



## Destructive creation: capital accumulation and the structural violence of tourism

Bram Büscher & Robert Fletcher

To cite this article: Bram Büscher & Robert Fletcher (2016): Destructive creation: capital accumulation and the structural violence of tourism, Journal of Sustainable Tourism

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1159214>

 View supplementary material 

 Published online: 06 Apr 2016.

 Submit your article to this journal 

 View related articles 

 View Crossmark data 

# Destructive creation: capital accumulation and the structural violence of tourism

Bram Büscher<sup>a,b,c</sup> and Robert Fletcher<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Sociology of Development and Change, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands; <sup>b</sup>Department of Geography, Environmental Management & Energy Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa; <sup>c</sup>Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

## ABSTRACT

Tourism is not merely a capitalist practice but a central practice through which capitalism sustains itself. Precisely how tourism “products” become capital and the types of violence this process entails, however, has not yet been systematically theorized or investigated. Building on Noel Castree’s six principles of commodification, we explore how tourism becomes capital, understood as “value in motion”, and how this process not only provokes various forms of material violence but can become a form of (structural) violence in its own right. Based on research in tourism settings in Southern Africa and Latin America and general trends in international tourism, we argue that three integrated forms of structural violence to both humans and non-human natures are especially prominent, namely the systematic production of inequalities, waste and “spaces of exception”. As a global industry crucially dependent on integrated material and discursive forms of value creation, we also show that these forms of structural violence are often rendered invisible through branding. We conclude that tourism uniquely combines these three forms of structural violence to enable a move from Schumpeter’s famous creative destruction to “destructive creation” as a key form of violence under capitalism.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 August 2015  
Accepted 9 February 2016

## KEYWORDS

Tourism; capital; value;  
violence; inequality; waste

## Introduction

In South Africa, the Emoya Luxury Hotel and Spa company offers tourists an opportunity to “stay in our unique Shanty Town... and experience traditional township (informal settlement style) living within a safe Private Game Reserve environment” (<http://www.emoya.co.za>). Within its 270-hectare property outside Bloemfontein, the company has constructed a cluster of simulated shanties that can accommodate “up to 52 guests” and are considered ideal for “team building, braais, (a South African barbecue), fancy theme parties and an experience of a lifetime” (<http://www.emoya.co.za/p23/accommodation/shanty-town-for-a-unique-accommodation-experience-in-bloemontein.html>). As the company describes this experience:

Millions of people are living in informal settlements across South Africa. These settlements consist of thousands of houses also referred to as Shacks, Shantys or Makhukhus. A Shanty usually consists of old corrugated iron sheets or any other waterproof material which is constructed in such a way to form a small “house” or shelter where they make a normal living. A paraffin lamp, candles, a battery operated radio, an outside toilet (also referred to as a long drop) and a drum where they make fire for cooking is normally part of this lifestyle. Now you can experience staying in a Shanty within the safe environment of a private game reserve. This is the only

**CONTACT** Bram Büscher  [bram.buscher@wur.nl](mailto:bram.buscher@wur.nl)

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1159214>.

© 2016 Taylor & Francis

Shanty Town in the world equipped with under-floor heating and wireless internet access! (<http://www.emoya.co.za/p23/accommodation/shanty-town-for-a-unique-accommodation-experience-in-bloemfontein.html>)

This example captures the central theme of this paper: the intimate relationship among tourism, capital accumulation and structural violence. It is by now well established that tourism is, in its core, a capitalist practice and that, in turn, tourism has an important role in sustaining and expanding global capitalism (Fletcher, 2011a; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Robinson, 2008). What has seen less attention is precisely how tourism destinations become capital, defined following Marx as *value in motion*. According to Marx, value in capitalism (which in Marxian terms brings together use and exchange value) is the “universal equivalent”; it finds its general expression in money, occasionally taking the shape of commodities that embody particular use-values (Marx, 1976). In turn, money or commodities become capital only when they circulate and move, meaning capital must become “an end in itself, for the valorization of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement” (Marx, 1976, p. 253).

This of course makes sense with respect to tourism, considering how the activity is supposed to move people to do something, experience something, see something, be somewhere else, and even be something (or somebody) else. Tourists become bodies in motion in and on planes, trains, boats, bicycles, airport walkways and so forth. For operators and service-providers, tourist bodies become the exchangeable, circulating “assets” that render their infrastructure profitable (as signified by the familiar tourism-dictum of getting the most “bums in beds”). Yet, precisely how all of this bodily motion becomes a form of capital that is itself set in motion, and the types of violence this process entails, has not yet been systematically theorized or investigated. While tourism has often been described as promoting the “commodification” of landscapes and people (see e.g. Greenwood, 1977; West & Carrier, 2004), how exactly this process occurs has been left largely unexplained. To begin with, the question of what is the commodity in tourism is not clear-cut. Tourism is not a discrete item but a complex *process* in which the “product” on offer is generally a diverse constellation of entities including such intangible “background elements” as the overall ambiance of a location (Briassoulis, 2002). Next, the question of how value circulates in tourism is complex too; it is not the tourists’ bodies actually in motion that constitute the tourism “product” but the places and people they visit and the experiences obtained in the process. How precisely do these components come together as tourism capital, defined as “value in motion”?

The process of commodification in tourism is far less straightforward than is usually portrayed in the tourism literature. This process, in turn, entails various forms of violence that also have not yet been systematically analysed or theorized (see Ojeda & Devine, in press). While most previous accounts have focused on the relationship between tourism and direct physical violence (see Andrews, 2014; Fletcher, 2011b; Phipps, 2004), the role of *structural* violence in tourism development has been less explored (but see Devine, 2014). This is due in part to a continued bias in considering “the rending of flesh with the intention to harm” as the “foundational definition of violence” (Nordstrom, 2004, p. 60–61). Yet, Nordstrom considers this definition misleading, asserting that “violence isn’t intended to stop with the crippling of physical bodies. Violence is employed to create political acquiescence; it is intended to create terror, and thus political inertia; it is intended to create hierarchies of domination and submission based on the control of force” (Nordstrom, 2004, p. 60–61). An expanded definition to encompass what is often called “structural” violence (e.g. Tyner, 2016; Žižek, 2008) – that inherent in societal forms to which many people contribute indirectly but for which no particular person is directly responsible – thus helps to reveal a more subtle and multifaceted relationship between tourism and violence. Tyner (2016), for instance, argues that violence should be seen as an “abstraction” from concrete circumstances that is then selectively applied to particular dynamics according to the logics of a dominant mode of production. In this way, “our a priori abstractions of violence” – given in by the dominant mode of production – “mask certain actions – and most inactions – as violent” (Tyner, 2016 p. 19, 22). An expanded understanding thus allows actions

and inactions that inflict suffering indirectly to be categorized as forms of *structural* violence, a perspective we adopt herein.

In turn, these twin dynamics of commodification and violence in tourism are themselves intimately related in myriad ways. As a global industry, tourism depends upon the structural violence inherent in the general patterns of spatially uneven development across the world (Harvey, 2006; Robinson, 2008). Additionally, capital accumulation via tourism commonly functions as a form of structural violence in its own right. This accumulation then gives rise to further forms of structural violence in terms of the social and environmental costs it exacts in the locations in which it operates. Moreover, as the simulated shantytown example introduced at the outset makes clear, through tourism the structural violence perpetrated within the overarching society (as well as within the tourism industry itself) can itself be harnessed as the further source of value, functioning, among others, as a form of what Klein (2007) calls “disaster capitalism”. In these ways, we argue, in its function as a prime form of capitalist expansion (Fletcher, 2011a), tourism development can be seen as one of the central ways in which the structural violence foundational to capitalism is perpetuated as well (see also Devine, 2014; Tyner, 2016).

