help address the ecological crisis Sklair foresees.⁵⁶

Another contribution of the alternative tourism movement to securing equity and sustainability and avoiding the twin crises is its role in maintaining economic and societal diversity. Such a vision inspires Vivanco's discussion of an alternative to corporatised tourism:

The task is how to forge conviviality and coexistence among peoples with profoundly divergent histories, beliefs and values. This will be achieved by acknowledging at the outset the strength in pluralism and self-determination, not by rejecting tourism and tourists, but by rejecting the monistic logic and political-economic structures underlying ecotourism's developmentalist fantasies and tragedies. In so doing, it may be possible to strengthen an alternative vision of public engagement, nature conservation, and tourism beyond the IYE's universalistic and self-serving vision (2002).

The preceding analysis indicates that alternative tourism niches such as volunteer tourism, community-based tourism and pro-poor tourism can envision tourism as an instrument for communities to include in their sustainable development toolkit as a supplement to subsistence and traditional activities. Prosser advocates keeping tourism in its proper place:

Tourism will be only one element in the local economy, possibly not even a dominant element. Perhaps it will be used as a product only in the earlier phases of development, and phased out later as the income gained from it is invested to improve agriculture and to diversify the economy. Thus, tourism would then be seen as an exploitable resource and product within a broader, longer term strategy of sustainability. Such a view of tourism enables it to be both exploitative and

⁵⁶ Analysts such as Sharpley (2002) are sceptical of the possibilities of moving tourism consumers to environmental awareness and action.

sustainable – it serves its economic and social purpose within a destination without destroying the natural and human resource base (1994, p. 36).⁵⁷

In keeping diverse lifeways alive rather than fostering the market fundamentalism of capitalist globalisation and the dependency that consumerism brings, these types of tourism hold the potential to secure equity, sustainability and quality of life rather than undermine them.

The global solidarity that tourism's cross-cultural encounter potentially offers has been envisioned as a source of change to global order as the narrow bonds of national solidarity (which shelter the social inequities of capitalist globalisation) give way to a formation of the "global village". Inayatullah proposes the possibility that world travel will fashion global governance:

Travel has begun the process of creating a narrative in which there is no longer any allegiance to a particular place. We are becoming deterritorialised, delinking ourselves from land and the nation. The loneliness that results from this discontinuity with history might be resolved not through the search of one place but the realization that the planet itself is home. While this is quite a conceptual jump, nation-states are not eternal. Moreover, humanity's survival may depend on moving to a new world order of identity, at the very least some form of global governance and planetary self (1995, p. 414).

Gossling contends that tourism has a key role to play in the development of cosmopolitan identities as people travel and lose a sense of belonging to a particular place or home (2002a, pp. 296-297). Similarly, sociologists Cohen and Kennedy boldly assert that "international tourism... contributes to the growth of globalism – a

⁵⁷ Wall's analysis of sustainable development in tourism versus sustainable tourism suggests: "The quest for sustainable tourism may be sufficient to meet the narrow interests of the tourism industry but the search for sustainability more broadly conceived, in which the tourism industry may be a partner and in which tourism is viewed as a means rather than an end, is likely to address more fundamental development goals" (1997b, pp. 47-48).

more intense feeling of common membership of the human collectivity” (2000, p. 212). Their support for this assertion comes from the inductive reasoning that travel provides multicultural experiences that dissolve the boundaries between people and help us to see our similarities and interdependencies. If this sense of globalism were to replace the current neoliberal system of capitalist globalisation, the inequities leading to social polarisation could be avoided as we move from our nationalistic perspectives to a more global solidarity.

