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# The Micro Geopolitics of Ecotourism

*The Intricacies of Discursive Constructions  
and Partnerships in Planning, Promotion  
and Management of (Eco)tourism*



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**Ismar Borges de Lima**  
*AUTHOR*

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*The Intricacies of Discursive Constructions,  
Power Relations and Partnership Models in  
Planning, Promotion and Management of  
(Eco)tourism*

Ismar Borges de Lima

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**About the cover**

The cover picture was taken in 2005 in a tourism site some miles away from Manaus, Brazil. The little boy belongs to a riverbank village. He was on the spotlight because of holding a small cayman and sometimes a domesticated mammoth as seen.

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*This book clearly presents the complex and often contradictory subject of ecotourism. Early on, ecotourism was held in a highly favorable light as being the ideal alternative to mass tourism. It was purported to have minimal impact on the natural environment, cultural resources, and indigenous communities while simultaneously it provided economic benefit to local economies. Whereas ecotourism can and does achieve many of these benefits, which are not mutually exclusive, it is not without its faults because research has shown that even the low-impact approach of ecotourism can still inflict changes. These changes include physical impacts by visitors to natural resources such as erosion on trail surfaces, disturbance of fragile cultural resources, disruption and/or displacement of wildlife from their habitat, and social changes to local indigenous cultures. That said, ecotourism is not necessarily a bad thing. It does provide a means for local cultures to take advantage of interest in local resources by outside visitors; much of the revenue associated with ecotourism remains at the point of designation.*

*Ecotourism allows the visitor to experience many of the wonders of natural and cultural world in a way in which they – the visitor – become better educated about the unique cultures and natural environment which they have chose to visit. The visitor often develops a greater appreciation and understanding of the places that they have chosen to visit. Recognition of these special places often results in increased importance to protect and preserve these resources. Author Ismar Lima clearly illustrates how ecotourism is not without its secondary impacts or consequences, in spite of the many benefits that this small sector of what is the largest industry worldwide; tourism.*

*This book explains the many wonderful consequences for bringing people to remote and isolated locations and allowing them to experience the wonder of the natural and cultural world. However, the text also sheds light on the many and often complex issues associated with ecotourism. In particular, Lima discusses the confusion central to the term ecotourism, citing literature by highly respected and well-published scholars in the field of ecotourism research.*

*In particular, author Lima incorporates research as part of his doctoral studies in New Zealand, a unique and special location for ecotourism activities partially based on the isolated setting and tremendous natural and cultural landscapes. He also presents issues related to collaborative ecotourism*

*in his home country of Brazil in the state of Bahia through a well documented and detailed case-study. This book pulls together in one comprehensive text many of the theories, applications, methodological tools, social consequences, and governmental structures of ecotourism. It does this in a logical and rational manner, making it easily usable by scholars, resource managers, program directors and NGO leaders. For this reason, this book represents a significant contribution to the field of research and applications of ecotourism principles and practices. It will be of great use and application for a wide audience of users.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Professor Peter Kumble, Ph.D.** \_\_\_\_\_

*Researcher on Landscape and Planning, Tourism, Ecotourism. Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, **University of Massachusetts, MA, USA.***

**T***he original version of this manuscript was also reviewed as a doctoral investigation document by **Michael C. Hall**, an internationally acknowledged scholar in the tourism field, Professor at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand who said “the author is to be congratulated for the overall quality of the research and the written quality of the work”. **Heather Zeppel**, a Professor at James Cook University, Australia, highly prized in Academia because of her publications on ecotourism, also manifested her views on the work, “the manuscript...provides new insights...through discourse analysis...and the author should be encouraged to publish key findings of it”.*

## FOREWORD

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*This is an interdisciplinary book on tourism, sustainability, nature conservation and preservation, public policies, politics, power relations, partnerships and discursive constructions which presents tourism-related topics and current themes with remarkable in-depth analysis and introspective views serving as a source to various purposes of scholars, researchers, professors, government staff, planners, policy makers, people of trade and of private sector, civil society, NGOs, and by those interested in this subject. It is a book written to be used by individuals of any discipline within the Social Sciences, such as planning and management, human geography, and sociolinguistics, etc.*

*The book has very well-built conceptual, theoretical and methodological sections because it is based on a four-year doctoral investigation. Conceptually, the author discusses and applies Social Constructionism, Critical Realism and Theory of Collaboration to empirical data, and he discusses and adapts the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough as a methodological tool. Ismar's contributions to Academia are many and lie in the development of the Contextual Critical Discourse Analysis (CCDA) as a qualitative method; as well as his approach on sustainability as socially constructed in which he labels it as 'liquid sustainability'. He was also the first scholar to develop the concept of 'local environmental governance' (LEG) and to apply it to real cases as an essential element of new ecologically oriented development models.*

*This book is a very interesting reading with unique approaches. There are general chapters accessible to a broad audience in reason of case studies in Brazil where the author draws on empirical experiences in Amazonia region such as in Marajó Island, Tapajós-Arapuins, Maripá, Jamaraguá, Maguari, Silves, Novo Airão, and in the northeast region of the country, specifically in Bahia state, namely Itacaré, Ilhéus, and Una municipalities. This book is also based on a four-year fieldwork in New Zealand.*

*The author visited and collected data in Mount Maunganui, Rotorua, Waimangi, Maungatautari Ecological Island, Bay of Plenty with a focus on Kuaka Organization, Bay of Islands, Wairere Boulders in Hokianga, Kauri Park, and other green areas in Far Northland. In this book, the author examines collaboration schemes and partnership models by deconstructing them as institutional and organizational arrangements, and he seeks to underline the various impacts on local and regional development. It is a praiseworthy pioneer study and writing on nature-based tourism activities in protected areas, either being labelled as community-based or not, as well as (eco)tourism as a public or private endeavour in both countries.*

*The author is notably knowledgeable on nature-based tourism and environmental issues and he made a great contribution to the literature with his pioneer study and writings on ecotourism in two countries which have been on a worldwide spotlight because of their nature-based tourism potentialities and activities.*

*The book presents distinct realities and contexts of two amazing countries with magnificent, unique landscapes and nature. It enables an extensive understanding on tourism, planning, public policies, state role, institutional arrangements and structures, law, environmental legislation, local stakeholders' views and perceptions, and nature protection strategies. It greatly maps the micro geopolitics that exists in all levels of ecotourism development: in its conceptualisation, design, planning and management.*

*It examines issues of power in (eco)tourism development as manifested in the discursive construction and positionality of local stakeholders. It then inquires whether collaborative schemes can bridge the various interest groups dealing with nature tourism activities in a way that they can expand social, economic and environmental benefits. The language they use, the context they live in, and their relationships and interactions are systematically deconstructed to unveil possible collaborative models for conflict resolution that can advance the practices of (eco)tourism as well as bring collective gains regionally.*

*Focusing on nodes of conflict and nodes of collaboration, case studies were chosen in New Zealand and in Brazil that encompass public and private actors in (eco)tourism such as government agencies and small-scale tour operators. The 100% Pure New Zealand campaign, Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel, and Silves and Itacaré in Brazil are investigated in depth. The researcher is concerned with the values, perceptions and attitudes of local actors about the role and importance of (eco)tourism as a concentration area for conservationist networks.*

*The author is skeptical about the constructions of (eco)tourism outside the context of local stakeholders that are 'imported' or imposed on them in a way that it increases pre-existing tensions and conflicts. With many cases in the literature showing that (eco)tourism lacks an institutional archetype to deliver all its promises, it is plausible to talk about nature-based tourism instead. However, the claim is not that simple, because ecotourism entails contentious issues; it is a complex activity as one takes it for social inclusion and as a tool for regional economic development. The author advocates that representative collaboration and partnerships can ease the move from destructive to constructive conflicts in (eco)tourism. Ecotourism is a complex activity as one uses it for social inclusion and as a tool for regional economic development. The author argues that the way (eco)tourism has*

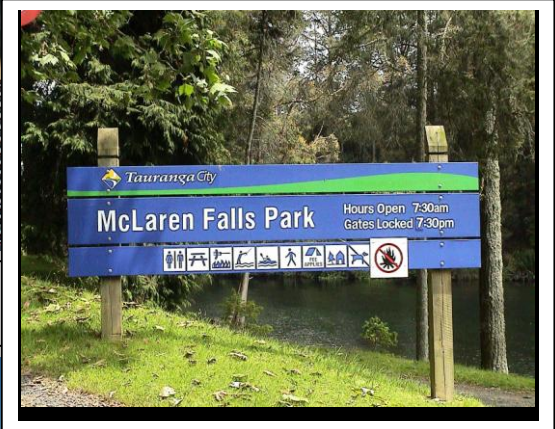
*been envisaged demands participatory managing structures such as local environmental governance (LEG) and deliberative associational spaces (Lima & Buszynski, 2011).*

***O**ne of the assumptions is that '(eco)tourism' can become even more meaningful and functional in its conservationist mission if locally discursively constructed, negotiated, and consensually implemented.*

***F**or deconstructing the cases, 'critical contextual discourse analysis' (CCDA) was developed. It is a methodological approach and tool used to shed light on textual production (written or spoken), consumption and interpretation, and its influence on social practices within a specific regional context. Social constructionism and theory of collaboration conceptually introduce the case. The author adopted a 'critical realist' stand. In the analysis, collaborative adaptive management, triple bottom line, corporate social responsibility, accreditation programmes, and the importance of environmental education for human attachment to nature are discussed as a background.*



# Nature-based tourism in New Zealand



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# Nature-based tourism in Brazil



## Inscription

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**T**his book is warm-heartedly dedicated to **Brenda Velasco Borges** and **Patrick Aroha Velasco Borges**, my daughter and son, and they have been utmost reasons for me to continue the walks towards a higher level as a human being and father. This book is also dedicated to my mother, **Maria Alice Borges Lima** (*in memoriam*) who was the base and the wisdom behind me, the actual mentor of my personal and academic life, and the spiritual guide of my past, current and forever days.

## Table of Content

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Frontispiece	2
Copyrights, ISBN, author's contacts and publishing information	3
Academic comments and reviews	4
Foreword	6
En-suited New Zealand picture	9
En-suited Brazil picture	10
Inscription	11
Table of Contents	12
List of Figures	17
List of Tables	18
List of Boxes	19
Acronyms	20
Acknowledgment	22
General Acknowledgments	24

### CHAPTER ONE

#### Ecotourism, Competing Discourses and Collaboration

1.0	Introduction	25
1.1	Significance of the topic	27
1.2	The “muscles” of language	30
1.3	What are the antitheses in ecotourism?	33
1.4	The various contentious explanations for ecotourism	42
1.5	Liquid sustainability	47
1.6	Research goals and objectives: Asking the research question(s)	51
1.7	Structure of the book	55

### CHAPTER TWO

#### Issues of Theories

##### Part I

2.0	Introduction	58
2.1	Environmental crisis and value for nature	58
2.1.1	Intrinsic versus instrumental values for nature	59
2.1.2	Human detachment from nature	63

## Part II

### Theoretical Approaches: Discursive Fabrication of Nature

2.2	Social constructionism	69
2.2.1	How powerful is language?	74
2.2.2	Fairclough: Language and power	77
2.2.3	Bureaucracy as a form of societal control	79
2.2.4	Nature discursively fabricated	80
2.3	Theoretical consensus	87
2.4	Are social constructionism and critical realism mutually exclusive?	88
2.4.1	Critical realism and social constructionism: A theoretical synthesis?	91
2.4.2	Theories as discursive enclaves	92
2.5	Storylines and coalition	96
2.5.1	Ecological modernisation discourse	97

## Part III

### Concepts and theories on collaboration

2.6	Introduction	98
2.6.1	Theoretical approach on collaboration	98
2.6.2	The conflict-consensus parameter	105
2.6.3	Social contract, cooperation and language	106
2.6.4	Debating the Collaboration Theory	108
2.6.5	Selin and Chavez's evolutionary framework for collaboration	111
2.6.6	Partnerships and their life cycle	113
2.7	Associational public spaces	115
2.8	Conclusion	122

## CHAPTER THREE

### Developing Methodological Tools

3.0	Introduction	125
3.1	Qualitative research	128
3.2	What is the attractiveness of qualitative research	131
3.2.1	Triangulation	134
3.3	Outlining the procedures: Issues of method	135
3.3.1	Scope of a topic: The case studies and the units for analysis	136
3.3.2	Case studies	138
3.3.3	Criteria for selecting multiple cases	140
3.3.4	Participant observation	141
3.3.5	Case studies on the ground: primary data collection	142
3.3.6	Field Trip in Brazil	144
3.3.7	Regional case study in New Zealand	150

3.4	Interviews	150
3.4.1	Interpreting the Interviews	151
3.4.2	Interview Analysis	153
3.4.3	Other Sources of Documentation	154
3.5	Textual Analysis: Procedures	155
3.5.1	Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Fairclough's Method	156
3.5.2	Conjoining Social Constructionism, CDA and Contextuality	161
3.5.3	Developing an Analytical Tool: Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis (CCDA)	163
3.5.4	Mapping the Methods of Text and Discourse Deconstruction	166
3.5.5	How does Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis (CCDA) Differ from other Text-Based or Semiotic Content Analysis of Published Material ?	168
3.6	Scaling Ecotourism: Issues of One's Method Choice	170
3.7	Study Limitations	171
3.8	Reflexivity: The Researcher Role	173
3.9	Conclusion	174

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Competing discourses and (eco)tourism Development: An analysis**

4.0	Introduction	176
4.1	Analysis framework: An outline	177
4.1.1	Ecotourism at the epicentre of sustainability debates	177
4.1.2	Modelling: the nodes of conflict	180
4.1.3	Various rhetorics that define ecotourism: Wordiness?	182
4.1.4	Carrying capacity in tourism resources: Human abstract schemes?	189
4.1.5	Tourism and nature: A case of Western metaphors	193
4.2	Itacaré village: Tense power relations in (eco)tourism development	194
4.2.1	In Itacaré village	196

4.2.2	Reviving the data and analysis: Video-recording and virtual updates	196
4.2.3	Institute of Tourism of Itacaré (ITI) and Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015 (STWI 2015): A drill in power relations	197
4.2.4	Historical issues of power relations and Itacaré (eco)tourism development	198
4.2.5	Volatile economy	201
4.2.5.1	Social fabric and nature: problems of getting along	201
4.2.6	Itacaré's ecotourism attractions	206
4.2.7	Marketing Itacaré's ecotourism: A critical discourse analysis	207
4.2.8	Luxury nature tourism, elitism and human intervention at Itacaré coast	215

4.2.9	Massification of nature tourism: Manoeuvres of powerful operators	216
4.3	Tensions in community ecotourism development of Silves: ASPAC and Guanavenas case in Amazonia	217
4.3.1	Introduction	217
4.3.2	Conflicts of interest, power relations and ecotourism	218
4.4	Conclusion	225

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Competing Discourses in Nature Tourism: A New Zealand Case

5.0	Introduction: Critical contextual and discursive analysis	227
5.1	Deconstructing the 100% Pure image of New Zealand	228
5.2	Depicting the '100% Pure' New Zealand' tourism campaign	230
5.2.1	100% Pure campaign on TV and on the internet	233
5.2.2	'Norway Awaits': A counter-propaganda?	218
5.2.3	Academics', stakeholders' and people's competing perspectives	241
5.2.4	Intertextuality: comparing views of Boxes 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3	243
5.2.5	Signified and signifier	245

5.2.6	A deadlock, local versus global discourses and demands: 100% Pure New Zealand, food miles, ecological footprint.	249
5.2.7	Ministry of Tourism official comments on the 100% Pure campaign...	255
5.3	Valuing New Zealand's Clean Green Image (Ministry for the Environment)	256
5.4	The environmental state of New Zealand	257
5.5	Conclusion	262

## CHAPTER SIX

### Collaborative (Eco)tourism: Introduction and Itacaré case, Bahia State, Brazil

6.0	Introduction	265
6.1	The challenges for collaboration: A regional context	265
6.2	Notes on the textual analysis of statements and extracts	273
6.3	Institute of Tourism of Itacaré (ITI)	274
6.4	ITI and its discourses	277
6.5	Storyline: Itacaré tourism as a cluster model	284
6.5.1	Itacaré as a collection of tourism themes	284

6.5.2	Itacaré residents' perception about ecotourism development and ITI	293
6.6	Updating: ITI in June 2007	300
6.7	Public debates in Itacaré: The role of CAPA and of other 'public forums'	301
6.7.1	Analysis of extracts: CAPA's meeting and negotiation of power	305
6.8	Plano Diretor (Municipal Master Plan)	312
6.9	Conclusion	321

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Collaboration, norms, institutions and the role of small-scale stakeholders: Kuaka NZ Education Travel, Bay of Plenty

7.0	Introduction	325
7.1	Kuaka and Action Stations: An outline	327
7.2	Nature tourism in New Zealand: Normatisation and institutional archetype...	328
7.2.1	Local Government Sector	335
7.2.2	New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010	336

7.2.3	DOC, concession system and nature-based tourism	340
7.3	Kuaka New Zealand Environmental Travel: A steering role in conservation..	347
7.4	Addressing the principles of the Triple-Bottom Line (TBL	358
7.5	Collaborative schemes can ease environmental learning and conservation...	360
7.6	Conclusion	364

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Conclusion

8.0	Introduction	368
8.1	Ecotourism within a non-relativist social constructionist perspective	372
8.2	Ecotourism: A self-governing system?	376
8.3	Approaching the key research question	379
8.4	Recommendations for future research	382
8.5	Insights	383
	- <b>Appendix I - Land Status and Amazonian Ecotourism: <i>Res communis</i> versus <i>res nullius</i>. Brazilian National System for Conservation Units (SNUC).</b> - <b>Institutionalisation of the industrial timber in Amazonia Forest</b> - <b>Local Communities and the forest concession System</b> - <b>Conclusion: Forest Concession and Proecotur</b>	385
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	399



## List of Figures

---

---

- Figure 1.0 Ecotourism towards a definition
- Figure 1.1 (Eco)tourism or local environmental governance
- Figure 1.2 Book structure outline
- Figure 1.3 Map of fieldwork sites in Brazil
- Figure 1.4 Map of fieldwork sites in New Zealand
- Figure 2.0 Scopes and dimensions for collaboration in ecotourism development
- Figure 2.1 Partnering framework: Power accounts and collaborative advantage
- Figure 2.2 A partnering continuum
- Figure 3.0 Progressive phases delimiting the research and study areas
- Figure 3.1 Functionalities of text material and methodological approach
- Figure 3.2 Discourse as text, interaction and context
- Figure 3.3 Levels for discourse interpretation
- Figure 3.4 Framework for critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA)
- Figure 3.5 Map of theories and methods for textual and discourse analysis
- Figure 4.0 Outline of nodes of conflict
- Figure 4.1 Environmental impacts and visitor numbers
- Figure 4.2 Hypothetical tourist area lifecycle
- Figure 4.5 Itacaré village location, Bahia state, Brazil
- Figure 4.6 Urban and rural Itacaré and its resorts
- Figure 4.7 Clustering the stakeholders in Itacaré
- Figure 4.8 Structural and infrastructural problems in Itacaré 2005
- Figure 4.9 Environmental signs in Itacaré beaches
- Figure 4.10 Ecotourism operators in Itacaré
- Figure 4.11 Regional map: Silves district, Amazonas state, Brazil
- Figure 5.0 Mapping textual and pictorial sources
- Figure 5.1 New Zealand 100% holistic reasoning
- Figure 5.2 Signifier, signified and meaning attachment
- Figure 5.3 Online poll about nuclear energy for New Zealand
- Figure 6.0 Participatory approaches for nature tourism development by III/HVS
- Figure 6.1 Institute of Tourism of Itacaré and 2015 Itacaré Plan for Actions
- Figure 6.2 CAPA and its subordination to the government institutional hierarchy
- Figure 6.3 Mapping CAPA's meetings
- Figure 6.4 A participatory and collaborative network in the APA of Itacaré
- Figure 6.5 Institutionalisation of sustainable nature tourism: An all-encompassing collaborative model for Itacaré
- Figure 7.0 Historical brief: New Zealand tourism management
- Figure 7.1 New Zealand Legislation dealing with environmental matter
- Figure 7.2 Advocacy conservation in nature tourism: Normative, institutional and agency
- Figure 7.3 Bay of Plenty map
- Figure 7.4 Collaboration, business and trade-off cycle
- Figure 7.5 Environmental certification and the degree of institutionalisation
- Figure 7.6 Kuaka NZ Education Travel's interactive relationship
- Figure 7.7 Ecological voluntourism

## List of Tables

---

- Table 2.0 Definitions of two opposing paradigms to environmental values
- Table 2.1 Language and power themes according to Norman Fairclough
- Table 2.2 Discourse on forest: Metaphors and respective prototypes
- Table 2.3 Sociological theories according to Bhaskar (1998) and other sources
- Table 2.4 Theoretical perspectives, methods and fields of application
- Table 2.6 Factors that can be critical to success or failure of partnership
- Table 2.7 Partnership evolution and life cycle
- Table 2.8 Arrangements for collectively approaching communal problems
- Table 2.9 Tips for Collaborating
- Table 2.10 Collaborative schemes: The need of an existential paradigm shift
- Table 3.0 Data collection: Interviewees and informants by sector  
in Brazil and New Zealand
- Table 3.1 Quantitative versus Qualitative Approaches
- Table 3.2 Data collection: Fieldwork in Brazil and New Zealand
- Table 3.3 Types of regional ecotourism in Brazil and data collection
- Table 4.0 Positive and negative impacts of ecotourism on local communities
- Table 4.1 An outline: Itacaré infrastructure and attractions
- Table 4.2 Itacaré ecotourism service providers
- Table 4.3 Aldeia do Vale and Silves communities: Gains with ecotourism
- Table 6.0 Partnerships and collaboration for development of tourism in Itacaré
- Table 6.1 Proposal for partnership in nature tourism development in Itacaré
- Table 6.2 Estimates and projections for tourism sector in Itacaré
- Table 6.3 Itacaré respondents' urban districts
- Table 6.4 Central and state governments transfers to local government
- Table 6.5 Status of members of CAPA in June 2007
- Table 7.0 Practicability of RMA in nature-based tourism
- Table 7.1 New Zealand tour operators and normative documents
- Table 7.2 Being a DOC's concessionaire: Gains and disadvantages
- Table 7.3 Business, visitors and conservation into the same nature  
tourism project: New Zealand tour operators' opinion
- Table 7.4 Local and regional stakeholders and their functional relationship with  
Kuaka New Zealand
- Table 7.5 Kuaka and Actions Stations ISV achievements

---

## List of Boxes

---

- Box 1.0 NZ tour operators' perceptions of the sub-definitions of nature tourism
- Box 2.0 Amazon the 'lungs of the world'
- Box 2.1 Ecotourism and claims: Rhetoric or fact?
- Box 4.0 Tourism brochure: Ecopark
- Box 4.1 Tourism brochure: Malocas Jungle lodge
- Box 4.2 Numerical carrying capacity: An extreme?
- Box 4.3 Land grabbing (*grilagem*) in Brazil and issues of power
- Box 4.4 Itacaré in tourism language
- Box 4.5 Tourism marketing explains Itacaré village
- Box 4.6 Environmental issues, tourism and conservation on Itacare.com
- Box 4.7 Itacare.com website and recommendations for environmental protection
- Box 4.8 Eco Village hotel advertisement
- Box 4.9 Guanavenas' advertisement
- Box 4.10 ASPAC and Aldeia do Vale's advertisement
- Box 5.1 Clean green New Zealand: A complex genealogy
- Box 5.2 New Zealand imagery: An Arcadia
- Box 5.3 Branding strategy packaging tourism campaign
- Box 5.4 Competing positions and environmental issues
- Box 5.5 Argumentative extracts on carbon emissions
- Box 5.6 Linking 100% Pure to practices
- Box 5.7 100% Pure claim may become NZ Achilles heel
- Box 5.8 NZ 100% Pure campaign: Overstatements?
- Box 5.9 How are you (tour operators) committed to 100% Pure
- Box 5.9.1 Self-evaluation: Words and expressions that define own business  
in nature-based tourism in New Zealand
- Box 6.0 Speeches of members of ITI
- Box 6.1 Selective tourism
- Box 6.2 Carrying capacity as an issue for Itacaré
- Box 6.3 Sustainable tourism workshop Itacaré 2015 (in June 2005)
- Box 6.4 Keynotes of a meeting of the CAPA on the 25 July 2005
- Box 6.5 Statements of members of CAPA: 'Visions for the future'
- Box 6.6 Public image
- Box 6.7 Taking advantages of a political scenario
- Box 6.8 Financial constraints
- Box 6.9 New road construction: Camamu-Itacaré
- Box 6.9.1 Broadcasting the meetings via radio
- Box 6.10 CAPA, Plano Diretor of Itacaré (PMDI). Meeting 25 April 2007
- Box 6.11 Municipal Common Council: Issues on 15 May 2007

## Acronyms

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ACERTI	Tourism Business Owners' Association of Itacaré
APA	Area de Proteção Ambiental (Environmental Protection Area)
ARM	Adaptive Resource Management
ASPAC	Silves Association for Environmental and Cultural Preservation
AMAZONASTUR	Amazonas Tourism Organisation
CAMnet	Collaborative Adaptive Management Network
CAPA	Administrative Council of Environmental Protection Area
CCDA	Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CGU	Controladoria-Geral da União (Office of the Comptroller General)
COMTUR	Municipal Tourism Bureau
CONDEMA	Municipal Council for Environmental Protection
CONDER	Bahia State Building Company
CRA	Natural Resources Centre
CSER	Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility
ECOS	Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum
EPI	Environmental Protection Index
FLONA	Brazilian National Forest
GG	Green Globe
GIS	Geographic Information System
GTAP	Working Group for Free Beach Access in Itacaré
IBAMA	Brazilian Institute for the Environment
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IESB	Instituto de Estudos Socio-Ambientais do Sul da Bahia
IPTU	Brazilian urban territorial tax and duty
ISS	Regional Brazilian tax and duty
ISV	International Student Volunteer
ITI	Institute of Tourism of Itacaré
LEG	Local Environmental Governance
LTCCP	Long-Term Council Community Plan
MMA	Ministério do Meio Ambiente (Ministry for the Environment)
NTOs	National Tourism Organisations
NZSR	New Zealand Survey Respondent
NZTB	New Zealand Tourism Board
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDMI	Plano Diretor Municipal de Itacaré (Municipal Master Plan)
PCMTS	Municipal Accreditation Programme for Sustainable Tourism
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
PRODETUR	Tourism Development Programme
PROECOTUR	Brazilian Government Ecotourism Programme for Amazônia
RESEX	Natural Resource Sustainable User Reserve
RMA	Resource Management Act

RPPNs	Private Natural Heritage Reserves
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
SBN	Sustainable Business Network
SEBRAE	Brazilian Agency for Support of Micro and Small Enterprises
SEMARH	Brazilian Bureau for the Environment and Water Resources
SENAC	National Commercial Training Service
STWI-2015	Sustainable Tourism Workshop of Itacaré 2015
SUDAM	Government agency for development of the Amazonian region
TIANZ	New Zealand Tourism Industry Association
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnership
WBOPDC	Western Bay of Plenty District Council

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# *Chapter One*

## **Ecotourism, Competing Discourses and Collaboration**

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### **1.0 - Introduction**

This book discusses the many facets of discursive construction in ecotourism and seeks to contrast them to the realities on the ground. It starts from the premise that there is not a socially harmonic and idyllic ecotourism practice. It is not an impact free activity and, in many aspects, is in competition with the local dominant powers and structures. In fact, the intricacy of ecotourism implementation unveils an activity that is “both multivocal and contradictory” (Gullette 2001: 67), and can thus primarily bring divergences rather than integration. The use of the term itself – ecotourism – is not without problems (Stark 2002; Carr 2007; Bjork 2007).

Tourism, particularly ecotourism, with its emphasis on natural resources has become a chief theme for research around the world. In New Zealand, the country’s landscapes and infrastructure allow domestic and overseas wanderers to join and enjoy nature-based tourism. Traditionally, the focus of tours to New Zealand has been some ‘hotspots’ that bring together Māori culture and adventure tourism (Dowling 2001a, b). Nevertheless, in recent years the Tourism Board has been marketing the country as the unspoilt place to visit.

Using eloquent catchphrases, and appealing images, New Zealand has been presented as ‘clean’, ‘green’, and ‘100% pure’, in a worldwide campaign, since its launch, in 1999. The campaign is grounded on the premise that New Zealand - because of its geographical isolation - can provide a “competitive advantage over other destinations” (Weaver and Lawton 2002: 218). Whale-watching in Kaikoura, the geothermal area in Rotorua, the lost world and the glow-worm caves in Waitomo, Queenstown and the fiords of Milford Sound have been the most famous and frequently visited places in New Zealand. Half of all international tourists visit a national park (NZTB 1993).

There is no doubt about the importance of tourism for New Zealand’s economy and, the country’s responsibility to keep its environmentally friendly image overseas but the increasing number of visitors has alarmed some environmentalists. The government stimulus in terms of tourism expansion within natural areas creates “pressure on some icon attractions [which can] not be

sustained in the medium term” (Dowling 2001b: 144), without actions to avert such visitor impacts. Such considerations began to take effect in the 1990s as government tourism agencies decided to watch more closely for the negative outcomes of tourism. In fact, ecotourism policies devised by the government mirror “the interaction of actors’ interests and values in the influence and determination of the tourism planning and policy processes”, so they do not evolve from a vacuum (Hall 2003: 21).

Central to this book is the power of language and its use in environmental discourses within the realm of ecotourism. Discourse is a communicative process through which meaning is shared. Yet trivial questions of “what a text is permits no easy answer” (Titscher 2000: 5); for Halliday (1978), text is everything that contains meaning in a particular way, “a continuous process of semantic choices” (p.137). Not all texts are discourses, but discourses are all constitutive of texts.

Discourse can be taken as a constructed system of arguments, interpretations and ideologies that shapes the social practices which affect the way the individual sees things and reproduces them (Hay 2000; Jay 2004; Lee 1992). For Titscher et al. (2000), “the notion of discourse, in both the popular and the philosophical use of the term, integrates a whole palette of different meanings that often seem to be contradictory or mutually exclusive” (p. 25). Discourses construct a version and interpretation of what is allegedly regarded as a reality, as a fact, as an event, by individuals or institutions. Van Dijk’s (1977) definition for discourse is plain, short and meaningful, ‘discourse is generally text in context that permits to be described empirically’(cited in Titscher 2000: 26), that is, discourse as constitutive of reality. Yet there are various definitions of discourse, it refers to,... a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. Thus the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representation and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play (du Gay 1996: 43).

Some discursive constructions are fundamentally elaborated on for manipulation and ideological appropriation (Fairclough 1989; Gergen 1999; Foucault 1972, 1979; Berger and Luckmann 1967), and also to control social practices within a domain, region, or during a certain timeframe of public administration. This happens because stakeholders want their interests to prevail over those of others. For this reason, they then occasionally change or fabricate versions regarding a certain problem/issue or theme. Moreover, social practices are said to be in active association to reality, and to change with reality; Fairclough (1989) confirms that “the world that human beings live in is massively a humanly created world, a world created in the course of social practice” (p.37).

The challenges for sociolinguistics, researchers and sociologists in general are to disclose the hidden agendas existing in modern society; it is hard to reveal the true intentions behind ideological devices for social control, and this includes discourses. Equally difficult is to discern among various existing discourses, one

type of elaborated discourse (or embedded ideology in discourse) as the single motive that engenders particular social practices and beliefs.

Critical to my investigation is to determine whether collaboration in ecotourism can propitiate ‘discursive orders’ (for local actors) to the extent that they bring a promising alternative reality through dialogue. ‘Actors’ is defined here as “active participants who seek to engage or enrol others into their own projects, based on their own interests and worldviews” (Murdoch and Marsden 1995 cited in Bramwell 2006: 959).

Following this line of thought, claims are interrogated, paradigms scrutinised, and further enquiries are raised: how can language/discourse as social practices contribute to restoring a positive function for individual-group, individual-institutions, and society-nature relationships? What are the ways in which texts are constructed by communities for particular purposes? Gergen reminds us that “we give to texts their meaning [and they] only come into meaning through their function within relationships” (1999: 42).

### **1.1 - Significance of the topic**

The methodological approach in ecotourism fills a gap in the literature; it mostly covers the ongoing and controversial debates over its definition and concept as well as the dynamics, effectiveness and failures of its implementation noted in case studies and its impacts. Existing literature still lacks a more comprehensive study on collaborative models in ecotourism as well as an in-depth socio-environmental critique of the theme. An analysis of the social construction of ‘nature’ and of ‘human and nature interaction’ can help to reveal the vested interests of stakeholders as well as existing power relations.

The book fills gaps about discursive constructions in (eco)tourism by investigating ‘competing discourses’ in the sector as well as active collaborative arrangements, their practices and ‘storylines’. To understand ‘meaning creation’ and ‘its dissemination’ is very important because from this, group orders are established and work to determine standards and routines with gains or losses socially, environmentally and/or economically.

The methodological procedure for this investigation embraces a new framework for discourse analysis in which norms, context and structure (not only agency) are identified and become essential to define the ‘levels of social changes’ (if any) in (eco)tourism implementation. The method uses various elements of ‘critical discourse analysis’ (CDA) but goes beyond it by putting emphasis on the context because only ‘texts’ could not provide the empirical evidence for this study.

Critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA) is thus the main tool for assessing ‘competing discourses’ and ‘collective meanings’ in (eco)tourism in Brazil and New Zealand (refer to Chapter 3, section 3.5.2). The theme examined is framed by the following approaches, ‘social constructionism’, ‘critical realism’ and ‘theory of collaboration’. They serve as a theoretical background for general understanding

of the theme. One of the richnesses of the thesis lies in the details provided in the case studies.

The theoretical and methodological approaches add substantially to the literature that is short of material in the triad semantic-linguistic-contextual field. Most authors have decided to focus mostly on the linguistic elements, without being concerned about other variables (extralinguistic facts) that might influence or frame certain social practices such as decision-making, planning and the motives behind specific managerial choices. This book is also the first one to investigate (eco)tourism with insights out of case studies in Brazil and New Zealand, two countries that have strong potential to become the leaders in (eco)tourism worldwide (refer to Figures 1.3 and 1.4). The investigation was not comparative; rather, some questions are raised and the cases are used parallel to each other.

Māori tourism is critical to New Zealand/Aotearoa culturally and historically. However, its aspects are not comprehensively debated in the book. A series of facts compelled me not to take indigenous issues into account. First, the scope of the investigation. Secondly, the major research question that does not primarily focus on Māori and cultural elements; thirdly, it would become problematic to discuss Māori tourism because it would not be possible to have parallel sections on indigenous tourism in Brazil.

In comparison to New Zealand where Māori are highly urbanised and somewhat integrated (or readable about) to a Pākehā culture, in Brazil, indigenous groups are not urban; they live in their territories spread mostly in the Centre-West and North regions of the country. As mentioned by Zeppel (2006), “despite the sheer size of the Brazilian Amazon, 60% of the entire Amazon region, there are few Indigenous ecotourism ventures”<sup>1</sup> (p.88), even though “of Brazil’s 441 Indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> A few initiatives in indigenous ecotourism in Brazil include: The A’Ukre community and 14 others in the Kayapó territories; Tataquara Lodge, Xingu River; and in Mamirauá Reserve (as commented by Zeppel 2006: 88-89). In Mamirauá, Brazil, the ecotourism project works more closely with riverbank dwellers (traditional population) rather than with Indian/Indigenous communities. According to Baggio (2007: paragraph 33), other initiatives are: expeditions of foreigners to Pico da Neblina National Park crossing Yanomami *aldeias* or *malocas* (clustering of Indian huts); *Cooperativa Mista de Produtores e Extrativistas*, a cooperative composed of 1,400 Indians of nine tribes in Altamira region, Pará State; the Jaqueira Project in the Pataxó Indigenous Area in Coroa Vermelha, Porto Seguro (Bahia State); and the Macuxi community, in Maloca da Raposa, in Normandia (Roraima State) promoted by the Brazilian National Tourism Bureau (EMBRATUR). In the district of São Félix do Araguaia, Mato Grosso State, there is an ongoing ethno-indigenous ecotourism project, called Roteiro Xingu, which visits places and carries activities near the indigenous areas. Moreover, in the Amazonia many tour operators take visitors to Indian communities and territories for a cultural experience. Most of them are operating non-officially and then breaching FUNAI’s recommendations and the Brazilian National Law 6,001 of 19 December 1973 on Indigenous peoples, their territories and culture. The Law seeks to safeguard

reserves, 80% are in the Amazon” (CI 2005a as quoted in Zeppel 2006: 88). The National Foundation for Indigenous People (FUNAI) in Brazil monitors and tries to filter external impacts on their culture, and this institutional philosophy has caused drawbacks for those communities.

Because of my background, living experience and academic orientation it would make it a hard task to comprehensively translate Māori culture into the study. The research design, the methodological lines, the analyses of discursive constructions were chosen to be used broadly in tourism; besides, Itacaré and Kuaka NZ are predominantly western featured. Kuaka NZ has Māori cultural components in their educational travel but the emphasis was given to ecological and environmental discursive constructions. Definitely, the focus is on nature and its conservation through tourism, not on indigenous (eco)tourism<sup>2</sup>. However, the author recognises the relevance of advancing this sector, particularly in Brazil, with FUNAI restructuring itself to regulate it.

FUNAI’s president, Mércio Pereira, said that in 2007 there was a study to implement four pilot ecotourism projects in indigenous areas from 2008 if the Brazilian Parliament changes the Law 6,001 (refer to footnote 5). For Zeppel (1998), Indigenous peoples should be able to “derive income from land” (p. 74) by dealing with activities other than extractive and impacting ones (Zeppel 2007). According to her, the conservation of natural spaces depends “on community development and local empowerment, through technical support, tourism training and new tribal tourism committees” (Zeppel 2006: 284).

This book has its scholastic values because of its interdisciplinary approach that weaves human geography, sociolinguistics, planning and management as well as a methodology and method developed in the ‘context of ecotourism’ in Oceania and South America. It introduces a systematic method of deconstructing texts (written and spoken) by cross-cutting them with a local and regional context and circumstances they belong to in an attempt to reveal the ‘intentions of the messages’, the ‘hidden messages’. Moreover, the methodological approach opens up a new perspective for environmental management and planning in (eco)tourism grounded on ‘discursivity’ - the production of collective meanings - in collaborative schemes as a platform for conflict resolution. The study identifies elements that may become the ‘cement’

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Indigenous culture and territory of activities and visits that may affect their well-being and culture. Thus, any legal Indigenous ecotourism project in Brazil depends on the reformulation and approval of the Law 6,001 by the Brazilian Parliament. The changes on Law 6,001 were proposed some years ago but the Parliament has not fully debated and voted it yet.

<sup>2</sup> According to Zeppel (2007: 312), “the term indigenous ecotourism has emerged since the mid-1990s to describe community ecotourism projects developed on Indigenous lands and territories in Latin America, Australia and Canada”.

that could bring different local actors to satisfactorily operate their business in line with social and environmental demands.

## **1.2 - The “muscles” of language**

Language is critical to power relations, “...with subjugation [of others] by various groups who claim ‘to know’ or to be in possession of ‘the truth’” (Gergen 1999: 38-39). Foucault, concerned by its expanding domains, urged for mobilisation against these forces through resistance and subversion. Foucault has advocated that “power engenders resistance too” (d’Hauteserre 2006: 242). It implies that individuals are encouraged not to be passive, unaware, naïve and uncritical to the power of discourses and to attempts at manipulation. For Gergen, it was important to adopt “a posture of antagonism toward the dominant order” (1999: 40). To my knowledge, it implies impetus for both inquiries and negotiation in order to generate alternative practical orders of greater promise.

Power here, though it may become coercive, is distant from the notion of power that enforces control by law and arms. As Fairclough underlines, power relations involve relationships embedded in struggles between different social groups (stakeholders) with their particular motives, goals and interests maintaining levels of engagement, and formal and informal webs with one another (Fairclough 1989). For Foucault, power can be described as an open, relatively coordinated cluster of relations (Foucault 1972; Gergen 1999; Gordon 1980). Discourses externally represent the *façades* of certain groups; group interests with their rhetorics, views and positions. Discourse is imbued with power because it reflects the voices of some and the discursive constructions are contentious because they do collide with other discursive opinions in the game of governing social structures and economic interests.

As Bryant and Bailey (1997) posit, there is no neutrality when humans and environment interact; such forms of interaction entail ecological changes that are likely to have socio-political outcomes. However, “not all discourses are powerful” (Jay 2004: 78), and not all discourses are built consistently, and they do not suggest agreement either. Within society, many discourses diverge, competing with one another (Jay 2004). Interaction of actors in ecotourism is believed to produce collective perceptions over the values of nature. It is an assumption that when actors interact, focussing on communal problems, they create channels of communication that facilitate consensus building. If they talk the ‘same language’ they are then able to create commonsensical actions, which is assumed to equalise power among stakeholders, to the extent that they advance local well-being and promote nature conservation. Ongoing collaboration schemes in sustainable tourism/ecotourism in Brazil and in New Zealand will serve as empirical platforms for this investigation.

The analysis of competing discourses focused on environmental and economic divergences becomes at some stage unmanageable because of so many

disciplines and facts involved. This chapter is just a slight scratch on the surface of the debate. Hawken, Lovins and Lovins (1999) explain that politics, economics, ethics and religion were invented to fulfil the wider purpose of being human, economic efficiency is an admirable means only so long as one remembers it is not an end in itself. Markets are meant to be efficient, not sufficient; aggressively competitive, not fair. Markets were never meant to achieve community or integrity, beauty or justice, sustainability or sacredness – and, by themselves, they don't [...] Only [humans] can reveal worthy goals for the tools of the economic process (p. 262).

Certainly only humans are in a position to create new institutions and norms to heal the scars left by civilizations. It is a consensus that no economic system will give a prompt solution for the impacts it creates; no ameliorative technology has progressed at the same velocity as environmental degradation. So one cannot hope that technology alone will avert a social and environmental crisis. There is an incompatibility of timeframes; there is a significant deficit between the 'ability of humans to create high technological answers to problems' and 'irreversible human impacts on Earth'. The destructive essence of humans has been faster than technology, faster than their impetus to act rationally through norms and attitudes. Then, does ecotourism have the capacity to meddle in the relational human-environment deficit?

Technology and culture are not favourable to any ecosystem as they have encouraged an increase in consumption of resources (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins 1999). In the history of development, there has been disproportional exploration and use of the earth's natural wealth by Northern countries and by some specific groups in the South which leaves them stranded with a huge 'ecological debt' (Martinez-Alier 1995; McAfee 1999). Dovers and Handmer (1993) understand that western societies regard themselves well-informed about the global environment even though reality shows that humans live in uncertainty about their future despite an ever-increasing flow of information.

A significant part of environmentalist discourses is about the limits of our biosphere (e.g. climate change policy discourse), and its social and ethical implications (Milton 1996; Ben-Ami 2004). Groups and nations are then expected to act without misanthropy and superfluous self-interest, and should cooperate to find practical solutions (Jamal and Getz 1995, 2000; Kumar and Dissel 1996; Koontz et al 2000). Equity in tourism development demands power sharing (Coles and Church 2007; Ryan 2002). These authors focus on the 'optimisation' versus 'capacity' for the use of natural, economic and human resources. They talk about the role of institutions and their public policies wondering whether human beings are living beyond Earth's ecological means. The institutions should be able to avoid a dystopian future. Dystopia is used here in reference to a world in which the hopes for betterment are replaced by feelings of fear and of ominous consequences because of present-day behaviour.

Control over nature should triumph over the depletion of the natural environment to prevent natural catastrophes (Lima 2002; Hajer 2005; 1997; Hawken, Lovins and Lovins 1999). When we refer to ecotourism, we expect it to deal with an 'environmental crisis' within a certain geographical space; i.e. to mediate development, human presence, tourism and impacts; there are thus 'spatial-time considerations' evolving out of the human-environment relationship, a "geography of sustainable tourism development" (Hall and Lew 1998b:1). Mediation can be understood here as an intervention between diverse interest groups (Gunning 1998).

Sustainability has been at the core of ecotourism practices, but on the ground local actors have faced problems in applying the concept. 'Sustainable development' has been a complex theory, embedded with competing views about how it should be. Ecotourism is proposed to reconcile part of the problematic relation between occupation of natural areas and human impacts. The author maintains that the way in which ecotourism is conceptually envisaged, defined and implemented, must, of necessity, bring all the contradictions sustainability faces, and put it in conflict with a capitalist/neo-liberal oriented system. Analysis of discourses on ecotourism will help to identify the main 'nodes of conflict'.

The author will try to demonstrate how negotiation of discourses is the means for overcoming forms of *tokenism* that deceitfully thwart beliefs on consensual and collective instruments for natural resource and community management. Because of the contentious essence of ecotourism, the researcher investigates forms of collaboration through which stakeholders can interact for consensus building, bringing new meanings, values and approaches for their own relations, and for the relations between humans and nature. The research has the mission to deconstruct sustainable tourism/ecotourism models in Brazil and in New Zealand in order to identify locally, on the ground, the competing and contradictory discursive aspects embedded in the concept and practices of ecotourism.

The author also seeks to demonstrate how power relations among local actors can determine the creation and representation of values and of meanings in a given context. Finally, the investigation focuses on current initiatives towards collaboration, that is, the way local actors have interacted for conflict resolution in the form of negotiation of discourses and of power. The equilibrium between 'humans' and 'nature' is dependent on the creation and management of ideological and physical spaces. It depends on the existence of 'associational public spaces' as kernels for establishing dialogues and forms of collaboration. This type of space, either physical or virtual, is of utmost relevance in dialogical and agreement terms because it eases the communicational process among the pertinent stakeholders on a matter of collective interest; this dialogical process is regarded by Lima and Silva (2010) as an advance because it represents the horizontality of interaction and of communication among actors; it happens in a way it breaks with protocols and formalities of dialoguing over any issues, eroding in a positive way the existing



hierarchical barriers that can make consensus building a hard reaching task (Lima & Silva, 2010).

This study is somewhat provocative in the sense that it seeks to contrast statements in ecotourism with facts, revealing ‘realities’ and unravelling possible ‘obfuscated aspects’ and much of “the doom and gloom” of the discursive constructions in ecotourism. This book aims to be a seminal work and challenge some of the social, environmental and economic claims in ecotourism without disqualifying them. This is not an attempt to refute the benefits generated by the philosophy of ecotourism, neither is it an attempt to defend an ‘ecocracy’. Orthodox greens, deep ecologists, ecological feminists, socialist biocentrics, and green anarchists subscribe to the view that global capitalism is not sustainable. For them, it brings damage rather than equitable global gains. The view contrasts with mainstream economic thought that defends the position that an expansionist industrial capitalism promotes economic growth and is “championed as the cure for both poverty and environmental degradation” (Neumann 2005: 85).

This book is, of course, not a free attack against ecotourism or against its proselytisers, but a critique on naïve, ambiguous and controversial discursive constructions that pervade the activity and other subjects pertinent to ecotourism. Such constructions serve to create myths, and dilemmas, or concepts that add little to the real aim of ecotourism: that is outsiders interacting, contemplating and learning in natural open spaces with the moral obligation of not preserving them. The study takes into account the advances and successful aspects of some projects and programmes in ecotourism (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996; Fennell and Dowling 2003; Hawkins 1994; Holzapfel 2003; Honey 1999; Page and Dowling 2001; Wearing and Neil 1999; Weaver and Oppermann 2000; Weaver 2001).

The study will focus on a variety of discursive constructions in ecotourism, most of the time in an attempt to unveil discursive distortions and contradictions. It will seek to contrast ‘statements in their textual format’ to elucidate the real meaning of ecotourism in a local context. By analysing case studies and pertinent discourses, its role for conservation will be assessed as well.

According to Pleumarom (1996), many critics take ecotourism as an “eco-facade”, a concealing tactic of the mainstream tourism industry that hides the exploitative and consumptive demands for nature by greening it. This gap between discourses and reality in ecotourism is to be checked, contrasted and displayed. As Pleumarom (1996) declares, “there are well-founded concerns that eco-tourism lacks adequate scientific foundations and is therefore not well equipped to arrive at sustainable and practicable solutions [...] to the environmental crisis.”<sup>3</sup>

### **1.3-What are the antitheses in ecotourism?**

Ecotourism should be envisaged as a business (McKercher 1998) in which nature preservation and culture should hold the same priorities as profitability.

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<sup>3</sup> Third World Net website: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/eco2.htm>, retrieved on 15 January 2006.

Cultural and environmental issues should be intertwined with all aspects of its management. Ecotourism has quickly become another form of consumption (Nowaczek et al. 2007; Carr 2007); but, with exclusion points. It is not a deliberate 'green' consumerism. Meletis and Campbell (2007) argue against any attempt to label ecotourism as a 'non-consumptive' activity. For them the notion of ecotourism as consumerism is "inaccurate" and its attributes should be re-conceptualised (2007: 850).

There is a myriad of approaches about its management, operation, and people's attitudes. Ceballos-Lascurain's first definition for ecotourism was chosen for general reference: it "involves travelling to relatively undisturbed, unpolluted natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and wildlife as well as any manifestations of past or present culture to be found in these areas" (1988: 13-14; 1991).

The definition may be regarded by some scholars as "old-fashioned" but seems to be more encompassing because it mentions cultural manifestations as one of the components of ecotourism. In his most recent interview for *Ecoclub* magazine, he commented on his definition,

Ecotourism implies a scientific, aesthetic or philosophical approach, although the 'ecotourist' is not required to be a professional scientist, artist or philosopher. The main point is that the person who practices ecotourism has the opportunity of immersing him or herself in nature in a way that most people cannot enjoy in their routine, urban existences. This person will eventually acquire an awareness and knowledge of the natural environment, together with its cultural aspects, that will convert him (sic!) into somebody keenly involved in conservation issues (October 2006, Issue 85, p. 2).

Ecotourism has been recognised as a subset of alternative tourism, an alternative to mass tourism, where the chief motivation for travel is "to use, see and experience the natural environment" (Cater and Lowman 1994; Wearing and Neil 1999; Page and Dowling 2001: 21). Mass tourism infers that the priority is the tourist's enjoyment without any worries about environmental impacts.

At present, disagreements about the definition of ecotourism mostly lie with the criteria used, perspectives and ideological stands that explain ecotourism as a western, modern phenomenon; these factors have delayed reaching a universal definition (Page and Dowling 2001: 25; Orams 1995; Beeton 1998; Higham 2007a, b).

The difficulty is how to deal with numerous definitions for ecotourism in which terms are added or subtracted. Some of them include culture (cultural), others not. Further confusion results from the use of related terms such as cultural, adventure, educational, and nature tourism as synonyms for ecotourism and among themselves. Even worse are the misunderstandings that the terms 'sustainable ecotourism', 'sustainable tourism' and 'nature-based tourism' cause (Weaver & Lawon 1999; Bjork 2007; Burton 1997, 1998; Beaumont 2001). In fact, 'sustainable

ecotourism' is certainly a pleonasm (or tautology). All tourism comprises either mass tourism or alternative tourism" and they may or may not be subject to sustainability.

Mieczkowski (1995) puts on the same level 'ecotourism' and 'nature-based tourism' and explains they encompass cultural, educational, scientific, adventure, and "agritourism" (Roberts and Hall 2001). The 1997 Queensland Ecotourism Plan states that the terms are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive.

In New Zealand "a clear definition of the term still remains elusive" (Dowling 2001a) and there is no boundary between ecotourism and other types of nature-based tourism (Higham and Carr 2003b: 235-236). However, Ecotours New Zealand, a virtual network of small-scale ecotour operators, is explicit in their views and position about environmental issues in New Zealand:

Greedy developers are hacking up farms and bushlands and putting up shanty-towns. Where does it end? Are we going to repeat the mistakes of the larger nations and watch our children's heritage slide away in a great oil-slick?...We see ecotourism as part of the answer. We figure that nobody is going to hack down bushlands if there is money to be made out of keeping them pristine for tourism ([www.ecotours.co.nz](http://www.ecotours.co.nz) retrieved on 20 February 2007).

For them, ecotourism is,

The observation of living organisms within their natural environment where the operation does not degrade and may enhance the environment so that it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations. There is an educational element to the operation. The participants will learn from expert guides and hopefully gain an increased respect and love for the environment ([www.ecotours.co.nz](http://www.ecotours.co.nz) retrieved on 20 February 2007).

In Brazil, there have been abuses of the term 'eco' and of 'ecotourism' itself. During the field trip in Amazonia, in Manaus, some travel-touting agents approached me on the street; they were trying to lure me to participate in their ecotourism excursions and eco-lodges by using 'key environmental expressions' in English. Their brochures had greenspeak clichés and pictures that promoted eco-adventure in Amazonia. Some luxury lodges near Manaus are notorious for covering up and green washing their non-ecologically friendly services and structures. They are located in an area known as the Amazonas' Ecotourism hub, created in 1996 by the Ministry for the Environment (MMA).

The lodges are located along the Negro River (Rio Negro) for three reasons: 1) proximity to Manaus that is a gateway for central Amazonia and receptive of visitors; 2) beautiful scenery along the Negro river and its tributaries; and 3) acid black waters of the Negro river prevent the proliferation of mosquitoes and other insects (Marques 2000).

In terms of structure and architecture, some resorts and jungle lodges have saunas, *cyber-cafés*, gyms, swimming pools, conference auditoria and restaurants with an

international menu. Their well-trained guides can provide a nature encounter with a mix of fake and genuine performances. For example, ‘cayman spotting’ at night may be a fraud with the animal being tied to a tree for hours (Intwee-24, *Novo Airão* city, 2005). Exotic birds, monkeys and other mammals, which come closer for visitors’ appreciation, are in fact domesticated-jungle animals or are “imprisoned” by an easy food supply (Participant observation in Janauari Ecological Park and in *Novo Airão* city).

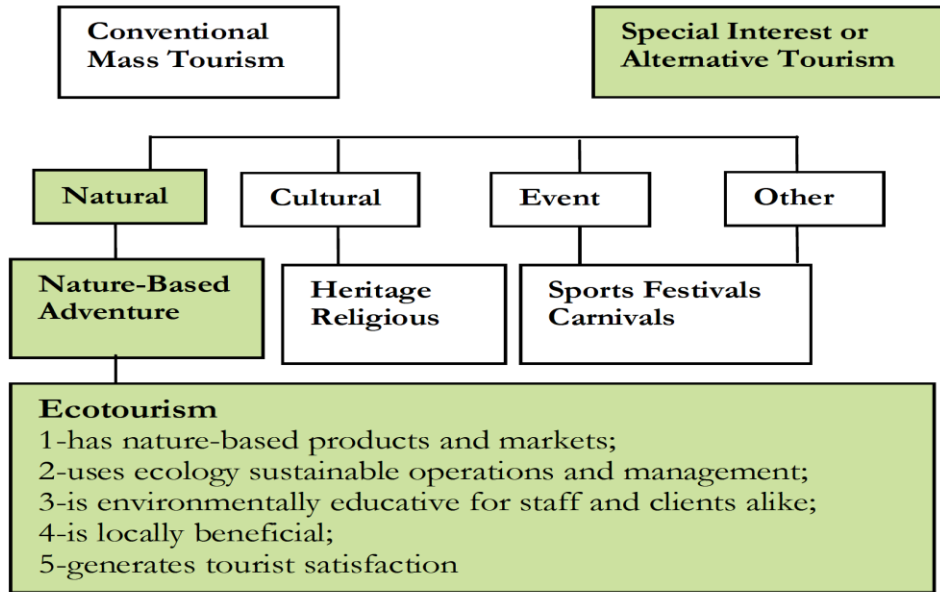
Marques (2000), in her evaluation of 12 ecolodges in the Brazilian Amazonia, confirms the findings of a previous study managed in 1999 by SUDAM (Brazilian government agency for development of the Amazonian region). The studies reveal inconsistencies between the use of the term ‘eco’ and the practices and structures of jungle service providers on the ground. There is however consensus that ecotourism comprises the sustainable management of the destination (Diamantis and Ladkin 1999) and has its regional economic and social potential, contributing to regional development, community empowerment and the creation of employment (Hall and Boyd 2003).

The consensus seems to be that ‘ecotourism’ is an ‘alternative form of tourism’; an alternative model opposed to ‘mass tourism’ (large scale/resort-based tourism). Mass tourism is supposedly more liable to cause significant negative impact and less inclined to directly benefit host communities. This contrasts enormously with ecotourism features and goals as described below.

Ecotourism (and its derived definitions) lies under the ‘umbrella’ of what is called ‘alternative tourism’ and it is proposed as an alternative to mass tourism (see Figure 1.0). For this study, I will link ecotourism to ‘nature tourism’ in which outsiders enter or stay in a natural space for the reasons of visiting, contemplating, enjoying, interacting and learning in that environment. Hall (2007d) refers to nature-based tourism as, “ultimately based upon the factors that allow an area to display the characteristics of perceived and actual naturalness” (p.106).

In this book, ecotourism has been used interchangeably with nature tourism, and has been categorised as a form of alternative tourism (Mieczkowski 1995), even though Fennell regards ‘nature-based tourism’ as being an activity that “encompasses all forms of tourism – mass tourism, adventure tourism, low-impact tourism, ecotourism” (1995: 35). In addition, ecotourism and sustainable tourism will be linked and will co-exist throughout the research.

However, this association of terms is not without a hitch, because ecotourism entails contentious issues, particularly related to its definition (Bjork 2007; Carr 2007). In the literature, these three terms ‘ecotourism’, ‘sustainable tourism’ and ‘nature tourism’ are not synonymous.



Source: Dowling (1997a: 100)

**Figure 1.0 - Ecotourism towards a definition**

As mentioned, since the 1980s ecotourism has been defined in different ways (Weaver & Lawton 2006; Burton 1997; 1998, Dowling 2001). The literature devotes substantial chapters to it. However, there has been a trend to have ‘ecotourism’ more succinctly defined. For example, Ecotourism Australia Association adopted a very plain definition: ‘ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation’.

Another simplified definition is: responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people (Stabler 1997; Dowling 2001; Newsome et al. (2002). That is, ecotourism is a form of travel that promotes environmental and cultural experiences in natural areas. It should lead towards conservation (Beaumont 2001).

Ecotourism is regarded as an alternative to mass tourism (Dowling 2001; Burton 1997; Weaver 2006) it is a branch of sustainable tourism; it is nature tourism; it is expected to be sustainable (Markwell 1998). The term ‘ecotourism’ has been used interchangeably with ‘nature tourism’ and ‘sustainable tourism’. However, many other terms are used under the rubric of ecotourism, such as ‘green tourism’, ‘low impact tourism’, ‘jungle tourism’, ‘bio-tourism’, ‘ecologically responsible tourism’ (Dowling 2001; Buckley 2004; Higham 2007a, b; Bjork 2007; Higham & Carr 2003a, b).

On the other hand, Sustainable Tourism Development has been defined as one that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future (Bjork 2007). It is envisaged as leading to

management of resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while it supports the biophysical environment (Bjork 2007).

Sustainable tourism, compared to ecotourism, is comprehensive, encompassing the whole tourism industry; it is taken as tourism-centric (Stabler 1997). Environmental learning and immediate conservation outcomes are not explicitly stated as a component in sustainable tourism development (Bjork 2007; Buckley 2007; Weaver & Lawton 1999). Nature-based tourism is just any travel to natural places, it can be sustainable or not; ecotourism or not (Bjork 2007; Dowling 2001; Newsome et al. 2002; Markwell 1998; Higham & Carr 2003a, b).

Nature tourism/ecotourism is not a homogeneous activity, “it encompasses a wide range of activities” such as boating, wildlife and walking (Plummer et al. 2006: 499) promoted by various actors. It can include a private business or community ecotourism project. Ecotourism/nature tourism ventures can operate under a set of legislation. It can be practiced in environmentally protected areas (public or private ones). The expected positive outcomes in nature tourism/ecotourism are the enhancement of an ecosystem, preserving it, and/or the enhancement of a local community, by improving the quality of life.

For this study, the concern is with the level of impacts human interventions may cause. Nature tourism should be oriented to nature conservation rather than concerned with community inclusion and cultural aspects: “nature-based tourism presents a vexing situation as the environment becomes the main attraction upon which many individuals and organisations stake a claim” (Plummer et al. 2006: 500). This is not a reductionist approach that aims at the oversimplification of the theme, but an attempt to unwrap a debate jammed in conceptual details and rival viewpoints that haven’t succeeded in bringing universal agreement about what ecotourism is or ought to be.

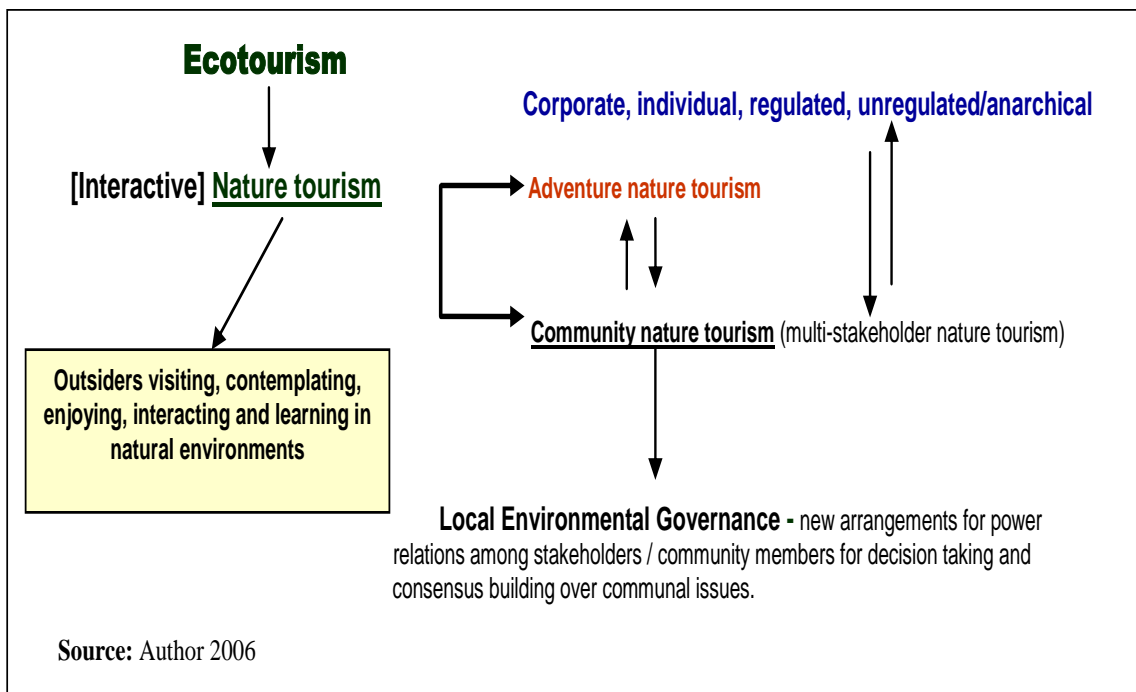
The stalemates lie in imprecision and the subjectiveness of ‘sustainable indicators’, ‘codes of conduct’, ‘regulations’, and the ‘commercial aspects of ecotourism’; and whether community participation and culture should be regarded to classify ‘nature tourism’ as ‘ecotourism’ is also part of the problem.

In my questionnaires answered by nine out of 37 New Zealand tour operators approached, six of them said that sub-definitions of nature tourism such as ecotourism, green tourism, sustainable tourism, responsible tourism do not matter for them. Four of them said it matters, and one mentioned ‘marketing consistency’ as the reason. For those NZ survey respondents’ (NZSR) who said ‘no’, their comments were (Box 1.0):

**Box 1.0 - NZ tour operators' perceptions of the sub-definitions of nature tourism**

- I believe ecotourism is overused and nature tourism is a better term. Neither matters in the day to day business as they only serve to categorise the business. What matters is what you are offering the public compared to what they experience (NZSR-1).
- I also avoid labels...others may call me 'eco tours' or whatever and that's fine. I prefer a "guided bush walk". A label that speaks about the days rather than a general term (NZSR-2)
- None of our visitors could tell you the difference between any of these labels. They want a real, enjoyable, educational tour (NZSR-8).

In addition, the involvement of the local community in nature tourism development gives a complex structure to the activity which requires broad forms of management in order to achieve 'environmental protection and conservation'. All-encompassing ecotourism/nature tourism projects that seek to approach social, economic and environmental problems make them very complex ventures in terms of management (Huybers & Bennett 2000; McKercher 1997). This type of multifaceted projects requires institutional structures and cross-sectoral cooperation/collaboration in order to work effectively. Because of these demands, it would be better to situate such projects within the perspective of 'local environmental governance' (Fig. 1.1).



**Figure 1.1 - (Eco)tourism or local environmental governance**

For example, Ecotourism in Mamirauá in Brazil operates under a governance structure that fills government gaps for isolated areas. Where democracy is weak and where the central and state government have been unable to fully address the well-being of local communities and of the environment, decentralisation of power is desirable. The following two citations can provide some leads about Mamirauá governance:

A model of how to carry out effective conservation in an area of high global and local diversity conservation value whilst at the same time improving livelihoods for the residents and users of the Reserve [...] an integrating conservation system with poverty reduction (Koziell and Inoue 2002).

Governance of the reserve in such a participatory system is based on an effective alliance with locals. This alliance assumes that the involvement of members of local villages in all activities can be assured if those members have a clear perspective of the benefits derived from the protection of the areas (Queiroz 2007).

Many academics use a list of rigorous criteria for sustainability in tourism (Mowforth and Munt 2003: 98), observing whether an accommodation company, reserve or (eco)tours have: ecological, cultural, social, and economic sustainability; as well as whether they have educational components (i.e. environmental interpretation), local participation, and support conservation.

The Brazilian definition for ecotourism is “a section of tourism, that uses, in a sustainable way, the natural and cultural heritage, fosters its conservation and aims to build environmental awareness through environmental interpretation, promoting the welfare of the communities involved” (Soavinski 2001).

According to Mowforth and Munt (2003), their list is not prescriptive but derived from observed practices of those organisations which label themselves as ecologically friendly (p.97). In their criticism, Dovers and Handmer (1993) point out that ‘sustainable development’ came into international debate as an ‘umbrella concept’ that has been more rhetorical than a sincere attempt to deal with the issues,

The very notion of sustainability has deep and diverse historical roots in energy analysis, classical economics, renewable resource management...[and]...three decades of rising concern over the health of the biosphere...The debate environment-development is now generally structured with some reference to its still-evolving framework...[but]...sustainability is indeed characterized by deep-seated contradictions – paradoxes, conflicts, and tensions – between perhaps irreconcilable goals or directions (p. 217).

Ecotourism is an extension of the green discourses that evolved from the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s (Dowling 2001; Bjork 2007). The green discourses confront the capitalist versions for the value of nature. Some discursive construction seeks to combine both disciplines, ‘ecology’ and ‘economics’, into a new area for rational interventions in ecosystems. Consequently, the green discourses represent the



viewpoints that are largely defined and overlapped by other discourses (Barnes and Duncan 1992).

Certainly, the environmental discourse can be “fragmented and contradictory” (Hajer 1997: 1), fraught with a collection of astounding claims and concerns that are assembled together by different actors resulting in different versions for the same issue. Vested interests guide rhetorics and narratives over the environmental crisis with “poles” for its origin and for its solution. Environmentalist views on nature and for nature clash in many instances with the politicians’ and economists’ views. Locals also have their own approaches and interpretations to the environmental crisis and possible solutions.

People have different perceptions of the importance of the environment and of the market, and this allows different connotations for ecotourism and sustainable tourism as demonstrated by the lack of consensus in defining them (Higham & Luck 2007). It is fundamental to set the type of ecotourism to be discussed and the latent forces behind it. Instead of analysing subdivisions of ecotourism as rural, responsive, alternative, green tourism, etc, I am more concerned with factors that influence the activity such as land tenure and protection status, wilderness versus inhabited areas, government regulation and environmental legislation, and exclusivity of attraction(s), as well as any existing partnership among stakeholders.

Sustainability has been central for the implementation and practices of nature tourism. Acott and La Trobe (1998), opposed ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ ecotourism. For them, the notion of a ‘shallow ecotourism’ serves the purposes and realities of the business sector in which “there is no consideration of intrinsic value [of nature]...and...management decisions [in ecotourism] are made from a utilitarian, anthropocentric viewpoint” (1994: 244-245).

The categorisation of ecotourism as ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ as well as that of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ sustainability are indeed ‘discursive construction’s to serve different stakeholders’ interests and goals without disqualifying them from the label ‘eco’.

Ecotourism certainly became a ‘conceptual word’, discursively featured to encompass socio, economic and environmental issues. Reflection on this starts by questioning what type of discourses ‘tourism’ itself is wrapped with. It creates the desire to go to other territories, to other cultures and “taste” the unusual and exotic.

Simmons (2004) found that visitors’ desire for destinations can be stimulated/encouraged in three dominant ways: 1) appeals for present-day enjoyment or getaway from modernity; 2) appeals for nostalgia, reminiscence, longing and bucolic places; 3) the longing for colonial or western influences (p.47). Within these dominant dimensions, encounters with nature are constructed as unique, fabulous, positive and good for nature itself and locals as can be observed in the New Zealand 100% Pure campaign. In terms of inciting visitor motivations and influencing demand, expertise in marketing language matters,

Marketing is the major management tool that tourism organisations can employ to influence demand. They spend millions of dollars on marketing each year to attract new customers. Marketers use their knowledge of what

motives people to travel and how customers make travel decisions to achieve their marketing goals and objectives (Pearce et al. 1998: 99).

Ecotourism, symbolically represented as a form or a subset of sustainable development, brings with it all the controversies concerning what is ethical and rational in nature-society relations. This is because the use and application of the concept of sustainability “is inherently a matter of dispute” (Hall 1998: 13). Political ecology addresses the interrelationship of politics and ecology, in an attempt to understand how different social groups interpret and experience environmental change and conflict (Bryant, 1992; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Scholars have struggled to know how such interpretations and experiences inform, and are informed by environmental discourses (Bryant 2000; Peet and Watts 1996), since language is constitutive, rather than reflective, of reality (Gray 2003: 27).

#### **1.4-The various contentious explanations for ecotourism**

Discrepancies in ecotourism discourses and related discourses appear in the form of catchphrases, statements, narratives, rhetorics, tropes, ploys, and consist of a mix academic, scientific, institutional, business, popular and general beliefs and claims.

Such discourses can be textual or visual (Fairclough 1989) and can appear in academic, scientific, organisational and institutional documents as well as in marketing and advertisements prepared by private sector actors and tourism promoters. They can be fraught with competing claims, views, accounts, justification and interpretation over social, economic and environmental issues. Stakeholders make use of such rhetoric and create narratives in order to see their interests prevail over those of others.

Institutional communication either in terms of policies or in the form of routinised circulation of internal or public information also encapsulates messages that are not neutral in the sense that they aim to achieve certain levels of social patterns and responses. Language is power; or, at the very least, used as an attempt to keep power (Fairclough 1989; 1992) by certain groups. Discursive constructions are powerful because of the effects and influences they can have on individuals.

Ecotourism is part of the environmental discourses, proposed mainly as a mediated solution for socio-environmental deadlocks, but brings with it all the controversies of environmental discourses because it is harnessed to the notions of sustainable development and lack of institutional arrangements or models for operation and proper support.

By reviewing the literature, news and published material on sustainability and environmental issues, I identified that the discursive constructions of the environment, including those linked to ecotourism, can be divided into seven major categories based on the arguments and rhetorics used by their authors: nature as fragile; nature as resilient; nature as resource; nature as equilibrium; nature as sink; nature as paradise; and nature for hedonism.

Competing discourses and conflicts are susceptible to happen in six dimensions in ecotourism: conceptual, ideological, relational, normative, structural and spatial.

These dimensions and categories will serve as a framework to situate ecotourism in the context of ‘discourse’ and ‘conflict’. However, “not [...] every discourse manifests conflict – social struggle” (Fairclough 1989: 164).

Conflict can be, for example, rooted in structural power imbalances among stakeholders or in a “power vacuum” (Plummer, Kulczycki and Stacey 2006: 512), for example, a regional political vacuum in terms of public policy and planning for the tourism sector and/or the absence of ‘legitimate bodies’ to mediate the stakeholders crisis as observed in Silves, Amazonia.

For Hay (2000), environmental discourses hold their own version of “the truths”, pointing out the effects and the causes of nature transformation. Hajer (2005) defines discourse as “an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena [...] produced and reproduced through [...] a set of practices” (p.1). There are then different versions (rhetorics) for environmental depletion and for environmental solutions.

Discourse constitutes viewpoints that are “mostly defined by their relationship to other discourses” (Barnes and Duncan 1992: 8). In this sense, environmental discourses can be taken as a structured discussion of environmental conflict, with each environmental discourse providing “its own version of ‘the truth’ showing causes and effects of environmental change, the actors involved, and appropriate strategies to be adopted” (Gray 2003: 37).

However, this book does not aim at mediating and decide upon what is ‘truth’ and what is ‘fallacy’ in the discursive constructions in ecotourism. Rather, the author seeks to identify competing discourses, their fabricators and sources and the context in which such discourses emerge are used, gain sense/meaning and become forms of control or the truth.

Discourses ‘in’ and ‘adjacent’ to ecotourism are embedded with ‘truths’, ‘logical-fallacies’ and ‘fallacies’ such as a flawed pattern or mistake in reasoning. Some discourses create a peculiar image of nature convincing, for example, visitors to participate in nature tourism activities and introducing them to local ecosystems. Institutionalised discourses, including those of the academia and of government tourism bodies, foretell benefits ‘ecotourism’ can bring in terms of conservation and of social gains.