Building on Noel Castree’s (2003) six principles of commodification, we theorize how tourism destinations become capital, understood as “value in motion”, and how this process not only provokes various forms of material violence but can be a form of structural violence. Drawing on our extensive research in tourism settings in Southern Africa and Latin America as well as general trends in international tourism, we show how tourism as capital not only systematically produces inequalities, waste and “spaces of exception” – three integrated forms of structural violence to both humans and non-human natures – but also preys on these forms of violence to offer new tourism experiences, a dynamic akin to Klein’s (2007) “disaster capitalism”. We observe, however, that for most forms of tourism, an intense process of branding in the actual destinations helps render this structural violence invisible in ways that are essential to the commodification of tourism “products” themselves. We conclude by arguing that tourism, as a global industry crucially dependent on integrated material and discursive forms of value creation, seems to have inverted Schumpeter’s famous creative destruction to deliver “destructive creation” as another key form of violence under capitalism.

Before continuing, one important caveat is in order, namely that this paper is predominantly a theoretical exercise, even though it includes many concrete examples and is deeply informed by our empirical research on tourism over the last 15 years. Hence, much of what we analyse are theoretical “ideal-types” whose logics we try to understand. In empirical practice, these logics are of course always compromised, contradictory and more nuanced. Moreover, we are not arguing that tourism is *only* about (structural) violence, as it is obviously also (about) much more, an essential point that we elaborate in the conclusion. Yet, as the link between tourism and violence has not yet been given the attention it deserves, it is worthwhile to focus rather single-mindedly on the (ideal-typical) logics of this link. In this way, we hope to add to the debate on tourism and violence by offering conceptual clarity as well as some theoretical possibilities of where actual tourism realities might be heading.

## Tourism as capital

In order to understand tourism as capital, it is first important to clarify how tourism entails a process of capitalist commodification. Capital as “value in motion”, after all, crucially depends on commodification as the process that enables things to become valuable in capitalist terms and hence suitable for circulation. In other words, the process of commodification creates tourism “products” that can be turned into circulating exchange value and hence capital. Here, we base our analysis on Castree’s foundational analysis, where he distinguishes six central principles of commodification (2003; all quotes from pages 279–283):

- (1) privatization, which “refers to the assignation of legal title to a named individual, group or institution. The title gives more-or-less exclusive rights of the owner to dispose of that which is named by the title as they wish”;
- (2) alienability: “the capacity of a given commodity, and specific classes of commodities, to be physically and morally separated from their sellers”;
- (3) individuation: “the representational and physical act of separating a specific thing or entity from its supporting context. This involves putting legal and material boundaries around phenomena so that they can be bought, sold and used by equally ‘bounded’ individuals, groups or institutions (like a firm)”;
- (4) abstraction: “a process whereby the qualitative specificity of any individualized thing (a person, a seed, a gene or what-have-you) is assimilated to the qualitative homogeneity of a broader type or process”. This takes two forms, namely *functional* abstraction (“looking for real and classifiable *similarities* between otherwise *distinct* entities as if the former can be separated from the latter unproblematically”) and *spatial* abstraction (this “involves any individualized thing in one place being treated as *really the same* as an apparently similar thing located elsewhere”);
- (5) valuation: a movement from intrinsic value to “labour values” and from use value to “exchange” value; and
- (6) displacement which entails “something appearing, phenomenally, as something other than itself” or, conversely, “one set of phenomena manifesting themselves in a way that, paradoxically, occludes them”. In this way, “commodities thus constitutively conceal an intertwined process where workers *and* the environment are harmed systematically (barring state intervention or corporate constraint)”.

Referring to these principles, we are now in a position to more fully describe the complex process by which tourism is commodified. The application of some of these principles to tourism “products” is quite straightforward while with others it is less so. *Privatization*, for instance, is easily described in most tourism destinations, where individual parcels and facilities are owned by discrete actors. *Valuation* is usually a similarly straightforward process, whereby the intrinsic and use values of a given activity (from cooking a meal to making a bed to driving a vehicle to having sex) are converted into monetary exchange value through its inclusion in the tourism market. Whether these processes of privatization and valuation are legitimate or accepted is of course not taken into account here, but we will come back to this later.

How other principles of commodification apply to tourism is less immediately clear. Consider *alienability*. Many tourism products do not have the capacity “to be physically and morally separated from their sellers”, as often they are part of landscapes, sites, cultural or natural phenomena or are in fact the “sellers” themselves. Often it is derivatives (postcards, names, images, miniatures and so forth) that are alienable although they are so without (necessarily) impacting on the tourism attraction from which they are derived. At other times, it is the experiences created via the product of tourism labour that are the alienable elements in the exchange.

The *individuation* component of tourism commodification is related to this and also somewhat convoluted. In some instances, this can be quite simple, as when a specific landscape feature (i.e. a waterfall) is enclosed within privatized space and a fee charged for its viewing. In other forms of tourism, however, this dynamic is far more complicated. How does one, for instance, individuate a specific “culture” (i.e. the “Maasai”) for commodification as a tourism product? In this case, the individuals and the attributes comprising the “product” must be clearly delineated, reified and abstracted from their living, fluid reality and presented in an essentialized form that gives them simultaneously a rigidity and capacity to circulate as generic imagery, a process Greenwood (1977) famously called selling “culture by the pound”. The social costs of this process, also called the “Disneyfication” of culture, have been exhaustively documented (see e.g. Bruner, 2004; Greenwood, 1977; MacCannell, 1999).

This, in turn, facilitates the process of *abstraction*, wherein the tourism product is further divorced from its supporting reality to become part of a class of products in which one can stand in for

another. Continuing our previous example, “the Maasai” becomes a generic category wherein one group of individuals become exchangeable for another each of which represents the general category of which it is considered paradigmatic. In a similar way, “the Maasai” as a whole become abstracted as an example of indigenous people in general to be experienced as a particular yet “categorized” form of life (Bruner, 2004). Likewise, one can “scuba dive”, undertaking what is understood as the same activity in a wide variety of diverse locations from Mexico to Thailand to Australia, in relation to which “coral reef” becomes an abstract category filled in by particular seascapes as well.

In this way, tourism commodification resonates strongly with the tensions that Smith identifies in the dialectic between differentiation and equalization in uneven capitalist development more generally (2008, chapter 4). In tourism, destinations and sites must be different, but also familiar enough to be recognized as relatively interchangeable forms of tourism capital. In other words, the equalization achieved through commodification of tourism experiences paradoxically depends on their being different to a certain degree. In this way, contends Debord (1967, p. 94), “tourism – human circulation packaged for consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities – is the opportunity to go and see what has been banalised. The economic organisation of travel to different places already guarantees their *equivalence*”. In other words, the value and use value in tourism commodities are the same (namely, tourism experiences) but they are marketed as different in the exchange process. This is obviously something that many tourists do sometimes realize, and that can lead to a disjuncture between what they had hoped to experience (something “authentic”, incredible, beautiful, unique, etc.) and what they actually experience (something slightly or considerably less than “authentic”, incredible, beautiful, unique, etc.) (MacCannell, 1999).

