

Tourism, inclusive growth and decent work: a Marxist critique

Journal:	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>
Manuscript ID	Draft
Manuscript Type:	Special Issue Paper
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Abstract

This paper interrogates the ideas of ‘sustained’ and ‘inclusive’ growth that are intrinsic to one of three UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8 - Decent Work and Growth) adopted by the UN World Tourism Organisation’s (UNWTO) 2030 sustainable tourism agenda. It provides a Marxian-inspired political economy critique of the UNWTO’s embrace of SDG8 and highlights the blind spot within the UNWTO’s inclusive growth-led SDG agenda with respect to questions of equity and social justice. The paper contends that the UNWTO’s SDG-led agenda is contradicted by the logics of growth, competitiveness and profit-making that drive the continued expansion and development of tourism. Rather than addressing the structural injustices that entrench inequalities and reproduce exploitative labour practices, the notion of sustained and inclusive growth reinforces the primacy of capital and market notions of justice and continues to perpetuate a growth driven tourism development model. The paper contributes to a critical theorization of sustainable tourism and offers an informed critique of the current political agenda for sustainable tourism and its potential outcomes.

Keywords: political economy, sustainable tourism, inclusive growth, decent work.

Introduction

Despite the innumerable policies and strategies devoted to advancing sustainable development agreed since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit a systemic paradigm shift towards sustainable tourism development remains hindered by the existence of “defence and delaying mechanisms in the economic and political system” (Müller, 1994, p.134). The launch of the UNWTO’s sustainable tourism development agenda in 2015, framed by the United Nations Agenda 2030 and associated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seemed to “indicate the need to rethink the current economic growth ideology in the context of social and environmental needs in development” (Saarinen, 2018, p.33). Its advocates argue that it signals a major step towards building a global, integrated multi-stakeholder framework for ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and combatting climate change. Meanwhile however, growth-led, extractive, profit-driven economics continues to exacerbate an inter-connected global environmental, climate and development crisis (Klein, 2015).

The UNWTO and its partners contend that the managed growth of tourism can help engineer a transition to a “green economy” and contribute to “decent work creation, poverty alleviation, improved efficiency in resource use and reduced environmental degradation”

(Stroebe, 2015: 2226). This paper presents an analysis and critique of the UNWTO's embrace and application of the SDGs with an explicit focus on SDG 8 (Decent Work and Growth) namely, the UNWTO's desire to harness tourism in order to "promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth" and "full and productive employment and decent work for all" (UNWTO, 2016, p. 33). Specifically, it addresses the neglect of work and labour in the tourism sustainability debate (see Baum et al., 2016), with due regard to the lack of attention to the critique of political economy in the UNWTO's SDG agenda (Hall, 2019, p.7).

This paper argues that the UNWTO's failure to address, much less challenge, the systemic processes of accumulation and exploitation that shape and constitute the competitive dynamics and industrial structures of tourism capitalism (Bianchi, 2018), undermines its ability to put forward a genuinely fair and progressive sustainable tourism agenda centred on concerns of environmental and social justice. It contends that earlier critiques of capitalist tourism development in the Global South, in which principles of economic justice and solidarity between nations were foregrounded (e.g., Shivji, 1973; WTO, 1980), have largely been superseded by market-friendly notions of 'sustained' and 'inclusive' growth that offer little by way of a challenge to the accelerated monetisation of nature and dehumanisation of labour. The injustices of enclosure and dispossession are furthermore often obscured by normative global sustainability discourses in which conservation rather than the just and equitable use and control of resources is foregrounded (Banarjee, 2003).

The argument put forward in the paper is premised upon the historical materialist methodology drawn from Marxist political economy (e.g., Marx, 1973, pp.100-108; Marx 1977). A materialist approach interprets capitalism as a historically specific, dynamic and contradictory mode of production driven by the pursuit of profit and the accumulation of capital which further intensifies the competitive dynamics of capitalist growth (Marx, 1974, p.555). Here, *capital* does not refer to simply the existence of commerce and markets, rather, it is a system with a distinctive set of logics that can only be understood "in the context of a particular social relation between appropriator and producer" (Wood, 2016, p. 24). The historical-geographical reproduction of capitalist social relations is played out through the continuous separation of humans from their *means of production* in tandem with the *social reproduction* of workers via the (unpaid) household labour of women (usually) and the wider relations of solidarity and mutual exchange that sustain the social fabric of communities (De Angelis, 2007, p. 37). A third component of capitalist expansion enabling the continuous production of a labour force is constituted via the *enclosure* and appropriation of natural

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3 assets and dispossessing once self-sustaining inhabitants of their independent means of
4 obtaining a livelihood. The 16th and 17th century English acts of enclosure which drove
5 peasants off their land and extinguished customary use rights as well as the processes of
6 settler colonialism witnessed in the US, both of which gave rise to capitalist property
7 relations, represent similar logics of appropriation and dispossession (see XXX in this issue),
8 which have played out in various ways in colonial and imperial histories worldwide (see
9 Wolf, 1982).

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16 The resultant antagonism between capital and labour arises out of the exploitative nature
17 of capitalist production and more specifically, the treatment of human labour as a factor of
18 production (Selwyn, 2015, pp. 516). Systemic forces of injustice arise out of the
19 commodification of human labour power and the enclosure of natural wealth and resources
20 necessary to sustain human livelihoods, but which are also integral to the expansion of capital
21 and endless growth upon which it depends (Hickel, 2019a). Challenges to the normal' orderly
22 workings of the market and the attendant 'need' to ensure an adequate return to capital are
23 characteristically viewed as 'disruptive' and contrary to the "formal justice of the market"
24 (Streeck, 2014, pp. 60-61).