Taking the premise that the existing competing discourses in the practices of ecotourism make communication and interaction (among local actors) difficult to be managed, I propose to scrutinise collaborative schemes and how they have been managed as ‘associational spaces’ for negotiation of discourses. In many aspects, power relations are linked to the use of language and to meaning fabrication. Consensus building is above all the negotiation of discursive contexts.

Manipulative and distorted discourses can be either directly or indirectly linked to ecotourism, concomitant to its definition and implementation, or they can pre-exist or evolve in such a way that they clash with the principles and goals of ecotourism. The subject requires micro and macro analyses that can contrast rhetoric and enactment in ecotourism.

Discursive construction in ecotourism lies on two major levels: abstract construction and utilitarian construction (Lima, 2009). At both levels the discourses comprise theoretical and conceptual aspects permeated with competing ideas embedded, for example, in the “relationship between power and scientific knowledge and the recognition of the existence of multiple, culturally constructed ideas of the environment and of environmental problems” (Neumann 2005: 7).

By emphasizing nature preservation rather than nature manufacturing, ecotourism sets itself on the borderline of different interests, bringing controversies and inquiries by those who will be affected by ongoing changes. Beeton (1998) identified the main interests of stakeholders and concluded that many of their expectations for and meanings of ecotourism and nature at a local community level, vary greatly risking pushing them against each other because not all groups want the same things. For example, the tourist industry seeks a healthy business environment with: 1) financial security; 2) a trained and responsible workforce; 3) attractions of sufficient quality to ensure a steady flow of visitors – who stay longer and visit more often; 4) a significant return on investment. Policy makers and nature tourism operators seek: a) protection of the environment through improvement, correction of damage, and restoration; b) to motivate people to ‘care for’ rather than ‘use up’ resources. Community members seek a healthy place to live: i) food, adequate and clean water; ii) health care; iii) rewarding work for equitable pay; iv) education and recreation; v) respect for cultural traditions; vi) opportunities to make decisions about the future (Beeton 1998).

Conceptually, the diverging issues in ecotourism are linked to discursive distortions and the abuse of the term ‘eco’. This is linked to agents that rhetorically seek to construct and present ecotourism according to their interests and views. The problem is rooted in the conceptual foundations of ecotourism. Even Ceballos-Lascuráin, purportedly the creator of the term ‘ecotourism’ and its description, has two definitions for ecotourism.

In management and business, ‘ecotourism’ is targeted as a differential market for companies giving them advantages for labelling themselves as ‘eco’ and ‘sustainable’. The “lure of discourse” is thoroughly debated unveiling the types of discourses, at different times, on environmentalism, romanticism, and exoticism (Weaver 2001).

Ecotourism is positioned between being comprehensive and minimalist. Weaver (2001) uses ‘attractions’, ‘learning’ and ‘sustainability’ as variables to set the dimensions of involvement in ecotourism, setting it as restricted/superficial or holistic in terms of understanding the “particular charismatic megafauna or megaf flora” (2005: 444). Cater (2006, 2007) approaches ecotourism as a western-driven construction that should be contrasted against global political interests. For her, theories, narratives, policies and institutions that contribute to shape ‘ecotourism’ are driven by a global political economy (p.24).

In discursive terms, Azcarate (2006) investigates “a hegemonic development discourse through an ecotourist strategy” (p.98), by deconstructing the local-global development narratives in ecotourism in *Celestun*, a biosphere reserve in Mexico. He

applies some of the developmental notions linked to discourse and nature construction as presented in political ecology.

For Acott and La Trobe the notion of ‘shallow ecotourism’ serves the purposes and realities of the business sector as “there is no consideration of intrinsic value [of nature]...and...management decisions [in ecotourism] are made from a utilitarian, anthropocentric viewpoint” (1998: 244-245). The categorisation of ecotourism in ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ is indeed a ‘discursive construction’ to serve different stakeholders’ interests and goals without disqualifying the label ‘eco’.

Conversely, some social scientists, for example, understand ‘ecotourism’ as pathways for ‘neo-colonialism’, with wealthy people from the North appropriating remaining pristine areas in developing countries (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 177). Other scholars condemn the attempts to masquerade human interventions and the commoditisation of nature and culture (indigenous and locals on sale?) under the label of a locally beneficial ecotourism (Johnson 2006). All-encompassing characteristics of ecotourism make it even worse to arbitrate and implement.

Eco-social perspectives in ecotourism development contribute to stress and clashes. For example, the demands for involvement of locals in ecotourism expand the difficulties for its enactment. Social inclusion, empowerment of local communities, environmental justice, steady income generation and fair wealth distribution are too many expected attributes for just one single activity. All these promising features can in reality be achieved through a local multi-stakeholder governing system called ‘local environmental governance’ (Lima 2002) which can provide proper institutional arrangements and support. Besides, the lack of well-integrated institutional models and bodies for ecotourism and sustainable tourism operation and monitoring gives a self-governing facet to these activities. Certainly, rules, ecological certification and codes of conduct can provide normative platforms for them to operate. Are they enough? Can they guarantee the best practices?

As Gray (2003) postulates, “ecotourism is at the cross-roads of conservation and development” (p.7). Its proponents resolutely defend the point that ecotourism may become an economic alternative to highly impacting practices in forest areas such as logging, mining, grazing, disorderly settlement and unplanned growth.

General discourses set ecotourism as a medium that seeks to “juxtapose development and conservation” – what some refer to as “a micro solution to a macro problem” (Ryan, Hughes and Chirgwin 2000; Gullette 2001: 103). In a more pragmatic approach, ecotourism is expected to operate without the negative aspects of mass tourism (Ryan, Hughes and Chirgwin 2000: 133-142) serving as an environmentally friendly alternative to it.

On the ground, the attempts to make sustainable tourism and ecotourism a practical extension, or a subset, of sustainable development have revealed its problematic dimensions. Conflicting scenarios evolve because sustainable tourism and ecotourism discourses have ‘subjective boundaries’ for nature use and access under the excuses of ‘sustainable management’. It means that most of the directions and guidelines for sustainability seem to be superficial, speculative, and just conceptual

(Pleumarom 1996). In these terms, ecotourism has had mediocre success in mediating conservation and human greed; it has in many ways failed to be the bastion of sustainable development.

Ecotourism labelled as a 'sustainable practice' is all the more problematic because it comes as a remedy formula for macro problems. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism are only partly responsive to the appeals for sustainability. Alone, they can hardly guarantee the conservation and maintenance of natural spaces and resources. The assumption is that the complexities of ecotourism implementation (Higham and Luck 2007) require a complex institutional model. However, such a model is lacking or is incomplete.

Ecotourism is often advocated as a sustainable form of tourism but imprecision in terminology clouds basic issues. There are strong economic, ecological, and cultural reasons for believing that, even in its purest forms, ecotourism is likely to present substantial challenges to destination areas (Higham and Luck 2007), particularly if it competes for scarce resources and displaces existing uses and users (Wall 1997).

Attempts to promote ecotourism development potentially increase tension between stakeholders and traditional power structures. This happens because: 1) of an increasing flux of new businesses; 2) the emerging of a new elite; 3) newcomers that do not legitimate the local dominant groups; 4) the creation of socio-environmental bodies that are resistant to the manipulation by local oligarchies; 5) participatory demands for decision-making; and 6) regulations that come against the interests of the traditional elite. Those groups who are involved with ecotourism and sustainable tourism have symbiotic dependency relations. Equilibrium in such interactions could flourish by identifying areas in common that which may be called 'dialogical nodes' or 'interactive platforms' as a strategy for mutual understanding with possible positive outcomes.

If local stakeholders are able to 'negotiate discourses' creating channels for communication and consensual decisions, they can perhaps make ecotourism a long-lasting activity, and virtually cash in its benefits. However, the explanation is not deterministic and reductionist. In a macro perspective, ecotourism and sustainable tourism - as a discursive extension of sustainable development - may bring convergence of the socio-economic and environmental interests if combined with normalisation and law enforcement.

Some of the principles of sustainable tourism and ecotourism are embedded with messages that become discursively competitive with the capitalist model. The capitalist model is oriented by the forces of consumerism, capital expansion and maximization of profits; a more noticeable phenomenon from the mid-20th century with the "West of commodity consumption [...] a combination of Henry Ford's [...] formula and the Keynesian thrust" (O'Connor 1994: 130). Conflicts in this domain exist because ecotourism disrupts the market rationale that requires constant and quick nature transformation; world capitalism is pigeonholed "by struggles between capitalist interests and social groups resisting dispossession of their own lands, resources, and

selves,” (O’Connor 1994: 137) alongside struggles engendered by noncapitalist motives.

Other debatable features include the ideas of carrying capacity and zoning over the access and use of land and resources, restrictive strategies (regulatory policy tools) that seek to control the levels of human interventions in the environment. Hall (2007b) for example regards ‘carrying capacity’ as one of the frameworks for monitoring and evaluation and highlights the importance of researching tourism at a local destination but scaling its effects and impacts within a global environment context (p.244, 245).

For Butler, ‘carrying capacity’ is at the centre of sustainable development, “and must be operationalised if sustainability is to be achieved” (as quoted in Hall and Lew 1998a: 8). The book does not aim to validate or reject sustainability discourses. It will not discuss sustainable development through an exhaustive literature review. The target is definitely not to decipher the sustainable development conundrum. I do take sustainable development as a key environmental discourse that has surveyed many government bodies and organisations to consider Agenda 21 guidelines in their planning. However, many of the acclaimed sustainable actions have lacked scientific parameters and validation, and abuses have rendered the term meaningless. Moreover, Agenda 21 has been criticised for linking ‘development’ to ‘trade’, rather than having it conditionally tied to ‘environment’. According to Peter Bjork,

This separation of two central dimensions in sustainable development has filtered down to many of the existing sustainable tourism development programs and can today be picked up as a paradox even in ecotourism (Bjork 2007: 35).

Whichever the criticisms and shortcomings are, sustainable development is a set of powerful symbolic statements adopted by planners and institutions (Hunter Lovins 2006),<sup>4</sup> that has encouraged many to change how they should interact with, dwell in and transform the environment.

### **1.5- Liquid Sustainability**

All the controversies and imbedded oxymora related to sustainability as a new tenet for development - a sustainable development to be more punctual – are focal to discuss ‘sustainability’ as a “liquid concept”. In this section, it is named as ‘liquid sustainability’ and is intrinsically related to the notions of ‘liquid modernity’ a term coined by the thinker Zygmunt Bauman. The term ‘liquid sustainability’ is in fact a critique on two facts: first, sustainability as a new ingredient for development models and for a neoliberal system; secondly, the ways ‘interest groups’ have appropriated of this new environmental, social and economic orders. Such institutional erosion has two sides, positive and negative, it will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>4</sup> Hunter Lovins’ speech on Smart Communities, University of Waikato, July 2006.

'Liquidness' is defined as 'the state of matter in which a substance readily flows, with little or no propensity to disperse; it is a matter in a flowing state', and, as a 'liquid', its shapes and formats are therefore determined by places and containers to which it is subjected to.

As for 'sustainability', its liquidness state is thereby determined by realities, contexts and conveniences. With this approach, it is possible to say that 'flexibility' (wills for changes) and 'adaptiveness' (ways for adjustments) are intrinsic elements of 'sustainability' which give to it a 'liquidity condition' in regard to development models and to human-nature perceptions and relations.

Here, the notion of 'liquidity' lies in the fact that 'sustainability' can gain different meanings, values, truths and applicability according to specific interests of individuals or of groups of individuals. This notion is also closely linked to some intricacies regarding the definition and applicability of ecotourism principles. But, before continuing on ecotourism it is important to highlight some conceptual understandings of 'liquid sustainability'. The discussion will help to shed light on how difficult it is to have 'sustainable' as part of 'tourism' and of ecotourism and this happens in reason of two driving forces, environmental and economic ones. The point for discussion is exactly of how society should position itself in face of the existing dilemmas of 'development' and 'environmental chaos' it produces.

The interrelated issues of 'development', 'society', 'postmodernity', 'inequalities', 'social and environmental ethics' and 'consumerism' have been comprehensively debated by Zygmunt Bauman since the 1980s. In 2000, Bauman brought further attention and criticism to his writings by introducing the term 'liquid modernity' in reference to a rapidly changing world order that has undermined all views of durability. In terms of development, his inquiries have challenged those who have advocated 'modernization' as a historical stage in which it is possible to have structures in an 'everlasting static institutional state'.

By calling 'postmodernity' a 'liquid modernity', Bauman has provided insightful critiques on the trends and changes in the world regarding the neoliberal developmental politics, expansion of markets, labour force mobility, new levels of poverty which have redrawn class lines, and on the new patterns of consumption. According to Lee (2005), Bauman has proposed 'liquid modernity' as "a more apt term for making sense of changes as well as continuities in modernity" (Lee, 2005, p.61-62); for him, there is an "uncertain future characterized by a 'fluid world of globalization, deregulation and individualization'" (Bauman, 2002, p. 19; Bauman, 2001). And, 'sustainability' can be regarded as a major element of this "liquid modernity, being part of changing world, particularly as the focus is 'sustainable development'.

For Lee (2005), Bauman's metaphor of liquid modernity is directly connected to the "aqueous foundation of modernity" and also connected to the implicit uncertainty in a postmodern world, a condition which has caused dissatisfaction on Bauman because he has witnessed deliberate increasing inequalities in most nations, and the environmental matters follow the social ones. Lee explains that "the notion of



liquidity is appropriate for conceptualizing the flow of modernity and its consequences around the world” (2005, p.62-63).

In Bauman’s views, the rapid centralization of institutional power with the emergence of legal-bureaucratic authorities has given to ‘modernity’ a notion of solidity, because bureaucratic structures may be realized as being more solid than the traditional ones. Modernity can be regarded as solid in a sense it interlocks powerful institutions such as capitalism, industrialism, surveillance and the military which overwhelm “any individual effort to keep tradition in place, and makes ‘Western expansion seemingly irresistible” (Giddens, 1990, 63, apud in Lee, 2005, p.62-63). It is to say: modernity connotes ‘solidity’ and postmodernity connotes ‘liquidity’. ‘Liquid modernity’ is straight linked to postmodernity as advocated by Bauman, and development itself demands ‘solid structures’ as a platform for it to exist. Development can be understood as being part of an agenda of modernizing societies,

Development is, therefore, a solidifying project... [and] the First World is considered purely modern because of the solid consequences of its scientific, technological and democratic achievements, unlike the less solidly organized societies of the Second and Third World , but the First World is swimming in an ocean of uncertainty and ambivalence. The Second World has disintegrated with the dismantling of the Soviet Union and communist states. The Third World has fragmented into the newly industrializing countries (NICs) and the less wealthy and less developed nations (Lee, 2005, p.68).

However, since ‘sustainable development’ has been proposed as a mid-condition for bridging the needs and demands of society in terms of natural resources, this new conceptualisation of ‘development’ also breaks with the notions of institutional solidity. , government, people and corporations have to adapt to a new world order whose overall orientation has been rationality.

Surely, ‘sustainability’ is a proposal - if not, rather an ultimate world appeal for consciousness and behaviour change - which aims at leading the humans into reflections on the fact that there is a ‘limit to growth’, and the current natural resources and territorial demands have gone beyond a carrying capacity of the planet. This sounds obvious to many, but some ‘interest groups’ have tried to give a new understanding to ‘sustainability’ and to ‘sustainable development’ in a way they can still keep the ‘detrimental practices’ of producing and consuming without really changing a situation or a system to make it more environmentally friendly. In a given context, some capitalist-oriented groups have adopted highly impacting social and economic practices, but with the precaution of clothing them with rhetorics in an attempt to mitigate the extension of damages on nature.

Thus, as I talk about ‘liquid sustainability’ I am referring to two different ways of understanding and dealing with such a very abstract concept. First, ‘sustainability’ can be essentially regarded as ‘liquid’, because the way it was outlined by the United Nations Brundtland Commission in the report *Our Common Future*, in 1987, allows

various interpretations and courses of action. ‘Sustainability’ is approached very broadly in the report to the extent it allows government bodies, planners and bureaucrats to design policies, programs and action plans in almost all productive sectors and in social areas with high levels of flexibility and with different targets and outcomes. The Agenda 21, outlined during the World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992, markedly has been the most visible attempt of several nations to reach some common sense on sustainability in order to put it into practice as envisaged by the U.N. Brundtland Commission. Technology, innovation, cutting edge research and creativity have been one of the avenues governments and organizations have found to make ‘sustainability’ feasible. All these choices break with the notion of ‘untouchable static solid institutional structures’. Sustainable development breaks with all notions of ‘institutional rigidity’ because it calls for ‘new ways’ of doing the ‘old things’ to the extent ‘development’ cannot exist to serve only the capitalist side of the system. Corporations cannot be bigger than the world carrying capacity.

‘Sustainability’ exactly because of its abstractness as a concept can be readily converted, shaped and re-shaped (as a ‘liquid’ does) to serve various interests and views in the society. But for some individuals and groups, the **3Rs** philosophy (Re-use, Recycle and Reduce) is not relevant, because it goes against their economic goals, business, and profitability; it goes against their rigid unchangeable position that the natural world exists to supply the industrial and trade demands. Developed society is thus a society which has caused high levels of impacts on nature.

Development implies nature and space transformation. This type of debate situates itself within two knowledge spheres: environmental sociology and economics, and possibly with more stress on the former. A ‘workable sustainability’ requires interconnections and jointly actions of all sorts to design and propose solutions to “all-too-real social and biophysical conflicts”, because “environmental problems are not only problems of technology and industry, of ecology, biology, of pollution control and pollution prevention” (Bell, 2004, p.1-2); it goes beyond this scope because environmental problems are part of a macro problem of social inequality, institutional failures, of highly negative impacting economic models and of power relations.

Realistic sustainability means society must find ways to successfully deal with issues of blatant population growth, and in reason of that, to deal with overconsumption and resource depletion. In a nutshell, there has been a long-lasting social and environmental imbalance over the decades, and sustainable development is an equation hard to achieve because the existing planet’s environmental state is all about an environmental predicament, deadlocks and stalemates manipulated by different corporate power groups! Sustainability has a ‘liquid state’ because it requires adaptability and elastic models of development of those who have the decision power on it. And, the notion of ‘liquid sustainability’ prevails as we discuss sustainable tourism and ecotourism as avenues to have practical examples of economic activities with low impact.

## **1.6- Research goals and objectives: formulating the research question(s)**

An academic investigative writing is a process of choices above all, and thus I use a critical realism approach for dealing with discursive contents. This book adds to the literature as it proposes a broader approach to advance the concept of ecotourism beyond the scope of tourism itself, and toward collaborative models for nature and human resource management through associational public spaces (Stark 2002: 110).

The environmental crisis is essentially a crisis of values, and a crisis of relations of an industrial society with the environment. There is no ultimate remedy for the environmental and ecotourism dilemmas. Discourse negotiation can contribute to tailor and bind power locally to serve multiple stakeholders (Hajer 1997: 21). Agreements on representations of nature and on social practices can provide leads for reconciliation around the material requirements of civilisation with new values and feelings for nature.

The discursive construction of reality thus becomes an important realm of power. Discursive strategies have to be understood in their own social and cognitive context, taking into consideration that the environment is based on representations, which implies a set of assumptions and (implicit) social choices that are mediated through an ensemble of specific discursive practices (Hajer 1997: p.17).

Nature, beyond its normative and cognitive meanings, has been an object produced and reproduced as part of the demands of a consumerist society. The main objective of this study is then to show areas in which discourses in/on ecotourism collide while arguing that 'discursive interaction' can create new and consensual meanings and values for nature and for practices in nature tourism.

Discursive interaction is believed to transform cognitive standards and create new cognitions and new stances, among local stakeholders, with a democratic redistribution of power acquired through a bargaining and trade-off process. It is central to the investigation to know whether 'niches of ecotourism' can work as experimental grounds, providing empirical facts on ways of negotiating difficulties and differences among local actors. Before outlining the major research question, the following points should be observed:

First, it has been critical to investigate new forms of local power division that can mitigate the defects of a liberal political democracy and of a consumerist society. Therefore, discussions on ecotourism do lie outside the debates on the legitimacy of political democracy and of the effects of a system driven by the capitalist/neo-liberal forces that perpetuate a model of wealth concentration at the expense of the poor and of nature.

Second, consensus building in nature tourism management is first and foremost subject to individuals to uncover the truths and fallacious statements present in the self-interested and manipulative discourses that dictate rules and induce certain practices and beliefs. Third, discursive constructions and practices of sustainable tourism and (eco)tourism are inherently in conflict in five major grounds, i) clashes with the interests of dominant agents and structures; ii) by encompassing socio-environmental role(s) as the means to reach societal justice rather than stressing a

regulated business for managing impacts; iii) by high levels of abstraction, overestimation and expectation for a single activity; iv) lack of national or supra-national institutional bodies that could legitimate ecotourism and its claims; and v) the inexistence of strong links between public policy prerogatives/instruments and empirical-scientific evidence in ecotourism. Taking into account all these issues, this book has the mission to investigate the following major research question:

**Can collaborative schemes allow levels of interaction and communication among stakeholders in a way that they are able to achieve collective advantages (gains) in and for (eco)tourism, positioning it at the intersections of the discourses of ‘profit’, ‘nature conservation’ and ‘social justice’ ?**

Textual analysis of discourses in (eco)tourism partnerships may provide evidence that a rigid, hierarchical, and socially unbalanced structure (i.e. organisation, community, government body, etc) has moved into a more socially accountable, open and participatory arrangement. Focus on structures is essential and will be assessed. I am more interested in the ‘discursive content’ that circulates in the networks for collaboration, and yet interested to know ‘how’ the actors have used this ‘group learning’ to promote sustainability. Local authorities, government agencies, host communities and the pertinent business sector, which make collaborative initiatives a salient feature of contemporary tourism (Vernon et al. 2005; Charlton and Essex 1996) increase learning capital.

One of the assumptions in this investigation is that each actor has his/her own grasp about their individual and collective role as well as an autonomous realization of what ‘sustainable practices’ ought to be. Another assumption is that stakeholders have different levels of comprehension about conceptual aspects of ‘sustainability’.

A **major assumption** raised here is that ‘collaborative arrangements’ do not necessarily end conflict, but a community-based collaborative approach and a partnered conservationist-oriented system to tourism-related development issues can facilitate the move from destructive to constructive conflicts. That is, conflicts still continue but they have a positive prospect as long as ‘associational public spaces’ have been created for dialogue, change and resistance. Bramwell and Lane (2000) explain that “adversarial conflicts can be wasteful as stakeholders entrench their mutual suspicions, improve their confrontation skills and play out similar conflicts around each subsequent issue” (p.6). Stakeholder collaboration can contribute to strengthen dialogue and to develop a mutually acceptable proposal about how tourism should be managed (Huybers & Bennett 2000; McKercher 1997).

### **1.7- Structure of the book**

The conceptual approach of this book is split into two major parts: **i)** it first seeks to identify and analyse competing and manipulative discourses (and discursive constructions of domination) by setting them in the six dimensions of disputes in ecotourism, and in the themes of perception of nature.

The book does not aim to categorise discursive statements into ‘truth’ and ‘fallacy’; instead, the selected discourses will have their essential aspects discussed either by explaining unclear parts or by contrasting such statements to other textual (or visual) discursive constructions. What Fairclough (1992) calls ‘manifest intertextuality’ or ‘interdiscursivity’ where “specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text” (p.117) will be detailed in the methodological chapter; **ii**) the book seeks to reveal possible new understanding(s), meaning(s) and practices that have re-oriented the relation between humans and nature through collaborative models and strategies.

That is, the investigation presented in this book searches for new discursive constructions that have advanced the career (institutionalisation) of ‘ecotourism’ as a ‘nature tourism activity’ managed by multi-stakeholders with a consensual realisation of what nature is (Jamal, Borges and Stronza 2006). The ideological driver that led me to split the book into two distinct but complementary parts is that the problematic and contentious issues in implementing (eco)tourism demand an in-depth investigation on collaborative schemes and partnerships. Without dialogue and consensus, ‘reality’ in (eco)tourism becomes distorted for the stakeholders.

Thus, it is argued that ‘discourse negotiation’ offers a chance for stakeholders to decide what truth exists for them in a specific context; and this communal reading on local reality can advantageously govern actions and the establishment of rules for better management of conflicts in nature tourism activities. To communicate my views and interpretation on the theme, I have written in the first person rather than tried to camouflage them by using ‘impersonal devices and style’. I have sometimes used the impersonal passive voice to avoid excessive repetitions of the first person.

Following this introduction, **Chapter two** deals with pertinent theories, approaches and concepts for the topic. This chapter discusses issues of power and of ecotourism using ‘social constructionism’ and ‘collaboration theory’. These two theories provide the ideological, epistemological and ontological grounds for the research. Social constructionism sheds light on the ‘discursive fabrication of nature’, ‘reality’ and ‘relativism’ as well as language for social control. Gray’s (1985, 1989) and Selin and Chavez’ (1995) approaches to collaboration and partnerships are used to explain the interactive processes among stakeholders in ecotourism. Collaboration theory is understood much more as a conceptual approach than a theory; it contains frameworks and guidelines that help grasp the ‘advantages’ and ‘drawbacks’ that pervade the social and business networks in (eco)tourism development.

**Chapter three** justifies the research methodology, methods and tools. It describes the set of procedural steps undertaken to achieve the goals of the research and study. The chapter underlines the appropriateness, reliability and validity of the research process and techniques used. Pertinent aspects about triangulation, case studies and the interviewing process are explained. I discuss critical discourse analysis (CDA) procedural methods and introduce a new approach: Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis or CCDA (refer to Chapter 3, section 3.5.2). This approach provides tools

and frameworks to examine the power of language and interactive meaning creation in (eco)tourism.

**Chapter four** identifies key discourses that are characterised by distortions, contradictions and/or hidden messages. They are discourses that reflect the views and positions of certain individuals and groups about (eco)tourism and correlated subjects. The chapter takes a holistic approach and interrogates various claims and concepts. It is an analysis, in the broad sense, focusing on various competing discourses constructed by stakeholders, the media and scholars in Brazil with Itacaré and *Silves* cases in the spotlight.

**Chapter five** tracks the same issues as mentioned in Chapter four but with a focus on New Zealand. The chapter pinpoints the competing discourses in New Zealand related to (eco)tourism (i.e. 100% Pure) and environmental sustainability. The objective of the chapter is to show that language use is not neutral; the various socially constructed perspectives diffuse meanings and messages that may not mirror mainstream understanding of (eco)tourism.

**Chapter six** analyzes collaboration and partnership in (eco)tourism in Brazil. For the investigation the Itacaré community case was chosen. Attention is given to the interactive role of the stakeholders. The chapter seeks to understand ‘how’ the local actors deal with issues of power embedded in the discourses and rhetorics. The importance of a ‘public, independent and participatory council’ for consensus building is investigated. The Itacaré case is approached as an evolving model for conflict resolution in (eco)tourism.

**Chapter seven** continues my investigation on collaborative schemes but focused on New Zealand. This chapter pays attention to networks and collaboration within the perspective of a small-scale tourism business, Kuaka NZ Education Travel. The aim is to know ‘how’ Kuaka NZ interacts with its various stakeholders locally and internationally in the way it reproduces, refutes and/or creates new perspectives and meanings for (eco)tourism development in the Bay of Plenty. Moreover, the current environmental legislation in New Zealand and the role of the Department of Conservation (DOC) are discussed. Part of the investigation includes knowing whether this normative material shapes the practices of the businesses towards a more ‘environmentally consistent’ nature tourism’. Some concepts such as ‘social and environmental business responsibility’, ‘learning destination’ and ‘learning organisation’ are applied to the Kuaka NZ case.

**Chapter eight** is the conclusion. In this last part of the book, the theoretical and conceptual approaches are succinctly revised and respectively applied to the cases. Key findings in the previous chapters are expected to respond in part or totally to the

major research question. Recommendations for further research on discursive aspects of (eco)tourism are provided.

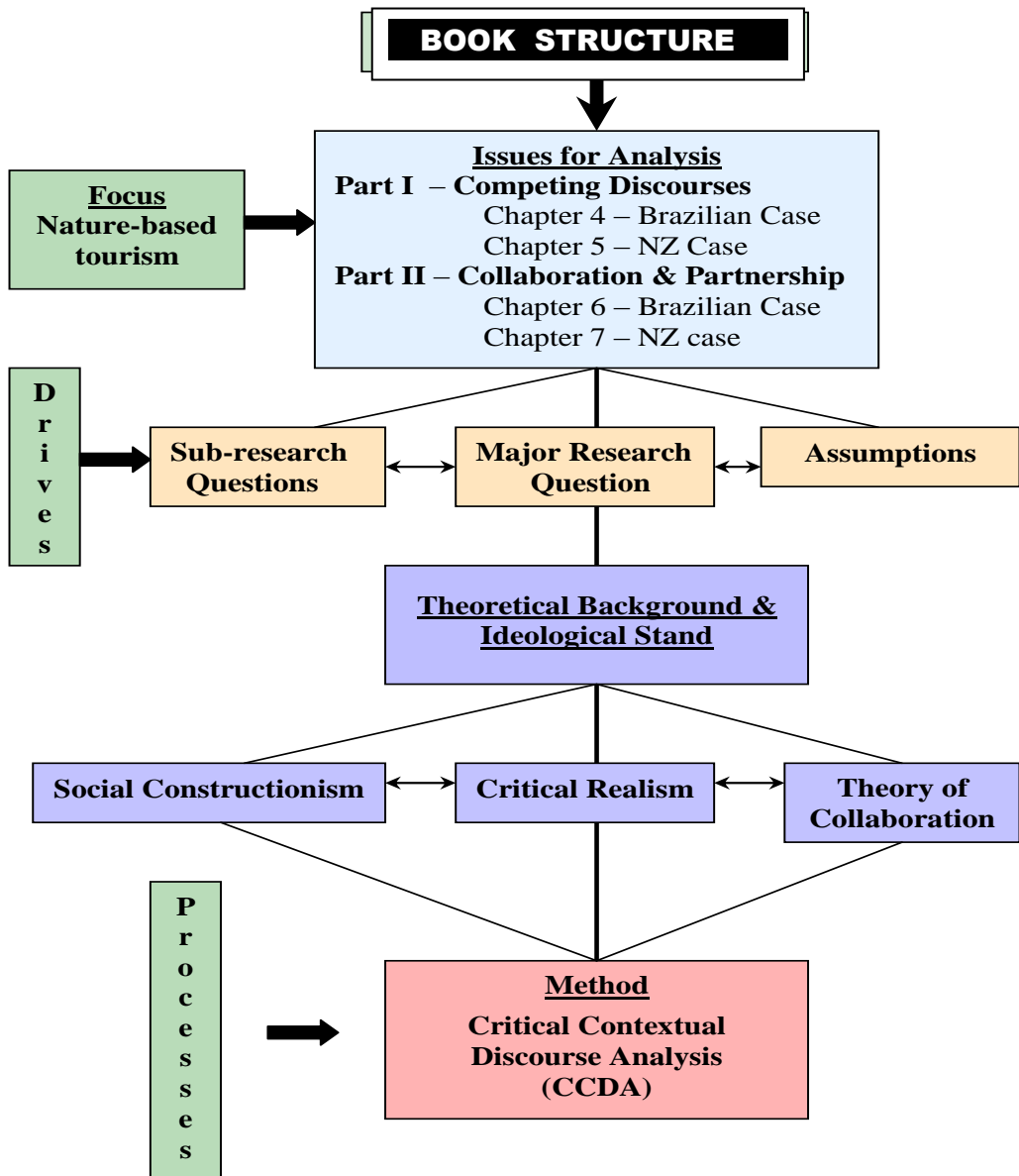
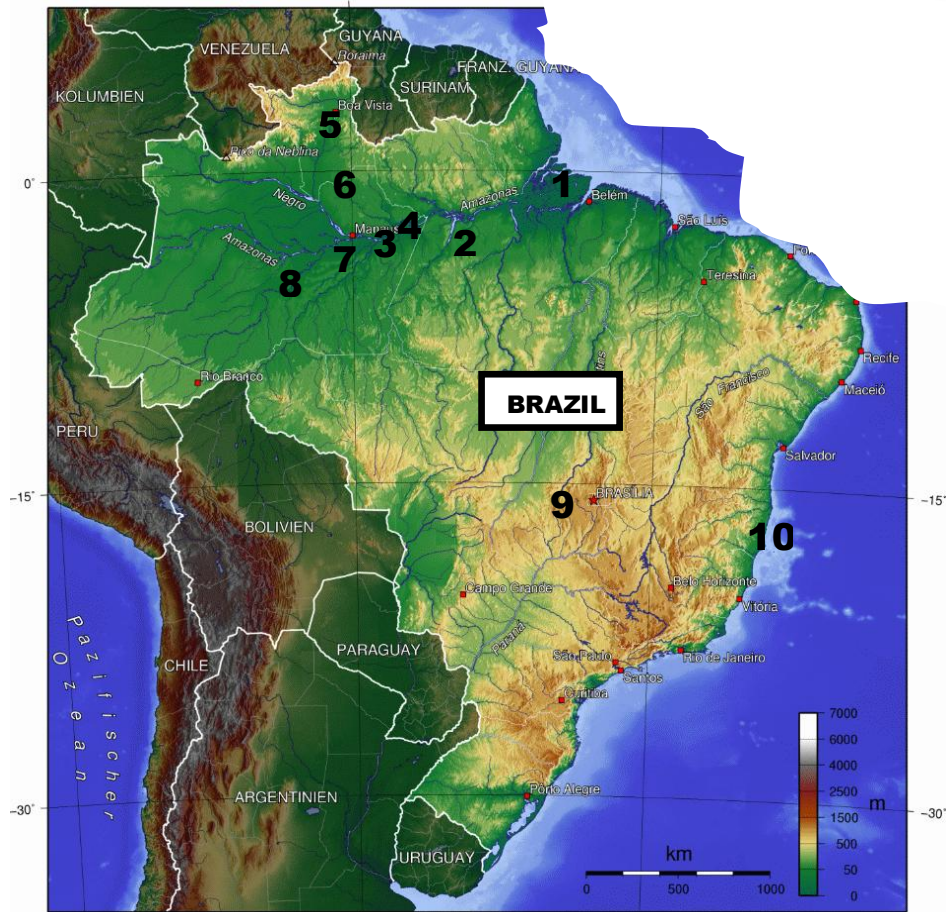


Figure 1.2 - Conceptual and theoretical structure outline of the book

The following figures Figure 1.3. illustrates the main structure of the book as a reasoning and analysis process in contribution to the literature on ecotourism. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the sites of fieldwork in Brazil and in New Zealand.

## BRAZIL: FIELDWORK SITES



Source: Author 2008, adapted from online map

1. Marajó Island (Pará State);
2. Santarém, Maripá, Maguari and Jamaraquá (Pará State);
3. Novo Airão (Pará State);
4. Silves/ASPAC (Amazonas State);
5. Boa Vista (Roraima State);
6. Presidente Figueiredo (Amazonas States);
7. Manaus, Januárlândia and Novo Airão (Amazonas State);
8. Mamirauá Reserve (IDSMS)



# NEW ZEALAND: FIELDWORK SITES

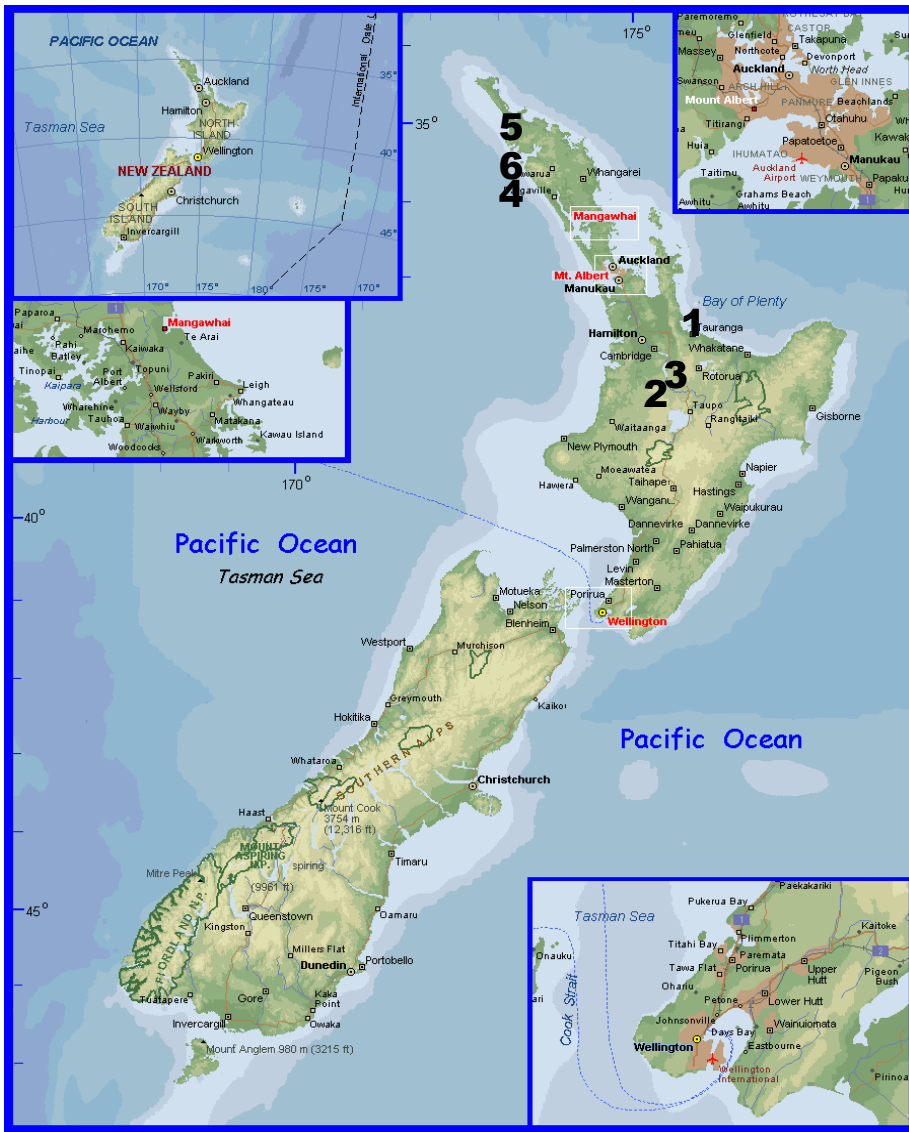


Fig. 1.4

Source: Author 2008, adapted from the internet

- 1 Kuaka NZ Education Travel & Action Stations (Bay of Plenty)
- 2 Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Walking Legend, Rotorua &
- 3 Maungatautari (Bay of Plenty)
- 4 Trounson Park, Kauri Reserve (Far Northland)
- 5 Fullers (Bay of Islands)
- 6 Wairere Boulders, Giant Dunes, Kaitia (Far Northland)

## *Chapter Two*

### **Issues of Theories**

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#### **2.0 - Introduction**

This chapter is about the theoretical insights that will help to explain discourses in (eco)tourism. As mentioned, the book has two major parts under investigation: ‘competing discourses’ and ‘collaboration’, to avoid obscuring the topic. The guiding theories and concepts are ‘social constructionism’, ‘critical realism’ and ‘theory of collaboration’. In the analytical chapters on collaboration, Chapters 6 and 7, the theory of collaboration prevails, but ‘social constructionism’ is an implied element all the way through. In the first part of the book, I will first introduce the main conceptual understandings about the discursive construction of reality, meanings of nature and human impacts on the environment. The second part will be devoted to social constructionism, and the third part will discuss theories of collaboration.

#### **Part I**

#### **2.1 - Environmental crisis and the value for nature**

This section discusses the environmental crisis, the materiality of human essence and value of nature in which ecotourism is positioned. The environmental crisis is rooted in the existing dilemmas that position human demands and nature preservation on opposite sides. Ecotourism is embedded in this crisis, and is recurrently proposed as a solution for part of it.

The environmental crisis is above all a crisis of human misperception of values of nature. It is a crisis of misconceiving the attributes of natural resources. This appears in the immediate materialism that eclipses the real worth and wonder of our natural living system(s). In a more epistemological approach one can query, “how we can know what nature really is” (Hajer 1997: 16). The environmental crisis has become a matter of whether or not to act for its worst or for its best turns. Ecotourism is definitely not the “magic potion” for solving this crisis, but its welfare theory lures the nature aficionados because it takes into consideration the depth and richness of the more-than-human world.

Holzapfel (2003) underlined the importance of understanding the essence of the human being as a precondition towards understanding human behaviour in the ecotourism context and debate: “human agency is viewed as a rogue or chaos maker,

altering the system's coevolutionary and cooperative dynamics [Chaoplexity theory]" (p.47). He expands this view by adding the existentialist approach of Sartre (1969) which states that humans are free to choose, moved by self morality and self personalised values that determine the feelings of responsibility and of accountability toward each living specie.

Defenders of economic growth and nature transformation such as dominant groups and leading nations prefer to work on the challenges to manage the chaos rather than to choose precautionary and rational 'boulevards' to avoid it. Reading on environmental ethics and environmental philosophy will shed light on the voids of the eco-anthropological dilemmas (Beaumont 2001; Holden 2003). Human conduct and law has been one stem of ethics which can be directly applied to tourism as well it has become a topic for research due to the proof of environmental changes caused by human agency (Rolston 1992; Vardy and Grosch 1999).

From the outset, I argue that to understand the environmental crisis and the career of ecotourism, it is first central to understand the values humans place on the surrounding world and the way they interact with it, and with each other.

### **2.1.1 - Intrinsic versus instrumental values for nature**

Nature is what humans say it is, and becomes what humans make of it. Rolston (1998) argues that values are objective in nature, and underlines that "any object, whatever it may be, acquires value when any interest, whatever it be, is taken in it" (p.71).

Rolston takes an epistemological approach questioning 'how we know what we know' when assessing the values in nature. For him, values themselves exist because of human responses to the surrounding world, so "world building does go on in the mind of the beholder" (p.74). Value, in a different way to other natural properties, lies absolutely in one's mind as part of a mental state rather than an event situated in space-time (Rolston 1998), "yet the evolving mind is also controlled by the matter it seeks to investigate" (p.75).

Some values are taken commonsensical – which are not just the result of one's perception – are rooted in culture everywhere. People's understanding about nature evolved from experiencing nature as a utilitarian resource. Communal experiences, resulting from individuals interacting with nature, have set patterns for values on nature.

Before the manifestation of ecology as a distinct discipline, landscape was perceived as a collection of live and inanimate objects, "a plurality of separate individuals" but such a notion has changed; ecology has revealed that nature is a complexity of articulations, and they together form an integrated biophysical unit (Callicott 1998: 57). Through the scientific lenses, culture and experiences together have produced the meanings of nature by praising it based on its "instrumental values" (Vilkka 1997; Rolston 1998).

According to Vikka, "an instrumental-value view is the sufficient reasonable ground for nature conservation" (1997: 9). For example, photosynthesis – following

advances of science – gained new dimensions particularly in the face of deforestation, greenhouse effect(s) and global warming. From this perspective, the individual understands that ‘trees’ have a function for human and non-human survival, and for this single reason, their existence has intrinsic value.

Partridge (1998) challenges Rolston (1998) with his standpoint that nature has an objective value, and argues that “values” for nature are not aside from existing evaluators (p.81). Clearly, one must determine what is the worth and wonder of nature. There are important aspects raised about environmental ethics by questions such as, “what shall we do with regard to nature?” (Schweitzer 1998: 86), which deals with issues of ‘true morality’ and nihilism, in a sense that ‘sustainability’ permeates all spheres of public decision; there has been a “fusion of politics and life in the modern world...a new form of power which Foucault calls biopower” (Ojakangas 1997: 178). As a sole concept, Foucault (1982) explains power as the interventions of certain actions over the field of other possible actions. Nihilism and true morality are indeed an ontological discussion, and I do prefer to move to the question of ‘what is ethics’, which I consider more relevant at this stage.

Schweitzer (1998) explains that ethics consist “of practising the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live”, as one does toward oneself (p.93); the human being is ethical when s/he helps all life which s/he is able to help, “and when s/he goes out of the way to avoid injuring anything living” (p.94). Schweitzer (1998) provides further leads when he affirms that ethics is “responsibility with regard to everything that has life...ethics as self-devotion for the sake of life, motivated by reverence” (p.94).

Taylor (1998) establishes environmental ethics as a life-centred system through which human beings are understood to be “no more intrinsically valuable than any other living thing but should see themselves as equal members of Earth’s community” (p. 98), that is, human beings are “plain members and citizens of the biotic community” (Leopold 1998: 117).

As a solution for environmental impacts, Beaumont (2001) and Holden (2003) claim that ecotourism can be an avenue for a desirable conservation ethic; there needs a new environmental ethics for tourism. They are concerned with human treatment of wild organisms, species populations, and communities of life as they occur in earth’s natural ecosystems. However, Vilka (1997) shows scepticism about the idea of a ‘community earth’, “human relations to nature are technical, industrial, or commercial. The non-human world has only monetary value” (p. 9). Weston adds: “western culture is ecologically destructive in its dominant forms” because it is essentially human-centred (1999: 69).

Elliot (1997) demonstrates that wild nature has intrinsic value, and humans have a mission to preserve and restore it. For him, intrinsic value is “nature’s value apart from satisfying human interests or even the interests of sentient creatures” (Elliot 1997: 27). Intrinsic value for natural habitats is a view that clashes with the commercial value given for nature, and it certainly contrasts with Rolston’s approaches to anthropocentric values (p.27).

‘Intrinsic value’ means that any living being of the Earth’s community - without distinguishing the type of entity it is – has value because it merely exists (Bonnet 2003, Taylor 1998), and this perception should back views and actions of the global communities; the approach inherently nurtures the philosophy of sustainability (Taylor 1998). The principle of rational human agency - as moral and self-governing agents – demands the application of moral decisions in relation to the natural world.

In contemporary democratic societies, an ‘egalitarian stand’ is still missing for a balance between humans and the importance of other living beings, “there is as yet no ethics dealing with man’s (sic!) relation to land, to the animals and plants which grow upon it” (Leopold 1998: 117). Environmentalists frequently claim for environmental protection of the wilderness moved by claims of ‘intrinsic value’ of nature (Nunez 1999: 105).

The intrinsic value of a forest is that it exists for its own sake, and its ‘instrumental value’ refers to the absolute certainty that the forests will continue to exist providing ‘ecosystem services’ such as photosynthesis (Moore 1963; Elliot 1997; Vikka 1997). Another example is the intrinsic value of ecotourism with its premises that attempt to keep under control the impacts of outsiders in green areas; and its instrumental value refers to the feelings that a fair trade-off between humans and nature is achievable. Intrinsic value and instrumental value complement each other.

Taking into account the current levels of deforestation and the theorisation over ‘ecological restoration’, the understanding is that ‘intrinsic value of nature’ is a truth, and the most obvious evidence is that humans have not been able to replicate the ecosystems in their plenitude and complexity. Only nature is able to reproduce itself. Whatever belongs to a process of natural creation that humans cannot replicate, has intrinsic value.

That is the wonder about nature, humans can indeed fabricate it through discourses or through defective replicas (i.e. reforestation). Nature can be duplicated through pictures and video but humans will never build perfect ecosystems. In terms of ecotourism, the existence of nature in its natural estate becomes an intrinsic value converted into ‘economic dividends’. That is, the unspoiled green and blue outdoors are the “bonds” that attract visitors and their money.

Gruen (2002) argues for a further development of the ideas on intrinsic value of nature; for her, there should be intermediate values to be applied to natural spaces. She claims that the ‘intermediate valuations’ – situated between intrinsic and instrumental values – have been overlooked by environmental philosophers. According to her, ‘intrinsic’ is a word that brings bewilderment and should be abandoned, and attention should be only paid to the concept of ‘environmental ethics’.

The following extract can be an example of ‘intermediate valuations’ for nature in which ‘scrub’ is assigned different values from ‘plague’ to ‘beneficial’ as well as strategic (to avoid slides). ‘Mediate valuation’ is then a holistic understanding of the usefulness of nature and how nature serves human beings beyond economic reasoning.

Throughout history, societies have been overly anthropocentric. Many people do not realise that other species have the same rights to occupy the same space as humans. This anthropocentric position colludes to create the means and belief in an inherent human supremacy over other species setting them as object(s) of exploitation and abuses. Those moved by such a view have the feeling of belonging to a higher class of entities disregarding completely their position as just one more social construction, since they are but one specie among thousands. This is a millennial view.

In ancient Greece, humans had already been conceived as superior, “with a kind of worth greater than that of any non rational humans regarding capacities for systematic actions” (Taylor 1998: 108).

Who cares about the scrub? Scrub has long been thought of as weedy wasteland, suitable only for clearing... Today we know that native scrub – short, dense vegetation made up of shrubs, ferns, and young trees – has lots of values. These values include providing habitat for many threatened species such as kiwi, a nursery for native forest and a good cover for steep unstable hillsides”... “clearing any type of vegetation may require a consent. If you’re planning to clear any native forest or scrub, check the rules with your local and regional council (EnviroCare, *Issue 42, Summer 2005, p. 6*).

This leads us to reflect about the real meaning of how ‘intrinsic value of nature’ matters for our civilizations<sup>5</sup>, questioning the overwhelming pace of natural space transformation for servicing the demands of a capitalist driven system. In this sense, intrinsic and instrumental values of nature are in conflict with the ‘commercial value’ of nature; there are ecocentric and anthropocentric positions (refer to Table 2.0).

Holden (2003), while evaluating actions of tourism stakeholders towards nature within the concept of environmental ethics, found that the majority of stakeholders “now pursue an ethic of conservation vis-à-vis an instrumental use of nature...but [with] little desire for a further shift to a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic” (p.94). They mirror an ideological extension, ingrained in different orientations people have as ‘idealist’ or ‘materialist’ and/or ‘human Chauvinist’ or ‘*ecocentrist*’.

There are always examples of these dualities and divides in our society. Maybe humans need a new enlightenment that would encourage different perceptions on how to get along with nature without killing it. Hence, maybe, it is time to break down old values and search for new ones, calling for the review of norms that are backed by the morals and ethics of the 60s.

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Civilisations’ is borrowed from *Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington (1998).

**Table 2.0 - Definitions of two opposing paradigms to environmental valu**

<b>Ecocentric/ biocentric Philosophy</b>	Philosophy that all things in the biosphere have an equal intrinsic value and an equal right to exist. Advocate practice of little intervention, placement of high values on natural resources, no use or responsible use and very small numbers of tourists. Measures of natural value related to undisturbedness, naturalness and completeness. Ecocentric philosophy complies with preservationist view of resource protection
<b>Anthropocentric Philosophy</b>	Dominant philosophy of the Western world. Implies that nature can be conceived only from the perspective of human values. Humankind determines the form and function of nature within human societies. Anthropocentric philosophy may support views of conservation or exploitation, intervention in the management of nature and high levels of access to natural areas.
<b>Source:</b> Fennell 1999, p. 252-254.	

### 2.1.2 - Human detachment from nature

This disengagement of humans relative to nature can be observed in present-day events, even the most trivial ones. In a children’s game in which they had to identify ‘metal’, ‘wood’, and ‘plastic’ items indoors, I was surprised by their perception and notions of what in fact a ‘table’ is.

The children, all six years old, knew that the table was made of wood; some knew that wood comes from trees; but amazingly no child perceived that the table was indeed a dead tree. The word ‘dead’ was not part of their cognitive understanding of table.

Part of this disconnection from the natural world probably resides in the fact that children (and adults) get used to a “manufactured nature”, with its original forms, shapes and sizes modified. Nature transformation may cause people to mislay their sensitiveness for other living-beings. What is a tree? What does a tree mean? What is its value other than commercial? Most of the deforestation in Amazonia probably has its innermost reasons in this human detachment from nature (see Sewall 1995).

Environmental ethics and environmental critical thinking are disciplines and methods that contribute to a process of nature awareness building, for which I advocate ‘social metanoia’. The term ‘metanoia’ can be regarded as a new way of understanding the surrounding world. Environmental education and environmental interpretation - introducing the functions and importance of ecosystems - are for instance one of the means to cognitively reunite humans and nature.

Educational nature tourism can contribute largely to seed the notions of moral and ethical conservation; advocates of ecotourism claim that environmental education fosters “awareness and understanding of natural environments and consequently promotes pro-environment and responsible environmental behaviour” (Beaumont 2001: 317).

The critique on human Chauvinism (Elliot 1997; Whiteside 2002) holds that absolute environmental justice includes all living beings, not only humans, in the equation for welfare; “it is arbitrary and unjust to exclude non-human species from moral consideration when it is clear that they can be harmed from human actions” (Keil et al. 1998; Singer 1998). Extremes in manufacturing nature, the complete commoditisation of the natural world, may be legal but they are not ethically moral (Hajer 1997).

Without doubt, “the relationship between nature and society is, in a word, dialectical” (Neumann 2005: 9). Historically it is recognised that all civilisations and societies have had their fractional contribution to the current developing environmental chaos.

The environmental crisis had been mentioned and theorised by Roman, Arab Muslim, and Greek scholars who had, in their time, predicted and alerted mankind to the limits of our habitable planet. Some of these scholars have mapped geography as a discipline that bridges the imaginary and real world, giving contours to cultural geographies (Neumann 2005: 15).

Culture is therefore approached as being inherently the result of groups of people choosing to repeat actions and perpetuate mainstream thoughts, taken as moral and ethically correct in their time and beyond. They then become a legacy. However, tradition is not always moral; it does not always encompass the ethically correct, particularly in relation to predatory relations towards the environment. Cultural geography epistemologically seeks to explain the cultural practices that have inadvertently disrupted the Earth’s natural geographies.

The geographer Clarence Glacken (1967), identified sequences of time “from the ancients to the moderns” in which western culture changed its perception and ideas of nature (Cater 2007): the Earth as a designed creation; climate as an influential factor of the human character and culture; and the ways people chose to alter pristine lands. Humans and the transformation of natural spaces are intriguing subjects that “structure the development of modern geographic thought” (Neumann 2005: 15-16). Human geography can steer the debate on anthropocentrism, moving it from a human-centred discussion to approaches on animal rights and environmental ethics (Singer 1998; Warren 1998).

The realisation of a finite nature proceeds in part from the ideas of Thomas Malthus (1766-1834). The 60s and 70s were the decades for spreading the seeds of critical environmental thinking. All the writings and ideas on ecology, development and nature of this time were mostly influenced by the neo-Malthusian thought which set population growth as the major and sole cause of environmental degradation (Adams 2001; Neumann 2005).

Hallmarks of this period were the works of Hardin (1968), Ehrlich (1968), Club of Rome (1972), and Schumacher (1973). In 1962, Rachel Carson denounced the use of chemicals on farm, and alerted authorities and common people to the risks they pose (Carson 1971, p.23). All these writings questioned and broke with the conformism, compliances and connivances of the world – mainly the well-off western



nations, holders of industries or of embryonic industrial sectors promising affluence through expansionary nature predator capitalism, and underlined, again, the risks of demographic explosion and Earth's capacity for it.

Hardin (1968), drawing on the ideas of the economist William Foster Lloyd (1794-1852), defended coercive state interventions over communal properties as the means to promote the best management of resources. Privatisation of resources would provide the avenues for rational management practices (Neumann 2005: 27). This view contradicted evidence that 'communal farming' did not cause more impacts on nature than 'commercial farming' (Stott and Sullivan 2000). His arguments contradicted the positive outcomes reached through collective management of land, and the weight of the involvement of some communities in collective nature-based ventures (i.e. ecotourism).

It seems that Hardin's comments were actually misinterpreted by some academics. *Tragedy of the Commons* is a metaphor, and the word 'tragedy' should not be taken literally, because metaphors are "powerful expansion of word meaning" (Le 2005: 335); their meanings must be contextualised.

Certainly, it is not only regulation over communal or private land that matters in terms of environmental impact, but the attachment to that land, the sensitiveness for nature and the awareness of its intrinsic values. Such subjective aspects can make a difference, just as individuals make good or bad choices in resource management. For example, in terms of resources management, rather than using slash-and-burn practices randomly, farmers can be selective as to which areas of bush to clear. This choice would provide natural habitats for certain animals. Moreover, preserved "green islands" can be transformed into areas for nature contemplation.

If one acknowledges that nature has a value in itself, one will surely look for ways to impact it less. Feelings of belonging and environmental awareness are processes through which humans perceive nature beyond its instrumental and commercial values. These notions operate changes in human thinking pushing them into a critical review of 'actions and effects' that benefit the natural environment.

However, it is important to highlight that land under protection status holds legal apparatus for its conservation, which can augment the scope of conservation through attachment to that land. In essence attachment and protection by law, together, mediate the rationality in people's mind at the moment of transforming or impacting pristine areas. This logic works the same for tourism activities driving them into more nature-oriented ventures under the label of sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

What matters first, a human-centred or nature-centred system for managing the Earth's resources? Whiteside (2002) talks about ecological intersections for valuing nature; he mentions the notion of an anthropocentric ecologism, which would determine "only how much of nature will be allowed to exist as a function of our best understanding of human interests" (Whiteside 2002: 45), a sort of previous notion of ecological footprint. This notion is close enough to those of ecological modernisation

and ecodevelopment that promote equilibrium between human demands and the need to have nature as a preserved capital.

Anthropocentric ecologism is compatible with the opinion of environmental economists that propose eco-efficiency in nature. Hawken, Lovins and Lovins (1999) claim too that the next industrial revolution will be one based on *Natural Capitalism*. All these thinkers seem not to disregard the intrinsic value of nature but centre ecological economic aspects over the importance of intact ecosystems.

Habermas claims that contemporary capitalism is characterized by a degree of ‘colonisation’ of people’s lives by ‘systems’ that have reached crisis proportions. The ‘systems’ are money and power – or the economy, and the state and institutions. On the one hand, in the form of consumerism, the economy and the commodity market have a massive and unremitting influence upon various aspects of life, most obviously through the medium of television and advertising. On the other hand, unprecedented state and institutional control (specifically by public institutions) is exercised over individuals through various forms of bureaucracy (Fairclough 1989: 197).

Restoration of nature was convincingly proposed in *Faking Nature* based on the assumption that “wild nature has a value-adding feature” (Elliot 1997: preface vii). This understanding meets my own positionality that the future of worldwide economies rests on applying a mix of improved technologies with the reconstruction of altered spaces.

As historically noticed, technology not always advances at the same pace as the manufacturing of natural spaces, but it can be used to mitigate the impacts of such human intervention. The former is always a step behind the current needs of the civilization or inaccessible to most countries, which contributes to the chaotic dimensions of the environmental crisis.

Pristine nature is a shrinking event with intense capitalist claims and settlement demands for what is behind its boundaries. At any given moment, under the risk of cataclysms and energy predicaments on Earth, it may not be a hyperbole to predict that governments and society will finally rethink human-nature relations, looking for a just value for nature; or, will realise the real costs of the environmental degradation caused by industrial production.

Within this context, ecotourism has been championed because it becomes a type of vanguard instrument against nature depletion. However, against ecotourism are its limited economic returns as compared to other industrial activities. The extreme need for preserving natural areas would dictate new governing rules founded in the premise that development frontiers should not move forwards, destroying the ‘remaining green islands’ of many nations. This situation would make clear that there are incontestable limits to growth, breaking out with the mainstream thinking that development is the transformation of natural resources. This is not an anti-development theory but the conviction that restoration of already-impacted areas will become imperative.

The capitalist frontier – in its versions of soy bean farming and extensive cattle breeding, mainly over forest areas, as in Amazonia – must retreat. For those zones

already depleted, mitigation should probably come with the ‘reinstallation’ of fauna and flora.

As underlined by Kellner (1992), “the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) seeks to discover ‘why humanity, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism’” (p.85). ‘Savagery’ is manifested in discourses that seek to manipulate people’s mind by joining “science and scientific thought into the apparatus of the current systems of domination, fascist and capitalist” (Kellner 1992: 85). These are the reasons why Horkheimer and Adorno disbelieve the scientific disciplinary circles and look for truths in critical philosophy.

Without debunking the radical turn of Adorno and Horkheimer, and making use of critical realism (or transcendental realism), I still put forward the proposal that erudite mastery intersections in the domains of environmental ethics, political ecology and environmental economics may become an avenue for a new existential ethos.

However, the grand turn will not take place with inquisitions on what is legal or legitimate; the big shift will not occur over regulatory or judicial re-examination. Changes should not be the product of intimidation, of the sequestration of freedom; the need for welfare ecology does not give grounds for *ecoterrorism*, a term believed coined by Arnold (1997).

In fact, violent acts in the name of environmentalism are a setback to be utterly repudiated; instead, the domination system and its distorted discourses should be astutely exposed, bringing people to terms with what reality should be. As Hajer (2005) highlights, “talking Green” no longer has any direct links to any form of radicalism such as happened in the 1980s; nowadays, ‘greentalk’ connotes ideas of a global environmental crisis, with appeals for collective actions and the sharing of values. Hajer (1997) adds that reality is always particular - following *Lacanian* views that knowledge of nature is only metaphorically represented – “it is always dependent on subject-specific framing or time-and-place specific discourses that guide our perceptions of what is the case” (p.17).

The raising of awareness cemented by ethics and morals is the lead-in to the shifts; and this is to be followed by reviews of the role of the state and of regulations. Whatever the state of affairs may be, humans must have freedom of choice and, most importantly, must be aware of all possible choices.

The environmental crisis is in part a crisis of humans not conforming to ethical standards. First, environmental ethics is a nature-centred philosophy that argues that humans should rate the surrounding world beyond themselves, clearly, beyond human terms. However, human reason is betrayed by selfishness. Human reference points are somehow tightly tied to particular interests. They carry the ‘illnesses of bias’ that favour the individual at the expense of the whole. This is an innate aspect of humans that thinkers have observed and reasoned about through time; Aristotle asserted that humans are “greedy and cowardly”, and when they hold power to deliberately act - above the law of justice - they become “the worst of animals” (Campbell 1981: 56).

The search for pleasure, the pride of power over others and the obsession for limitless acquisition transformed humans into highly consumerist beings (Winter 2007;

Flew 1985; Giddens 1994). For tourism, the destinations are ‘commodities’; they become “regulated and often highly commodified spaces” (Hall 2007a: 26). Under this scenario, ecotourism should not then be imposed but constructed from the bottom up with gains and losses negotiated and managed locally among stakeholders; they should have ownership of ecotourism ventures and of their fates, adjusting it to their needs but moved by conservationist drives. It cannot be a practice that runs down the natural outdoors.

According to Donnelly and Bishop (2007), reasoning is constituted by deliberative qualities; it splits into ‘practical reason’ – through which humans control impulses –, and ‘theoretical reason’ inferring that humans systematically think, prized with the gift of contemplation (Campbell 1981), and are wilful in their actions, practicing “freedom of the will” (Searle 2001:13). Humans mostly act by planning in advance, and “by nature...compelled to question the acts they perform” (Donnelly and Bishop 2007: 89). Inquiries into the anthropogenic environmental problems lead us to question the reasoning that humans use towards biophysical areas.

In the words of Weston (1999), “the environmental crisis is a crisis of the senses, of imagination, and of our tools for thinking – our concepts and theories – themselves”, the environmental crisis is thus beyond recycling, public policy and ecology (Preface, vii). It is first a crisis of perception and of judicious thinking rather than a crisis rooted in the prevalence of an iniquitous system, which triumphs because the lack of critical inquiries colludes with it. According to Horkheimer and Adorno,

...traditional and contemporary modes of thought and writing have become absorbed into the present system of administration and domination, and that new modes of radical thought, writing and critique are therefore required” (as quoted in Kellner 1992: 86).

They also add that positivism - taken as a current dominant form of critical thought – is indeed powerless to provide methods for social theory and critique due to its detailed verification of facts fraught with calculable arithmetic formulas. In their understanding, positivism is so worthless for critical thinking that, if applied to it, contributes to the self-destruction of any manifestation of enlightenment (Kellner 1991: 83-87; O’Connor 1994). How can we achieve a desirable level of critique of the existing environmental crisis? How can we translate environmental ethics into practical terms? What are the boundaries for transformation of nature?

The major objective of this study is to capture the meanings given to the relation between nature and society as they are produced on the ground in collaborative schemes as well as the power issues that may facilitate or constrain interactive processes within the realm of tourism. Meanings exist under a set of understandings founded on environmental ethics. As underlined by Holzapfel (2003), given the fact that humans hold competitive and cooperative elements as part of their character trait, a pluralistic moral stance can drive the decision-making processes about what should be right or wrong in ecotourism practice.

Again, the initial steps to unravel meanings, values and consensus for the dilemmas of human interventions, environmental crisis and nature tourism are possible through a textual investigation. According to Hall and Michael (2007), the changing environment of tourism is “bound up in neoliberal policy-making in a variety of ways” (p. 8).

For Coles and Church (2007) the connections between power and tourism reside in the fact that tourism has had a role in governing social life where it is developed (p.2); it has an agenda with political contours empowering and disempowering stakeholders. Tourism studies should be “rewired more extensively into discourses and conceptualisations of power” (Coles and Church 2007: 2). Adorno and Horkheimer noted that the traditional modes of thought and writing are highly influenced by the present system of domination, “tend[ing] towards accommodation to dominant currents of thought” (in Kellner 1992: 85).

The unwrapping of manipulative ploys, tropes, rhetoric, and biased mainstream beliefs can advantageously contribute to the emergence of a genuine revolutionary thinking in the socio-environmental realm.

## Part II

### Theoretical Approaches: Discursive Fabrication of Nature

#### 2.2 - Social constructionism

Social construction theory embraces the idea that all human meaning is created through a process of social interaction (Gergen 1999), in which “the reality of everyday life is shared with others with individuals apprehending the other by means of typification schemes (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 28, 30). The non-existence of an absolute truth seems to be the (theoretical) foundation of social constructionism (Gergen 1999; Eder 1996). It is a branch in social sciences that finds and shows ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ as problematic.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) classified the social construction of reality as objective and subjective; the former composed by institutionalisation and legitimation processes; and the latter (subjective reality) formed by internalisation, that is, achieved by primary and secondary socialisation of individuals, and by their systematic maintenance and transformation of such reality.

If one looks for arguments for constructionism, metaphors and narratives provide them; constructionism is not separate from language and rhetorical tools, and its arguments are circumscribed by history and culture and used by individuals in their social relationships (Gergen 1999: 228), as “human action... is determined by the world as interpreted through linguistic categories” (Collin 1997: 147). There is then a tacit linguistic knowledge manifested through conventions, “language as an institution”, in which meanings are determined by the beliefs of the entire community

rather than by individuals alone (Collin 1997: 214, 215). Reality becomes meaningful to individuals in the way they interpret it (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 18).

Essentially, social constructionism theory seeks to explain the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalised and assimilated by human beings, and the role of language and interaction in the whole process. It explains the social construction of reality as the direct effect of humans' action, their knowledge and their interpretation of it (Turner 1996). Reality is then what people think it is. Under this theoretical approach, knowledge originates from social interaction and is completely rooted in narrative and conversation.

However, Gergen (1999) claims that "if the meaning of our world is generated through the way we use words together, what is this saying about the nature of truth?" (p.35). In other words, knowledge is ingrained in discourse and dialogue. According to Wittgenstein (1980), humans' interaction through language is the cornerstone for creating meaning. Constructionism advocates that any form of communication involves the "contextually contingent" - that is, the social fabrication of 'truths' (Willmott 1994: 3).

All the objects of our consciousness, every 'thing' we think of or talk about, including our identities, our selves, is constructed through language, manufactured out of discourses. Nothing has any essential, independent existence outside of language; discourse is all there is...and provides a frame of reference, a way of interpreting the world and giving it meaning that allows some objects to take shape (Burr 2003: 105).

The discussion is over the existence of a real world and how this real world can be revealed to humans. Is the 'real world' just a by-product of humans, discursively fabricated within a certain culture, views and background? Is there a 'real world' outside discourse? Is the real world the one circumscribed by the application of logical, systematic and objective methods of investigation? Comte stated that the only authentic knowledge and understanding evolve from affirmative positions of theories tested by a strict scientific process.

Social constructionism is a critique of realist thinkers; those who follow the empiricist approaches of John Locke and Francis Bacon. For these philosophers, one's mind at birth is somehow a blank slate, a "*tabula rasa*" (Gergen 1999: 10) which gains knowledge through one's experience with the world. It encompasses complex thinking and subjective views.

Other famous empiricists are Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, David Hume and Bishop Berkeley. They advocate that scientific knowledge is acquired through experimental arrangements that require logical method, theories and pertinent hypotheses; all tested against the real world in the search for truths. Observation of the natural world guides individuals for the understanding of existing phenomena. Social constructionism is an invitation to take a critical position on "conventional knowledge as based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world" (Burr 2003: 3); it is clearly

in opposition to what the positivist and empiricist sides in the traditional science propound.

Because of dogmatic, rational and assertive views of science, constructionists also have queries with another school of epistemology, called rationalism. For rationalists – from Plato to present-day cognitive psychologists – knowledge is framed by mental processes and as the result of an indirect learning of the world. Rationalists advocate the position that the world does not generate our perceptions; instead, the human mind creates concepts that coordinate our perceptions of the world (Gergen 1994).

What is in discussion here is ‘the nature of knowledge’, and how people understand the world and its phenomena. Each person sees the world differently because of his/her cultural and educational background, experience in life and because concepts are not similarly produced. These theoretical approaches and studies have not been able to solve the problem of the nature of knowledge. Social constructionism is thus presented to shed light on how the sense and logic of the world is discursively constructed,

Social constructionism seems to lead to the claim that nothing exists except as it exists in discourse, i.e. the only reality that things have is the reality they are given in the symbolic realm of language, that ‘there is nothing outside of the text’ (Derrida 1976: 158, as quoted in Burr 2003: 82).

Constructivists share the common perception that reality is not explained by ontology (the nature of nature, what exists by itself); it is not ontologically created. Physical, biological and social events, including issues of gender and race, are all socially fabricated, and the role of social constructionists is “to suspend the ‘obvious’... [taken for granted discourses], and...listen to alternative framings of reality...with the comparative outcomes of multiple standpoints” (Gergen 1999: 50; Berger and Luckmann 1967). This simplification of complex world events posits constructivists as social reductionists.

Burr (2003) explains that this new theoretical orientation underpins, at varied levels, the different approaches to the study of humans as social animals; social constructionism serves as a structural basis for ‘critical psychology’, ‘discourse analysis’, or ‘poststructuralism’ (p.1). Constructionism puts emphasis upon the “socially constructed aspects of our knowledge”, this includes our understanding of ‘self’ and others (Willmott 1994: 3).

According to Burr (2003) and Gergen (1999), social constructionism is not claiming that language and discourse merely have a strong influence upon our perception of reality. What we know as reality is itself a social construction. It is at this point that some people begin to doubt the social constructionist position (p.80). Human socialisation has been regarded as a process built up into – what Berger and Luckmann (1967) called – *plausibility structures* or, as a second order objectivation of meaning, called *legitimation* (p.92-128).

In Gergen's (1999) words, socialisation through "conceptual understandings of the world and rational supports for these understandings" (p.53), leads humans to initiate a natural process of internalisation of an objective world. Daily language becomes the source for apprehending the objective world and contributes to the ordering of facts to make sense to individual(s), situating them and their role within society and its structures. This applies to (eco)ecotourism development too,

...language of tourism comprises not so much representations as misrepresentations, not formation but deformation, not what the world of the Other is, but what the writer wishes it to be. In short, it is a language that 'consciously contests' the insider's view of the world (Dann 1996: 25).

Reality is not conclusive for social constructionists. Unquestioned definitions and explanations have changed from time to time and depending on circumstances (Gergen 1999: 63). For example, the socially constructed personality of individuals, connecting it to age and phases (childhood, teenage, adulthood, third age) are terms, definitions, and concepts through which various people or states of affairs become framed. Consider then the role of schools, psychological tests, health exams and the way they construct the person, and how "mental illness, mental retardation, and homosexuality" are represented and explained (Gergen 1999: 63-64). 'Wrongs' and 'rights', for human impacts on nature, have been constructed in the same way.

Deforestation may become acceptable for many institutions since it is controlled or monitored deforestation (e.g. forestry, certified timber, etc); if it is selective logging, it is 'correct' (Lima, 2002). Deforestation followed by 'forestry' is also taken as 'acceptable' and promptly proposed as a quick-fix for massive deforestation in Amazonia, even if such homogenous replanting cannot reproduce the exact natural habitat of wild animals and replicate the former ecosystem.

Social constructionism aims to keep people aware of fallacious or manipulative versions of 'taken-for-granted' realities in our society. For example, narratives on ecotourism are investigated and deconstructed within a social context, and to reveal contradictions as well as the various structures that try to legitimate meanings and power relations that privilege one group against the interests of others. That is when 'discourse' and 'contextual' analysis come in line with social constructionism under a critical realist perspective to explain (eco)tourism planning and management and to explain its conflicting and collaborative aspects.

The terms constructivism and constructionism refer to the same theoretical stream, and are often used interchangeably throughout the literature despite some distinction in meaning. For Burr (2003), the essential difference appears in two degrees: the extent to which the person is taken as the agent steering a process of social construction; and the extent to which people are shaped (constructed) by the social forces, structures and social relationships. I prefer to use 'social constructionism'.