This leads to the final component of the commodification process, *displacement*, essentially a form of commodity fetishism whereby the actual inputs (labour etc.) making up the tourism process are concealed by what is commonly termed a “tourism bubble” insulating clients from the behind-the-scenes reality of the products they consume (Carrier & Macleod, 2005). In this way, as Harvey (1989, p. 351) asserts, tourism perpetrates “a free-wheeling denial of the complexity of the world, and a penchant for the representation of it in terms of highly simplified rhetorical proposition...Travel, even imaginary and vicarious, is supposed to broaden the mind, but it just as frequently ends up confirming prejudices”. Higgins- Desbiolles (2009, p. 68–69) in this respect refers to the “culture-ideology of consumerism” that underpins the commodification of tourism inputs whereby rich people’s “right” to consume travel and holiday displace the contradictions that make this possible and (seemingly) legitimate in the first place.

As a brief illustration of how several of these components coalesce in a commodified tourism “product”, consider again the simulated shantytown from the introduction. First and foremost, this exists within a privatized space and is given a monetary exchange value through its offer as a stay for a rate of 550 Rand (about US \$44) per person per night. The place is then individuated as a space distinct from the surrounding landscape and abstracted, both functionally and spatially, as a simulacrum of a generic shantytown experience. The experience is thus rendered alienable, and the revenue gained from this process actually alienated, through appropriation of the surplus value of the labour invested in constructing the product, which in this case is displaced through obfuscation of this labour and the spectacularization of the unequal social and racial relations surrounding it. In sum, despite the common contention that tourism entails commodification of a variety of phenomena, how this process actually occurs is far from straightforward in the analysis of actual tourism developments and products.

A more detailed analysis of this process, moreover, serves to highlight some of the dynamics that have enabled “tourism, that perfect practice of mobility and exchange, to emerge as one of the world’s largest single industries” (Haraway, 1991, p. 168). It could only have done so if it was not merely a capitalist practice but indeed a central practice through which capitalism sustains itself (Fletcher 2011a), which is why it is crucial to further conceptualize tourism as capital. Based on the process of commodification, tourism becomes capital when the value generated through the commodification process starts circulating to become a dynamic (and uneven) process whereby money

or resources are invested in order to generate more money or resources. Tourism capital, then, mobilizes tourism resources as part of a broader circulation of value that inheres in and at the same time supersedes those same resources. This, ironically, gives the “authentic” that is criticized so effectively by West and Carrier (2004) another connotation because through the process of their rendering as capital, commodified tourism products lose (a part of) their perceived authenticity, while what becomes authenticated is in fact capital itself. This process — here again, to be sure, theorized in a generic sense — is what must become “an end in itself” and what gives tourism-as-capital its *structural* nature. In practice, this comes down to the governance and management of the highly complex mix of tourism infrastructure, the circulation of tourist bodies, different political economies of expectation and a suite of environmental, social, political, economic and historical contexts that together enable the circulation of tourism capital (see Richter, 1989). Part of this is also the production and exploitation of structural violence to which we now turn.

### Tourism and structural violence

Analysis of the tourism commodification process illuminates the structural violence involved in the process as well. As a global phenomenon, the rise and spread of capitalism as a whole has been grounded in multiple forms of violence, both direct/physical and structural, from the primitive accumulation spurring the accumulation cycle to the accumulation by dispossession affording its continuation and expansion (Harvey, 2006). As a capitalist industry, then, in its essence tourism can be seen as itself a product of structural violence inhering in the uneven development leading to the economic and social difference that forms the basis for most of the international tourism industry. In part, this is due to its often direct perpetuation of the accumulation by dispossession dynamic in displacing local residents from sites of tourism development (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Blázquez et al., 2011). In its practice, moreover, tourism commonly exacerbates this same structural violence by exploiting local people and environments as the basis for capital accumulation repatriated elsewhere (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

In this, we identify three main forms of structural violence: production of inequality, waste and spaces of exception. These forms of structural violence are, of course, not unique to tourism, but they do, as we will show, acquire certain typical features through tourism. Moreover, they provide further opportunities for development of tourism capital, as in our shantytown example, where the general structural violence of the capitalist system, out of which the tourism industry emerges, is harnessed as a source of value for further accumulation as per Klein’s (2007) discussion of disaster capitalism. In this example, indeed, the very suffering of those living in real shantytowns is commodified in all the ways previously described as the basis for the private capture of the expanding process of the circulation of tourism capital. Koot ([in press](#)) describes a similar dynamic in which tourism around the Kalahari Bushmen is marketed in part on the promise to help alleviate the poverty created by the people’s marginal incorporation within Southern African societies. In situations like these, the cycle of structural violence comes full circle, something we will come back to below.

This total process, we contend, depends upon but also reverses Schumpeter’s classic formulation of capitalism as a process of “creative destruction”, upon which Harvey frequently draws. It can also be seen as a cycle of *destructive creation*, wherein besides tearing down the old to make way for the new capitalism seeks to harness its (self)destruction through structural forms of violence as the basis of value creation itself. The reason we emphasize this reversal is that it allows us to acknowledge both the violence in tourism and the ways in which this is embedded within the production of creativity and even joy and fun. Violence and destruction for some, in other words, become sources of tremendous creativity (and enjoyment) for others. The tourism industry is replete with examples of this process, from the widespread practice of slum tourism in actual (as opposed to simulated) neighbourhoods impoverished by dynamics of global capital (Dürr & Jaffe, 2012) to so-called “last chance” or “extinction” tourism to visit endangered species and vanishing glaciers (Leahy, 2008; Lemelin et al., 2013) to sex tourism based on the commodification of (mostly young women’s) bodies

rendered as bare life through exclusion from the formal productive economy (Clift & Carter, 2000). In this final example, indeed, the three main forms of structural violence we highlight – inequality, waste, and spaces of exception – come together in the space of these bodies themselves.

### **Production of inequality**

Tourism, as any form of commodity production, produces inequalities. At the same time, tourism *depends* upon inequalities. One could even say that the *sine-qua-non* of tourism is inequality, although this is more usually couched as “distinction” (Bourdieu, 1984). As previously noted, tourism destinations or offerings distinguish themselves through presentation as unequal from others, although usually within standard (commodified) categories of abstraction that make sense to tourists and within the overarching tourist political economy. Hence, the abstract category of “safari” includes both a self-drive through a public park and being driven around in a private reserve but they make for two unequal experiences, while also enabling tourists to generate forms of distinction based on yet other modes of inequality (their earning abilities, access to networks, etc.; see Büscher, 2016). Both modes of inequality – as socioeconomic and as distinction – feed on each other in tourism to produce structural inequality: inequalities necessary to maintain tourism as capital.

There are many elements in understanding how this works, but a first foundational one is how tourism as a commodity is socially alienated from its producers. Very often, this is a direct form of alienation when local communities are (violently) expropriated from the land to make space for tourism (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Brondo 2013; West & Carrier 2004). Yet here, following Tyner (2016), we focus on a more abstract process that is common to all forms of capitalist production, namely the appropriation of the surplus value of workers’ labour, for which workers are paid a wage that allows for the alienation of the products of this labour by the owners of capital. But what exactly is the “product” in this case? If the essential tourism product is a certain experience, then what exactly is the workers’ contribution to this experience that is alienated in its commodification as a form of tourism? There are a number of aspects to this dynamic. The most straightforward is of course the labour workers perform to create the tourism infrastructure itself, including work as builders, cooks, cleaners, drivers and so forth. But there are additional important dimensions to this process. As Hochschild (2003) points out, what many tourism workers, particularly guides, sell most essentially is their “emotional labour”: the generation of a particular affective state that facilitates tourists’ achievement of their own desired affect underlying the positive experience the latter seek. Hence, as Hochschild asserts, one of things most centrally alienated in touristic exchanges is commonly workers’ emotions themselves. In addition, workers’ entire bodies may be alienated, most paradigmatically in sex tourism (Clift & Carter, 2000) but also, for example, in adventure activities such as whitewater rafting and skydiving where tour guides must place their own lives at risk in service delivery as well (see Fletcher, 2010, 2014).