All these observations forecast transformations over extended time as alternative tourisms slowly but steadily reform human relationships with each other and with nature. However a critical review of the fair trade in tourism movement suggests that reform may be insufficient in the face of a powerful system of capitalist globalisation which co-opts or undermines reformist efforts before they can crystallise into significant change. For instance, Mowforth and Munt have analysed FTT and noted it will only ever be a very small facet of the total of tourism activities and so its impact on the unfair structures of the global trading system will only be small (2003, p. 170).⁵⁸ It is also important to place such initiatives as fair trade in tourism in the larger context of the global market agenda such as the liberalisation being conducted under the GATS negotiations which are set to disadvantage small to medium enterprises and the informal sector in developing countries which is where the fair trade initiative is most likely to be situated (see Kalisch, 2001). As Ogle has asserted “from the beginning alternative trade has been limited (and changed) by the ‘unfair’ structures it sought to change, and in many ways the structure of alternative trade has

⁵⁸ Mowforth and Munt suggest that codes and regulations of transnationals or even more controversially, the more revolutionary reaction of localisation (a policy of encouraging local producerism and local consumerism) and reduction of western consumption might therefore be more effective policy measures (2003, p.170).

come to reflect that unjust system” (1994, p. 17). Ogle argues that alternative trade organisations which promote fair trade are still operating within the market system, so that no matter how they try to conduct trade “softly”, they are still subject to the rules and constraints of commercial viability. Ogle’s analysis leads to the conclusion that:

The logic of the system works against social change. While trade, alternative trade and ‘green’ economics as a whole are viewed from the narrow framework of business, this will always be the logic of the situation. Indeed, the main lesson from the experience of alternative trading is that, without a thoroughgoing political analysis and commitment to social change, the economic logic of the system will take over and corrupt or co-opt good intentions (Ogle, 1994, p. 19).

Pleumarom’s analysis of alternative tourism supports Ogle’s assessment. She claims:

Many parties concerned with tourism have been involved in efforts towards ‘better sharing the benefits’ of globalization through the development of grassroots-oriented tourism. We are all for people-centred projects, but there are good reasons to argue that these are bound to fail if the macro-economic climate is detrimental and even hostile to those goals. In other words, there is no place for a fairer and more sustainable tourism in this world under corporate rule, and viable alternatives will never thrive where a globalized economy controlled by a minority dictates its rules to local societies. Hence the corporate tourism industry must first fundamentally change their role and vision (Pleumarom, no date b).

Additionally, some analysts view the impacts of capitalist globalisation to be so detrimental to society and ecology that time is of the essence. The direness of the current situation is reflected in this comment by academic Raoul Bianchi:

Despite what has been said about sustainability and ethics, tourism development is proceeding at a scale and pace never witnessed before - particularly in the Mediterranean where I work - leading to the continued decimation of habitats and coastlines.

As I write this Greenpeace are occupying a hotel in the natural area of Cabo de Gata near Almeria where hotel developers have built a massive structure in a protected area. I have recently written about the moratorium in the Canary Islands which nevertheless has not prevented the authorities building more and more golf courses (up to 30 are planned on Gran Canaria alone!). As mobile capital continues to seek outlets for investment, property speculation continues to be rampant. In fact, the bulldozer, not the olive tree, is arguably the most common feature of the Mediterranean these days (2005).

Such a situation suggests that a revolutionary transformation is required and not a reformist approach.⁵⁹ Seton claims that to be truly effective, sustainable development will entail a “radical transformation in present-day economies... it requires a fundamental change in the way natural resources are owned, controlled and mobilized” (1999). Kevin Markwell, in his essay entitled “Ecotourism: Nature protected or nature commodified?” agrees that such a transformation is required: “... to expect that ecotourism, sustainable tourism, or indeed any form of ‘environmentally appropriate’ or ‘sensitive’ tourism, will transform our relations with nature, without a concomitant and widespread ecological transformation of society, is naive and simplistic” (1998, p.71). Bugnicourt has also cautioned about over-optimism on the capacities of alternative tourism to change things in the current context:

There is no doubt whatever that a change in the overall economic and social relations between industrialized and Third World countries and a consequent evolution of behaviour will be needed before there can be any real prospect of a tourism which no longer leaves itself open to the charge of colonialism, but brings people closer and offers the enriching discovery of new environments and different civilisations (Bugnicourt cited in Crick, 1989, p. 326).