Theoretically, there are two major approaches for social constructionism. The first focuses on the micro structures of language that are used in interactions; the second approach focuses on the macro level of the use of linguistic and social structures. Danziger (1997) preferred to distinguish these two approaches of constructionism as 'light' and 'dark'. These words could be used interchangeably with 'strong' and 'weak' constructionism. Burman (1999) correctly emphasised that 'dark' and 'light' may sound pejorative. I will refer to this subdivision as I focus on 'micro' or 'macro' social constructionism.

Micro social constructionism analyses and focuses on the linguistic content of social interactions. Discourses used in human relationships are believed to hold multiple versions of the world (Burr 2003: 21). Micro social constructionists advocate that the real world is that described through language, narratives, discourses, through which the meaning of words gain collective sense. For this reason, humans cannot make "claims about a real world that exists beyond our descriptions of it" (Burr 2003: 21). The most noticeable micro social constructionists have been Kenneth Gergen and John Shotter. Gergen (1999) explains the communal construction of the real world through interactions and discourses as a form of either control or emancipation. Both agree that "constructionism does not in any way disclose that final form of life that we all, as human beings, should live" (Willmott 1994: 53).

Macro social constructionism acknowledges the constructive power of language but sees this as a derived form, or at least related to, material or social structures, social relations and institutionalised practices. It is particularly influenced by the work of Foucault and informs the critical realism of Parker (1992; 1999) and Willig (1999). This approach is used to show how 'science' and 'the individual' have been socially constructed. As cited by Gergen (1999), macro social constructionists such as Hollway, Burman and Ussher are particularly interested to analyse power relations, feminist issues, social imbalances and inequality as well as mental health.

The micro and macro versions of social constructionism should not be mutually exclusive. According to Burr (2003), their synthesis is not that impossible (p.22). Burkitt (1999), Burr (2003), Butt (2000), and Davies and Harré (1990) have taken steps towards these syntheses.

A very pertinent inquiry in this context is if the knowledge of the world does not come from the world as it presents itself to us, where does it derive from? Under the social constructionist gamut, the immediate answer would be that knowledge of the world is fabricated by people and among them (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Gergen 1999).

In her attempt to advance the debate, Burr (2003) explains that social relations become the kernel for social constructionists. Everyday lives are everyday practices through which people share opinions, experiences and versions of life and of the world, constructing shared knowledge. Truth is our understanding of the world along a historic and cultural line in which events and interactions take place.

Reality becomes then, a product of social interactions and processes by people engaging and sharing their views. For people, reality does not come from an objective

observation of the world (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Gergen 1999). This argument is at least polemic pushing us to discuss later the possibility of bringing together, in synthesis, a realistic and relativist position in social constructionism rather than being dogmatic regarding one party. Criticisms appear exactly because of this inflexibility promoted by most constructionists over the issues of 'realism' and 'relativism' for understanding the world the way it is.

Burr (2003) underlines the fact that constructions of the world infer patterns of social action while they exclude others. There are evidently power relations when one constructs a version of the world, representing it from the individual, or from a specific group to the collective. Social construction of the world, of nature, of ecotourism, of nature-society relations has implications for what certain people are allowed to do and for how they treat others. Under the social constructionist belief all knowledge comes from world observation, based on some perspective or other, in the service of certain interests over others (Gergen 1999; Searle 1995) meaning that representation of the real world is biased. It mirrors the shared understanding of a group or person; thus, for social constructionists there is no objective fact.

Actually, since the very beginning of social science, there has been a search for truths, for rationality, for consistent grounds for understanding human nature and society. All these enquiries became the foundation of social science and are far from being satisfactorily answered, and it is uncertain whether they can be answered. When a researcher advances an area of knowledge or fills a disciplinary gap in science, new queries evolve from these advances. Knowledge acquisition is evolving from what humankind adds to it, provoking turns, bringing new possibilities and more reflection on human nature.

Knowledge is something that people do together. For Habermas (1985), it involves communicative action, and modern societies are made pluralistic in the sense that they share and accommodate core and different partial universes, with outright ideological conflicts mitigated by tolerance and cooperation (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 125). In this process, language is essential because it makes society exist "as both objective and subjective reality". This is said to occur within a dialectical transformation ordered by 'externalisation', 'objectivation', and 'internalisation' of events by individuals (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 129).

In brief, social constructionism has been presented as able to patronize, "a multivoiced tradition...with singular positions" and "all giving rise to their own situated knowledges" (Willmott 1994: 3-4).

### **2.2.1 - How powerful is language?**

Some people enthusiastically embrace that 'ecotourism can bring equity and well-being to local populations'. Where is the truth in this statement? How can we know that this statement holds any truth or whether this truth may be proven in one region but not verifiable in others?

The construction of ecotourism as a 'philosophy of life', 'a global movement and trend', 'an economic alternative', 'as holding the power to equalise local powers',

etc, deserves an in-depth investigation because ecotourism projects and programmes have been implemented under regional and contextual conditions that may lead people to regard one specific achievement as the truth for all. We also know that discourses are closely linked to social practices and structures in everyday life in society, and the veracity of them is relative to the will of dominant groups to give credibility or not to some discourses.

Language has practical consequences for individuals. It is critical for human coordination and control. Language entails “internal rules that make discourses function as a structure to behaviour” (Hajer 1997: 49), backing Giddens’ assertions that there is a duality of structure in discourses with enabling and constraining functions and results.

Some thinkers, representatives of different times and schools, have struggled to show and make individuals aware of ways in which they have been controlled through institutions. Gergen (1999) highlights that “often these controls seem to issue from institutions”, which he refers to as “structural power” (p.204).

Foucault, for instance, understands that constraining effects of discourse are not instructive (in Hajer 1997: 49). Discourses infer exclusion, prohibition, and disallowance once they become coercive, restricting one from arguing or even from raising questions: “language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated [...] through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’ and ‘reality’ become established” (Ashcroft et al. 1989, quoted in Hall and Tucker 2004: 6). However, discourses have an exclusionary aspect because they only authorise certain people a voice; “they come with discursive forms of internal discipline through which a practical order [or discursive orders] is maintained” (Hajer 1997:49).

Some scholars – mainly those inclined towards political issues - regard language as “niches to sustain specific ideologies” and for the perpetuation of privileges. They regard ‘language’ as a cover for shortcomings in government actions and enactments such as policies; language has been appointed as a tool for control and for controlling (Gergen 1999: 80).

Fascinated with language in action, many scholars devote their attention to the way discourse is used by people in the course of daily life – how words are variously deployed, how conversations develop or fail, and how realities are often held together by a delicate ...relationship...language includes not only the words we use to define what is real and good, but includes all our gestures, dress, bodily markings, personal possessions and so on...For Goffman, language must be understood as a form of social action (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 77).

Language leads us to the discussion of three intertwined items, ‘discourse’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘power’. One of the most representative thinkers in this domain has been Foucault who was “centrally concerned with this [triadic] relationship” (Burr 2003: 67; Mills 1997). Usually, the mainstream thought is that the direct link between

knowledge and power is the idea that knowledge strengthens one's power; higher education enables the individual to improve his/her background resulting in opportunities for better jobs, wages, and social position. However, Foucault seems to break with this traditional correlation between power and knowledge.

Social constructionism paves the road for scholars to understand how discourses, structural powers, create and represent versions of reality (Gergen 1999; Alcoff 2005) so that, "what we call knowledge then simply refers to the particular construction...of a phenomenon" (Burr 2003: 68). Even scientific texts become versions of reality; and following the social constructionist principle should not be taken for granted deliberately.

Latour (2004) explains that scientists, in order to have their science and arguments believed and acknowledged must generate supporters while reducing hecklers through mobilisation. Scientists use four means to have their findings accepted: i) *allies*, enrolling others to support interpretations; ii) *former texts*, getting articles published adding to the literature with what is known or established; iii) *rhetorical devices* such as X-Ray, GSR, etc; iv) *inscription devices*, machines and technical lab processes that measure or "translate the world as it is" (Gergen 1999: 56).

The use of language allows the world to exist in the way individuals perceive it. Because perceptions are not homogeneous – but agreed through interactions – the sociolinguistically constructed world, shared as such, infers real consequences in terms of power relations. Under a poststructuralist view of the use of language, textual and spoken communication become the hubs where conflicts and struggles take place, with power relations being "acted out and contested" (Burr 2003: 55).

For Foucault, power bounds any type of mainstream thought in our society. People - by choosing to act in one way rather than another – markedly reveal the contours of influential powers (Flew 1985; Howarth 2000). Thus, the decision to act in particular ways varies according to the different knowledges that currently prevail in our society (Flew 1985). We can then put power into effect by drawing upon discourses; our actions and decisions are an effect of discourse. Foucault underlines that social practices are framed by the prevailing narratives, rhetorics and also by the forces that manipulative discourses operate in one's mind. What driving forces stand behind one's decision? (Cromby 2002: 78; Flew 1985). Social constructionism seems to have the claim that anything that exists, it exists through discursive constructions; that is, reality is taken as symbolically represented, and "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida 1976: 158). So, how powerful are the discourses?

A single text does not produce big societal changes, but the production and reproduction of an idea or ideas repeatedly through varied sources of discourses render the changes routine, the new mainstream. The risk for people is to be passive to all forms of discursive constructions, and then get involved in thoughts and views that otherwise would not come to their mind, but which would either propel individuals to choose a certain course and attitudes or exclude other possible decisions. Discourse is regarded as inherent to social practices, and it nourishes the reproduction of social structures (Foucault 1972; Wodak 1996; Simmons 2004; Kendall 2007).

Foucault advises that dominant discourses are thus subject to resistance. For him, power and resistance are two sides of the same coin, as “the power implicit in one discourse is only apparent from the resistance implicit in another” (Burr 2003: 69). For Foucault, power and knowledge always walk together; the two are indivisible, indissoluble in a way that society has been relatively controlled by a disciplinary power.

The power of language comes with the power of discursive controlling tools. Foucault’s invitation to question given truths, given unities, interpreted and written by others, leads us into iconoclastic views on discourses. Issues of power in discourses are linked to the production and spread of ideology or ideologies.

For Mulligan, “the notion of ideology, whatever neutral definitions with which we may proffer it, strongly connotes a ‘project’, a ‘consciousness’, a ‘subject’ pre-existing the discourse itself (2003: 430). Does ideology precede discourses? Mulligan (2003) says it comes jointly with the intentions of creative agents, with political projects, and with history. Ideology is then a sum of occurrences that is deployed in statements.

History and discourse complete each other in which discourses work as superscripts of the meanings in history. Analysis of statements should be comparative (Foucault 1972: 157-165) and should compare them to one another in the way they are presented” (Mulligan 2003). When one speaks of a system of formation, one does not only mean the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogeneous elements (institutions, techniques, social groups, perceptual organizations, relations between various discourses), but also the relation that is established between them – and in a well determined form – by discursive practice (Foucault 2003: 80-81).

### **2.2.2 - Fairclough: Language and power**

Language is the vehicle for discourses, and discourses are the vehicle of ideology (Fairclough 1989). There are major discourse types that hold ideologies, which function to legitimise existing social relationships. Advertising discourse and the discourses of interviewing and counselling are some types of discourses that have had a pivotal role in ‘colonising’ people through various social institutions, which reflect the ideological aims and position of the dominant class. There is “a high degree of integration of institutional orders of discourse” in society that helps the colonising process to happen (Fairclough 1989: 36). The focus is the relationship between ideology and prevailing power by consent as opposed to coercion. Social control is exercised without intimidation, with legitimisation given by one’s conscious or unconscious self-permission. For example, advertising discourse often integrates “people into apparatuses of control which they come to feel themselves to be a part of” (Fairclough 1989: 36-37).

According to Fairclough (1989), there are three mechanisms for societal coordination: 1) there may be practices and discourse types which are universally followed and necessarily accepted because no alternative seems conceivable, which have built into them coordinated knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities; 2) coordination can be imposed in the exercise of power, in a largely hidden

fashion, as the ‘power’ behind discourse that he calls ‘inculcation’; 3) coordination can be arrived at through a process of rational communication and debate; a mechanism Fairclough calls ‘communication.’ Certainly, not all-current language in use holds hidden intentions; ideology is not always embedded in it.

Fairclough’s attention lies in the constraints, influences and control that originate in these structures and institutions which individuals are not able and not allowed to set aside (1989: vi). How do our roles within these institutions define a particular use of language and acceptance of certain connoted meanings as the only choice for reality? How does language contribute to the domination of some individuals by others? Fairclough classified the relation between power and language into four major themes (refer to Table 2.1).

<b>Language</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>Discourse</b>	Language as social practice determined by social structures
<b>Discourse</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>Orders of discourse</b>	Actual discourse is determined by socially constituted orders of discourse, sets of conventions associated with social institutions
<b>Class</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>Power in capitalist societies</b>	Orders of discourse are ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole
<b>Dialectic of Structures</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>Practices</b>	Discourse has effects upon social structures, as well as being determined by them, and so contributes to social continuity and social change
<b>Source:</b> Adapted by Ismar Lima, 2008, based on information available in Language and Power. Norman Fairclough 1989: 17			

Discourse implies social conditions of production and of interpretation (where it occurs), shaping the way in which textual material is produced and interpreted (Fairclough 1992). Moreover, practices that seem to be commonsensical can reveal themselves as the result of discursive strategies of dominant classes or leading groups. Such practices become naturalised – incorporated in everyday life - because of the institutional manoeuvres that endorse them. Individuals often guide their actions on an institutional basis without perceiving that such institutions have their ideological positions that “embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimise existing power relations” (Fairclough 1989: 33).

In fact, ideological power embedded in the institutions contributes to sustain uneven relations of power. Ideological power becomes a significant complement to political and economic power because it is present in discourses. Conversely, knowledge and values that receive little or no recognition from the community or

politically powerful institutions tend to be overlooked, ignored or doubted by many land managers (Jay 2004: 79).

As Habermas (1985) underlines, the lifeworld is subordinated to system imperatives with everyday life being increasingly bureaucratised and monetarised as the economic system guides customers, workforce, and families to its imperatives (p. xxxiv). The law, the media and education are examples of social institutions that significantly guarantee the continuation of dominant groups. The educational system persuasively trains students at different levels “to fit into and accept the existing system of class relations” (Fairclough 1989: 33).

One important aspect highlighted by Fairclough is that power relations are not linked to class relations in a Marxist sense; instead, power relations take place in many instances among social groupings in institutions and outside them as in the relationship among stakeholders acting in the tourism/ecotourism sector. They are inclined to put differences ahead of discussions, making hierarchies and economic position barriers for collective dialogues and social gains. The major problem is to separate the constraints that exist because of hidden forces, e.g. capitalist ones, from those that appear or gain force with ecotourism implementation.

Focus on the use of language may become a form of identifying what type of discourses existed before ecotourism projects and those that evolved after. An analysis of language use can provide leads to the links between ecotourism development and power relations.

### **2.2.3 - Bureaucracy as a form of societal control**

Institutions are people constituted and people-oriented; and their norms, rules and bureaucracies are the result of human will at the very least. People shape institutions that shape people and society. Contrary to this viewpoint, Foucault, for example, rebuffs the notion of ‘structural power’; for him, power has no exact location, it is not set in persons or in distribution of material power. Foucault’s position is that power resides not “in a structure or person but in a set of relationships” (Gergen 1999: 207).

I am sceptical about Foucault’s position. However, I do not refute the view that power is innate in social relationships. My point is that ‘institutions’ are people acting and interacting, then, relationships are not outside institutions; instead, they are within their domains at varied levels. Institutional structures make them inclined to become bureaucratic, inaccessible, and unfathomable for the majority. Institutional bureaucracy can then be used as subterfuges through which the state or a group in power take control over people.

To these ends, the state creates contexts for interventions that people cannot promptly react against, for example, control of inflation or currency constraints on wages, public service regulation, subsidies and/or over-taxation, and public policies that directly change people’s lives. Public policies and institutional administrative expedients are forms of discourses; they are forms of discursive power, “power in discourse, and power behind discourse” (Fairclough 1989: 43).

#### **2.2.4 - Nature discursively fabricated**

Modern institutions in the western world have been a contradiction in themselves with the environmental crisis revealing their incomplete nature (Cater 2007). As underlined by Hajer (2005), democratic institutions have been unable to safeguard the “collective good of environment and amenity against the capitalist forces of private gain” (p.37). Paradoxically, nature destruction gains legitimacy because profitability comes uncoupled from the actual costs that nature transformation implies; that is, the externalisation of costs of industrial production makes it highly profitable since the rest of society pays for the ‘actual costs’ through high levels of pollution, deforestation, excessive waste, landfills of non-recyclable products, and possibly human-induced (anthropogenic) climate change.

Profitability itself is discursively constructed in economics and accountancy because it does not reflect the actual costs of the loss of natural spaces, which is, in most cases, irreversible. As Weston (1999) mentions, “the privatization of property makes it hard to restrict ecologically disastrous uses of the land” (p.2). On the other hand, marketing people’s behaviour as well as lack of awareness contribute to keep the capitalist logic of ‘over-consumption’ and ‘nature exploitation and depletion’ in an ever worsening state.

Hajer (2005) raised the question whether society can act upon this realisation of its institutional failures, which he names ‘incomplete nature’. I would say the institutions are non-responsive to the limits and reality of an overcrowded planet. Beck (1992) believes that the environmental crisis might become a modern positive milestone, with people, government and institutions working to make a new and superior class of modernity, certainly one less rapacious.

The environmental crisis should be the ultimate event to make people aware of new standards of behaving and producing. In a world pervaded not only with environmental, but also with socio-political crises and countless social splits - with loosened social structures and contested political legitimation - new societal coalitions may manifest themselves as a sort of counter-modernity discourse (Beck 1994, 1992; Hajer 2005).

Unlike Beck and Hajer, I take the position that a counter-modernity discourse – based on societal coalition - should include the old frames and appeal for more rationality, more power devolution and decentralisation, and more conscious social choices. This is because a ‘societal coalition’, founded on the premises of an ‘ecological modernisation discourse’, sounds to me like the continuation of the current practices hidden behind the label of ‘rationality’. For Beck, two tendencies will influence immensely the course of the environmental crisis: “new variations of ecological fundamentalism and the erosion of the political realm from within” (Hajer 2005: 38).

I imagine that Hajer’s proposal for a societal coalition should work against these two tendencies. His proposal for coalition – collaboration or integration of sectors – is more related to a macro-societal level; I myself advocate forms of coalition at a micro level. It is more an issue of subpolitics – similar to Foucault’s approaches to power – in which investigations addressing social order and equilibrium should focus on micro



powers or power/knowledge areas. Models of ecotourism with multiple stakeholder participation provide the exact case for the analysis of micro powers and their ability to negotiate power and construct collective meanings (knowledge).

The social construction of nature opens up two differing and competing forms of social evolution in the history of human societies: a natural evolution and a cultural evolution. Natural evolution changes the form of social interaction with nature. Society uses its knowledge of nature to increase its 'productive forces'. This increases the complexity of society, and, above all, the social division of labour. Cultural evolution, on the other hand, changes the rules of responsible action in society. It uses normative rules to promote its 'moral progress'. This leads to an intensification of social conflicts (Eder 1996: 2). Beyond the cognitive and normative definitions, "meaning is given to nature in the process of consumptive appropriation" (Eder 1996: 29).

Beyond (cognitive) praxis and (normative) praxis, the symbolic meaning of nature is explicated in a discourse on nature that focuses on joy and sorrow, hope and fear in the interaction with nature...The social construction is reduced to the social appropriation of nature, its evolution accelerated by cognitive learning processes...The development of productive forces, technical progress and the increasing division of labour are thus the expression of an evolution of society determined by the social construction of nature (Eder 1996: 8).

In Berger and Luckmann (1967), the human relation to the environment is underlined by world-openness:

Not only have humans succeeded in establishing themselves over the greater part of the earth's surface, their relationship to the surrounding environment is everywhere very imperfectly structured by their own biological constitution (1967, p. 46).

Searle (1996) discusses the role of language in constituting facts; he asserts for example that 'money', 'property', 'marriage' and 'government' are facts just because we believe they exist. He provocatively examines what can and what cannot be socially constructed drawing examples even from biology. He focuses on natural phenomena and human institutions, comparing their discursive constitution as evidence for his arguments. Searle then sets a framework for classifying facts as brute/objective fact and institutional fact. Objective fact is one in which 'reality' exists independent from human wishes and narratives, whereas the institutional fact refers to the 'human constructions' of reality.

Scientific language is normally taken as credible and accurate. However, social constructionism advises that even in scientific texts, the facts should be approached with suspicion and precaution. Social constructions of facts are elaborated in science, academia, or public debates. Facts are constructed with formal, metaphorical or colloquial language; they are present in different textual manifestations: scholarly

journals, folklore, religion, beliefs, storytelling, myths, etc. They appear in textbooks, fiction, poems, songs, movies, theatre play, TV, radio, brochures, etc. There 'perfect body and diets' (see Blood 2005), 'cultural stereotypes', gender, consumerism, and politics of nature are all socially constructed (Stibbe 2004; 2006). As an example, we can mention the social construction of climate change as a global environmental problem.

Demeritt (2001), states that the discourse of global warming as caused by physical properties of greenhouse gases has been regarded by critics as a reductionist approach aimed at serving a variety of political purposes. He seeks to "unmask the tacit social and epistemic commitments" wrapped in scientific controversies that require academic reflections about expertise, uncertainty and trust (Demeritt 2001: 307; 325-329).

Another example of social construction of the natural world has been the genetic modification/genetic engineering debate. This launched a "war of words" among scientists, environmentalists, NGOs and GM advocates, starting what Cook (2004) called 'genetically modified language'. Symbolic links between narratives/discourse and reality on the ground become what Hajer (2005) calls "purely scientific idiom", referring to 'acid rain' as a narrative that links industrial production and impacts on nature.

Until recently, the idea of 'smoke' and 'dirt', for instance, was linked to the notion of progress, modernity, a meaning completely different from those held by people aware of their consequences today. In the 70s and 80s, deforestation in Amazonia, with bulldozers clearing pristine areas, became the 'symbol of modernity' ostentatiously used in central government campaigns under the motto "progress in Brazil, 50 years in 5" (Lima, 2002). At that time, politicians and planners perceived the untouchable forest areas as a symbol of backwardness (underdeveloped).

In contrast to that Brazilian government orientation and policy, some environmentalist groups and organisations, known as the third sector, began in the 1980s a campaign to raise awareness about deforestation in Amazonia. Their motto was "Amazonia, the lungs of the world" (refer to Box 2.0). The metaphor works but its semantic appeals are exaggerated. First, the metaphor makes an erroneous denotation between 'Amazon as an atmosphere cleaner' and 'lungs'.

For this purpose, the metaphor should instead relate Amazonia to 'kidneys' or 'liver'. Secondly, Amazonia does exist as a local and regional ecosystem but no scientist can say with precision the extent of Amazonia's importance for gas exchange (e.g. photosynthesis), reduction of the greenhouse effect, etc. Environmentalists, writers and journalists are still attached to the idea of a worldwide service of Amazonia. They still use the motto and the storyline of "a net producer of oxygen" to sustain their viewpoints (see Box 2.0).

In terms of imagination and nature, for example, during an interview, the environmentalist Adriana of IPE, a non-governmental organisation in Amazonia, highlighted the difficulty of starting up environmental campaigns for protecting animals by using the image of snakes, "...it simply does not work for us, for what we

plan...then it is preferable to use a more charismatic animal – the pink river dolphins – for such campaigns”.

Conversely, with different methods, the Australian Steve Irwin, the Croc Hunter, in an attempt to demystify the images of snakes and crocodiles and raise people’s ecological awareness for their protection, chose to explore wild animals’ habitats disclosing their “secrets” and behaviour. However, some people question whether Irwin’s interventions in wildlife were entirely ecologically friendly.

### Box 2.0 - Amazon the ‘lungs of the world’

The Amazon deserves to be called the "lungs of the world," as new projections show it is a net producer of oxygen despite widespread burning of the jungle, scientists said.

*Article by Axel Bugge*

The projections show that the trees in the world's largest tropical forest are cleaning the air by absorbing carbon dioxide. The data collected indicates that the Amazon absorbs slightly more carbon dioxide than the burning spews out.

"The indication is that it is a small net supplier of oxygen," said Paulo Artaxo, a researcher at the University of Sao Paulo.

That conclusion is based on the latest projections made possible by the Large Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia, the world's leading study of jungle deforestation.

Scientists have long thought that the Amazon is a net producer of oxygen. The issue is politically sensitive in Brazil because it reinforces environmentalists' calls to stop Amazon burning, which hit its second-highest level last year.

Source: PlanetArk.com. Reuters News Service, retrieved on 30 July 2004.

REUTERS NEWS SERVICE

The discursive construction of ‘animals’ as being ‘good’ or ‘evil’ can be picked throughout history, permeated by religious, social and environmental thoughts. How much do these discourses (constructed images) influence people to act with nonsensical violence against these “evil” animals? In New Zealand, the image of dolphins and whales has been introduced and publicized by many tour operators presenting them as friendly, approachable, and interactive marine animals. The ‘kiwi bird’ has been discursively built as unique and exotic, threatened, at risk of extinction, sweet, quiet, silly, and fragile. On the other hand, stoats and possums have been depicted by the New Zealand Department of Conservation as a ‘plague’ to be controlled, that is, banished or eliminated.

Deep ecologists would say that dolphins, whales, kiwis, possums and stoats are nothing except ‘living beings’ to be respected. The religious environmentalist, in an animal rights advocacy, would state that the animals are composed of body and soul.

Cartesians would protest arguing that animals are merely complex machines, absent of immaterial thinking essence, deprived of soul. Since animals do not have a “voice” to speak for themselves, this type of statement is another polemic social construction of nature.

Preece (2005) is strongly opposed to the Cartesian conception of animals as automata. He affirms that the Christian mainstream denied ethical terms to animals, which in his views are superior to humans; he calls this approach “theriophily”. According to Lovelock’s GAIA hypothesis (1979) <sup>6</sup>, any living substance on Earth functions as a single articulated organism; thus, humans and non-human entities are part of the same universe, fostering and sustaining life for its own continuity.

Moving forward with the analysis on relativism and realism in social constructionism, ‘objects’ and ‘events’ that appear in metaphors will be used as examples of discursive constructions of nature tourism (see Table 2.2). Andersson (1992) selected sentences on ‘forest’ and ‘nature’, used in the modern western world, to support his reconciliatory theory that metaphors are both constituted of reasoning (as claimed by cognitive linguistics) and of lack of any cognitive competence (as claimed by anthropologists). Andersson’s (1992) qualitative approach to the theme explains “how metaphors really function in discourses” (p.1), their implicit manifestation in narratives and rhetorics. He uses the ‘prototype theory’ (Rosch 1978) that categorisation should rely on the assessment of similarities and differences; prototype is in this theoretical approach “a standard against which things are judged [...] good examples of categories” (p. 4).

Clearly, each word may participate in many semantic categories, and thus encompass different values (Cater 2007). Andersson (1992) cites how ‘forest’ can be linked either to ‘natural forest’ or ‘artificial forest’; these examples represent two conflicting prototypes in discourses on nature and forest which become a sensitive issue when environmentalists and foresters discuss best practices for forest management.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on GAIA hypothesis, see also *The New Gaia Atlas of Planet Management* (2005) by Norman Meyers and Jennifer Kent.

The forest is a <i>sanctuary</i> ...	it gives <i>peace to the soul</i>
The forest is a <i>community</i> ...	species <i>live together</i>
The forest is a <i>home</i> ...	species <i>belong to it</i>
The forest is a <i>room</i> ...	there is a forest <i>floor</i> and a <i>ceiling</i>
The forest is a <i>machine</i> ...	it <i>functions</i> and <i>works</i> in certain ways
The forest is a <i>mine</i> ...	we take out (mine) <i>the resources</i>
The forest is a <i>living thing</i> ...	it is <i>healthy</i> or <i>sick</i>
<b>Source:</b> Andersson 1992	

Following this line of thought, I have argued that ecotourism has been an incomplete conceptual project fraught with contradictions; it practices divergence rather than integration. What it promises to deliver requires a well-integrated institutional platform. In general, ecotourism has been conceptually incomplete on the ground.

Rhetorics on ecotourism can be embedded with supposition, prediction, expectation and fallacies, which do not translate or, sometimes, overestimate the real extent (or truth) of the benefits the activity can provide. As Rothman (1998) posits “tourism promises much but delivers only a little” (p.434), and he underlines that much of what ecotourism delivers somehow disappoints local dwellers.

The literature shows that ecotourism implementation has varied greatly in terms of achievements and results. Yet ecotourism and its terms, definition and principles are certainly socially constructed. Constructions that predict and raise expectations should be distinguished from constructions that portray or describe an event (Box 2.1).

Discourses are fabricated to present made-up successes, to omit shortcomings and create something imaginary – a myth – that can disguise the real dimensions of ecotourism. What are the gaps between rhetoric and reality in ecotourism?

**Box 2.1 - Ecotourism and claims: rhetoric or fact?**

- Ecotourism as a tool for sustainable development
- Ecotourism promotes the sustainable use of biodiversity
- Ecotourism minimises impacts
- Democratisation of benefits through ecotourism: financial benefit and empowerment for local people

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008, based on the available literature on ecotourism

Ecotourism certainly became a ‘conceptual word’, discursively featured to encompass social, economic and environmental issues. Reflection on this starts by questioning what type of discourses ‘tourism’ itself is wrapped with. Tourism

marketing language is persuasive, elaborated to convince a segmented group or person to visit areas different from those they are used to,

The marketing approach assumes that most of this tourism communication takes place prior to the trip, either to persuade first-timers to journey to the destination or to remind repeaters of the benefits they have previously enjoyed there (Dann 1996: 137)

Marketing language creates the desire to go to other territories, to other cultures and “taste” the unusual and exotic. Ecotourism solely approached as a business which ‘encounter with nature’ as its main appeal. Encounters with nature are then constructed as unique, fabulous and positive for nature itself and locals as one can be observed in the ‘100% Pure Campaign’ and Norway Innovation’s Tourism Marketing (Chapter 5, section 5.2.2). One may choose a nature-based tourism package rather than a conventional tourism package supported by the feeling of being ‘good’ by supposedly contributing to local hosts and to nature conservation.

These are the main rhetorical components that favourably support one’s decision regarding ecotourism, either as ecotourism provider or as an ecotourist. The vested meaning in ecotourism - internalised by many - is that it is ‘beneficial’ to all. In semiotics, ‘ecotourism’ functions as the ‘signifier’ with ‘altruism’ being its signified. Sausurre’s idea is that sign systems – language in codes and meanings governed by its own internal logics - govern individuals, help them make sense of the world and of themselves (Gergen 1999: 24). Ecotourism gains ‘collective meaning’ as something altruistic, environmentally friendly; and this shared meaning of ecotourism gives sense and orients people for particular decisions and social practices while it leads them to exclude others.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that humans create and institutionalise social phenomena, making them a form of tradition. Knowledge is then acquired through interactions. Clearly, reality comes from and is maintained by social interactions and relationships. Interaction permits the sharing of common understanding, and the transfer of this experience can be direct or indirect through observation by repeating acts or reproducing ideas and perceptions. By setting certain practices as common knowledge, humans reinforce these practices and permit routines of actions that make sense for the individual or for the group in that shared-life context.

According to Hajer (1997), it became a *cliché* to typify public problems as socially assembled (p.42). When political analysts employ the theory of social constructionism, they defend the position that public problems are indeed related to certain ‘problem owners’ and try to shed light on how certain actors have successfully achieved definitions of a problem.

Social constructionism gives grounds to Lukes’ (1999) critique of the conceptions of power in the literature; he underlines that applied methodologies of positivism have failed to specify the problem of representation of reality. Mills (1997) agrees with Foucault that no one can deny the existence of a reality beyond textual

constructions; however, discourses shrink the person's consciousness of an objective world, driving one to exclude such real phenomena (Mills 1997: 51; Burr 2003: 89).

Considering this mainstream thought, Gergen (1999) is often the social constructionist who most self-identified with the relativist position because it is clear for him/her that linguistic descriptions of material and psychological events are detached from material reality.

In fact, debates on 'truth' and 'reality' are unresolved, challenging social constructionists in their search to arbitrate them. Gergen (1999) wraps up with the view that social constructionism is a form of discourse that is not the "final word" because it is true in theoretical terms, but is rather a way of avoiding, having "a world grounded in an endless dialogue" (p. 228). Constructionism adopts 'relativity' as a key concept, although some constructionists advocate the synthesis of this theoretical branch into critical realism. This is the next subject for scrutiny.

### **2.3 - Theoretical consensus**

Social constructionism is to some extent part of the theories of human development. However, the approach here is not on human development in terms of acquiring knowledge of the world through accumulative cognitive gains since childhood. The discussion is on the "intersubjectivity of social meanings" as a "shared understanding" among individuals whose interaction is based on common interests and assumptions that form the ground for their communication (Kim 2001: 1); such a meaning-swap process is supposed to happen in collaborative schemes in (eco)tourism.

Ernest (1990) explains that the use of language patterns and collective agreed perceptions form the base for communications and interactions through which knowledge and social meanings are framed. Social meanings are also the result of negotiation that takes place within and among communication groups (Gredler 1997). Intersubjectivity as group-shared understanding provides the platform for communication acts that lead to the dissemination of 'new understandings' among participants of a certain group (Vygotsky 1987).

The common belief among constructionists is that knowledge is a product of interactions between people and their contextual environment. Group consciousness of its intersubjective meanings contributes to the diffusion of new values, understandings, practices and information (Kim 2001; Mills 1997; Vygotsky 1987). The epistemological node of social constructionism lies in the very notion that we represent the world from the moment we begin to talk about it; narratives of every day life, become one's accounts of what it is like (Edley 2001).

When social constructionists who take this position say that 'there is nothing outside the text' they are not...making an ontological claim, that is a claim about the nature or existence of a world beyond discourse. When used ontologically, the term social constructionism refers to the way that real phenomena, our perceptions and experiences, are brought into existence and take the particular form that they do because of the language that we share (Burr 2003: 92).

Social constructionism has been imperative to support researchers who outline bottom-up approaches for group and community organisation. For example, Cooperrider (1992), developed the project *Imagine Chicago* which sought to gather community representatives over issues of communal interest in order to have them decide possible solutions (also see McNamee 2004; Cooperrider 2000; Cooperrider and Kaplin 2005).

Such bottom-up community decision-making and development approach is based on the premises that people in interaction create meanings and courses for social practices within a social constructionist perspective. Certainly, this is an example of a very democratic approach - form of collaboration - for problem-solving at the community level. In this book, such collaborative schemes provide some leads to forms of collaboration or partnerships in sustainable nature tourism projects.

Social constructionism seems to advance collaboration at the moment it is planned to work from the ground, thus permitting then the inclusion of 'voices' of minorities and gender equity as the means to achieve necessary knowledge for community stability.

There is no socio-environmental equilibrium if locals are not truly included in the decision-making process. Social constructionism is fundamental to understand the cultural aspects and indigenous aspirations in nature tourism activities. It is imperative for understanding the role and importance of women in partnerships/cooperation that aim to promote local sustainable practices in tourism. However, as already mentioned, indigenous (eco)tourism is not the focus of this study.

#### **2.4 - Are social constructionism and critical realism mutually exclusive?**

Critical realism begins from the principle that the world as we conceive it, "exists independently of our knowledge of it and that its very independence means that human knowledge is not 'reality', but a representation of it" (Neumann 2005: 50). Reality can then be observed 'out there' by its very self-existence (Castree and Braun 1998; Neumann 2005; Willems-Braun 1997). From an opposite position, Berger and Luckmann (1967) proclaim the need for clarification on how 'commonsense reality' can be produced by "the theoretical constructions of intellectuals and other merchants of ideas" (p.19).

Critical realists face the challenges of obtaining empirical evidence that supports the truths; they search for material perspectives of knowledge (Holzapfel 2003; Yeung 1997). Critical realism provides a set of criteria for assessing and reviewing claims about reality and this approach serves as a methodology in social sciences.

Under critical realist science, the world phenomena witnessed by observation are products generated by "underlying, relatively enduring (intransitive) structures" (Burr 2003: 101). Advocating for a 'constrained constructivism', a concept close to critical realism, Hayles (1995) arbitrates for 'an independent world autonomous of our knowledge one she calls "unmediated flux" and this world becomes real through "self-



organizing, transformative processes that include sensory, contextual, and cognitive components” (p.49, quoted in Neumann 2005: 51).

From a critical realist angle, human beings can transform and reproduce society but they cannot create it (Bhaskar 1998); they cannot create life and cannot replicate the ecosystems entirely in their original forms and functions. In this transformational model of social activity, he mentions that there is a duality of character between human habitual practices and society; society is thus the material cause of human agency, and it is continually replicated by this agency (Bhaskar 1998). It exists because humans are in activity within it. Society is not just structures; it includes conventions and practices (Bhaskar 1998).

In critical realism, language is taken as constructing our social realities, constructions that have been shaped by “possibilities” and “constraints” of a material world (Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig, 2007: 101). For them, “critical realism combines constructionist and realist positions to argue that while meaning is made in interaction, non-discursive elements also impact on meaning” (p.102).

For some researchers, critical realism has been perceived as a ‘third way’ in terms of theory and methodological uses; it has been placed as the ‘filling element’ between empiricism and positivism (Sayer 2000). Some social theorists and political ecologists, have used Bhaskar’s (1975) framework of the real to orient themselves as to how science commands realisation of knowledge (Sayer 2000; Forsyth 2003; Neumann 2005).

According to Bhaskar, sociology is ruled by two major theories: i) the Durkheim model, in which individual human behaviour determines society, what he calls reification; ii) and the Weber model, in which human practices determine society. Bhaskar takes into account Berger’s model which advocates that society forms the individuals who create society.

In terms of human coordination and reaction to practical orders, realist discourse largely differs from constructionist discourse. The realist discourse holds the dualism of being a language of trust while being an instrument of control (Gergen 1999). The needs to reproduce and replicate content and information found in realist discourse regarding the best match for instant mutual communication; Gergen uses as an example the dialogue between the pilots and traffic controller in their preparation for aircraft landing (1999: p.18). In this situation, language must be precise, exact, and represented in details and through indexes with coordination for ‘altitude’, ‘airspeed’, ‘visibility’, ‘runaway availability’, etc. Shared coordinated language is in this context required to avoid disaster. Realist discourse is then the language of trust that promotes predictability and order. Conversely, the ‘constructionist discourse’ often functions in the reverse situation. It is said to be a “liberating agent, challenging the taken-for-granted [attitude] and opening new realms of comprehension and action” (Gergen 1999: 18).

At a metatheoretical level, Gergen underlines that both discourses account for our comprehension of the surrounding world, with knowledge, objectivity, insight and truth residing within communities. They are crucial to our future and well-being as we

either seek fully human coordination by indexing language or by acknowledging and replicating business tenets, government institutions and the juridical system conventions.

Collier (1998) has been one of the most radical critical realists by taking to extremes the assumption that reality and truth (the real world) are dependent on language and human thought. For him, relativist social constructionism is rooted in dogmatism because it negates the existence of fundamental structures such as capitalism as a social construction, which frame one's life and actions; a system of collective conviction that resists to changes in the face of evidences (Ratner 2005). As Burr (2003) highlights, the reality of an existing capitalist structure that determines people's lives cannot simply be refuted, as it will reveal itself as nonsensical (p.98).

For Hruba (2001), the critical realist position believes that "there is a coherent and dependably consistent reality that is the basis for our sensations, even if our sensations do not resemble the causative phenomenal bases, or 'onta' that prompt them, or demonstrate the same presumed cohesion or consistency" (p.57). Hence, our perceptions and sensations do not mirror reality, and although they are often volatile and changeable, nevertheless they do reference the real world in some way; they are not independent of it, produced entirely through our symbolic system such as language (Escobar 1996; Burr 2003: 95).

For critical realists, language matters to the extent that it contributes to misrepresent reality; reality is not created by discourses but distorted by them.

Contrary to the view of some critical realists, most social constructionists do not see language as the only reality (Burr 2003: 92). Gergen refutes the accusation that he denies the existence of a reality beyond discourse. Realism and constructionism are two distinct forms of discourse (Gergen 1999, 2001; Watzlawick 1984), and individuals guide themselves by these perceptions during the process of argumentation. For example, "critical realists thus argue that there is a material dimension of our lives that is, at least, partially non-discursive" (Sims-Schouten et al. 2007: 103). In this sense, language can be used to refer to reality for practical purposes;

Willig (2001) says that if everything is discursively constructed, then we have no grounds for adjudicating between views, as a result, 'anything goes'. Willig accepts that social and physical arrangements provide the conditions of possibility for the emergence of discourses, but without determining them (1999a: 100). She believes that "from a non-relativist social constructionist viewpoint, meanings are afforded by discourses, accommodated by social structures and changed by human actors" (Willig 1999a: 44). For Willig the 'realist' and 'relativist' argument and counter-argument both, can both be demonstrated. *Critical realists* would say, 'relativists do not take up a moral and political position in relation to anything at all. Reality exists independent of discourses. On the other hand, *Relativists* would state that realists are governed by bottom-line arguments to the extent that they refuse that truth claims cannot be challenged.

Willig (2001) demands a social constructionism that provides a critique of the world, explaining why things are as they are and providing alternatives for their current

versions (p.38). Critical realism, she underlines, sustains that shared meanings and understanding are to some extent a mere artefact of social structures. They do not completely form our views of the world but hold a relative causation, possibly associated to Parker's conceptual merge where he combines an 'epistemological relativism' with 'ontological realism'.

That is, knowledge and perceptions of things, which envelop us into a context, are constructed in discourses. However, such constructions are based on a reality structured by the physical and social environment (Escobar 1996).

People act, think, approach and solve everyday problems in the way they do because certain social practices become routines framed by interaction and communication. They gain a collective sense and are socially championed. For Parker, social practices are shaped and re-shaped in a social continuum steered by individuals and by the structures they create. He is convinced that there is a reality beyond discourse, and this reality "provides the raw material from which we may structure our understanding of the world, through discourse" (cited by Burr 2003: 97). According to Sims-Schouten et al., there are three main advantages in taking a critical realist, rather than relativist position:

First, critical realism enables an analysis that can consider why people draw upon certain discourses, by proposing that the extra-discursive provides the context from which the use of certain discourses is more or less easily enabled; second, critical realism can explore the impact of material practices on discursive practices; and, third, this approach does not only map the ways in which participants use discourse in order to construct particular versions of reality, but it also positions their talk within the materiality that they also have to negotiate (Sims-Schouten et al. 2007: 103).

The most visible 'critical realist' aspect of this study is sustained by my position that ecotourism is not a 'ready-to-use' idea built outside a local context. Let me take the example of a guided tour: it has been established that a suitable group size should be of 11 visitors and one guide (12 people). However, a tour of 15 people for bush walking should not be deprived from an 'ecologically friendly' status. In operational terms, an ecotour company may not become economically viable if it needs to contract one more guide to accompany three extra visitors to a group. Even the most strict ecotour organisation will make decisions based on their 'local understanding' of how they should operate to impact on nature the least.

Conflicts exist because of the complexity in applying a conceptual ecotourism. I am sceptical about radicalism in ecotourism and about dogmatic ecologists and policy makers who overlook nature's resilience (Refer to Chapter 4, section 4.1.4).

#### **2.4.1 - Critical realism and social constructionism: A theoretical synthesis?**

Can these two streams be synthesised? Liebrucks (2001) seeks to link up a realist position while accepting a plurality of perspectives. He makes a distinction

between the ‘things’ of the material world, which are subject to the laws of natural science regardless of our talk about them, and the ‘things’ that form the subject matter of psychology.

Even though the canons of social constructionism confine views to a relativist side (Speer 2007), there have been some constructionists resistant to it who have sustained the position of a reality outside discourses (Cromby and Nightingale 1999). The motives for such critical posture are linked to issues of morality and political action (Harré 1995b; Escobar 1996; Nightingale 1999).

A dogmatic position and the negation of a non-discursive world may become the theoretical load social constructionists should advance without betraying the theoretical perspective they advocate (Riley, Sims-Schouten and Willig 2007).

Burkitt (1999) believes that a social constructionism which recognises the material and discursive world – as well as agency and society – can move toward the debate on realism and relativism, bringing many propositions into synthesis. He sees with scepticism the argument that social conventions, moral rules, and expressive order of language can be disengaged from a material world (Harré 1993). For him, discourse alone cannot fabricate the world, “reality is therefore not a constant, but an ever-changing realm” which is discursively constructed and practised by society. Social constructionism and critical realism are not opposite because “the act of social construction may take place through material means” (Burr 2003: 101).

Burr (2003) found that the semantic misconception of the word ‘reality’, by some constructionists, has resulted in argumentative shortcomings. According to Burr (2003), the contrasts are: i) reality as truth becoming an antonym to falsehood; ii) reality/materiality opposed to ‘illusion’; iii) reality versus ‘construction’ (p.101). She explains that those social constructionists who label themselves realists take the view that our perceptions of the world can “only ever approximate to reality.

Social constructionists’ become ‘critical realists’ as soon as they are against the mainstream view about relativism and its implications (Sims-Schouten et al. 2007). Even though a synthesis of critical realism and social constructionism shows itself defective – retaining exclusionary aspects –take Neumann’s (2005) view that regards the “materiality of nature while maintaining that our understanding of nature is discursively constructed” (p.11). This reveals me philosophical stand that will guide me throughout the research process.

In the following sections, I will discuss Hajer’s attempt to reunite ‘constructionism’ and ‘realism’ through two approaches: ‘discourse coalition’ and ‘ecological modernisation’.

#### **2.4.2 - Theories as discursive enclaves**

In a nutshell, theories are discursive enclaves. They are discourses, and their inherent epistemological competition within the sociology of knowledge and social theories needs reflection. Scientifically, a theory is a form of discourse that “describes the specificities of a particular domain...it is the order we choose to put the facts in” (Jonhson 2006: 134). Theories are then in-built with assumptions that seek to explain

the world and its human and non-human systems; they contain a set of assertions and beliefs that gives meanings to biophysical phenomena and societal events.

Theory is an attempt to describe the state and function of various occurrences experimented by living beings, “theory is a discourse reconstructing how things are and how they are (mis)understood, and how the state of affairs and its misrecognition can be explained” (Popkewitz and Fendler 1999: 58).

Theories are then discourses, discourses that construct reality (Gross et al. 1997) and nurture their own tenets; a construction which fits all circumstantial aspects of life, whether directly observable or not, testable or not, material or not. Luvsan (2006) agrees that, “Discourse is usually understood in sociology as a way of constructing and interpreting reality established and maintained in linguistic practices” (p.1).

Within the context of scientific theory, representation becomes the hub of multiple realities, rather than just one reality. That is why critics diverge in their positionality on the same subject. Each School of Thought has its course of reality; they represent and advocate a series of arguments founded on a realist or relativist understanding of phenomena, “a representation that was produced by applying a formal procedure to data”, involving observation, development of a conceptual model, interpretation and verification (or prediction) concomitant to the new observations and facts (Jonhson 2006: 134), and consequently giving a version of general knowledge.

For example, the School of Sociology of Knowledge seeks to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups take part in the fabrication of their perceived reality. The School contrasts itself with the ideological standing, major area of study, conceptual focus and key ideas compared to two other Schools: German and French. The French School is more functionalist, encompassing social norms and behaviour, with society being determined by individual human behaviour. Conversely, the German School is antipositivist, idealist and advocates a dichotomy between natural and social sciences; its focus is rationalisation and bureaucracy; society shapes individual human behaviour (refer to Table 2.3).

‘Social constructionism’ is nested in the school of ‘Sociology of Knowledge’; the school’s mainstream thought is that there is a continuous dialectic through which society forms individuals who create society (and its systems and institutions). The schools advocate positionalities of ideas inherently sustained by patterns of discourses that seek to give sense to systems of belief. They attempt to explain social factors, paradigms, and to be responsive to ontological enquiries, aligned with either positivist, relativistic or sceptical conceptions. Table 2.3 shows four sociological perspectives as outlined by Bhaskar (1998). The table is important because it helps to situate ‘Critical Realism’ in the context of other disciplines and schools of thought, their major area of study as well as their enquiries.

**Table 2.3 - Sociological theories according to Bhaskar (1998) & other sources:**

	<b>Model – I</b>	<b>Model – II</b>	<b>Model – III</b>
<b>Thinkers</b>	<b>Weber</b>	<b>Durkheim</b>	<b>Peter Ludwig and Berger</b>
<b>School</b>	<b>German Sociology:</b> - Antipositivist - Idealist - Hermeneutic Tradition * Differentiated Natural Sciences of Social Sciences	<b>French Sociology:</b> * introduced Functionalism * reversed the idea of society evolving like living organisms * social norms are strong * social behaviour is well-regulated	<b>Sociology of Knowledge Social Constructionism:</b> to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived reality *Sociology is a form of consciousness
<b>Major Area Study</b>	* Industrial sociology * Sociology of religion * Sociology of Government	* created the theories of social progress; of social evolutionism; of social Darwinism	<b>Theories:</b> * Society as ‘Objective Reality’ and society as ‘Subjective Reality’
<b>Focused Concepts</b>	* Rationalisation * Bureaucracy * Classifications of authority	Social structures and norms determine meanings and understandings	*The relationship between society and individual. *Focus on how human concepts or inventions become part of our reality
<b>Key Ideas</b>	Society determines individual human behaviour	Individual human behaviour determines society	It suggests that society forms individuals who create society in a continuous dialectic
<b>Dynamics/ Process</b>	Voluntarism	Reification	Illicit identification

Model – IV
<b>Bhaskar and American critical realists (Roy Sellars, George Santayana &amp; Arthur Lovejoy) and a broader Movement (Bertrand Russel &amp; C. D. Broad).</b>
<b>Critical Realism</b> It refers to several Schools of Thought whose followers advocate a critical realist philosophy. Critical realism holds a critique of Hermeneutics and Positivism. Compared to other epistemologies, critical realism is distinctive in three aspects: its transcendental and dialectical character; the content of its particular thesis; and, by being critical of the nature of reality itself.
Sociology in general
Rationalisation Focus on how reality, and society determines individuals
Society and human praxis must have a dual character: society is the ever-present condition [material cause and is the continually reproduced outcome of human agency
Duality of praxis

In the shadowed area of Table 2.4, constructivism is briefly outlined, and situated in terms of method and data collection as well as in reference to possible application fields.

**Table 2.4 - Theoretical perspectives, methods and fields of application in comparison to Constructionism (in blue).**

Research Perspectives			
	Modes of access to subjective viewpoints	-Description of processes of creation of social situations	-Hermeneutic analysis of underlying structures
<b>Theoretical Positions</b>	-Symbolic interactionism -Phenomenology	-Ethnomethodology -Constructivism	-Psychoanalysis -Genetic structuralism
<b>Methods of data collection</b>	-Semi-structured interviews -Narrative interviews	-Focus groups ethnography -Participant observation -Recording of interactions -Collection of documents	-Recording of interactions -Photography -Films
<b>Methods of interpretation</b>	-Theoretical coding -Qualitative content analysis -Narrative analyses -Hermeneutic procedures	-Conversation analysis -Discourse analysis -Genre analysis -Document analysis	-Objective hermeneutics -Deep structure hermeneutics -Hermeneutic sociology of knowledge
<b>Fields of application</b>	-Biographical research -Analysis of everyday knowledge	-Analysis of life-worlds and organisations -Evaluation research -Cultural studies	-Family research -Biographical research -Generation research -Gender research

**Source:** Flick et al. (2004: 6)

### 2.5 - Storylines and coalition

‘Discourse coalition’ is where actors position themselves around narratives and mainstream stories in environmental politics (Hajer 1997; Fischer and Hajer 1999). It is called ‘storylines’ chosen by certain stakeholders to guide or orient their actions (Hajer 2005).

Storylines then are forms of narratives and rhetorics that individuals or groups of individuals take for granted and corroborate to increase their levels of credibility. Hajer focuses his investigation on aspects perpendicular to storylines such as the forces that shape them, their constructors and those who try to gain control over them, and most important, ‘how’ particular storylines gain social influence (Hajer 2005: 264).

Storyline is fundamental to discourse-coalition because it brings actors to internalise them and advocate key messages. The concept of discourse-coalition sets environmental politics as linked to social constructions of environmental problems (Fischer and Hajer 1999). The variety of narratives on environmental problems works to form ‘groups of coalition’ who advocate or refute particular mainstream thoughts. That is, they take positions based on what discursive construction they consider to be



consistent and plausible enough for them. The only place where divergences can be satisfactorily negotiated is within the (discursive) structures they appear and spread.

As Hajer (2005) commented, “all actors speak about [deforestation] but mean [slightly] different things” (p.13). The actors have different perceptions and cognition of what deforestation means, and their feelings are also influenced by culture and social conditions. Each actor or group of actors will have their vision and interpretation, of causes, consequences and obligations for deforestation. Jay (2004) found that strains between natural and social scientists in the assessment of conservation policies happen because “while natural scientists pay attention to ecological consequences, social scientists focus on the acceptance and involvement of landowners in the programme” (p. 261).

Storylines show the political dimensions each actor has in relation to a current issue of their knowledge, whether it has “enough socio-political resonance” (Hajer 2005: 13). Storylines are important because in environmental politics, actors have their positionality, their own predetermined objectives over local and global environmental problems (Fischer and Hajer 1999).

According to Hajer (2005), the globalisation of environmental discourses seems to be the result of coalitions based on cause, consequence, and solutions. Deconstruction of discourses that form public policies will disclose “fragmented and contradictory statements able to create the sort of problems that institutions can handle and for which solutions can be found” (Hajer 2005: 15).

The Brundtland commission’s report on environment and development (1987) is – of course - not a public policy in itself but functions as a “catalyst for change in environmental policy” (Hajer 2005: 11-12); the document gathered propositions for improving and maintaining ecological and social order. The promotion of world stability requires revising the issues of development and conservation, to bring well-being and survival of the planet.

### **2.5.1 - Ecological modernisation discourse**

The ‘Ecological modernisation discourse’ can be regarded as specific story-lines for the salvation of the world by conciliating development and natural conservation (Spaargaren et al. 2000; Buttel 2000; Fisher 2001). This type of discourse outlines environmental management as central to the current works focused on the mitigation of the environmental crisis.

The ecological modernisation perspective keeps the “legal, institutional, and eco-industrial and technomanagerial reforms – such as laws for water and air pollution control – as the pillars for improving the quality of the environment” (Zimmerer 2003: 4-5). It is then a reorientation of the environmental mainstream thoughts in the social sciences (Blaikie 1998). Ecological modernisation should not be perceived as a hegemonic discourse because there are other types of discourses, or mainstream approaches, in the environmental domain.

In fact, the change in thinking about environmental problems and possible practical solutions for them occurred in the second half of the 1980s when

‘greenspeak’ or ‘green discourses’ came onto the scene, together with a thrust towards new organisational principles and procedures as well as institutional innovations for dealing with everyday ecological problems. Ecological modernisation could be also connected to the deregulatory move in public administration introduced in the 1980s. It rejects the “anti-modern sentiments that were often found in the critical discourse of social movements”; in fact, ecological modernisation is a policy strategy that has its foundations “in progress and the problem-solving capacity of modern techniques and skills of social engineering” (Hajer 2005: 32-33).

In contrast to other ecological discourses, ecological modernisation does not address basic social contradictions; rather it has a “modernist and technocratic approach to the environment” with solutions for the environmental problems not centred in the social domain but in the techno-capacity of institutions to fix the current problems.

In this sense, the ‘environmental crisis’ is not regarded as “an anomaly of modernity” but an issue to be mastered and controlled through “modernist policy instruments” of pertinent institutions and experts (Hajer 2005: 33). The main critique is that it represents “different ways of writing the same old capitalist discourses that set nature as a commodity and only that” (Hajer 2005). The notion of an ecological modernisation has been called “the dismal quackery of eco-economics” (Ben-Ami 2004) and regarded by others as a ‘rhetorical tactic’, more precisely, the “proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing” because it uses arguments and proposes solutions to reconcile the irreconcilable.

## **Part III**

### **Concepts and theories on collaboration**

#### **2.6 - Introduction**

This part will debate the major findings on collaboration that will take into account with respect to the analysis of existing collaborative schemes in the (eco)tourism sector. Partnership and collaboration are not new paradigms in the social sciences. Specifically for the tourism sector, Bramwell and Lane (2000) and co-authors published a series of papers on tourism collaboration dealing with politics, practice and sustainability.

The approach of this book is ‘language’, ‘interactive process’ and ‘structural arrangements’ of partnerships in Brazil and New Zealand and the effect they may have on stakeholders’ practices. My position is that ‘collaboration/partnership’ can advance dialogue towards a less contentious (eco)tourism implementation and development. The belief is that ‘conflict resolution’ and ‘common language’ in (eco)tourism can be promoted through structured platforms in which meaning and power are negotiated and agreed for collective advantage.

‘Collaboration’ is not a new theme in the debate on resource management, environmental planning and sustainability. Collaboration has been underlined as an essential approach to solve communal problems in (eco)tourism planning and development; it has been taken as central to the delivery of sustainability (Robinson 2000: 309). On a global scale, the United Nations has acknowledged how important collaboration is to harness efforts, projects and organisations in order to improve life styles and the environment. In 1998, the UN created the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), set up to support programmes and projects in eight strategic areas, including to ensure environmental sustainability.

In the 90s, a great number of articles and books began to be published covering the synergist and interactive ways through which various stakeholders could cooperate to achieve sustainable outcomes at local, regional and national levels (Jamal and Gatez 1995; Long and Arnold 1995; Schuet, Selin and Carr 2001). General theories of inter-organisational partnerships can be used to explain ‘how’ stakeholders can cooperate with each other to solve problems that affect them.

The initiatives are non-stop with social and environmental organisations everywhere concerned to create networks for promoting sustainable development and ‘good governance’. For Hall, “networks refer to the development of linkages among actors (organisations and individuals) where linkages become more formalized towards maintaining mutual interests” (2000: 145-146). Such linkages exist on a continuum, ranging from ‘very flexible’ to strings in form of coalitions, and to more long-term shared structures. Partnership and collaboration exist at all levels and among different stakeholders (refer to Fig. 2.0, p.95).

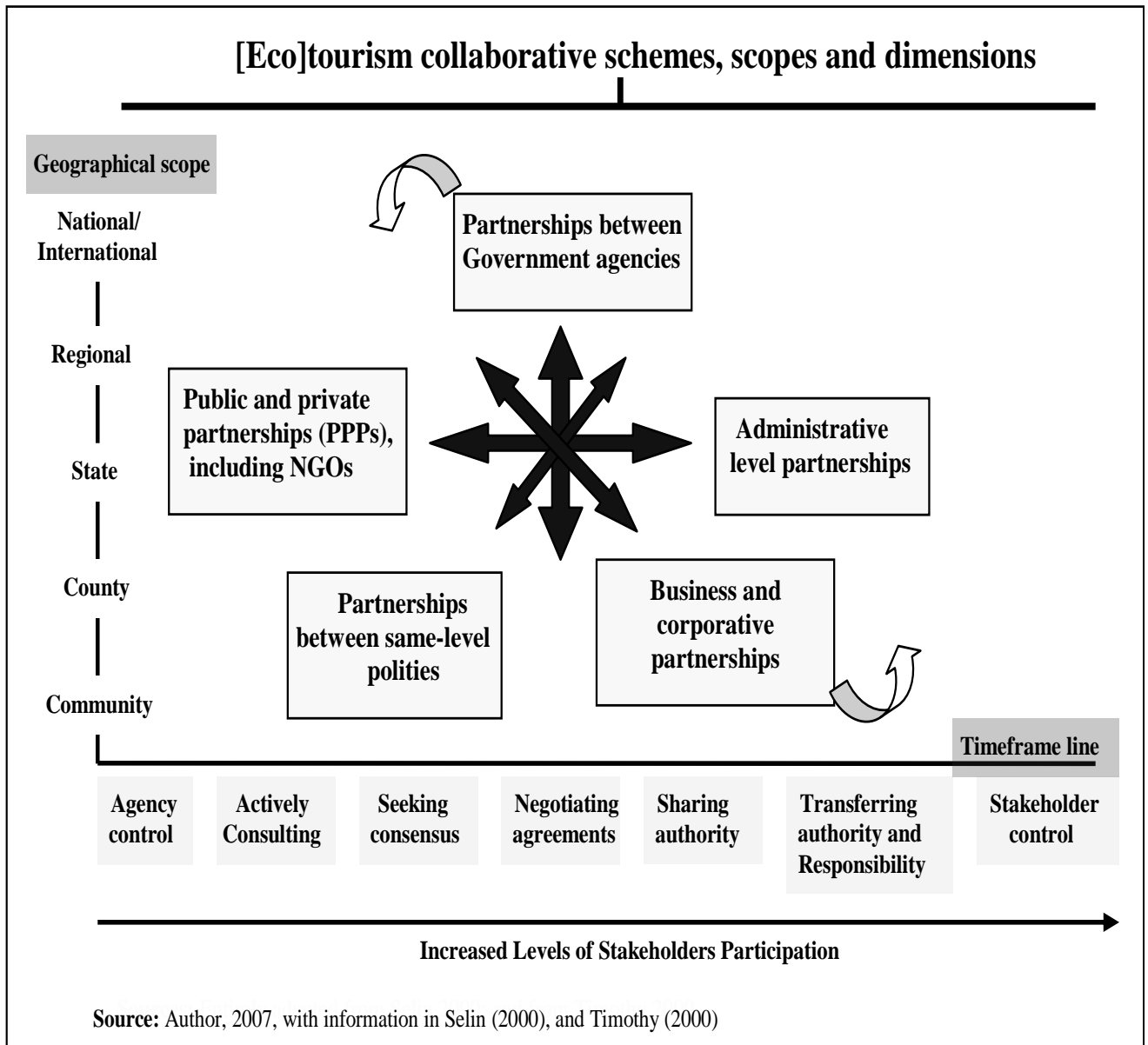
However, to gather a number of actors to work jointly with the purpose of solving collective problems requires the creation of proper channels for dialogue and communication, otherwise, collaboration can add to problems rather than show directions for solving them.

In fact, the great paradox of (eco)tourism development in pristine and protected-areas is that its success may lead to their ruin (Saxena 2006: 264; Higham and Luck 2007: 119; Higham and Luck 2007). Also, there are great expectations that collaborative arrangements can create a set of agreements for possibly mediating human interventions in natural spaces (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b). Collaboration in ecotourism should not be only beneficial for participating actors; it should lead networked actors towards conservationist achievements.

‘Consensus’ in the environmental debate is still a far-fetched goal. Many of the environmental discourses - including ecotourism ones - should be demystified to reveal secure paths for human decisions and actions. The key premise that guides the investigation is that ‘if stakeholders disagree over communal and collective issues’, if stakeholders construct and/or reproduce diverging discourses, they are also able to create institutional arrangements and frameworks for consensus building. They themselves retain the will and the means to come together to debate and agree upon discourses that will orient their actions and routines.

Collaborative schemes are thus believed to become forums for debates, to become ‘associational public spaces’ (Stark 2002) in which the actors become able to create a dynamic channel for dialogue, expecting to increase trust, reduce stress and expenses, and to bring the stakeholders to a level of desirable transparency at dealing with each other. Through constant interacting, local actors are believed to work on collective areas of convergence in nature conservation. Through dialogue and negotiation, distorted discourses are disclosed, re-elaborated in a way that can reorder the social practices with gains for stakeholders, for nature and for visitors.

**Figure 2.0** - Scopes and dimensions for collaboration in ecotourism development



In order to understand the dynamics and synergy of ‘power relations’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘conservation’ a comprehensive assessment framework is required. The following framework (Figure 2.1) illustrates the dynamics of negotiating power within a layered interactive process that involves ‘structure’, ‘norms’ and ‘agencies/agent

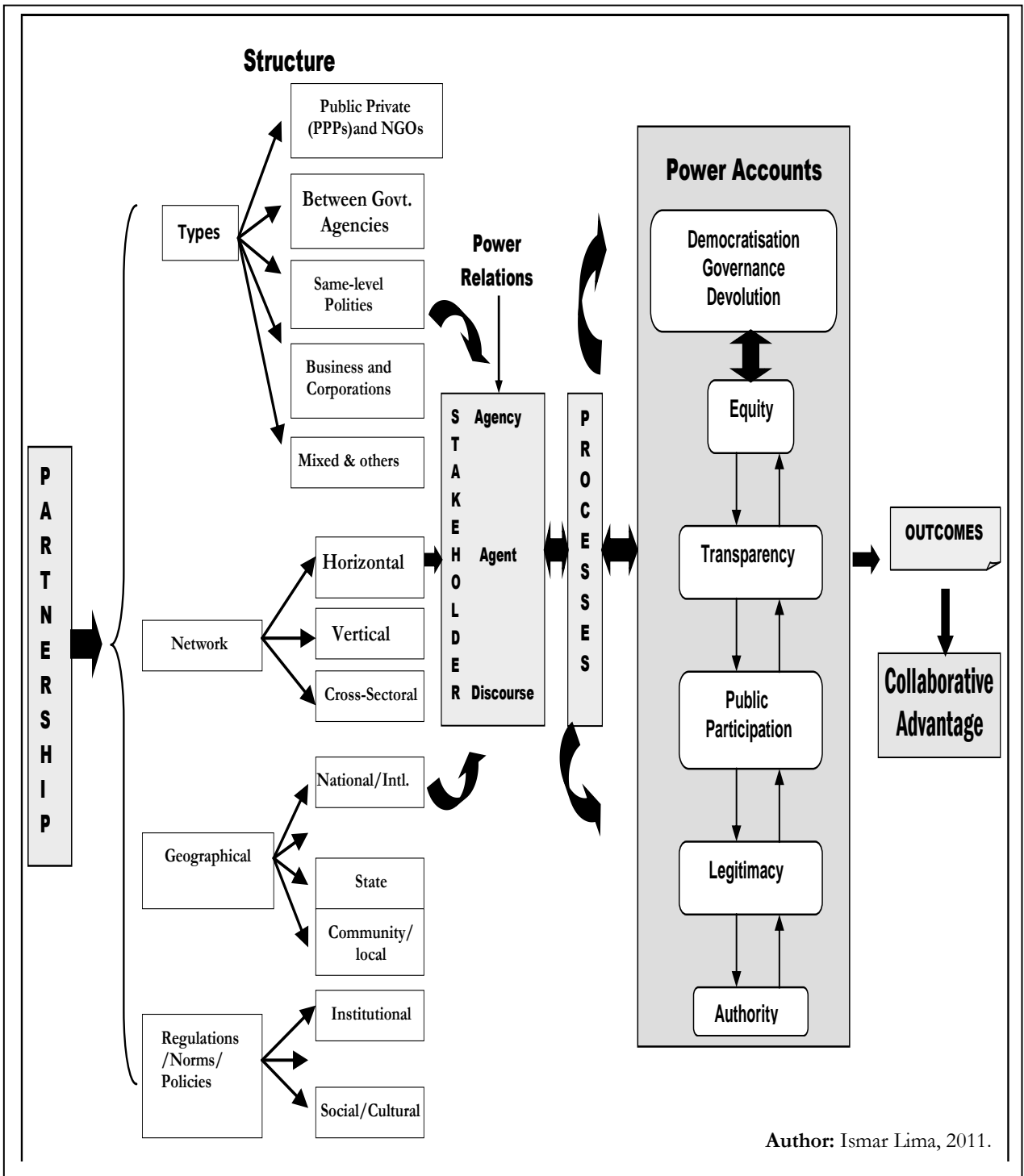
The framework is an initial step for assessing the partnership process in the selected case studies. Even though the focus of this investigation is the discourses of the stakeholders’, the ‘structure’ and the ‘context’ of the partnerships are not disregarded.

Figure 2.1 attempts to show that stakeholders do not make decisions motivated only by good-will and business self-contained issues; stakeholders are part of a complex structure that directs and indirectly informs, guides, assists and enforces a set of conditions and procedures. The interactive process through partnership/collaboration makes the links more apparent, and all these events, legislation and partners somewhat influence other partners’ role.

Partnership is then proposed as one of the ways to manage ‘group interests’ and ‘power relations’ to an extent that the processes may result in democratic and collective gains (or collaborative advantage), see Figure 2.1.

Partnership schemes are believed to create levels of dialogue and understanding that will result in ‘power accounts’ which are explained here as circumstantial events and tools for management and planning in (eco)tourism. However, one item cited as a key motive for companies and organisations to adhere to collaborative schemes is the potential to overcome long-term costs of adversarial conflicts among interest groups.

Figure 2.1 - Segmented collaborative advantages



Cooperation is to establish channels for communication in a way that mitigates the potential for struggle and resistance; dialogue can readily bring actors to roundtables where divergences do not result in litigation and in economic and social costs. Grounded in this ethos, collaboration can tacitly create and promote group dynamics in which stalemates and impasses are approached constructively with motions and perspectives towards a common language and hybrid solutions.

Transparency and trust are the bonds in the process of creating mutual stakeholder reliability. In fact, the primary aim in a partnership should be the elimination of suspicions and the pledge that hearings will regard all parties and voices.

In terms of collaboration, cooperation and conflict resolution, Stark (2002) assessed ecotourism, analyzing its definitions, and contrasting them to codes of ethics used in recent worldwide tourism. She tried to detect the limitations of these codes by applying to them Habermas's discourse ethics and the feminist ethical and political theories of Seyla Benhabib. She claims that "the overemphasis on the rational aspects both of the principle itself and of the notion of 'rational trust' stands in need of a corrective ethics if they are to be used successfully in negotiating real-life conflicts" (p.1). For instance, the answers to what should be 'right' or 'wrong' in ecotourism practice; or to define parameters for collective actions for group stability and social dividends.

Stark (2002) raised the question of whether the discussions and decisions involving local communities, regional and national jurisdictions and other actors could be constructed so that all stakeholders would be sure that their viewpoints would be fully heard, considered and managed in significant ways. In an unequal power relation for decision-making, some stakeholders may not have their interests fairly considered by the powerful ones or by the expert participants. During debates, a variety of scientific and technical discourses occur "given greater epistemological weight and often considered 'objective' over or against 'subjective' local and lay discourses" (Stark 2002: 108), causing a feeling of inferiority or marginalisation among those who do not detain the expertise in certain areas or lack communication power.

The emphasis in Habermas' discourse on ethics on intersubjectivity gives a relevant dimension for disputes that may arise in the public arena, and includes the moral aspects of ecotourism and its impacts (Stark 2002). Habermas has made efforts to manufacture ways actors can come to consensual and rational dialogue, in the sense that those involved are able to share the same value systems.

Fundamental to the idea of rationality is its tradition grounded in giving reasons-for and reasons-against (Habermas 1984), on arguments and counter-arguments. The problem is that when actors join in public debates, the intention to solve problems arises together with 'new thorns' to be faced and eliminated; while solutions demand more in communication and hearings, the new thorns (dilemmas) function as impediments to possible agreements in collaboration.

So, issues in ecotourism, resource management and land tenure/ownership following attempts to deconstruct mainstream discourses to discuss and reassemble

them as new consensual discourses, for new social practices, may be obtained only after a contorted process.

The level of complexity to bring different viewpoints into the same channel of communication for consensus building can result in unexpected levels of fatigue and stress among the participants, and consequently negotiations do not advance. Aware of this situation, mediators and participants should focus on subjects of convergence rather than begin negotiations with the most polemic and controversial discourses/themes. This is possibly close to what Stark (2002) mentioned as the need for a kind of “application discourse” in public debates (p.109). Consensus building is above all a special political occasion, with agreed non-hierarchical participation and readiness for trade-offs.

Theoretically, weak and powerful parties should be then brought to the roundtable with the same importance, and the technical language replaced by semantic constructions that do not cause discomfort; the language in use should not intimidate the weakest parties.

Habermas (1984) has shown a keen interest in finding rational methods for mutual understanding in which communication becomes free of coercion. In his views, the key to reach understanding lies in “using reasons or grounds to gain intersubjective recognition for criticisable validity claims” positioning them as right or appropriate action in relation to an overt normative context (1984: xii). For these ends, communicative competence is critical. In ecotourism and stakeholders disagreements, I agree that ‘communicational channels and spaces’ grounded by normative apparatus have the ability to make a crisis a ‘constructive event’ without necessarily bringing all parties into consensus.

Habermas (1984) advocates that the key for a democratic, peaceful and just deliberative process in decision taking lies in the ability to accept all reasons, and assess all pertinent facts, with justice. This principled platform may incite people to move towards trade-offs and consensus.

Discourse ethics is as complex as it is subjective and a summary of its major aspects is necessary (as cited in Gergen 1999: 152-153): 1) where there is conflict, a process of argumentation should be put in motion and be directed toward consensus; 2) everyone should have equal rights to participate; 3) participants in the discussion should be of equal power on a level playing field in which no expression is suppressed or coerced; 4) everyone can introduce into the discussion any assertion or expression of attitude or desire he/she wishes; 5) only those solutions will be valid that meet the approval of all participants and everyone’s interests must be satisfied.

Habermas believes that consensus becomes a product of opinion exchange if it takes place along ethical lines. This hope seems to be idealistic without a proper institutional arrangement for actors to dialogue and negotiate. Moreover, if there are opposing parties, such as pro-life and pro-choice advocates over a certain issue or public debate, is it likely that opponents’ reason and evidence will convince the other side of the debate that they are wrong – that they were simply operating under false assumptions?



People live in a puzzling world where deep traditions make the scholar's attempt to create rules or ethics to avoid the collision of perspectives. It is rare that individuals or groups arrange regulations for advancing dialogue which are neutral.