This appropriation of workers’ labour as the basis of value creation in tourism is of course fundamentally predicated on unequal terms of exchange. This inequality takes a number of forms. Economically, the value of a tourism experience derives directly from the difference between what tourists pay and what tourists earn, necessitating that tourism workers are usually paid (far) less than the tourists they serve. Hence, Robinson (2008, p. 131) asserts, the global tourism industry is grounded in the “cheap, relatively unskilled labour [of] chambermaids, waiters, drivers, clerks, porters, and so on, and made possible by the expansion of the unemployed and marginalized worldwide”. In this way, “Tourism as it is practiced in global society takes for granted this division between the rich and the poor and the ‘right’ of the wealthy to be waited on by the poor.. .One person’s leisure is another person’s work, and these relations are not reciprocal” (Robinson, 2008, p. 131).

At the same time, most tourism depends on the exploitation of racial and/or cultural difference as well, often understood in hierarchical – that is, unequal – terms as a movement not merely through space but also through time to a previous “stage” of civilizational development (Fletcher, 2014). This, for instance, is how prominent travel media like *National Geographic* characteristically portray their

subjects (Lutz & Collins, 1993). As an example, journalist Tim Cahill (1997) describes his journey in Papua New Guinea, perhaps the paragon of such “evolutionary” travel, to find “Neolithic peoples still living in tree houses” (1997, p. 400). Cahill relates, “I want to go upriver. Back in time” (1997, p. 399). But one could also point to more direct racial divisions in terms of labour, one example being the racial hierarchies of employment in tourist attractions from Caribbean luxury resorts and Mediterranean cruises to African safaris (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

A second foundational form of inequality is situated in general forms of unevenness or difference – many of which are themselves the outcomes of historical capitalist uneven geographical developments (Harvey, 2006) – that can be rendered into modes of distinction through the commodification process. The difference of places is a key element here: “The tourism industry is unique... in the sense that the product which it markets is the very geographical, spatial, climatic, and cultural diversity of the global economy itself” (Borocz, 1996, p. 13). London draws tourists because it is different from Paris, and vice-versa. Together, London and Paris are key “European” tourist destinations, more so than, say, Oldenzaal in the Netherlands, or Tallinn in Estonia. Part of the difference here is that the former were (more) central nodes in unequal (colonial) patterns of capitalist expansion and exploitation which fuelled their growth and enabled the development and building of prestige projects including physical (monuments, buildings, public art-works, etc.), cultural, social (museums, parks, festivals, etc.) and other forms of infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, former colonies, having escaped formal economic subjugation, have embraced tourism development as a means to gain a toehold in a global capitalist economy dominated by advanced industrial producers and have hereby entered into new relations of dependency and unequal exchange within a post-colonial climate (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

These uneven results of uneven geographical developments, in turn, become the basis for further distinction-generating activity in order to attract tourism capital: “the marketing of places as somehow unique environments has in recent years become big business” (Harvey, 2006, p. 92). Hence, places on every possible scale (countries, provinces, regions, cities, villages, even streets and so forth) have become tourist “destinations”, caught up in intense competition to brand themselves as distinct and noteworthy relative to one another in the race to attract tourists (van Ham, 2001). To highlight but one example: along with promotion of “Boundless Southern Africa” as a regional brand (Büscher, 2010), Mozambique has:

rebranded itself as the “Land of Contrast,” casting itself as a world-class destination for tourists. Boundless Southern Africa supports this initiative because the move will promote sustainable and responsible tourism. The Land of Contrast brand encourages visitors to participate in conservation efforts while in the country and protect Mozambique’s biodiversity at the same time. This new brand will also build and preserve Mozambican values and pride, while benefiting the local people. (<http://www.boundlessa.com/5/>)

“Nation-branding”, “city-branding” and other forms of place-branding have become ubiquitous and are already the subject of a large and growing literature that we can only touch on briefly here (see Pike, 2009; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Based on the broader point that place-branding for tourism provides further evidence of Smith’s dialectic between differentiation and equalization in uneven capitalist development more generally, we highlight several issues. To begin with, branding is a *strategic* process of differentiation that at the same time equalizes those that are part of a place under one banner that supposedly captures the essence of that place (Sinha Roy, 2007). It is usually done by a small group of actors (“branding experts”, marketers, etc.) who make strategic decisions in essentializing place in terms of “placement” in the global tourism market. Complex (economic, social, political, etc.) inequalities within this essentialization are necessarily violated, as doing them justice would complicate “brand recognition” for proposed target audiences.

Consequently, strategic branding decisions must simultaneously be “true” and do violence to the realities they aim to promote. This can lead to poignant contradictions that embody the violence of distinct forms of structural inequalities in relation to race, ideology, gender and income. One example is the “the commoditization in Cuba’s revitalized tourism industry during the post-Soviet Special

Period vis-a-vis the revolution's Marxist–Leninist ideology” (Kaifa Roland, 2010, p. 3). Another is the ironic Chinese “self-orientalism” to create a tourist representation that signifies “a modern China subjugated to Western understanding and authority over modernity” (Yan & Almeida Santos, 2009, p. 295). A final issue is that branding itself obviously makes strategic decisions to play into existing social-economic inequalities in that certain places brand themselves exclusively for certain classes or segments of society. Hence, certain experiences are “meant” to be exclusively for the super-rich, which in turn enables them to further distinguish them as a class (one example here being “space tourism”; see <http://www.virgingalactic.com>).

Importantly, these various issues do not represent an exhaustive attempt to categorize the links between inequality and tourism. Moreover, and equally importantly, they also intersect in manifold ways. Hence, contemporary forms of uneven geographical development link to distinction-generating tourism practices in manifold and sometimes unexpected and extreme ways. One example relates to contemporary and deeply violent dynamics in terms of structural inequalities happening in Greece. As Greece is forced to adjust (more) to neoliberal forms of governance, debates on how it may use its tourism image to alleviate its debts may take extreme forms as occurred several years ago already when commentators suggested that Greece must just “sell some islands” to cover its debt. As one article explained, “There’s little that shouts ‘seriously rich’ as much as a little island in the sun to call your own... Now Greece is making it easier for the rich and famous to fulfill their dreams by preparing to sell, or offering long-term leases on, some of its 6,000 sun-kissed islands in a desperate attempt to repay its mountainous debts” (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/24/greece-islands-sale-save-economy>). Another, very different, example is “James Bond” tourism where tourists aim to revisit James Bond movie sets and scenes and so contribute to and re-enact, according to Reijnders (2010, p. 369), unequal “patriarchal notions of masculinity”.

The broader point here is that the dialectic between tourism and uneven geographical capitalist development allows each element of this dialectic to feed off the other, resulting in intensified stimulation of violent structural inequality as capital accumulation via tourism both profits from and exacerbates the uneven development of which it is part and parcel. It is in this sense that tourism can be truly seen as “world-making” (Hollinshead et al., 2009).