⁵⁹ Sklair squarely sides with revolution “because I cannot accept the optimistic hope that capitalism can become much more humane globally than it already is...in my view the next step in the quest for human progress has to be the transformation of capitalist globalization into socialist globalization through the globalization of human rights” (2002, p. 324).

Mowforth and Munt claim there is:

...the need to politicise the tourism industry in order to promote its movement towards sustainability and away from its tendency to dominate, corrupt and transform nature, culture and society. The politicisation of the tourism industry would require a clarification and emphasis of the associations between prevailing power structures and the control of tourism developments, and a clear linking of the goal of reducing uneven and unequal development with the policies pursued by the tourism industry and the governments and international institutions which promote it.

Without this politicisation, sustainability will continue to be hijacked by the prevailing model of development, capitalism, and will increasingly fall into the service of the controllers of capital, the boards of directors of major transnational companies and other organisations which manage the industry. This tendency has already been apparent (2003, p. 113).

Whether conventional or alternative, a good deal of tourism today rests upon the ideology and order of the neoliberal market civilisation as it proposes to commodify and marketise people, places and cultures. Lanfant and Graburn conclude “alternative tourism while claiming to be ‘good tourism’ has not, in spite of its forceful declared opposition, broken radically with the ‘other tourism’. Alternative tourism, still included within the promotion and expansion of international tourism, may just be another stage” (1992, p. 112).⁶⁰

There is one alternative tourism that has firmly committed itself to the revolutionary task of overturning the injustice and inequities of corporatised tourism and capitalist

⁶⁰ When alternative tourism is sold through the market system, the providers of alternative tourism must deliver what the tourist consumer demands or their business will fold. Such pressures lead to a compromising of ethics and principles because the majority of tourists demand certain characteristics of their holiday experience, including quality accommodation, services of a given standard, time for rest and recreation, opportunities to take photos and purchase souvenirs which are iconic of holiday activities. Thus Kelly’s study of the One World Travel Tours unit of Community Aid Abroad found pressure to reduce the “study content” of their “study tours” and add more time for touring key tourism attractions and shopping (1995, p. 20). However, the “study content” was the essence of their tours as they aimed to educate Australians about the issues facing developing countries and hopefully secure their commitment to support aid and development in future. This case study reveals how a commercialised justice tourism experience can be pressured into becoming more like the corporatised tourism it is seeking to transform. In effect what was a tour with strong justice content shifted more to consumerism and entertainment due to the commercial pressures that exist in a competitive market context. This demonstrates the dynamic of the “culture-ideology of consumerism” very vividly.

globalisation, namely justice tourism. In particular the role of the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism and other NGOs in bringing tourism within the discussion of the World Social Forum is a development with profound implications. The World Social Forum (WSF) is a growing gathering of the world's civil society movements which challenge the dominance of the Washington Consensus and advocate for global justice. In conjunction with the assertion of developing country clout at the Cancun summit of the World Trade Organization in 2003, it is clear that the representatives of developing communities are seeking systemic change.

As introduced in Chapter four, the WSF put the tourism industry in its sights with a Global Summit on Tourism at the 2004 meeting in Mumbai. This gathering was intended to be a “result-oriented, participatory process with a long-term outcome for sustainable tourism” (World Social Forum – Tourism, 2004). The theme of this tourism session was “who really benefits from tourism?” and a call to “democratise tourism!” was released. The NGO that was a key organiser of the event, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), called for the WSF to advocate for a tourism that is “pro-people” (ECOT, 2003). Their vision stipulated: “Tourism interventions at the WSF will consolidate global efforts for tourism that is equitable, people centred, sustainable, ecologically sensible and gender just” (WSF-Tourism, 2004). During the WSF, an “Intercontinental Dialogue on the Impacts of Tourism” was held in the main session, four focused seminars on cases were presented and an activists’ strategy meeting of two days’ duration was convened. Representatives attended the activists’ strategy meeting from grassroots community organisations from around the globe and from major tourism NGOs such as ECOT, Tourism Concern, AKTE and Equations. As the declaration which came from this meeting

shows (see Appendix A), the participants in this gathering advocated forming a solidarity campaign to secure the rights and interests of people at the “grassroots” who bear the impacts of tourism. Simultaneously, they called for concerted action to sensitise the UNWTO and the WTTC to the needs and interests of ordinary people.