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32 Section one identifies the logics of growth, process of capital accumulation and role of
33 labour in the tourism political economy as the basis for the analysis and critique of
34 sustainable tourism development as construed by the UNWTO. The paper then interrogates
35 the UNWTO's SDG agenda in the context of the historical-political struggle of the UNWTO
36 to define, develop and lead a global sustainable tourism agenda since 1992. This section
37 draws on an analysis of key UNWTO reports¹ to interrogate the ideological and linguistic
38 framing that shapes the UNWTO's engagement with SDG 8 together with the personal
39 involvement of the second author of this paper. As director of the Retour Foundation he was
40 a core member of Tourism European Network (TEN) and the Transforming Tourism
41 Initiative both of which have lobbied the UNWTO for greater civil society representation in
42 relation to discussion and elaboration of the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* (WTO,
43 1999b), the *Framework Convention on Ethics* (UNWTO, 2017b) and the UNWTO's SDG
44 agenda. Between 1999 and 2002 he was the elected Northern co-chair of the tourism caucus
45 of the CSD-NGO steering committee, the official civil society partner of the United Nations
46 Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) from its 7th meeting in 1999 (UNCSD-
47 7), when tourism was introduced into the UN sustainable development agenda, until the 2002
48 World Ecotourism Summit. It was at this point that the UNWTO brought the officially
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3 sanctioned NGO involvement to an end as a result of growing disagreement over the content
4 and direction of UNWTO policy. Following this NGO participation became increasingly ad
5 hoc and sanctioned only at the UNWTO's discretion. The final section contributes to a
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7 political economy critique of the principles of 'sustained' and 'inclusive' growth that are
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9 integral to the UNWTO's global sustainable tourism development agenda.
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15 **The political economy of sustainable tourism**

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17 Scholarly attention in sustainable tourism has moved away from a conservationist resource
18 management focus towards diverse and rigorous theoretical inspection of concerns related to
19 *inter alia*, destination governance (Bramwell, 2011; Dredge and Jamal, 2013) sustainable
20 livelihoods (Tao and Wall, 2009), poverty reduction (Neto, 2003; Scheyvens, 2007),
21 empowerment and social justice (Jamal and Camargo, 2014; Coria and Calfucura, 2012;
22 Scheyvens, 1999), environmental ethics (Holden, 2003), the tourism commons (Briassoulis,
23 2002), and increasingly, degrowth (Hall, 2009; 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). And
24 yet studies of tourism's complex relationship to sustainability and the forces of economic
25 development are typically reliant upon static and descriptive conceptions of political
26 economy in which tourism capitalism is construed as the aggregate of commercial tourism
27 activities or "set of assets" (Sharpley, 2015, p.448), rather than one driven by the competitive
28 struggle between capitals, the exploitation of labour and the energy-intensive use and
29 commodification of nature.² Contradictory capital/labour relationships are neither static nor
30 universal (Burnham, 1994). Rather they are shaped by the daily struggle of labouring classes
31 to defend their standards of living (including, resistance to enclosure of the resources and
32 eco-systems upon which such livelihoods depend) and the right of capital to organize the
33 labour process in accordance with the imperatives of profit-making (Selwyn, 2015). The
34 precise social coordinates of struggle are nevertheless shaped by geographic variances of
35 capitalist development and local social structures together with the collective capacity of
36 labouring classes to organise and resist exploitation (Chibber, 2013).
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51 The growing consensus surrounding the imperative of sustainability in tourism that
52 permeate policy and corporate pronouncements conceals unresolved contradictions between
53 sustaining *tourism* and sustainable *development* (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; McCool et al.,
54 2001). At the heart of this protracted debate lies a tension between "weak" and "strong"
55 interpretations of sustainability (Hunter, 1997, pp.853-4). The former is "industrially-
56 oriented" and tends towards an adaptive stance, permitting a managed and regulated
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3 expansion of tourism, while the latter advocates stricter “limits to growth” and constraints on
4 the depletion of natural capital (see Saarinen, 2006, pp.1126-1129). This apparent dichotomy
5 nevertheless avoids a more fundamental interrogation of the meaning of *sustainable*
6 *development* in the light of the forces making for the relentless growth of tourism and the
7 conditions under which value is created and surpluses appropriated.
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12 The political ecology of tourism employs a similar conceptual armoury to examine the
13 struggle between different actors and institutions over access to and use of environmental
14 resources for tourism (Bramwell, 2015: 211). Such conflicts are evident in Cole’s (2012)
15 work on tourism and water in Bali as well in recent analyses of the intersections between the
16 restructuring of tourism capitalism, territorial planning and socio-environmental struggles in
17 the Balearic Islands (Blázquez et al., 2015; Hof and Blázquez, 2015). Governance
18 perspectives examined the struggle between different state actors to define and advance the
19 adoption of policies and planning mechanisms for sustainable tourism (Bramwell, 2011).
20 Advocates of tourism degrowth have argued have that to redesign and align tourism
21 economies with sustainability requires a more profound challenge to the current model of
22 growth-led tourism that goes beyond simply managing and/or balancing the growth of
23 tourism with resource management and conservation (Hall, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles et al.
24 2019). However, with notable exceptions (see Büscher and Fletcher 2017; Duffy 2015;
25 Fletcher 2011), the analysis and critique of the complex and contradictory relationship
26 between tourism, capitalist development and sustainability remains divorced from more
27 searching and systematic analyses of its political economy much less the class dynamics of
28 capital-labour relations in the struggle to define and implement sustainable tourism.
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45 ***Tourism development and growth***

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47 The period between 1990 and 2008 witnessed 260 per cent growth in international tourist
48 arrivals and the consolidation of tourism as major category of international trade, with the
49 fastest growth in arrivals taking place between 2003 and 2007 (UNCTAD, 2010: 2). Largely
50 unperturbed by the 2008 financial crisis, by 2018 growth in international tourism had reached
51 6 per cent per annum, exceeding the average rate of global economic growth (3.7 per cent)
52 (UNWTO, 2019). During the same year international tourism accounted for 10.4 per cent of
53 global output with an estimated total economic value of US\$8.3 trillion (WTTC, 2018).
54 Meanwhile, since 1990 the number of people living on less than US\$5 a day increased by
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3 more than 370 million while global GDP per capita simultaneously grew by 65 per cent
4 (Hickel, 2017, p.56). Despite the emergence of increasingly diverse measures of human
5 well-being and measures to account for externalities since the OECD first mandated the
6 pursuit of GDP growth as the priority of government in the 1960s, it remains the principal
7 strategy of governments and international development agencies for delivering prosperity
8 (Raworth, 2018, p.38). Indeed, the SDGs themselves proscribe growth rates of 7 per cent per
9 year as the principal means of eliminating extreme poverty in ‘developing’ countries.