Regulations are biased in some way, and Gergen (1999) goes even further by stating that "even the strict rules of argument and evidence that prevail in the courtroom supposedly producing 'justice for all' – favour the economically privileged" (p.154). This is true if the person takes into account that one who pleads guilty in court may not be promptly jailed because of the benefit of a 'bail', which puts better-off people in a situation of privilege, awarding them temporary freedom. The verdict discourse is then changed by an overlapping judicial discourse that permits bail, which creates different realities for the rich and the poor. Second, according to Gergen, "there are no universal rules for transformative dialogue, for dialogue itself will alter the character of what is useful" (1999: 154).

### **2.6.2 - The conflict-consensus parameter**

Campbell (1981) signalled that 'conflict' is a form of social relation. It is an occurrence in which action "is oriented intentionally to carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of the other party or parties", and then to exercise power and consequently lead the related actor(s) to achieve "imperative control" or forms of domination (p.179). The proposed parameter is that societal relationships are set in extremes. On one side, there are theories that explain society as being organised in competition and in conflict.

Achievements are conditioned to existing forms of coercion, of power, be they, economic, political or "spiritual" through manipulation of feelings and convictions (Campbell 1981: 38). Conversely, at the other extreme, there are theories that establish conflict as "a surface matter" which functions as a barrier for agreements and consensus building. The fact is that any society needs its members to accept and adopt norms and regulations in order to permit society to function. Social order can be achieved in two ways: by creating channels of communication that set dialogue over coercion; or by coercive means, with enforcement of law and punishments as tools that function to bring actors into conformity; or conformity subtly attained through the pressures of "public opinion and social ostracism" (Campbell 1981: 39).

In Aristotle's and Marx's views, conflict resolution and the elimination of the imperatives of domination become a social ideal, with individuals claiming that competitive conflict is a natural event whose solution evolve from the "relative power of the contestants...or even a welcome expression of the values of forcefulness, aggression and achievement, something that all humans desire and which is to be admired" (Campbell 1981: 39).

In fact, the consensus-conflict parameter is bonded to the capacity to obtain the consent of individuals to facts they oppose outright; this process of consent or conformity is called by Campbell (1981) the 'concept of power' and can be achieved "through the use of force, or of money" (p.39). On the other hand, consensus theories state that agreements rely more on the idea of authority than on the exercise of power

in a physical sense. In Itacaré, consent in ecotourism development was observed as powerful stakeholders decide to work more closely with the community and more marginalised groups breaking with a historical social dichotomy in the district (refer to Chapter 4).

### **2.6.3 - Social contract, cooperation and language**

In his ‘theory of society’, Hobbes signalled that human nature is person-centred and actions are oriented to satisfy one’s wishes, which appears to make cooperative human relationships impossible (Campbell 1981: 76). In this sense, suspicions over others’ thinking and actions work as barriers for collaboration/partnerships. No rational person has any goodwill to engage in joint agreements – even those that promise to be mutually beneficial - if the person fears that others will take advantage at their expense; fears will drive out hope (Campbell 1981) with early expectations coming to naught.

For successful steps towards cooperation, actors must find instruments or have arrangements that guarantee for them that a third party will not act inadvertently just in his/her self-interest rather than struggle to bring gains for the group. In the absence of such instruments, it can appear unreasonable to collaborate with another person over whom one has no control. Hobbes’s proposal for such a dilemma is that before stakeholders progress towards complex forms of agreements, they must first contract with each other “to set up power that will force them to keep to their bargains” (Campbell 1981: 77). That is, negotiation of power - for party equalisation – will keep one committed and tuned to group talks and aims.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his writings (1750-1782), discusses the Social Contract as “an agreement among [people] previously in a ‘state of nature’ to constitute a ‘corporate and collective person’” (Rousseau 1988: xiv), awarding themselves a code of laws to regulate their mutual social relationships. Rousseau’s views on ‘contract’ closely focussed on the ability of people to delegate their power and will to the State which they believe – as it retains its sovereignty - will keep their freedom while protecting life and property. In collaborative systems, attention should be given to the ability of actors to delegate decisions to “a new moral person [or institutional arrangement or organisation] in whose being they share...without surrendering their liberty one to another” (Rousseau 1988: xxiv).

In fact, Rousseau did not invent the doctrine of the social contract; it is a theory as old as Greek Sophists. All social contract theories represent society as “based on an original contract, either between the people and the government, or between all the individuals composing the State” (Rousseau 1988: xvii). For him, all democratic governments are mixed in character, and “are only comparatively democratic” (1988: xxvi) because pure democracy in the sense of ‘government by all the people in every detail’ is unlikely to become a human institution (Rousseau 1988: xxvi). The point is that any government will be ruled by select(ed) people.

The effect of the Social Contract, according to Rousseau, is the creation of a new individual. When it has taken place, ‘at once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a corporate and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from the act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will (Rousseau 1988: xxxi, and Book I, chap. 6).

A social contract is understood as a device through which people have the will to act for peaceful relationships once they are assured to have the benefits they wish. They will then delegate power to the State body to manage and arbitrate for the whole of society. Consequently the state obtains the means to keep peaceful human relations in equilibrium. Despite being used at the macro level, to theorise about humans-state cooperation, the principles of the social contract can be regarded as a process to establish forms of good governance through partnerships.

Hobbes signalled, that “no contract is binding unless there is a superior power to enforce it” (Campbell 1981: 77); however, people should be able to support such a social contract without being coerced.

Central to this notion is that a managing or governing body, legitimately constituted and endorsed by people through consent, cannot become a political power to harvest one’s freedom and wishes; hence, forms of cooperation that continually sustain and legitimise the ‘governing body’ cannot be established by force. Itacaré has experienced this process of legitimation of ‘groups’ for dealing with social, economic and environmental issues from the perspective of the majority; it represents a move into forms of social contracts (refer to Chapters 4 and 6). The role of language for the social contract is also regarded. For Hobbes, language is “a rule-based activity requiring learning and authoritative standards, and men [sic!] cannot make contracts without using language” (Campbell 1981: 86).

The first choice in speech communication should focus on the role of communication for building social consensus (Martin and Colburn 1972: vii). The lifeworld is represented as a “culturally transmitted and linguistically organised stock of interpretive patterns” (Habermas 1984: xxvi). Whereas social integration presents itself as part of “the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld [...] functional integration only comes into view when the lifeworld is objectified as a boundary-maintaining system” (1985: xxix, chapter 2: 348-349). The art of partnership or collaboration is to present one’s view in a way such that the partners become inclined to comply. One brings individuals into a discussion or debate related to an issue of one’s interests, expecting others to expose their ideas and views, to share opinions, and endorse decisions that can advance and re-orient social practices for the well-being of the whole group even though one does not agree with all the points.

Collaborative negotiation of discourses is a trade-off stance with parties settling and accepting demands and wishes. The focus in collaboration will be the ability of actors to work towards convergence rather than divergence in order to construct the pillars for consensus. The most challenging aspect is to find or elect an

arbitrator or mediator for balancing or at least for ordering the process of consensus building. The mediator should be someone or group with acknowledged authority or eligibility to bring stakeholders into communication and keep them tuned in and motivated with the debates. Mediator(s) is(are) expected to be innate conciliators.

#### **2.6.4 - Debating the collaboration theory**

Collaboration theory (Charon 1985; Gray 1985, 1989; Jamal and Getz 1995; Wood and Gray 1991) discusses interactions focusing on organisations. The theory reinforces the relevance of agency rather than structure for explaining human attitudes, behaviour, and decisions. Araujo and Bramwell (2002), discuss extensively the importance of collaboration and partnerships in tourism planning and regional development. They analyse the advantages and constraints of collaborative arrangements in socioeconomic and political contexts. The way government organisations are harnessed with other tourism actors will determine how tourism develops.

Partnerships promoting regular face-to-face meetings among participants ease the process of discussion and negotiation towards acceptable proposals of (nature) tourism models (Araujo and Bramwell 2002), but Hall (2000) warns that “the linguistic niceties of partnership and collaboration” and the promises of these schemes, stakeholder exclusion can happen in tourism planning and policy processes (p.285-286).

Even though, there has been growing attention to inter-organisational collaboration because it can become a process through which partners can pool field knowledge, expertise and other resources that can make management policies more effective (Pretty 1995; Araujo and Bramwell 2002). Joint-work is a perspective drawn mainly from collaboration theory (Parker 2000; Araujo and Bramwell 2002) and has become the cornerstone for projects that aim to achieve success in (nature) tourism operations.

Cooperative work can occur when several parties want to respond to a communal problem, but individually would not have enough control over significant resources to respond as they want (Gray 1989; Araujo and Bramwell 2002), and the partners can forge “cost-effective solutions to regional challenges” such as in the case of tourism organisations (Selin and Beason 1991: 640). This way, resource dependency does not become an issue for further disputes.

Wood and Gray (1991) confirm that “stakeholders collaborate in order to reduce complexity” and to control uncertainties. The main assumption of collaboration theory is that collaborative actions reduce complexities. Gray (1989) argues that collaboration implies “joint decision-making among key parties in a problem domain.” For people this implies that information flow and learning become less obtrusive; they can re-arrange and distribute tasks equitably to achieve maximum effectiveness. Within organisations, collaboration contributes to overcoming administrative barriers; tasks can be better allocated; and there is strong potential to trim down costs at the operational level. At an inter-organisational level, collaboration

uses agencies, bodies and entities that share communal interests, or at least, work towards some communal goals; they may thus benefit in terms of redistribution of actions in areas where each one is leader. Operating collectively they can establish schemes for collective marketing and constant dialogue over market/organisational competition, reducing expenses.

The assumptions of collaboration theory should be taken into account when one is analysing sustainable tourism partnerships on a regional level. It is believed that partnerships and cooperation projects are well situated to harness local, regional, and national interests within a regional development scheme (Gunn 1994; Inskeep 1991; Tosun and Jenkins 1996; Araujo and Bramwell 2002; Hall 1999).

If the common understanding is that collective actions minimise differences and optimise benefits for those involved in such actions, some assumptions about partnerships should be considered: 1) joint actions reduce tensions between central government and regional and local parties; 2) regional-scale joint activity secures equitable distribution of benefits in development; 3) partnerships reduce bureaucracies; 4) they strengthen locals against external adversities; 5) legitimate individuals excluded from partnerships may block the implementation of policies; and 6) partnerships/cooperation facilitate the management of debts and the acquisition of external funding.

The theoretical approach to collaboration/cooperation is broadly diffused in those of management, administration, and sociology fields. In tourism, the collaboration perspective is discussed by Kernel (2005). She focuses on the challenge of integrating economic, social and environmental issues for planning sustainable tourism. Kernel centres her investigation on 26 small and medium sized tourism enterprises in Denmark. Using the theory of collaboration, Kernel (2005) tries to identify common interests, problems and sets directions for sustainable development in tourism ventures. Fadeeva (2004) also uses collaborative explanations to explore sustainable tourism and cross-sectoral networks for sustainability. Determined to understand the collaborative links of public and private organisations, Fadeeva chose as a case study the EMPOST-NET project of the European Union embedded in varied networks.

In fact, efforts to cooperate for solving problem-issues in (eco)tourism should be more broadly approached. For example, ecotourism can become an experimental ground for trying out ways of negotiating solutions for daily stalemates, and of negotiating the existing differences that block the stakeholders from building a harmonic ecotourism activity at an operational level. A good example for analysis may be *Itacaré* village organisational arrangements with various actors trying to put the differences and historical struggles behind them as they take initial steps in the creation of a forum for debates on collective problems that will advance ecotourism/nature tourism development in the region. Roberts and Hall (2001) say that currently (nature) tourism development has been closely linked to management and policy theory.

Certainly, problems in ecotourism implementation never exist alone; they are part of more complex socio-political and environmental issues, and there is certainly

much to gain from examining their discursive content as well as the public hearings in multi-stakeholders interactive systems. What happens through agency and structure matters as well, “people’s action will be influenced by personal and societal mechanisms that are independent of our thoughts or impressions” such as the physical nature of the objects and the power of institutions (Sims-Schouten et al. 2007: 102-103).

In terms of ecotourism development, the government policies and local collaborative structures are elements embedded in discursive constructions; they are also structures exogenous to them that shape social practices. Taking this critical realist perspective, ‘associational public spaces’ can be regarded as a platform for researchers to investigate the dialogic and performative character of power (Bramwell and Lane 2000: 179).

Albeit being a prominent theme, collaboration has not yet been intensely researched; it is interdisciplinary with content drawn mostly from the social sciences and management. Three approaches can be identified in the literature (Huxham and Vangen 2005: 10). The first group of authors focuses on the ‘life cycle’ and ‘phases’ of collaboration. Normally in this approach authors discuss the activities that take place or should take place in each phase of the partnership evolution.

The second approach deals with the causes and consequences of success and failures in the partnerships. There are factors that can help partners to achieve common goals; and there are factors that can bring them into disagreement or disinterest, consequently weakening networks and possibly frustrating collective projects (Table 2.6).

Huxham and Vangen (2005) add that many researchers have dedicated time to investigate thoroughly the role of a specific factor in collaborative arrangements such as ‘trust’ (p. 11). On the other hand, some researchers have paid attention to ‘skills’, ‘structure’ and ‘competencies’ necessary to overcome the negative factors in collaboration (Scott and Thurston 1997; Williams 2002; Buckley et al. 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005).

The third approach is related to strategies to assist meetings, symposia and roundtables for partnership implementation and development in which researchers are frequently oriented to explore managerial and modelling solutions in collaboration (Huxham and Vangen 2005).

The following section will focus on the first approach in which Selin and Chavez explain their evolutionary life cycle for collaboration, and their views are compared to the other authors.

**Table 2.6 Factors that can be critical to success or failure of partnership**

Successful Performance Factors	Poor Performance Factors
Recognition of a high degree of interdependence in planning and managing the domain/project	Personal agendas
Recognition of individual and/or mutual benefits to be derived from the collaborative process	Individual egos and high profile
A perception that decisions arrived at will be implemented	Politicking; unbalanced power distribution
The inclusion of key stakeholder groups	Poor managerial relationships
The appointment of a legitimate convener to initiate and facilitate community-based collaboration	Geographical distances
Formulation of aims and objectives	Cultural distances
Having meetings open to whoever displays interest	Blocked communication channels
Access of information about the process and giving feedback to participants (summaries)	Lack of transparency
To be connected to the community leaders and active volunteers	Exclusionary models where a multiparty participation is essential
Encouragement of presentations and public positions at meetings	Attempts at manipulation of members and of ideas
Using working sessions to focus participation and the development of products [participatory approach	No trust building and suspicions
Online guidelines and codes open for inputs	Use of difficult technical language which causes annoyance
Timeframe and targets must match, be realistic and well-addressed	Lack of commitment to meetings, deadlines and agendas

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008, with information in Huxham and Vangen 2005.

### 2.6.5 - Selin and Chavez’s evolutionary framework for collaboration

Following Gray’s (1985, 1989) recommendation to fill research gaps on collaboration, Selin and Chavez (1995) focused on three case studies linked to tourism development in the United States to collect empirical data in order to elaborate an evolutionary model of partnership(s). Based on their fieldwork and on the integration of organisational behaviour field theory, Selin and Chavez defined a model that

suggests that “tourism partnerships begin in a context of environmental forces” (1995: 844) and evolve through three phases: problem-setting, direction-setting and structure setting. Their findings validate the three stages underlined by Gray’s model (1989).

Individuals, groups and organisations that look for potential partners in a society with dynamic structures and inter-relations tend to deal with forces that go against their cooperative goals. These forces are various, “competitive or technological, while others are political, social, or economic ones” (Selin and Chavez 1995: 848). Not all forces have a negative impact; some can help organisations to address common problems. According to Selin and Chavez (1995), partnerships can be initiated through the intervention of a ‘facilitator’, a ‘convener’ or ‘broker’.

In Brazil, non-governmental organisations and class representative associations normally approach key stakeholders to get together for debating and looking for solutions. In Silves (Amazonia, Brazil), the ecotourism project of ASPAC<sup>7</sup> was initiated through this process.

Local leaders, highly concerned with the depletion of fishing lakes in the district, took the initiative to articulate actions, harnessing some Silves communities around the problem and making them aware of the necessity to protect the lakes; later they received external financial support from the Austrian and Swedish governments to start and manage conservation and ecotourism projects. They built an eco-resort, called Aldeia do Vale, where they have employed around 30 community members. Ecotourism in Silves (ASPAC/Aldeia do Vale) is a good example of a mixed partnership, with formal and informal links and different levels of interaction. Their networks were established between the communities and ASPAC’s leaders, and between ASPAC and the international and national donors and partners (Austria, Sweden, PDA, Pro-Varzea, Brazilian Ministry for the Environment, and WWF).

‘Crisis’ is another factor that can become the motive for local actors to work jointly. ‘Crisis’ is regarded as one of the catalysts for “collective action through partnerships” (Selin Chavez 1995: 848). For example, in Itacaré the constant arbitrary decisions and lobby of powerful stakeholders to take individual advantages over decision-making have sparked the creation of ‘resistant groups’. NGOs and class leaders decided to confront unilateral decisions and possible abuses from wealthier groups with campaigns and public demonstrations. These groups have demanded equity, participation and transparency in decisions that may affect shared resources, ecotourism matters and the community’s social life.

The crisis in Itacaré was a historically expanding domination by powerful stakeholders who have controlled land, (eco)tourism business and natural resources. They are accused at the same time of excluding the locals through a ‘marginalisation process’. These events motivated fragmented groups to get together (in a collaborative

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<sup>7</sup> ASPAC - Silves Association for Environmental and Cultural Preservation.



way) in order to establish ‘strategies’ to monitor political decisions as well as to exercise ‘pressure’ for a more democratic system.

For Itacaré, the most emblematic crisis was an attempt to “privatise” public areas. The word ‘privatise’ refers to restrictive access and the charge of entry fees to beaches by some shoreline farm owners in Itacaré. This action returned in form of multiple grouped-individuals united against the charge; it was a counter-reactionary position.

Apart from ‘convenors’ and ‘crisis’, other factors play a significant role in partnership formation such as ‘existing networks’ and ‘vested interests’ (Selin and Chavez 1995: 849). The tourism business sector and community groups in Itacaré have different levels of networks among them, and consequently they have a variety of vested interests.

The complexity of networks and the particular interests certainly have played a crucial role in determining links and achieving adherence to any formalisation of partnerships. Such partnerships have occurred among intra-governmental agencies with short timeframes. Normally government bodies cooperate following a timeframe to implement policies, for capacity building and/or for local structuring.

In this book, It is discussed and deconstructed the ‘structure’ and ‘discourses’ of some collaborative arrangements in Itacaré, some of them in a very seminal stage or pre-partnership (Chapter 6) (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b) as well as debate Kuaka NZ as a case study of a small-scale business (Chapter 7).

### **2.6.6 - Partnerships and their life cycle**

The first phase of Selin and Chavez’s evolutionary model is classified as ‘antecedents’ and includes existing factors that may influence or determine partnerships as just discussed (crisis, convener, existing networks, etc). The second phase is ‘problem-setting’ which encompasses a set of factors and events for partnerships such as ‘interdependence’, ‘legitimation’, ‘identification of communal problems’, ‘prospective benefits’, and ‘perceived reliance to stakeholders’.

The next phase is ‘direction-setting’ in which stakeholders establish goals, set ground rules, jointly search for strategic information, promote the organisation of sub-groups and explore options for partnering’. ‘Structuring’ is a phase in the model that involves the formalisation of relationship (as being formally collaborative), the assignment of roles, elaboration of tasks, and the creation of a system that helps the stakeholders to monitor and control the implementation process and members’ actions. The last phase is ‘outcomes’ by accomplishing results that bring ‘collective collaborative advantages’ as initially wished and planned by the local actors. There is a life-cycle in the collaborative process.

Selin and Chavez’s model shares some common aspects with Waddock’ (1989) and Lowndes’ and Skelcher’s (1998). They position the ‘structuring’ and ‘consolidation’ in different phases of the process but both take the point that previous ‘networks’ are a beginning to constructing a more stable and formalised partnership (Table 2.6). It is

noticed that Butler's (1980) and Selin and Chavez's (1995) tourism evolutionary cycles have similar patterns of events for each of their phases.

For example, 'Antecedents' is in line with 'Exploration'. 'Problem setting' implies 'Involvement' which, thus, demands 'interdependence, consensus and problem definition. 'Development/Direction Setting' requires the establishment of goals, setting rules, exploring options and organisation of sub-groups. 'Consolidation/Structuring' involves formalization, assignment of roles and monitoring schemes. 'Stabilization/Outcomes' infers 'achievements' (benefits and impacts). I have chosen Selin and Chavez's model for this investigation because they have five different phases to explain and situate my case studies. Rather than talking about termination of partnerships as the last phase as in Butler's (1980) cycle, they have approached it in terms of 'outcomes' and have taken it as a cyclical model; this aspect fits Butler's tourism evolution cycle and its 'rejuvenation phase'. That is, tourism development should be regarded as a cyclical process through which success and consolidation can be achieved by strengthening local stakeholders' trust building and collaboration through networks.

Waddock (1989) purposely uses earlier theory applied to organisational partnerships. She highlights the need of "re-hooking' partners with a broadening agenda" with the goal of keeping them interested and committed to the partnership process (as in Caffyn 2000: 224). Lowndes and Skecher (1998) investigated the changing modes of governance with special attention given to networks and formal partnerships. Three modes of governance were observed to give grounds to their claims that in each stage, market relationships; hierarchical arrangements, and informal and fluid networking determine a greater or lesser role of the stakeholders.

Networking, hierarchies and market mechanisms for "tendering and contracts may play the major role in the programme delivery phase" (as in Caffyn 2000: 208). However, Huxham and Vangen are skeptical about the possibility of obvious divisions and sub-divisions within a certain timeframe of a partnership, as "it is often hard to identify clear beginnings and endings [in collaboration] let alone specific phases in between" (p.10).

Table 2.6 compares three life-cycles for partnerships as elaborated by Selin and Chavez (1995), Waddock (1989), and Lowndes and Skelcher (1998), and they can be contrasted to Butler's (1980) tourism evolution cycle (see Table 2.7).

**Table 2.7 Partnership evolution and life cycle**

<b>Selin and Chavez (1995) Evolutionary tourism partnership model</b>				
Antecedents, crisis, mandate, vision, networks, leadership, incentives	Problem setting, interdependence, consensus on stakeholders, and benefits, problem definition	Direction setting, establish goals, set ground rules, explore options, organise sub-groups	Structuring, formalisation, roles assigned, tasks elaborated, monitoring	Outcomes, programmes, impacts, benefits (feedback loop of cyclical)
<b>Waddock (1989) Evolutionary model of partnership development</b>				
Context, crisis, mandate, networks, vision, broker	Initiation, issue crystallization, coalition building, forum established, trust building	Establishment, purpose formulation, work begins on agendas	Maturity, purpose reformulation, broadening of focus	(Death)
<b>Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) Partnership life cycle</b>				
Pre-partnership Collaboration: Network mode of governance, informality, trust, sense of common purpose	Partnership creation And consolidation Hierarchy mode of governance, assertion of status and authority, formalization of procedures	Delivery, market mechanisms, tendering and contracts, lower cooperation	Termination and succession, network mode of governance, uncertainty, new openness, community, involvement	
<b>Butler (1980) Tourism area cycle of evolution</b>				

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008, Adapted from Caffyn 2000, p. 204-205.

### 2.7 - Associational public spaces

Of utmost importance for this investigation is the understanding of institutional models for collaboration and of sketches of autonomous deliberative bodies that can serve as ‘spaces’ for consensus building. That is, ‘associational public space’ is not necessarily a place; it can be a network, an event, or a cluster of people with similar mindset and/or with communal goals.

The socially constructed aspects of ‘associational spaces’ reside in the fact they can become the occasion for ‘meaning production’ and ‘agreements on meanings’ that may advance the managerial aspects of (eco)tourism development. By agreeing on meanings, stakeholders set boundaries for debating, approaching and for strife solving. For instance, Seyla Benhabib drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt has proposed the creation of ‘associational public spaces’ through which stakeholders would learn

“how to reason, understand and appreciate the standpoint of other participants” (Stark 2002: 110).

In public space, featured to ease and encourage collaborative actions, actors are expected to take the viewpoints of others, and then advance negotiations through, what Arendt called, “transcending judgment” (Stark 2002: 110). It is a situation in which participants present themselves in good-will to take others’ standpoints into consideration on the basis of moral respect. To regard other party views, inquiries and claims become pivotal for initial talks in collaboration because these talks will allow heterogeneous participants to identify web of interests and points of convergence.

Transcending judgement does not imply that all standpoints will be taken to the final debates and roundtables for consensus building. Rather, it is a way of genuinely transforming ‘deliberative arrangements’ in ‘public’ and ‘associational’ spaces in which all voices have their ‘say’ and listeners and mediators are ready to underline the fundamental but implied contents. In these spaces, all statements are discourses that could be deconstructed. ‘Collaborative schemes’ could create an environment where stakeholders are able to discuss and negotiate meanings and values for nature and nature tourism, reordering their individual and collective perceptions and actions.

Public associational spaces are ideal for interaction in which knowledge, storytelling, personal experience and testimony “are expanded to include narratives of all sorts” (Stark 2002: 110). In the associational public space, differences are expected to coexist; I am not suggesting that conflicts will disappear; instead, conflicts are supposed to occur but with actors already organised and prepared for dialogue without competition - which will form a platform for collective exposure with a gradual process of knowing what the other thinks including whether the person is oriented towards the group goals. Knowing the other’s thinking is essential for increasing mutual trust.

Stark (2002) underlines that discursive construction in this setting should not be judged exclusively on the principles of objectivity and rationality; rather, discourses should be approached according to the meanings they enact in the process of social relationship and interaction. However, the relational processes should not be thought as subject to existing political space but to “its creation through the enactment of the multiple discourses in the events themselves” (p.110). All participants must be aware of and informed about the role of mediators/facilitators as well as the dynamics through which the discussion will take place.

Stark insists that the models for decision-making should be decided before discussion of the issue occurs. Mediators, discussion leaders and consultants “who have no stake in the issues are given the task to implement and monitor the discussions and decision-making” (Stark 2002: 111). This is in practice linked to the organisational aspects of public spaces. For example, in Itacaré village, powerful local actors realized that they would have obtained greater added-value to their ecotourism ventures if the weaker actors continued to be marginalised in the process of decision-making.

The challenge for keeping the flow of the talks is to overcome feelings of resentment internalised by many of those who have been oppressed by the dominant contextual powers. In the recent past, lobbies and the municipal government structure were continually used to maintain a situation of domination.

The success of the ‘associational public spaces’ resides in the ability of all parties in the dispute to be accepted as autonomous actors, with the ability to make independent decisions – including the decision whether or not to participate in the negotiation process. Consequently, these actors are expected to mobilise in order to “create space for the formation of new, unexpected coalitions” (Hajer 2005: 59) such as ITI and the participatory council (CAPA) in Itacaré. Ecological modernisation is then a sort of policy discourse that suggests that the answers to the current environmental crisis rest on stakeholders’ will to interplay cooperatively and innovatively.

For Goodman, McCool and Herbert (2005), the objective of negotiated problem solving is to use an open, “consensus-building process to arrive at decisions that parties to the dispute can agree to because they accept both the process and its outcomes” (p. 16). They outlined types of deliberative arrangements for problem solving. Partnership, for example, in which actors engage in aware of their role, limits, commitments and burdens, is just one of the models for keeping pertinent parties in contact in order to agree upon solutions that reveal themselves convenient and promising for both sides.

There are various forms of collaborative arrangements for problem solving negotiation (see Table 2.8), but they are not rigid and may combine one or more elements from each other (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b). Associational public space is presented as multi-participatory, operating in network through a popular deliberative Council.

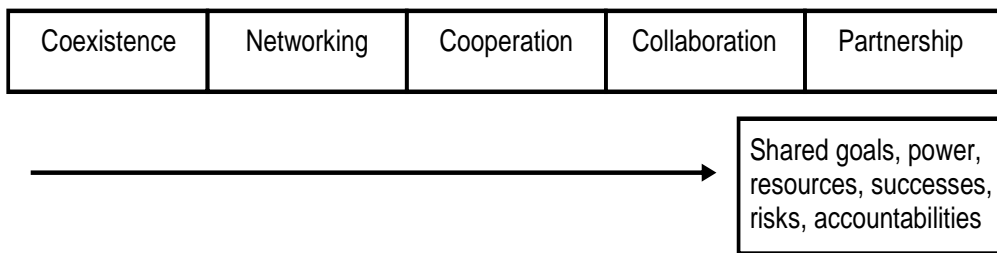
Table 2.8 - Arrangements for collectively approaching communal problems

Arrangement	Modus Operandi	Scope and role	Process
Alternative dispute Resolution	Bargain	Perceived interests	By sacrificing some secondary interests, primary gains are achieved
Partnership	Participants as partners	Sharing both burdens and solutions	Advantages for everyone
Autonomy	Autonomous actors to freely participate	Each party is coparticipant	Engagement in consensual negotiations and decision-making
Established rules of the game	Rules previously agreed and mutually accepted	Pre-established boundaries procedures and rules	Framed discussion
Interactive process	Open decision-making to consensus building	Full participation by all parties	Each perspective is taken into account, all parties speak out
<i>Ad Hoc</i> structures and organisations	New organisational body may be created	Multi-jurisdictional with sharing or temporary personnel	Cross-boundary participation with diversity in participation advancing or setting-back consensus building
Associational public spaces	Collaborating in a network. Existence of an autonomous, popular and deliberative Council	Multi-participatory	Power negotiation, trade-offs and the creation of a collective, consensual and meaningful approach to (eco)tourism development.
<b>Source:</b> Ismar Lima, 2008, based on Goodman, McCool and Herbert. 2005: 17.			

Craig and Courtney (2004) developed an evolutionary line that situates actors in a process of interacting towards partnership, “a partnering continuum” as shown in Figure 2.2. The authors position ‘coexistence’ as the first step that may evolve into more stable interactions, which they call ‘networking’, followed by cooperation, collaboration and partnership itself.

The nuances between ‘collaboration’ and ‘partnership’ are not contextually significant; they are used interchangeably throughout the book. The words that indicate ‘associativism’ such as ‘cooperation’, ‘networking’ and ‘coexistence’ do not ‘stand alone; they are entrenched in collaboration and partnership as “connections have [...] been drawn between the terms partnership and collaboration” (Plummer et al. 2006: 504).

In spite of a progressive partnering continuum, the business and organizational relationships in an industry can simultaneously be often of cooperation and of competition. The coexistence of the binary ‘competitive’ and ‘cooperative’ was named by Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) as “co-opetition”, in which firms within a geographical cluster compete with each other in specific areas, but they are in will to cooperate among themselves, harnessing interests, to succeed in inter-regional competitions (Huybers and Bennett 2000).



Source: Craig and Courtney (2004: 12)

Figure 2.2 - A partnering continuum

One peculiar aspect of cooperation is that some actors may decide to become engaged in - to get involved - motivated solely by the feeling that others can achieve levels of consensus that would badly affect their position as a dominant power. As mentioned by Plummer et al. (2006), power has the ability to influence specific outcomes, and it is linked to legitimacy, accountability and to exchange of resources, power is “recognised as a basis for transparent decision-making” (p. 507).

In collaboration, one can only speak on behalf of oneself and, unilateral and inflexible decisions of not participating in these arrangements may give the chance for others to appropriate power acting against the interests of certain isolated groups. Then, guaranteeing one’s participation in the discourse seems to be the best course for security rather than staying alienated, external, to collective forms of decision taking. This leads me to comment on the relevance of ‘routinised forms of discourse’ in collaboration.

Social-interactive discourse theory combines the appreciation of routinised understandings with the possibility of actors exercising their freedom of choice in relation to many social practices available for them (Hajer 2005: 56). Routinised forms of discourse become strategic because they promote group equilibrium; they avoid stakeholders getting confrontational in the process of talks (Hajer 2005: 57).

Government discourses can be embedded with arbitrary hidden interests, with power structured in ways that become indiscernible. For that reason, proper attention

should be given to the degree which discourses become structured in institutional arrangements (Hajer 2005). That implies the need for surveillance of actors and of the motives behind the new discursive constructions, except when these discourses retain meanings that encompass the collective wishes. Routinised forms of discourse are the continuation of power relations. Analysis of discourses can in this sense be used to map ‘positions’, ‘views’, ‘controlling language’ and ‘meaning fabrication’ in collaborative arrangements (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b). Then, the analysis should focus on specific aspects of collaboration that have provided evident textual material.

For example, because of their previous experience with a partnership for regionally marketing a group of tour companies and their region, Northland Sustainable Tourism Partnership (NZ) has enough documentation for the implementation of collaborative schemes aimed at ‘marketing a business cluster’. Northland Enterprise and the Ministries for the Environment and of Tourism provided reports about it with comments on the procedures and development, and predicting outcomes.

The fieldwork helped to capture local partners’ views through eye-to-eye contact, a grasp of their feelings and impressions about the partnership process when they were still in the direction-setting phase (refer to Table 2.7, p.109). Later, it was possible to access the partners’ final assessment of the collaborative arrangements and their recommendations. Even through a fragmented collection of ‘discourses’, it will be possible to identify the meaning fabrication and their possible effects on the participants’ views. The parameters for comparison and analysis are the expectations raised by the government promoters, the predictions of outcomes and the partners’ views at the end of the process.

As awareness about the importance and role of collaborative arrangements for the dynamics of nature tourism management is increasing, are these arrangements progressing into more elaborate structures – with levels of institutionalisation – shaping themselves as a form of environmental governance?

Vernon et al. (2005) believe that the “emergence of local collaborative projects presents a rich vein for advancing the empirical and theoretical understanding of governance in tourism” (p.325). They evaluate the British district council’s collaboration scheme for the promotion of sustainable practices at the tourism business level and the relevance of the public sector to encourage bottom-up (participatory) forms of governance (2005: 325). Collaboration can be inadvertently perceived as the means for the public sector to discharge its duties rather than a new type of governance, (Vernon et al. 2005: 330).

One of the missions of Chapters 6 and 7 is to check Huxham and Vangen’s (2005) conclusions and impressions about collaborative schemes. They created a list of 10 items (tips for collaborating) with which one should be aware of while engaging in associative ventures. The list is the result of their investigation on ‘partnerships’, and is cited with patterned statements on behaviour in terms of causality and consequence (see Table 2.9).



The tips have a “prescriptive tone” but they emphasise that ‘there are no easy answers’ about how to make partnerships succeed. They used a set of themes that they were working with to underline issues relevant for groups or organisations (or whoever) before setting a joint agenda. They recommend the readers to use the tips with care and caution because some may not be absolute truths, except for the first and the last tips: “don’t do collaboration unless you have to” and “no stakeholder alone has the full control of the dynamic collaborative process” (2005: 37, 41).

All tips are intended to provoke thought, and the list mixes advice on personal, administrative and procedural items (see Table 2.9) – based on the authors’ fieldwork experience – which encourage and discourage stakeholders to get involved in partnerships. Their position on partnership/collaboration is complex and multifaceted, and “there are no easy routes to success”.

**Table 2.9 - Tips for Collaborating**

1	Don't do it unless you have to! Joint working with other organisations is inherently difficult and resource consuming. Unless you can see the potential for real collaborative advantage it is most efficient to do it on your own
2	Budget a great deal more time for the collaborative activities than you would normally expect to need
3	Remember that the other participants involved are unlikely to want to achieve exactly the same thing as you and make allowances. You need to protect your own agendas but be prepared to compromise
4	Where possible, try to settle yourselves some small, achievable tasks. Build up mutual trust gradually through achieving mutual small wins. If the stakes are high, you may need a more comprehensive trust-building approach
5	Pay attention to communication. Be aware of your own company jargon and professional jargon and try to find clear ways to express yourself to others who do not share your daily world. If partners speak in ways that do not make sense, don't be afraid to seek clarification
6	Don't expect other organisations to do things the same way yours does. Things that may be easy to do in your organisation may, for example, require major political manoeuvring in another.
7	Ensure that those who have to manage the alliance are briefed to be able to act with an appropriate degree of autonomy. Wherever possible, they need to be able to react quickly and contingently without having to check back to the 'parent' organisations
8	Recognize that power plays are often a part of the negotiation process. Both understanding your own source of power and ensuring that partners do not feel vulnerable can be a valuable part of building trust
9	Understand that making things happen involves acting <i>both</i> facilitatively and <i>directively</i> towards others
10	Assume that you cannot be wholly in control and that partners and environment will be continually changing. Then, with energy, commitment, skill and continual nurturing, you can achieve collaborative advantage.
<b>Source:</b> Huxham and Vangen 2005: 37	

## 2.8 - Conclusion

Language is taken here as a highly organised and encoded system which employs devices to express and exchange information (Said 1991:21); it is a container of meanings and of patterns of social orders. Within the Chomskian tradition, language is taken “as a formal system principally concerned with describing the world” (Potter and Wetherell 1987: 28), and a place for ideologies in struggle to manifest

themselves. For example, the language of tourism is normally linked to ‘modernity’, ‘promotion’ and ‘consumerism’ (Dann 1996); it contrasts in many senses with the ‘language of environmentalism’ but the nexus is manifest under the rubric of ‘sustainable tourism’ and ‘ecotourism’ (Weaver & Lawton). As mentioned by Dann (1996), while language may be considered “ideologically neutral”; ‘discourse’ is however “value-committed” through processes of domination and “subjectification” (p. 4).

The profusion of competing discourses in tourism (Frey 1994) is rooted in the fact that there are intentions behind discourses and they are not neutral; each individual or group of individuals involved in events ingrained in power relations seeks to understand, interpret and construct a contextual reality. Foucault for example “introduces the notion of conflicting discourses when he suggests that a society will favour a preferred version of truth over others” (quoted in Simmons 2004: 43). Because discursive constructions imply power of the sender/speaker over the addressee with ‘meaning fabrication’ that may influence the daily life of people and tourism activities, social constructionism was chosen to explain the phenomena.

Construction of a reality occurs at various levels through public opinion in the media and through political and corporate discourses and interaction. Collaboration and partnership have a basic element: interactive processes. This is a micro perspective for understanding ‘how’ the storylines and rhetorics contain values and meanings created and disseminated by a certain group. Because of the need to understand the structures, agencies and discourses in collaborative arrangements, the ‘theory of collaboration’ was chosen for use in line with ‘social constructionism’.

Competing discourses and collaboration in (eco)tourism development required these two theoretical knowledge-based platforms (or frameworks). The units for analysis in partnerships are ‘discourse’ and ‘context’, and the theories serve as an introductory background and complete each other (refer to Chapter 3).

Stakeholders’ participation in collaborative schemes may demand or cause an existential paradigm shift from ‘anthropocentric’ to ‘biocentric’ way of looking at nature and its importance for the human survival. Table 2.10 lists the main elements of the paradigm shift for better interaction between ‘human-nature’ and ‘human-human’. There is a need of a metanoia in planning and managing (eco)tourism at all levels to achieve successful collaboration/cooperation.

Table 2.10 - Collaborative schemes: The need of an existential paradigm shift

**Towards cooperation: the need of an existential paradigm shift**

<b>Anthropocentric/Androcentric</b>	<b>Nonanthropocentric/Biocentric</b>
<b>Domination</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
<b>Centralist</b>	<b>Decentralist</b>
<b>Rebellious</b>	<b>Adaptive</b>
<b>Split</b>	<b>Convergence</b>
<b>Autocratic</b>	<b>Libertarian</b>
<b>Disguise</b>	<b>Transparency</b>
<b>Skepticism</b>	<b>Trust</b>
<b>Antagonistic</b>	<b>Cooperative</b>
<b>Managerial</b>	<b>Participatory</b>
<b>Silence</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>Despotic</b>	<b>Egalitarian</b>
<b>Exploitative</b>	<b>Protective</b>
<b>Manipulating</b>	<b>Advancing</b>
<b>Egocentric</b>	<b>Holistic</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>Fairness</b>
<b>Accumulating</b>	<b>Sharing</b>
<b>Imbalance</b>	<b>Equilibrium</b>
<b>Antithesis</b>	<b>Compromise</b>
<b>Depletion</b>	<b>Conservation</b>
<b>Seclusion</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
<b>Self-oriented/Individualistic</b>	<b>Community oriented/Collective</b>

Source: Author, 2007

## *Chapter Three*

# Developing Methodological Tools

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### 3.0 - Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to detail the methodological procedures and methods used to develop my research. Methodology is an orderly course of action, a body of methods and principles of inquiry in a particular discipline, but does not limit itself to these parameters. It is indeed more than the organisation of actions, more than procedures, and involves the reasoning and the philosophical postulations that mark a particular study. Within social sciences the methodological choices are manifold, methods being qualitative and quantitative.

This book has predominantly a qualitative orientation, more precisely, an object-directed qualitative methodology, which acknowledges that all research is ideologically driven, not free of bias in its design (Sobania 1999: 34), which means that researchers begin the investigation process with pre-formulated questions. There is also a prior understanding over a problem-issue. In other words, researchers hold prejudices (Bohm 2004). Moreover, personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity are elements that influence the outline of any study.

Biases are a factor but must be managed in order not to compromise the validity of the arguments and findings. They can appear during the proposal design, at the time of the literature review, in the fieldwork, in the elaboration of questionnaires, during the analysis of data and in the conclusion.

Biases may emerge at any phase of the investigation. They can be intentional or non-intentional. For example, just one source of information may cause unintentional biases. The researcher can reduce biases by letting others know about the topic, the methods and concepts used. Publicity can involve the participation in seminars, workshops, conferences and publication of articles. Meetings with supervisors are of utmost relevance to obtain guidance on 'how' to balance prejudices. Feedback from academic peers and supervisors can be understood as 'necessary filters', particularly for those investigators dealing with very subjective social themes.

Critical posture, self-confrontation and the initiative to take both sides of the same event are also strategies to achieve some neutrality in judgements. Some scholars prefer to mix qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure the pertinence of their findings.

For example, I have used some surveys that numerically (statistically) give ground to my discourse analysis of the statements of key actors in the Itacaré case. The same took place with my case study on Kuaka NZ as 37 questionnaires were distributed to other small-scale tour operators in New Zealand as a means of crosschecking data, and to avoid drawing conclusions based on one or few sources of information. For that survey, 37 tour operators were selected randomly through the internet in different areas of New Zealand and invited to answer 24 questions, eight of them being quantitative. Nine eco-business owners replied and were coded as New Zealand Survey Respondent (NZSR).

Although the sample is limited, it serves the purpose. The survey was not prepared to be highly statistical and numerically encompassing. Rather, it aimed to produce descriptive material with different perceptions and experiences of some tour operators in the country and to use their answers to confront data collected in the case studies, for example, in chapter seven on Kuaka NZ.

Throughout the analytical chapters, the reliable secondary information such as news articles, papers in journals and government reports were regarded as essential to support the evolving arguments in the investigation. In many instances, the multitude of sources with consistent data on a topic encouraged me to take a position in the analysis.

To know others' views and positions was one way to break with my prejudices and biases; it helped me to outline the findings, conscious of their fundamentals and veracity. Tools and methods are not chosen randomly, but according to the investigation demands. That is the reason 'triangulation' becomes crucial, and was widely employed in the study.

Neither does the status and origin of the researcher make him/her an authority *per se*. For example, because I am Brazilian – who has done a great deal of reading on Amazonia and with some casual visits to cities in the region – does not make me an expert in ecotourism in that area.

Thus, for validation of a study, comprehensive fieldwork is mandatory. According to Decrop (1999), interpretivist researchers usually “fail to justify how and why their qualitative approaches are sound” (p.157-158). For him, the methodological introduction of proposals is often limited, not really having a research design with a sound description of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ as part of the criteria. What takes place is not methodological weakness and structural problems with the research, but a problem of properly communicating a research plan in its qualitative terms.

As a qualitative research project, it primarily utilises procedures that can generate descriptive data. This methodological choice helps the researcher to describe, interpret and unearth human experiences such as feelings and thoughts of any kind (Le 2005; Morse 1994). The qualitative and interpretative approach is required because social construction of reality rests in “the intersections between the notions of (social) fact, (social) reality, cognition, meaning, agreement, and the others”, that is, social construction cannot be entirely and empirically measured; it cannot be unveiled statistically by correlating human and societal occurrences (Collin 1997: 16-17).

Here, methods are defined as families of related procedures determined by some common features such as the theoretical base and study limitations (Titscher et al. 2000: 8-9). The analysis requires an interpretative framework because it deals with social and institutional phenomena within a constructivist perspective; the approach weaves theory, various discursive sources and interpretations. Most of the evidence about how humans construct their world and give sense to it can only be captured through the shadows the researchers come across about the phenomena.

In this sense, the study seeks to capture the social world (under investigation) as a human creation seen and experienced by the respondents as well as discursively represented in a context. Reality is captured through interaction. I do take the challenge of reducing the subjectivity of my interpretations (then the biases) by sticking to the texts being analysed, seeking to have a lucid connection between the quantitative and qualitative approaches during the deconstruction process.

The research focuses on textual and visual sources, and on informants and key interviews of staff at government tourism bodies, tour operators, guides, community leaders, and members of NGOs (see Table 3.0), totalling 59 people; 42 in Brazil and 17 in New Zealand. In the table, some contact people can appear in more than one category or sub-group. The targeted participants were those involved in nature tourism, who could ‘voice’ their own views and experiences.

**Table 3.0 Data collection: Interviewees and informants by sector in Brazil and New Zealand**

Country/ Sector	Tour operators	Community leaders & locals	NGOs	Government employees directly related to nature-based tourism sector	Guides	Other
<b>Brazil</b>	10	11	7	6	9	2
<b>New Zealand</b>	8	-	-	4* *It includes three DoC's officers	7	2

Qualitatively oriented, the investigation uses some quantitative analysis, based mainly on secondary data. It is relevant to note that the textual material and the interviews (combined) become the primary source of data while my role as participant observer becomes ancillary to the process of understanding the cases. As Jorgensen (1989) underlines, the benefits of ‘interviewing’ and ‘participant observation’ are not divorced procedures but mutually informative methods.

Mapping the course of actions can help to reveal the advantages and limitations of a qualitative scientific method. Moreover, records serve to show shortcomings or structural failures, giving the researcher chances for reformulations and methodological adjustments. For instance, one may have a well-focussed research

question but hold inadequate means and tools for approaching it. Denzin and Lincoln (2003c) explain that the challenges to qualitative research are many, and such researchers are labelled as:

Journalists, or soft scientists. Their work is termed unscientific, or only exploratory, or subjective. It is called criticism and not theory, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism or secular humanism (p.12).

The extract shows obvious resistance against 'qualitative research', views coming mostly from those positivist-oriented academics who take this methodological approach as "an assault on objectivist science" (Denzin and Lincoln 2003c: 12).

The Comte's positivism always seems to be an imposition from those scientists who insist on a knowledge boundary between "hard science" and "soft scholarship" (Carey 1989: 99); these scientists state that the "power of reason and rationality" should order and improve human affairs (Filmer et al. 2004: 35), however, qualitative approaches are not disqualified from achieving these goals. Some positivist advocates go further by even stigmatising the new experimental qualitative methods as 'fiction' rather than 'science' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003b). Broadly stated, qualitative research puts value on people's words because they are believed to provide "greater access [...] to subjective meaning than do statistical trends" (Lazar 2004: 14).

On the other hand, constructionists, critical theory scientists and followers of the postmodern schools of thought cast off positivist and postpositivist principles and criteria; such qualitative researchers usually regard the positivist orientation as "irrelevant to their work [because it only reproduces] a certain kind of science [...] that silences too many voices" (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 15). In tourism, for example, much of the literature on community is based on quantitative surveys, but the quantitative approaches are said to be not instrumentally helpful data collection on specific socio-environmental themes in tourism,

...quantitative methods are less useful for understanding how individuals construct their attitudes and opinions of tourism, and how they are influenced by the historical, geographical, social and cultural contexts in which tourism occurs (Shone et al. 2005:92).

### **3.1 - Qualitative research**

The goals of research in the social sciences are to provide answers to ontological and epistemological questions about our surrounding world. Research is essentially composed of a 'problem-issue', 'assumptions or hypotheses', 'theory' and 'methodology' and a fieldwork that can empirically provide leads for the investigation. It implies analysis and interpretation of social occurrences. Methodology and method are not perfect synonyms.

Methodology is broader in scope and envelops methods; it implies the understanding of a contextual sociology, organizational context, political issues, ethical, ideological and philosophical principles vis-à-vis a certain method(s). Methods are



methodical procedures, techniques and analytical tools for selecting units of investigation and for assessing data on various aspects of the social life (Neuman 2006: 2). 'A piece of research is never conclusive because as one advances an academic-scientific field, new enquiries for investigation appear. The same notion applies to methodological procedures. They are never exhaustive, free of shortcomings and disputes.

There are many ways to answer the same research question particularly as one deals with subjective topics. This should not be, though, a pretext for researchers to drive themselves into methodological inadequacies. By criss-crossing the methods, the researcher can reduce limitations to the study and the incidence of procedural failings.

A qualitative approach is used in many areas of human geography. It targets issues of "human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks" (Hay 2000: 4). Qualitative researchers face questions geared to social structures or to individual experiences, for instance, the unfolding issues related to 'agency' and 'structure'. Structures are understood as internally tied practices and objects (Hay 2000), and can be social, environmental or economic.

Qualitative research is supposed to "describe life-worlds 'from the inside out'" with evidence and understanding evolving from the point of view of those who participate (Flick, Kardorff and Steinke 2004: 3). By using methods that sharply depict reality, qualitative research brings insights to content routinely lived by the whole society but not properly observed, interpreted and explained. It makes the 'unknown' perceptible for the whole, by displaying circumstances and aspects of a phenomenon, and consequently permitting individuals to recognise themselves as part of these events (Flick et al. 2004).

According to Fairclough, social research focuses on the ways structures and systems bound, shape and control events and actions, while agency refers to the ways agents produce events, actions and texts (2003: p. 224). Both agency and structures have 'causal powers' and dialectical relationships with tensions between them resulting in events including textual production.

In order to explore the links between the natural environment, the human organisation of space and the discursive representations of it, this current research uses 'discourse analysis' under the scope of human geography. Space, people and the way they come together in order to manage their interventionist actions in the environment are the kernel of this investigation.

Contemporary human geographers study places, people, bodies, discourses, silenced voices and fragmented landscapes. The research questions of today's human geographers require a multiplicity of conceptual approaches and methods of enquiry (Winchester 2000: 2).

The first basic assumption of qualitative research is that social interaction produces meanings and contexts that shape a social reality. Participants in a context share meanings that "they attribute to objects, events, situations and people" (Blummer 1969; Flick et al. 2004: 6). The second assumption is based on the idea that

if the social world is created and re-created in a day-to-day process of sharing and of creating norms and rules, its study demands ethnographic methods. Third, the use of hermeneutic interpretation for understanding individual and collective attitudes and actions includes social relationships and contexts. The fourth assumption is based on the fact that in a qualitative investigation ‘communication’ among actors becomes central for the deconstruction of social reality (Flick et al. 2004: 7).

To give a status of ‘qualitative’ to research infers an emphasis on meanings and processes that cannot be measured and assessed in terms of quantity, frequency, intensity and amount (Sobania 1999: 34), that is, they require a spectrum of methods - outside the traditional quantitative range – in order to scrutinise the intersubjective nature of the object of study. For Kvale (1996), what lies behind a phenomenon can be uncovered through personal consideration and passive observation in which the researcher gets involved and interacts in routines linked to that phenomenon.

There are then actions of a researcher to understand “how a group’s meaning system is generated and sustained” instead of using axioms, laws, and logic and a deductive system of interlinked concepts/definitions (Neumann 1997:83). Open-ended interviews, open-ended questionnaires, personal communication and discursive examination of aspects of printed or audiovisual material are some of the most common examples of qualitative methods.

According to Flick et al. (2004), there are three distinct perspectives in qualitative research. First, the schools of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology seek to understand abstract meanings. Secondly, constructivism and ethnomethodology focus on the routinised daily life and on its social constructions. To complete the sequence, researchers oriented by a structuralist or psychoanalytical position centre attention on “latent social configurations and on unconscious psychic structures and mechanisms” (Flick et al. 2004: 5). But perspectives do not limit themselves to this list.

Guba and Lincoln (1994), for example, mention ‘positivism’, ‘post-positivism’, ‘critical theory’, and ‘constructivism’ as being the four ‘paradigms’ that are part of a qualitative research approach. In turn, Chua (1986) considers three categories: positivist, interpretive and critical. These mentioned research epistemologies do not exclude each other; they are “philosophically distinct” – as ideal types – but such differences may not appear in the practices of qualitative research (Lee 1991; Sobania 1999).

There is not a single track method and perspective to manage and advance a research field and theme. For example, an investigation can accommodate the ‘interpretive’ and ‘critical’ underlying epistemologies.

In fact, qualitative research is ‘qualitative’ because it does not incorporate the rigidity of quantitative methods. Its main characteristics are: a variety of method choices, rather than a sole method; everyday events and knowledge as the focus; contextuality is of utmost importance for research design and analyses; principle of openness; case studies for extensively understanding the scope of a problem-issue; and

as stated by (Flick et al. 2004) “qualitative research as a textual discipline; and theory elaboration as a goal” (p.9).

In addition to their descriptive section of the key qualitative research assumptions, they designed a useful table (see Table 3.1, p.128) depicting the theoretical and methodological frames and patterns for social research. The table includes theoretical positions, methods of data collection, methods of interpretation, and fields of application. It can serve as an initial guideline for researchers to situate themselves in terms of procedures and techniques related to a problem-domain under investigation.

### **3.2 - What is the attractiveness of qualitative research?**

For Flick et al. (2004), it is a type of investigation that allows a more open and more involved approach to an event; and this largely differs from other research procedures that become highly standardized and dogmatic with strict methods and normative concepts (Wilson 1970). Examples of this are rigid methodological procedures risk restricting an ethnographic analysis used by the researchers concerned ‘with the ways people speak of one another and make sense of the events they experience’ (May 1997: 126).

Humans and their social world are not static. In some cases, if the topic demands, qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other.

Clearly, a qualitative approach is a “field of inquiry in its own right” (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 1, 2) that equips researchers with a set of guidelines and tools in the pursuit for empiricism (refer to Table 3.1). Qualitative research crosscuts disciplines, areas of knowledge and paradigms. It implies an “interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions” (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 1) that may encompass positivism but moves across towards post-positivism, poststructuralism, and interpretive studies. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) remind us about the various methods and approaches available pinned to qualitative research such as participatory investigation, interviews, participant observation, audiovisuals and texts.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Chicago School set ‘qualitative elements’ for advancing sociological research, more precisely inquiries for the study of human group life. At that time, scholars such as Mead, Boas, Benedict Baterson, Redcliffe-Brown (Denzin and Lincoln 2003) started employing in anthropology, methods other than traditional positivist ones.

Captivated by the benefits of the methodological flexibility in the social sciences, other researchers such as Lévi-Strauss, Giddens and Foucault equipped themselves with tools and methods that permitted a more dynamic and comprehensive explanation of society with insightful gains in political science, business, mass communication, tourism, sociolinguistics and so on.

In general, interpretivist scholars are inclined to praise qualitative rather than quantitative methods, because “people’s words provide greater access to their subjective meaning than do statistical trends” (Lazar 2004: 14).

Subjectivity is then inescapable but should be managed, with parameters and frameworks that give it credibility. For this investigation, methodological choices analyse a case by combining texts and context as the means to provide the empirical, fact-based evidence.

Clearly, a qualitative approach is by no means the excuse for vague analysis grounded on impressions. Rather, findings are backed and validated by a set of evidence - *principally qualitative* – from readings, participant observation of local reality, and oral and written statements. The concern with tropes, narratives, storytelling by locals, official and unofficial texts requires a framework that merges elements of hermeneutics, structuralism and semiotics.

What counts to index the world under investigation? Whatever is necessary to elucidate a case such as field notes, interviews, talks, video, photos, and memos. Qualitative research requires an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the phenomena and meanings “hidden” (not yet told) in our world.

For Denzin and Lincoln (2003), the qualitative researcher is a sort of ‘*bricoleur*’, a maker of quilts, who uses aesthetic and material tools, “deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials...at hand” (p.2). The subordinate and exploratory essence of qualitative practices helps to develop further quantitative research, and is “often used as a forerunner to quantitative techniques” (Decrop 1999: 157).

In the literature on tourism resources, both qualitative and quantitative streams can be identified. In tourism journals, Riley and Love (2000) noted that Tourism Research often reserves space for stand alone qualitative articles; elsewhere, quantitative techniques prevail (Decrop 1999) such as in the investigations developed focusing on events in tourism business and management.

Partly, the problems related to qualitative approaches evolve from the endurance of the positivist paradigms. One question that resides in the mind of some sceptical positivists is whether ‘qualitative approaches’ can produce objective knowledge.

Which perspective is more scientific, qualitative or quantitative?

Disputes between these two approaches have been debated at length in the literature by advocates from both sides drawing arguments in favour and against it. Lincoln and Guba (1985), regarding the issue of trustworthiness, developed four criteria that are central to both qualitative and quantitative perspectives:

1. **Credibility** (*internal validity*): how truthful are particular findings?
2. **Transferability or Replicability** (external validity): how applicable are the research findings to another setting or group?
3. **Dependability** (*reliability*): are the results consistent and reproducible?
4. **Confirmability** (objectivity): how neutral are the findings (in terms of whether they are reflective of the informants and the inquiry, and not a product of the researcher’s biases and prejudices)? (as cited on Decrop 1999: 158);

For Decrop (1999), the best choice is to use methodological eclecticism (p.158). Quantitative research uses mostly statistics, surveys, questionnaires and structured interviews (but) “all methodologies have their specific strengths and weaknesses [and] should be acknowledged and addressed by the researcher” (Dawson 2002: 26).

Triangulation is then proposed as an avenue for credibility. It breaks with most of the arguments against qualitative approaches because it is transversal. It collects tools and multiple sources that produce cross-checking evidence for a case. Moreover, it does not discard quantitative elements that can strengthen the argument.

Within the context of this research, qualitative and subjective methods contributed to answer particular questions (see Table 3.1). The adopted methodology and methods contain elements of ‘grounded theory’ and ‘ethnography’, in the sense that ‘historical context’ is present (but not the centre), and the events are analysed in the light of developing arguments. The concern is to check actors’ rhetorics as evolving stories, without necessarily being in the pursuit of theoretical sampling as in grounded theory (Dawson 2002; Seale 2004).

The procedure managed through comparisons reinforces the qualitative character of the study. Not in a sense that I intend to have a ‘theory’ emerging from the data - such as grounded theory commits itself to - but to harvest more detailed empirical evidence based on experiences on the ground, by interviewing and contacting those who deal on a daily basis with nature tourism. Clearly, the research is not “grounded theorizing” (Seale 2004: 244) neither is it hypothesis testing.

For every kind of case study, five elements must be accurately elaborated and included the research design: the research question; the theoretical assumptions; the unit(s) of analysis; the logical relation between assumptions and data; and the criteria for the interpretation of the results (Yin 1984: 29). Some studies require more than one method for data collection and analysis such as triangulation.

<b>Table 3.1 - Quantitative versus Qualitative Approaches</b>	
<b>Quantitative approach</b>	<b>Qualitative approach</b>
Measure objective facts	Construct social reality, cultural meaning
Focus on variables	Focus on interactive processes, events
Reliability is key value free	Authenticity is key
Values free	Values are present
Theory and data are separate	Theory and data are fused
Independent of context	Situationally constrained
Many cases, subjects	Few cases, subjects
Statistical analysis	Thematic analysis
Researcher is detached	Researcher is involved
<b>Source:</b> Neuman 2006: 13.	

### **3.2.1 - Triangulation**

Triangulation and mixed-methods become crucial for empiricism and validation because findings and conclusions do not gain insights out of sources standing alone. The inter-method triangulation helps to get varied information on the same topic to overcome any deficiency of single-method investigations it thus strengthens validity and reliability. It involves the use of a variety of information. Next to primary data, secondary sources of information are important for the qualitative researcher, and it is “a good way of approaching research as it enables you to counteract the weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative research” (Dawson 2002: 31).

Triangulation becomes a critical element to be applied to the social sciences. It adds one layer of data to another in a way that helps to construct a confirmatory statement as a finding. Fine, Weis, Weseen and Wong (2003) reinforce that a firm reliance on multiple methods, particularly for studies conducted through narratives, allows the researcher to “cross over, converse with, and tap into the different kind of data” (p.187). In their case, triangulation helped to gain insight into the “very contradictions between methods that would most powerfully inform policy” (p.187). According to Mcfee (1992), triangulation can be of two types:

- (1) between methods, in which mutual validation is sought; and (2)
- within a method, addressing one issue through input from various perspectives (p. 215).

For this research, triangulation was attempted between methods. I combined case studies, interviews, participant observation and texts (documents, content in meetings, brochures, etc) in order to reveal how ‘humans’ and ‘nature’ have been discursively constructed (Cater 2007). Discourse analysis helped to shed light on issues of power and to unveil hidden messages.

The investigation was through texts and contexts analysis, and the key tool was formulated by blending critical and contextual analysis. This approach is what I call ‘critical contextual discourse analysis’ (CCDA) in which textual material is the ‘ground’ and the contexts function as ‘pavement’ (refer to section 3.5.3).

By choosing ‘triangulation’, the concern is to have consistent qualitative research, structured and organised to convincingly corroborate or refute assumptions. In the study, there are no hypotheses to be tested; and conversely, each analytical chapter is populated with assumptions, a series of statements to be contrasted with empirical facts either textually or contextually. A multiple-method approach brings advantages, opening up “rich opportunities for cross-validating and cross-fertilising research procedures, findings and theories” (Brewer and Hunter 1989: 13).

### 3.3 - Outlining the procedures: Issues of method

Why are procedures of utmost relevance in research? A methodical procedure ensures the researcher a safe route back in the study in case of methodological shortcomings. Following consistent procedural pathway, the researcher can choose different starting points for an investigation, and to “make it easier to record findings and to compile reports of [their] experience” (Titscher et al. 2000: 6), besides giving credibility to the study. A scientific work should in essence allow for verification; “research must be generalizable and transparent...capable of being replicated and repeated” (Titscher et al. 2000: 11).

In empirical research, the methods and procedures for analysis must be in line with two ways of collecting data: fieldwork and laboratory. For this research, fieldwork prevailed and required data collection *in situ*. It demanded the use of interpretative frameworks and method map for taking preliminary decisions.

Titscher et al. (2000) suggest that for the purpose of orientation and organisation, the researcher should elaborate an inventory based on four major questions: a) what research question am I trying to answer? b) what analysis will provide a useful response to the question? c) to conduct this analysis what data do I need and from whom? d) what are the practical steps to obtain and record these data? For the fieldwork, the units of data collection, of investigation and of analysis must be identified and systematically exercised.

Because of the subject of this study, grounded on the binary ‘competing discourses’ and ‘collaboration’ in (eco)tourism, the units of data collection were those areas with nature-based tourism activities and with occurrences of ‘strains’ and ‘partnerships’ among the stakeholders. This step formalised the selection of case studies. The second procedural step was to identify the units of investigation within the context of the chosen cases. In this specific case, the units were the stakeholders’ interactive processes with existing nodes of conflict and nodes of collaboration.

The units of analysis were the texts related to circumstantial and situational aspects of daily life of the stakeholders. The units were thus the texts produced and/or consumed by the pertinent interlinked stakeholders, not necessarily linked to nature tourism issues, but, critical for understanding ‘power relations’ and ‘collective achievements’ in a certain context in due course of investigation.

As for the textual production related to the ‘100% Pure’ and ‘Green Clean’ campaigns, the subject was selected because of its economic and environmental implications at a micro level of tourism development and operations. The 100% Pure campaign was analyzed at three interconnected levels: first, the campaign texts and images were deconstructed as units themselves; secondly, ‘intertextuality’ was developed with the analysis being done regarding various views and opinions about the campaign and its claims; thirdly, inherent and explicit implications of 100% Pure claims were crossed with the reality on the ground by Kuaka New Zealand case, Action Stations as well as other stakeholders and NZ government reports. The textual collection for analysis involved ‘cluster samples’.

Instead of using a quantitative approach to the analysis of texts (i.e. by counting the frequency at which key words or phrases appear in a document), the sociological qualitative textual analysis begins with the idea of social context, and sets the author of discourse(s) as a self-conscious actor who addresses himself to an audience under particular circumstances; in reality the researcher reads the texts by taking into account the symbols they contain (Nan, Cook and Burt 2001: 172-173). This textual analysis can be combined with observational methods. The following stage is to deconstruct, interpret and reconstruct the parts of texts to check or reveal new assumptions about 'environmental symbols' as meanings to be interpreted.

That is, discourses hold ideological rhetorics, embedded with relations of power, which influence social events and practices in a context. Language and ideology walk together, and function to represent, or even construct, specific views and thoughts of social events. These discursive representations entail messages that can be used for social control. This research is then concerned with 'competing discourses' and 'power relations' in nature tourism. It also targets the identification of rhetorics in collaboration and the way they can advance local practices in nature tourism. It deals with issues of power and language in the management of tourism resources.

### **3.3.1 - Scope of a topic: The case studies and the units for analysis**

The major research question becomes the pillar for guiding the investigation. The premise is that if there are competing discourses in ecotourism, there are certainly effective ways of negotiating the differences among the stakeholders. Competing discourses in ecotourism and collaboration are not simple themes and they require multiple approaches. The way to get insightful acquaintance with the theme and full understanding about nature tourism stakeholders - and of their views about 'disputes', 'collaboration' and 'nature-society relations' - was by choosing multiple case studies in Brazil and in New Zealand.

Prior assumptions become crucial guides for in-field findings. When the scholar comes up with a researchable question to fill a gap in the literature, the follow-up is to formulate hypotheses or assumptions that could be tested, compared, contrasted or verified.

Each premise or prior belief brings attention to something that should be assessed within a pertinent range of study. According to Yin (2003), "if you are forced to state some propositions you will move in the right direction", telling you where to search for relevant evidence (2003: 22). Question words such as 'how' and 'why' keep the researcher on track to capture what s/he needs (Yin 2003).

In fact, during the process of literature review and manuscript design, delimitation of a topic is one of the priorities. The researcher is expected to find out knowledge area not comprehensively covered by previous researchers, "using the selected approach, the main preliminary decisions are taken about possible routes...to arrive at results (Titscher et al. 2000: 10).

The identification of a relevant problem to be investigated leads the researcher to look for the most suited theory for the case. Consequently, the decision for one



theoretical mainstream leads to a specific methods. There are three progressive stages delimiting a study area, its focus: antecedents; reasoning and refinement (see Fig. 3.0, p.133).

The first phase refers to a set of elements prior to the commencement of a research that will influence its theme and focus; researcher's former background, area knowledge, literature review and identification of a problem to be investigated contribute for delimiting the study.

The second phase refers to a process of reasoning about the chosen topic. In this phase, delimitation takes place as the researcher comes up with the key questions and, from there, s/he formulates assumptions and chooses a suited theory (or theories) for backing the investigation, "empirical studies to be planned...and...conducted in an orderly manner...explicit assumptions form the starting point for all data-collection", and the assumptions can be therefore transformed into research operations (Titscher et al. 2000: 13).

Refinement is the phase in which delimitation is the result of methodological implementation (see Fig. 3.0, p.133). For example, by choosing the units of collection within a geographical area (spatial delimitation), of investigation (e.g. social or event delimitation), of analysis (e.g. text material delimitation). In the last phase, delimitation is also refined during manuscript design, at outlining the data collection procedures and during the fieldwork management.

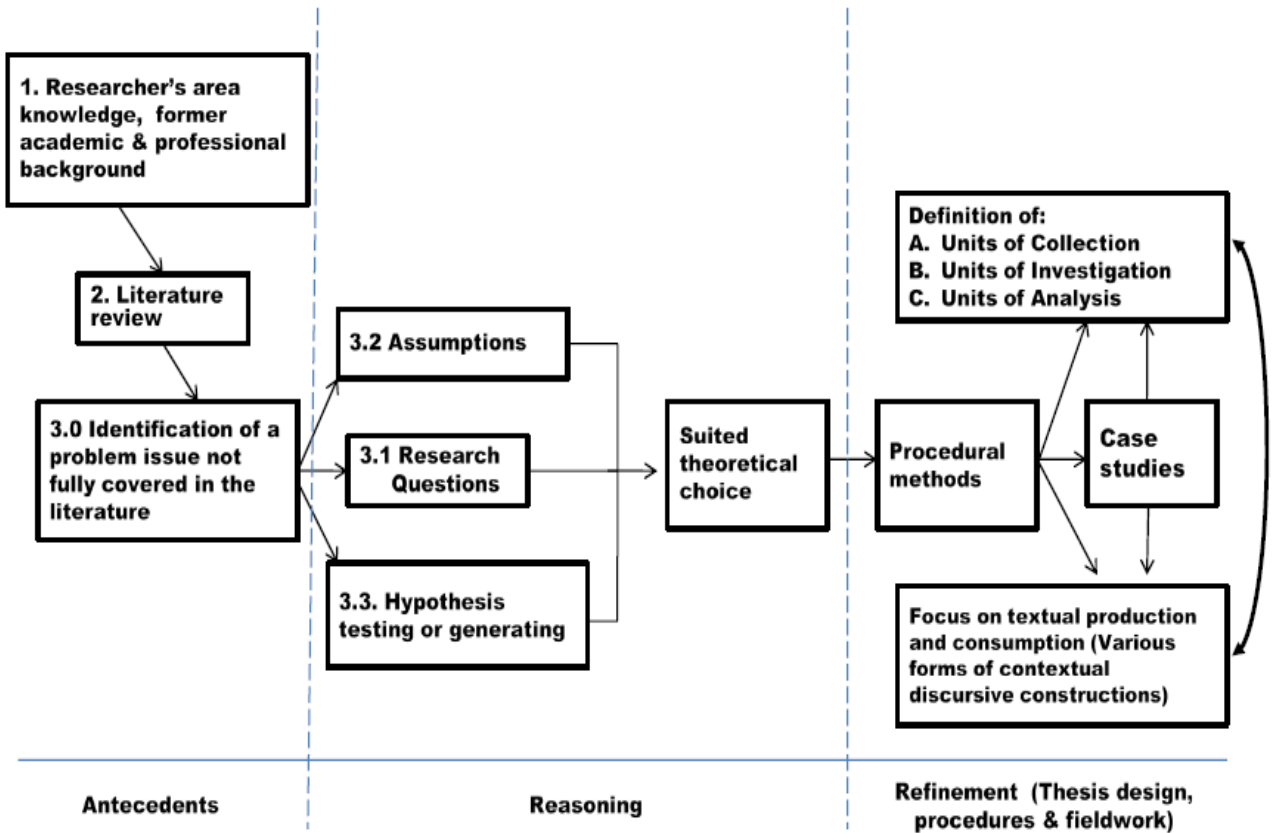
The selection of a specific method does not provide all the tools and routes, because "many decisions that need to be taken in the course of a research project still remain open (Titscher et al. 2000: 13). It may happen that researchers need to take different course of actions, even changing structural aspects of the thesis during the fieldwork because reality on the ground may require it.

Improvisation, flexibility and ingenuity are some of the personal skills that can help the researcher to solve and manage favourable unexpected events that are part of the study limitation.

For example, if a key interviewee in fieldwork overseas refuses to provide any information because it has become mandatory to sign a 'consent letter' according to ethical rules of the University, rather than insisting on the 'consent letter', the researcher can just ask for authorisation orally recording it on the tape-recorder (with the interviewee's permission). Another example is about a case study not revealing itself promising and fruitful in terms of data collection. As part of the solution, the researcher needs to think about additional source of information or, even, to look for similar case elsewhere in the region rather than spending weeks in a single location, which might cause unfruitful delays putting at risk deadlines.

Whatever the field topic, the course of work or study limitation, for any scientific study, procedural methods must be followed in a way that the results can be verifiable; "this requirement derives, in essence, from the postulate that scientific discovery is not merely self-discovery: research must be generalizable and transparent" (Titscher 2000: 11). Yet in terms of delimitation, theories have an important role in determining the type of method(s). As Titscher et al. (2000) posits, "theories define the

framework for methods, methods determine conditions for concrete research operations” (p.13).



Source: Author 2008.

Fig. 3.0 - Progressive phases delimiting the research focus and study area

### 3.3.2 - Case studies

With plans to learn on the ground, I selected case studies that could potentially advance my work and provide insights. Multiple case studies led me to an overview of realities in ecotourism, its different perspectives and its developments on the ground both in Brazil and in New Zealand; two countries I have some knowledge about, from academic experience and readings. And I am also familiar with the contexts, cultures and institutions. The writing mixes descriptive and analytical styles. Data mostly come from primary sources.

Case studies delimit further the boundaries of a social research on events in a certain local context. They contribute to elucidate the social phenomena under investigation. Case studies, mainly the exploratory ones, open an opportunity to learn in-depth about the object of study. They allow the researcher to participate in a context, to be immersed in the social fabric, and interact with locals, by asking questions and by observing local actors' routines. Through this interaction the

researcher becomes aware of various facets lived by a community, which, otherwise, would not come to his/her comprehension.

A literature review cannot provide the same set of knowledge one can acquire through field work and experience. Case studies help to disclose the dilemmas and minor problematic issues faced by a group or community in their daily life; they help to illustrate and enrich the research with details.

Case studies, if well-structured, become a reliable source of first-hand data; they become a sort of dynamic and social lab through which the objective and subjective world of a group or community is grasped.