At the activists’ strategy meeting, discussions considered how the UN system could be utilised to make the UNWTO (recently admitted into the specialised agencies of the UN) responsive to the civil society movement which represents the people impacted by tourism rather than a tool of corporatised tourism (ECOT, 2004). Lastly, a plan of opposition to corporatised tourism was formed as participants committed themselves to investigate and address the impacts of GATS, leakages, structural adjustment, neoliberalism and exploitative labour practices (ECOT, 2004). Following on the success of the 2004 Mumbai gathering, this group created the Global Tourism Interventions Forum (GTIF), discussed earlier, to oversee these proposals and ensure that tourism discussions continue at future World Social Forums (as did occur at the 2005 Port Alegre, Brazil WSF meeting). The GTIF will in particular be “speaking back” to the powerful forces in corporatised tourism including TNCs, the UNWTO, World Bank, IMF, governments and others so that the voices of the “grassroots” in local communities around the globe will no longer go unheard at the global level (GTIF, 2005). Moreover, the GTIF would also be aligning itself with the global justice movement of the WSF in recognition of the fact that corporatised tourism emanates from capitalist globalisation.

The full impact of the justice tourism movement remains to be seen.⁶¹ The effectiveness of justice tourism has some obvious limits. For instance, the promoters of solidarity tourism are aware of its constraints. One website notes “But this still is an expensive solution: Solidarity Tourism suits travellers used to travelling in groups and in organised tours. Therefore, it is still far from being within the reach of all budgets” (Tourisme Solidaire, no date). Its impact is also limited by the fact that only a small group of individuals (niche market in the terms of the tourism industry) will be interested enough to use their holidays and money for such endeavours. However, despite these constraints, justice tourism may be able “to punch above its weight” as the small proportion of people who engage with it might be people occupying influential positions who can act as a vanguard for transformation.⁶² Certainly the institutionalisation of justice tourism through the formation of the GTIF provides an organisational structure with resources, power and influence which can carry out a sustained attack on the corporatised tourism system and oppose its social and environmental inequities. In light of the success of the French anti-globalisation NGO Attac in derailing the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in 1998 the threat posed by the GTIF to corporatised tourism should not be discounted.

⁶¹ Concerted research on justice tourists is still pending. Perhaps one of the few insights from the tourism literature to date is provided by Schwartz (1991) when he discusses the role of tourists in supporting the Tibetan uprising of 1987 against Chinese rule. Additionally there is the work by McGehee and Norman (2002) which demonstrates that participants in Earthwatch tours experience changed consciousness so that they begin linking the personal with the political and become more receptive to new social movements.

⁶² Such a possibility is suggested by the outcomes of a tour run by the Bush University. In July of 1997, Perth’s Anglican Archbishop Peter Carnley, Sydney QC Alec Shand, best-selling novelist Di Morrissey, former president of East Kimberley Shire Susan Bradley and an ABC television crew were members of a “Bush University” tour group run by the Ngarinyin Aboriginal community of Western Australia. Unexpectedly, they found themselves in a confrontation with the pastoralist running Drysdale River station which is home to the famous Guyan Guyan or Bradshaw paintings (Kirkwood, 1997). The pastoralist blocked their access to the Ngarinyin sacred sites in order to assert her rights of refusing access to her pastoral lease property. This experience inspired the influential tour group members who were shocked at the tensions revealed in this incident to publicise the event and to use their power and influence to work towards social justice outcomes for communities such as the Ngarinyin.

