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### A Review of "Tourism and sustainability: development, globalisation and new tourism in the Third World (3rd ed.)"

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Tourism and sustainability: development, globalisation and new tourism in the Third World (3rd ed.)**, by Martin Mowforth and Ian Munt, New York, Routledge, 2009, 448 pp., US\$196 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-415-41402-9

The book critically explores issues and challenges that have emerged around the debate of development, globalisation and sustainability using the lenses of tourism. It places local discussion of these debates within a global context. The book has 12 chapters that are connected to one another and are knit together by different case studies.

The first chapter sets the platform for the debate presented in this book. The interrelationship among key themes and keywords is presented in this chapter. Chapter 2 discusses multiple meanings of the three contested concepts of sustainability, globalisation and development. The relationship between power, ethics and contested nature of these concepts and their influence on how tourism is produced and consumed across the globe is explored in this chapter. Chapter 3 places power as the pivot of tourism analysis. Three concepts are used to substantiate the relationship between power and tourism: hegemony, discourse and ideology.

Chapter 4, which carries the basis of the argument in the book, regards sustainability as a contested concept, a concept that is “socially and politically constructed” and reflects the interests and values of those involved. It also presents new forms of tourism and communication tools used to convey them. Chapter 5 provides analysis of tourists who identify themselves with new forms of tourism, with the class distinction playing a great part in these new tourism paradigms. The authors argue that holidays have moved beyond mere relaxation towards the opportunity to study and learn, to experience the “authentic other” through varieties of market segments.

Chapter 6 presents sustainability as a part of a broader environmental debate between First and Third World contest for recognition and authority. The chapter dissects two facets of sustainability: on the one hand, an environmental or ecologically centred meaning of sustainability as protecting and enhancing resources and biodiversity; and, on the other, an attempt to sustain cultural products for the benefit of (predominantly) First World new middle class tourists. Chapter 7 reflects on how all the players in the tourism industry have immersed themselves in the sustainability debate by taking different standpoints, driven by varying interests. With the call to make tourism a “fair” business, the authors argued that little or nothing is known about fair trade in services, let alone fair trade in the hospitality sector. Perhaps the most significant difference is that fair trading organizations are non-profit-making, and those small independent tour operators who have adopted some quasi-fair trade elements also need to ensure commercial viability. Chapter 8 advocates for community empowerment through involvement and equitable benefits sharing. The authors argue that local communities in Third World countries reap few benefits from tourism because they have little control over the ways in which the industry is developed. These

communities cannot match the financial resources available to external investors and their views are rarely heard. The chapter focuses on communities that receive tourists and looks at their levels of power, control and ownership of tourism business.

Chapter 9 touches on the phenomenon of urban tourism. Mowforth and Munt argue that currently we are living in an increasingly urbanised world, and the trend is likely to increase. Instead of being attraction sources, cities present undeniable problems that work rather to repel tourists with the root causes coming from political, economic or social stances. The chapter assesses whether the new forms of tourism, particularly heritage and slum/reality tourism, can assist the poor in their development, given the nature of “tours”, the ownership, control and power of these activities being not in the hands of the local communities who are being helped out of the shackles of poverty.

In assessing the politics of tourism, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and other organizations have set the parameters of tourism planning, promotion, identification of tourism products, investment and infrastructure construction policies in Third World countries. The important question here is “Who benefits from planning and policy formulation and who controls these decision-making processes”? How can tourism industry direct its efforts, policies and energies towards securing provision of the basic human needs to the poor if decisions are to be made by “outsiders”? These are some of the key issues that are covered in Chapter 10. Chapter 11 questions the role of tourism in poverty reduction in Third World countries. The chapter concludes by analysing pro-poor tourism practices as a tool of enhancing human security and justice, and what role tourism plays in such events. The book concludes by situating power and uneven development at the critical point in understanding contemporary tourism. And thus words like sustainability and development are, arguably, socially constructed and continually contested between different interest groups.

Discussion in this book is built on three key themes: (1) uneven and unequal development, (2) power and (3) globalisation. The themes underlie the relationship between First and Third Worlds and how inequalities perpetuate the uneven and unequal development between them, with Third World being recipients of what First World wants. In the authors’ own words, “this book is not about sustainability and Third World tourism, rather it is about sustainable Third World tourism, with the aim of addressing how socio-cultural, economic and political processes operate on and through tourism” (p. 369). The utilisation of case studies from Third World countries in revealing the “depth” of issues being discussed complements the book, which gives an overview of how tourism is produced and consumed in these areas. Overall, the quality of writing and up-to date analysis of issues facing tourism in Third World makes the book highly commendable for individuals interested in or dealing with different sectors of tourism, especially those who want to appreciate tourism in a broader perspective.

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