A case study allows *openness* for the researcher (no standardisation that might limit the action of the researcher); *communicativity* that is, action and communication form the reality and are recorded by the researcher; *naturalism* implies that study relations are not “artificially constructed models;” *interpretativity* in which social reality is “interpreted reality” (Carroll 1996)<sup>8</sup>. As emphasised by Yin (1991), a case study is an empirical investigation that explores a current phenomenon in a real-life context and requires multiple sources of evidence. The case study will be considered both as a data collection method as well as a research model (Sarantakos 1993: 259-260).

A case study is in fact a particular method of qualitative research that allows an in-depth and systematic approach and examination of single occurrences. It is “one of several ways of doing social science research” (Yin 2003:1), as it investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. The researcher gains a sharp-edged comprehension of a case and becomes able to test hypotheses, to find answers for initial assumptions or to raise new ones. A case study unveils the complexities of social phenomena, needed for a holistic and credible academic observation and experiments.

However, some social scientists consider that a ‘case study’ is only an appropriate choice for the exploratory stages of an investigation (Dawson 2002), and other methods should be used to sustain the next research steps. Whether choosing a case study or not as a method depends on several factors: the type of research question(s); the researcher’s control over the actual behavioural events; and the period of occurrence, past or present, that is, historical events opposed to contemporary ones. For example, if the research targets a historical review, it is pertinent to focus on archival information rather than a case study.

One of the strongest aspects of case studies is that since they are, “limited to a particular set of interactions...it allows one to examine how particular sayings and doings are embedded [within] patterns of social organization” (Silverman 2004: 55). A case study is not the same as ethnography and participant-observation (Yin 2003) but can embrace these two methods as well. Because the concern here is ‘text’ in a ‘context’, case studies are suitable to the investigative proposal. For my investigation, the case studies are part of a *triangulation* procedure.

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<sup>8</sup> Communicativity, naturalism, interpretativity and openness was identified as patterns to case studies by Lamnek (1988).

The types of cases can vary depending on procedures for answering the research question(s). Case studies can then be classified as ‘illustrative’, ‘exploratory’, ‘critical instance’, ‘programme implementation’, ‘programme effects’, ‘prospective’ and ‘cumulative’. They are not mutually exclusive. As Yin (2003) explains, there are different types of case studies but just a common underlying principle; they are empirical enquiries (p.13) that help the researcher to construct validity - with scholastic consistency - and thus offer a work of adequate erudition.

‘Validity’ takes place as a systematic process in methodology and methods; for example, by using multiple sources of evidence, by establishing a chain of evidence, by interviewing key informants and using a case study report. That is, validity forces one to choose the appropriate measures. ‘Reliability’ in turn can be achieved through the use of case study database and protocol (Denzin and Lincoln 2003; May 1997).

The qualitative analysis of case studies uses the technique of “making repeated observations” (Sarantakos 1993: 307) at various levels across sites and across embedded units. The technique contributes to identify ‘discursive constructions’ in a specific context.

For this investigation, issues of ‘competing discourses’, ‘power relations among stakeholders’ and ‘schemes of collaboration’ were observed, explored and recorded in various occasions in the case studies.

For validity and replication it is critical to consider multiple cases as one, using them for the application of a pattern of methods, of approaches, of questions, and to take into account the prior assumptions in order to find well-founded evidence. For this investigation, a single framework for analysis was created (see Figure 3.4, p.160).

### **3.3.3 - Criteria for selecting multiple cases**

Selection of potential case studies began parallel to the literature review and knowledge acquisition in ecotourism. The initial target was to identify possible researchable gaps. By realising that there were few publications on collaboration in ecotourism and by gradually understanding the problematic issues, replete with discursive contradictions entrenched in its concept, definitions and implementation – I decided to pay attention to nature tourism practices in Brazil and in New Zealand.

According to Titscher et al. (2000), “multiple-case studies refers to a form of investigation in the context of which several case studies are carried out”, but, every case is a absolute study in itself and is not designed for statistical purposes (p.45).

During eight months alongside the preliminary literature review, between August 2004 and March 2005, before any in-field data collection, I searched on the internet for possible case studies. Key words such as ‘ecotourism’, ‘tourism’, ‘sustainable’, ‘preservation’ and ‘community’ were used in the website *Google.com* and in other electronic search engines. The first strategy was to get as much information as possible – even fragmented – about ecotourism initiatives. Two types became a priority: cases with explicit divergences among stakeholders; and cases with partnership or collaboration schemes.

Community ecotourism received especial attention because of its complex web of inter-relations. However, single nature tourism/ecotourism initiatives were also investigated.

After creating a short list of possible cases, the second step was to contact organisations and prospective participants. I decided to approach government employees, researchers, NGOs and some tour operators by phone and email. The aim was to get prior information about their activities and thoughts on ecotourism. In the contacts, the research goals were briefly explained. They were informally invited to participate.

For those who demonstrated interest in the subject, a formal letter was sent. The set included the consent form and information letters (Annex II). These documents were sent by both electronic and conventional mail. All documents and forms were written by me in English and in Portuguese. Semantic context was observed to avoid misunderstanding and distortions.

It is important to underline that all the procedures to contact the key participants strictly followed the principles of the Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato.

### **3.3.4 - Participant observation**

Participant observation added substantially to my interviews and analysis, and confirmed Young's (1999) previous observations on (eco)tourism. It helped me in three distinct ways i) it facilitated my approach and relationship with locals. It helped me in terms of building trust with the locals; ii) it provided leads and findings that helped to elaborate more well-focussed interview questions; iii) information provided by interviewees could be contrasted on the ground.

On other occasions, the opportunity for talks, interviews and sharing a place – as a participant observer – allowed me to have a grasp of routines and of social fabric, which otherwise, would become hard to carve out from that context.

Some scholars regard the interview process as the primary source of data while participant observation has a secondary back-up role. In my case, with the triangulation method, all forms of data collection and experience in the investigated area became mutually supportive, and complemented one another. Each one had its inferences, applied techniques, advantages, and limitations. They became mutually informative methods (Jorgensen 1989; Sobania 1999).

The whole fieldwork involved different levels of participant observation. It included staying in local communities in the Amazon forest, going on tourism excursions, interaction with local guides, as well as my participation in seminars, meetings, regional events and conferences.

In three and half years of academic investigation, interactive opportunities helped me to better understand the local context and reality of ecotourism/nature tourism practices. For example, structured participant observation enabled me to learn in-depth about the practices, operational details, daily life, mainstream thoughts, structures and agents (stakeholders) in Amazonia and Itacaré community in Brazil; the

Northland region, Rotorua, and with Action Stations' and Kuaka's staff in New Zealand.

In fact, ethnography is present in participant observation and vice-versa. The ethnographic aspects refer to a lengthy participation in the routines of some communities and of some organisations in Brazil and in New Zealand. As a participant observer, I overtly and covertly paid attention to the daily life of key stakeholders (Walsh 2004) in order to understand the dynamics that could frame a social fabric, particularly in the Itacaré case.

The emphasis in ethnography is on studying an entire culture, tied to the notion of ethnicity, traditions, customs and geographic position to include virtually any group or organization; however, it is an extremely broad area with a great variety of practitioners and methods (i.e. participant observation). It involves taking extensive field notes. There is usually no fixed limit to what will be observed and no real ending point in an ethnographic study. For this specific study, data collection was done without a full cultural immersion. For example, by focusing on Itacaré, I did not regard the *Bahian* culture. Neither did I focus on Māori culture and Māori tourism.

Participant observation in Brazil and in New Zealand helped me to identify many existing distortions between discourses and practices in ecotourism activities.

The fieldwork helped me to spot institutional gaps, shortcomings, conflicts of interest and operational difficulties faced in the Proecotur and by stakeholders in nature tourism practices. The following are some examples of events in which I got involved and had the chance of being a participant observer (Table 3.2, p.138). In fact, Table 3.1 (p.128) and Table 3.2 complement each other by outlining the fieldwork.

### **3.3.5 - Case studies on the ground: primary data collection**

The fieldwork included a three-month visit to forest areas located in Brazil and one year and a half of talks, interviews, video-recording, and participant observation of the activities of two New Zealand educational tour providers: Action Stations and Kuaka New Zealand. The fieldwork was part of the strategy to gather primary data for the investigation.

The case studies functioned as a 'social lab' in which discursive analysis was applied as tools for identifying 'nodes of conflict', or 'nodes of dispute', in ecotourism development. The word 'conflict' refers here to various ideological, social, economic and environmental divergences – manifested in the form of discourses.

Conflicts, discussed in this book, do not denote physical confrontation; instead, they are ideological clashes, stimulated by the binary of development and conservation (Jamal, Everett and Dann 2003). 'Nodes' connotes the word "intersections", and in the context of this book, refers to scenarios in which competing discourses interlock, merge, and mount to an extent that they can be traced.

'Nodes of conflict' are present in events, organisational interactions and processes, and in any spoken or written manifestations. Distinct viewpoints and arguments, related to a problem-issue, have explicit and hidden ideological content. In this context, an analytical framework is necessary for: I) identification of 'nodes of

conflict'; ii) identification of stakeholders' discourses; iii) analysis of competing discourses on ecotourism development; and IV) categorisation (refer to Figure 3.4, p.160).

Stakeholder views and printed material on nature tourism/ecotourism became units for analysis. Stakeholders have their standpoints on various issues; for sustaining their position and interests, different storylines and rhetorics are constructed, shaping a reality.

Critical analysis of these competing discourses can shed light on problem-solution schemes for ecotourism development. The research will check textual sources looking for excerpts that can reveal contradictions, hidden statements, distorted constructions, and logical fallacies. The findings are expected to help in the design and outline of collaborative models in nature tourism activities.

New Zealand (2004~2007)	In Brazil (April ~July 2005)
<p>1. Action Stations' and kuaka's staff meetings;</p> <p>2. Action Station's and Kuaka's environmental education tours with secondary school and college students. Around 50 students from Singapore, and 80 students of an Auckland school.</p> <p>3. Northland field trip with a scholar and students of the Department of Geography. Various nature and cultural tourism locations were chosen for a learning experience on the ground. Stakeholders and the Department of Conservation's staff were interviewed. Northland partnership's project was my main focus. An excursion was made with Fullers, a tour operator in the Bay of Islands, specialised in marine ecotourism (whale watching and swimming with dolphins). Wairere Boulders Reserve Valley, located in Horeke – near Hokianga harbour - in NZ, was also used as an in-field undertaking for understanding nature tourism activity.</p> <p>4. Matakoho Top 10 Holiday Park (Matakoho city);</p> <p>5. Kauri Coast Top Ten Holiday Park (Interview with the manager and overnight);</p> <p>6. Kauri Reserve Park (Daylight and guided night walk for wild life observation/watching);</p> <p>7. Waipoua and Trounson Kauri Forests;</p> <p>8. Waimangu Volcanic Valley (Rotorua)</p> <p>9. Guided Walking Legend (Rotorua)</p>	<p>1a). Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015.</p> <p>1b) Participation in the meetings of the SEMARH (Bureau for the Environment and Water Resources) and of the Administrative Council for APA (CAPA). 1c) Interviews. 1d) Ecotours. 1e) Participant observation (Itacaré, Bahia State).</p> <p>2. SUINVEST Sustainable Tourism Development Workshop (Itacaré, Bahia State).</p> <p>3. Ecotourism in <i>Silves</i> (Amazonas State). Visiting two communities. Interviews. Participant observation.</p> <p>4. Maguari village (<i>Santarém area, RESEX, Pará State</i>). Focus on Puxirum community ecotourism project. Participant observation. Interviews.</p> <p>5. <i>Maripá</i> and <i>Jamaraquá</i> villages (Pará State, <i>Santarém area</i>). Focus on community ecotourism. Participant observation. Ecotour participation. Interviews.</p> <p>6. <i>Marajó</i> Island (Pará State). Private-managed ecotourism enterprise. Participant observation. Interviews.</p> <p>7. Areas surrounding Manaus and <i>Novo Airão</i> (Amazonas State). Participant observation. Interviews.</p> <p>8. <i>Pirenópolis</i> village. Nature tourism experience in the farms. Participant observation.</p>
<p><b>Source:</b> Ismar Lima, 2008.</p>	

### 3.3.6 - Field trip in Brazil

The field trip in Brazil lasted three months, between 7 April and 8 of July 2005, two months in the Amazon rainforest and 26 days in the Northeast of Brazil, in the Mata Atlantica rainforest. Initially six locations were short-listed as prospective case studies, and six others were included as the field trip was taking place. The new prospective case studies were informed by key stakeholders as part of the snow balling process.

In the Brazilian Amazonia, the locations were Presidente Figueiredo district; Novo Airão; Januárlândia ecological area; Marajó Island; Alter-do-Chão village;



Maripá community (Puxirum ecotourism project); Silves district (ASPAC ecotourism); Maguari and Jamaraquá communities (ecotourism in the National Forest of Tapajós/Flona. In the northeast of Brazil, Bahia state, the short-listed cases were ecotourism in the Itacaré village and the ecotourism of Una district (EcoPark/IESB).

In the West-Center, Goiás state, ecotourism in the savannas of Pirenópolis district was also visited. All these locations were approached, visited and data collected.

During the whole field work in Brazil, 42 key participants directly and indirectly involved in tourism and ecotourism activities accepted to be interviewed. Among them, 15 females and 27 males – 7 belonging to Silves, 11 belonging to Itacaré and 24 participants of other localities in the states of Amazonas, Pará and Bahia. Six of the interviews were not tape recorded. Outlines with key sentences and key topics were written in order to recall later the content discussed. The interviewees belonged to varied backgrounds and social classes, some of them having had higher education, while others were illiterate. Among them were guides, travel agency managers, land owners, NGOs and government staff, ecotourism project coordinators, presidents of dweller associations, and community leaders, etc.

This mix of background and of area of knowledge helped to bring the points-of-view of subordinated and dominant stakeholders together on the same subject. Three months travelling to many locations did not allow me to organise more interviews. I decided to centre my attention on key actors and key informants who would likely be able to provide more insightful and wide-ranging feedback on the realities of ecotourism. I did not approach visitors because the focus of the research did not require it.

The fieldwork was managed to make me familiar and knowledgeable about the intricacies of ecotourism development and of its reality on the ground. I then decided to approach participants by raising general questions about ‘conflict’ and ‘collaboration’, using their answers as a guideline. I avoided becoming confined to a pair of issues. General questions can produce wordy interviews but are the means to get a broad understanding of many sides of certain problematic issues. It becomes an avenue for knowledge acquisition.

The objective of the field trip was work on the ground to investigate the structures, policies and philosophy of ecotourism in Brazil as they are. Five main aspects served to guide the fieldwork: i) to identify possible intra-community conflicts linked to ecotourism development. ‘Conflicts’ are treated here as ‘conflicting discourses’; ii) to identify existing collaboration or partnership schemes; iii) to understand how the actors interact; iv) to identify the symbols and their importance for the stakeholders in terms of discourses and communication; and v) to check Proecotur achievements and obstacles in the implementation of a national programme of ecotourism in Amazonia. Special attention was given to their process of communication, the language used among stakeholders, and the interactive structure: who was the actor linked to whom, and doing what in ecotourism development? What were their roles?

All these aforesaid aspects were covered through interviews, video and audio recordings and by visiting ecotourism projects and communities. Conceptual, technical and practical matters in ecotourism development were discussed. In order to secure precision, validity and reliability, all pertinent information was checked and contrasted with different sources in that context.

Rechecking of information and of data was done in two ways: I) by chatting with common dwellers, local business owners, guides and passers-by; and ii) by verifying official data (i.e. Tourism Organisations and Bureaus) and by talking to government staff. The initial plan was to video-record all aspects of ecotourism development and stakeholder interaction; however, it became a very difficult task. Unstable weather, refusal of locals to be video-recorded, unexpected low battery power, lack of time, humidity in the rainforest areas were some of the factors that stopped the camera working. In addition, a strong noise background caused distortions that almost made some of the interviews almost inaudible.

The fieldwork helped me to comprehend the ecotourism demands and needs in Brazil. The testimony of participants, their sincerity and revelations became priceless. I was able to perceive how hard it is to implement viable ecotourism projects because of conflicts of interests. In each location I realised the stakeholders and government create a reality for ecotourism. That is, they have their own ways of approaching and solving the problems. What interested me, were the best practices of such collaborative arrangements. Two months after finishing the field trip, a comprehensive 80 page report was written and presented to my supervisors. It was used for reference in my analytical chapters. The report was prepared based on the information collected during the field trip, my memoirs, memos and printed material.

In Amazonia, the fieldwork was not so promising. Some locations and communities previously scheduled to become case studies such as Maguari, *Maripá* and *Alter-do-chão* revealed not be a steady source of data because of their incipient (eco)tourism. The only place that really contributed to the aims of this research was *Silves*, discussed in chapter four. Costa do Cacau, located in the southernmost part of the Bahia state, about 1,400 km from Amazonia, became the second case study.

In that shoreline region, covered and bound by the Mata Atlântica rainforest, I collected data in three places: in Itacaré, *Ilhéus* and Ecoparque de Una. In *Ilhéus* city, the work consisted of an interview with the ecotourism coordinator of the Una Ecopark, in the Institute for Socio-Environmental Research in the south of Bahia State.

After the interview, a day visit in the Una Ecopark taught me how they operate and manage ecotourism. The visit helped me to contrast the information provided during the interview and advertised in brochures with the local practices. Una Ecopark administration has implemented a strict ecotourism management in the reserve, with references to carrying capacity and codes of conduct; the aim is to diminish human impacts. As part of their ecotourism framework, they also provide a comprehensive environmental interpretation.

Itacaré was the village, where I spent 24 days, enough time to accumulate significant data, and it included my participation in three worthwhile local events in

ecotourism. I had the opportunity to attend a workshop on sustainable tourism, prepared by ITI, with renowned Brazilian authorities on the theme. Also, a workshop on tourism development was organised by state and local governments, and sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). I also attended a symposium organized by a local NGO to discuss with its affiliates to discuss tourism trends in the village and their possible socio-political implications. Because of the length of my stay and of thematic events, I got a holistic understanding of power relations, and of social and economic implications in ecotourism development in the region.

*Pirenópolis*, a village situated in the Centre-West region of Brazil, about two hours from Brasília, was my next fieldwork location. In *Pirenópolis*, I visited the Centre for Tourist Assistance (CAT), similar to NZ information centres, where I talked informally about the realities of ecotourism in the region with local guides. I collected pertinent tourism brochures. However, data collection was limited due to time constraints and distances. Many ecotourism attractions are located in farms scattered far and wide in the district. It would be a hard-hitting task to cover them in just three days. The solution was to choose one place that could provide clues about their practices in ecotourism.

According to local guides, ecotourism operations and features are very similar in all the farms that are part of the Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPNs). The RPPNs are protected private areas that receive some government tax waivers. The farmers, who opt to transform their lands into reserves, also have priority for public funds and loans. Their lands, once transformed into RPPNs, acquire the status of world heritage sites (Lima, Chaveiro & Almeida, 2010a,b; Lima, 2010). At random, I chose to visit the Cachoeira do Lázaro (Lázaro Waterfalls), an ecotourism-oriented RPPN farm, where I spent a whole day for observation. I had an informal talk with the manager. No interview was recorded. *Pirenópolis* has been on the spotlight as a regional tourism destination because it was recognised as a UNESCO heritage site, and because of its appealing natural attractions, a municipality with plenty of waterfalls, streams, and exotic rock formation, a place ideally for the practices of ecotourism and adventure tourism as well as rural and agrirural tourism (Lima, Chaveiro & Almeida, 2010a,b).

However, the main economic activity of *Pirenópolis* has been the mining industry which has caused huge visual and environmental impact in the hilled landscape surrounding the city. This situation contrasts largely to what it is said to be a 'heritage', both historic-culturally as well as natural one, regarding that county. Thus, the discursive constructions on *Pirenópolis* seem to be "a two-edged sword situation", two types of views and perceptions, in which the reality on the ground is not of an actual pristine green untouchable savannah (Lima, Chaveiro & Almeida, 2010a,b; Lima, 2010). *Pirenópolis* lies in a dual scenario, but, economically, tourism has grown steadily and according to the local government tourism board, it has significantly overcome the mining industry at a time (Lima, 2010). In summary, the fieldwork embraced three Amazonian states, *Pará*, *Amazonas* and *Roraima*, totalling 15 different localities such as villages, small cities and some communities (see Table 3.3):

Table 3.3 Types of regional ecotourism in Brazil and data collection

Location Region	Description	Field-work	Primary data Collection/ Observation	Relevance for this specific study
1) Marajó district	Small-scale privately owned ecotour companies and ecological accommodation. There are not specific ecotourism projects. Ecotourism experiences and nature encounters take place on the Marajó farms, organized by the farmers themselves or by local tour operators.	Yes	Moderate	Low
2) Alter do Chão	It is located in the state of Pará, and has mass nature tourism with visitors interested in seasonal river beaches. Four local tour operators take visitors for nature appreciation in surrounding forests, lakes and rivers. Sport fishing has had increasing demand. <i>Alter-do-Chão</i> itself does not own ecotourism projects, but it has a Tourist Information Centre, placed on the wharf, called TFT. It was built as part of Proecotur's strategy for infrastructural improvement of tourism.	Yes	Moderate	Low
3) Maripá	It is one of the Tapajós river's communities, in the Pará State. In December 2004, the community became the first case for organised ecotourism in the region. It started at the end of 2004 and is called the Puxirum Ecotourism Project. It has been financed by the Finnish government, and managed jointly by Maripá, the Brazilian Environmental Institute (IBAMA) and by Mãe Natureza tour operator. <i>Note.:Puxirum is an ongoing ecotourism project</i>	Yes	Moderate	Low
4) Silves district	It was the first place in Amazônia to have a community ecotourism project managed by an NGO, called ASPAC. It works in collaboration with some riverside communities of that district. Its main target has been to protect fish stock and to improve the living standards of families in the region. Ecotourism has become an alternative and complementary source of income for some families.	Yes	High	High
5) Manaus and nearby areas	It is the main gate for central Amazônia. Neighbouring forest areas have been used for eco-resort constructions. Up to five hours away from Manaus, there are many choices for jungle hotels/hostels. These hotels provide accommodation suitable for any budget, ranging from simple straw huts to luxury structures including sauna, gym and swimming pool embedded in the rainforest. Most of them claim to operate as ecotourism companies. A rigorous investigation may prove the opposite. Novo Airão district, six hours from Manaus, has been on the spotlight as a nature-based tourism place with attention being given to its exuberant rainforest and to the river fauna. The manatees and the river pink dolphins are the main attractions. The dolphins have been domesticated by a family who has created a strong links with the animals. The issue has been polemic and contentious.	Yes	*Manaus nearby ecolodges: <b>Low</b>  * Novo Airão and its Manatees and River Pink Dolphins: <b>High</b>	Low  Medium

<b>6) Presidente Figueiredo</b>	It is the closest city to Manaus by road (two hours by car). It is a place for nature appreciation. The district is replete with waterfalls, streams and caves appropriate for ecotourism and/or adventure tourism. Presidente Figueiredo has well-developed structures for hosting the visitors. Ecotourism activities take place in farms and in the Urubuí Ecological Park (urban area).	Yes	Low	Low
<b>7) Itacaré district</b>	Small-scale privately owned ecotour companies. Itacaré has had intense ecotourism activity but it does not have any ecotourism project. It does not hold any community ecotourism; rather, nature encounters are managed by local operators, highly competitive among themselves. There is no specific regulation or codes of conduct for ecotourism practices. Itacaré became a referential in Brazil for a mix of adventure, cultural and ecological tourism. The region contains many natural attractions. It has tidal waves for surf, large areas covered by rainforests, and its inhabitants have a unique heritage, called Bahian culture. During the peak seasons, Itacaré village faces intense stress on its carrying capacity. Local authorities and operators agree that the village cannot support massive tourism.	Yes	Very High	Very High
<b>8)Una District</b>	Una Ecopark is an ecotourism pilot program managed by IESB It is an NGO with a pivotal role in socio-environmental research in the south of Bahia state. Una Ecopark was the result of a partnership between Conservation International and the IESB. It is not a community ecotourism but has hired locals to work on the project.	Yes	High	Low
<b>9) Maguari/ Jamaraguá</b>	Maguari and Jamaraguá villages. Ecotourism coordinated by the Government Environmental Department (IBAMA). * Location: National Forest (FLONA), Belterra County	Yes	Moderate	Low
<b>10)Pirenópolis and Brasília</b>	Pirenópolis district has plenty of waterfalls, streams, hills, bushes and trails. It is regionally segmented with visitors coming from various nearby cities. The natural reserves are in private areas owned by farmers. They are the ecological and adventure tourism operators in Pirenópolis. There is no community ecotourism project there.	Yes	Very low	Very low
<b>11)Mamirauá Ecological Reserve</b>	Mamirauá Community Ecotourism Project *Location: Tefé County, State of Amazonas. Interview with its main manager, Helder Queiroz, in Belém, State of Pará.	No	Low	Low
<b>12) Bonito</b>	Readings. Workshop in Itacaré.	No	Low	Low

Source: Ismar Lima, 2008.

### **3.3.7 - Regional case study in New Zealand**

In New Zealand, nine nature-based tourism enterprises were initially short-listed as potential case studies such as the Waimangu Volcanic Valley and Walking Legend, in Rotorua, and tour operators in the Bay of Plenty. Pre-selected cases included six tourism companies, participants of a Northland sustainable tourism partnership project. The field trip to Northland was done between 29 of August and 5 of September, 2004. The six tourism businesses are: Dive Tutukaka, Fullers Bay of Islands, Dolphin Discoveries, Enterprise Northland, Waitangi Treaty Grounds and the Matakohe Top 10 Holiday Park. The latter three businesses are not ecotourism-oriented, but provide activities in natural settings. As for Tutukaka, Fullers and Dolphin discoveries, they have nature-based activities involving visitors, rather than practicing ecotourism in its essence.

For this research, three nature tourism case studies were approached, and an initial field visit was done: 1) Waimangu Volcanic Valley (in Rotorua); and 2) Action Stations and Kuaka NZ Education Travel, two organisations in the Bay of Plenty that provide cultural and educational nature tourism. They provided more insights and most of the information at operational level of a small-scale operator acting cooperatively with nature-based tourism activities (see Chapter 7). The fieldwork and data collection with Kuaka NZ was done between 1 November 2004 and 29 July 2007. 3).

For comprehensively understanding the extension of the partnership, its networks, ramifications, implications and opinions of the partners, an eight-day field trip was offered by the Department of Geography, The University of Waikato. At that opportunity, DOC's staff and some officers in the Information Centres in Kaitaia, Trounson Park and Kauri Park were approached and asked about their institutional links, shared activities and collaboration with local companies.

As a methodological procedure to consistently guide the data collection, and for framing the book, the following steps were taken: 1) to understand New Zealand sustainable tourism development and policies. This required a review of key government documents; 2) to select nature tourism partnership/cooperation case studies in the North Island; 3) to map a stakeholder web of links; 4) to analyse discursive content. Data collection included relevant information in organizations' meetings, tourism brochures and pamphlets, government handouts, and segmented news. This data collection and analyses helped to understand 'how' knowledge about sustainable nature tourism has been built, transmitted and shared, and put into practice by stakeholders, local community and government bodies.

### **3.4 - Interviews**

I opted for an in-depth and unstructured interview style, expecting to get more descriptive statements. The key interviews were tape-recorded in order to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the statements. Due to its flexibility, this format permitted interviewees to express more spontaneously their experience and interpretations in

ecotourism (Dunn 2000). I used a set of guiding questions to keep the interviewees well-focused without interrupting the flow of the conversation. I paid attention to possible statements with conceptual words and hidden meanings.

The main subjective criterion for approaching the interviewees was their level of involvement in ecotourism. Those highly engaged in the activity on the ground or with (eco)tourism having a key role in a business, community, or government were invited to give their views and tell their stories. By interviewing a variety of key people, I got different perspectives on single issues both in New Zealand and in Brazil. It also allowed me to gain a variety of critical - 'official' and 'unofficial' - views concerning economic, environmental and social issues in ecotourism. They explained 'what' ecotourism is for them (the reality of ecotourism in practical terms), and 'how' they managed the various daily issues to balance interests, and for some of them, to maintain it as a source of income.

### **3.4.1 - Interpreting the interviews**

The target of the interviews was twofold. The first objective was to explore local views and get knowledge about the realities and conflicting scenarios linked to ecotourism implementation. The purposeful question was (is): how does ecotourism work in practical terms? What are the predominant contradictory discourses at the conceptual level? The second aim was to explore pertinent initiatives in terms of collaboration in ecotourism activities.

What are the discourses being created and used in collaborative schemes? From interviewees' answers I was able to explore further subjects related to the operational level of ecotourism, local history, past conflicting events, the public spaces for social interaction and meaning creation, and their expectation on how ecotourism should be.

Not all interviewees were previously scheduled to participate in the research. By contacting the first interviewees and by staying in the communities, other key participants appeared to give their opinion. A 'snowballing technique' (Dawson 2002; Bloch 2004: 176), also known as network sampling, happened naturally (*unplanned*) during the field trip. That is, one interviewee or local always had someone else who could participate. 'Snowballing' is a random approach in order to find potential participants as indicated by the researcher's previous contacts (Bloch 2004; Sarantakos 1993; Dawson 2002; Hammersley 1992).

Through this 'snowballing strategy', a web of key informants was established. They had either similar ideas/opinion or diverging ones compared to their acquaintances/referees. This is because each informant wants to give sense to his/her own storyline and view. However, interviewees of those employed in governmental bodies provided information based on official data and reports.

All interviews were face-to-face. The participants were interviewed in their own environment, either at work or in their living places. This made them more relaxed. Although I was a stranger, asking about their life style and nature tourism, I

did not face any resistance or opposition to my questions. On the other hand, some of the riverbank dwellers I interviewed were shy, and this created “walls” to be managed. It is not in the first meeting that you build trust. The term ‘researcher’ is not new for them, but I suppose they have just a vague notion of its precise meaning. Both honest and dishonest people have approached Amazonian dwellers over the years. Corrupt politicians, foresters, miners, political candidates, false researchers have cheated them. Such a situation made them treat outsiders with suspicion, and remain cautious.

By using a semi-structured interview format, it was possible to avoid the hierarchical situation of ‘authority’ and ‘subaltern’, that is - I ask, and you (participant) respond. Each interview had its own peculiarity and my only concern was to ensure that interviewees would not shift away from the research focus. I tried to get clues and leads out of their answers. This helped me to develop the interview, and showed to them my interest in what they were saying. Eye contact during the conversations helped me to interact with them. However, some locals were uncomfortable with it. I paid attention to their reactions, looking for signs of surprise, confusion or annoyance.

An introductory talk helped to break the ice and to explain the objective of the research. All participants were informed about their rights not to answer questions, or even to change previous statements. Some asked for the questions in advance. I opted not to give them in advance and explained I wanted spontaneity in their answers. They were informed that each interview would last around 45 minutes but it could be longer if they had more to add. The shortest interview was 16 minutes and the longest 2 hours and 35 minutes. The interview was framed with descriptive, structural, technical and philosophical questions. Their personal testimony became a relevant source of storylines and rhetorics in ecotourism. It is important to highlight that I did not prepare any interview pre-test because of the scope of the research and of the reduced number of interviewees (Kvale 1992).

Explanation about ethical issues had priority before any tape-recording of the conversations. All participants were asked to read the explanation sheet and to sign a consent form (included in the appendix). In New Zealand and in many other countries, ‘consent letters’ are standard procedure in research, and individuals are comfortable about signing them as a legal document which ensures their anonymity.

Conversely, consent letters became a critical issue to be dealt with during the field work in Brazil. It became a burden to be managed. They are not popular and people have objections to signing documents. Consent letters are not common procedure in Brazil and, rather than facilitate the interview process it created barriers and raised the suspicions of locals. They feared that by signing the document they would have to abide by legal obligations and commitments.

In most small communities in Amazonia, they are not too familiar with researchers and research; to their eyes, an outsider may be anything, for example, a swindler attempting to grab their land. Some participants just agreed to participate if they did not need to sign anything. Some Amazonian dwellers asked someone else, usually more literate people, to read the documents for them. For those who refused



to sign, I asked them at the beginning of the interview if I was authorised to ask the questions.

All participants used their full original names, occupation, and address. However, all personal names were coded either as *'intwee'* or *'interviewee'* and followed by numbers. 'Personal names' mentioned in the analyses are names publicly mentioned in documents and websites. In this specific case, they were cited. During data collection, none of the participants showed resistance to talking openly to me about their experiences in (eco)tourism, except for two community leaders, two guides in *Maripá*, *Pará* state, and one manager of the Amazonas government state tourism agency (*Amazonastur*) who flatly declined previously arranged interview sessions.

Because I was new to their 'territory', not-introduced by any authority and/or villagers' acquaintances, and asking too many questions and self-identifying as a researcher, I think the two leaders did not trust me much to have their talks recorded. As for the manager's case – I suppose – he did not want to have any statement recorded that could compromise him heading that strategic managerial post. His attitude was really peculiar to me. I cannot really tell what his reason was. In their case, the talk happened informally, without any tape recording. The wishes of participants were respected following the ethical orientation of the University of Waikato. But all the time I guided myself based on good sense and to avoid embarrassing the participants.

Conversations took place mostly in the evening and/or very early in the morning. In the *Maripá* community there was no light at night. The oil generator was broken, and there were no candles. Moreover, because I was in transit, part of the information came from informal talks. This mainly happened in *Maripá*, in the *Resex*, and in *Jamaraquá*, in the *Flona* (National Forest). *Resex* and *Flona* are protected areas managed by *IBAMA*, a Brazilian government body for conservation.

### **3.4.2 - Interview analysis**

According to Kvale (1996) the interpretation of interviews is a process of developing meanings in which the researcher provides insights for a new perspective or explanation about the studied phenomena.

The four main steps to analyse interviews are: a) transcription of interview onto paper; b) Individual analysis: the integration and evaluation of the information; c) generalisation: the development of typologies, that is, the identification of differences and similarities in the interviews, by which to group them; d) control: multiple verification of the script against the recorded material (Lamnek 1988: 104-105 cited in Sarantakos 1993: 305-306). This allows the verification of initial assumptions. For example, in his thesis, Sobania (1999) used Sarantakos' (1993) three phases for analysing interviews: 'data reduction', 'data organisation' and 'data interpretation'.

By removing superfluous and repeated information, data can be reduced to a more convenient and manageable level by eliminating repetitions, contradictions, and redundancy. 'Data organisation' can be done by assembling information around the themes of each specific question. I followed these steps in an attempt to identify 'key

words' and 'key sentences' in the texts. A second refined categorisation contributed to a more consistent analysis, with the identification of textual similarities and differences. The interviews - after being classified by themes – were confronted with other textual data in nature tourism (i.e. documents, brochures, media text, etc).

Due to the limited scope of my research, I did not transcribe the interviews entirely. I listened to all of them about three times and used scripts for mapping them with 'key words' or 'key sentences', and linking them chronologically for easy later access. This partial transcription was to better deal with the management of interviews and save time. Instead of transcribing everything thoroughly for a posterior discourse analysis, I mapped the text in a way I could locate the most relevant sections and excerpts to support my study. The same happened with tape-recorded material. I have tried to use Transana software to map my video recordings but, in my case specifically, it was not very effective. Only three interviews with staff of Action Stations and Kuaka NZ Education Travel providers in New Zealand were fully transcribed. Kvale (1996) suggests that interviews could be concisely summarised into themes for adequate and quick management of them.

In fact, he identified five major approaches to qualitative analysis of interviews, 1) 'meaning condensation' that involves the abridgement of meanings expressed by the participants into brief formulations; 2) 'meaning categorisation' with interviews coded into categories; 3) 'narrative structuring' or chronological and social organisation of an interview in textual format in order to bring out inherent meanings; 4) 'meaning interpretation' involving a more speculative interpretation of the text. It usually requires an in-depth analysis that goes beyond a textual structure and its surface meanings; 5) 'generating meaning through *ad hoc* methods', it is an eclectic quantitative approach to an interview text. Sophisticated textual methods are used to bring out the meaning of different parts of collected data. This method can be used with any interview records; it is distinctive because it allows a free interplay of techniques in the process of text analysis.

### **3.4.3 - Other sources of documentation**

In order to retrieve particular aspects of ecotourism for subsequent analysis, the entire field work in Brazil and in New Zealand was video and voice recorded. Video recording showed to be of utmost importance for this investigation for two main reasons: first, it helped to secure data; secondly, it helped with accuracy. Because there was just one scheduled fieldwork in Brazil, videotaping those sites, organisations and people, helped to retrieve aspects of the field trip without the pressure of doing it again. Videotaping and voice recording are worthwhile because they reproduce the exact environment and context.

It does not substitute the role of personal observations and memos, but even the most skilled and detail researcher cannot replicate - through notes, diaries, and reports - the sharp features of ecotourism spots and ecotourism activities as a video camera can. The memos and reports function as an empirical complement for the audiovisual material and vice versa.

The use of a camera, for example, can capture the daily life of a community, or images and dialogues of a tour expedition, and stakeholder meetings and interaction. Moreover, some aspects that seemed to be irrelevant for the study at a given moment in the fieldwork may be revealed later to be of crucial importance. If one hadn't video-recorded it, the empirical evidence would be lost.

### 3.5 - Textual analysis: Procedures

Before discussing 'texts' as 'discourses', it is critical to discern different functions that texts may have as research material: i) text as text; and ii) texts as representation. First, texts themselves can become the object of research; secondly, texts can be approached as 'utterances', "manifest components of communication" (statements) of and about the selected groups who produced the text (Titscher 2000: 32, refer to Fig. 3.1). By selecting the texts as the object of study, the investigation seeks "to draw conclusions exclusively about the texts themselves". Clearly, texts as utterances are forms of discourses with social implications.

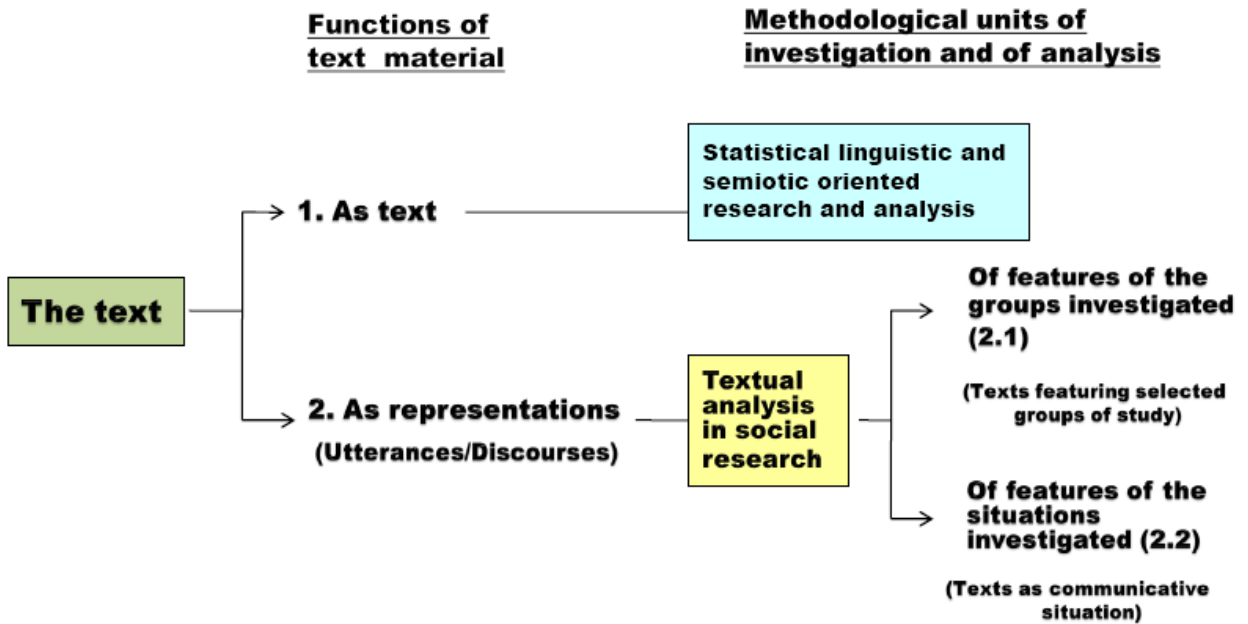


Fig. 3.1 - Functionalities of text material and methodological approach (adapted from Titscher et al. 2000: 32, by Ismar Lima, 2008).

Taking into account the nature of my research, in which data collection is centred on discourses, interviews and documentation, and context, the suitable methodological approach is one that can generate descriptive data. For these ends, the research required a mix of methods that would bring together 'the modes of access to subjective viewpoints' and 'description of processes of creation of social situations',

then lying in the constructivist perspectives; constructivism deals with daily routines and the ways reality is discursively constructed. For these, I am also using the theory of collaboration. The theory is employed to explain the inter-personal processes through which ‘knowledge’ and ‘meanings’ can be created and shared. The focus is not the individual *per se*, but the interactions of a social group, and in my case studies, the nature tourism stakeholders.

Analysis of texts infers that one is in search for what is ‘there’ in the text and the various discourses the text is built on. Fairclough (1989) explains that researchers, involved with analysis and interpretation of textual features, should alternate their attention either considering only the semantic aspect or taking into account grammar and structures (p. 110-111).

For Fairclough there are distinct focuses in a text; sometimes what matters is just semantics/vocabulary *per se* that links itself to ideological issues; some times it is the arrangement of vocabulary in a text that provides an ideological connotation. Metaphorical language has ideological implications (Fairclough 1989: 113-114). Forms of social control are exercised in textual nuances either in the vocabulary used, the meanings or in sentence construction. Euphemisms and metaphors are complex systems of signification (Neumann 2005: 94); and contribute to construct social realities with different ideological inputs (Fairclough 1989: 115).

According to Gergen (1999), scholars specialised in social constructionism have become increasingly attracted to the emancipatory potential of discourse analysis. The method has allowed them to critically and creatively approach our ways of life as presented in texts and discourses. Scholars are fascinated how discourses can be used to maintain power relations and to undermine certain groups (Gergen 1999: 80).

Taking the premise that the world is socially represented through language and symbols - with *en suite* meanings in everyday practices – in-depth analyses of structures of shared language become essential (Parker and Bolton 1999; Wodak 1996; Kendall 2007). Methodological developments in qualitative research have been achieved through constant inquiries within the constructionist spectrum. There has been an increase in research focusing on discursive practices and on the efficacy of rhetorics. They have been accommodated by constructionist approaches (Gergen 1999: 3).

### **3.5.1 - Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Fairclough’s method**

Discourse analysis has become a well-established and central method within the social sciences (Fairclough 2003). Discourse analysis emerged “in the context of the wider post-positivist interpretative tradition” but its origins can be tracked much earlier in history, with its roots in the studies of ideology and of language philosophy (Hajer 1997: 43-44). Discourses can be textual or visual (Fairclough 1989). According to Hay (2000), environmental discourses hold their own version of “the truths” by pinpointing effects and causes of nature transformation. Discourse is then part of social practices within which it is created; it is then part of what is said in such a context (Fairclough 1989, 2003; Hajer 1997). It is seen as a collection of concepts and ideas that are produced, reproduced, shared, and transformed.

For Hajer (1997), definitions of environmental problems can be adequately analysed by a mix of methods and approaches (p.44). He advocates that discourse must be understood beyond what is said; the intentions behind the messages should be observed; there is an “institutional dimension of discourse” (Hajer 1997: 263). Fairclough (1989) suggests the need to understand the institutional motives and circumstances in which discourses are created. For a consistent analysis, four elements must be taken into account, the social orders, the interactional history, the situational and intertextual contexts (refer to Figure 3.2 & 3.3, p. 154, 155). Discourses evolve from any institution, for example, family as an institution, a tour operator, or the government tourism bureau.

Texts should not be analysed apart from the contexts and social circumstances in which they are elaborated, distributed, and consumed, and or how they carry meaning. “The functioning of those institutions” and “how power is structured in institutional arrangements” are highly influential for environmental discourses study (Hajer 1997). That is the reason I decided to analyse discursive practices within the reality of case studies. I was thus able to include texts and rhetorics of major institutions involved in nature tourism, which permitted me to get a more holistic understanding of the relations between intentions of discourses and ongoing social practices.

For Hajer, the social-interactive discourses theory is suitable for scholars interested in disclosing the processes of production and transformation of discourse, thus filling a theoretical-political gap in Foucault’s work (1997: 52). Hajer brings elements of Mead’s ‘symbolic interactionism’ into his theory on social-interactive discourses, and replaces the idea of ‘self’ in interaction by introducing the relevance of textual constructions. In fact, Hajer’s theory blends symbolic interactionism into social constructionism.

By reviewing the main approaches to language, Fairclough (1989) mentions the basic aspects of pragmatics and critical discourse analysis. In pragmatics, language is seen as a form of action in which “spoken and written utterances constitute the performance of speech acts such as promising or asking or asserting or warning” (Fairclough 1989: 9). Speech acts are connected to Austin’s and Searle’s analytical philosophy which is part of Anglo-American pragmatics. In brief, it refers to the idea that ‘at saying something, the person does something’, that is, acts are not apart from speeches and encompass all dimensions of conversations.

There are then the message source (speaker) and a recipient (hearer); speech acts function to ask other people to perform specific undertakings and to be responsive to them (Searle 1969). CDA approaches language as evolving from individuals. Through articulated communication meanings are attached to words. There is a process of meaning-making. Discourse Analysis is not only a method; it is one of the ways of doing social research (Sharp and Richardson 2001).

This approach is widely accepted as a functional method in linguistics. However, Fairclough highlights that from a ‘critical point of view’, the individualistic aspect of ‘speech acts’ makes the approach weak as compared to critical discourse

analysis (CDA) because it overstates the extent to which speakers manipulate language to strategic ends. Under the speech acts context, individuals become the sole source of ‘strategies’ adopted to achieve their objectives, “action is thought of atomistically as emanating wholly from the individual” (Fairclough 1989: 9).

The speech acts approach reduces the role of social conventions as manipulative communication/conversation. It centres on “single invented utterances rather than...[centring on]...real extended discourse” (Fairclough 1989: 9-10), in a way that speech acts become problematic for those who use them to analyse discourses. In terms of linguistics proper, ‘speech acts’ provide the tools for investigators to work on the interdependence of social context and language, but, social context – though considered in the process - has been kept in a marginal position.

In this study, I am interested in investigating how individuals use rhetorical devices in conversation to influence or persuade a recipient. The focus is how structures and forces of social institutions determine the way individuals communicate, construct and explain the world and everyday events. Central to this research is to know who constructs the discourses (textual source), what constitutes the discourses (intrinsic messages), how nature tourism actors are affected by different discursive constructions and how they (the actors) can collaborate with each other to bring consensual meanings into their routines.

Eco-critical discourse analysis has also come into in vogue for those researchers interested in environmental issues. This type of analysis includes texts about the environment and environmentalism and seeks to expose the various underlying ideologies they endorse (Harre, Brockmeier and Muhlhausler 1999; Stibbe 2004). Environmental discursive constructions that may bring potential outcomes for the relations between nature and society become the focal attention for researchers, particularly texts that bring issues, views and orders within a neoliberal economic perspective (Stibbe 2004; Goatly 2000).

With this approach, one can investigate ‘exploitative language use’ and its relations to power structures in society. Eco-critical discourse analysis can then be used with two distinct approaches: to expose hidden damaging ideologies; or to identify discursive representations that can help to disseminate environmentally sound ideas and approaches (Fill and Muhlhausler 2001; Stibbe 2004). In this sense, eco-critical discourse analysis belongs to the ecolinguistics field which focuses on the role of language for solutions for ecological problems.

Ecolinguists are committed to criticise unecological concepts and views that pervade language in its various uses, discursive misrepresentations that may give sense to environmental degradation (Fill and Muhlhausler 2001). In other instances, discourses embedded in logical fallacies sustain many unecological practices. Anthropocentrism and growthism are some examples of ideological positions that can potentially lodge counter-discourses against nature conservation and protection (Fill 2000). Thus, by regarding language as a form of discourse and as social practice, the researcher commits not just to analyse texts and their process of fabrication but also to

interdiscursivity, their social conditions (contexts), and institutional and social structures (refer to Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

### Discourse as text, interaction and context

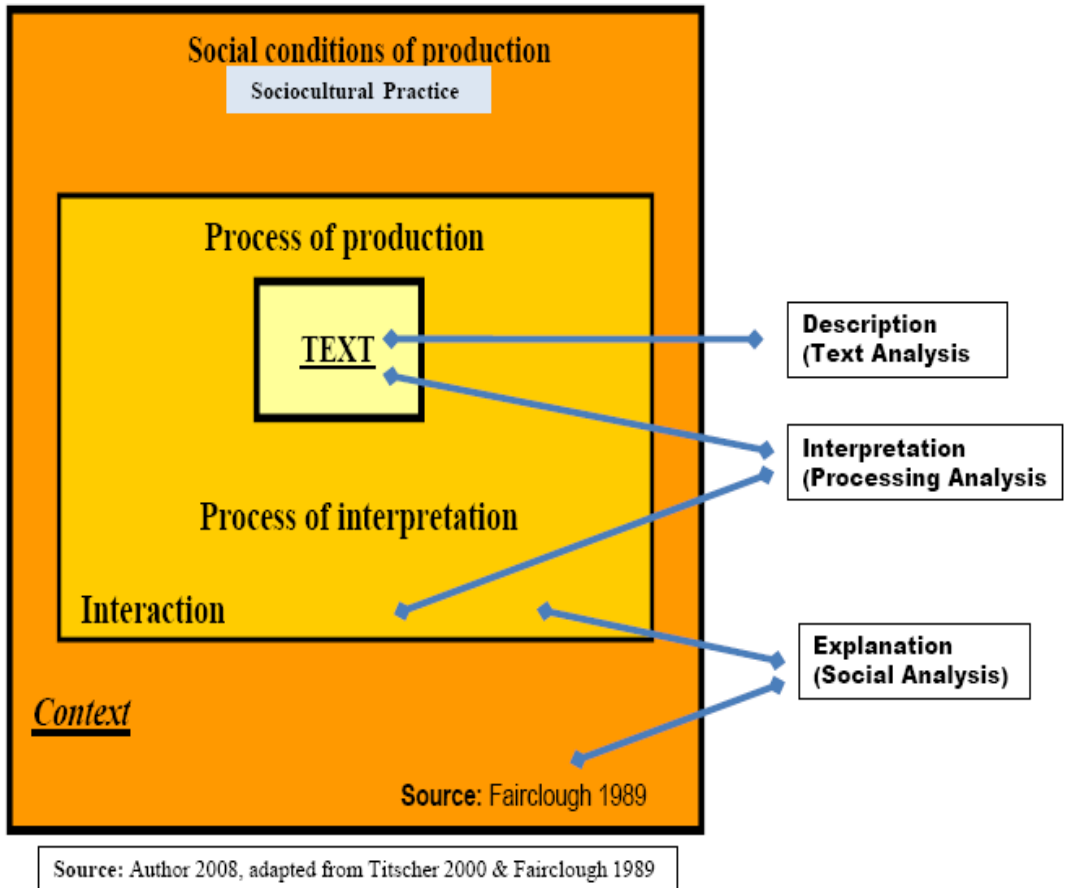


Fig. 3.2 - Discourse as text, interaction and context

Fairclough discerned three stages for critical discourse analysis: i) description: the stage concerned with formal properties of a text; ii) interpretation: deals with the relationship between text and interaction, that is, text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource for interpretation; iii) explanation: a relationship between interaction and social context – “with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects” (1989: 26).

For Fairclough, these stages of analysis of texts contribute to one’s understanding of how power relations and ideological processes become diffused in discourse. Scholars applying CDA methods become committed “to take a political

stance to the truth claims made by discourses which help maintain oppressive power relations, and to increase the voice of marginalised discourses” (Burr 2003: 174-175).

To Fairclough, the stage of interpretation is concerned with participants’ processes of text production as well as text interpretation. Fairclough defined six major domains of interpretation: two levels related to context, and four levels related to interpretation (p.141-142).

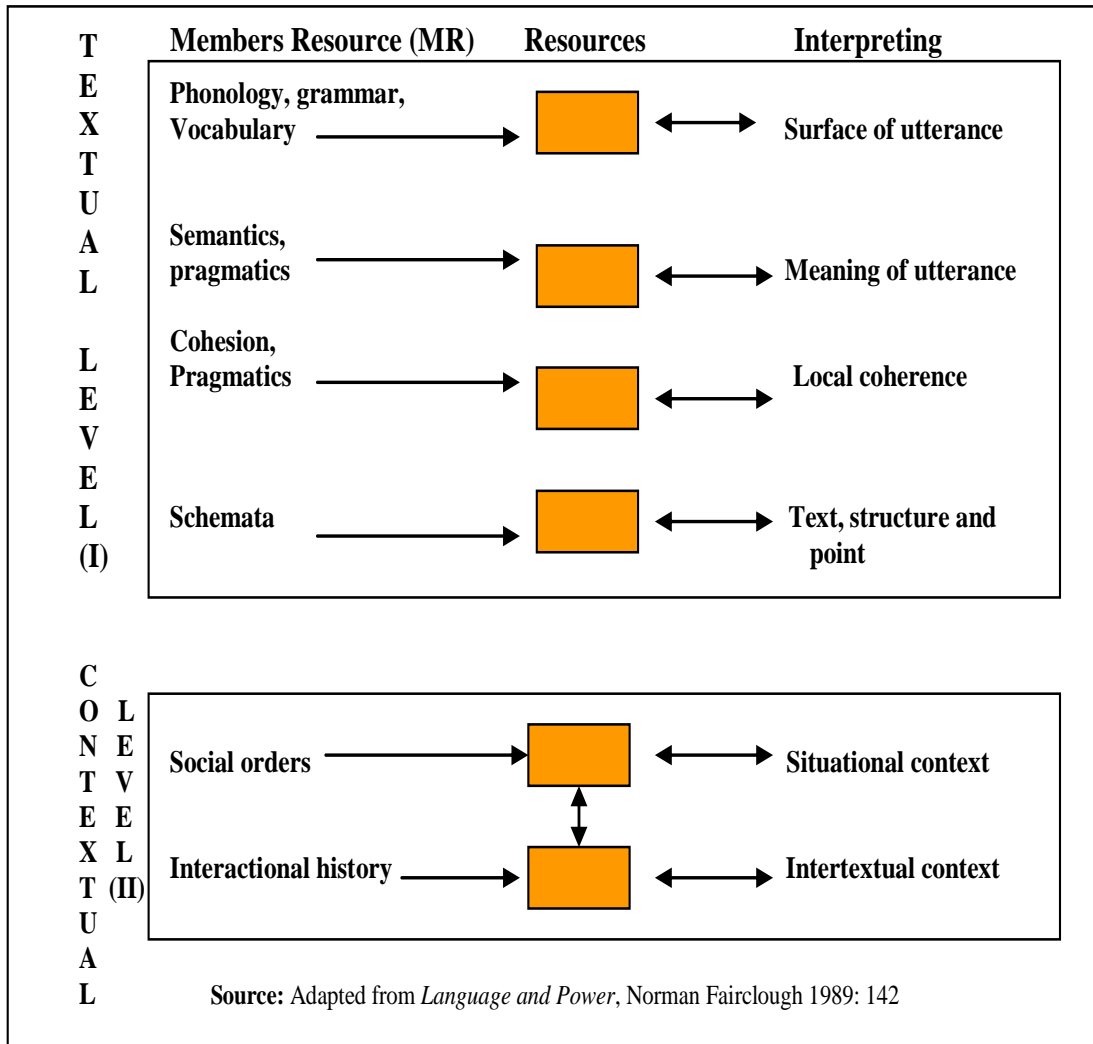


Figure 3.2 (p.154) specifies sections of Figure 3.4 (p.160) by adding layers to a framework that informs researchers about the ‘text’ and ‘context’ levels for analysis. For example, the first section sets ‘context’ in two dimensions: ‘situational’ and ‘intertextual’ corresponding respectively to ‘social orders’ and ‘interaction processes’.



The second section is centred on the linguistic and semantic elements of the text such as 'phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion pragmatics'.

The proposed formula suggests 'deconstruction of statements' with a focus on linguistics aspects. The diagram is informative, and structured to give a conceptual orientation to researchers. This investigation demands a more *sui generis* framework that outlines the various choices for understanding the complexity and importance of discourses in (eco)tourism development. That is, a framework that can be a tool for 'discursive' and 'contextual' analysis, revealing issues of power within two theoretical dimensions: social constructivism and collaboration (see Fig. 3.4, p.160).

### **3.5.2 - Conjoining social constructionism, CDA and contextuality**

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, the book is oriented to reveal different existing constructions of nature, more precisely, of nature as depicted and socially ordered by local stakeholders. Constructions of nature, social constructionism can be subdivided into 'micro' and 'macro' levels. Micro social constructionism focuses on the semantic content of social interactions, that is, language and its meaning as inherent in the human relationship and on its various versions of the world. Micro social constructionists claim that the real world is described through narratives and discourses, and that the words gain a collective sense.

Then, humans cannot make claims about a real world outside its existing descriptions. Conversely, for macro social constructionists language has a constructive power that derives from material/social structures, social relations and from institutionalised practices. Advocates of this approach try to demonstrate how science and individuals are socially constructed.

Usually, the macro social constructionist is interested in investigating power relations and social inequalities. The nuances of these two approaches are entrenched in the relativist and realist notions of the world as constructed by language. As mentioned, micro and macro versions should not be mutually exclusive (refer to Chapter 2, section 2.2), and are brought together for my framework for textual analysis which I elaborate in the next sections. Then, competing discourses and conflicts are likely fall in six dimensions in ecotourism: conceptual, ideological, relational, normative, structural and spatial.

The following examples can illustrate the circumstances in which each level may appear; however, the levels are not steady, or inflexible, and two or three levels of competing discourses can be identified in the same case or event.

At the 'conceptual level' diverging discourses are ingrained in the definitions of ecotourism; it is present in the way local stakeholders have chosen how to operate ecotourism and this collides with the overarching notion of how ecotourism should be.

At an ideological level, competitive discourses are in the storylines and narratives about 'development' and 'conservation'; that is, different perceptions are

supported by anthropocentric and ecocentric perceptions. The relational level refers to discursive constructions that appear as two or more stakeholders are operating in the same (eco)tourism market; this level deals with power relations among stakeholders and the types of narratives they produce to justify decisions and actions.

At the normative level, regulation, policies, rules, codes of conduct, certification programme (e.g. Green Globe-21), etc may have inconsistencies as compared to the operational level of ecotourism; they may also have items and clauses that go against stakeholders' practices on the ground. Written documents usually represent the formal position of an organisation/institution and they consist of discursive constructions that sustain a standpoint.

As for the structural level, competing discourses may occur in two streams: 1) at an inter-sectorial or inter-departmental level of a government body, company, etc; 2) they may also take place among stakeholders because of social fabric, stratified in classes, and they produce their own texts as an attempt to keep their power or command. In this case, structural and relational levels are intertwined.

The spatial level refers to issues related to natural resources access, management and settlement (or ownership) in that area. Stakeholders involved in conflicts linked to land access and possession tend to have their own discursive production. Again, it is a question of historical power relations. Examples in Brazil, include the Itacaré colonisation period and its legacy to the contemporary population; and in New Zealand, there are Māori land issues related to the Treaty of Waitangi and claims for land re-possession and indemnisation. Each discourse fits in a level (or levels) of power relations; thus, it is important to critically scrutinise textual constructions in order to identify 'order words', 'hidden messages' and 'the intentions behind the discourses'. Key questions are who is saying what to whom and why.

One problematic aspect about the claim of CDA is that the status of 'reality and truth' within the social constructionism perspective creates obstacles for one to advocate his/her position (Burman and Parker 1993; Parker 1992). The point many scholars diverge on is about the notion that if there is no truth but only competing discourses, how can one be sure about reality? Who holds the truth?

The epistemological aspect of 'how to be sure about what we know' is beyond the scope of this study on competing discourses. However, In Chapter 2, I thoroughly examined two theoretical positions: realism and relativism, and came to the conclusion that they are not mutually exclusive within the social constructionist perspective. They can be brought together conceptually and theoretically, as a non-relativist ideological position (refer to Chapter 2, section 2.4).

Theories of social constructionism tend to be idealist rather than realist in their approaches to the role of texts and language in the construction of the world. To shed light on this subject, Sayer (2000) explains that for a realist the relation between discourses and the social world is an interchangeable one, with social institutions being "ultimately socially constructed, [and] once constructed they are realities that affect and limit the textual construction of the social" (quoted in Fairclough 2003: 8-9).

Another existing problem about identification of discourses is the trend to have them simply labelled into a systematic and coherent classification of events, becoming what Burr (2003) called ‘familial discourse’ (p.175), without taking any critical stance. For example, because of these characteristics of speech acts, I initially found that critical discourse analysis (CDA) could become a more suitable method for investigating the subject of ‘competing discourses and negotiation of discourses’ in ecotourism. Moreover, CDA furnished me with the tools for adequately investigating ‘language’ as a complex system of signification shared among many actors (Wodak and Ludwig, 1999). Unlike speech acts, critical discourse analysis can help expose power inequalities and ideology that are concealed in the use of language (Burr 2003: 170-171).

In order to deconstruct these selected texts, elements of Fairclough’s (CDA) combined with contextual analysis were employed. There are different levels for textual analysis (van Dijk, 1988). In order to answer my research questions I need to regard language as a container for ‘ideologies’. As Neumann (2005) emphasises, “discourse analysis plays close attention to the role of language in constructing social reality as a complex system of signification” (p.94). The interactive web of relations in the practices of ecotourism/nature tourism requires additional frameworks for fully understanding the process used by some actors to ‘produce’ and ‘represent’ issues according to their wishes and interests. There are no neutral texts, certainly, but ‘reality in the practices of ecotourism’ transcends the boundaries of semantics and linguistics.

There are contextual events to be taken into account. At this point, I would like to underline that other factors such as historical events and the understanding of structures of power in a community or region become crucial for an analysis of ecotourism on the ground. It is important to highlight that until now I have been using ‘ecotourism’ and ‘nature tourism’ interchangeably; however, a conceptual differentiation will be provided in later sections. For unveiling and unravelling contextual meanings in discourses used among actors in nature tourism, critical discourse analysis has shown itself useful, but, not enough for the scope of this research. The aim of the next section is to explain the development of a Contextual Critical Discourse Analysis (CCDA) for text-context analysis.

### **3.5.3 -Developing an analytical tool: Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis (CCDA)**

Fundamentally, the methodology and methods are the choice of the researcher but defined by the subject itself and by the research question(s). That is, the pending queries in Academia, the gaps to be filled, bound the work of the researcher. CCDA was developed as a new approach, still incipient and with areas to be strengthened, but it greatly serves the proposal of the investigation that seeks to identify functional models in (eco)tourism that can reconcile economic, environmental and social interests. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define it, “qualitative research...is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world...it consists of...material practices that make the world visible” (p.5) that are otherwise not systematically perceptible by a regular citizen because of his/her different

priorities in life. Figure 3.4 was developed as a framework for the analysis of competing discourses in nature tourism/ecotourism. It includes the micro and macro perspectives in social constructionism. Here the relativist and realist viewpoints are brought together in a systematic and orderly way for categorisation without neglecting critical inputs. The power of language is then introduced as being cognitive or coercive within a text, interaction and social context.

The proposed framework (Figure 3.4) can guide the researcher beyond the classical approach for discourse analysis. It is more comprehensive, and was elaborated to be organic. Within the constructionist perspective, any researcher can add layers and/or sections that may complete or reinforce existing ones. The framework is indicative, not static, particularly the sections on 'representation', 'rhetorical devices' and on the 'functions of language'. There is an obvious trend in this research to have the 'discourses', 'statements' and 'rhetorics' analysed in contrast to a context in which stakeholders are inserted.

The mission is to identify 'key elements' in ongoing collaborative models that have advanced dialogue and synergism among local actors propitiating collective gains in the management of tourism resources. What determined this choice of method (within social constructionism), rather than techniques from phenomenology, ethnomethodology and structuralism, was the need to focus on social actors and on the power politics they produce and get involved in. For example, collaboration in (eco)tourism is negotiating power. And negotiation itself implies agreeing on meanings. 'Meaning' is said to evolve out from individuals through typified interactional roles. People's knowledge of what reality is becomes part of institutional and social structures.

Language, as a container of meanings - within these structures - is the unit for investigation. By tracing 'language in use', in the form of discourses, one can identify 'semantic intersections' where reality is a collective reality, created by human agency but shaped by the structures. Despite their significant impact on social sciences, 'phenomenology' and 'ethnomethodology' are grounded in a philosophical stand that situates language as "the fundamental resource for microsocial interaction" (Filmer et al. 2004: 39).

A comprehension of factual accounts in (eco)tourism development demands focus on text and context. Because of the specific questions raised in the study, the appropriate methodology should be one grounded in 'social constructionism' and instrumentally supported by CCDA. It includes the analysis of relevant information in meetings, business folders, company pamphlets, brochures, government handouts, news current affairs and any public information, as well as government documents concerning tourism and its development

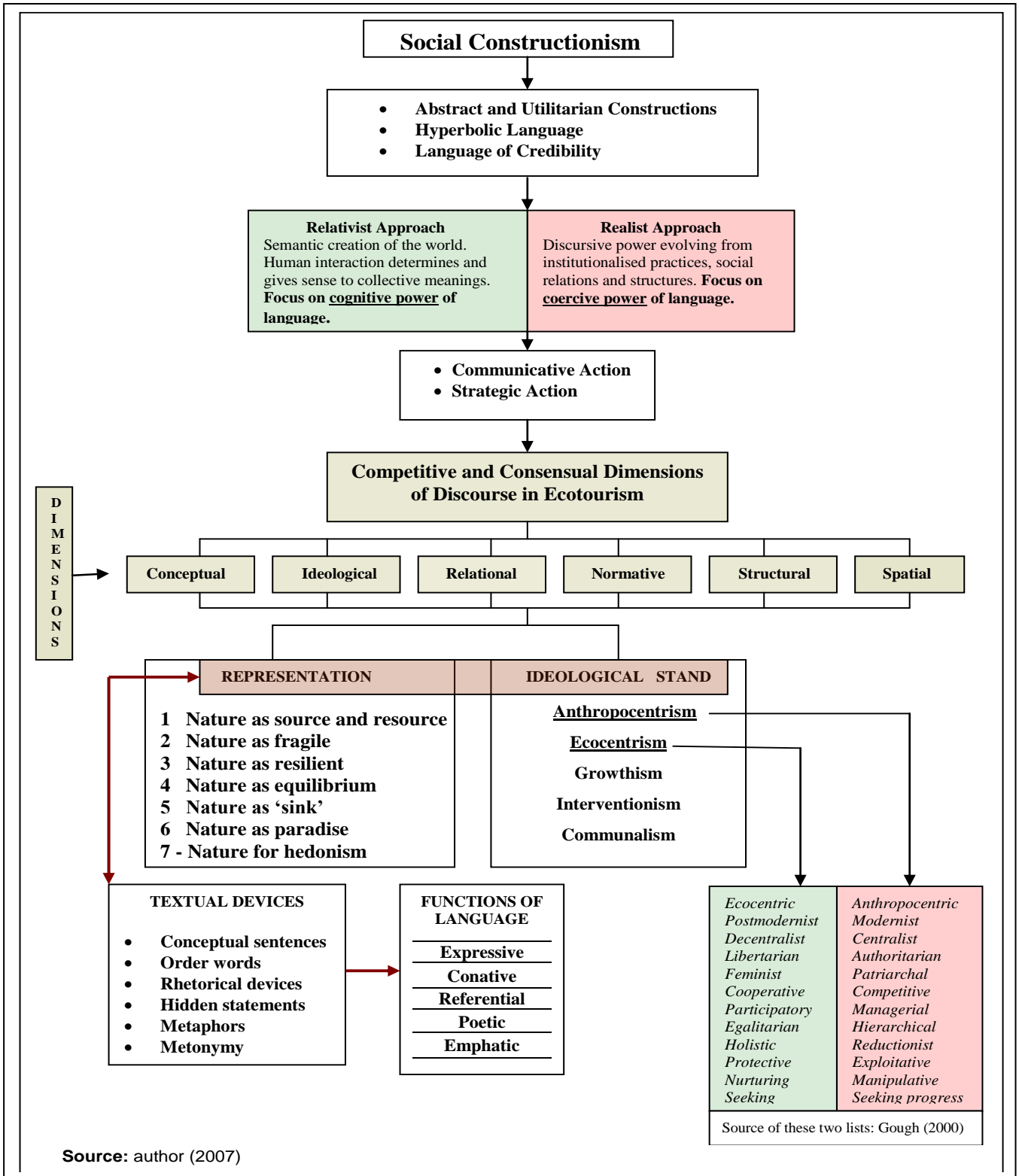


Fig. 3.4 Framework for analysis of discourses: Micro and Macro perspectives in Social Constructionism and texts attributes

#### **3.5.4 Mapping the methods of text and discourse deconstruction**

For this research, a map of methods of text and discourse analysis (created by Titscher et al. 2000, refer to Fig. 3.5) was used to situate the topic and the research problem vis-à-vis the various theoretical mainstreams and methods. Some elements were taken into account to inform about the most suitable operational track for the research on dealing with ‘competing discourses’ and ‘collaboration’ in (eco)tourism implementation. Three elements were the drives for a better matched selection of theories: ‘meaning fabrication’, ‘power relations’ and ‘interactive processes’.

Based on the literature review, on my own reflections and on the initial contacts with key ‘actors’ in the prospective case studies, I have decided to use Social Constructionism and the Theory of Collaboration as the conceptual platform for the research. They would serve suitably to explain the cases in which ‘stakeholders’ are daily involved with various types of textual productions that either cause (or magnify) crisis or push them to cooperate.

Texts as representations of reality produced and consumed by local actors, in their own local/regional context, should be investigated. This social research has enquiries into ‘discursive rivalries’ and ‘collaborative schemes’ in ecotourism development. Because of that the Theory of Collaboration, Social Constructionism and CCDA were included in the diagram and interrelated to other theories and methods (refer to Fig. 3.5). Critical Realism (CR) was also included and interconnected with some methods despite it has been discussed to explain my ideological stand.

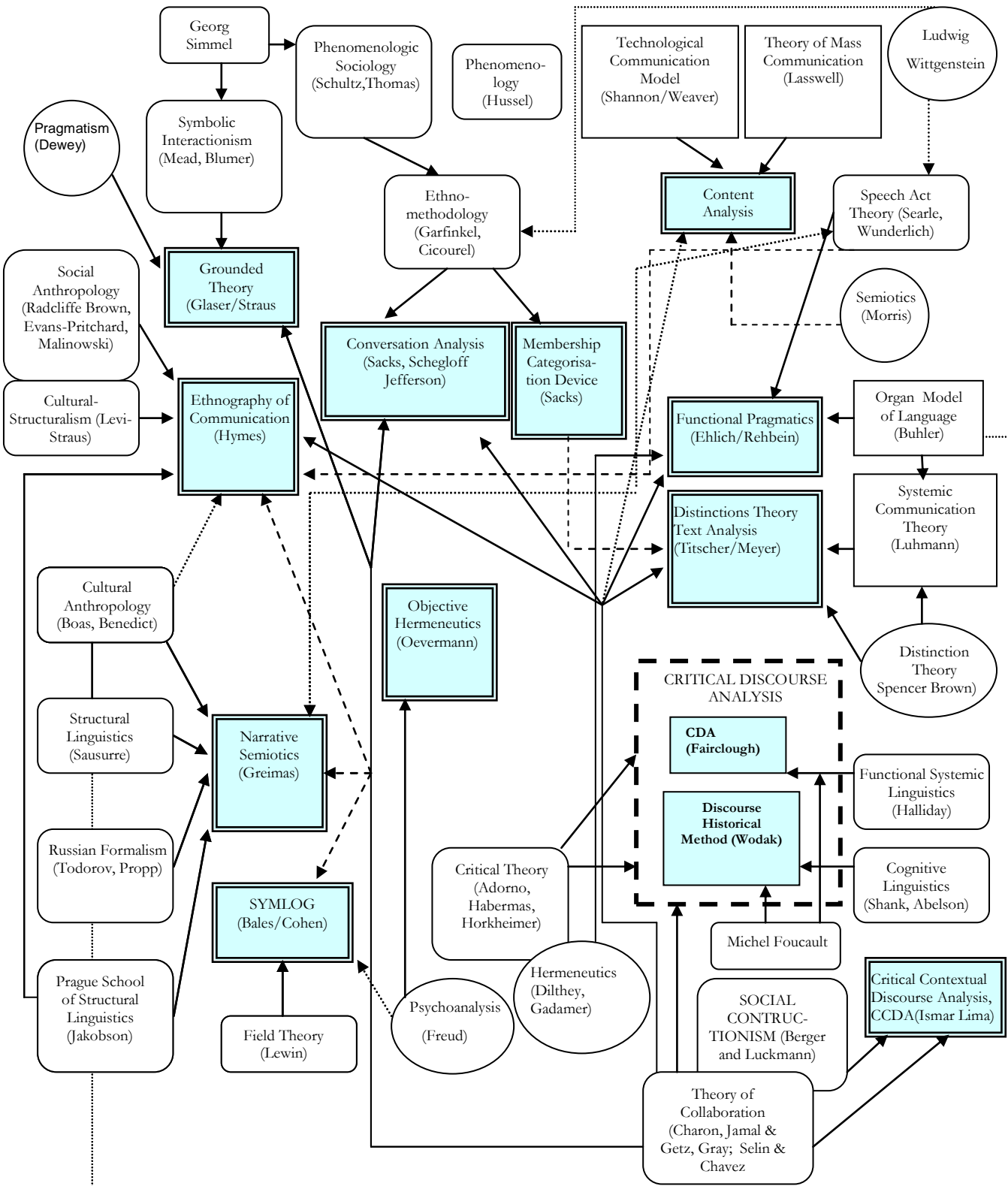


Figure 3.5 - A map of methods of text and discourse analysis as created by Titscher et al. 2000 with Ismar Lima's insertions: Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis (CCDA), the Theory of Collaboration, and Social Constructionism

### **3.5.5 - How does Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis (CCDA) differ from other text-based or semiotic content Analysis of published material?**

In this investigation ‘[critical] discourse analysis’ was the preliminary indication was first regarded as a perfect procedural match for answering the key research questions. However, CDA of Fairclough had revealed to be not a complete method for the endeavour. CDA approaches very timidly issues from within a context by stakeholders involved direct or indirectly with ecotourism activities.