However, there are those who see a revolutionary agenda as too difficult and utopian to achieve. Capitalist globalisation is here to stay and so, they argue, it sets the parameters within which we must work. This includes some of the analysts referred to here including Garner mentioned in the ecotourism section and Mowforth and Munt whose analysis has been invaluable. Mowforth and Munt claim:

The industry is unlikely to change its modus operandi. There seems little prospect of changes to the dominant imperatives of capitalism and capital growth, and the growth in 'corporate consciousness' is unlikely to have more than minimal impact on global justice and equity in tourism. It is likely, however, that the industry will become the major proponent of 'sustainability' (2003, p. 301).

However, accepting this reality means a severe curtailment of the promise of alternative tourisms. As Anita Pleumarom has stated, tourism today is premised on more growth, more expansion and more development - even if it is ostensibly within the sustainable development paradigm. She warns:

...we may find that a stringent regulation of tourism, which involves a stricter limitation of tourist numbers and a halt to the unlimited spatial expansion of tourism, is better than further promoting tourism growth and hoping that this growth can be handled with 'good management', education of tourists, etc. (1999d, p. 8).

But can we follow Pleumarom's proposal of stringent regulation of tourism's numbers and expansion in this era of individual freedom, market rule and desire for material advancement? In fact it has been demonstrated in the earlier discussion that many of the niches of alternative tourism in effect work to expand and spread tourism rather than limit and restrict it. The tourism sector has usurped the values of alternative tourism on two fronts. In the first place, the UNWTO, the WTTC and others have co-opted the language of their opponents in order to diffuse the

opposition to both capitalist globalisation and corporatised tourism. Thus the UNWTO's "Liberalisation with a human face" campaign has usurped the language of poverty alleviation, sustainability and fair trade while still touting increasing liberalisation and privatisation (UNWTO, no date b). Secondly, the corporatised tourism industry has also harnessed the alternative tourism phenomenon to benefit from geographical spread and the market expansion associated with alternative tourism. As the mass tourism sector has peaked, the "new tourisms" provide new sources of profits, greater longevity and the bonus of being good public relations material to demonstrate commitment to responsible corporate practice.

This debate about reform versus revolution comes down to the familiar dichotomy introduced earlier in the discussion of the environmental movement, notably reformers versus radicals. The proponents of fair trade, pro-poor and responsible tourism claim that we have to work realistically within contemporary real world parameters and seek to carve out a niche for more equitable and just relations that will eventually have an impact on the larger system. The idealistic counter-argument of the radicals holds that to work within the realistic system of today is to countenance it, enhance its longevity and allow it to continue to wreak environmental and social havoc. They claim that the only answer to ending an unjust and unsustainable system is not to tinker on the side but to overhaul the system; this is the widespread ecological transformation to which Markwell (1998) refers. This debate is fundamental and its resolution will not be easy. Figure 5.3 provides a model of a continuum that ranges from the status quo, to mild reform, to radical transformation and applies these to both global order and the corporatised tourism system to illustrate the range of possibilities highlighted by this analysis.