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16 Bramwell and Lane (1993, p.2) argued that sustainable tourism is not “anti-growth” but
17 rather is linked to the need, identified in the 1987 Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), to bring
18 about “fairness” and “convergence” between rich and poor nations in the global trading
19 system. Notwithstanding the variants of capitalist development worldwide, since its
20 adoption as a major plank of economic development by newly-independent ‘Third World’
21 states commencing in the 1950s tourism has been construed as an ideologically-neutral,
22 technical enterprise whose success or failure is predominantly judged in terms of annual
23 increases in arrivals and tourist receipts and their contribution to GDP-led economic growth
24 (UNCTAD, 1973, 2010).

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32 During the 1960s and early 1970s when environmentalists began to highlight tensions
33 between economic growth and the environment, tourism seemed to offer ‘developing’
34 countries a viable alternative to becoming suppliers of raw materials and agricultural
35 commodities to the industrialized West, with the potential to help transform them into
36 modern industrialized economies (Peters, 1969). Since then much has been made of the
37 contribution of tourism-led growth to economic development (WTTC, 2018), including the
38 claim that market-driven tourism has functioned as an engine of wealth redistribution from
39 rich to poor countries (Keller and Bieger 2011, p.1).

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46 While the view persists amongst international development agencies that tourism is
47 uniquely placed to contribute to economic development and reduce poverty in the Global
48 South (UN News, 2011), revenue leakages have continued to plague tourism development
49 UNCTAD (2010, p.9). The UNWTO and other international institutions have recognized
50 such shortcomings but remain committed to the logics of export-led tourism albeit one whose
51 adverse consequences merely need to be better managed (Rifai, 2017). However, the very
52 *need* to trade (in tourism) and the terms under which such trade is undertaken is “often a sign
53 that an economy is unsustainable” (Douthwaite 1999, p.171). The contribution made by
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3 tourism to improvements in national income, living standards and poverty reduction³ often
4 lack deeper interrogation of the social and political dynamics of tourism development. The
5 imperative to earn a wage and the very fact that tourism may provide jobs for people who
6 don't have many alternatives (see Steiner, 2006: 170), is indicative of the disempowerment of
7 labouring classes and often coexists with exploitative labour regimes within destinations.
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9 Although many low-income states did experience a boost to national income and employment
10 the development of tourism destinations often entailed the disruption of native economies and
11 consequent emergence of socio-economic inequalities (Britton, 1980). Tourism investment
12 and economic growth in recent years continues to accelerate land dispossessions, loss of self-
13 reliance and the intensification of ecological destruction (Holden, 2013, pp.108-111), with
14 little discernable decrease in inequalities (Alam & Paramati, 2016).

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23 The acceleration of global trade and consolidation of neoliberal market economics in the
24 1990s saw tourism emerge as a major avenue of capitalist development and pillar of
25 economic growth strategies for advanced and emerging economies alike (Britton, 1991). In
26 1991 GNP was superseded by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the principal benchmark
27 against which the economic strength and wealth of nations would be measured (Fioramonti,
28 2013, pp.41). This seemingly innocuous change attributes income generated by foreign-
29 owned firms to the countries in which they were generated and not the country in which the
30 firm is headquartered. This gives the misleading impression that national incomes are
31 growing and the conditions of development improving despite continuing economic
32 privations and revenue leakage in the Global South (see Hickel, 2017). Not only does GDP
33 shape the understanding of value, given the weighting of tourism in the export sectors of
34 many low-income economies in which foreign-based transnational corporations and off-shore
35 investors play a significant role, it potentially inflates the economic benefits provided by
36 tourism (see FDI Intelligence, 2018). The question of value, how it is produced and by
37 whom it is appropriated in tourism economies, is therefore a critical one for the evaluation of
38 any sustainable tourism development agenda.
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56 ***Tourism capitalism and the creation of value***

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Tourism development catalyses new forms of value and reshuffles the internal distribution
of capital, land use and organisation of labour as they become structured around the demands

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3 of tourism capital accumulation. The industrial organisation and concentration of tourism
4 industries emerges from the interaction between the degree and scope of integration of
5 domestic economies into global markets, firm strategies and the character of state
6 intervention in a given destination (Clancy, 2001, 26-27). Considerable corporate
7 concentration exists in the various tourism sub-sectors and increasingly amongst online
8 digital platforms (Gössling & Hall, 2019, p.12). Destinations however often comprise a
9 multitude of different firms of varying scale operating across a spectrum of “capitalist and
10 non-capitalist and formal and informal sectors” (Gibson, 2009, p.529). Nevertheless, local
11 firms in the Global South are often subordinate to lead tourism firms based in the advanced
12 capitalist countries, who are able to monopolise revenues through their governance of global
13 commodity chains (Christian, 2016; Mosedale, 2006).

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23 Given the difficulty of exerting “property rights over tourism experiences” (Williams,
24 2004, p.62), competition between diverse constellations of tourism enterprise over access to
25 and use of resources fuels the relentless privatization and commodification of lands,
26 ecosystems and labour in continuous cycles of “destructive creation” (Büscher and Fletcher,
27 2017). In the absence of robust mechanisms for reconciling competing uses, tourism may
28 precipitate the enclosure and exploitation of “common pool resources” (Briassoulis, 2002), to
29 make way for the construction of resort infrastructures and privatized tourism activities. The
30 very destruction of customary livelihoods and monetization of these habitats often results in
31 the expansion of wage-labour upon which such growth in fact relies (Mittal and Fraser,
32 2018). Tourism economies are also often vulnerable to unproductive ‘rent seeking’ and
33 speculative real estate investment as means of sustaining profitability and capital
34 accumulation, such as fuelled the frenzy of real estate-led tourism growth along the Spanish
35 littoral from the 1990s until the 2008 financial crash (Murray et al., 2017; Hof and Blázquez-
36 Salom, 2015).⁴

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Financialization has fuelled growth in mergers and acquisitions in the global tourism and hotel sectors which is increasingly augmented by the entrance of private equity and ‘real estate investment trusts’ (REITs) in the purchase of major tour operations, hotel and resort assets (ILO, 2010, pp.29-32; Yrigoy, 2016). The resultant complexity of corporate ownership and financial flows in tourism has been further magnified by the rise of corporate on-line travel agencies (OTAs) and online rental platforms, leading to the disruption of existing patterns of corporate dominance in key tourism sub-sectors whilst exacerbating new patterns of online market concentration (Gössling and Hall, 2019).⁵ Despite their ability to unlock