### **Production of waste**

The second form of structural violence we highlight entails the (structural) production of waste. Tourism commodities commonly produce much waste, the most obvious form of which entails direct and indirect environmental degradation (Duffy, 2002; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). “Tourism Is Poisoning the Mexican Caribbean”, reads one news item from 2011, explaining that “The booming tourist industry along Mexico’s Caribbean coast, particularly in the area of Cancún and the ‘Riviera Maya,’ is polluting the world’s largest underwater cave system and harming the world’s second largest coral reef, a new study has found” (<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=54431>). An example of more indirect degradation, from the Maldives, shows that waste from its five-star hotels is now dumped on one specific island: “In a bid to battle a growing waste problem, The Maldives has been dumping almost all of its rubbish on a single one of its some 1,200 islands. Thilafushi island has turned into a dump, and environmental activists say the bad practices adopted there are causing contaminants to seep into the country’s once pristine sea water, and then into the food chain” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWKF8BGetco>).

Many more examples could be mentioned, but these do not necessarily show how the tourism industry produces waste *structurally* and how this is unique to the tourism industry. This changes with what is arguably the quintessential and most serious form of environmental degradation, namely tourism’s contribution to climate change (Carrier & Macloed, 2005). The tourist industry heavily depends on and hence highly stimulates the development of travel infrastructure and concomitant forms of transportation, much of which has negative structural impacts on the environment, especially on climate change (Stroebel, 2014). While this form of producing waste has been

well researched (see Scott, Gössling, & Hall, 2012), it is not often framed as a structural form of violence. This, we argue, is because of the fact that tourism as capital – as value in progress – has transportation, infrastructure and the growth of these as its absolute *sine-qua-non*. Stroebel (2014), therefore, rightly asks whether tourism companies are simply “protecting holidays forever” and concludes rather pessimistically that she cannot see how the corporate tourism industry – despite its widespread sustainability rhetoric – can ever substantially reduce its carbon footprint through voluntary measures (e.g. carbon offsets). She shows how tourism industry leaders in Europe have consistently opposed top-down legislation in favour of self-regulation that has had little effect on the industry’s carbon footprint. Meanwhile, a prominent NGO promoting “responsible” travel, formerly a proponent of carbon offsetting, recently reversed this position, asserting that the only way to truly reduce tourism’s climate implications is for people to travel less (<http://www.responsibletravel.com/Copy/Copy902116.htm>).

Another, less well-examined, form of structural production of waste under tourism is its dependence on branding and marketing, as already introduced above. Besides the manifold violent discursive impacts of branding and marketing, which we have discussed above and will discuss further in the following section, it is clear that these activities have very direct and large material impacts as well. Branding and marketing campaigns, after all, need to be materially produced through computer and related technological infrastructure, and subsequently printed or shown on billboards, TVs or other screens that also need to be materially produced. This, in turn, and because of its discursive significance that we will discuss below, again becomes a structural form of producing waste since it is a quintessential part of tourism as capital. Phrased differently, branding and marketing are arguably half of what makes tourism capital in the first place, and hence its violent impacts are necessarily structural. One of many possible illustrations here comes from the first author’s research at the 2011 and 2012 national Dutch tourism fairs.<sup>2</sup> At this, the largest annual tourism fair in the Netherlands, we were encouraged by most vendors to take home as many leaflets, brochures and suchlike as we could carry so that we could study them at home “at our leisure”. Several times, in seemingly desperate attempts to get rid of the mountains of materials stacked within vendors’ booths, we were advised that if we did not like the materials, we could simply throw them away at home. And this is what many people did. Many visitors even brought trolleys to cart their haul of “souvenirs” from the fair.

Another, final illustration of how the production of waste in tourism is not merely a bi-product of delivery but an essential component of this delivery itself is the case of food. For tourists to feel that they have received the luxurious treatment they seek, providers must never run short of food (or drink). To ensure this requires that providers prepare far more food than can possibly be consumed, much of which must subsequently be discarded. Obviously, this dynamic is most extreme in so-called “all-inclusive” resorts or cruises where clients are promised unlimited quantities of food and drink as part of their experience, but in our research we have witnessed this even in ostensible “low-impact” ecotourism trips that claim to contribute environmental and social benefits. On whitewater rafting excursions in Latin (and North) America, for instance, one of the guides’ main jobs at the end of the trip is to deposit the copious quantities of accumulated trash, which on overnight trips includes the human waste collected from portable toilets (disposal of which occasionally results in unfortunate yet memorable mishaps; see Lindsay, 1997). On high-end luxury safaris in southern Africa that claim to respect the nature that they commodify, guides are similarly left with much accumulated trash from food and drink consumption, for instance after famous “bush-breakfasts” (although in this case disposal is usually done by more anonymous black labourers who come and clean up after tourists have left for more animal sightings).<sup>3</sup>

To some degree, the waste issue has been acknowledged by large parts of the tourism industry, which is attempting to mitigate at least some of it. The most famous example is the common warning about wasting water through laundry in hotels. “Leave your towels on the railing” becomes a prime way for tourists to relieve their guilt of producing waste, as well as for hotels to display their “environmental consciousness” at virtually no cost. However, we argue that these and many similar measures actually strengthen our argument since they do not *structurally* solve the waste issue because they

are often but tiny green drops in oceans of waste and because they tend to “greenwash” and so actually legitimize (the growth of) waste-producing practices.

These arguments, and others, have also been made with respect to what has become the quintessential form of sustainable tourism, namely “ecotourism”. A large literature now exists that critiques ecotourism for not being very “eco”, instead often having very negative environmental impacts, one of the most significant of which concerns the GHG emissions from air travel discussed earlier (Carrier & Macleod, 2005; Duffy, 2002; Mowforth & Mount, 2003). Moreover, as Meletis and Campbell (2007, p. 850) argue, the very common practice of “categorizing ecotourism as ‘non-consumptive’ is not only inaccurate, but also has consequences for both environments and people”. Hence, they not only show that direct consumption of wildlife can and does take place within ecotourism (and is not even necessarily problematic) but that a focus on the ostensible non-consumption of wildlife both “masks the ways in which ecotourism can consume resources and result in broader negative environmental impacts, beyond those that occur on-site in ecotourist destinations” (2007, p. 855) and – precisely through the “the commodification of local culture, the re-enforcement of local stereotypes, and/or adversely affecting local culture or identities in other ways” – can have negative social and cultural impacts on local people (2007, p. 856–857; see also Hutchins, 2007; West & Carrier, 2004).

### ***Production of “spaces of exception”***

The third form of structural violence we emphasize is the production of spaces of exception (Ong, 2006). This is a play on Agamben’s (1998) idea of the “state of exception” in which the sovereign decides on the exception to the rule. In tourism, spaces of exception are referred to as the “tourism bubble” (Carrier & Macleod, 2005) and it is this bubble that shields people from the two preceding forms of structural violence, hence why we argue that this is a form of structural violence in its own right. The most important function of the bubble is that within it the normal rules do not apply anymore: the point for most tourists is to become “liminal” (or at least “liminoid”) (Graburn, 2004), to get away from “normal” and to hence not be disturbed with mundane or political issues. Typically, they “just” want to enjoy and have no worries, literally “to get away from it all” (West & Carrier, 2004). Tourism, in this way, also plays on pressures and tensions in capitalist societies where stresses and demands on many people are often very high. Tourism, in this sense, is a capitalist relief mechanism for the “normal” pressures of work and life in capitalist society, or further, a means to harness the stress produced by this work and life as a basis of renewed accumulation (Fletcher & Neves, 2012).