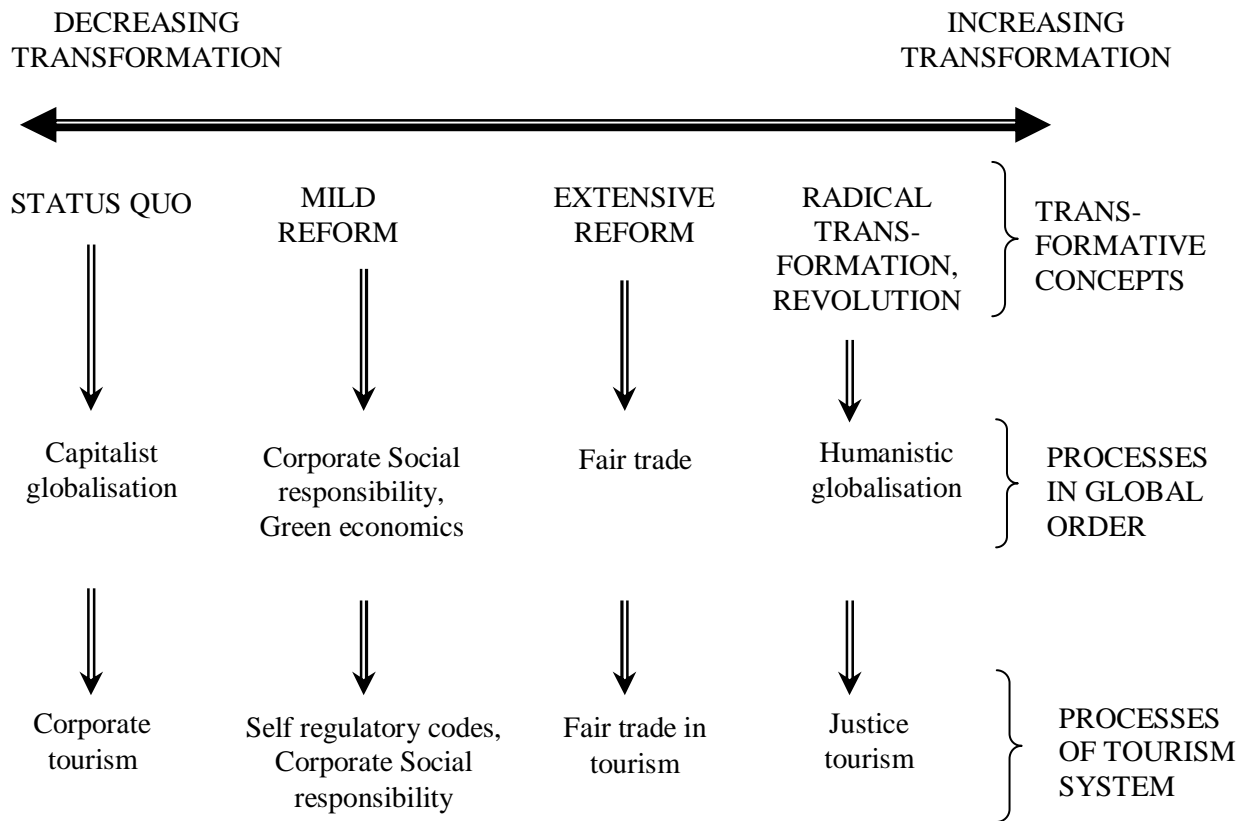


Figure 5.3: Transformative concepts applied to global order and tourism system

Perhaps changes will also be led by action by the host communities operating at the “grassroots” where the transformations in tourism are most needed. One recent example which points the way to the seldom noticed transformations undertaken in localities around the globe is the formation of a workers’ run hotel at the Hotel Bauen in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Hotel Bauen went bankrupt and the workers lost their jobs during the 2001 economic crisis. In 2003 the workers occupied the building and set up a workers’ cooperative to re-open the hotel and secure their livelihoods (Dangl, 2005). This example offers a direct challenge to the capitalist

model and as could be expected, the workers were threatened with eviction. Whether successful or not in this instance, the case of the Hotel Bauen indicates that despite the rhetoric of market ideology that “there is no alternative” to the market system, there are in fact many alternatives available for exploration and utilisation which possess vast potentials in fostering both alternative tourisms and alternative globalisations.

In her consideration of the profound changes required to overturn destructive capitalist globalisation, Stewart Harawira recommends pedagogies of hope and a “vision for a new eco-humanism that is about global peace, global justice, and the sanctity of collective life” (2005a, p. 160). Perhaps this is the ultimate promise of each of the alternative tourisms examined here as they teach participants new ways of being with each other and with nature.