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3 value in idle assets, the rise of online rental platforms creates additional challenges for
4 achieving ‘decent work’ in many areas of tourism and hospitality (Dredge & Gyimóthy,
5 2015). Evidence nevertheless does exist for the emergence of alternative business models and
6 distinctive modes of value creation in tourism (Cave and Dredge, 2018). However, the
7 potential for collaborative and non-monetary forms of value creation presented by digital
8 platforms are small-scale and thus far present little threat to the dominance of corporate and
9 financialized systems of capital accumulation that drive tourism growth.
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18 ***Tourism and labour: the hidden dimension of sustainability***

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21 Given the prevalence of low pay, exploitation and weak protections across the tourism and
22 hospitality industries (Cañada 2014; ILO 2010, 2017; Teberga De Paula, 2018), it is
23 unsurprising to find that ‘decent work’ (SDG 8) is integral to the UNWTO’s SDG agenda
24 (UNWTO, 2017). Studies of sustainable tourism are rarely accompanied by an examination
25 of the intersecting axes of exploitation and discrimination arising out of the class character of
26 tourism capitalist development and attendant patterns of resource use and appropriation.
27 Despite a substantial literature on employment practices and working conditions
28 consideration of the systemic nature of labour exploitation in tourism capital accumulation
29 has been overshadowed by orthodox managerial and economic perspectives (Ladkin, 2011).
30 Critical engagement with SDG 8 from the perspective of dignity in tourism employment also
31 construes the tourism workforce as a factor of production, disregarding the class relations of
32 struggle that underpins exploitative labour regimes (Winchenbach et al., 2019).
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43 Tourism industries are marked by “diverse labour market tensions, varied subsistence
44 strategies, and complex dynamics of power relations” (Madsen Camacho, 1996, p.33). These
45 are shaped as much by a nation’s overall political economy (Williams 2004, p.66), as they are
46 the “hybrid and contradictory economic formations” of tourism capitalism (Gibson, 2009,
47 p.530). The myriad small-scale entrepreneurs that underpin tourism economies are also often
48 exposed to precarity and chronic insecurity resulting from market volatility, seasonality and
49 unfavourable regulatory regimes (see Jamal, 2019: 43-45). That said, it is those at the lower
50 ends of the labour market with little more than their labour or “free floating” capital to sell
51 (Crick, 1994, p.163), who are most exposed to the insecurities and injustices of tourism work.
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3 The political economy of global tourism and associated regimes of accumulation is
4 produced and reproduced at different spatial scales partly through the ability to draw on a
5 vast pool of globalised and socio-ethnically-differentiated labour amongst whom ethnic
6 minorities, women and migrant workers are disproportionately represented (Chin, 2008;
7 Chok, 2009; ILO 2012). Hence, the divisions of labour within large, transnational firms
8 (particularly in global cruise companies, large-scale resorts and hotel chains) are often
9 structured according to ethnicity, nationality and gender (Chin, 2008; Hampton, 2010; Wood,
10 2000). Moreover, despite the growing popularity and high yields associated with specialist
11 ‘niche’ tourisms systemic labour precarity and poverty is widespread (see Hampton,
12 Jeyacheya & Lee, 2018). Ample evidence also exists pointing to a correlation between the
13 construction of luxury tourism installations and exploitative working conditions, including in
14 all-inclusive resorts in the Seychelles (Lee et al., 2015), luxury hotels in Pakistan (Sheikh,
15 2010) and integrated mega-resorts in South-East Asia (Chok, 2009; Hampton 2010).

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26 Collective bargaining in the tourism and hospitality sectors is undermined by weak trade
27 union representation as well as the fragmented and geographically dispersed structure of
28 tourism producers. Notwithstanding strong labour unions in key support services (e.g. air
29 traffic control), the fragmentation of tourism divisions of labour and perishability of tourist
30 services themselves constrains the ability of labour to slow down the speed of production or
31 disrupt supply-chains. The complexity of globalised corporate ownership structures has
32 enabled the out-sourcing and sub-contracting of work to employment agencies undermining
33 collective bargaining and eroding employee protections (Grossman and Greenfield, 2006;
34 Sheikh, 2010).

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42 While low-skilled poorly paid tourism-hospitality sector jobs may be preferable to the
43 arduous nature of work in other export sectors or traditional agrarian/fishing occupations, this
44 does not negate its frequently exploitative nature. As attested by the prevalence of precarious
45 conditions amongst tourism workers in the Global South ‘decent work’ in tourism can be
46 hard to find (Lee et al., 2015, p.198). The fact that foreign-owned tourism corporations may
47 pay higher wages than many small-scale locally owned firms or that wages may rise in line
48 with growth and profits does not negate the need to interrogate the political-economic
49 conditions under which surpluses are produced and distributed.

50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 **The UNWTO and sustainable tourism**

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3 The Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), is commonly regarded as the launch pad for
4 global political action to achieve sustainable development.⁶ Although it fell short of mapping
5 out an agenda for radical political reform it explicitly recognised the relationship between the
6 “short-sighted” pursuit of prosperity, overuse of environmental resources and, poverty
7 (WCED, 1987, p.27). However, the emphasis on continued growth as means of relieving
8 poverty meant that tensions remain between economic growth and the equitable distribution
9 of “life-sustaining resources and opportunities” (Goldman, 2011. p.2).

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16 Agenda 21, a template for practical action on sustainable development agreed at the Rio
17 ‘Earth Summit’ in 1992, sought to address questions of equity through encouragement of
18 civil society involvement in the design and implementation of a global sustainable
19 development agenda. Somewhat paradoxically, trade liberalization across all economic
20 sectors was endorsed as means of stimulating sustainable economic growth (UN, 1992).
21 Meanwhile, proposals to set up a centre to monitor corporate malpractice and references to
22 over-consumption in the industrialized countries were deleted from the draft convention as a
23 result of lobbying by leading industrial nations (see Hilary, 2013, pp.61-63).

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31 During the period from 1992 until the 2012 Rio+20 Earth Summit in Johannesburg
32 the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) coordinated a series
33 of annual multi-stakeholder meetings with representatives of civil society and other ‘major
34 groups (labour unions, local governments, local communities and industry bodies etc.) in an
35 attempt to forge a consensus around key issues and challenges for sustainable development
36 and identify ways for governments to address these. In the lead up to the UNCSD-7 in 1999
37 NGOs involved in campaigning on tourism-related issues were invited to communicate a
38 common position on sustainable tourism that respected the divergent stances of Northern and
39 Southern NGOs (CSD, 1999a).