This dynamic, obviously, is not new. David Bunn (2003), when studying “tourism, water and wildlife photography in the early Kruger National Park”, argued that the symbolic importance of Kruger as a romanticized white fortress was reflected in iconic mediations of the park geared towards the developing tourist industry (cf. Neumann, 1998). Waterhole photography, especially, helped to capture “African wilderness”, which in turn, Bunn argues, provided ways to make sense of larger political-economic and social changes. Building on Walter Benjamin’s critique of industrial modernity, he asserts that Kruger was “a typically modernist form of symbolically enclaved space” that was to provide protection from “the destructive force of early twentieth-century industrialisation, mechanisation, and shocking new experiences of time”. Rapid political economic, cultural, social and war developments between the 1920s and the 1950s were believed to have “widespread negative effects” on people, with a main threat being the “numbing of the senses”. In response, “Wilderness experience would simply restore the deadened, instinctual power of the sense, and the beautiful, mirroring semblance of the waterhole photo was designed to achieve just that sort of sympathetic reawakening” (Bunn, 2003, p. 207–208).

In the rapid political economic, cultural, social and violent changes under contemporary capitalism, it is clear that many people long for and need tourism bubbles to shield them from the effects of these changes, at least temporarily (Fletcher, 2014). In this section, we look at various important strategies to produce these liminoid spaces of exception. Branding and marketing, again, play an important role in this, as we argue that they are a specific form of destructive creation that transforms

locally grounded diversity into privatized, alienable, abstracted, displaced, valued and individuated branding commodities. Yet, branding and marketing, as mentioned above, have very direct material sides, and must indeed relate to some degree to material realities, which themselves often materially try to create this tourism bubble. Enclave tourism resorts, from which local people (other than workers) are usually excluded and tourists generally advised not to leave the premises due to security concerns, are the most paradigmatic example of this dynamic (Manuel-Navarrete, 2016). In such resorts, moreover, beaches are often sanitized to look and feel pristine by not only getting rid of waste but also “unwanted” natural features such as (excessive) stones or weeds (Duffy, 2002). Another example that has become popular in recent years is a trend called “Glamorous Camping”, or “Glamping”:

A new trend of glamping has emerged with luxury camping resorts, safari camps, eco-resorts and campgrounds offering every amenity imaginable, from 5 star dining to spas. Manufacturers are catching on, offering designer gadgets and gear to bring style to the wilderness. Regardless of budget, you can enjoy the great outdoors without sacrificing luxury. (<http://glampinggirl.com/about-2>)

Creating material spaces of exception through the tourism bubble, then, is about being in a particular environment and not being there at the same time. It is about literally placing oneself outside of a particular socio-historical context, even when tourism products are themselves often derived from and dependent on this very same context. That this can create major contradictions can poignantly be illustrated through the 2011 democratic revolts against then-President Mubarak in Egypt. While many Egyptian people were fighting for their freedom and against an oppressive leader in power for over 30 years, it is instructive to see what happened with the tourism industry in the country. Egypt is a very popular tourism destination, and in the past, insurgents have sought to leverage this to further their demands on the state (Phipps, 2004). So, whereas some major Dutch travel agents sought to “repatriate” their tourists (<http://www.nieuws.nl/627684>), British tourists continued to “enjoy Egypt sun despite unrest” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12330093>). In Sharm El Shaik, according to the BBC reporter, everything is far away from the violence and unrest in Cairo and other cities, and this is presented as a good thing. Indeed, the BBC reporter literally says that while all this unrest is bad news for Egypt’s tourism economy, “for now, many people here appear determined to continue enjoying themselves”. In other words, the tourists refuse to let some people’s fight for their freedom and dignity of life interfere with their “hard-earned rights” to enjoy their tourism bubble.

In turn, host countries and operators also often fear disturbance of the bubble. In Sharm, operators (as well as other local people) were worried that people might not visit anymore, and, indeed, other news reports stated that as a result of the unrest interest in holidays in Egypt and Tunisia had collapsed and that now people were orientating themselves towards Turkey instead (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/16/egypt-worst-economic-crisis-1930s>). Hence, fights for freedom simultaneously become competition between countries over who can attract tourists, compromising the brand the state seeks to promote in this struggle.

Yet, through all this the bubble continues. Interestingly, in the weeks of the Arab Spring protests, including the major ones in Cairo, there were trams in the Netherlands’ capital, The Hague, bearing massive two-side commercials for holidays in Egypt. These were complemented by pervasive billboards and advertisements, while at the same time, in the same city, the foreign ministry warned people not to visit Egypt and almost 4200 people were “repatriated” to the country. Likewise, at the 2011 and 2012 Dutch Holiday Fairs, Egypt had a massive stand, still trying to attract people to the country. This, then, links back with the point about branding and marketing and how it performs an essential function in the denial of the structural violence of tourism and – in this case – the structural violence of uneven geographical developments more broadly. Branding and marketing around tourism both enhance and police the persistent focus on feel-good, positive images about every conceivable destination or experience. This, in turn, puts structural pressure on people and places to live up to this branding despite the fact that actual realities often do not, so imposing narrowed futures on tourism destinations and the people that live there. This, then, is another form of destructive creation: creation that becomes superficial and actually destroys any deeper idea about meaning-giving,

place-visitation and so forth. The many disclaimers that tourism companies habitually use are interesting here, in that many tourism companies make lots of promises which are branded quite nicely, but at the same time provide copious disclaimers protecting themselves from when the reality does not actually live up to the brand.

Branding and marketing, in sum, normalize and naturalize the idea that tourism is outside of structural violence – that inhering within both overarching society and the tourism industry itself. In this way, then, the spaces of exception conjured via tourism constitute a further form of structural violence exacerbating the other two previously discussed. The result is a vicious cycle of sorts wherein the tourism industry is able to turn a blind eye to its implications within processes of uneven capitalist development even as it serves as a means of a prime means of accumulation perpetuating this very process.

## Tourism frontiers

While tourism is focused on creating exceptional spaces where tourists can “get away from it all”, this does not mean that they actually and always can, or that tourism as a whole is not somehow attentive or responsive to the uneven geographical and violent realities of late capitalism that it itself is part of and perpetuates. Moreover, if indeed many tourism actors acknowledge contemporary serious social and environmental problems, then how do they deal with the limits that these problems potentially pose for tourism? It is here that we argue that a broader form of structural violence under capitalism inherent in tourism as well, namely its ability to commodify and profit from its own limits. As Joel Kovel explains, capitalism:

constantly seeks to go beyond the limits that it itself has imposed, and so can neither rest nor find equilibrium: it is irremediably self-contradictory. Every quantitative increase becomes a new boundary, which is immediately transformed into a new barrier. The boundary/barrier ensemble then becomes the site of new value and the potential for new capital formation which then becomes another boundary/barrier, and so forth and on into infinity – at least in the logical schemata of capital. (2002, p. 41–42)

Tourism-as-capital, in turn, is part of this violent dialectic, as can be seen in many contemporary attempts to try to harness this violence itself as a further source of value by turning it into tourism attractions. This is apparent, of course, in our earlier simulated shantytown example but many other illustrations of this dynamic can be identified, including the widespread practices of slum and extinction tourism previously noted (Schroeder, 1999, p. 368). Tour operators, for instance, are increasingly urging people to see polar bears, penguins or icecaps “before it is too late” due to climate change (Leahy, 2008; Lemelin et al, 2013). In Mexico, meanwhile, a theme park allows one to pretend to be crossing the US-Mexico border with the assistance of fictitious “coyote” guides and be subject to harassment by imitation border guards (<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/runtdown/fake-border-crossing-is-amusement-park-attraction>). Robert Young Pelton has long offered exclusive tours (as well as a popular guidebook) to the “world’s most dangerous places” to rub shoulders, for instance, with Colombian revolutionaries (see Cahill, 2002; Fletcher, 2011b). Indeed, in this respect, tourism is one of capitalism’s most creative and versatile manifestations, embodying most paradigmatically the dynamic of destructive creation we highlight in this analysis.