5.6 Conclusion

Despite the lack of a definitive conclusion that alternative tourisms result in alternative globalisations, it is still clear from the preceding discussion that alternative tourisms are worthy of attention for the roles they play in making another form of globalisation possible, particularly in fostering “cosmopolitan consciousness” and fostering environmental ethics. As stated earlier, Gossling contends that tourism has a key role to play in the development of cosmopolitan identities (2002a, pp. 296-297) which is a key attribute of a more global consciousness. This formation of an identity wider than current dominant nationalist allegiances is a prerequisite for addressing the social polarisation crisis that Sklair

identified and is a key facet in the movement to the humanist/ socialist globalisation that he envisions. Additionally, various forms of alternative tourism have been shown to be conducive to leading people into a changed relationship with nature - a pre-condition to avoiding the ecological crisis that Sklair predicts due to capitalist globalisation. In particular, ecotourism and volunteer tourism have been specifically designated as paths for moving from an anthropocentric paradigm to an environmental ethic based upon biocentrism in which the rights of nature are accorded respect.

Whether Sklair is correct in his assessment that the impacts of capitalist globalisation are terminally damaging and that reform is not possible under this system is subject to debate. Certainly the fostering of the “there is no alternative” (TINA) syndrome serves the interest of the supporters of capitalist globalisation but there are many individuals and groups around the world who are resisting capitalist globalisation and imagining and creating alternative globalisations. The resistance that the Multilateral Agreement on Investment incurred and the success of the campaign to derail it will hearten those who expect a growing rejection of the dominant ideology of market civilisation. The formation of the Global Tourism Interventions Forum and the campaign to join wider social movements opposing capitalist globalisation particularly through the mechanism of the World Social Forum, clearly identify justice tourism as seeking not only to alter unjust, inequitable and unsustainable tourism but also to play a part in the much larger strategy of inaugurating another form of just globalisation. The next few years will reveal the ways in which the anti-corporatised tourism movement will interact with and influence the anti-capitalist

globalisation movement. It seems likely that they will learn from and assist each other in their efforts to show that “another world is possible”.

This chapter has attempted to show the ways in which an alternative tourism movement may contribute to the creation of another form of globalisation. As was shown, at their best, these forms of alternative tourism hold the seeds for potentially profound change. Thus ecotourism could lead to the development of an alternative consciousness which could see individuals and society accept the extension of rights to nature itself. Sustainability offers tourism the notion of limits and appropriate prioritisation as tourism becomes embedded in social and environmental contexts and not viewed merely as an economic phenomenon. Fair trade in tourism proposes forming equitable terms of trade so that the hosts and employees of tourism are no longer exploited to provide profits for the industry and inexpensive holidays for tourists. Pro-poor tourism reminds us that the focus of tourism should be meeting the developmental needs of the host community; all of it and not just the elite.

Community-based tourism indicates that communities may choose to initiate and control their engagements with tourism thus using it as one tool at their disposal to secure the future they wish and securing a diversity of lifeways rather than incorporation into the market mould of market civilisation. Peace through tourism suggests that the tourism encounter can be used to seek out both truth and justice in order to reconcile peoples and secure the harmonious co-existence that is imperilled by social and environmental crises. Volunteer tourism offers “another way of doing tourism” so that holidays become a chance to contribute to the restoration of natural environments and addressing social problems while simultaneously building a self-identity based on caring relationships rather than iconoclastic individualism and

isolating selfishness. Lastly, justice tourism proposes a direct intervention to create a new and more just world order. Individually, these are very powerful forces for transformation and collectively they are potentially formidable.

The next chapter moves to a micro-level case study of the Ngarrindjeri community and their tourism facility, Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre in South Australia. This case study illustrates some of the dynamics explored in Chapters two through five. The Ngarrindjeri community have faced the damaging impacts of capitalist globalisation and have developed an agenda of resistance. Simultaneously they run Camp Coorong seeking reconciliation, justice and sustainability and thereby may be playing their small role in fostering the eco-humanism and transformations advocated by Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b) and Sklair (2002).