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46 Although the WTO provided some input into the UNCSD (see WTO, 1999a), at this
47 stage it was unable to take a leading role at the UNCSD-7 meeting due to being neither an
48 industry body nor an NGO. While differences emerged over the Industry-specific Agenda 21,
49 supported by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)⁷ and the International Hotel
50 and Restaurant Association (IHRA), versus Local Agenda 21 (a joint initiative of UNEP and
51 ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability)⁸ and supported by the NGO Tourism Caucus
52 and Local Authorities, the WTO refrained from taking a firm position.

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3 The multi-stakeholder dialogue on tourism at the UNCSD-7 in 1999 marked the zenith
4 of NGO and civil society participation following the Rio summit (Dodds, 2019). It also
5 marked a move away from the WTO's earlier commitment to a social vision of tourism
6 development set out in the Manila Declaration (WTO, 1980) and Acapulco Document (WTO,
7 1982) towards an unequivocal commitment to neoliberal market-led principles (see Higgins-
8 Desbiolles, 2006). Tensions between the NGO Tourism Caucus and WTO over the neoliberal
9 direction of its sustainability agenda at the World Ecotourism Summit in 2002, resulted in a
10 permanent rift, marking the end of formal NGO participation in the high-level agenda setting
11 framework. This signaled a major turning point for the WTO's engagement with an
12 emerging global agenda for sustainable tourism. Hitherto, the WTO had been primarily
13 concerned with the promotion of tourism as an instrument of economic development. In its
14 report to UNCSD-7 the WTO (1990a, p.5) states that "market forces alone do not guarantee
15 that tourism will be sustainable". This is then somewhat contradicted in the *Global Code of*
16 *Ethics for Tourism* in which tourism is directly addressed as a "factor of sustainable
17 development" (Article 3) but within the framework of a "market economy, private enterprise
18 and free trade" (WTO, 1999b). The UNWTO's reinforced its commitment to trade
19 liberalization in tourism services following World Trade talks in Doha (2001) and Cancún
20 (2003), by which time it had become a specialized agency of the UN (Ferguson, 2007).
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38 ***The UNWTO and the Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 8***

39 The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the basis of
40 UNWTO's attempt to establish a common framework of action centred on sustainable
41 tourism. The SDGs represent a compromise negotiated and agreed between governments, the
42 implementation of which falls to major industry associations and multi-stakeholder groups
43 representing different sectors, in which corporate influence is significant (see Gleckman,
44 2016). Of the five over-arching sustainable development goals set out in the preamble of
45 Agenda 2030⁹ economic growth is not in fact addressed as an explicit goal (UN, 2015).
46 However, the proclaimed necessity of growth is clearly stated in SDG 8 with the resolve to:
47 "create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared
48 prosperity and decent work for all" (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>). Here
49 growth is reframed as an explicit *goal* of sustainable development, not just a means to
50 achieving it, although no specific rationale is given for doing so other than the taken-for-
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3 granted assumption that growth and productivity improvements are essential for driving
4 progress towards implementing the SDGs.
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6 While the SDGs are construed as “integrated and indivisible” (UN, 2015), the UNWTO
7 has chosen to focus specifically on SDG 8 with the aim to “Promote sustained, inclusive and
8 sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” along
9 with SDGs 12 and 14 (UNWTO, 2017a, p.99). Tourism is explicitly addressed in Target 8.9:
10 “to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and
11 promotes local culture and products” (UNWTO, 2017a, p.99). This target is linked to two
12 indicators:
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- 19 • 8.9.1: Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate
 - 20 • 8.9.2: Proportion of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs.
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24 When charged by the UN to formulate measures for Indicators 8.9.1 and 8.9.2 by 2020,
25 the UNWTO proposed to replace them with a single indicator (combing growth and decent
26 work) entitled “Progress towards sustainable tourism” along with three additional sub-
27 measures “that provide a good (conceptually precise and feasible) indication of the three
28 dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic, social and environmental)” (UNWTO, 2018a).
29 Additionally, the UNWTO proposed that the *economic* dimension of sustainability be
30 measured by tourism’s contribution to GDP, using the UNWTO’s Tourism Satellite
31 Accounting methodology. By way of justification the UNWTO claims that “While Target 8.9
32 has many parts, within the context of Goal 8 it is understood that its main focus is “promoting
33 sustainable tourism” (UNWTO, 2018a, p.6). In addition to misrepresenting the parent goal,
34 the relationship between growth and sustainable tourism remains unclear if not outright
35 contradictory. The proposed measures themselves consist of little more than a restatement of
36 growth-led economic orthodoxies through which tourism’s contribution to economic
37 development has been conventionally interpreted.
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48 The prioritization of “sustained economic growth” demonstrates the degree to which
49 the SDGs are framed by business-focused market principles in which the “priorities” of the
50 corporate sector are often foregrounded (UNWTO, 2016, p.24). Constant reference is made
51 to supporting and incentivizing the private sector and promoting a “pro-competitive and
52 effective policy framework” in order to stimulate further growth (UNWTO, 2017a, p.19).
53 Both the wider Agenda 2030 and UNWTO’s interpretation express and consolidate the
54 institutionalization of a “normative neoliberalism” through which markets and competition
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3 have become the defining principle of a single, global political-economic system (Davies,
4 2016, pp.127-129).