## Conclusion

The analysis presented here might seem rather “total”, where seemingly all things related to tourism relate to commodification and violence. Hence, in the conclusion, it is important to bring in some caveats and a sense of imagination that might put tourism in a different light. First, we want to emphasize that our analysis applies not necessarily to tourism as a whole but more specifically to tourism in a capitalist context. As Robinson points out, “It is not tourism per se that converts cultures, peoples and the environment into commodities, but *capitalist* tourism” (2008, p. 133, emphasis in

original). Yet, tourism “need not be a *capitalist* activity” (2008, p. 133, emphasis in original). We certainly do not deny that at times tourism can be used as a force of progressive social change, employed in the service of social justice or even, as in the case of some tourism to participate in the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, for instance, anti-capitalism (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; 2008; Jamal & Camargo, 2014). In this sense, the potential of tourism to counter dynamics of commodification and structural violence highlighted in this analysis remains a neglected but important topic for future research.

It remains the case, however, that at present the vast majority of the immense global tourism industry remains intimately bound with the capitalist mode of production, exchange and consumption in all of the myriad ways emphasized herein. To this extent, the dynamics we have documented remain highly pertinent for theorization and critique. We hope that our analysis helps to provide a basis for more rigorous conceptualization and analysis of intertwined processes of commodification and violence in tourism development for aid in future research and practice.

A second important caveat is that we do not intend to portray tourism capitalization as an inexorable juggernaut smoothly commodifying everything in its path. As noted earlier, our aim was to present this process as a theoretical ideal-type. In practice, this process is often quite rocky and uneven, confronted by numerous obstacles, from the materiality of locations themselves (e.g. sea cliffs crumbling from beneath hotels) to resistance by local residents to the negative implications of tourism development, including aspects of structural violence such as the type of environmental impacts previously noted (Kousis, 2000). How this type of “double movement” ultimately shapes the tourism development process is another important focus for future analysis.

Finally, we do not wish to unfairly demonize tourism in particular, as the dynamics we highlight are largely general to capitalist development as a whole. Hence, the aim must be not to confront tourism development specifically but rather the overarching process of capitalist destructive creation that underlies it. In this, the question of inequality – not accidentally presented as the first of our three forms of structural violence under tourism – remains key, for as Frantz Fanon (1963, p. 69) asserted long ago, “what counts today, the question which is looming on the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity must reply to this question, or be shaken to pieces by it”.

How, then, might tourism look if conceptualized from the point of view of a more general anti- or post-capitalist politics? In the space remaining, we can only hint at some potential directions. First, we believe tourism has to be part of a broader degrowth movement (see Kallis, 2011; Kallis & March, 2015). Degrowth is a “project of radical socio-ecological transformation” focused especially on a sustainable downsizing of global consumption and production patterns. Tourism, clearly, must not just come to terms with the fact that its exponential growth has to halt, but that it needs to radically “degrow” in line with broader, more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Second, and related, this means that tourism should become part of what Molly Scott Cato (2012) calls “bioregional economies”. For her, this especially connotes to a “closer connection with our local natural environment” (Scott Cato, 2012, p.217), which will mean that tourism can no longer be about ticking off boxes of “spectacular attractions” and ever rising bed-night numbers, but about longer term connection and dedication to specific places, peoples and their local and extra-local socio-economic, ecological and political struggles.

Third and last, tourism should move radically from a private and privatizing activity to one founded in and contributing to the common (Hardt & Negri, 2009). Obviously, tourism under capitalism is also founded in the common, but, as we have shown, violently preys on this for purposes of capital accumulation. But what does it mean for tourism to *contribute* to the common? At the very least, based on Hardt and Negri, it encompasses materiality *and* subjectivity: both must be attended to, acknowledged and cared for when fighting for a post-capitalist tourism. What this might altogether look like, and whether we can actually still refer to the term ‘tourism’ at all in this beginning of a vision, is an open question. But it is one that, under current circumstances of violent forms of capitalist tourism, is an inviting and exciting one.

## Notes

1. Although this is not to say that only (former) centres of accumulation can become key tourist attractions, as this is clearly not the case.
2. Undertaken with four graduate students from the Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University (both years).
3. As observed during research in July 2015 in Sabi-Sands in South Africa by the first author. On this occasion, three black labourers were waiting in their vehicle close to where we had our bush-breakfast, greeting us friendly while we drove past them.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Diana Ojeda and Jennifer Devine for the invitation to be part of this special issue, and the anonymous reviewers, Diana, Jennifer and editor Bernard Lane for their engagement with and contributions to this article.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

**Bram Büscher** is professor and chair of the Sociology of Development and Change group at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, visiting professor at the Department of Geography, Environmental Management & Energy Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and research associate at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He is the author of *Transforming the Frontier: Peace Parks and the Politics of Neoliberal Conservation in Southern Africa* (Duke University Press, 2013).

**Robert Fletcher** is associate professor at the Sociology of Development and Change group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands. He is the author of *Romancing the wild: Cultural dimensions of ecotourism* (Duke University Press, 2014).

## References

- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo sacer. Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Andrews, H. (Ed.). (2014). *Tourism and violence*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.
- Benjaminson, T.A., & Bryceson, I. (2012). Conservation, green/blue grabbing and accumulation by dispossession in Tanzania. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39, 335–355.
- Blázquez, M., Cañada, E., & Murray, I. (2011). Búnker playa-sol: Conflictos derivados de la construcción de enclaves de capital transnacional turístico español en El Caribe y Centroamérica. [Búnker Beach-Sun: Conflicts from the construction of Spanish transnational capital tourist enclaves in the Caribbean and Central America]. *Scripta Nova*, 15. Retrieved February 2, 2016, from <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-368.htm>.
- Borocz, J. (1996). *Leisure migration: A sociological study on tourism*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Briassoulis, H. (2002). Sustainable tourism and the question of the commons. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29, 1065–1085.
- Brondo, K.V. (2013). *Land grab: Green neoliberalism, gender, and Garifuna resistance in Honduras*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Bruner, E. (2004). *Culture on tour: Ethnographies of travel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bunn, D. (2003). An unnatural state: Tourism, water and wildlife photography in the early Kruger National Park. In W. Beinart & J. McGregor (Eds.), *Social history and African environments* (pp. 199–220). Oxford: James Currey.
- Büscher, B. (2010). Derivative nature: Interrogating the value of conservation in “boundless southern Africa”. *Third World Quarterly*, 31, 259–76.
- Büscher, B. (2016). Reassessing fortress conservation: New media and the politics of distinction in Kruger National Park. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 106, 114–129.
- Cahill, T. (1997) No cannibal jokes, please. In *Outside* Editors (Eds.), *The best of outside*. New York, NY: Villard.
- Cahill, T. (2002). The most dangerous friend in the world. In *Men's Journal* Editors (Eds.), *Wild stories* (pp. 93–109). New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Carrier, J.G., & Macleod, D.V.L. (2005). Bursting the bubble: The social cultural context of ecotourism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 11, 315–334.
- Castree, N. (2003). Commodifying what nature? *Progress in Human Geography*, 27, 273–297.
- Clift, S., & Carter, S. (2000). *Tourism and sex: Culture, commerce and coercion*. New York, NY: Cengage Learning.