CDA alone would not be enough to answer my research questions. The solution was to advance tools that would approach the subject with new perspectives. In order to thoroughly, orderly and systematically deconstruct the contentious and collaborative contexts, a framework for ‘critical contextual discourse analysis’ (CCDA) was then developed.

What has been proposed here is the analysis of ‘texts’ within a ‘context’ in which they are produced. The method demands tools for a ‘Critical Contextual Discourse Analysis’ (CCDA) that can shed light on the role of stakeholders and on local politics (refer to section 3.5.2). CCDA retrieves key aspects of ‘critical discourse analysis’ (CDA) but puts emphasis on the context where the events take place: ‘texts alone cannot provide all the answers’.

It is necessary to deconstruct and understand the social fabric, the power games, the group interests, and the motives behind the struggles in a certain geographical area where (eco)tourism development is situated. This is the mission of chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. It is very difficult to set criteria for comparing and distinguishing methods of text analysis because each method has ‘intersectional aspects’. Indeed, they form a linguistic method family very closely linked, with few demonstrated nuances; with a slight degree of difference.

However, there is a dichotomy between linguistic-based and non-linguistic based analyses. Any research that has no link to the extralinguistic reality, the analysis is centred on statistical structure of texts in content analysis such as in narrative semiotics (Titscher 2000: 33).

Conversely, if the study belongs to the field of social research, “texts are investigated as utterances of particular groups of people” and they are the units of data-collection, and the features of the situations also investigated (Titscher 2000: 33). This approach regards the situational context and the role of local actors as text generators.

According to Titscher (2000), linguistic methods analyse ‘coherence’ and ‘cohesion in a text and the relationship between them, e.g. ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ tied to semantic value of particular words and their position in a sentence. ‘Cohesion’ is related to the “components of the textual surface” such as “textual-syntactic connectedness” (p.227); the text obeys grammatical rules and dependencies even having stylistic artefacts that seek to harmonise the phrasal structure such as ‘recurrence’ and ‘conjunction’. ‘Coherence’ is all about the existing meanings in and of a text (textual semantics). Non-linguistic methods mostly pay attention to meanings



only, but with extended concentration in social factors. There is thus a difference of aim and of procedures at the moment of deconstructing a text.

In social research, cohesion, coherence and context are the primary characteristics to serve as a lever for textual analyses. Consequently, one can proceed for a 'solely linguistic analysis' (restricted to text itself) or for a '[critical] discourse analysis', a sociological method of text analysis much broader in scope. In this case, discourse is regarded as a social practice (Fairclough 1989).

What makes CCDA distinct compared to other text-based or content analysis methods is its attribute to regard 'cohesion', 'coherence' and 'context' all together for understanding the 'subjective' and 'objective' world of actors within a geographical area. CCDA is an all-inclusive method embracing and assessing systematically externalities of a text such as 'intentionality', 'informativity', 'acceptability' and 'situationality'. These elements become salient by analysing a text within a context. That is, who wrote what to whom with what intention?

Thus, CCDA helps to understand 'how' meanings in text are produced, disseminated, consumed and interpreted on the ground by the stakeholders. The method entails tools and venues that capture the outcomes of communicative actions at a local level. Scale issues are part of the analytical process with global and local discourses being taken into account for understanding a certain reality locally. Speech situation, attitudes and experiences are extralinguistic features which CCDA is concerned about.

Yet CCDA is distinct from other method of text analysis, particularly from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), because of its obvious non-relativist social constructionist orientation. Moved by a critical realist position, researchers using CCDA seek to understand the outset of new values and meanings as a bottom-up phenomenon.

Any text in a context has hidden intentions and meanings, and CCDA aims to reveal them in all linguistic genres such as narrative, argumentative, instructive, normative and informative within a particular context. CCDA becomes a further methodological tool to demonstrate whether or not a reality is subject or object of a situational environment and/or of a local actor intervention. With its strengths being the analysis of 'text(s) in context(s)', CCDA can shed light on 'manufacturing consent', unresolved claims or controversial axioms (e.g. sustainable development, climate change and evolutionary cycles) from within a local perspective.

CCDA serves as an avenue for exercising a 'socio-diagnostic critique' which is concerned "with the demystifying exposure of the – manifest or latent – possibly persuasive or 'manipulative' character of discursive practices" (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 65).

Content Analysis (CA) is the longest well-known method of text analysis among those of social investigation (Holsti 1968; Neuendorf 2002). The term originally refers to quantifiable methods of text content such as the absolute and relative frequency of words in a text body (Neuendorf 2002). Subsequently, CA was extended to nest all procedures operating with semantic, pragmatic or syntactic groups.

Such procedures and techniques seek to quantify these groups “by means of frequency”; however, “the range of analytical goals, means and processes in CA is vast”, particularly after Mayring (1988) has proposed it as ‘qualitative content oriented’, bringing CA close to ethnographic methods or grounded theory (Titscher et al. 2000: 55).

Conversation Analysis is highly qualitative oriented, reliant on transcribed conversations. Its proposed procedures fall “within the rubric of ethnomethodology”; the method demands considerable involvement between the investigator and the investigated individuals such as in a patient-doctor interaction (Neuendorf 2002: 7); Conversation Analysis is used for in-depth analysis of interviews.

### **3.6 - Scaling ecotourism: Issues of one’s method choice**

Hall (2007b) brings to the academic debates the importance of applying the concept of scale within the Social Sciences, particularly for studies of tourism and ecotourism. According to Burt (2003), issues of scale can better help understand tourism because “it raises issues as to what scale of analysis tourism should be examined at and how findings at one scale can be related to another” (quoted in Hall 2007b: 244). In (eco)tourism, an accurate assessment of impacts should be one ‘point-to-point’ in a certain time and space, that is, it should take into account the possible visitors’ impacts in a continuum from their departure location, transit regions to their final destination(s). Hall (2007b) believes that issues of scale or selection of boundaries become critical for ascertaining effects and contribution to conservation, economic development and local communities, as well as, for tourism monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Studies focussed on specific (eco)tourism sites without regarding scale may result in a “gross underestimate” of the environmental impacts (Gossling et al. 2002; Gossling and Hall 2006). For Hall, “many studies of ecotourism tend to be extremely localised” (2007b: 245).

For this study, scaling ecotourism temporally and spatially would require different methodological approaches, tools and data collection from what has been done. For example, it would involve investigating the interlinks between local and global events in Brazil and New Zealand, the various layers of connections among stakeholders and visitors - and their discourses – within a temporal and spatial scale. Clearly, this is not the focus of the research. As the book title indicates it, ‘the micro geopolitics of (eco)tourism’, in contrast, demand an investigation bounded by existing texts and contexts - pertinent to chosen case studies - at a local level. Scaling is mostly one’s method and focus choice. Even though, the readers will realise scale issues in this work, the existing scaling is not systematically applied in a space and time line as debated by Hall (2007b).

In this book, issues of scale of ecotourism have been observed in the framework for critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA) (refer to Fig. 3.4, p.160). Scaling exists in the partnering framework, see Figures 2.0 (p.95), 2.1 (p.96) and Table 2.7 (p.109) & 2.8 (p.112) in which a partnership model is demonstrated in its various levels as well as the interplays of stakeholders with ‘partnering structure’ and ‘power

accounts'. That is, the partnership model is structurally outlined in layers; being public and private, between government and NGOs, business and corporate, or a mix of all; in addition, partnerships can have horizontal, vertical, cross-sectorial networks, or a mix of each. Geographically, they can occur at international, national, regional, state and community/local levels; and they abide by jurisdictional regulations, norms and policies.

Levels of scale are outlined in Fig. 6.4 (p.315) about the participatory and collaborative network in the APA of Itacaré as well as in Fig. 7.1 (p.327) about New Zealand legislation and norms, and their jurisdictions. Fig. 4.0 (p.176) suggests scaling in the model of nodes of conflict. Table 2.7 (p.109) compares four scaling models. However, only Butler's outline (1980) situates issues of tourism within a space and time scale; "in tourism studies possibly the nearest that exists to an ergodic hypothesis...of a tourist" evolution cycle (Hall 2007b: 248).

As for scale issues with respect to discourses and series of discourses, the book has done a substantial contextual and intertextual analysis of the political, economic and environmental implications of 'ecological footprint', 'climate change', 'environmental impacts' and 'natural resource management'.

Ecological footprint is a mechanism used in audits on travel impacts; it can be used for assessing the environmental dimensions of tourism (in a temporal and spatial scale) in relation to "the travel of the customer rather than just the consumptive and productive activities of [a certain]...organisation *per se*" (Hall 2007b: 251).

Scaling is intrinsic in the discussion about the influence of normative documents and regulations on local stakeholders operating in the nature-based tourism sector in New Zealand and in Brazil. The same can be asserted about the sections on accreditation programmes such as Green Globe. For this type of analysis what prevails is 'intertextuality', that is, the relationships of text(s) to others, and to a context in past or present time at a local, regional and international scale. Some issues transcend the local sphere.

Scale issues are inherent in the discussions of universal concepts such as 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development'. Such macro concepts are systematically interconnected with existing contentions related to 'sustainable tourism' and 'ecotourism' implementation at local and regional levels.

### **3.7 - Study limitations**

Fieldwork in Boa Vista, Roraima state, was the weakest and most unfruitful part of the trip in Amazonia. Spending three days in the city did not result in substantial data. The time was spent trying to find key people for interviews. Finally, I found the government department responsible for Proecotur in the state. An employee of the Tourism Department agreed to an interview which lasted around 20 minutes only. She provided very little relevant information. I had the impression either she was not sure about providing information on Proecotur or she was new to that function and so not confident to talk about it.

In Boa Vista, an inner-land without ecotourism projects, it was not possible to develop any practical observation for this study. Boa Vista/Roraima did not provide the right conditions to become a case study. The interview will only serve to support arguments relative to Proecotur.

Originally, a field trip to Mamirauá Sustainable Reserve, in the Brazilian Amazon, was scheduled but it was cancelled because the reserve was under maintenance and people would not have had enough time to share with me. In addition, I would have had just two days to visit their ecotourism installations. However, in Belém I had the opportunity to interview the deputy director of the Mamirauá Institute in Brazil, Helder Queiroz who provided key information about the ecotourism practised in the Mamirauá reserve, a mix of community and commercial ecotourism, institutionally managed and marketed internationally. The interview lasted almost one hour with many details on the financial viability of ecotourism; budget, investment and profitability; and on the main challenges faced by the managers and locals. Ecotourism in Mamirauá has been designed to be a sort of 'governance model'; the interactive process there strengthens the human and social capitals in the region (Lima and d'Hautesserre, 2011).

Researchers should not be dependent on audiovisual recording devices. Technical problems, faulty equipment, and loss of tapes are a few examples of unexpected events that can jeopardise one's research. I lost one video tape because of faulty fabrication. But this did not represent a critical loss of data. Because I am a Brazilian citizen - fluent in English and Portuguese - language issues did not turn into a communication problem.

There were technical, physical and temporal setbacks in the interview phase; factors that happened beyond my control. Some interviews could not be recorded because of personal refusals, shyness or low memory in the digital voice recorder. On some occasions, I decided not to record because I was concerned with the possibility of losing spontaneity in the statements. I decided then just to chat with locals, and tried to retrieve the maximum data as possible. To take notes was also difficult in some locations because of lack of proper atmosphere, poor weather conditions, no light at night in isolated communities, or, there was no time for sitting down to write memos.

In New Zealand, two recorded interviews with Action Stations' and Kuaka's staff recorded with low in volume were inaudible because of air-conditioning noise. Moreover, the video--recording of their practical work in educational tourism in an open space on Mount Maunganui got severely distorted because of excessive wind. Part of the dialogues and explanation simply could not be listened to or tracked.

In Manaus, the interviewees of Amazonastur (Amazonas Tourism Organization), a state government tourism bureau, who were previously scheduled, began to put off the meetings. After four days of trying to set up an appointment, they finally declined and offered a brief informal talk about nature tourism practiced in areas surrounding Manaus. This response was disappointing and caused a delay in my itinerary as it raised costs (hotel, food, transportation, etc). However, I had the chance

to talk to some local guides and visited some ecotourism agencies. This helped me to understand the way they perceive ecotourism and visitors.

Another problem concerning the interviews done in Portuguese was to situate them within an appropriate English-speaking context. Translations can always bring some risk of original content loss. On the other hand, field work provides a series of elements and contextual experiences that together can mitigate the risks of flawed interpretations.

### **3.8 - Reflexivity: The researcher role**

The motives for this study are rooted in my personal experience over recent years about deforestation in the Brazilian Amazonia. I have a critical realist position about Amazonia and its uses. Nature tourism seems to be a rational way of exploring those huge green areas. Although I believe nature tourism has a potential for enhancing the social, cultural and natural capitals, I am sceptical about its real effect against deforestation and about its vigour as an economic activity, as noted by Hecht (1985), or its ability to counter the seemingly economic irrationality of the destruction of Amazonia.

Ecotourism is limited in its role for nature preservation; it can just mitigate a fraction of the problems, mainly those issues that demand organised forms of interaction with nature. I am a lower-middle class Brazilian, with a university degree in Journalism, and well-read about Amazonia. In 1998 I decided to specialise in this area. Social injustice became the main thrust for doing this research as Brazil has a serious problem of income inequality and wealth distribution.

As a member of the lower-middle class stratum, I have faced and lived many situations in which language has been used to manipulate and tyrannize people, particularly those living in isolated areas of Amazonia. Deconstruction of discourses is one of the ways to reveal abstract and utilitarian rhetorics in ecotourism. Utilitarian rhetorics are those that make sense for local actors on the ground. Abstract rhetorics are usage of language to create a relative world that mirrors and fit the reality as lived by the locals either in Amazonia or in New Zealand (Lima, 2009). In many respects, abstract rhetorics can become coercive language. By reading the literature on ecotourism and visiting ecotourism spots in both Brazil and New Zealand, I became intrigued with how often ecocentric views compete with anthropocentric ones. I have chosen to investigate ecotourism/nature tourism in New Zealand because I believe this country has advanced satisfactorily on socio-environmental issues.

The initial intention was to draw a New Zealand model of actors' interaction and collaborative communication in nature tourism that could be applied in Brazil. Other factors that motivated me to research nature tourism/ecotourism were my passion for green areas. In addition, I have a special interest in travel. New Zealand has been advertised as 'green' and 'clean' and '100% Pure' for years and this also attracted my attention to this country. However, competing and contradictory aspects of conservationist and tourism languages should be unveiled.

### **3.9 - Conclusion**

The methodology and methods presented in this chapter were chosen and designed to instrumentalise the deconstruction of texts, events and contexts in (eco)tourism implementation. A set of documents, official and unofficial information sources and case studies were chosen and linked to various facts and factors systematically as part of the scenario under investigation. By having multiple analytical tools, the comprehension of ‘reality’ in ecotourism turns to be holistic. The key device is the ‘analysis of discourses’ in interface with ‘context’; the strategy can facilitate the mapping and identification of ‘positions’, ‘views’, ‘controlling language’ and ‘meaning fabrication’ as experienced by local stakeholders. The mapping process through textual analysis is one of the ways to scratch the surface of the complex art of collaborating and to reveal its likely benefits. “Semantic networks” (Walker 2003) can serve as an avenue to investigate **how** ideology and power structures emerge in the discourses of local stakeholders as they are interacting in partnership.

Social change is very subjective. There is no precise way to measure it; a more comprehensive understanding about the role of discourses in social practices might demand long-term ethnographic work which would clash as an initial proposal, its timeframe and the availability of funds. Because of the complexity of the topic, the methods would help me to capture ‘a reality’ and ‘the power of meaning construction’ in ecotourism development through the ‘shadows’. This is certainly a characteristic of ‘qualitative research’ methodologies. Each research is an individual and unique piece of work; it has its own assumptions, focal areas and leading questions that may demand versatility of the researcher; s/he must be able to create specific tools and methodological venues. The major limitation to applying this tracking method is that I have remained peripheral to the process of collaboration since I was only an observer and this fact limits the chances for a grasp of the internal systematic process of negotiating power. This constraint can be overcome by talking to leaders and to active participants of the collaboration schemes, interviewing them, and by reading pertinent documents.

In methodological terms, it was decisive to this research to check on the ground promising case studies rather than getting attached too early to a few without knowing their real potential as “labs” for data collection. For example, if I had committed myself to work with some communities in Amazonia, I would have spent several years without getting the data needed for analysis. It was a very challenging, exhaustive and exploratory journey in Brazil, dialoguing and interacting with people of varied background in ecotourism in order to understand the theme in a contextualised way. It was also a rewarding experience to follow and understand intimately the work of KuaKa New Zealand/Action Stations; those contacts broadened my perspectives, enriched my background and made me feel much more confident to debate (eco)tourism as a form of interaction with nature. By following these methodological criteria, I was able to identify the ‘nodes of conflict’ and the ‘nodes of interaction’ in ecotourism in Silves, Itacaré, in Brazil, and in the Bay of Plenty (Kuaka NZ), making them my case studies on ‘competing discourses’ and ‘collaboration’. I have used an

array of texts dealing with social, environmental and economic issues as supplementary sources for my findings and arguments.

Discursive analysis alone would not provide all the empirical elements to map this 'negotiation of power' in collaborative (eco)tourism schemes. Collaboration structures and exogenous factors must be taken into account for an in-depth comprehension of the negotiation of power. In this case, critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA) is an open method to serve the different purposes within the realm of 'text' and 'context'. A hybrid approach that can be adjusted and refined each time it is used, it was designed to be somewhat organic with inclusion or exclusion of components and tools to better serve the purposes of different research projects.

## *Chapter Four*

### **Competing discourses and (eco)tourism development: an Analysis**

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#### **4.0 - Introduction**

This chapter presents the various diverging discourses that permeate the debates in ecotourism and sustainable tourism. It also discusses the social, political and economic issues that affect their implementation on the ground. Although the procedural aspects were explained in Chapter 3 on methodology, the applied method will be briefly commented upon to reinforce and complete former explanations.

The analysis will seek ways to answer the following research sub-questions: 1) has ecotourism implementation been predominantly populated by coercive and abstract language rather than using cognitive language for mutual knowledge construction at the local level? 2) what are the textual and contextual elements in the nodes of conflict that should be taken into account for consensus building?

This chapter on competing discourses brings a mix of techniques for deconstructing and commenting on textual samples using systematic, descriptive and analytical approaches. The analysis is carried out using whole texts, statements and snippets from related cases in Brazil and in New Zealand. Assorted printed and online material, interviews and data collected during fieldwork are the textual and contextual sources. In addition, citations will be contrasted with each other to disclose ‘nodes of conflict’ inherent in stakeholder interactions. These two procedures contextualize ‘ecotourism implementation’ and show that it is not without problems. Discourses have competing rhetorics in which statements - directly and indirectly related to ecotourism and sustainable tourism - bring with them social, economic and environmental contradictions.

The conflicting areas of discursive construction occur mostly because scholars have different world-views and particular scientific approaches; the government and its bodies have formal and rigid policies/norms that collide with interests of stakeholders on the ground. Political orientation, economic class, historical and cultural factors contribute largely to the production of diverging storylines. Competing discourses in and about ecotourism/sustainable tourism are then a complex net of statements involving power relations involved.



The target is not to arbitrate over any polemic issue but to identify and analyse existing contradictory aspects between discourses and practices of (eco)tourism and sustainable tourism on the ground. In a capitalist model, 'conservation' and 'environmental management' gain a political and economic dimension. For many groups and nations, the need to follow environmentally friendly production and consumption involves changes in the economic rationale and profitability. Sustainable capitalism implies bringing in line political economy and the politics of ecology (O'Connor 1994).

Data on ecotourism, collected in New Zealand and in Brazil, can show how complex it is to bring sustainable development into practice. The social construction of reality is biased, multi-layered and, in many instances, distorted. A comprehensive understanding of 'meaning fabrication' requires an in-depth textual and contextual investigation.

#### **4.1 - Analysis framework: An outline**

A textual construction provides by itself, the first level for analysis, which includes definitions, principles, and concepts of ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Carrying capacity and the social role of ecotourism are critically examined as forms of discourses. The second level for analysis considers particular cases of (eco)tourism and contexts in which they are merged. Issues of power, marketing and conservation will be discursively analysed as well.

The prevailing theoretical stand for this investigation is social constructionism, and a framework was elaborated for a critical discourse analysis, which has sections as follow: 1) dimensions; abstract or utilitarian construction, hyperbolic language, and language of credibility (relativist or realist approach); 2) representation; 3) ideological stand; 4) textual devices; and 5) functions of language (Lima, 2009) (see also Chapter three, Figure 3.4, p.160).

In addition to these sections, a complementary contextual analysis (wherever pertinent) will consider extraneous information for a more inclusive understanding about the implicit message in the text or picture. For example, the analysis may include the source and 'elaborator' of the discourses (individuals, organisations or institutions), the ideological and/or political orientation in question, the organisational structure and size, power relations with other stakeholders, and any other pertinent circumstantial aspects (Lima, 2009). All these elements help to reproduce the scenario in which a discourse was created, addressed, spread, and consumed.

##### **4.1.1 - Ecotourism at the epicentre of sustainability debates**

Ecotourism rests at the epicentre of the debate on sustainability mostly because of its features, and because of the high levels of expectation it has raised among environmentalists, academics, and advocates. Ecocentric and anthropocentric views split individuals, setting them at opposite sides on how humans should interact with nature.

By contrasting different statements with observed facts on the ground about ecotourism, the ecocentric-anthropocentric representations of nature can be identified. There are areas, situations and circumstances in human activities that diverge, producing tensions. The existing “knots” in the relations are what I call ‘nodes of conflict’ or ‘nodal areas of conflict’. Nodes of conflict are mostly caused by communication problems and by lack of collective participation in a group. It is similar to Jamal and Getz’s (1995) ‘problem domain’ that is “a system-level challenge composed of numerous parts over which no single organisation or societal-sector has complete authority” (Bramwell and Lane 2000: 78) and over which no stakeholder has legitimate status or the means to control it.

It seems that in those activities in which stakeholders act in isolation - lacking the will to belong to an integrated system of partners - the nodes of conflict are more continuous. They are sources of discourse production, with argument and counter-argument over shared problems. Within such a contextual situation, with individual interests at stake, local actors rhetorically try to give substance to their ideas.

The construction of social reality, merged in contradictions and distortions, normally takes shape through this process of,

...production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, [and] is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men (sic!), the language of real life [...]. A system of ideas is ideological to precisely the extent that it is wrong, and in as much as the error is the work of concealed interests and more or less unconscious motivations (Flew 1985: 28).

With the uncertainty of truth, and uncertainties about who has the truth, any type of discourse is ideological. Texts themselves reflect particular ideological stands (Campbell 1981). Ideology is a structure of ideas that encompasses material causes (Flew 1985). Humans make their speeches and take positions because they have reasons and motivations to do so. For example, neo-liberals furnish discourses that back the Consensus of Washington.

For some economists and business specialists, earth’s ecosystems are an everlasting natural capital to be explored, “formatted”, to get “added value” and to be marketed for worldwide consumerism (Pojman 1998); which “are often the vehicle for runaway, indiscriminate growth, including the growth that degrades natural capital” (Hawken et al. 1999: 260). Deep ecologists usually buck a capitalist system that disrupts an integrated system of nature and humankind (Naess 1989; Sterba 1998).

The construction of social reality normally takes shape through processes of disputes, in contradictions and distortions. Ecotourism is a product of environmental discourses, and has been fabricated to reconcile antagonist forces: conservation and development. A major question is, has it succeeded as a catalyst?

Any field of science produces different perspectives, views and storylines (Hajer 2003) about current phenomena, either sustaining former views or adding to them to the extent that they turn old issues into new paradigms. A paradigm shift is

the result of new approaches to the same phenomena, in which the established truth and belief are challenged and dismantled. Changes hardly occur without ideological tensions.

In sustainable tourism/ecotourism, dilemmas and stalemates pervade the activity, mirroring the local context, the macro scale of tensions that ideas on sustainable development have given rise to, particularly after the Rio Earth Summit 92 (Eco-92), which proclaimed and invited all the people to control impacts as the means of mitigating the destruction of nature. As underlined by Zeppel (January 2008), since Eco-92 “the environmental impacts have increased and there is still no overall global agreement on levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”.

Many of these contentious discursive constructions and power relations were observed in the language used (written and spoken) by local actors dealing with nature tourism activities in Brazil, mainly in the community ecotourism initiatives of *Silves*; the river pink dolphin case in *Novo Airão* town, and in some allegedly ecotourism ventures in areas surrounding Manaus city, all located in Amazonia.

The Brazilian government ecotourism programme for Amazonia (Proecotur) has also become a source of competing discourses and diverging actions because of the lack of an institutional model for implementing, managing and monitoring ecotourism. In Itacaré municipality, in the Southern region of *Bahia* state, intense disputes in and over ecotourism between powerful and small stakeholders have been observed.

The concepts and principles of ‘ecotourism’ there do not match the practices on the ground, and neither do the eco-visitors fit the profile, perceptions and attitudes of a regular conscious ecotourist (Guimaraes 2003). However, the local actors have tried to establish channels for dialogue in order to overcome differences and construct a new reality for the development of ecotourism in the region.

In New Zealand, language used to market nature tourism also became a source of discursive construction for analysis. The conflicting discourses appear between the language used and the goals of the NZ Department of Conservation (DOC), Ministry of Tourism, New Zealand Tourism and private stakeholders on the ground. These cases contributed to data collection in textual format such as interviews, official documents, reports, brochures, and images.

The focus of this chapter is not to examine how the economic drives negative impact on the environment; rather, the focus is on the various discourses that seek to sustain the consumerist logic of capitalism and of marketing in ecotourism. When individuals defend the essence of a discourse, they are in fact taking an ideological position, and will make decision and act accordingly.

The analysis of competing discourses begins with a brief review of definitions, concepts and principles of ecotourism and the contradictions they contain. This chapter and the following ones are not a conclusive work but an introduction to issues of ‘consensus building’ and ‘collaboration’ in nature tourism development, filling gaps, and opening up opportunities for further research. ‘Nodes of conflict’ evolve each

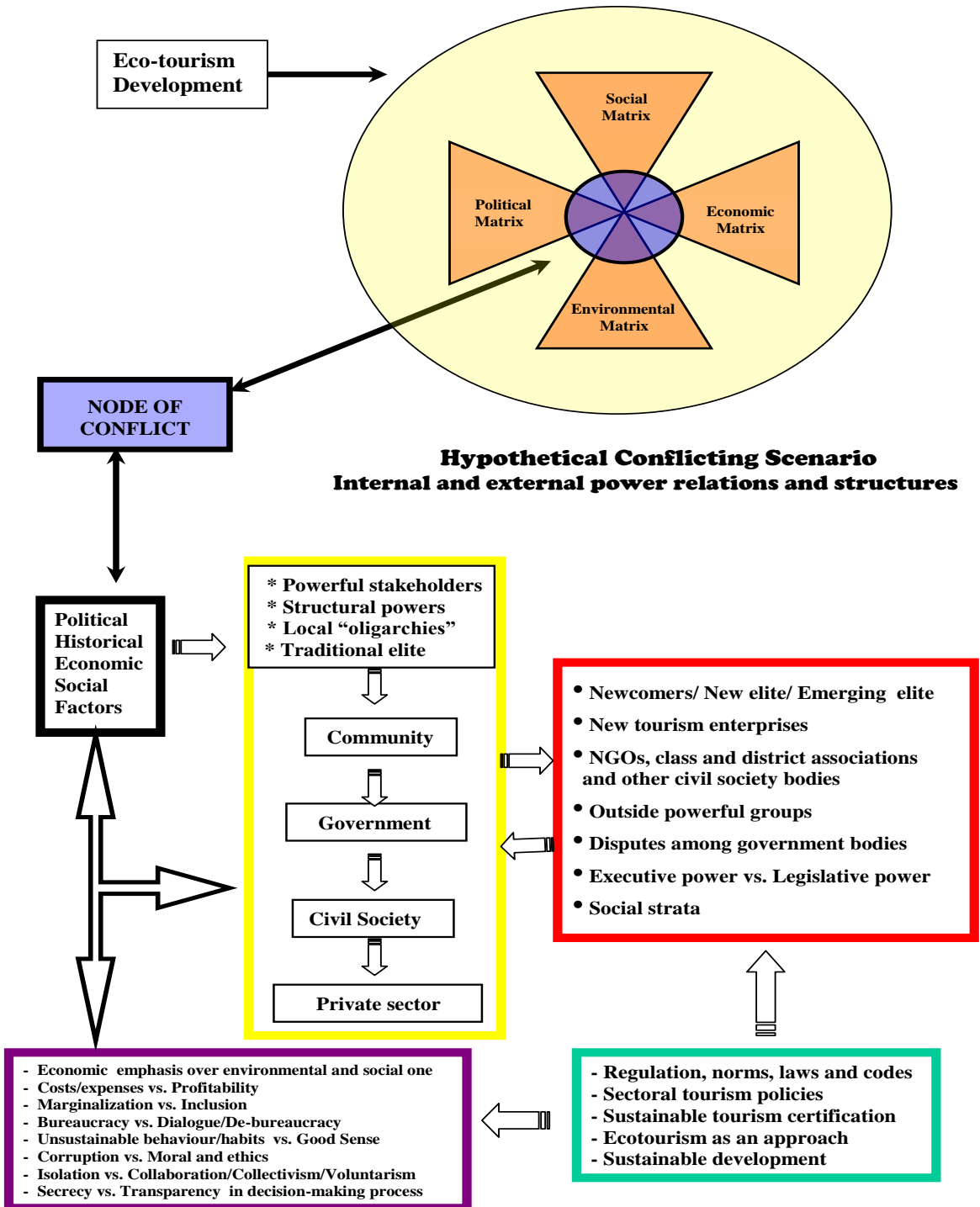
time stakeholders interact. There are limits to human impacts on the natural environment, and ecotourism has been a particularly sensitive case.

#### **4.1.2 - Modelling: the nodes of conflict**

Nodes of conflict in ecotourism are not always obvious. They can happen because of three factors: group consciousness, structures of domination and injustice. Bureaucracies, hierarchies, radicalism, sectarianism, and social disharmony in a community, institution or company hint at existing nodes of conflict (see Fig. 4.0).

In terms of process, 'nodes of conflict' can be sparked by synergic group manifestations around the issues of income and wealth maldistribution, resource management, politics of group control, social exclusion and the lack of participatory decision-making. A high concentration of textual production, of arguments and of counter-arguments over a central theme indicates the presence of a node of conflict. Because stakeholders take a position on issues of interest to them, and need to advocate it, to give sense to their decisions, social practices and views, they produce and circulate more intensely their versions of reality in an attempt to legitimate it.

**MODEL OF NODES OF CONFLICT**  
**Ideological and factual driven forces of conflict in**  
**[eco]tourism development**



Author: Ismar Lima, 2011.

Figure 4.0 – Models of Nodes of Conflicts in Ecotourism

#### **4.1.3 - Various rhetorics that define ecotourism: Wordiness?**

Is ecotourism a gimmick, an ephemeral buzzword, a passing fad? Is it a strategic tool for regional development and for nature preservation? The perspectives vary on this issue. Ecotourism is still at an embryonic stage (Fennell and Dowling 2003; Weaver 2001). However, there have been utopian and realist ideas about the way ecotourism should be conceived and operated. Utopian approaches here mean all fanciful and almost unachievable goals in/for ecotourism.

Sustainable tourism and ecotourism bring with them all the controversies, complexity and expectations inherent in the notions of sustainability and of economic development, since they sit within the concept of sustainable development. The combination of ‘sustainable’ and ‘development’ has caused confusion and frenzied debates. The juxtaposition of contradictory words particularly tends to create uncertainties about the real meanings of such concepts.

For some critics, sustainable development is also an oxymoron with sustainability inferring “steady-state implications” and development assuming “growth implications” (Page and Dowling 2001: 19). Other debatable features include the ideas of ‘zoning areas’ over the access and use of land and resources. Zoning is a strategic management tool for controlling human impacts and interventions in the environment. It implies creating restrictive zones for visitor access in order to safeguard biophysical habitats.

Some of the principles of sustainable tourism and ecotourism are embedded with messages that become discursively competitive with the capitalist model, a model that is oriented by the forces of consumerism, capital expansion and maximization of profits; a more noticeable phenomenon since the mid-20th century. Conflicts in this domain exist because ecotourism disrupts the market rationale that requires constant and quick nature transformation; world capitalism is resisted “by struggles between capitalist interests and social groups resisting dispossession of their own lands, resources, and selves,” (O’Connor 1994: 137) alongside the conflicts rendered by noncapitalist motives.

The equilibrium between ‘humans’ and ‘nature’ in the tourism domain is dependent on the creation and management of ideological and physical spaces. It depends on the existence of ‘associational public spaces’ to establish dialogues and forms of collaboration.

I have argued that ecotourism has been an incomplete conceptual project created with contradictions; it is primarily of divergences rather than of integration. What it promises to deliver requires a well-integrated institutional platform. Without a multi-stakeholder collaborative scheme, it will become a tough task to have ‘its principles’ a reality on the ground. Moreover, some multi-stakeholder nature tourism requires a more complex structure for management. In this case, ‘local environmental governance’ (LEG) (Lima 2002; Lima & Buszynski, 2011) and ‘associational public spaces’ (Stark 2002) are mentioned as an instrument for integration and cooperation.

Although criticism is made, there is no radical attempt to refute the benefits generated behind the philosophy of ecotourism; neither is it an attempt to defend an

‘ecocracy’. There is scepticism about all of its promises. One cannot just take for granted the plethora of rhetorics on ecotourism without being critical about them. Scepticism and a critical position are the abstract factors that instigated me to carry on the research. The author does not try to disqualify ecotourism as a concept; rather it seeks to critically deconstruct its versions, bringing to it a more realist perspective.

If ecotourism projects do not create successful outcomes on the whole, they do have sectional positive results. Examples are everywhere: in Brazil, the Mamirauá ecotourism project has been a complementary economic activity for some Amazonian riverbank dwellers even though the project is not financially autonomous, with its management and maintenance dependent on external investments, donations, and government inputs as explained by the deputy director (Intwee-15, Belém).

Since its creation in 1999, Mamirauá Reserve and Institute (IDSM) have received funds and grants from a number of donors. In the past it was supported by the UK Department for International Development, the European Union, WWF and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Currently, the Reserve has been financially supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Sciences and Technology (MCT), Amazonas state government and by the Amazonas State Research Support Foundation (Fapeam), the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Gordon Moore Foundation through the programme Darwin Initiative, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and by Petrobras,<sup>9</sup>

Ecotourism activities in Bonito County, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, have also been mentioned as a successful model because of their voucher system that serves to control the number of visitors in each tourism hotspot. It has helped manage visitors’ impact using carrying capacity, and has strengthened collaboration and partnership among tourism stakeholders in that county. Bonito region’s ecotourism is not without problems as highlighted by another executive, Eduardo Coelho, president of the Bonito’s Association of Tourism Business (in Itacaré, Bahia, Brazil, 2005).

In New Zealand, numerous providers of nature tourism services can be mentioned because of their successful integrative management. Action Stations and Kuaka Educational Travel have bloomed in the sector by combining ecological volunteerism, environmental education and nature tourism offering landscape restoration and community enhancement at the local level. They are case studies presented in this book. Kaikoura district, in the South Island, 200 km north of Christchurch, became popular in the last two decades for its marine tourism such as dolphin and whale watching. Marine mammal encounters have projected the district domestically and internationally.

Kaikoura district became the first village to be benchmarked with Green Globe 21, and has tried to develop a series of criteria and environmental indicators towards sustainable practices (McNicol et al. 2001; Black and Crabtree 2007; Parsons

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<sup>9</sup> Information available on the website of the Ministry of Sciences and Technology, retrieved on the 16 July 2008, from <http://www.mct.gov.br/>.

& Grant 2007). With visitor numbers increasing by 14 percent per year (McNicol et al. 2001), it risks its carrying capacity being exceeded with associated impacts:

Although tourist numbers bring significant economic returns by contributing to at least 30% of the district's employment, such a large number of visitors also places significant pressure on the district's infrastructure, natural environment and community (Kaikoura 100% Committed, a report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2006, p.1).

In order to tackle the increasing number of visitors, Kaikoura district has developed projects that require association with the community, schools, government bodies, iwis, and business. For 2006-2007, projects have focused on zero waste, water quality and sewer upgrades, climate change protection with zero CO2 emissions, and volunteer beautification projects (Kaikoura District Council 2005-2007).

Local and regional Councils in New Zealand together with the Department of Conservation form an institutional archetype that has partnered with other organisations to improve the quality of urban and rural life. Their social and environmental actions and projects benefit the tourism sector. Visitors will spend their time in an enhanced environment. For example, Environment Waikato, as a Regional Council has the mission to look after waterways, vegetation, and quality of air, geothermal spots, coastal marine areas, and soils. It has helped the industrial sector, communities and other groups to use and live with natural resources without depleting them. Projects include protection of biodiversity and environmental education. Environment Waikato supports school programmes, Care groups, business education, and Zero Waste.

The steering idea is that enhancement of the environment is first for the locals; visitors who come over just enjoy what the communities have. This is a holistic approach for planning tourism. In Brazil, the priority of local authorities is to improve tourism spots only, because visitors will stay there. Normally, the most organized, clean and functional areas are the tourism shores. The same enhancements are not planned for a local population as a whole. There is segmentation of public investments.

However, any form of tourism development (including ecotourism) brings positive and negative impacts to local communities and environments (Weaver 1998) (see Fig. 4.1 and Table 4.0). Nodes of conflict appear because evolving problems of tourism implementation frustrate stakeholders and community. For example, revenue from ecotourists can revitalise a local economy with more money circulating in the market, but, at the same time, this influx of capital creates inflation pushing prices up and in turn raising the cost of living, "ecotourism may alter local economies, but it probably stops shortly of truly changing fundamental social and cultural patterns of resource use" (Stronza and Gordilho 2008: 451).



In another example, (eco)tourism can open new employment opportunities, but locals are deprived of key positions (except guides). They are usually unskilled, assuming non-specialised work, and are underpaid.

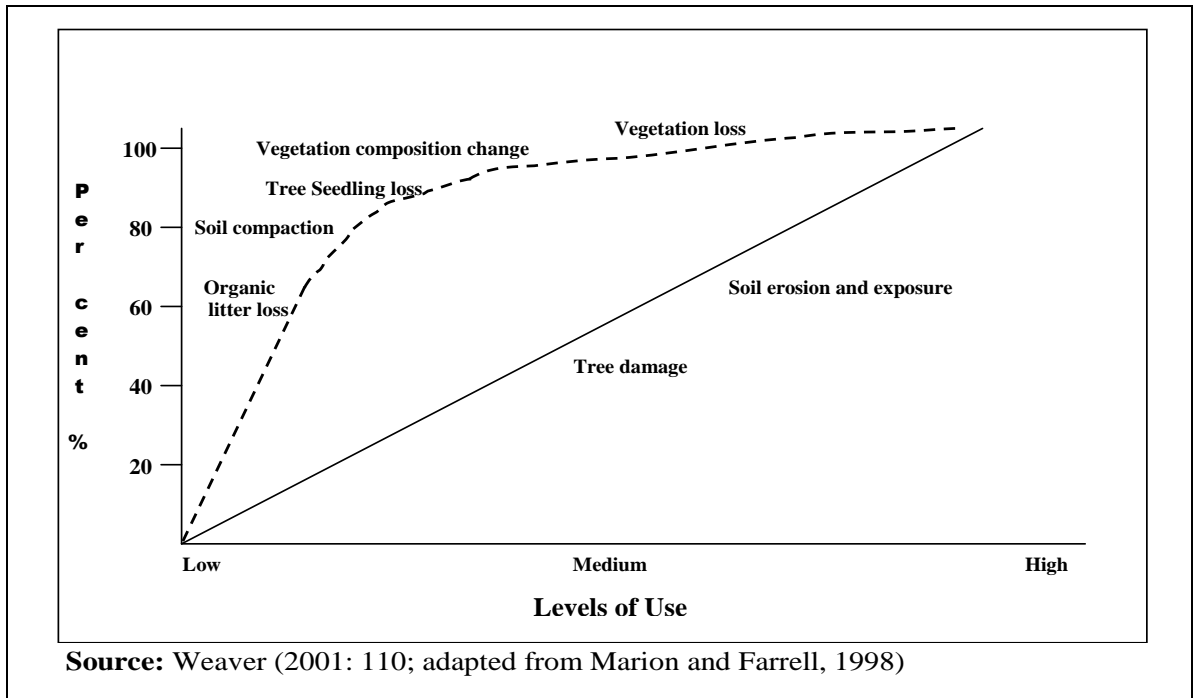


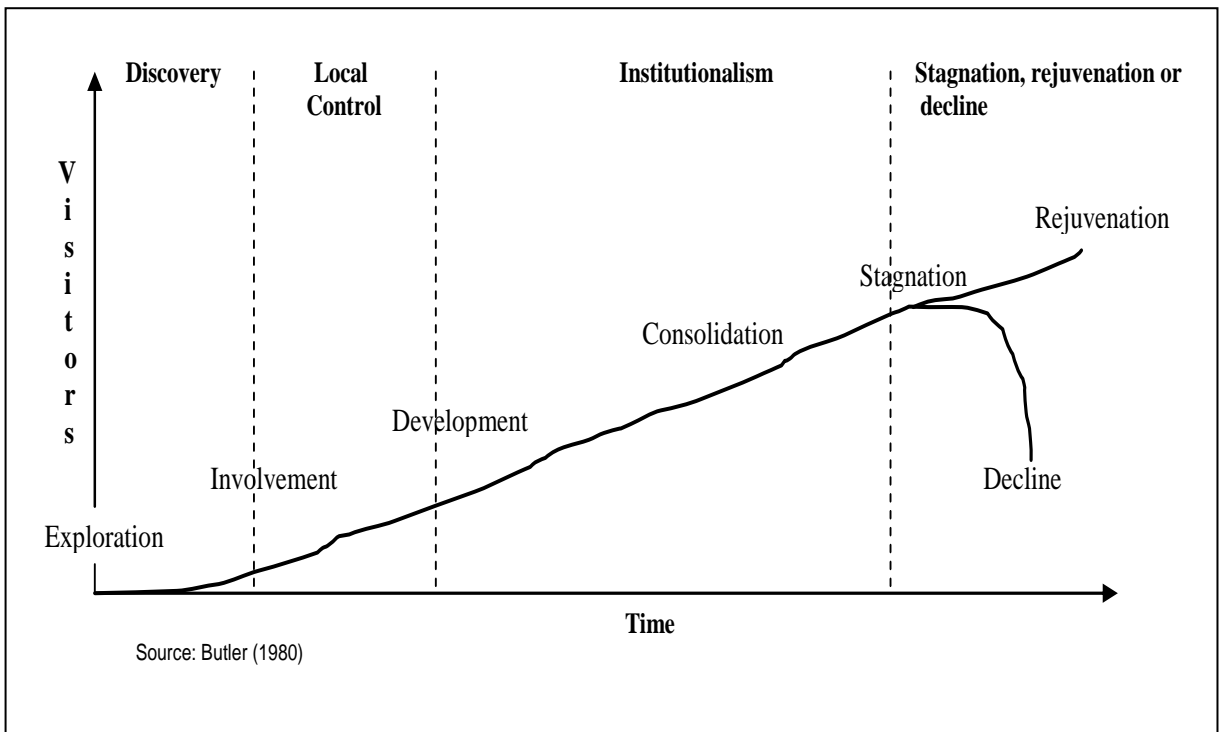
Figure 4.1 - Environmental impacts and visitor numbers

Table 4.0 - Positive and negative impacts of ecotourism on local communities

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Revenue from eco-tourists</li> <li>* Job creation</li> <li>* Indirect revenue (multiplier effect)</li> <li>* Stimulates peripheral rural economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Start up costs</li> <li>* Underpaid and unskilled employees</li> <li>* Ongoing expenses</li> <li>* Uncertain revenue</li> <li>* Damage to crops by wildlife</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Incentives to protect environment</li> <li>* Eco-tourist's assistance with Habitat enhancement</li> <li>* Education in protected areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Success = rapid growth</li> <li>* Tourism causes damage and stress</li> <li>* Financial value on nature</li> </ul>
<b>Sociocultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Aesthetic/ spiritual experiences</li> <li>* Fosters awareness among residents and eco-tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Intrusion on local culture</li> <li>* Cultural influence</li> <li>* Displacement of local culture</li> </ul>
<b>Source:</b> Adapted from Weaver 1998 by Ismar Lima, 2008.		

Tourism is a seasonal and volatile sector with a limited lifecycle from implementation, consolidation to stagnation, and there is a hypothetical line of progressive degradation because of excessive visitation (Fig. 4.2), which makes it an uncertain revenue source. Silves, in the Brazilian Amazonia, has experienced the stagnation stage of the cycle with a drastic reduction in the number of international visitors; the number of visitors throughout the year barely helps maintain the structure and is insufficient to start up new projects (Intwee-37, Silves, 2005).

Aldeia dos Lagos and ASPAC in Brazil have tried to establish partnerships with international organisations and outbound travel agencies/operators in order to increase the flow of visitors. In Maripá, the coordinators of Puxirum ecotourism, aware of the seasonality of tourism, have advised the local people not to put all their efforts (and hopes) into ecotourism, and to continue with their annual subsistence agriculture (fieldwork data collection, 2005).



**Figure 4.2 - Hypothetical tourist area lifecycle**

A comparison between the tourism area lifecycle and increasing visitation/resource impact (Figs. 4.1 & 4.2) reveals that the consolidation phase is critical for ecotourism and control of impacts. In this phase, most stakeholders and the community have supposedly adjusted to the activity, and may receive a more steady flow of income/revenue. They are then more inclined to cooperate and support initiatives to revert negative environmental impacts. At this phase, ‘associational public spaces’ would be central for collective decision-making.

‘Consolidation’ is then a phase of equilibrium in which stakeholders’ role and market participation is more defined and agreed upon (but not free of conflicts). ‘Stagnation’ means there is a shortage of capital, a sort of localized economic recession because of the decreasing number of visitors. If stakeholders are not prone to cooperate and channel investment for the ‘common good’ (nature), they will lose the financial means, and be left with a highly impacted environment. Unless a rejuvenation phase takes place, locals will need external finance to restore the environment and restart an (eco)tourism lifecycle.

In Maguari and *Jamaraquá*, where two communities are involved in community ecotourism in the Flona of Tapajós, Amazonia, locals explained that they are cognizant of not relying on ecotourism as the main source of income/revenue (fieldwork in Amazonia, 2005; Lima and d’Hauteserre, 2011). They keep their small plantations and limited ranching. Local stakeholders should accept with precaution rhetorics that describe ecotourism as a stable and thriving economic activity. Stakeholders cannot be lured by projects that are not realistic in their planning or simply overlook seasonality and the lifecycle of a tourism area.

External factors that affect tourism (SARS, Bird Flu, terrorism, air ticket prices, rainy seasons, competition from other tourism markets, etc) must also be taken into account. Moreover, locals who do not get income from (eco)tourism and are excluded from decision-making may feel marginalized (e.g. as in Silves, Itacaré, and Puxirum ecotourism project in *Maripá*, in Brazil). Nodes of conflict in (eco)tourism development may arise at the moment that stakeholders or locals take a particular position over a problematic issue.

Conflicts also develop as individual advantages begin to prevail over collective gains. That is, when tour companies, for example, are maximizing profits by overusing natural and social spaces, but have no plans to restore the environments in use nor to bring benefits to the community. As Landell-Mills and Porras (2002) also observed, “though tourists often pay hefty for their eco-expeditions, many tour operators have been reluctant to share the returns with the local communities” (p.450).

If communities can truly benefit from the influx of tourists, they are encouraged to participate in conservation (Belsky 1999).

There are many occurrences that disqualify certain ecotour operators as ‘ecologically sustainable’ such as: the deforestation of ecotourists’ surrounding areas; various impacts on nature (oil generator spill, sewage into the river, no waste management), no local community involvement, non-existent or limited environmental interpretation, and constructions with brick, ceramics, plastic, and metal in the middle of the forest.

These impacts do not match with the discursive constructions of ecotourism. For example, two brochures of different jungle accommodation providers were selected randomly for illustration (the brochures’ English grammatical and spelling mistakes were not corrected) (refer to Boxes 4.0 and 4.1).

#### **Box 4.0 - Tourism brochure: Ecopark**

Located in the heart of the Amazon jungle, Ecopark unites adventure and comfort. It has 60 rooms distributed among 20 bungalows throughout the forest, thatched-roof open air restaurant, private beach, natural bathing pools, massage room, games room, events room [...]. Each unit has 3 apartments with independent entrance and bathrooms, hot showers, air conditioning, and screened windows, with rustic, yet charming decoration. Comfort and safety in the jungle (Amazon Ecopark Jungle Lodge, brochure, 2005).

On the other hand, there are ecolodges, with discreet floating bungalow structures, integrated into the Amazonian landscapes, built with recycled materials, featuring minimal urban conveniences; there is some local community involvement and interaction, and some of these lodges try to provide a more real jungle experience and learning for outsiders (Intwee-10, *Novo Airão* city, 2005, and information in the brochures and websites). The following extract is just illustrative without implicitly validating it as ecologically friendly or as an ‘eco’ lodge:

#### **Box 4.1 Tourism brochure: Malocas Jungle Lodge**

Our eco-lodge, without electricity (and noise) is situated at 150 km from Manaus in a fully protected area; 3 malocas (Indian circular houses) offer 12 double rooms with toilets and shower, and also a hammocks area. Out traditional cuisine propose delicious Amazonian fishes [...]. Programs...with native guides including: Jungle treks, piranha fishing, visit of an Indian reserve and a native family house, canoe paddling on Igapos and Igarapes, flash and catch alligators, bird watching (Malocas Jungle Lodge, brochure, 2005).

Some tour operators and nature tourism service providers have been more realistic and transparent when marketing themselves. They have approached their operations and business modestly, with more descriptive marketing than hyperbolic language. They have been aware of the need to improve their performance either benefiting the eco-visitor with a more interactive nature encounter and learning or benefiting the environment with acceptable levels of impact.

For example, the Municipal Tourism Bureau of Presidente Figueiredo, 107 km north of Manaus, has used the slogan ‘*Na Rota do Eco-Turismo*’ (literally, On the Route for Ecotourism) in order to market the rainforest, rivers, lakes and caves of that municipality.

The marketing campaign clearly states that the Bureau and private sector are looking for ways to have ecotourism and sustainability. Its brochure is just descriptive and informative with key figures and a map, and the only hyperbole found is, “we have an undeniable ecological paradise”, “in the corner of the Amazon jungle” and “at the heart of the Amazonia, visitors will find a tiny part of the paradise”.

In Itacaré district, Bahia, a tour agency markets itself in a brochure as,

Having a philosophy of doing a truly sustainable tourism [...] Itacaré Ecoturismo offers local trained guides [...] looking for ways to adjust (itself) to a tourism without harming nature, Itacaré Ecoturismo provides the following services: beach walkings, canoeing, rafting, biking, trekking, off-road trips, waterfalls...a headache free holiday for visitors [...] serving the visitors with local labour, encouraging culture, and adding values to individuals and to nature (Intwee-5, Itacaré, 2005).

#### 4.1.4 - Carrying capacity in tourism resources: Human abstract schemes?

This section assesses ‘recreational carrying capacity’ in (eco)tourism as a discursive construction used to control environmental impacts, in a certain locality, by limiting visitor access. It has been applied in many areas to implement sustainability in numerical terms. The restrictive and arbitrary aspects of ‘carrying capacity’ are quoted. Moreover, some assumptions underline the subjectivity of ‘carrying capacity’ and of its indicators. Carrying capacity holds inherent issues of politics of growth management. Rhetorically, there is a notion that ‘fewer people in’ means ‘less impact on’. In biological terms, carrying capacity,

...is the maximum population of a given specie that a particular environment can support indefinitely (Booth and Spiner 2006: 12).

As for the tourism sector, Cooper et al. (1993: 95) define it as,

that level of tourist presence which creates impacts on the host community, environment and economy that are acceptable to both tourists and hosts, and sustainable over future time periods.

In their definition, Cooper et al. replaced the term ‘number of visitors’ by ‘tourist presence’ to avoid a straight link between ‘number of people’ and ‘impact’; they also mention specific factors that should be taken into account for ‘carrying capacity’ such as ‘length of stay, characteristics of the tourists/hosts, geographical concentration of visitors, and degree of seasonality. In their equation, carrying capacity is determined by local and alien factors (Cooper et al. 1993: 95). By comparing the definitions of carrying capacity, it appears that the biological definitions (agricultural) have been imported and adjusted to human physical presence in the environment.

Moreover, both definitions are vague open for interpretation: maximum population (how many?), a given species (do all species impact in the same proportion?), particular environment, indefinitely (eternity itself?), that level of (which one?), creates (negative or positive?) impacts, which are acceptable (what is acceptable?), sustainable over future time periods (how to have it sustainable and how to have it longer?). The vagueness of the definitions demands complementary forms of measurement to give sense to the rhetorics of ‘carrying capacity’ and its effectiveness for averting undesirable impacts (whichever).

A link has been made between the promotion of sustainability and carrying capacity, and this connection of impacts of visitor crowds on natural environments was already noted in the 1930s (Booth and Spiner 2006; Manning 2002). In the 1950s, American researchers concluded that they needed to develop means that could be effective to control excessive numbers in tourism spots in order to keep those natural resources preserved; then, carrying capacity was created as a framework on the basis of 'limiting', 'constraining' and 'zoning' natural areas for recreation practices (Booth and Spiner 2006: 12).

Other researchers have similar views; McCool and Lime (2001) for example say that the notion of carrying capacity came from a neo-Malthusian perspective founded on the limits of the Earth's resources. For them, "the concept carries a number of assumptions that are unsupported in the real world and raises questions about the objectives of tourism and protected area management" (p. 372).

I argue that 'carrying capacity' is not a science; it is a procedural instrument for environmental policy, planning and resource management. Devices that can be implemented "in order to allow for expansion, to restrict growth, or to enforce contraction [...] restrictions usually focus on technical issues [...] such as permits and zoning" (Bramwell 2006: 957). The criticism is about their rhetorical abstractness that spawns inconsistencies.

Definitely, 'carrying capacity' is a policy option for controlling the number of visitors and for tourism area demarcation based on value judgments that mostly disregard a more complex set of variables.

As Manning (2002) commented, "carrying capacity has obvious parallels and intuitive appeal in the field of park management" (p.1). Its major shortcomings as a concept are that it assumes a straight link between 'crowd' and 'impacts on the environment'. Stankey (1971) explained that (recreational) carrying capacity is a physical and biologically complex phenomenon with no linear link between use intensity and environmental damage.

Other aspects should be taken into account to determine a numerical outcome in terms of recreational carrying capacity. For example, the resilience of nature and its ability to absorb impacts; impact monitoring, environment restoration and maintenance, revitalisation and planning are management actions that account positively for a more wide-ranging carrying capacity calculation.

McArthur (2000) underlines that carrying capacity is a "blunt instrument" that does not accommodate such variables. For him, its flaw is that 'people' and 'environment' are taken as static, as elements that never change; then, they always have the same relation between use and impacts. It is now widely recognized that there is no single capacity value for a natural resource area.

In New Zealand, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has strict rules for carrying capacity for its concessionaires, and some of them and other non-concessionaires follow the rules and the recommended numbers but do not agree with them (information provided during interviews). Carrying capacity as a concept should

be fully revised, and its abstract constructions should be changed for more flexible, broad and consistent parameters and indicators.

One of the operators in Paihia region said that the relationship with DOC was very upset in 2004 as DOC created sleeping and resting zones for dolphins, and enforced reduction in the number of boats and tours in the Bay of Islands to reduce stress on the sea animals. Because DOC used certain criteria for establishing the zones, tour operators contested them. Lack of comprehensive scientific investigation about dolphins' behaviour in the region made operators say that 'zones for dolphins' were nonsensical. For them, dolphins do not sleep, and if they do, they could sleep everywhere and anytime in the sea, away from the boats and from visitors. At that time, conservationist plans did not match economic ones in Paihia.

Competing business and institutional discourses sprouted over time with companies facing 'external interference' in their profitability edge. In terms of controlling impacts of visitors in recreational areas, Reiser, Shone and McNicol (2005) explain that DOC uses GIS data-mapping within its Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP) to assist its managers.

Rather than being reliant only on biophysical carrying capacity - the sort of system that fails "to clearly identify or define maximum use level thresholds" (Butler 2003 quoted in Reiser et al. 2005: 190), DOC opts for hybrid systems based on consultation with all stakeholders involved in management to determine the acceptable level of change in natural assets (Reiser et al. 2005: 190). For 'visitor management' in ecotourism, the framework Ecotourism Opportunity Spectrum (ECOS) provides an approach and tools that aim to promote conservation and protection of the landscapes and ecosystems as part of the ecotourism experience (Reiser et al. 2005: 190).

Many factors influence the nature of the carrying capacity(ies) of a site, including place, season and time, user behaviour, management objectives, patterns and levels of management, and the dynamic nature of the physical setting (Beaumont 1997; Hall and Page 1999; Manning 1999).

Rigidity in applying and interpreting carrying capacity discredits it. Box 4.2 illustrates how 'carrying capacity' is made a highly complex arithmetical equation. The formula is a typical example of giving a 'realist perspective' to a socially constructed concept. Inflexibility in managing carrying capacity produces issues of power. The numerical approach to carrying capacity puzzles the operators and communities instead of rallying them.

### Box 4.2 - Numerical carrying capacity: An extreme?

A team of the Brazilian Environmental Institute (IBAMA), Lins and Salim, in charge of managing an ecotourism course in Maguari and *Jamaraguá*, developed a 'carrying capacity formula' based on possible landscape transformation, number of visitors and in the ways ecotourism is managed. For the formula, they considered: i) the number of visitors (10 people per group); ii) the time needed to complete the walk; iii) the distance between the groups (990 metres); iv) the linear meter of trail occupied by one person (1 metre); and v) the total available business time for using the trails.

$$CCF = \frac{S}{s+v} \times \frac{T}{t}$$

**Notes:**

**CCF:** Carrying Capacity Formula

**S:** the trail's length

**s + v:** Distance between the groups (990m) plus the total linear meter of occupation per group (10 m);

**T:** business time (total in available hours)

**t:** required time to complete the trail.

By using this formula, Lins and Salim, estimated the carrying capacity for a *Jamaraguá* trail called *Trilha das Castanheiras*. The trail is 9,200 metres long; the business time for using the trail totals 10 hours and people spend 5 hours to complete it. They found that a carrying capacity number would be of 184 visitors per day. The authors themselves recommended 180 people. Lins and Salim alerted to the fact that the suggested carrying capacity number may be distorted because there are external factors and other elements that were not included in the formula. For example, they explained that during the rain season the trails are much more vulnerable to impacts due to soil conditions and the CCF should be dropped by 60%.

Attempts to give exact arithmetic features to carrying capacity have been controversial. However, two researchers at Lincoln University, Booth and Spiner (2006), developed a study about carrying capacity for Fiordland to be used by Environment Southland. They created an 11-step method to determine actions that could manage carrying capacity in the region. Their framework is centred on three principles: community 'buy in', 'protecting area-related values', and 'scientific robustness'. Carrying capacity in Fiordland should take into consideration stakeholders' diverse value perceptions; that is, have a methodology to set how much activity is tolerated by the environment and by the locals,



A methodology that minimises bias and maximises buy-in from the wider community/stakeholders...by developing appropriate carrying capacity [and then to have] the acceptable level/types of and/or restrictions on activity and structures in different parts of Fiordland (Booth and Espiner 2006: 5).

They also fragmented areas of investigation in Fiordland to measure resource and social conditions, avoiding in this way possible flaws that would evolve from generalizations.

Some guides and tour operators say that for Amazonia, the notion of carrying capacity is just abstract and in many cases nonsensical. In Maguari, they believe that it would be better to invest in trail restoration and environment recovery. In vast areas of the Amazonia, carrying capacity may not make much sense.

Carrying capacity and zoning are regulatory policy instruments sustained by the discourses of those institutions that devised them, and have sought to render them plausibly. I follow Hall's (2003) when he mentions that "ecotourism operators will react to regulatory policies and structures depending on their individual and collective interests" (p.34). In addition, it is difficult to determine when further development will have detrimental or irreversible impacts (Bramwell 2006; Butler 2004; McCool and Lime 2001). Increased income without strongly linked with conservation targets and without or poor enforcement, "simply fosters more rapid resource extraction" (Gibson and Gyertsen 2001: 500; Stronza and Gordilho 2008: 451).

In the fieldwork in Brazil and in New Zealand, I observed many disputes between local stakeholders and communities with the institutions for environmental conservation. Because of its idiosyncrasy, carrying capacity is disbelieved in various localities that have (eco)tourism as an economic activity (e.g. in Brazil in *Alter-do-Chão/Maripá*; in Maguari and Jamaraguá; in *Novo Airão*, in Itacaré; in *Pirenópolis*).

The Brazilian Institute for the Environment (IBAMA) taken by some stakeholders as the 'government environmental watchdog', has faced problems to apply and enforce the concept because of local resistance. In Brazil, few stakeholders and communities follow recommended numbers for carrying capacity.

#### **4.1.5 - Tourism and nature: A case of Western metaphors**

A glance at the literature shows that ecotourism implementation has resulted in both failures and successes (Wearing 1999; Weaver 2001; Page and Dowling 2001). This two-sided outcome challenges ecotourism advocates, and calls academics to re-define the concept from a bottom-up perspective. Ecotourism should not be envisaged as a neo-Marxist, communal enterprise. Social constructionism explains part of the myth fabrication about ecotourism. Symbols, codes and meanings are then attached to it, dictating patterns of actions that do not match contextual reality.

Ecotourism is not a homogenous event with a single built-in characteristic. It is rather entangled with many variables and conditions that make it multifaceted. Definitely, there is no standardized model of ecotourism despite relentless endeavours

by planners and experts to find patterns that would service ventures worldwide. Discourses that explain ecotourism should emerge from stakeholders' experiences on the ground (Gray 2003).

The work of stakeholders is not based on concepts but on what makes their business endure. They are not charitable self-financing organisations. Economic and business drivers thus overlap theoretical assumptions. Many stakeholders act backed by guidelines and manuals for good practices in ecotourism; however, even a strongly conservation-committed tour operator has 'profitability' and 'financial health' as leading factors for decision-making. If they cannot sustain their business, they cannot sustain conservation. Privately owned ecotourism businesses must have the financial means (profits) to cover their expenses, with some surplus to be invested in conservation activities.

In developing countries like Brazil with an unregulated ecotourism sector, financial constraints may make ecotourism companies and organisations overlook some of the principles and operational procedures that would help to mitigate their impacts on the environment. In Itacaré, for example, in the low season, with a shortage of visitors and money, there have been cases of ecotourism agencies taking groups of 46 people for a guided bush walk. The case reveals two things: ecotourism agencies without commitment to the practices of genuine ecotourism and companies interested in maximising profits. Rather than dividing visitors into three or four groups and contracting local guides to lead them, the companies prefer to operate the same way as in mass tourism. The same remark applies to government ecotourism projects. At some point, ecotourism is expected to continue on its own without subsidies.

#### 4.2 - Itacaré village: Tense power relations in (eco)tourism development

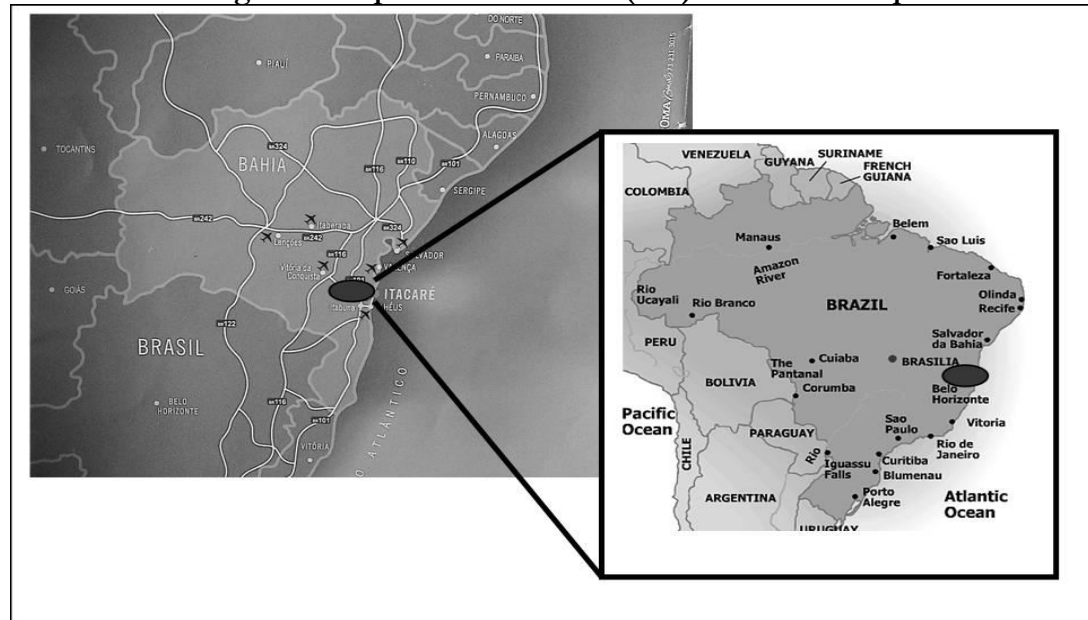


Figure 4.5 Itacaré village location, Bahia state, Brazil.

Itacaré is a district that stretches over 730 km<sup>2</sup> with a village of the same name located in a region covered by what remains of the Mata Atlântica rainforest, in the southernmost part of Bahia state, Brazil (see Fig. 4.5). At the time of Brazil's discovery, in 1500, Mata Atlântica covered 7,500 km<sup>2</sup> of coast, roughly 15% of the Brazilian territory; nowadays, only 7.84 percent of the original forests remain (Meirelles 2005). An Environmental Protection Area (abbreviated in Portuguese as APA) is usually dozens of acres of preserved forest spots and of coast with biotic, aesthetic and cultural elements; its objective is to protect biological diversity while assuring an environmentally friendly resource management by the local population (Oliveira 2005; Pereira 2005).

The APA of Itacaré was created in 1993, and is located in Itacaré-Serra Grande region it protects Mata Atlântica jointly with other APAs and parks: Parque Estadual do Conduru (Conduru State Park), APA of *Marauí* and APA of Enchanted Lake (Intwee-7, Itacaré, 2005). For this study, the public status of land, property or territory where ecotourism development takes places is of utmost relevance.

As Itacaré is located in an APA, the whole district is normatively ruled by a set of laws and regulations. This type of normatisation should be approached as forms of institutional discourses that have two main purposes: i) to guide public policies, and ii) to shape social and business practices. APA's regulation is flexible; it allows levels of human interference in the environment. Such flexibility has opened chances for breaches; it has brought tensions between locals and powerful stakeholders who want to take personal and economic advantages of loopholes in the law. Privatisation of beaches and huge eco-resorts in the Mata Atlântica rainforest are some of the reasons for the struggles. Even though legally situated and approved in the context of the APA's regulations, the interference creates local community dissatisfaction and raises moral and ethical issues.

Itacaré district itself has 20,000 inhabitants, mostly rural (60%), and its economy is basically fishing and tourism (Jornal da APA, 2002; 2005). Its main tourist attractions have been the village itself, its people and a simple but picturesque architecture. The ideal waves for surfing, the abundance of green areas, the white sand beaches, and lifestyle are factors that make Itacaré a tourism hotspot. The African legacy with its influence on the Bahian cuisine, Afro-religious rites (Casa dos Bonecos), and Capoeira (a former slave dance and fight), Rua da Orla, the lighthouse, and *Ponta do Xaréu* and other urban aspects are add-ons to the travel packs that lure visitors (Intwee-5, 2005; Bahiatura.com; Itacare.com).

Many visitors go to Itacaré just for cultural immersion; they love sharing time and talking to local people (Intwee-29, 2005). Since 1998, with the sealing of *Estrada Parque* (Park Highway), an extension of Highway BA-001, linking Ilhéus city, 70kms distant from Itacaré, adventure and nature tourism have boomed with 120,000 visitors in 2005, or six times the whole population of the county. The paving of Park Highway was part of state and central government investment with loans from IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) for tourism development in Bahia.

The paving alone cost US\$18,058 million, or 77.5% of the budget available for Southern Bahia which encompasses Una, Itacaré, *Ilhéus* and other districts (Oliveira 2006; Bahiatursa 2005; Plano Itacaré 2015).

#### **4.2.1 - In Itacaré village**

The most famous and crowded street is 'Rua da Pituba' where most budget hostels, restaurants, bakeries, local tour agencies and tour operators, cyber-cafés, and shops are located. Rua da Pituba is a sort of meeting point for visitors to interact, to have fun and get informed. The village has accommodation and tour packages for all pockets. Close to Pituba, there are middle-to-high range price accommodations. They are 'private villages' or 'condominiums' built in the bushes near downtown: Ocaporan Hotel Village and Condomínio das Conchas do Mar II owned by rich and powerful farmers and politicians (Intwee-7; Intwee-29, Itacaré, 2005). Although the constructions and structures are of a higher standard than other buildings in Itacaré, there is no infrastructure. The village lacks a sewage system, paved streets and waste collection.

Bahia, particularly Itacaré and Porto Seguro, have received massive investments by Portuguese and Spanish corporate groups, which have already contributed about R\$ 1 billion reais (NZ\$ 500 millions)<sup>10</sup>, in the tourism sector with the construction of resorts, such as Itacaré Eco Resort and Warapuru in Itacaré (Bahiatursa 2005, Oliveira 2006: 3).

#### **4.2.2 - Reviving the data and analysis: Video-recording and virtual updates**

As part of the methodology and strategy for data collection, during the first three days, I decided to familiarise myself with the place where I was, the local culture, and about the tourist aspects and spots. I chose to stay anonymously for a few days because I feared that revealing I was a researcher could interfere in my plans to get a 'real perspective' on how nature tourism works there; the village is small and within a few days, every resident would recognize me as a researcher. The first interview (Intwee-26) about Itacaré happened in Salvador city, 266 km from Itacaré, two days before my arrival in that village. Intwee-26 was a key contact person between September 2004 and December 2005 as I was selecting my case studies. Intwee-26 had explained via internet about the various interest group conflicts in Itacaré and about the various organisations in that district.

In Itacaré, during my stay, two events linked to sustainable tourism implementation contributed largely to data collection: the Sustainable Tourism Seminar and the Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015 (STWI 2015) on 11 June

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<sup>10</sup> All fees, prices and currency are presented in New Zealand dollars. Brazilian currency (R\$ = Real) was converted into New Zealand currency (NZ\$) based on a round rate of NZ\$ 1 = R\$ 2.00) in the April ~ July 2005 period. The conversion is largely indicative, not subject to rigorous calculation.

2005, during which, the Instituto de Turismo de Itacaré (ITI) delivered a 10-year tourism plan (Itacaré 2015 Plan). The document and the Workshop Itacaré 2015 were prepared to order the tourism development in the district.

#### **4.2.3 - Institute of Tourism of Itacaré (ITI) and Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015 (STWI 2015): A drill in power relations**

STWI 2015 was regarded by key entrepreneurs as a milestone for the future of tourism in the district. In fact, the workshop was the first one of its type, and brought well-known specialists on tourism in Brazil as presenters; moreover, it was very democratic and opens to the whole community. The presentations were followed by open debates. Itacaré workshop was followed by the release of Sustainable Tourism Planning Towards 2015. The workshop, the speeches, the document tourism planning towards 2015 and the video-recorded public debates will be the object of discursive and comparative analysis in chapter 6.

ITI has been accused by the local community of being an Institute that advocates only the interests of the powerful tourism businesses and land owners. Tense debates and accusations from locals and local organisations against ITI, the presenters, and local authorities were witnessed during the workshop. The clashes replicated the power relations rooted in Itacaré's history, aggravated by decades of domination and subordination since the Colonial period.

Social imbalances, unfair wealth distribution and local politics have brought further challenges for consensual eco-adventure tourism development, the main economic activity in the district. Without community support, the eco-adventure tourism entrepreneurs may face frustrations and insolvency of their business. That is the main reason they have tried to open dialogue channels within the community. Chapter 6 on collaboration examines the existing rhetorics, narratives and positions of ITI, 2015 Itacaré plan and the Municipal Sustainable Tourism Accreditation Programme (PCMTS).

The second event was a public seminar organised by the Municipal Tourism Bureau in partnership with the Tourism Development Programme of the Ministry of Tourism (Prodetur). The workshop was also highly democratic and had an eclectic audience (government employees, businessmen, academics and members of the community). The participants comprehensively examined the needs and demands for sustainable tourism. The third significant event was the meeting organized by the Advisory Board of APA of Itacaré. The Council invited its members to critically analyse the last events on sustainable tourism and share their views. The target was to prepare an agenda for monitoring ITI's actions and the follow-up of its sustainable tourism plans.