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6 Agenda 2030 demonstrates the continued hold of this logic through its explicit support
7 (SDG17.10) for “a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable
8 multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization”
9 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>). The UNWTO (2017a, p.12) makes frequent
10 reference to the need to “remove barriers to trade” with little evidence given to demonstrate
11 how this enhances sustainable tourism development other than by virtue of tourism’s
12 potential to enable developing countries to “take part in the global economy” (UNWTO,
13 2017a, p.24). The Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics similarly encourages tourism
14 multinationals to “promote local and sustainable consumption and production” and to avoid
15 “excessive repatriation of their profits” in return for the “freedom to invest and trade”
16 (UNWTO, 2017b, Art. 12.5, p.88). Nowhere is there any mention of intractable global
17 inequalities of wealth and income (Hickel, 2017, pp.37-43), or the link between tourism
18 growth, uneven distribution of wealth and excessive levels of consumption by a privileged
19 minority of travellers.
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32 ***Sustainable tourism and decent work***

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34 The idea of ‘decent work’ emerged in parallel to the broader debates on sustainability
35 during the 1990s. In 1999 the International Labour Office defined decent work as “jobs of
36 acceptable quality” and “respect for the fundamental rights of work” (ILO, 1999, pp.4-7).
37 While such rights are seen as essential to enable workers to “claim a fair share of the wealth
38 they have helped to generate” the ILO’s definition remains framed by the contribution decent
39 work could make to growth and the need to accommodate “business and employers
40 concerns” (ILO, 1999, p.10). Decent work was subsequently incorporated into the MDGs
41 and is now integral to UN Agenda 2030 as part of SDG 8, thanks in part to the persistent
42 lobbying of the ILO itself.
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50 The ILO’s (2017, p.11) recent guidelines on decent work identify key challenges to be
51 addressed in the areas of tourism and hospitality employment including, the high incidence of
52 informal working arrangements, insecurity, poor working conditions, low wages, long
53 working hours, high turnover rates, limited social protections and incidences of
54 discrimination, exploitation and sexual harassment. It goes on to propose ways in which
55 sustainable tourism policies could contribute to a decent work agenda related to Targets 8.9,
56 12.b and 14.7 (ILO, 2017, pp.15-16). However, despite acknowledging the need to strengthen
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3 labour protections, promoting social dialogue and the rights to collective bargaining the
4 ILO's conception of decent work remains aligned with "enhancing tourism enterprise
5 performance" and policies that promote increased "efficiency and productivity" (ILO, 2017,
6 p.36, p.43). There is little engagement with the underlying causes of 'indecent' work much
7 less an attempt to understand how increased productivity may in fact result from intensified
8 forms of capitalist exploitation and integration into global markets.
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13 The UNWTO has, in various declarations (WTO, 1980, 1999a, 2017), stressed that due
14 attention be given to the rights of workers and the equitable distribution of wealth in tourism.
15 In 2008 the UNWTO and ILO jointly agreed to support "dignified work" and advance the
16 application of international labour standards but failed to identify an explicit programme of
17 action to achieve this (Gascon, 2019). Despite the participation of trades unions in UNCSO-7
18 the systemic forces of labour exploitation in tourism remain unaddressed (CSD, 1999c).
19 Much of the UNWTO's focus has been on developing statistical formulae for calculating
20 tourism employment with little regard to develop more robust criteria for the evaluation of
21 decent work. Not only does Indicator 8.9.2 reduce the interpretation of decent work merely
22 to the "number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total jobs and growth rate of
23 jobs, by sex", the UNWTO dilutes the meaning of sustainable tourism even further by
24 suggesting that the social dimension of tourism sustainability can be comprehensively
25 assessed through measures of tourism employment (UNWTO, 2018a, p.5)
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36 To reduce the evaluation of decent work to a simple calibration of the numbers
37 employed in the tourism industries disregards the interplay between the organization of work
38 in tourism economies and the class dynamics of capitalist labour relations (cf. Selwyn, 2014).
39 The limited horizons of the UNWTO's interpretation of dignified and decent work is
40 reflected in Target 8.7 which deals with the elimination of forced labour, modern slavery and
41 human trafficking and securing the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child
42 labour (UNWTO 2017a, p.99). As serious as these issues are, this construes decent work
43 predominantly as a moral issue disregarding how such human rights abuses and exploitative
44 labour regimes may be linked to the hollowing out of social protections as part of the
45 'normal' workings of tourism capitalism.
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The UNWTO nevertheless recognizes that, "tourism's ability to bolster decent work is
a complex issue" and acknowledges the challenges presented by the fragmented character of
tourism labour regimes and conditions of work (UNWTO, 2018b, 55-56). However, the
recent Framework Convention suggests that the protection of job security and social
protection for workers can only be guaranteed "so far as possible" (UNWTO, 2017, p.87).

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3 This exempts the tourism industry from respecting universally acknowledged worker's rights
4 by confining these within "the specific constraints linked in particular to the seasonality of
5 their activity, the global dimension of their industries and the flexibility often required of
6 them by the nature of their work" (UNWTO, 2017b: Art 12.1, 87). As if to further
7 demonstrate the attenuated definition of decent work and its subordination to growth the
8 current UNWTO Secretary-General failed to include decent work amongst the most pressing
9 challenges facing the tourism industry (Fingar, 2018), while not one of the 21
10 recommendations in the Chengdu Declaration on Tourism and the SDGs address decent work
11 (UNWTO, 2017c).

20 Discussion and Critique

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22 The UNWTO's SDG agenda prioritizes the sustained growth of a 'green' tourism
23 economy that will contribute to "economically viable and robust growth, decent work
24 creation, poverty alleviation, improved efficiency in resource use and reduced environmental
25 degradation" (Stroebe, 2015, p.2226). As if to reinforce the limited prospects for a genuine
26 rethinking of the tourism political economy the notion of green growth has stimulated a
27 "green gold rush" of foreign investment in "responsible" and "sustainable" tourism assets
28 (Mitchell, 2017). Meanwhile global spending on 'ecotourism' – still largely associated with
29 sustainability (UNWTO, 2017a, p.26) - outstrips aggregate investment in the industry
30 (UNEP, & UNWTO, 2012, p.viii).

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32 For the UNWTO "growth is not the enemy" (Rifai, 2017). Rather, the adverse
33 consequences of tourism growth can be addressed through the sustainable management of
34 growth and concomitant embrace of "more inclusive" and "sustainable" business models
35 (UNWTO, 2017a: 12). As indicated by Target 8.4 it is expected that the negative
36 externalities of tourism growth can be addressed through "decoupling" growth from
37 ecologically unsustainable resource use (UNWTO, 2017a, 28). While there has been some
38 evidence of the relative decoupling of growth from resource degradation between 1980 and
39 2002, the material footprint of growth has since accelerated (Hickel, 2019b, p.3). Moreover,
40 claims that many rich nations have achieved lower carbon emissions despite higher GDP,
41 ignores the degree to which emissions have been out-sourced through global supply chains or
42 that aviation and shipping emissions are not included in calculations.