- Debord, G. (1967). *Society of the spectacle*. London: Rebel Press.
- Devine, J. (2014). Counterinsurgency ecotourism in Guatemala's maya biosphere reserve. *Environment & Planning D: Society and Space*, 32, 984–1001.
- Duffy, R. (2002). *Trip too far: Ecotourism, politics, and exploitation*. London: Earthscan.
- Dürr, E., & Jaffe, R. (2012). Theorizing slum tourism: Performing, negotiating and transforming inequality. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 93, 113–123.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *On violence*. London: Penguin.
- Fletcher, R. (2010). The emperor's new adventure: Public secrecy and the paradox of adventure tourism. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 39, 6–33.
- Fletcher, R. (2011a). Sustaining tourism, sustaining capitalism? The tourism industry's role in global capitalist expansion. *Tourism Geographies*, 13, 443–461.
- Fletcher, R. (2011b). "The only risk is wanting to stay": Mediating risk in Colombian tourism development. *Recreation and Society in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, 1, 7–30.
- Fletcher, R. (2014). *Romancing the wild: Cultural dimensions of ecotourism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fletcher, R., & Neves, K. (2012). Contradictions in tourism: The promise and pitfalls of ecotourism as a manifold capitalist fix. *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*, 3, 60–77.
- Graburn, N. (2004). Secular ritual: A general theory of tourism. In S. Gmelch (Ed.), *Tourists and Tourism* (pp. 23–34). Long Grove: Waveland Press.
- Greenwood, D. (1977). Culture by the pound: An anthropological perspective on tourism as cultural commoditization. In V. Smith (Ed.), *Hosts and guests: The anthropology of tourism* (pp. 129–138). London: Blackwell.
- Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*. London: Routledge.
- Hardt, M. and A. Negri. (2009) *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: University of Harvard Press.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An inquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism: A theory of uneven geographical development*. London: Verso.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2006). More than an "industry": The forgotten power of tourism as a social force. *Tourism Management*, 27, 1192–1208.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2008). Justice tourism and alternative globalization. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16, 345–364.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2009). *Capitalist globalisation, corporatised tourism and their alternatives*. New York, NY: Nova Science.
- Hochschild, A. (2003). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling* (20th Anniversary ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hollinshead, K., Ateljevic, I., & Ali, N. (2009). World-making agency—world-making authority: The sovereign constitutive role of tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 11, 427–443.
- Hutchins, F. (2007). Footprints in the forest: Ecotourism and altered meanings in Ecuador's upper Amazon. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 12, 75–103.
- Jamal, T., & Camargo, B.A. (2014). Sustainable tourism, justice and an ethic of care: Toward the just destination. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22, 11–30.
- Kaifa Roland, L. (2010). Tourism and the commodification of *Cubanidad*. *Tourist Studies*, 10, 3–18.
- Kallis, G. (2011). In defence of degrowth. *Ecological Economics*, 70, 873–880.
- Kallis, G., & March, H. (2015). Imaginaries of hope: The utopianism of degrowth. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105, 360–368.
- Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Koot, S. (in press). Contradictions of capitalism in the South African Kalahari: Indigenous Bushmen, their brand and *Baaskap* in tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. doi:10.1080/09669582.2016.1158825
- Kousis, M. (2000). Tourism and the environment: A social movements perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, 468–489.
- Kovel, J. (2002). *The enemy of nature: The end of capitalism or the end of the world?* London: Zed Books.
- Leahy, S. 2008. Extinction tourism: See it now before it's gone. Retrieved February 2, 2016, from <http://stephenleahy.net/2008/01/18/extinction-tourism-see-it-now-before-its-gone/>.
- Lemelin, H., Dawson, J., & Stewart, E.J. (Eds.). (2013). *Last chance tourism: Adapting tourism opportunities in a changing world*. London: Routledge.
- Lindsay, J. (1997). *Up shit creek: A collection of horrifyingly true wilderness toilet misadventures*. New York, NY: Ten Speed Press.
- Lutz, C., & Collins, J. (1993). *Reading national geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MacCannell, D. (1999). *The tourist* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Manuel-Navarrete, D. (2016). Boundary-work and sustainability in tourism enclaves. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, doi:10.1080/09669582.2015.1081599
- Marx, K. (1976). *Capital, volume I*. London: Penguin Books.
- Meletis, Z., & Campbell, L.M. (2007). Call it consumption! Re-conceptualizing ecotourism as consumption and consumption. *Geography Compass*, 1, 850–870.

- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (2003). *Tourism and sustainability: Development and new tourism in the third world* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Neumann, R.P. (1998). *Imposing wilderness: Struggles over livelihoods and nature preservation in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Nordstrom, C. (2004). *Shadows of war: Violence, power, and international profiteering in the twenty-first century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ojeda, D., & Devine, J. (in press). Violent destinations: Articulations of tourism, violence and power. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
- Ong, A. (2006). *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Phipps, P. (2004). Tourism and terrorism: An intimate equivalence. In S. Gmelch (Ed.), *Tourists and tourism* (pp. 71–90). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Pike, A. (2009). Brand and branding geographies. *Geography Compass*, 3, 190–213.
- Reijnders, S. (2010). On the trail of 007: Media pilgrimages into the world of James Bond. *Area*, 42, 369–377.
- Richter, K. (1989). *The politics of tourism in Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Robinson, W. (2008). *Latin America and global capitalism: A critical globalization perspective*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Schroeder, R.A. (1999). Geographies of environmental intervention in Africa. *Progress in Human Geography*, 23, 359–378.
- Scott Cato, M. (2012). *The bioregional economy. Land, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*. London: Routledge.
- Scott, D., Gössling, S., & Hall, C.M. (2012). International tourism and climate change. *WIREs Clim Change*, 3, 213–232.
- Sinha Roy, I. (2007). Worlds apart: Nation-branding on the National Geographic Channel. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29, 569–592.
- Smith, N. (2008). *Uneven development: Nature, capital, and the production of space*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Stroebe, M. (2014). *Protecting holidays forever: Tourism, climate change and global governance* (PhD dissertation). University of Manchester, Manchester.
- Tyner, J. (2016). *Violence in capitalism. Devaluing life in an age of responsibility*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Van Ham, P. (2001). The rise of the brand state: The postmodern politics of image and reputation. *Foreign Affairs*, 80, 2–6.
- West, P., & Carrier, J. (2004). Ecotourism and authenticity. Getting away from it all? *Current Anthropology*, 45, 483–498.
- Whitson, D., & Macintosh, D. (1996). The global circus: International sport, tourism, and the marketing of cities. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 20, 278–295.
- Yan, G., & Almeida Santos, C. (2009). “CHINA, FOREVER”: Tourism discourse and self-orientalism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36, 295–315.
- Žižek, S. (2008) *Violence: Six sideways reflections*. London: Verso.