These three events, combined with many interviews and participant observation helped to gather enough empirical material to confidently discuss nature tourism in Itacaré. Moreover, they helped to clarify the power relations and conflict of interests in the district. In 2005, 2006 and 2007 I used the internet to keep myself updated. This was done in three ways: reading news about Itacaré; reading the discussion forums at

Itacare.com; and by registering as a member in the SOS Itacaré organisation for updated news, articles and online discussions.

According to ITI and the HVS report (July 2005), Itacaré has 97 hostel/hotels, 116 restaurants, 14 receptive travel agencies (seven of which are clearly self-entitled as ecotourism tour providers), and there are 50 shops specially targeting the tourists (see Table 4.1). The accommodation providers receive about 80,000 visitors every year, with about 180,000 overnights, resulting in a 45% occupancy rate. The accommodation sector is the main employer; it consists of small-sized buildings; only 8% hold more than 20 units. During the peak season from November to February, roughly 2,000 locals are directly employed in tourism. Tourism is thus the main economic source for people in the economically active age bracket.

**Table 4.1** - An outline: Itacaré infrastructure and attractions

Piece	Units
Accommodation	Total: 97 with 1061 rooms
Standard	79 with 809 rooms
Middle-price range/luxury	18 with 252 rooms
Restaurants/Bars	116
Inbound travel agencies	14
Shops	50
Beaches	16
Protected Areas (APA) and Parks	<i>Itacaré-Serra Grande</i> Conduru State Park <i>Marauí</i> , Enchanted Lake
Natural attractions	Mata Atlântica rainforest; trails, Rio das Contas (de Contas river); beaches, waterfalls, hills
Cultural attractions	Cocoa plantation capoeira, regional festivals, handicraft
Activities	Surfing, tramping and hiking; canoeing/rafting; horse riding, abseiling
<b>Source:</b> Translated and adapted from HVS report, Itacaré, 2005	

#### 4.2.4 - Historical issues of power relations and Itacaré (eco)tourism development

Itacaré village and district can be a laboratory for wide-ranging research on political ecology, power relations, and sustainable tourism/ecotourism. The district went through a number of socio-economic characteristics that stratified the relations of key stakeholders in tourism: the traditional elite, the emerging elite, and the community through its various NGOs and grassroots organizations.

Conflicts of interest, power relations, wealth distribution and social imbalances are historically intertwined in Southern Bahia state (Costa do Cacau; Ilhéus, Itacaré, etc). Unfair land distribution, with its origins in the colonial period, has largely contributed to conflicts on land tenure and land oligarchies in Brazil (Oliveira 1989; Dean 1971; Bruno 1997).

According to the traditional dwellers of Itacaré, the powerful farmers, with the help of politicians, lawyers and corrupt public notary, appropriated the rural areas formerly occupied by peasants who survived from fishing and subsistence agriculture; the scam to take their lands is known in Brazil as *grilagem* or *grilo* (Puhl 2003) (see Box 4.3). Under these schemes, large territories of rainforest were confiscated and never returned to their customary occupants (called *posseiros*). It became a regular practice to get land for power and for personal enrichment through thievery and violence (Intwee-26, Intwee-28, Itacaré, 2005).

Motta and Pineiro (2002) explain that ‘legitimation’ of grabbed land and of its proprietors takes place through persuasion and threat to the rural community which it recognises as the newest structure of power.

Land grabbing usually happens with the connivance of notary public staff that most of the time, register the land territory in duplicity by overlapping them. There is also direct and indirect connivance of government bodies. They award state and federal lands to party fellows, to crooks, and to fictitious people, individuals contracted or created to get the fraud done (Livro Branco da Grilagem da Terra no Brasil, Extraordinary Ministry for Land Policy/INCRA, p.12).

**Box 4.3 Land grabbing (*grilagem*) in Brazil and issues of power**

Because of imprecise mapping, it has been difficult to set boundaries between state-owned areas and private ones. From the 1930s to the 1980s, there were many conflicts between local people and the farmers in Southern Bahia (Intwee 26). Even the authorities have faced problems investigating whether land grabbing existed or not because of lack of documentation and because people seemed afraid to make formal accusations.

In December 1999, the Brazilian government created a public report, entitled *Livro Branco da Grilagem de Terras no Brasil*, with government actions against the land grabbing and land grabbers. The document estimates that 100 million hectares of public land were possibly grabbed in Brazil, and Bahia state appears in the report with 255 properties, totalling 5,749,659 hectares. Nearly half of all rural land belongs to 1.6% of the land owners while more than three million rural families struggle to find land to plant and survive (in Sauer, Souza and Tubino 2005).

Figure 4.6 shows the location of the village and of the luxury resorts. The biggest oval area is where the village itself is situated. It is the place with the most human concentration, both visitors and locals. The embedded circle is where the urban

luxury resorts and condominiums are located. These urban beaches are the preferred place for the surfers, and it is only a ten minute walk from downtown (Pituba ward). A few of them have private houses, bars and restaurants (i.e. Tiririca, Costa and Ribeira).

The areas within the square limits are huge farms owned by the powerful stakeholders of Itacaré and by the well-off newcomers and investors. The farms encompass the Mata Atlântica rainforest. The Costão is situated on the outskirts of Itacaré and is the place with the most luxury resorts. Since the region is an Environmental Protection Area (APA), farmers, investors and community must put up with a set of national, state and district legislation that safeguards the environment.

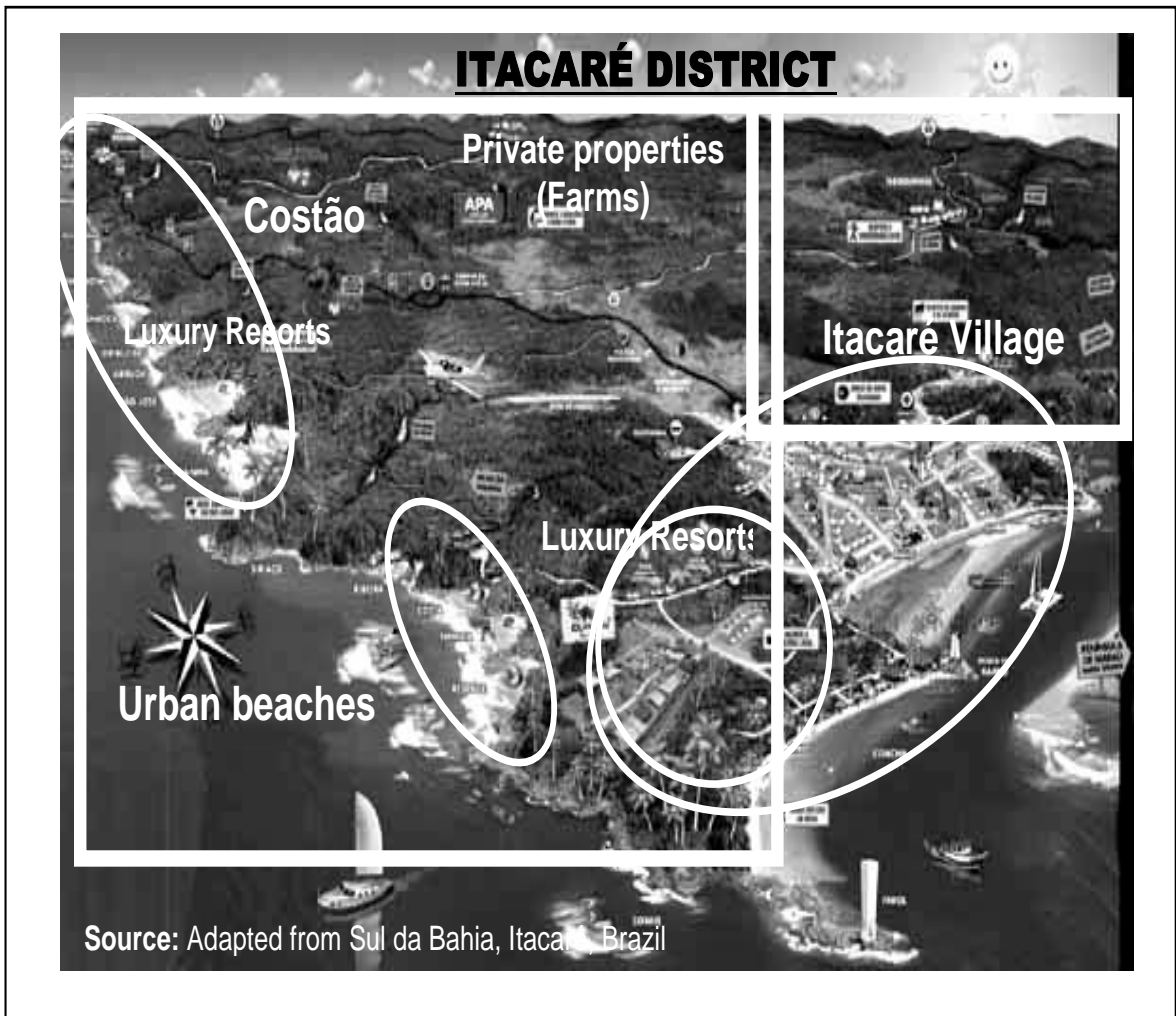


Figure 4.6 - Urban and rural Itacaré and its



#### 4.2.5 - Volatile economy

Economically, Itacaré can be divided into three distinct development phases. During the colonisation period, sugar-cane was cultivated in areas deforested for *pau-brasil* timber extraction. Later, cocoa plantation was the main economic drive, enriching the local farmers (Dolis 2003; Oliveira 2006).

At the end of the 1980s nature tourism revealed itself to be the newest economic drive (Souza 2005; Rebouças 2002; Moreau 2004). Until the 1970s, the village was a very active port, a centre for cocoa trade with plenty of jobs. Itacaré was the end of the trip for traders navigating from farms in hinterlands along the river de Contas. With steady cash flow, affluent people could afford the construction of beautiful European-styled buildings, giving a picturesque and attractive feature to Itacaré.

But the wealthy period of cocoa production vanished because of a plague called *vassoura-de-bruxa* (a fungus known as witches' broom) that annihilated cocoa plantations (Intwee-12; Intwee-29) and brought ruin to the local elite. It pushed thousands of peasants into a very miserable life (Dolis 2003; Souza 2005). These labourers, mainly afro-descendents, migrated to urban districts and/or created their own communities, called *Quilombolas* (Intwee-6, Itacaré, 2005).

##### 4.2.5.1 - Social fabric and nature: problems of getting along

Itacaré has social problems and lacks proper basic infrastructure. These problems have historically accrued with a clear split between 'lords' (dominators) and 'plebeians' (dominated) within a system popularly known as *Coronelismo*<sup>11</sup>. With land grabbing, settlers became impoverished and rainforest areas were cleared for cattle and plantations (of cocoa). For those who resisted, Itacaré became their perpetual home, a place to set roots.

At present, there are eight powerful farmers who own land that covers almost the entire Itacaré district, including the beaches and part of the village. The farmers are the traditional elite and own different types of business, including tourism services.

These eight farmers call themselves G-8 and have been accused by some locals of imposing their own rules and wishes against community interests. The situation creates a mixed feeling of inferiority, anger and discomfort between locals and the second and third generation of landlords (Intwee-29, Itacaré) with the poor pushed to the periphery (both socially and spatially). The G-8 is the group behind the creation of ITI. There is lack of consensus about how tourism should be in Itacaré, and sustainable tourism development will not be an easy mission.

Itacaré seems to be in general terms split into three different like-minded groups: i) the G-8 and their allies who form the economically dominant group; ii) the

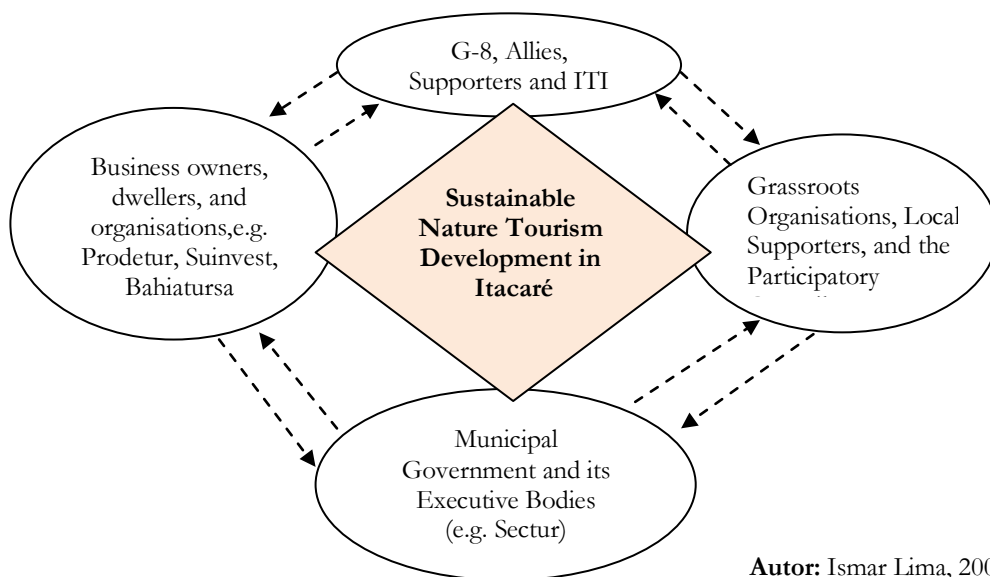
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<sup>11</sup> *Coronelismo* refers to a power system clustered on political chiefs, normally powerful land owners. Coronelismo dominated the political and administrative phases of Brazil as colony and republic. Rural areas and some urban districts still have a biased political system that resembles Coronelismo in most of its aspects.

village Council and its members (and allies) who are more socially oriented; and iii) a group that has kept itself out of polemic debates; ‘neutral individuals’ who live there permanently and are only concerned about daily life, their work or business without putting “labels” on themselves (see Fig. 4.7). Of course, this subdivision is not static. There is mobility with stakeholders’ choice depending on specific decisions or projects. Itacaré is certainly a social mosaic.

Power relations and inclinations are an emblematic characteristic of Itacaré; this context requires dynamism from the local residents and business groups that need to adapt themselves to a contextual political game, of manoeuvres, various storylines and attempts at manipulation.

### Power Relations Itacaré Scenario as in October 2005



**Figure 4.7 - Clustering the stakeholders in Itacaré**

The groups seem to have antagonist positions and perceptions on how the environment should be transformed. For example, one landowner, a member of the G-8, had decided by himself to erect buildings up to 14 metres high in Itacaré. His decision would go against the Municipal organic law that sets the maximum height at 7.5 metres. However, the Municipal Lower House deliberately altered the law to make the construction legal. This fact created a frenzied debate on the role of the Lower House. There was no accountability to conservation as established in the organic law document. On behalf of locals and of environmental conservation, the Administrative Council of the APA of Itacaré organised to resist the manoeuvres of the powerful landlord.

In fact, the social gap in Itacaré and in neighbouring districts is linked to the economic development phases in the region. During the colonisation phase (*pau-brasil* removal and sugar-cane plantation), locals were used as slaves or as very cheap labour. In the cocoa plantation phase, locals again became an abundant labour force who worked mostly for food and shelter on the farms.

In the 1990s, with the tourism boom the price of land and properties in Itacaré skyrocketed because of demand and real state speculation (Rebouças 2002). Many of the new property owners are in a hurry for profit but unskilled in managing tourism businesses.

During the interviews and talks with locals, I learnt that some traditional dwellers were pressured to sell their land for little money, and others were expelled by powerful groups because they did not hold official documentation of ownership of the land (Santos 2001; Oliveira 2006). Some individuals – lured by the quick profits of inflated prices - sold their properties cheap and were not able to acquire similar areas elsewhere in the district; they then became unskilled workers in exchange for minimum wages (Oliveira 2006; Rebouças 2002).

Many traditional dwellers and leaders have been sceptical and resistant about the creation of ITI, the elaboration of 2015 Itacaré Planning and about the PCMTS because they are not sure of the vested interests behind them. Are they sincere proposals that would promote the wellbeing of the population? For the locals, these endeavours and initiatives of powerful groups may become instruments and mechanisms that will allow them to have legal and legitimate instruments to control all productive sectors of Itacaré and the life of the traditional inhabitants.

All kinds of problems, caused by disorderly tourism development, assault Itacaré (Souza 2005; Plano Itacaré, 2005). A rural exodus aggravated this situation with hundreds of families moving to urban areas looking for work opportunities and a better quality of life. In Itacaré, they disorderly occupied forest areas and hill slopes at the entrance of the village such as *Santo Antônio slum* (Reis 2002) causing several negative impacts (Torres 2001). For example, *Santo Antônio* does not have a sewage system (in fact, the whole of Itacaré still did not have one in 2006), and in the rainy season sewerage ends up on urban swimming beaches (Oliveira 2006).

This human agglomeration has caused a shocking and unpleasant visual spectacle for outsiders. Most of these poor newcomers do not participate directly in the tourism sector; they work in the construction sector, carpentry and other non-specialised jobs.

Sewage, waste and traffic jams have become chaotic in the district with an ever-increasing number of visitors (Rebouças 2002). High demands exceed the carrying capacity (Torres 2001). Wandering through the village, individuals witness the social segmentation with opulent condominiums on one side and slums on the other.

Visually and aesthetically, Itacaré is a contrast. There are beautiful and ordered streets and wards, but, there are also areas poorly without basic services (i.e. *Santo Antônio, Bairro de Trás*); moreover, waste, dust, and mud (in the rainy season), a messy

and dirty central bus stop, poorly-looking houses, and streets packed with crowds of unemployed people and children give at first sight a negative impression.

Residents have complaints about the crowds in Itacaré that put pressure on their life-style and well-being,

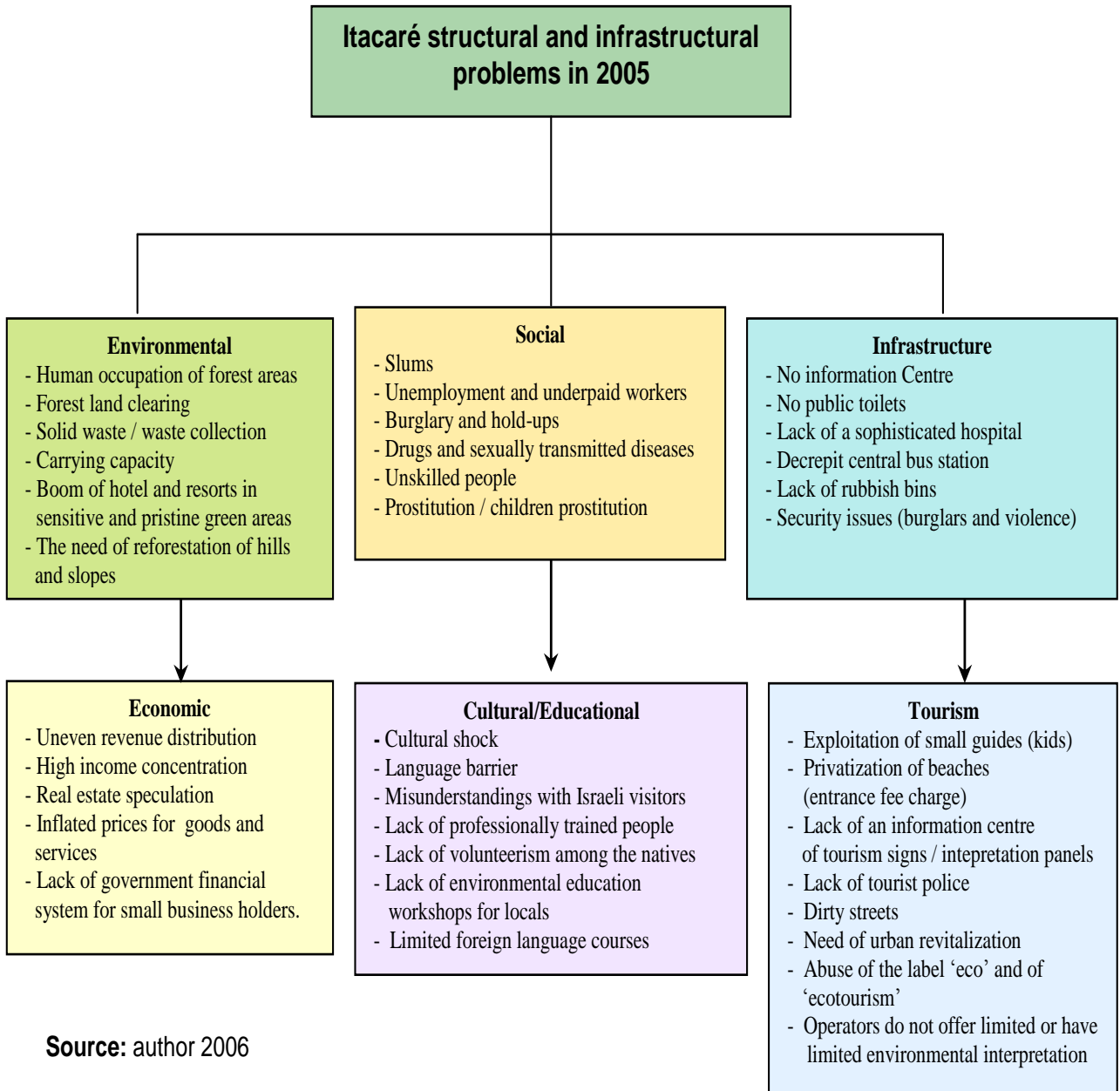
*...before paving the road in the 80s and early 90s, life for us in Itacaré was laid-back...visitors were coming here as always they came, it took up to nine hours to cover 60 kilometres in the rainy season, you know, they came but they did not crowd us...they came to surf and enjoy bushes, but in 1998 with the paved Ilbéus-Itacaré ecological park highway (BA-001), this trip is possible in 45 minutes now, visitor numbers have increased staggeringly, you know, at the beginning we got happy with them, coming as a flood, more money, more jobs, new restaurants and hostels and hotels, but later we saw it was a curse, being packed with people is not good, very problematic for locals, everything became expensive...locals cannot afford, many are stressed, with fatigue against visitors, and Itacaré cannot support the flow... too many...too many for this tiny paradise...fresh water and food became expensive and difficult to find in the summer...we need to change this...to manage it for our own good...many locals want it as before...manageable number of visitors (Intwee-29, Itacaré, in 2005).*

Intwee-29's testimony confirms some of the various researchers' observations (Weavers 2001; Wearing 1999; Page and Dowling 2001; Boo 1990; Brooker 1997; Honey 1999; Orams 1995) about the links between tourism implementation and the onset of social and cultural problems. They are mostly caused by the inability and inertia of the public and the private sectors to structure and plan tourism development. The problems become worse because of the pressures of an increasing number of visitors on the social and environmental carrying capacity (Fig. 4.8).

Small communities like Itacaré do not have room to expand and accommodate thousands of visitors (Torres 2001). And, the extent of the impacts is beyond mere physical ones, "the very nature of the tourism industry may well create processes of acculturation and value change which are peculiar to tourism" referring to postcolonial features of the sector (Hall and Tucker 2004:12-13). Intwee 29 mentioned 'pressure on life-style' with new routines being dictated by the economic development based on nature tourism.

The new context in Itacaré has caused change of values, and this clashes with the "customary practices" (d'Hautesserre 2005: 308) in Itacaré. With the sense of community, collectivity and life-style at stake, local inhabitants complain and have not been able to adapt to the 'new realities'.

Tourism development "perpetuates colonial forms of interaction" (d'Hautesserre 2004: 237) with interest groups and outsiders regarding the natives as inferior, cheap labour and/or unskilled. There is then not only a physical and cultural impact but also a psychological one. As a result, "the cohabitation of custom (with 'modern way') can only signify antagonism" (d'Hautesserre 2005: 308).



**Figure 4.8** Structural and infrastructural problems in Itacaré 2005

#### 4.2.6 - Itacaré's ecotourism attractions

The village is completely surrounded by primary and secondary forest vegetation with dozens of trails for fauna and flora appreciation. There are four unpolluted urban swimming beaches: Concha, Ribeira, Resende, Tiririca, and *Costão* (Intwee-7, Itacaré, 2005). For decades, Itacaré has been part of international itineraries for surfers, attracting experienced enthusiasts and learners. Coroinha beach is also an urban beach but unsuitable for swimming. The district has plenty of rural beaches, the main ones being: Siriaco, Prainha, *São José*, Arruda, *Jeribucaçu*, Engenhoca, Hawaizinho, Itacarezinho, Patizeiro, and *Pé de Serra*.

There has been great demand for adventure tourism in Itacaré, and neighbouring Taboquinhas. Rafting, canoeing, kayaking and abseiling are the major activities practiced. The streams and the waterfalls are spread out in the district which makes it a perfect place for those who want more than nature appreciation. Another nearby tourism spot is *Península of Marau/ Barra Grande* because of its isolation, coconut tree formations and deserted beaches. The text in Box 4.4 depicts the region.

#### Box 4.4 - Itacaré in tourism language

Beautiful beaches, tropical forest, rivers, waterfalls, good waves for surfing, capoeira, adventure sports... Come to one of most exciting place on earth! Itacaré, Bahia, an exotic town with all the best of Brazil, a unique place with sea, sun, nature and friendly people...possible countless unforgettable experiences; from a simple swim in the translucent water of the sea, a quiet canoe excursion on the Contas River, to extreme sports like white-water rafting (Online source: Itacare.com).

The text is partially descriptive but uses hyperbolic marketing language to create a specific imagery. Words and sentences such as 'an exotic town with all the best of Brazil', 'unique place', 'most exciting place on earth' are rhetorical devices with abuse of adjectives to lure visitors. 'Order words' are used to convey the message as in 'come to'. The extract packs all tourism types available in Itacaré: social and cultural tourism (exotic town; friendly people); 'with sea, sun, nature' (the classical three "s" – sun, sea, sand – combined with a nature encounter). Adventure tourism is advertised in contrast with nature appreciation as the sentences reveal, 'a quiet canoe excursion' and 'extreme sports like white water rafting'. The message conveyed is that all types of visitors will find a suitable activity and a particular attraction; Itacaré is then a multipurpose destination.

#### 4.2.7 - Marketing Itacaré's ecotourism: A critical discourse analysis

The following boxes from the official website of Itacaré (Itacare.com) will be used for critical contextual discourse analysis. Itacare.com is a website that provides all of the information visitors may need to plan a trip in advance and to check accommodation for different budgets. For a comprehensive application of CCDA, the

website Itacare.com will be linguistically deconstructed within the social context it is related to.

The website offers four languages (English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French) and works as a showcase, a virtual advertisement space, local news source and for building business and social networks etc. It has three major sections: 1) an outline of Itacaré and of its attractions; 2) a list of service providers (including ecotour operators and real estate); and 3) a trip planner which includes interactive maps, and hundreds of photos (gallery), besides weather forecasts and a tide timetable.

The hyperbolic language and metaphors used in the website are moderate. Out of 33 sub-webpages, four contain texts about conservation, sustainability, and advice for eco-behaviour (the least impacting interaction with nature), environmental institutions and their links. There are three entire sections, 'Responsible Tourism', 'Eco Adventure' and 'APA' with a broad range of environmental information and links. For example, the APA's webpage explains the foundations, philosophy and conservation goals of the Environmentally Protected Area (APA) of Itacaré-Serra Grande. Boxes 4.4 and 4.5 have two different orientations. They will be contrasted with competing explanations about Itacaré's environment as a destination. One can notice the difference between a tourism marketing approach and one that refers to environmental issues and ways to mitigate impacts. The second one uses more realist language for credibility.

#### **Box 4.5 - Tourism marketing explains Itacaré village**

an explosion of colours, sounds, smells, flavours and textures that elate our senses. There are only a few places in the world where nature has been so generous, offering such a diverse group of attractions concentrated in a single place. The town's welcome appears to be one of an atmosphere of permanent festivities, and it's not a false impression. Visitors that arrive now, from all over the world, are eager to partake in a little of all they can see and feel here. By the way it looks, the origins and different characteristics of the many "tribes" that end up meeting in Itacaré don't seem compatible, but at night, fans of very diverse musical backgrounds all end up colliding. Between a *farró* - a bit earlier - a *hip-hop* dance - later in the night - everyone seems to mix and enjoy a good time alternating between a *capeta* (alcoholic drink with herbal energizers), a beer and a new dance step (Itacare.com.br, accessed on the 21 March 2007).

Box 4.5 mixes tourism marketing language with figures of speech to create an imagery of Itacaré as a destination. There is a process of social construction of the place in which nature, culture, urban environment and people are introduced to entice outsiders.

The construction of its image promotes Itacaré town as a place socially integrative and inclusive. However, the reality witnessed on the ground during fieldwork is that locals feel excluded in two moments: 1) in the social fabric of the

town (as described earlier); 2) not included in the process of decision-making for tourism development. Extracts capture a lively party town, and give the impression that Itacaré is a socially equitable and harmonious place with an atmosphere of permanent festivity. This type of construction can be contrasted with the preceding description of Itacaré as exclusive, elitist, and socially chaotic and problematic for dwellers in their daily life. Stratification and class disparity create exclusions.

The extracts can also be compared with interviews in which locals describe the city as over-crowded in the summer, which raises the hackles of, and fatigue of the locals. Shone et al. (2005), found that the visitor-host encounters in “confined geographical settings” may produce circumstances out of control of the locals; but, such occurrences can also lead to the establishment of “adaptive behaviours” (Shone et al. 2005: 101), with residents managing their life to regain control over the “territory”. Adaptive behaviour is a response that contrasts with the notion that locals are passive in the face of tourism development. In terms of competing discourses, ‘clashing viewpoints’ are revealed as one compares the testimonies of the community and the NGOs to the language of marketing.

The sentences underlined in Box 4.5 have a conative function. For example, ‘an explosion of colours, sounds, smells, flavours and textures that elate our senses’ is a metaphor with strategic action; it brings a combination (“explosion”) of categories of words to persuade message receivers (e.g. visitors). The category words can be depicted as ‘colours’: the nuances of blue and green...the architectural contrasts; ‘sounds’: the hurly-burly of a small (crowded) tourism village, the various songs played everywhere; ‘smells’: meals and local air, sea, and rainforest; ‘flavours’: of fruits, of a local seasoning, of people; ‘textures’: the nuances of patterns of the various environments and people’s feelings and sense over them.

Hyperbolic language is also used: ‘a diverse group of attractions concentrated in a single place’ and ‘few places in the world’ (there are many other small cities and districts such as Taboquinhas, Una, etc in Southern Bahia, Costa do Cacau, that replicate the scenario and environment of Itacaré. The place is not rare in the region; but it is the most advertised, known and visited).

‘The town’s welcome’ and ‘nature has been so generous’ are sentences with ‘personification’, human features being given to non-human ones; for example, nature being “generous” (kind) to humans by offering diverse attractions in a single place (anthropocentric language; promotes consumerism). The expressions ‘many tribes’, ‘Itacaré...compatible...’at night’ portray Itacaré as a multi-purpose destination combining the different “tribes” (groups) homogenously with the objective of full hedonism. The text is a guarantee (“It’s not a false impression”) of how the holiday can be for ‘outsiders’ though not whether the routines are so pleasurable for the locals.

Some texts in the same website try to raise environmental awareness. The sub-webpages entitled ‘Ecological Surf’ and ‘Sustainable Tourism’ provide advice for conservation, environmental information and a sort of code of conduct (refer to Box 4.6 and Box 4.7). Itacare.com also provides links to environmental organisations for those interested in their work in the region. Somehow, Itacare.com does work as a



gateway to market its registered/affiliated members as a cluster without overlooking the fact that the district has problems to be solved with the help and commitment of the visitors as well. Itacare.com has tried to be eclectic by addressing conservation and marketing.

The messages in the boxes are very transparent, concise and do not try to masquerade the facts: ecotourism is expanding and creates contentious issues; the small village has faced negative social, environmental and cultural impacts. "Uncontrolled growth" needs to be managed for a sustained and sustainable tourism area. The recommendations are available online but inaccessible to most of the population. On the ground, the town does not have any public campaign, official signs and any local mobilization to improve local and visitor awareness about the importance of that environment.

**Box 4.6 - Environmental issues, tourism and conservation on Itacare.com**

**1. Sustainable Tourism**

...Each year Itacaré receives new investors. The small fishing village is little by little becoming a tourist dominion. The concern with uncontrolled growth is constant, therefore some actions are already in progress, so that in the future, the tourist industry's potential and the natural wealth do not come to an end...

...Tourism is an activity that also generates impacts, environmental, social or cultural. To reduce these negative impacts is a guarantee to the supported development of tourism while conserving the cultural and natural patrimony of the region.

In June, 2005, the "Itacaré 2015 Seminar", which launched the "Itacaré 2015 Plan - Directives for Sustainable Tourist Development", was a great step to discuss subjects related to economic and tourist growth as well as the strategies necessary for sustainable development.

**2. Ecological Surf**

The environmental aggressions on the coastal regions modify the outline of waves, change the characteristics of the ocean floor, currents, microclimate and quality of water. All this can transform perfect waves into non attractive waves to surfers. The environmental impacts that directly influence the attractiveness of the spots in the region are:

- Alterations of ocean floors due to changes at sandbars and destruction of coral reefs.
- Deforestation: Causing the silting of rivers and changes in the wind system.
- Marine Pollution: With the outflow of sewers, garbage thrown on the beaches and the trash that comes from the ocean.

How to preserve the surf spots? Fighting to diminish these impacts is a job for everybody, especially surfers. For the region's natural beauty to be preserved, we must:

- Clean trails and beaches, bringing along garbage bags to pick up trash left by others.
- Inform tourists and residents about the practices of preserving the environment.
- Restrain from using motorized vehicles on the beaches.
- Denounce deforestation and irregular constructions in the coastal areas.
- Denounce the outflow of sewage into the beaches...

**Box 4.7 - Itacare.com website and recommendations for environmental protection**

- Keep the APA clean, throw away rubbish in the bins
- Respect the ocean bordering zones, avoiding driving vehicles on the beaches.
- Alert authorities of predatory fishing
- Never eat meat from wild animals
- Respect the local culture and contribute to a society of individuals who are aware of the importance of conserving this cultural patrimony.
- Avoid loud noises after nightfall
- Be aware of transit norms. Walk more often than ride.

**Source:** Ecological Surf 2005

In fact, during my fieldwork in 2005, I came across five signs about where to store and how to manage the waste on the beaches. The signs were poorly written on wooden boards (see Figure 4.9) alerting visitors about the risks of leaving rubbish, mainly rests of cigarettes, for the sea turtles and dolphins, and about the prohibition of motorized vehicles on the beaches. They were voluntarily prepared years earlier by the Surf Association, SOS Itacaré and dweller associations.



**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2005, during fieldwork in Itacaré, Bahia, Brazil.

**Figure 4.9 - Environmental signs in Itacaré beaches**

The environmental organisations such as Yonic, Floresta Viva, ITI and Institute Tijuípe (closed down in 2006) together with other grass-root and community organisations (Casa dos Bonecos) and official environmental government bodies (SEMARH)<sup>12</sup> were working in 2005 to improve the population's awareness of conservation, pollution, waste management, and ways to keep the quality of life as well as the aesthetic and natural beauty of Itacaré district. Yonic for example has been an organisation with many ongoing projects such as fauna protection, waste management and craft, youth programme, health and nutrition programme for the poor, and the maintenance of a cultural and educational centre, etc.

Misrepresentation of ecotourism is a topic discussed by Weaver (2001) as a way of 'eco-selling' or 'greenwashing' services and products in the (eco)tourism sector without grasping its essential elements. Ecotourism has been intensely commoditised (Higham 2007a,b; Carr 2007; McKercher 1998). He adds that many believe the label 'ecotourism' can be appropriated as a profitable marketing ploy to convey a misleading image of environmental responsibility" (Weaver 2001: 97; Wight 1993; McKercher 1998).

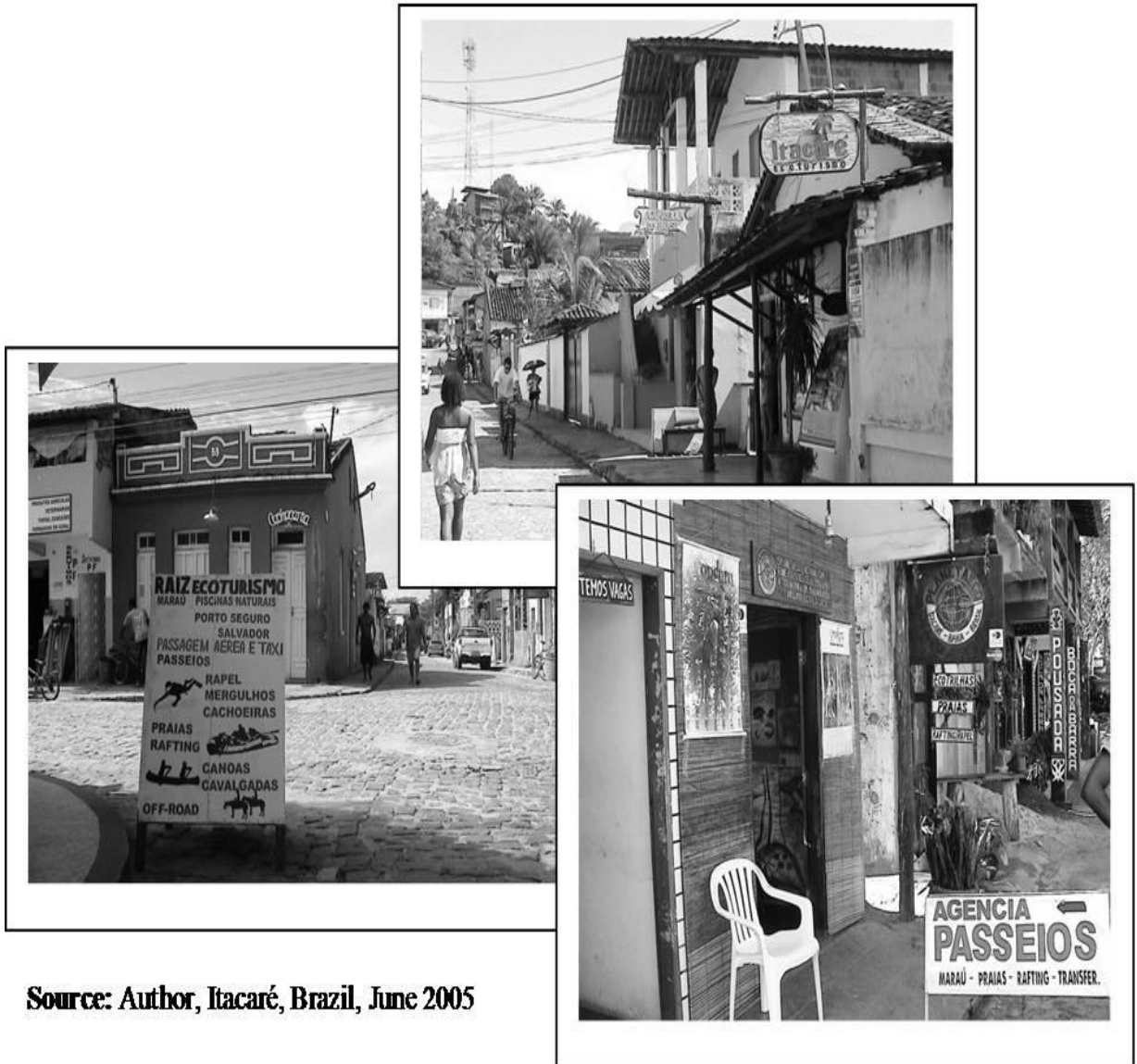
For Weaver (2001), misrepresentation of ecotourism is a relevant topic because "numerous negative impacts that actually pertain to other forms of tourism are ascribed to ecotourism" (p. 98). In Itacaré, most tour companies do not deliver a genuine ecotourism experience despite claiming that they do.

The 13 ecotourism providers of Itacaré (as in 2007) are not operators but inbound receivers, and depend on national tour operators for visitors. Table 4.2 (p.208) outlines the specialised activities of each ecotourism business. Data show that six companies out of 13 label themselves as 'eco': Via Ecoturismo, Itacaré Ecoturismo, Conduru Ecoturismo, Land Tour Ecoturismo, Raiz Ecoturismo and Eco Trip (Figure 4.10).

Rather than providing ecotourism with strong environmental interpretation, guides just escort visitors in the forest, and at the beaches, etc. Only two companies had bilingual guides. Teaching of instrumental English for hospitality has been promoted by SEBRAE, ITI, and the local government but is still unsatisfactory to prepare the locals at a desirable level of fluency.

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<sup>12</sup> SEMARH – Brazilian Bureau for the Environment and Water Resources



**Source:** Author, Itacaré, Brazil, June 2005

**Fig. 4.10 - Ecotourism operators in Itacaré.**

In 2005, most of the ecotourism service providers did not follow a code of conduct for sustainable practices or the principles of ecotourism. Conservation and sustainable practices have been mentioned by only two providers: Itacaré Ecoturismo and Via Ecoturismo. These two seem to be more nature conservation-oriented; they make clear they follow the ecotourism principles by contracting only local guides. However, their conservationist actions are not stated explicitly.

An interviewee, linked to one of the travel agencies, confirmed that some companies self-entitled ‘eco’ have no single notion of what sustainability is (Intwee 5). Their misuse of the term ‘eco’ compromises the image of the sector. Intwee 5 reported that he witnessed cases of eco-expeditions of groups of 50 to 60 people with just one guide. They were very noisy, drinking beer and dumping the cans everywhere; there was no respect for nature. Intwee 5 added that some tour agencies have sought to practice the best they can in terms of ecotourism performance,

Our concern with our role in ecotourism, is ecological preservation, preservation of the trails and routes; we do not want much impact on flora and fauna; moreover, Itacaré Ecoturismo prepared its own guides, locally selected and contracted, and has given them the chance for income generation and job position. By integrating the locals we believe this helps to raise levels of awareness, and they will look after the environment, monitor the trails and be resistant to mass tourism (Intwee-5, Itacaré, June 2005).

**Table 4.2 - Itacaré ecotourism service providers**

<b>Company/stakeholder</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>1) Eco Trip</b> www.ecotrip.tur.br ecotrip@ecotrip.tur.br	Airport transfer, ecological excursion, rafting, abseiling, tirolesa (Tyrolean crossing or aerial runway), off the beaten tracks (Maraú), and diving in the coral reefs.
<b>2) Zebra and Pepe (local)</b> mestrezebra@hotmail.com	Ecobiking, surfing, canoeing, abseiling, off-road experiences, waterfalls, guided tours on remote beaches
<b>3) Sul da Bahia (local/regional)</b> www.agenciassuldabahia.com.br suldabahia@rznet.com.br	Rafting, abseiling, trekking. Maraú Peninsula, and squad rides on the beaches
<b>4) Land Tour Ecoturismo (local)</b> landtour@hotmail.com	Airport transfer, ecological trips, rafting, Maraú region, Bilingual guide: English and Spanish
<b>5) Via Ecoturismo (local)</b> Viaecoturismo@hotmail.com	Tour with local guides, and adventure
<b>6) Itacaré Ecoturismo (local)</b> iecotur@uol.com.br	Guided tours, natural attractions, rafting, abseiling, mountain biking, diving, trekking, off roading, airport transfer, accommodation reserve agency.
<b>7) NV Turismo (regional)</b> www.nvturismo.com.br itacare@nvturismo.com.br	Tours with bilingual guides, Maraú region, abseiling, Contas River, “Arvorismo” (rope activities on trees)
<b>8) 4 Estacoes Transportes Turisticos (local)</b> Itacare_4estacoes@yahoo.com.br	Airport transfers, tours, rafting, specialist in off-road (Maraú)
<b>9) Itatur (regional)</b>	Ecotourism, radical sports, surf trips, airport transfers
<b>10) Ativa Rafting e Aventuras (mixed)</b> www.ativarafting.com.br itacare@ativarafting.com.br	Adventure tourism, rafting, abseiling, tracks, cocoa harvesting, fishing with locals, capoeira teaching and practicing
<b>11) Raiz Ecoturismo (local)</b> www.itacareraiyecoturismo.com.br raizecoturismo@uol.com.br	City-tour, Mata Atlântica trails, remote beach excursion, waterfall bath, radical sports, ecobiking, rafting, rappel, diving, surfing, horse riding
<b>12) Conduro Ecoturismo (local)</b> www.conduroecoturismo.com.br contato@conduroecoturismo.com.br	Arvorismo, adventure tourism.
<b>13) Passeios de barco (local boat trip)/Excursions. Renaitat@hotmail.com</b>	De Contas River and sea by canoe, raft and boat, beach tour, waterfalls

**Source:** Information collected by Ismar Lima, in 2005, during fieldwork in Itacaré, Bahia, Brazil.

The interviewee mentioned that this company has seven guides with a ratio of one guide per group of eight visitors, or 16 visitors but with two guides. For him, 'zero impact ecotourism' is impossible; any activity in the forest, even the purest ecotourism, will result in levels of impact (Intwee-5, Itacaré, 2005).

The way to mitigate impacts is to avoid excess, to limit group size, to collect the rubbish, and to talk openly and frankly with non-cooperative visitors. Intwee 5 recognises that ecotourism providers of Itacaré need to become really professional, that more training and capacity building is necessary and more environmental inputs need to be included in the expeditions. He added that ecotourism is not only for young people, and they have provided nature tourism experience for third age groups, overweight individuals and physically disabled groups as well.

For him, Itacaré beaches have become a disadvantage to ecotourism: "the Brazilian notion about beaches is that of curvaceous women in bikini, sun tan, beers and indulgence" (intwee 5, Itacaré, 2005). He compared Itacaré to other successful ecotourism spots in Brazil such as Brotas, Bonito, and Chapada Diamantina, and highlighted that these places achieved more consistent ecotourism practices because they do not have beaches as an attraction; "beaches and bush too close to each other as in Itacaré are not a good combination because a 'sun, sea, and sand holiday' in general does not match with a genuine ecotourism experience" (Intwee 5, 2005).

The conclusion is that most "eco" companies in Itacaré are still poorly prepared to deliver a genuine ecotourism experience in terms of local environmental knowledge transfer and of environmental interpretation. Visitors' experience has been a nature encounter with some 'environmental information highlights', and the guides have been 'accompanying people' without an active presence and control over the group(s).

Quick profitability is the drive for most tour companies in the region, and for many locals 'conservation' and 'sustainability' are murky ideas; most of the population does not have the notion and awareness of the value of their natural spaces. Because of the intense work of social and environmental NGOs, some stakeholders and locals have started to understand that the main tourism product of Itacaré is its healthy environment. On the other hand, unstructured tourism development has given room for aggressive business competition, and has also contributed to the creation of an unstable relational environment among stakeholders. Guimarães (2003) also reported these facts and events.

Raiz Ecoturismo, Via Ecoturismo and Itacaré Ecoturismo seem to be more concerned about environmental impact and have included a very basic environmental interpretation in their tour packages. A group of local guides, at Fazenda Boa Esperança (literally in English, Farm of Good Hopes) in Camboinha, a neighbouring county, has an active interpretive trail of roughly 1 km, located in a preserved area of rainforest (Itacaré 2015 Plan).

According to Intwee-6, the trail is a long-term project idealised to promote a re-encounter of locals and visitors with nature; the whole philosophy behind

environmental education is that people must feel that they are an essential part of nature (Intwee-6, Itacaré, 2005).

There has been an increasing interest by hotels and other tourism service providers in Itacaré to get certified as sustainable tourism businesses. The PCMTS aims to expand tourism activities with a commitment to social, cultural and environmental values. The Instituto de Hospitalidade issues the eco-labels, and has a board composed of three other organisations (Institute Floresta Viva, SEBRAE, and SENAC).

The PCMTS is planned to be a 'quality service hallmark' against the 'green washed practices' and against the abuse of the term 'eco' by local companies in nature tourism activities (interviews; Itacare.com; and PCMTS report April 2005).

#### **4.2.8 - Luxury nature tourism, elitism and human intervention at Itacaré coast**

Luxury resorts have been built in the coastal zone on the outskirts of Itacaré, within a 20km range of the village. By 2007, there were four of them in the region: Txai Resort, Itacaré Resort, Itacaré Eco Village and Warapuru Resort, the most recent.

These resorts are equipped like five star hotels, aiming to attract wealthy visitors, occupying a large portion of the rainforest. Their proliferation in the district of Itacaré has been cheered by outbound tour operators and visitors but has brought concerns to the local community and environmentalists because of social and ecological issues. They were constructed in the Environmental Protection Area (APA) that requires constant monitoring in order to avoid further impacts on the Mata Atlântica (Intwee-29, Intwee-7).

Warapuru, for example, which belongs to a Portuguese corporation, was designed by the English architect, Anouska Hempel, with 21 villas of 750 to 1,500 square metres, in individual plots of 5,000 square metres each. The buildings are spread between the rainforest and Engenhoca beach, a pristine place. Warapuru means 'the wolf that eats the fruit' in Tupi-Guarani, an indigenous language.

Some resorts have claimed to be environmentally friendly, but their urban features and structure contradict the use of the label 'eco' (see Box 4.8):

#### **Box 4.8 - Eco Village hotel advertisement**

Eco Village Hotel you can experience the sensation of being between the Atlantic Forest and the ocean. The Hotel units are generously spacious with one of the most beautiful views in the world. The Villages are located next to the beach but no damage has been caused to the actual landscape, producing a camouflaged effect in order to avoid disturbing the masterpiece of nature. Our 32 accommodations are divided between 5 Villages. Each unit has air-conditioning, telephone, frigo-bar, satellite TV, and a veranda with a view of the sea (Online source: EcoVillage.com, accessed on the 14 March 2007).

The underlined sentences in the extract show some discursive inconsistencies. For example, 'of being between' the forest and the ocean denotes visitors and the hotel as intruders. 'Generously spacious' implies that the construction occupies large areas of forest and beach.

It is possible to say that a hotel 'next to the beach but no damage has been caused to the actual landscape, producing a camouflaged effect in order to avoid disturbing the masterpiece of nature' denies the visual pollution of human construction (of any type) in that nature, and the declaration does not match with the infrastructure's description, of 32 accommodation units divided into five micro villages. Each unit has air-conditioning, telephone, frigobar, satellite TV, and a veranda'. Can a TV satellite dish be naturally integrated into a rainforest? The extract uses 'green' rhetorics in an attempt to wash out 'its visual impacts'; and to sell the image of a "good citizen"; and it is promoting green consumerism, with an anthropocentric oriented message, just for human hedonism.

CasaVogue, a Brazilian magazine (2006, edition 229), declared that 'as a place enclosed by the ballet of nature that covers Bahia, Warapuru is the newest promising paradise in tropical Brazil'. On the other hand, an Itacaré resident, concerned with the environmental impacts, explained it as, 'a concrete beast in the Tropics, an alien with modern lines not belonging to our bush and beach universe'. Competing views duel over the same enterprise. Two questions haunt the locals, how many luxury resorts will pop up on that coast from 2007, four or forty?

Environmentalists fear that Itacaré may become a replica of the disorderly occupation of the Porto Seguro coast by hotels and resorts. How does the Itacaré community benefit from the resorts? Txai Resort, for example, includes socio-environmental projects. It is called 'Txai Social', and is committed to protect nature and conserve biodiversity, with the planting of seeds of native species; to involve the community by strengthening integration and interaction; and to promote regional culture with incentives for art and artisans (Txai's website).

#### **4.2.9 - Massification of nature tourism: Manoeuvres of powerful operators**

A source of conflict of interests in Itacaré has been the manoeuvres of big travel agencies to monopolise the Itacaré eco-adventure market. Local travel agencies were the pioneers to open the market and format the destination, but they need the external operators to bring the visitors; problems arise at this stage (Intwee-7, Itacaré, 2005),

External operators set partnerships with local operators and gradually begin to understand our market, learning how to be competitive against us in Itacaré, and suddenly they dissolve agreements and partnerships, and bring their own offices and guides here, and because they do not belong to the region, because they do not have the attachment and feelings to this place as the locals, they do not care that they are transforming it into mass tourism. Institute of Ecotourism of Itacaré was created to integrate the local market against the ploys of these big operators such as CVD which wants to impose its rules and will on us. The Municipal Council has discussed the creation of specific laws that force them to contract local labour and just operate in Itacaré in association with local providers (Intwee-5, Itacaré, 2005).



According to Intwee-5, the way to overcome the attempts of external monopoly over eco-adventure tourism is through strengthening dialogue and cooperation among the local companies and by avoiding dependency on a few external operators. Diversity of visitor suppliers is a solution against bankruptcy and loss of market.

### 4.3 - Tensions in community ecotourism development of Silves: ASPAC and Guanavenas case in Amazonia

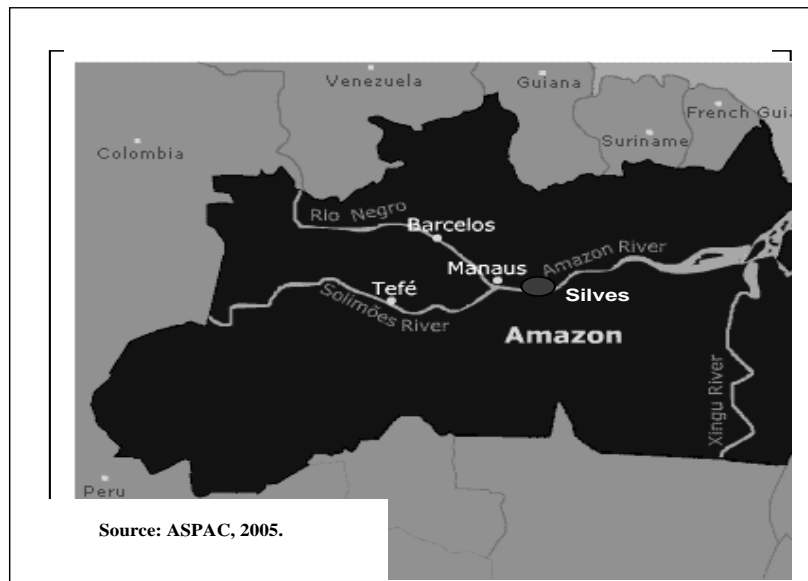


Figure 4.11 – Regional map: Silves district, Amazonas state, Brazil

#### 4.3.1 - Introduction

Silves is the oldest Amazonian settlement (Faria 2005) and was the first place in Amazônia to have a community ecotourism project. It officially started in 1994 under the initiative of a non-governmental organization called ASPAC (Silves Association for Cultural and Environmental Preservation). The ecotourism project is a partnership that closely links ASPAC to six participating communities spread over 3,747 square km of Silves district (Fig. 4.11). Some of them are eight hours away by boat. Silves County is not densely populated with only 9,000 inhabitants (2005). The most thriving aspect of this venture has been the Aldeia dos Lagos; a comfortable but not luxury resort that was built in 1997 and maintained through a series of partnerships.

The Austrian government, through WWF-Brasil, financially contributed to the construction of the Aldeia dos Lagos' structure. For capacity building, training, administration knowledge, and improvement of ecotourism services, Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC received support from Sweden. Until 2005, WWF-Brasil was still

providing technical assistance, consultation, transport and fuel, and some hostel and office consumables.

The idea behind community ecotourism was to create mechanisms for securing additional sources of capital that could be invested in the conservation of fishing lakes and to improve the quality of life of riverside families. Thus, the resort became the means for capitalization and continuation of community projects. Silves is an island-village, distant about 300 km distant from Manaus, bounded by Lake *Canaçari*, and positioned at the tributary of five rivers: Itabani, Sanabani, *Igarapé Ponta Grossa*, *Igarapé Açu*, and the river Urubu (Faria 2005; Moncayo and Ribeiro 2005). Silves village is five hours from Manaus in a trip that combines bus, car and boat transport.

It is a welcoming village with hospitable people, quiet and cosy. It has pleasant arborisation and from its upper part, up the hill, it is possible to glimpse the greenness and the maze of rivers, islands and the lake. There is significant public infrastructure in Silves. A hospital, high schools, squares, a conference space and playground are some examples, and it has recycling bins, something quite rare in that part of the Amazonian hinterland. Unfortunately, the inhabitants are not conscious about solid waste storage and management. I observed heaps of rubbish piles throughout the village during the fieldtrip.

In comparison to other Amazonian districts, Silves seems to have had an effective public administration in the last nine years (1997~2005). This assertion is based on the available public structure that exists in Silves. For tourism, there are three budget hotels and a luxury eco-resort – Guanavenas – together with Aldeia dos Lagos. They are the main accommodation and nature tourism service providers, followed by three other small hostels in Silves. Urban transportation is mainly by two-wheeled taxis. Bikes are very popular and are a special feature of the village. Cattle ranching and agriculture are the basis of the local economy, followed by local retail shops and government service structures.

Nature tourism has an increasing role in the local economy, and is considered an alternative income/revenue source (Faria 2005). The activity has slightly heated the economy by injecting some capital and attracting investments but it has opened few job opportunities. However, there has been no study to investigate the socio-economic dimension of ecotourism in the district. There is no study of the villagers' perceptions of ecotourism or their environment. Faria (2005) found that the community of Silves makes a distinction between the tourism practiced by ASPAC/Pousada Aldeia dos Lagos and by Guanavenas eco-resort.

#### **4.3.2 - Conflicts of Interest, power relations and ecotourism**

Ecotourism and environmental protection in Silves have been the reasons for ongoing conflicts of interest. These conflicts are most visible in the disputes between Aldeia dos Lagos Hostel (ASPAC) and *Guanavenas* eco-resort. They are rivals in business and have different standpoints on how ecotourism development in Silves ought to be. The divergences arise from problems of communication,

misunderstandings, hostile and intimidating attitudes, business and market factors, and politics.

Silves County has 23 communities but Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC just benefits six of them. They are São José da Enseada, Baixa Funda, Santa Luiza da Sanabani, Santa Maria do Rebojão, Cristo Rei do Anebá and São José do Pampolha. They are spread within an area up to 30 km from Silves village where Aldeia dos Lagos is located. In fact, only two of them have had a constant flux of visitors. Some families were chosen to host overnight tourists and to provide meals and there are trained guides to accompany them on the trails.

ASPAC is a non-government organization, with 56 members. It was created in 1993 with support by the Ecclesiastic Base Communities of Silves to protect Silves lakes that were being badly affected by predatory fishing. The NGO's mission has been to mediate solutions for socio-environmental matters on behalf of its members. ASPAC's first triumph over the problem was the approval of a municipal law for the zoning of the lakes and normatisation (Faria 2005). For riverside dwellers, fish stocks are a food security issue because it is the main source of protein; subsistence fishing is crucial for their survival.

In 1997, to overcome possible cashflow problems on lean days, ASPAC inaugurated the hostel *Aldeia dos Lagos* whose construction cost about NZ\$145,000. Aldeia dos Lagos employs about 30 community members in a shift system and pays a monthly wage of NZ\$180. It receives roughly 300 visitors a year; 70% are Europeans, mainly Italians; 20% Americans, and 10% domestic tourists. Aldeia dos Lagos is collectively managed by the Amazonas' Ecotourist Cooperative and by ASPAC.

Until 2000, the management group received external subsidies from the Ministry for the Environment, the Swedish government, PDA and Pro-Varzea. Currently the business provides revenues of up to NZ\$ 80,000 per year that pay staff salaries, and the repairs of surveillance floating platforms and the wages of four lake guards.

Conversely, Guanavenas eco-resort<sup>13</sup> is a luxury venture which belongs to a powerful land owner and businessman who was the mayor of Silves for eight consecutive years and completed his administration at the end of 2004. The current mayor was his former manager at Guanavenas. Taking into account the greenspeak discourses, how does Guanavenas eco-resort define and market itself? (Box 4.9).

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<sup>13</sup> At the time of the fieldwork in Brazil, I made two unsuccessful attempts to approach the Guanavenas manager for interviews and to contrast information. All the information written in this report about Guanavenas and its owner is based on secondary information obtained from its website or provided by the locals, Guanavenas' staff I have met outside the eco-resort, and ASPAC's staff. It is also based on an article, [Ecoturismo: Etnodesenvolvimento e inclusão social no Amazonas] Silveira (2005).

**Box 4.9 - Guanavenas' advertisement**

**The most beautiful spectacle is that one shown by nature!**

Guanavenas is a complex built up to provide you an exquisite journey to the heart of the Rainforest, the most exotic place and the largest ecological system in the entire world. Here in our facilities you can enjoy all the infrastructure you ever imagined found in this little paradise inside the jungle. All that comfort of a five star hotel you can find here and also have contact with nature, living a staggering experience you will never forget.

Guanavenas Jungle Lodge is located in the heart of the Amazon, a lake, igarapés, surround it and it is inside the jungle. It has 70 (seventy) triple apartments all with the same comfort level, air-conditioning and private bathroom (hot/cold shower). The lodge has also a restaurant that offers delicious regional food (self-service), besides two swimming pools, a game room, leisure grass camp and an observation tower 30 meters high and a telephone booth (local and international calls). In Amazonia is the unique in his category

(**Online source:** Guanavenas Pousada/ Jungle lodge at [www.guanavenas.com.br](http://www.guanavenas.com.br) , accessed on the 13 March 2007).

According to information given by the community in Silves, Guanavenas hardly involves locals in its more refined activities. Just a few work in the maintenance of the hotel cleaning, laundry and kitchen. Its guides are not locals and the jungle areas visited are those that usually do not belong to any community. Indeed, the eco-resort has its own green area for trails and nature appreciation. Just occasionally, food stock and other products are bought locally. Mostly the suppliers as well as the guides are from Manaus.

What are the discourses and rhetorics used by ASPAC to promote itself as a social and environmental NGO? (see Box 4.10)

**Box 4.10 - ASPAC and Aldeia do Vale's advertisement**

Good tourism for the visitor, the local population and for nature... The ecotourism project developed by ASPAC...in partnership with WWF-Brazil in Silves Island [...] Part of the income obtained from eco-tourism in Silves is directly used in actions to promote the environmental conservation of the varzea and the lakes...various categories of sanctuary lakes for fish reproduction [...] The Aldeia dos Lagos Lodge [ASPAC's accommodation] is administrated by the community. Located on the top of a hill on Silves Island, it offers 12 rooms with air conditioning and fridge, 1 restaurant and a small shop [...] There are more than 6 different tours on motor boats for bird watching, flora and fauna observation, including ...the flooded forests a rare experience only available from December until September, on the Amazonas River [...] The tracking in the forest allows a closer contact with houses, orchards and plantations (ASPAC's brochure, May 2005).

One person linked to Aldeia dos Lagos alleged that the former mayor used public administrative apparatus and influence in an attempt to block ASPAC community work and to cause financial disadvantages to Aldeia dos Lagos. According to this person, the bullying occurred without valid reasons except that they are competing in the same area, ecotourism, though their purposes vary. For years, dialogue between them simply did not exist and relations were through verbal attacks and clashes. In this case, if the allegations are true, power relations were limited to the level of agent (stakeholders) but within the local government structure. It was used to manipulate, pressure and control local opinion and decisions. ASPAC also faced problems of communication and of misunderstanding with the communities in Silves. It faced problems in integrating with the locals and getting them involved in ecotourism:

*The change of political Administration also contributed and contributes to interfere in the articulation and integration of ASPAC with the communities around ecotourism activities. How about establishing a partnership with the City Hall and the Mayor? We have tried but they refused. Currently (2005), there is a Tourism Bureau but the current Mayor is fully linked to the former Mayor and because of that nobody can talk to her, there is no communication, they just refuse to talk to us to establish dialogue has been a challenge (Intwee 3).*

*We suspect that the riverbank dwellers fear to get united to us because of the former and current Mayor [...] they belong to the same party and it is a continued administration for more than eight years now [...]. The communities fear that the Mayor can ignore them, and if this happens, they will not get public benefits from that administration as a punishment for supporting us. Moreover, there are communities that do not understand 'ecotourism' clearly; they do not know what it is and means; and distorted campaigns against it (ecotourism) and against our ecotourism. There have been anti-campaigns. In this way, for the locals, ecotourism raises many queries because it is a new thing for them. Besides, the communities want quick results, and we know that ecotourism is an activity in Amazonia that takes time for results to appear. The idea for most of them is: if you are friend of ASPAC you are enemy of the City Hall [...] There was pressure. There is some pressure from there (Intwee-3, Silves, interview 2005).*

The fieldwork included interviews with leaders and locals of communities associated or not with ASPAC in order to balance opinions. One of the locals explained what some dwellers think about ASPAC. The view contrasts with those points raised by Intwee 3 but do not disqualify his explanation.

There are diverging discourses, and the objective of the book is not to arbitrate the issues but to report them for discursive analysis. We have here a contextual and

content approach to the storylines of *Intwee-3* and *Intwee-13*. I have compared their views in order to understand the case.

The following citation is part of the interview with a local who has close links to ASPAC and has hosted visitors. I had asked about the reasons other communities in Silves district have refused to have closer connections with ASPAC and its ecotourism project,

*Because dwellers do not have enough information [about the administrative processes and management of ASPAC], people think that ASPAC may be taking advantage at the expense of the communities [through ecotourism and paying visitors]. The communities think they can be exploited, and ASPAC will get more benefits for itself rather than for the communities; this is what people fear. There is lack of information from ASPAC to the communities about their administration, their work [...] good dialogue and communication can contribute to convince other communities to join the project and the NGO. ASPAC does not have members of the communities in its administration. People of the Silves town have managed it. I have not seen anybody from the rural zone in their administration only people from the town (Intwee-13).*

As part of the interview, I asked what they would do differently (what conditions they would impose for a partnership), if they had to start with community ecotourism again:

*First of all, we would ask to have one of our representatives participating directly in the administration of ASPAC... and this person would keep us informed about ASPAC's activities, its projects and its agreements with the others. Currently [May 2005] ASPAC hasn't been really democratic, it lacks transparency (Intwee 13).*

And about the divergences between ASPAC and the former mayor,

*We felt that there was a dispute...they were rival... ASPAC had a thesis and the mayor had a different one. The mayor tried to approach them but because of political and ideological differences they did not get together...No partnership at all! The communities are well-organized...the former Mayor administered the village and the communities well. Education is advanced in comparison to other times...there is a power post...there is a school structure (Intwee-13).*

Faria (2005) in her study of ecotourism in Amazonia also underlined that the structures of power frame most of the social fabric and political events in that region. During my fieldwork in Silves I could confirm most of her observations: “the tourism practiced in the Amazonas state is international tourism [with] infrastructure belonging to regional political oligarchies and to business owners and foreign corporations which target quick profits and capital accumulation” (p.63).

There are two opposing constructed images: ASPAC’s ecotourism integrates the community in the activity, contracts local labour and creates an income source. On the other hand, Guanavenas’s form of tourism has tenuous involvement with the community (Faria 2005: 71). Two different groups control Ecotourism in Silves: ASPAC/Aldeia dos Lagos composed of traditional and grassroots representatives and Guanavenas’ formed by a powerful group.

Even though ASPAC’s administrative staff does not belong to isolated communities, they are still local residents, traditional ones. Moncayo and Ribeiro (2005) researched three communities of Silves that have had the Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC’s ecotourism project as an alternative income source. They are: São João, Santa Luzia do Sanabani and São Sebastião do Itapani. The survey sought local views to identify the benefits created by Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC. Cleanliness, finance and improvement in the quality of life were three items checked by them (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3 - Aldeia do Vale and Silves communities: Gains with ecotourism**

Aldeia dos Lagos’ Benefits to locals in Silves with ecotourism						
	Cleanlines	Finance	Improved the living standard	Have been in the Aldeia’s	Service Provider	Community supplies products to Aldeia’s
<b>Santa Luzia</b>	N/A	75%	25%	Yes: 75% No: 25%	Yes: 55% No: 45%	Yes: 60% No: 40%
<b>São Sebastião do Itapani</b>	N/A	100%	N/A	Yes: 71% No: 29%	Yes: 71% No: 29%	Yes: 14% No: 86%
<b>São João</b>	17%	17%	67%	Yes: 83% No: 17%	Yes: 17% No: 83%	Yes: 25% No: 75%
<b>Source:</b> adapted and translated from its original, Moncayo and Ribeiro 2005: 92-94.						

The researchers concluded that the Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC’s project cannot be classified as sustainable because it lacks widespread benefits for all communities, and those already working with them get differentiated financial and project inputs. Their study validates the demand of Intwec-13 for an egalitarian approach by Aldeia dos Lagos/ASPAC. On the other hand, I realised that logistically it would be a hard task for the project to encompass all the communities because of long distances, poor communication systems and a limited budget, as underlined by its manager.

Residents indicated that ASPAC lacks administrative transparency when dealing with the communities. This specifically refers to ecotourism management and the accountability of the Aldeia dos Lagos resort. They added that its administration practices segregation and exclusion. They said it is a highly centralised and non-

participatory administration. Accounting and financial issues are not open for public consultation.

Even though there have been such allegations, it is evident that ASPAC has contributed to part of the community, and it has an ecological and conservationist orientation (Faria 2005; Moncayo and Ferreira 2005). It has had a pivotal role as ‘guardian’ of the lakes and of the environment in Silves. According to one of the interviewees,

*Look, the communities are partners and, in our meetings everything is discussed with them and it includes the financial aspects, the prices to be practised [...]. We decide together the rates, fees and the amount to be transferred to each partner [...]. They know in advance how much they will get from us; there is transparency [...] without ASPAC's actions, the socio-environmental reality in the Silves district would be sadly different (Intwee-37, Silves, 2005).*

The information provided by the local community leaders in the interviews reveals that ASPAC failed to keep good communication with the communities. It failed to include residents in the Aldeia dos Lagos’ administration. One of its former managers and still active member acknowledged this when asked what he would do differently if he needed to begin with that community ecotourism from scratch:

*I think one thing that could be different, in terms of starting an ecotourism project, is to work first with the communities instead of beginning with the structure. We thought about the structure first and communities later. We need to start with a participatory project from the very beginning in order to include them, to create ways to have them in, so they can feel part of the project...and then to strengthen interaction through partnership. Trust is very important; it is the base for a solid partnership [and for it to happen we need] to identify leaders, to dialogue and to share with them all the steps in order to improve the partnership. The communities are aware of some issues such as bio-piracy because of our work...We need to start a project [together] from scratch...Transparency is everything...I came here [some years ago] to improve the grassroots and participatory projects (Intwee-3, interview in Silves, 2005).*

The coordinators explain that it is difficult to insert outsiders in the decision-making process on a daily basis because of the inability to gather community representatives. Additionally, they state that it would make the decision process slower and more bureaucratic. However, two coordinators admit that if ASPAC had been more participative from its foundation, they now would face fewer problems dealing with the riverside dwellers. As underlined by Stronza and Gordilho (2008), “participation in ownership and management may lead to new learning and greater local cohesion...changes that result from community participation” (p.451).

Faria (2005) suggested the creation of a Municipal Council for Tourism (COMTUR) and for the Environment as institutional, legitimate, supporting bodies, through which local associations can be represented in the process of decision making



by the government (p.71). Inter-sectoral Municipal Council and grass-roots representation in the political process and public planning will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The Silves case provides elements for two conceptual debates: i) the need for mechanisms for multiple stakeholder decision-making at the municipal level; and ii) debates on public access to natural resources and environmental protection areas. The first item will be discussed in the chapters on collaboration. The second item leads us to discuss two things that in Brazil have been highly influential in the protection of the environment: land statuses and land tenure (Oliveira 2005).

The norms and laws that regulate land ownership and its management have determined the social practices and human interventions in forest areas. Two concepts about ownership of land, *res communis* and *res nullius*, can create particular scenarios for (eco)tourism development (see Appendix I).

#### 4.4 - Conclusion

'Power' is inherent in any activity but in those locations with weaker institutions, mismanagement of budget and with strongly biased public administration, 'power relations' become a critical issue to be managed and mitigated by autonomous bodies and organisations. Itacaré and Silves (ASPAC) study cases in Brazil reveal that the lack of a participatory-grounded government and transparency of governance makes necessary the existence of 'associational public spaces'. However, Silves and Itacaré hold enormous contextual differences. While the Administrative Council of APA (CAPA), in Itacaré, has been able to articulate with many different interest groups, ASPAC, in Silves, has not entirely achieved this target.

Some factors can be mentioned as possible causes of this difference in (eco)tourism development. First, it is the geographical territory. Silves district is located in the middle of the Amazonia, five to seven hours from Manaus (the largest urban centre) by combining express boat and road transport. Silves district has many communities far away from its urban area (Silves village) which can only be reached by boat, some of them eight hours away. Isolation combined with boat only transport, and very expensive fuel create a scenario in which interaction and integration become a challenge for developing community ecotourism. Moreover, Silves district is not an environmentally protected area; thus, it does not have the same set of environmental legislation as Itacaré to regulate individual and business actions that can impact negatively on the communities and the environment.

We also need to observe that Itacaré residents are mostly urban, concentrated on a strip land of the district; this geophysical and demographic situation facilitates communication and interaction. The flow of information and Itacaré's consolidation - nationally and internationally - as an 'ecotourism hotspot', contributed to attract people of different backgrounds and business investment. The diversity helped to create more politicised groups to resist manipulation and storylines. The cases reveal that discursive constructions in ecotourism are not divorced from government, organisational, group and individual discourses. Competing discourses exist because

there are competing interests. There are different explanations and interpretations for the same events and facts.