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44 The UNWTO (2017a, p.27) makes explicit mention of the potential for "innovation and
45 "new technologies" to stimulate new business models and "efficiency gain". There is

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3 however no mention of the associated costs in terms of unsustainable resource use, residential
4 displacement and gentrification pressures brought about by the rise of digital rental platforms
5 and the attendant concentration of corporate power in the so-called “sharing economy”. As
6 welcome as they are, proposals to account for the hidden costs or externalities produced by
7 tourism (see Epler Wood, 2019), continue to construe nature as an “ecosystem service” (Sala,
8 2011), reducing the natural world and all its attendant complexity to merely another form of
9 capital that is substitutable for another (Fioramonti, 2013, p.89).

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16 The model of “inclusive green growth” espoused by the UNWTO (2017a, p.7) is rooted in
17 the World Bank’s paradigm of “inclusive growth” which calls for *accelerated* growth to
18 reduce poverty (World Bank, 2009, p.1). The UNWTO (2017a, p.7) is also at pains to draw
19 connections between the SDGs and “sustainable business operations that can spur
20 competition and increase profit”. There are numerous references to the “priorities” of the
21 private sector, including those of the Spanish tourism sector (UNWTO, 2016, p.24). But
22 there is little indication of the diverse capitals that have shaped the structure of Spanish
23 tourism, much less acknowledgement of the damage to the environment and social fabric
24 wrought by prioritizing the interests of real estate and construction capital that drives the
25 growth of tourism (Murray Mas et al, 2017).

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34 In its continued support for trade liberalization the UNWTO’s SDG-led agenda envisages
35 the further integration of small-scale producers in developing countries into global markets as
36 a means of enhancing the competitiveness and export-led tourism growth (UNWTO, 2017a,
37 p.24). Inclusiveness is envisaged in terms of facilitating access of producers to global markets
38 and increasing employment opportunities for the poor without challenging existing
39 hierarchies of wealth and power. There is no acknowledgement of how trade liberalization
40 and increased foreign investment, the logic of which pervades inclusive growth discourses
41 (Saad-Filho, 2009), may accentuate the flow of benefits to large private capital at the expense
42 of such small-scale producers and workers (Schilcher, 2007).

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50 Governed by liberal market pragmatism the UNWTO disregards the tenuous link between
51 tourism growth and reduction of poverty and/or inequalities (see Hampton, Jeyacheya &
52 Long, 2018), as well as the threat to the livelihoods and resources of peasant and labouring
53 classes entailed by the drive for the sustained growth of tourism (Devine, 2017). The idea
54 that competitiveness is intrinsic to sustainable tourism ignores the fact that open markets and
55 liberal trade regimes enables mobile transnational capital to seek *absolute* advantage,
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3 benefitting global investors and corporations at the expense of domestic enterprise and
4 indebted states in the Global South. The superior bargaining power of the former enables
5 them to weaken the regulatory environment or acquire lucrative assets at a favourable price.
6 This is particularly so where debt restructuring has impoverished national governments as in
7 the case of the sale of state-owned Hotel Montelimar to the Barceló group in Nicaragua
8 (Buades 2009, pp. 69-72).
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14 The emphasis on inclusiveness also implies a democratic and participatory approach to
15 economic development. However, the UNWTO merely urges tourism companies to
16 “encourage multi-stakeholder initiatives” (UNWTO, 2016, p.39). **Despite calls for the active**
17 **participation of civil society “partners” alongside other stakeholders in formulating SDG-**
18 **framed policy for tourism, it is telling that the UNWTO sees the role of civil society as one of**
19 **largely supporting and encouraging the private sector to incorporate sustainability in their**
20 **business models (UNWTO, 2017a, p.19).** The prioritization of corporate interests is further
21 reinforced in the Framework Convention which encourages the development of partnerships
22 between enterprises of generating and receiving countries and corporate support “the
23 equitable distribution of the benefits of its growth” rather than address the complex
24 relationship between tourism growth and poverty itself (UNWTO, 2017b: Art 12.6: 9). There
25 is no discussion of the considerable constraints to such equity imposed by a coercive rules-
26 based international trade regime nor critical scrutiny of how unequal economic relations are
27 produced and reproduced throughout the world trade system and global corporate commodity
28 chains.
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41 The concept of inclusive growth also betrays limited scope of ambitions regarding the role
42 of labour and decent work within a sustainable (tourism) economy. The horizons of decent
43 work are limited to being “inclusive of the large part of the country’s labor force” and
44 “productive employment rather than income redistribution” (World Bank, 2009, p.4). This
45 ignores the fact that low wages are significantly determined by the weak bargaining power of
46 workers and the concomitant ability of businesses to impose low wages and harsh working
47 conditions on them (Selwyn, 2014). The conceptual invisibility of contested class relations in
48 sustainable tourism are reflected in the praise given for the corporate social responsibility
49 policies of the NH Hotel Group (UNWTO, 2016, p.41), which has been heavily criticized for
50 outsourcing its cleaning operations and redundancies while simultaneously increasing profits
51 by €76m between 2014 and 2016 (Burgen, 2017).
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3 Growth serves both as the principal mechanism through which capitalism's continually
4 expands as well as an ideological tool foreclosing demands for redistributive justice by
5 aligning the interests of labouring classes with capital. Indeed, challenges to restrictive
6 environmental measures by developers have often been justified in the name of job creation
7 and economic development. On occasion this has led to clashes between environmentalists
8 and workers as occurred in the Hilton construction project in Malta during the 1990s
9 (Boissevain and Theuma, 1998). However, to interpret such conflicts as simply a trade-off
10 between environmental conservation and economic development ignores how the schism
11 between workers and environmentalists is produced out of unequal processes of capitalist
12 development in which workers' ability to make meaningful choices over their livelihoods are
13 constrained. Furthermore, it is often peasant farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples and workers
14 who bear the brunt of the impact of environmental degradation resulting from urban
15 development and tourism.
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29 **Conclusion**

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31 This paper has argued that the UNWTO's SDG agenda, specifically the notions of
32 'sustained' and 'inclusive' growth intrinsic to SDG 8, is marked by unresolved tensions
33 between sustainable development and sustainable tourism. The analysis and critique
34 presented here contends that the principles of 'inclusive growth' and 'decent work' espoused
35 by the UNWTO do little to address the contradictions and tensions inherent in the logics of
36 growth and processes of capital accumulation that drive the growth and expansion of tourism.
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38 **In its belief that sustainability can be reconciled with a growth-led 'inclusive' market**
39 **capitalism, the UNWTO's proposed revisions to SDG 8 and its broader sustainability agenda**
40 **remain blind to the injustices that are intrinsic to the systemic processes of exploitation**
41 **characteristic of tourism capitalism. The horizons of inclusiveness envisaged in their agenda**
42 **is reliant upon the market to deliver wealth redistribution through sustainable growth. This**
43 **leaves unaddressed the question of widening and deepening the democratic and cooperative**
44 **ownership, control and use of productive assets, including in the workplace itself, and the**
45 **potential for fomenting diverse arrangements of tourism production, thus naturalizing**
46 **capitalist property relations and inequalities in the distribution of resources.** Moreover, there
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48 is little to indicate that the UNWTO's SDG agenda has begun to grapple with the
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50 increasingly predatory modes of profit extraction and class struggles that characterise
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3 emergent variants of authoritarian statist capitalism and its role in driving tourism growth in
4 emerging economies.
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6 The paper has also highlighted the UNWTO's role in marginalising discordant voices
7 from civil society in the process of shaping and subsequently leading the global sustainable
8 tourism agenda that culminated in its current SDG-led agenda. **Despite the involvement of**
9 **civil society in the UNCS-D-7 the UNWTO has consistently failed to create an institutional**
10 **framework that would advance the democratic participation of disempowered groups in ways**
11 **that not only foster dialogue but would also enable such groups to exert influence on the**
12 **policies and strategic direction of the institution.** By promoting the idea that the interests of
13 corporations can be balanced with workers and local communities without addressing the
14 forces sustaining existing corporate ownership structures and the class dynamics of capital
15 accumulation that drives endless growth, the UNWTO's SDG agenda promises to do little
16 more than reinforce existing hierarchies of political-economic power. In this regard, the
17 authors have highlighted the limited ambitions of decent work as construed by the UNWTO's
18 SDG-agenda. To date, the UNWTO has yet to devise more convincing and robust indicators
19 for such a critical element of sustainable tourism. In so doing the UNWTO remains
20 conceptually blind to the exploitative relations of capitalist development that produce and
21 sustain indecent work in tourism.
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34 The ability of workers to negotiate decent working conditions is furthermore seen as
35 something to be delivered by a benevolent state and/or humane employers. Workers are
36 regarded as a factor of production and/or one amongst many interest groups whose demands
37 are to be set alongside those of states, corporations and entrepreneurs whose superior power
38 and ability to shape the organization of production is rarely addressed. This shifts the focus
39 away from the exploitation of labour and expropriation of the commons in the pursuit of
40 profit and the constellations of class power that drive the growth of tourism. Tourism
41 degrowth advocates (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Hall, 2009), rightly emphasise the need
42 to reconcile degrowth strategies with fairness, equity and justice to avoid the trap of elitist
43 environmentalism that marginalises the poor and labouring classes. Accordingly, tourism
44 degrowth strategies need to be coupled with a class-relational conception of justice and
45 radical redistribution of power and wealth (not merely a critique of neoliberalism) that
46 involves a more robust interrogation of the industrial organisation and processes of capital
47 accumulation that drive the growth of tourism.
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58 Language and verbal imagery too (note the compelling visual logos for the SDGs) exercise
59 a profound influence on human cognitive understanding, particularly in the realm of abstract
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3 economic ideas (Raworth, 2018). Through its prolific use of such adjectives as ‘sustained’,
4 ‘inclusive’ and ‘decent’ to qualify its fully-fledged drive for continual growth the UNWTO’s
5 SDG-led agenda is not only misguided but dangerous. Discourses of inclusive growth and
6 decent work shape the distinctive grammar and communicative logics through which markets
7 and growth are normalized in the UNWTO’s SDG agenda. This of course is no accident and
8 can perhaps also be interpreted as a political attempt by the UNWTO to steer the dialogue on
9 sustainability away from the questions of environmental and social justice in tourism that
10 would necessitate a radical reorganization of the political and economic structures that drive
11 and sustain the growth-led dynamics of tourism capital accumulation. **Further to the critique
12 presented here of the market orthodoxy that frames institutional discourses of ‘decent work’
13 and its application to the UNWTO’s sustainable tourism agenda, there is scope for closer
14 inspection of the diverse cultural understandings of decent work that may be excluded from
15 such discourses. However, recognition of the diverse social contexts and cultural differences
16 that shape tourism labour markets must not come at the expense of affirming the universal
17 struggle of tourism workers and destination communities to defend their well-being and live
18 free from exploitation.**

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27 ¹ The analysis draws on recent UNWTO reports on the SDGs while also identifying important
28 discursive and ideological continuities with other key reports approved by the General Assembly of
29 the UNWTO such as the UNWTO *Global Code of Ethics* (WTO, 1999b) and its successor the
30 *Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics* (UNWTO 2017b). It is important to note that these
31 documents do not always reflect the official position of the UNWTO.

32
33 ² Recent calculations suggest that international tourism accounts for 8 per cent of global GHG
34 emissions (Lenzen et al., 2018).

35
36 ³ SDG1 uses the standard international benchmark for 'extreme poverty' of US\$1.25. Even if the
37 logics of growth-driven market capitalism are accepted Woodward (2015) contends that to eradicate
38 global poverty (at US\$1.25 per day) would take at least 100 years at a rate of 2.35 per cent per capita
39 growth.

40
41 ⁴ Simon Kuznets, the economist who devised GDP metrics in the 1930s, later sought to exclude the
42 gains from speculative financial transactions from national income (Fioramonti, 2014: 57-8).

43
44 ⁵ There are few major tourism, hospitality and resort corporations amongst the world's top 100
45 corporations. An exception is Booking Holdings, the world's largest on-line travel retailer whose
46 market value (US\$93bn) increased by a remarkable 3,233 percent between 2009 and 2015 (PwC,
47 2018).

48
49 ⁶ US industrial interests rejected any reference to 'sustainability' at the 1972 UN Conference on the
50 Human Environment held in Stockholm (Fioramonti, 2013, p.84).

51
52 ⁷ The WTTC is a global coalition of corporate executives formed in London in 1990 representing 170
53 of the world's largest tourism and hospitality companies.

54
55 ⁸ ICLEI is a global network of 1,500+ cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable
56 future.

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58 ⁹ The five major goals are: to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and
59 among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote
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gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

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