The Itacaré case illustrates the management, and policy implementation of nature-based tourism resources in protected areas. It involves issues of “public sector reforms influencing the management of tourism, the imposition of user fees, and the role of the private sector in protected areas in a country whose public policy is heavily oriented to neo-liberal economic philosophies” (Jenkins and Wearing 2003: 206-207) such as Brazil. As commented by Hall, governance relates to power, and the investigation of power arrangements becomes vital for understanding “the political dimensions of tourism” because power governs the interplay among stakeholders with an effect on policymaking (2007:249). Itacaré has been an excellent laboratory for understanding the interplays of power and interest groups in ecotourism implementation and management.

## Chapter Five

# Competing Discourses in Nature Tourism: a New Zealand Case

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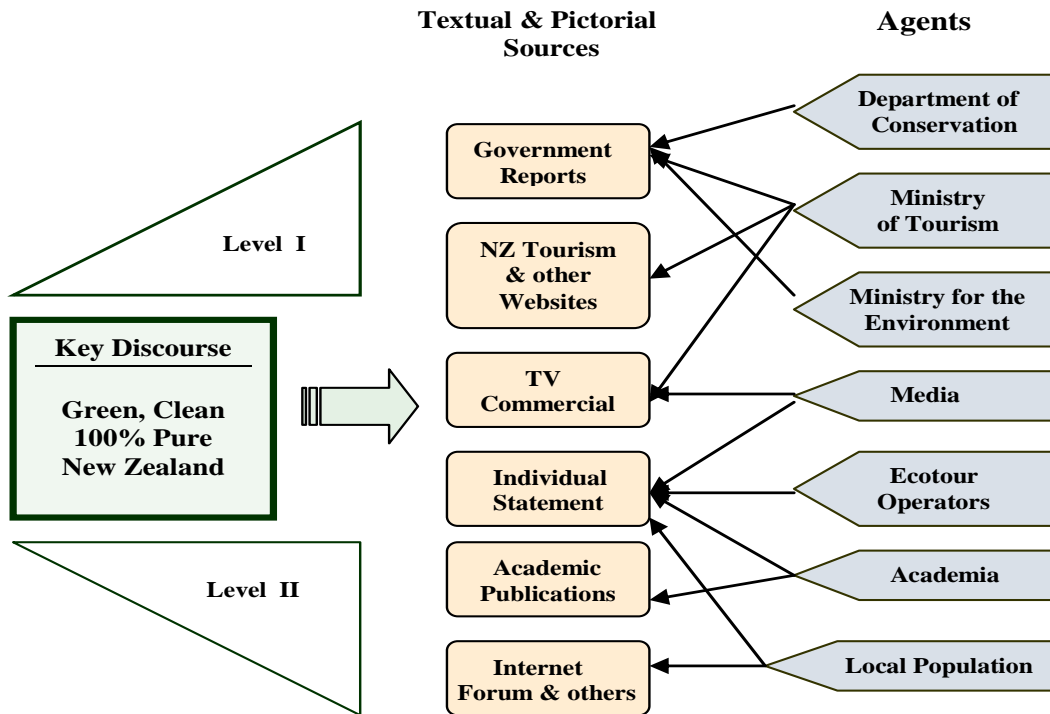
### 5.0 - Introduction: Critical contextual and discursive analysis

The following paragraphs will depict the main aspects of the discursive construction used in the 100% Pure global marketing as it is presented on television and online. The New Zealand Tourism website has complete footage of the commercial and it includes complementary texts and other pertinent information. Three out of a total of seven images and texts were extracted from the New Zealand Tourism website ([www.newzealand.com/travel/](http://www.newzealand.com/travel/)) for analysis .

All images are authentic, pictured and video-recorded in post card regions of New Zealand, and are advertised without any apparent visual enhancement (brightness, hue, sharpness, contrast, etc). The entire footage has the music *Waiting*, by Dave Dobbyn (a New Zealand singer), as sound background. The participants and visitors appear to be enjoying the landscapes in various ways and means: on foot, bushwalking, tramping, hiking, photographing, nature appreciation, fishing, skiing, horse riding, sailing, on a helicopter scenic flight, and outdoor bathing in a tub, etc. The commercial develops no dialogue or conversation.

The conceptual framework for analysis in the Figures 3.0 (p.133), 3.2 (p.154), and 3.3 (p.155) and Fig. 3.4 (p.160) discloses the various levels of ‘competing discourses’ and ‘power relations’ inherent in ecotourism and in sustainable tourism. Discursive constructions in the following sections will be contrasted with evidence on the ground by using as a source ‘government official reports’ and my own in-field observation. The textual analysis begins with a brief review of academic statements, about the 100% Pure campaign that attempt to explain the campaign and its content. In the second section, all aspects of the 100% Pure campaign are examined (texts, images and song).

The analysis provides an in-depth understanding of the marketing language techniques. The third section focuses on statements, comments and views that are contrasted with government ones as they appear in official reports, documents, strategic plans, articles and various texts on the internet. The last section offers a summary of the state of the environment in New Zealand as described by The Ministry for the Environment’s reports (see Figure 5.0).



Author: Ismar Lima, 2008.

Figure 5.0 - Mapping textual and pictorial sources

### 5.1 - Deconstructing the 100% Pure image of New Zealand

Although the campaign does not mention the word ‘ecotourism’ or ‘sustainable tourism’, it is evidently promoting them. Central to the 100% Pure campaign is nature, and its ability to attract visitors to interact with it. ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ is a brand building strategy; it is the construction of the image of a country supported by its iconic spots. This process of tourism imagery has conflicting areas and viewpoints with unfolding power relations domestically and in trade relations.

The ‘100% Pure’ campaign exposes how difficult it is for governments, local stakeholders and communities to keep pristine areas for tourism as envisaged in the concepts and principles of ecotourism. By discussing ‘Clean Green, 100% Pure New Zealand’, we are indirectly and conceptually discussing the controversies ecotourism brings.

No place in the world is 100% pure, clean and green absolutely pristine and unspoiled because the ecosystem and natural services are interlinked as human impacts reach into areas not yet physically visited by humans; for example, even unvisited regions in Antarctica or in Amazonia have been affected by ocean pollution and acid rain.

To find effective mechanisms that allow nature to quickly recovery from human impacts requires commitment to best practices and human intervention

management in urban and natural spaces. Environmentally friendly decision-making and individual behaviour must be persistently induced through mass media campaigns and education.

New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign on TV, advertised on a global scale via Discovery Channel and CNN in 2006, targeted potential visitors in its major markets: USA, Europe (mainly Germany and UK), South Korea and Japan. It uses a selection of New Zealand icons to sell the country and other components such as: natural environments, visitors interacting with nature, visitors enjoying building areas, Māori encounter, and adventure (i.e. Milford, Mt. Aspiring, Waipoua in the North Island, etc).

The discursive constructions do not seek to promote conservation or use the language of environmentalism; the whole campaign delivers the green, blue and white landscapes to visitors promising a nature and adventure experience; key words such as awe, wonder, escape, exhilaration, indulgence, and welcome are used in the commercial. These words are always preceded by the numerical status '100%', and are used to complete the '100% Pure New Zealand' idealisation in a cyclical way (Figure 5.1).

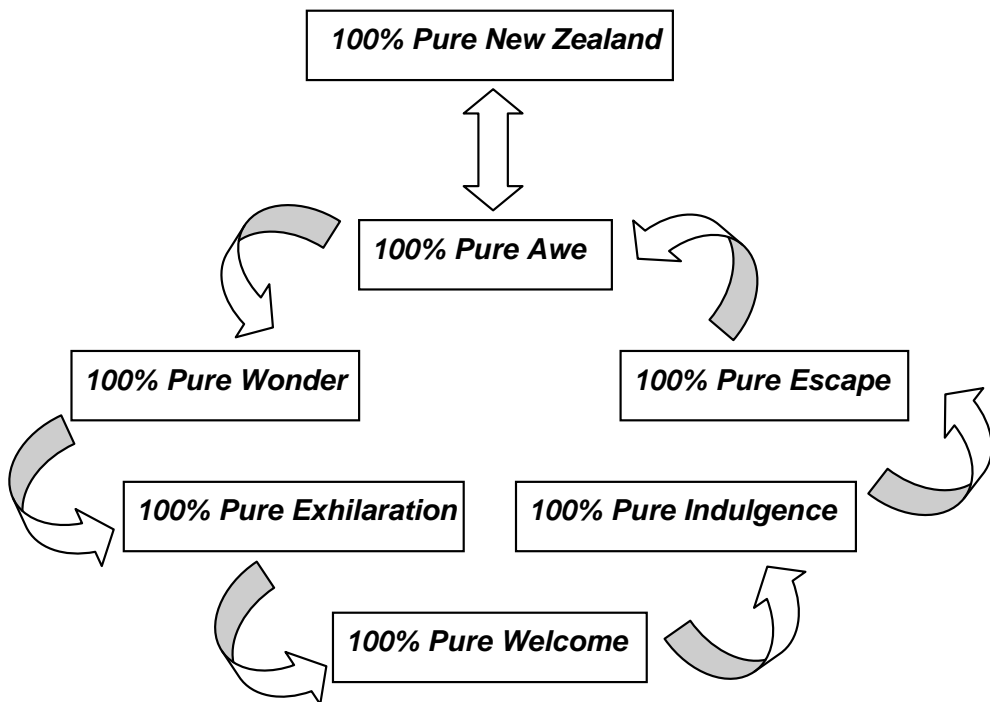


Figure 5.1 - New Zealand 100% Pure holistic reasoning

## 5.2 - 'Depicting the '100% Pure' New Zealand' tourism campaign

The following images and texts were extracted from the TV commercial in 2006. The pertinent texts available at the website were reproduced apart from the pictures for analysis. The criteria for selection were that those images reproduce ecocentric and anthropocentric aspects of the human-nature encounter in New Zealand. The focus is to see 'how' this encounter is described and delivered through symbolic codes or meanings in the imaginary of the viewer/outsider.

### First selected sample: 100% Pure Awe

Milford Sound, South Island: Mountains, green areas, flipping dolphins accompanying a boat, a girl at the prow as a man steers the wheel, the long waterfall, and the boat near it.

Snap 5.1

The image displays two screenshots of the 100% Pure New Zealand website interface. The top screenshot shows a video player with a girl on a boat and a text block. The bottom screenshot shows a video player with a man steering a boat, a rainbow, and a map of Milford Sound.

**Top Screenshot:**

Immerse yourself in the awe-inspiring majesty of New Zealand's scenery, and be amazed like never before.

The untouched beauty of New Zealand extends from north to south and coast to coast, from snowy peaks to rugged fiords, spectacular waterfalls to glaciers and boundless ocean. Engage your sense of adventure and explore the country on foot, by air, boat, helicopter, kayak or even on horseback. The South Island's spectacular Milford Sound is emblematic of the New Zealand scenic experience: nestled amid towering cliffs in Fiordland, it is an untouched haven with a unique mystical beauty.

**Bottom Screenshot:**

Immerse yourself in the awe-inspiring majesty of New Zealand's scenery, and be amazed like never before.


The untouched beauty of New Zealand extends from north to south and coast to coast, from snowy peaks to rugged fiords, spectacular waterfalls to glaciers and boundless ocean. Engage your sense of adventure and explore the country on foot, by air, boat, helicopter, kayak or even on horseback. The South Island's spectacular Milford Sound is emblematic of the New Zealand scenic experience: nestled amid towering cliffs in Fiordland, it is an untouched haven with a unique mystical beauty.

Immerse yourself in the awe-inspiring majesty of New Zealand's scenery, and be amazed like never before. The untouched beauty of New Zealand extends from north to south and coast to coast, from snowy peaks to rugged fiords, spectacular waterfalls to glaciers and boundless ocean. Engage your sense of adventure and explore the country on foot, by air, boat, helicopter, kayak or even on horseback. The South Island's spectacular Milford Sound is emblematic of the New Zealand scenic experience: nestled amid towering cliffs in Fiordland, it is an untouched haven with a unique mystical beauty.

## Second selected sample: 100% Pure Wonder


Footage description: a young Caucasian couple walking among the Kauri trees, in the Waipoua reserve, in the North Island. The couple is shown touching the kauri tree.

### Snap 5.2




Explore the primal beauty of New Zealand's ancient forests, home to a variety of native flora and fauna untouched by the outside world.

Wander among centuries-old native trees that tower overhead and surround yourself with the chorus of native birdsong. One third of New Zealand's land is protected as National Park or reserve land, with walking tracks of varying difficulties and lengths. All of New Zealand's forests are imbued with the spirit of Tanemahuta, the god of the forest, revered by Māori as a great provider of food, weapons, medicine, housing and warmth.



Explore the primal beauty of New Zealand's ancient forests, home to a variety of native flora and fauna untouched by the outside world.

Wander among centuries-old native trees that tower overhead and surround yourself with the chorus of native birdsong. One third of New Zealand's land is protected as National Park or reserve land, with walking tracks of varying difficulties and lengths. All of New Zealand's forests are imbued with the spirit of Tanemahuta, the god of the forest, revered by Māori as a great provider of food, weapons, medicine, housing and warmth.



Explore the primal beauty of New Zealand's ancient forests, home to a variety of native flora and fauna untouched by the outside world. Wander among centuries-old native trees that tower overhead and surround yourself with the chorus of native birdsong. One third of New Zealand's is protected as National Park or reserve land, with walking tracks of varying difficulties and lengths. All of New Zealand's forests are imbued with the spirit of Tanemahuta, the god of the forest, revered by Maori as a great provider of food, weapons, medicine, housing and warmth.

**Third selected sample: 100% Pure Escape**

A European couple wandering in the Mt. Aspiring National Park, South Island – West Coast.

**Snap 5.3**



Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally.

Rediscover your spirit of adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside then unwind in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings. From remote lakeside lodges to hot springs and golden beaches, New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit and let your cares drift away. No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.



**Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally.** Rediscover your spirit of adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside then unwind in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings. From remote lakeside lodges to hot springs and golden beaches, New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit and let your cares drift away. No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.



### 5.2.1 - 100% Pure campaign on TV and on the internet

The 100% Pure TV commercial and its replication at the New Zealand tourism website are treated as an act of verbal or imagery communication. The focus is to map the discursive fabrication of the 100% Pure campaign.

Elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are used to decode the message and to reveal pertinent linguistic devices. The Jakobson's model of the functions of language considers elements such as: first, the type of language (abstract/utilitarian; hyperbolic/credibility language; and communicative/strategic action); second, the coded language (representation; textual devices and functions of language, see Figure 3.4, p.160). In his model, the functions of language are centred on six factors considered fundamental for communication to happen (Waugh 1980: 57):

- 1) addresser (speaker, encoder, emitter; poet, author, etc);
- 2) addressee (decoder, hearer, listener; reader; interpreter);
- 3) code (system, sign, symbol, word);
- 4) message (the given discourse, the text);
- 5) context (referent);
- 6) contact (the connection between speaker and decoder).

The major functions of language are: 1) referential (informational) or representative. This function is oriented towards the context, and includes cognitive, denotative and ideational elements (Waugh 1980: 58). That is, the sentence has a cognitive context, a meaning by its context (Dann 1996: 2) expressive or emotive: it is a function that refers to the addresser. Interjections are the best examples. 3) conative or appellative, it is oriented towards the addressee to influence attitudes by persuading, recommending, permitting, ordering, and warning through imperatives, apostrophes and vocatives (Dann 1996: 4) phatic (emphatic): it is used "to establish (open), prolong (maintain) or discontinue (close) communication as in 'hello?' and 'good bye'" (Hebert 2006: 7; Miller 1996: 475); and 5) poetic, refers to rhetorical figures (tropes), pitch or loudness that give an aesthetic touch to the message as Miller explains "the attention is focused on the message itself, on its sound, shape, rhythm, etc" (1996: 475).

In the '100% Pure' campaign, there is an excessive use of hyperbolic words or adjectives combined with metaphorical sentences. They are techniques known as 'keying' or 'key words', with the use of clichés, modifiers and effect nouns (Dann 1996). These include: 'awe-inspiring majesty', 'be amazed like never before', 'untouched beauty', 'boundless ocean', 'spectacular', 'emblematic', 'unique mystical beauty', 'the primal beauty', 'untouched by the outside world', 'in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings', 'the perfect place'.

The expressions 'untouched beauty', 'untouched by the outside world', and 'boundless ocean' are metaphorical representations as well. No ocean is boundless. What (who) is the 'outside world'? The visitors, other nations!? 'Beauty' is an abstract concept, and consequently cannot be touched anyway. However, 'untouched' can be interpreted as referring to 'nature not yet transformed by urban occupation'. In this

way, ‘untouched beauty’ can be decoded as ‘nature free of human interventions’. The following visitor’s statement translates this sentiment, “...Compared to the crowded streets of Asia and Europe, loved the wide open-spaces on offer here...you have the feeling of being very alone” (New Zealand Backpackers News, July-August 2004).

The adjective ‘untouched’ is subjective, and somewhat brings texts and images into contradiction. In the samples, visitors can be seen walking in the bush, touching the tree, and tramping in the mountains. If the visitors are there, the “outside world” is consequently there, and then those areas are not “virtually untouched”. The textual and pictorial contradictions cannot be observed in the TV commercial as it is broadcast on Discovery and CNN Channels because the televised commercial does not have any text other than the headers (e.g. 100% Pure).

The 100% Pure New Zealand campaign on the website is more comprehensive, with extra information such as the exact location of each picture on a NZ map. Moreover, its digital format allows the user to control the content by ‘freezing images’ and/or by unlimitedly repeating frames. Technical information, details about the music background and credits are also provided.

As the addresser prepares a message to target a specific receiver, there are ways of elaborating the text that may facilitate its decoding. In advertising’s A.I.D.A. language, pictorial or textual discourses are then prepared to capture **A**ttention, to maintain **I**nterest, to create **D**esire and to get **A**ction (Nöth 1990; Dann 1996; Peppin and Carty 2001).

In the textual construction of the 100% Pure campaign, two functions of language prevail: the conative with imperatives and vocative/pronominal words, and the referential. This last implies cognition, denotation and description of a situation, state or action in a context such as: ‘one third of New Zealand is protected as National Park or reserve land, with walking tracks of varying difficulties and lengths’ and ‘snowy peaks, to rugged fiords, spectacular glaciers and boundless ocean’.

In the conative/appellative function, the imperatives and personal pronouns serve to establish a direct link between addresser and receiver/decoder, capturing attention as in: ‘immerse yourself in...’, ‘engage your sense of...’, ‘explore the country...’, ‘surround yourself with...’, ‘let your cares...’, ‘rediscover your spirit of...’, ‘unwind in...’, and ‘escape to...’. The use of imperatives is known as ‘language of social control’ applied in tourism (Dann 1996). Social control through language use recalls former discussions about the intentions of a ‘strategic action’ (Fairclough 2003; Fairclough 2001b; Habermas 1984). Some sentences, metaphors and expressions also have ‘implicit and masquerading commands’, as in ‘New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit’ is an example of implicit command.

In the metaphoric construction, ‘spirit’ is used to replace the words ‘energy’, ‘vigor’, dynamism, or ‘will’. ‘Spirit’ connotes these words. The order word is, ‘revitalize yourself’. The following sentences are examples of ‘masquerading commands’, ‘No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.’ These hyperbolic truisms complete the initial idea of ‘rejuvenation of the spirit’. Other examples of hyperbole are: ‘100% Pure’, ‘be amazed like never

before', 'untouched beauty of New Zealand extends from north to south and coast to coast', 'boundless ocean', 'a unique mystical beauty'.

The commercial is a mix of descriptive and metaphorical phrases with the predominance of hyperbolic expressions rather than having academic and scientific communicational elements. The discursive constructions and tropes in the '100% Pure' campaign fit into the following themes:

- Romanticism, 'escape to another world'
- Regression, 'let your cares drift away'
- Rebirth, 'rediscover your spirit of adventure'
- Hedonism, 'unwind in luxurious comfort'
- Fantasy, 'New Zealand's forests are imbued with the spirit of *Tanemahuta* (also, cultural indigeneity: Maori legends).

Most metaphors and clichés set nature as a 'paradise' and nature for hedonism (see Figure 3.3). The combination of these two representations implies a third intrinsic representation: 'nature as a resource' to be explored and exploited by the visitors. Then, the competing discourses are explicit and implicit in the scenes and texts of the 100% Pure campaign. Nature is exhibited as a consumable product for visitors' delight. All images show individuals alone, couples or small groups in green and blue outdoors. However, 'wilderness' is promoted together with 'urban environment' and 'urban comforts' such as therapeutic massage parlours, outside bath tub, motorized vehicles, buildings (restaurants, hotels, hot springs), etc.

In the commercial, nature has a discontinuous position oscillating between centre and periphery in terms of relevance. For example, images of mountains are shown followed by visitors tramping on them. The same happens with the waterfalls in Milford; the scene is intercalated with a couple in the boat.

Visual sample II shows a couple appreciating the Kauri tree, by touching it, may influence visitors to do the same and this type of message clashes with the Department of Conservation's (DOC) recommendation to trampers, for example, on how to proceed at Tauranga Kauri walking tracks and in Trounson Park, "Kauri have shallow root systems that are very susceptible to damage by trampling. Please do not walk in the area around the trees, as this can kill them. Return along the same track" (DOC, 2007). New Zealand Tourism's idealisation of visitors' interaction with nature is in conflict with DOC's. They are forms of competing discourses.

The tourism campaign does not sell the idea of mass tourism. The campaign is very anthropocentric-oriented. This extract illustrates the case, 'engage your sense of adventure and explore the country on foot, by air, boat, helicopter, and kayak or even on horseback'. The next examples reinforce the notion of a peripheral position of nature; in that it is to be enjoyed (consumed):

- South Island's spectacular Milford Sound is emblematic of the NZ scenic experience.
- Wander among centuries-old native trees that tower overhead
- Surround yourself with the chorus of native birdsong (This metaphor is a personification, and the birds will be seen by visitors as in a recital).
- Explore the primal beauty of New Zealand's ancient forests.
- Adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside.
- Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally.

In fact, the sentence 'Escape to another world' may not be considered a hyperbole on the whole. The endemic evolution of the New Zealand ecosystem over thousands of years in isolation somewhat validates the claim. According to American biologist, Jared Diamond, "New Zealand is the closest we can come to studying evolution on another planet". And Maryann Ewers and Bill Rooke of Bush and Beyond Guided Treks complete the notion, "NZ was the last major landmass on earth to feel the brunt of human occupation. Man (sic!) first arrived here only 800 to 1000 years ago [...] In Australia it happened 60,000 years ago" (Ecotours New Zealand 2007, retrieved on the 15 August 2007).


The commercial seeks to attract visitors to New Zealand for nature consumerism. The campaign sells the image of nature in everlastingly pristine condition to be touristically exploited. It explores five areas: nature tourism, adventure, Māori/Pākehā culture, winery and food, and health enhancement (hot springs, massages, etc).

New Zealand Tourism did not label the campaign as ecotourism, it creates a particular imaginary about New Zealand. It has been advertised as nature, cultural, and adventure tourism. Nature is present in all frames, in the whole TV movie and on the website. To enjoy nature on anthropocentric terms is the chief appeal: the urban and nature come together in the pictures. The imagery construction is one in which visitors will have the most of an exuberant nature, without giving up modern comforts (see Pictures A, B, and C). They were made with the use of software that froze the scenes, snapped with enough resolution for printing and visualization purposes.

# A



Switch to Interactive Mode Help



100% PURE ESCAPE

100% PURE  
newzealand.com

music credit: [Dave Dobbin](#)

Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally. Rediscover your spirit of adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside then unwind in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings. From remote lakeside lodges to hot springs and golden beaches, New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit and let your cares drift away. No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.



Mt Aspiring National Park

# B



Switch to Interactive Mode Help



100% PURE

100% PURE  
newzealand.com

music credit: [Dave Dobbin](#)

Take an exhilarating plunge into the wild beauty of New Zealand, and you'll find a landscape that truly puts the adventure into adventure sports. Hit the slopes on skis or snowboard, or get the ultimate rush on some of the world's most spectacular snow by flying up to untouched slopes with no one for miles around. And there are plenty of other ways to find adventure: take a flying leap into the adrenalin-pumping unknown with New Zealand's famous bungee jumping, or take to the skies with nothing but a parachute holding you above the spectacular scenery below. For a more tactile rush, raft through rollercoasters of white water amid dramatic cliffs and canyons.



Tasman Glacier

C



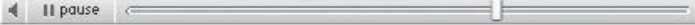
Switch to  
Interactive Mode

Help



100% PURE  
newzealand.com

music credit: Dave Dobbin



Visit New Zealand and indulge your love of spectacular food, five star wines and designer accommodation.

Unwind in a secluded lodge or a relaxing natural spa. Enjoy the unique surroundings of New Zealand's many boutique hotels and restored historic homes, or allow modern luxury accommodation to imbue your visit with style. Explore an unparalleled range of culinary delights, from gourmet dining to a wide range of ethnic cuisine and unique wild foods, all with the freshest of ingredients. Wherever you go, you can expect a breathtaking view. It could be the sea, a river, a lake, a forest or a geothermal backdrop - it all depends on where you choose to let your indulgence run wild.



On the other hand, pictures D and E translate the iconic elements of ecotourism, low impact visitation and nature contemplation. Snap D constructs pureness, the absence of pollution. Stream water is fresh and drinkable. This is a reality in many streams of the national parks. Snap D and E become imperative symbols, and they somehow seek to validate the motto of the campaign grounded in the notions of 100% Pure. The snaps construct the idea of 'no pollution', 'cleanness', and 'green'. In 'E', the visitor contemplates nature and has the camera on. The image delivers the same message in the early 90s: 'take nothing but photographs; leave nothing but footprints'. Some ecotourism service providers in New Zealand (i.e. Marlborough Sound, Bay of Plenty, etc) metaphorically use the sentence for conservation in their campaigns.

D

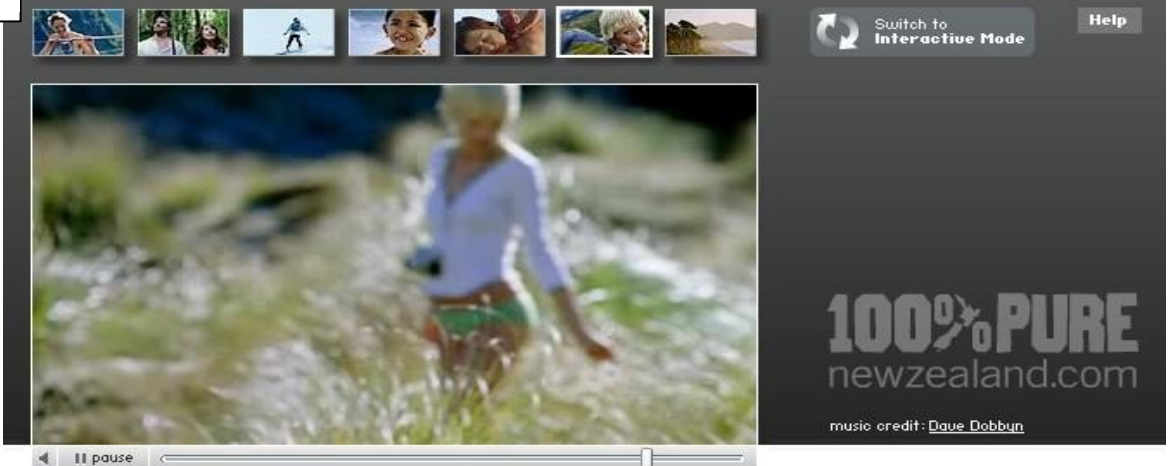


The video player interface for slide D features a dark grey background. At the top left, there is a row of seven small thumbnail images showing various outdoor activities and landscapes. To the right of these thumbnails are two buttons: "Switch to Interactive Mode" with a circular arrow icon and a "Help" button. The main video area shows a person in a green shirt and shorts standing on a log in a river, surrounded by large rocks and lush greenery. Below the video is a standard playback control bar with a "pause" button and a progress slider. In the bottom right corner of the player area, the text "100% PURE newzealand.com" is displayed in a large, bold, white font, with "music credit: Dave Dobbun" written in a smaller font below it.

Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally. Rediscover your spirit of adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside then unwind in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings. From remote lakeside lodges to hot springs and golden beaches, New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit and let your cares drift away. No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.



E



The video player interface for slide E is identical in layout to slide D. It features a dark grey background with a row of seven small thumbnail images at the top left. To the right are "Switch to Interactive Mode" and "Help" buttons. The main video area shows a person in a white shirt and green shorts walking through a field of tall grass. Below the video is a playback control bar with a "pause" button and a progress slider. In the bottom right corner, the text "100% PURE newzealand.com" is displayed in a large, bold, white font, with "music credit: Dave Dobbun" written in a smaller font below it.

Escape to another world where relaxation comes naturally. Rediscover your spirit of adventure in the fresh air of New Zealand's spectacular countryside then unwind in luxurious comfort amid untouched surroundings. From remote lakeside lodges to hot springs and golden beaches, New Zealand is the perfect place to rejuvenate your spirit and let your cares drift away. No matter which part of New Zealand you choose to escape to, you will return with renewed energy.



Using the same advertising language (A.I.D.A) as New Zealand, Innovation Norway – a government body of the Ministry of Trade and Industry – has released a campaign to promote Norway's white, green and blue landscapes. Innovation Norway also runs a multilingual website (Visitnorway.com) to work as a virtual guide and travel planner as well as a source for downloadable tourism material. Norway's tourism campaign, if not hilarious, is provocative. In an attempt to get the United Kingdom's visitor market, it released posters that feature the main elements of the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign but with modest use of hyperbolic language.

By selecting alpine and fiordland images and by using specific slogans, the Norway campaign (see pictures F and G) brings 'competing discourses in nature tourism' to an international level. The posters have the same pictorial and discursive devices used by New Zealand Tourism. Pictures were taken from the top of mountains showing the sea strip and the steep cliffs, boat sailing, long waterfalls, and the contrast of colours, with vegetation in the centre (see pictures A,B,C,D and E). The campaign also uses the language of control with conative/appellative elements, order words and masquerading commands such as 'Norway awaits' and 'For a free Escape Pack call...'.

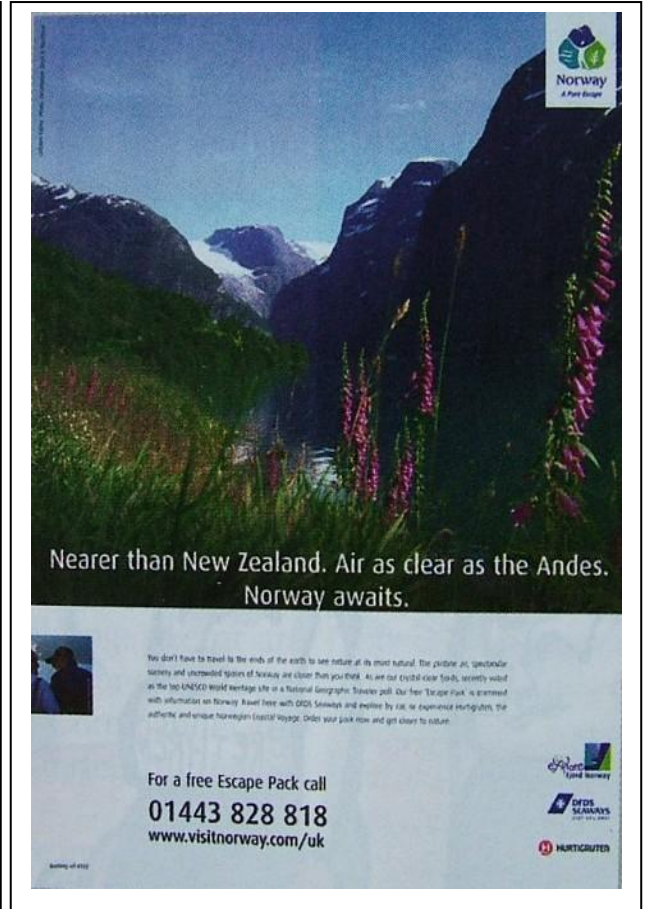
The slogans faintly mention the purity of the environment without getting involved in controversies. Instead of marketing itself as '100% Pure' and 'Clean Green', Norway Innovation chose a way around, by using the slogan, 'Air as clear as the Andes'. The artifice is a circumlocution. The competitive and provocative dimension of the Norway campaign is that it explores the country's relative proximity to the UK: 'Nearer than New Zealand'. The sentence delivers a hidden message, 'why travel 17,000 km to New Zealand in a non-ecological long-haul jet trip if you (visitor) can find the same attractions and landscapes, just a couple of hours away on a flight to Norway?'



F



G



### 5.2.3 - Academics', stakeholders' and people's competing perspectives

This section considers a selection of statements and viewpoints about the 'Green Clean, 100% Pure New Zealand Campaign', and seeks to contrast them in an attempt to provide a multiple stakeholder perspective on this subject. Sampling, though, is restricted to keep the scope of the study at a manageable level.

The first part analyses researchers and social scientists comments. The data translates the views of people who have been immersed in a historical review of New Zealand image creation and of image representation. Scientific language helps to transform viewpoints, suppositions and impressions into a more palpable debate.

The intention is not to get the readers bogged down with exegesis but to select excerpts that condense academic positions. The second part contains citations of stakeholders who have dealt daily with nature tourism, most of the time conveying the interaction of visitors with New Zealand landscapes.

The third part focuses on voices (statements) of ordinary people about the 100% naturalness of New Zealand are also examined. Their direct speech style describes what they see and feel without a holistically, contextual, historical and philosophical input. The third part analyses the 100% Pure Campaign by deconstructing it entirely as shown on TV and on New Zealand Tourism's website.

The last part seeks to provide a summary of government reports about the current situation of New Zealand's natural and urban spaces. The government selected a set of environmental indicators to measure the purity and cleanness of New Zealand's environment as the means to mitigate part of the controversial debates and queries about the veracity of the image of the country as advertised worldwide.

There are then, four sources for this investigation that reveal different perspectives about the 100% Pure campaign. The language of marketing differs largely from the language of local stakeholders. By examining these discursive constructions, one will realize how two world views 'anthropocentrism' and 'ecocentrism' permeate the message content. Some cases reveal obvious attempts to blend them. New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign is a 'top-to-bottom motto' - created by New Zealand Tourism/Ministry of Tourism - that has virtually pushed almost all sectors and organisations to take initiatives for locally achieving a state as ecologically sound as uttered in the campaign.

The language of marketing is used to attract visitors' attention to green and blue hotspot icons. Certainly, 100% pureness is a hard-to-achieve target, "in Nationwide focus groups, whilst a matter of pride, participants typically saw this clean green myth as a temporally distant utopia" (Coyle and Fairweather 2005: 148).

However, the size of New Zealand and its relative unpopulated condition are factors that may help the country to successfully manage the levels of impact either from the agricultural, industrial sector or from an ever-increasing tourism. A comprehensive analysis about the '100% Pure' campaign should include the moves and strategies the country has implemented in terms of conservation. Some government documents such as the councils' plans and reports of the Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Tourism become a key source of material for discourse analysis and statistics.

For Coyle and Fairweather, New Zealand's Clean Green image is part of meaning fabrication of earlier times, and more recently a nation's trademark motivated by historic events,

Although constructed around earlier mythologies, this place descriptor is a fairly recent one, originating in the mid 1980s, around the time the Greenpeace vessel, the Rainbow Warrior, sank off the coast of the South Island...Its emergence also coincides with the passing of a government act that designated New Zealand as a nuclear-free zone (Sanderson et al. 2003, 3, in Coyle and Fairweather 2005: 148).

Despite some of my criticism and queries, there is no intention to disqualify the scientific and methodological validity of any work. The goal is to find areas of

intersection and of divergence in the narratives while situating them under ideological stands. The leading question is, how do these academics decode and posit the advertised Green Clean 100% Pure image of New Zealand based on their findings? Coyle and Fairweather's (2005) most recent investigation, underlining the 'cleanness image of New Zealand' and the biotechnology revolution, seeks to fill gaps by reviewing and remaking previous studies focused on the country's image, national identity and technological innovation as approached by Bell (1996, 2002), Parker (2000), and Fleming (2002).

In their research, Coyle and Fairweather (2005) discuss the risks that a genetic engineering practice might cause New Zealand's Green Clean image and the loss of the nation's hallmark. They explore residents' perception around the dilemmas of GE and a Clean Green 100% Pure aphorism. They surveyed and interviewed 11 focus groups totalling 117 participants nationally.

By seeking sample diversity, they included Asian and Pacific Islander groups of Auckland. Although they sought a representative sample in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background, the spatial location of each focus group was not mentioned. It is nationwide but where do they live and how do they interact with the environment? What is their life experience? Are they farmers, businesspeople or environmentalists? Were they born in NZ or migrated to the country? Pākehā or Māori?

By taking 'demographic density' into consideration, residents of crowded-urban areas such as Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch may have a very different position about a 'clean green image' as compared to those people living in less populated areas in Franz Josef, Hokitika and Makarora. A segmented and comparative regional research about residents' perception on 'clean green image' is missing. Moreover, a sample survey of international visitors to know their perceptions on New Zealand to what is said and shown in the tourism campaign is still missing from the literature.

In 1999, Ingo Sobania - a German graduate student at the University of Waikato - developed a qualitative study of the discourses of German tour operators promoting sustainability and New Zealand as a 'clean green' destination. He was mainly concerned whether the construction of 'green destinations' would contribute to sustainable development.

#### **5.2.4 - Intertextuality: comparing views of Boxes 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3**

Coyle and Fairweather's research continues the debate over the political and economic intentions of the government to sustain a particular construction of New Zealand. The Boxes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 explain further their interpretation:

**Box 5.1 Clean green New Zealand: A complex genealogy**

The 'clean and green image' of New Zealand is a well-known example of what has been called a 'place myth'...suggesting that the place myth of clean green New Zealand is challenged by the new government policy of recreating the country as a centre of biotechnology innovation...(Coyle and Fairweather 2005: abstract).

Clean green New Zealand has a complex genealogy, and is bolstered by a number of place images of the country as an Arcadia, '100% PURE', 'beautiful New Zealand', the pastoral idyll, a tourist paradise...a desirable place to live (Coyle and Fairweather 2005: 148-149).

Thus, in contrast to Asia and Europe, where population pressure forced the cancerous march of urban sprawl into areas of aesthetic beauty, New Zealand still looked pure and unsullied. Against this backdrop, specific biotechnologies were disapproved [by focus group participants] of and identified as detrimental to the maintenance of a clean green country (Coyle and Fairweather 2005: 155-156).

Coyle and Fairweather adopted the same concept as Claudia Bell (1996) of New Zealand as a 'place myth'; in fact this concept was developed by Shields (1991, 2003) in his investigation on social spatialization. For Shields, places with overwritten topology become a "place-myth".

That is, ritualised sites, circuits and itineraries bring the past into the present (2003:3) with nostalgic representations of a site-specific landscape mapping visitors' memory. For example, some people keep tour maps as the means to revive and restore feelings and landscapes they delighted in during their journey. The citation below partially reproduces Bell's interpretation of 'purity construction' of New Zealand as a myth-place:

**Box 5.2 New Zealand imagery: an Arcadia**

For early settlers, New Zealand was constructed as an Arcadia, with artists recreating the romantic, sublime landscape of Europe in this Antipodean paradise. These representations marketed the country as an aesthetically consumable landscape, and hence appealing to tourists and immigrants. Yet even at this early stage, 'beautiful New Zealand' meant 'exploitable New Zealand' as the consumption of this sublime paradise became a selling point; 'a saleable bit of Arcadia' (Bell 1996: 31).

The following paragraphs are a partial citation of Dyson's (2003) review on the '100% Pure Campaign':

### **Box 5.3 - Branding strategy packaging tourism campaign**

The branding of New Zealand as a tourist destination [exists] within the context of the nation's reinvention of itself as a bicultural state. The marketing campaign is themed around the 100% purity of landscape, of environment, of experience, of indigeneity.

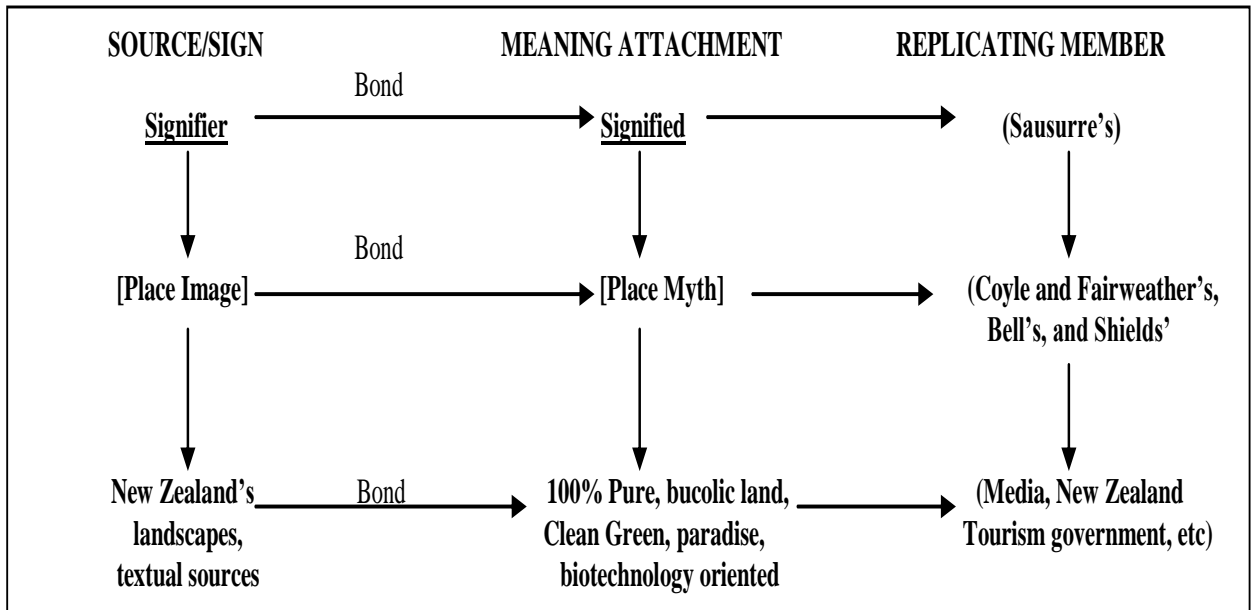
It draws on and historically condenses tropes which have been used to sell the place, first to white European settlers then to tourists, since the early days of colonisation in the nineteenth century. Inevitably images of the New Zealand landscapes as a 'Prelapsarian paradise' (and more recently as Tolkien's Middle Earth) eschew references to the depredations of colonialism just as the romanticized construction of the indigenous [Maori].

[Dyson] argues that the 100% Pure campaign is a branding strategy packaging New Zealand as a tourist destination through imagery [...] idealisations in the aftermath of a post-colonial struggle [...] 'New Zealand is as much a feeling as it is a country - fill up your senses' " (Dyson 2003).

The first and second extracts explore the concepts of 'place myth' and 'place image' as in 'signifier' and 'signified'. Boxes 5.1 and 5.2 as well as Figure 5.3 reinforce the idea of meaning-fabrication of New Zealand by highlighting the pertinent 'attached meanings' such as Arcadia, 100% Pure, 'Beautiful New Zealand', the pastoral idyll, the tourist Antipodean, Prelapsarian paradise, '100% purity of landscape, of environment, of experience, of indigeneity', etc. These terms end up creating stereotypes for the country.

#### **5.2.5 - Signified and signifier**

Sausurre's maxim is that signifier and signified are flexible, with elastic transition, with meaning fabrication being elaborated each time (see Figure 5.2). A signifier (sign/symbol) does not hold a perpetual signified (meaning). Signified is said to change because of people and context. Any word, symbol, thing or person may get different connotations depending on what will be constructed about them. Such meaning changes are merely caused by societal conventions. Institutions and social norms are part of a collective system that has the means to socially construct a reality.



Source: Author 2007.

**Figure 5.2 - Signifier, signified and meaning attachment**

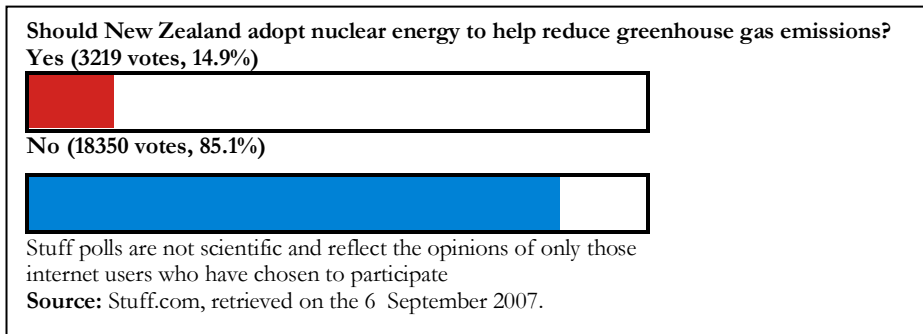
Government priorities and agenda are the institutional drives that work to give new 'signifieds' to already established 'signifiers'. Coyle and Fairweather's (2005) study confirms Saussure's position that 'attached meanings' are unstable. In their study, they show how the New Zealand government has tried to solve the dilemma of a highly productive agriculture and of intense use of pesticides in contrast to a '100% Pure image', by selling to New Zealanders the idea of 'genetic engineering' (GE) as a way around environmental impacts and water contamination. The authors found that the acceptability of 'genetic engineering' (place myth) is not the same as for the '100% Pure': "specific biotechnologies were disapproved [...] as detrimental to the maintenance of a clean green country" (2005: 155-156). However, as a Ministry for the Environment report points out,

Total avoidance of genetic modification may result in New Zealand being left behind in the "technological revolution", while embracing it could lead to loss of crucial markets that currently view New Zealand as clean and green, with environmental integrity (Valuing New Zealand's Clean Green Image, p.2).

'Purity' and 'biotechnologies' have their share, their links, and discourses to promote GE are a sort of 'strategic action' as explained by Habermas (1985). This dilemma of GE resembles the controversies of Nuclear power in the 1980s during

which the Labour government approved in 1987 an act establishing New Zealand as a nuclear Free Zone aiming to encourage global disarmament.

Some voices in the country believe that, if New Zealand cannot be left behind in the GE technological revolution, it cannot be left behind on nuclear energy any longer. For example, the New Zealand Atomic Energy Advocacy Council, an informal group, advocates for peaceful use of nuclear power such as electrical energy (Newstalkzb.co.nz, retrieved on the 06/09/2007). However, an informal online poll by Stuff.co.nz, a popular New Zealand media website, shows that 85.1% of the virtual participants are against 'nuclear power' as a choice to mitigate the emission of greenhouse gas (see Figure 5.3).



**Figure 5.3 - Online poll about nuclear energy for New Zealand**

According to people's perception, these two selling images of New Zealand (naturalness and GE) have 'colliding signifieds'. They are not compatible. A competitive dimension of two worldviews 'anthropocentrism' and 'ecocentrism' becomes detectable. How are they competitive? Biotechnology is an innovative technology, a new knowledge whose impacts have not been fully researched and understood. It is innovative as it increases agricultural productivity and can improve the nutritional value of food.

Biotechnology opens up a new dimension for managing the world food supply but it brings concerns as well. The main reason for the debate is the level of uncertainties linked to possible risks to health in the long-term and to its risks to the environment. Moreover, many scholars are alarmed at the political consequences of agriculture dependent on fewer corporate groups, the holders of the biotechnology's royalties.

The development of GM organisms (GMOs) [...] can contribute directly to enhancing human health and development. From a health perspective, there may also be indirect benefits, such as reduced agricultural chemical usage and enhanced farm income, and improved crop sustainability and food security, particularly in developing countries. Contradictory findings for such benefits sometimes reflect different regional or agricultural conditions. The use of GMOs may also involve potential risks for human health and development. Many genes used in GMOs have not been in the food supply before. While new types of conventional food crops are not usually subject to safety assessment before marketing, assessments of GM foods were undertaken before the first crops were commercialized (WHO, 1 June 2005: 5).

New Zealand's Green Party takes the position that New Zealand's GE free image is a positive setting for its export and for its tourism image, to "restore New Zealand's international reputation as a clean green country through policies such as an organic nation" (Green Party of Aotearoa/New Zealand, 2005). Competing discourses here gain a political dimension in which New Zealand Green Party's public policies for agriculture and tourism clash with the government's (Ministry for the Environment) as pointed out by the 'royal commission report' (see Box 5.4).

#### **Box 5.4 - Competing positions and environmental issues**

##### **\* The Royal Commission on genetic modification's report**

...directed it to receive representations upon, inquire into, investigate and report upon, (1) the strategic options available to New Zealand to address, now and in the future, genetic modification, genetically modified organisms and products; and (2) any changes considered desirable to the current legislative, regulatory, policy, or institutional arrangements, for addressing, in New Zealand, genetic modification, genetically modified organisms, and products (Ministry for the Environment, 27 July 2001, p.3. Online source).

##### **\* New Zealand Green Party's position**

Already, with the release of the royal commission's report, which gives a cautious go-ahead for environmental release of genetically engineered organisms, the organics industry is facing resistance in its overseas markets and increasing compliance costs. International organics standards demand zero contamination by genetically engineered organisms. Buffer zones simply will not work, either in practice or in perception. The 100 percent pure perception created by Tourism New Zealand, at a cost of several million dollars, would also be shattered. The cost of losing our "GE free" status and our clean, green image would be substantial (Rod Donald, Green Party Co-Leader, Budget Debate, 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Speech in Parliament, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2001)



### 5.2.6 - A deadlock, local versus global discourses and demands: 100% Pure New Zealand, food miles, ecological footprint

Local discourses do not occur in seclusion from broader transformations in political economy which has been coupled with, and doomed by, the global environmental changes. The dilemmas refer to the need of governments to adjust themselves to the global acting orders and demands at a local level. For Ferguson (2007), “tourism as a significant feature of contemporary global political economy has thus far attracted little attention in the field of international political economy” (p.557).

Milne and Ateljevic (2001) understands global-local tourism nexus as a transaction process, “which is at once driven by global priorities of multi-national corporations, geo-political forces and broader forces of economic change, and the complexities of the local” with interaction of various and varied stakeholders (p.371-372).

At a macroeconomic developmental level, tourism industry benefits from employment, foreign capital influx and exchange generation that are essential to make tourism a venue of a country’s development (Ferguson 2007). On the other hand, such a macro dependency - highly reliant on a volatile neoliberal market and external funds - can impact badly on poor nations, particularly those with subsidised ecotourism leading regional development, because of global financial crisis, foreign loans to invest in the tourism sector, speculative investments, and the alarming mounting debts,

...countries embarking on strategies to transform their last ‘unspoilt’ territories into tourism attractions risk that their remaining patches of natural forests will be sacrificed for commercial purposes...[with] tourism as the only industry apart from exports generating the revenue...to pay back huge foreign debts” (Pleumarom 1999: 1).

Adger, Brown and Hulme (2005) commented that there have been two streams for human responses to global environmental change, “by underlying discourses of environmental management and control and of economic integration, and, on the other hand, by resistance to globalization and new perspectives on vulnerability and resilience” (p.1).

Though the debates focusing on the global economic dimensions of (eco)tourism can be striking, the author is more concerned with the triad tourism-development-conservation as it has been discursively used in and has impacted locally on ecotourism practices.

This section critically deconstructs key environmental global discourses along with local contextual ones. For example, the interplays between ‘ecological footprint’, ‘nature tourism’ and ‘100% Pure’ campaign are discussed. The newest storylines supported by academics, scientists and witnessed by changes in the earth’s climate patterns, have been both of alert and prescriptive for the challenges about an evolving catastrophic climate change.

Food miles, ecological footprint, reduction of fuel demands, biofuels, food crisis, blatant global inflation and recession, and the needs for alternative source of

energy are the current statements that have permeated the media and political agenda. Some of these words are conceptual terms that bring with them implied messages (acting orders) for decision making, planning and management, and the tourism industry can be deeply affected by market prices and the visitors' mindset. Ecotourism is not apart from this creeping crisis, and the environmental debates have been hardly settled yet.

There has been an increasing concern about tourism's impacts on climate change because of the aviation transport and the emissions of greenhouse gas (GHG) (Bramwell & Lane 2008). With these shifting perceptions, the connections between tourism and global environmental change have prompted a series of studies, but yet being embryonic (Gossling et al. 2002; Simmons and Becken 2004; Hall 2006; Gossling and Hall 2006; Becken and Hay 2007). An imminent global warming makes sustainability a thorny target to achieve. For Bramwell and Lane (2008),

A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity are integrally related to the environmental constraints imposed by supporting ecosystems and the climate (p.1).

There is a bald-faced paradox between local ecotourism and global footprint because ecotourism – practiced by visitors travelling in long-haul flights to the final destination – becomes virtually a noticeable global polluter; thus, dismantling its image as a “caring partner for the environment” (Becken & Schellhorn 2007: 87). That is, “origin-to-destination travels” require substantial energy and produce excessive greenhouse emissions; for example, a return flight between London and Costa Rica results in “about 2.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger travelling on a wide-bodied jet aircraft” (Becken & Schellhorn 2007: 92).

If authorities and governments adhere to regulatory interventions in order to halt greenhouse gas emissions from the aviation industry, ecotourism destinations such as Kenya, New Zealand, Nepal and Botswana will lose significant revenues to their gross domestic product (GDP).

Simmons and Becken (2004) share the same opinion and alert that “shadow pricing of external costs, via carbon taxes, are a possible mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol, coming into force in New Zealand...this could have significant effects on the long-haul ecotourism market” (p. 21).

A blogger, in a frank criticism on an article about ecotourism in the *International Herald Tribune*, wrote: “Eco-tourism? Bah! Try Climate ‘Doom Tourism’...it concerns visiting places on our environmentally Bush-whacked earth that may soon be unrecognizable from their current state...gone too soon and lost forever like the dodo” (online source, retrieved on 8 July 2008)<sup>14</sup>. Becken & Schellhorn 2007 comment on the numerical impact of ecotourism-related air transport: “it would amount to “about 88.4

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<sup>14</sup> Online source, updated on December 17, 2007, at Ipezone blogspot, retrieved on July 8, 2008, from <http://ipezone.blogspot.com/2007/12/eco-tourism-bah-try-climate-doom.html>.

million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually [and] contradicts those conceptualizations of...low environmental impact ecotourism holidays” (p. 92).

As part of the solution for the impasse created about gas emissions versus ‘ecological footprint’, Becken and Shellhorn (2007), comment that there are several measures underway such as improvements in air traffic management, market-based instruments to control demands and major improvements in transport and aircraft technology (e.g. lower consumption engines) (p.94). In terms of demand, long-haul journey air tickets will most likely have surcharges with fuel prices skyrocketing; reduction in international air travel also may take place through gas emission levies or systematic integration of aviation routes by airlines.

Surcharges, emission trading schemes and regulatory pricing interventions can become highly controversial (Becken and Shellhorn 2007). Alternatively, Gossling et al. (2002) suggested a shift in terms of market destination and visitor source, “in order to become more sustainable, destinations should seek to attract clients from close source markets” (p.209, quoted in Hall 2007b: 252). For New Zealand, this choice would imply focussing on Australia as a critical market or to explore promising visitor source in the Pacific Islands.

According to the Ministry for the Environment’s 2007 report, entitled New Zealand Climate Change Solutions<sup>15</sup>, the strategies for mitigation measures to deal with climate change for the next decades, include: 90% of electricity generation from renewable sources; to reduce by half the greenhouse emissions per capita in transport by 2040; to widely deploy electric vehicles; to continue as a leader in research on agricultural emissions reduction and on new technologies and processes for the sector; by 2020 to achieve a net increase of forest areas of 250,000 hectares as compared to that in 2007; biofuels sales obligation; to promote the ‘low-carbon-diet campaign’; mandatory vehicle fuel-efficiency labelling; carbon neutral electricity and transport sectors; solar water heating programme; Building Code (Act 2004) review for energy conservation and efficiency in heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting; residential lighting efficiency programme, NZ housing strategy; urban design protocol; waste minimisation (solids) Bill; sustainable packaging accord; reduce your rubbish campaign; national environmental standard for landfill gas, enhanced eco-verification; public awareness; marine energy fund; negotiated greenhouse agreements within New Zealand Refining Co and Oceana Gold ltd.; and, business partnerships for sustainability.

The theory of ‘100% Pure’ brings a set of challenges because of the needs to achieve a conceivably acceptable ecological footprint at a global comparative level.

The expression ‘ecological footprint’ is a conceptual metaphorical discourse, coined by William Rees in 1992, which has become popular as an environmental indicator for sustainability. It regards the amount of resources and energy per capita hypothetically required to meet the needs of a certain population with the available

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<sup>15</sup> The report was retrieved on the 9 July 2008 and is available for download on [www.climatechange.govt.nz](http://www.climatechange.govt.nz).

technology, as well as the capacity of soaking up waste (Gossling et al. 2002, Gossling 2002; MacDonald and Patterson 2003).

However, according to international research “New Zealand’s ecological footprint [...] was, on a per capita basis, only slightly behind the US and ahead of Britain” (Callister 2006). One can ask how ecotourism links to ecological footprint, food miles, climate change (carbon credits), and biotechnology. The straight answer is that these concepts and events encompass environmental and political issues. They are not just casual concepts and experimental technology; they represent a paradigm shift. They propose a new economic order that will affect (eco)tourism.

*New Zealand Listener Magazine* (March 2007) covered this paradigm shift with the headline, “Will the war on climate change kill our trade and tourism?” According to Ed Sims, general manager of Air New Zealand, there have been concerns that northern hemisphere residents may accept ‘air miles’ and ‘carbon emission’ statements, not travelling overseas, and then affecting the inbound tourism market outside the region. Sims adds that, “a lot of passengers, especially in the UK, are ringing the contact centre asking about our emissions, the age of our fleet and how conscious we are of the impact we’re having on the environment” (*Listener Magazine*, March 3, 2007: 20-21).

‘Food miles’ and ‘ecological footprint’ are good examples of metaphors that gain worldwide meaning and understanding, and may interfere in the nation’s domestic policies. These conceptual discourses, bring political and social orders as well as trade drawbacks and new economic drives. Sceptical critics have raised the alarm that although such concepts are created for positive ecological ends, certain governments may misuse them in favour of the country’s domestic industrial and agricultural sectors (see Box 5.5).

For Sean Weave, environmental studies lecturer at Victoria University, the maintenance of NZ’s image reputation is crucial in economic terms, “the image is hugely important for New Zealand in terms of trade...people buy New Zealand meat and think, it’s from New Zealand, where the grass is clean and the rain that falls on the grass is clean” (in Tady 2006). He adds that the ‘carbon-offset’ fee to be included in the air tickets is a sort of system that creates a “misleading feelgood factor” about damages to the environment (Box 5.5), but is revealed to be an ineffective policy with only two percent of visitors voluntarily adding \$160.00 to the price of a round trip between London and Auckland (*Listener Magazine*, March 3, 2007, page 21).

**Box 5.5 - Argumentative extracts on carbon emissions**

<b>Economic/Business oriented rhetorics</b>	<b>Environmental oriented rhetorics</b>
<p>*air travel is far from inefficient (“four-wheel-drives are about four times less efficient than modern aircraft”), Sims.</p> <p>*air travel contributes only 1.6 percent of total carbon emissions, but a tripling of jet traffic over the next four decades will offset any fuel efficiencies and see this rise to 2.5 percent of emissions. Sims stresses that airlines contribute only a small proportion to climate change (The Stern Review).</p>	<p>*But the fact remains that jets consume eight times the fuel that trains do traveling the same distance (Listener Magazine, March 3, 2007).</p> <p>*aviation’s harmful effects are greater than they first appear, “because of other gases at high altitude. For example, water vapour emitted at high altitude often triggers the formation of condensation trails, which tend to warm the Earth’s surface (Sir Nicholas Stern, former head of the World Bank).</p>

**Source:** Author 2007, with date on the literature and media publication

Dann (1997) discusses “the feelgood factor”, and says that the ‘satisfaction of eco-visitors’ rests on the perception of ascending “from the multitude”, of not being a “rabble” (p.92). The tour operators construct this perception through greenspeak in travelogues, “the language of eco-tourism” (Dann 1997: 91) based on an environmentally friendly vocabulary. There is a social construction of reality “operating at the level of myth” that delivers “more about the hidden agenda of tour operators than the places they seek to promote” (Dann 1997: 92).

In many ads worldwide, it is noted that the tour operators’ emphasis on ‘green responsible tourism’ aims at guaranteeing the economic sustainability of business in an emerging market niche (ecotourism) rather than being genuinely concerned about conservation. The ‘100% Pure’ campaign was devised by New Zealand tourism with a twofold goal: first, to increase the number of overseas visitors; second, to proclaim the need of local public commitment towards the estate of the nature. Box 5.6 has messages that reinforce the need of linking ‘discourses’ with ‘practices’ about “100% Pure”:

**Box 5.6 Linking 100% Pure to practices**

The marketing campaign – billing New Zealand as green and clean – needs to be pushed harder and the reality needs to match the rhetoric...We have to overcome any perception that the overall tourism experience here will be negative environmentally (O’Connor, *Listener Magazine*, March 3, 2007, p. 21),

Ecological footprint and air miles are the newest ‘coercive’ mechanisms at the global level that seek to reorder the logic of travelling. They have become a set of ecological ‘hurly-burly’ storylines, but are not mentioned in the New Zealand Tourism

2010 Strategy as a threat to the tourism sector. O'Connor underlines that these concepts are part of tourism roundtable discussions about global awareness of environmental issues that would affect New Zealand's tourism industry: "carbon emissions might be a growing challenge, but it's not an insurmountable one" (O'Connor 2007: 20-21). The government's aim is to make the country a truly sustainable economy in holistic terms, even though "the most eco-friendly reality here may be insufficient to satisfy critics abroad" (Listener Magazine March 2007).

'Achilles heel' is a colloquial expression that translates the fear many specialists and academics have in relation to New Zealand and its self-promotion as 100% Pure. Rather than luring waves of international visitors, such a claim causes public administration and the private sector the Herculean task of weaving agriculture and tourism together with conservation (see Box 5.7),

**Box 5.7 - 100% Pure claim may become NZ Achilles heel**

Tourism New Zealand's 100 per cent pure marketing campaign may end up being the country's achilles heel as governments and consumers around the world focus on the contribution that air travel makes to global warming...The marketing campaign [...] created a paradox in a world where travellers were becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of long-haul flights (Callister's, Burghams' and Hooson's opinions as in the *Code Green* report, cited by an article at Dominion Post, 9 December 2006).

The marketing campaign is selective and sells the idea of 'total purity of the country'. This notion of 'totality' seems to be the most polemic issue with recurrent debates in academia and among the general public. Sandy Callister, the director of Providence Report, said that "no other country tells the world they are 100 per cent pure" *Code Green* report <sup>16</sup> (NZElections.com, December 2006), and the statements in Box 5.8 reinforce this perception,

**Box 5.8 NZ 100% Pure Campaign: Overstatements?**

The marketing folks are simply reinforcing the image held worldwide that New Zealand's faint ecological footprint makes it clean and green. But all the hype about New Zealand being clean and green may be somewhat exaggerated. New Zealand is touted internationally as one of the most breathtaking places to visit and as a conservation leader. But is there truth in the "100 percent pure New Zealand" slogan?" – Megan Tady, online source: Environmental Magazine, May-June 2006

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<sup>16</sup> *Code Green* is a report designed by the consultancy company/group, The Providence Report, in order to establish a framework for reflection and solutions about current global themes such as climate change and sustainability in a New Zealand context.

### 5.2.7 - Ministry of Tourism official comments on the 100% Pure campaign

In December 2005, the Ministry of Tourism released a document, Tourism New Zealand Baseline Review, with detailed comments on the impacts of the 100% Pure campaign for tourism inside and outside the country. The evaluation considered the major tourism markets, Australia, UK, US and Japan, and the areas of coverage and influence of the campaign such as scenery, ease and safety, cleanliness and purity. This section critically and discursively analyse key parts in terms of social constructionism. They will be contrasted with other stakeholders' views. According to New Zealand Tourism, the campaign is a success,

Overall perceptions of brand building activity are very positive. The 100% Pure campaign is almost universally described as excellent, a model for the industry and the envy of other NTOs, reinforced by recent international awards such as the Webby Award. TNZ's move away from tactical marketing to focus on the development of a strong global destination brand [...] though there is a view that the pendulum has swung too far now, and that additional emphasis on partnership marketing with the industry is now called for in situations where that makes sense.

Even in their report, New Zealand Tourism's statements are hyperbolic, "almost universally described as excellent, a model for the industry and the envy of other National Tourism Organizations (NTOs)". The criticism here is not on the merit of its success but the tools and criteria used to measure it as a success. Is it a success as an audiovisual production technically speaking? Is it a success in delivering the message? Is it a success in branding New Zealand as an international destination?

However, what do they mean with "the pendulum has swung too far now", and that additional emphasis on partnership marketing with the industry is necessary? Does it mean that NZT needs to continue expanding its marketing but partnerships will be the means of achieving it? Moreover, the end of the sentence is a very slippery declaration, "called for in situations where that makes sense". This statement is vague indeed.

By discursively analysing Norway Tourism campaign, we can note some similarities with the 100% Pure campaign, but because National Tourism organisations follow general guidelines for marketing, this does not give them a chance to state they "envied" the New Zealand campaign. As already mentioned, Norway tourism posters may be provocative by promoting Norway as "nearer than New Zealand".

The review points out that New Zealand's emphasis on scenery enhances its campaigns as compared to other NTOs, but underlines that the country still does not have a striking nature symbol such as the US with the Grand Canyon and Canada with Niagara Falls. According to them, stakeholders believe NZT's role has been crucial for creating a different perception of the country's landscape as observed in, "the density of outdoor pursuits, which lends energy to the scenery...most stakeholders indicate that they are happy with 100% Pure emphasis on this".

The document also emphasizes that ‘ease’ and ‘safety’ are not symbols that make them a hallmark for the country. Stakeholders acknowledge that the overall impression about the quality of the environment in terms of ‘cleanliness’ and ‘purity’ are “stronger than the reality”. NZT admits that “there are no brand icons that capture this driver [purity and cleanliness]”. Such a statement sounds contradictory as they selectively pick images of iconic areas (e.g. Milford Sound, Trousoun Kauri Park, Mt. Aspiring, Mt. Cook, etc). Some alpine landscapes have become symbols of New Zealand.

NZT seems to be selling an image of 100% Pure New Zealand in advance, in the belief that environmental public policies can sustain the brand fabrication, so “there is some concern that sustainability of these perceptions [purity and cleanliness] will deteriorate unless the country also matches this with stronger environmental policy”. It seems that any environmental obligation and liability were passed on to the Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, and local government bodies. The review’s concern was to assess the outcomes of tourism imagery in major markets and the NZ stakeholders’ fulfilment of it. It concludes that “this strategy (100% Pure Campaign) appears to have paid off, with a strong coherent destination brand apparent in all the major markets, and with stakeholder feedback overall very positive about the 100% Pure campaign”.

### **5.3 - Valuing New Zealand’s Clean Green Image (Ministry for the Environment)**

In 2001, the Ministry for the Environment released a report which had assessed the value of New Zealand’s Clean Green image. The study sought to quantify the benefits of exports as a result of positive perceptions about the environment. Three sectors were investigated: dairy, organic production and inbound tourism. As a method, it measured levels of reactions of potential consumers as confronted with illustrations of depleted landscapes.

According to the report, there is evidence that the Clean Green image is valuable, and the findings were: 1) an environmental image is a substantial driver for goods and services in overseas market; 2) New Zealand’s Clean Green brand is suggestively quoted as worth at least hundreds of millions of dollars (possibly billions); 3) New Zealand is relatively clean and green because of its low population concentration which consequently results in “relatively benign environmental pressures”. However, Morgan Williams, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, has a different judgment:

The last finding of the report is an unequivocal statement about environmental problems to be managed in order to sustain a reputation as a Clean Green country,

...there are environmental problems that are sufficient to raise questions about the sustainability of the value of New Zealand’s exports attributable to its environmental image. There is a risk that New Zealand will lose value that is created by the current environmental image if we are not vigilant in dealing with the problems that could threaten the image (Ministry for the Environment’s report 2001).



New Zealand society is like most Western democracies; it's very oriented to be a high consumer society...but that generates all the usual pressures of waste, water consumption, high energy consumption and so on (Teddy 2006: 1-2)

These declarations of the Ministry for the Environment are more precise than the one provided by New Zealand Tourism in which phrases are elaborated with marketing techniques that mask meanings. The difference in rhetorical devices used by both government institutions to convey messages on the same topic is obvious,

New Zealand markets itself as a 100% Pure, quality experience. To deliver on this promise to our customers, the tourism sector must focus on quality from product inception to delivery. Quality is essential to business, particularly because New Zealand is too small and distant to profit from lowest-common denominator, volume-based tourism” (Towards 2010- Tourism Strategy-Ministry of Tourism).

The 100% Pure campaign has been instrumental in developing this [purity and cleanliness] driver though there is some concern that sustainability of these perceptions will deteriorate unless the country also matches this with stronger environmental policy.

#### **5.4 - The environmental state of New Zealand**

For a cover story, journalists of the New Zealand magazine *Listener* (edition 3440, 15-21 April 2006), asked the four most influential environmental groups and agencies<sup>17</sup> to list their 10 top environmental concerns in the country.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Morgan Williams, was also consulted. Their main concerns are the levels of pollution (nitrogen dioxide) caused by cars in some urban areas such as Queen street and Kyber Pass Road, in Auckland, affecting the suburbs of Henderson, Pakuranga and North Shore.

According to Auckland Regional Council (ARC), 10 percent of “dirty” vehicles produce 50 percent of the pollution. The government identified 42 “airshed areas” where the air quality does not meet the standard such as in Kaitaia, Kerikeri, Dargaville, Kapiti Coast, Wairarapa, Blenheim, Nelson, Geraldine and Waimate.

Other environmental problems highlighted by the groups were water shortages, droughts and floods that strain water management. There has been a daily growing demand for water because of urban expansion and dairy farming. According to the article, New Zealand yet faces a problem of polluted water, as animal waste,

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<sup>17</sup> The groups were Ecogroup Environment and Conservation Organisations (ECO), Forest and Bird, Greepeace, Fish and Game (*Listener* 203, No.3440, 15-21 April 2006).

chemicals and nitrogenous fertilisers end up in creeks and streams. In addition, didymo algae - also known as rock snot – have spread rapidly up the South Island.

In the article, it is said that the ‘natives’ are at risk because of settlements, and it adds that stoats, possums, rats, rabbits cause a dangerous toll because they eat tonnes of vegetation in a single night; wetlands have been drained, and forests felled to make room for farm or forestry resulting in loss of species, declining Kiwi bird numbers.

Land in New Zealand is also overfarmed, overgrazed, and overgrown. As for ecotourism, some environmental impacts caused by humans have affected natural spaces in New Zealand and in many other places in the world (Buckley 2004). The impacts are the results of misconduct and lack of awareness of visitors and by those acting in the tourism sector.

The impacts in New Zealand and elsewhere include campervans dumping sewage along roadsides, erosion and overuse of walking tracks, not collected waste, bottle pets and plastic left behind, fuel and other non-organic liquid being thrown into streams, rivers, lakes, etc (Buckley 2004; Wong 2008; Simmons & Becken 2004; Leung & Marion 2004; Littlefair 2004).

Visitors’ and locals’ highly impacting practices, misconduct, environmentally unfriendly behaviour, mismanagement of natural resources, together with failures of public policies and of enforcement of environmental legislation are not predicaments faced only by New Zealand and Brazil. These unwanted events are present everywhere, in poor, developing and developed countries. Buckley (2004b) lists some of these environmental adversities: impacts of tour boats in marine environments, campsite impacts in Prince William Sound, Alaska (USA), ecological impacts of ecotourist visitation on macroalgal beds in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, impacts of hikers in Kavkazsky State Biosphere Reserve (Russia), the role of tourism in spreading dieback disease in Australian vegetation, impacts of tourism-related (in)migration in the Greater Yellowstone region, and impacts of four-wheel drive vehicle in the central coast region of Western Australia.

The list is not exhaustive and makes us realise that sustainability is reliable on visitor management, locals and visitors environmental education, environmental campaigns and awareness; sustainability demands the revision of policies, strengthening of institutions, enforcement of law, and creation of effective instruments and mechanisms for natural resources management. According to Stronza and Gordilho (2008), research has revealed that “ecotourism rarely replaces other relatively destructive activities” and may become an add-on contributing to environmental depletion (p.450).

The state of the environment is crucial for ecotourism because unspoiled, uncontaminated and conserved natural areas are the chief appeals for the sector. Without a high quality environment, ecotourism loses its foundations and attractiveness, “like no other form of tourism, ecotourism is dependent on opportunities to observe...and visit particular landscapes or ecosystems” (Gossling 2007: p.71).

As for New Zealand, in terms of branding equity, the Ministry of Tourism acknowledges that “the natural environment is fundamental to the New Zealand brand”. The same view is shared by (Dowling 2001a; Simmons and Becken 2004), “ecotourism forms an important part of the tourism industry...building on a long tradition of tourism in natural areas” (p.16).

Tourism has long been recognised as one of the economic pillars (Schott 2006), and New Zealand’s government commitment to environmental sustainability and for sustaining the 100% Pure promises, has bloomed with initiatives such as Zero Waste and collaborative schemes involving the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand and DOC (Carr 2004: 407).

Among the local residents, politicians, authorities and the owners of based-nature tourism enterprises, there are diverging views, arguments and counter-arguments about the environmental state of New Zealand as illustrated in the following statements.

### **Argument**

We [New Zealand] have lost almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our bush cover. Only 5% of our lowland forests and wetlands are intact. Most of our conservation estate is on land that would be deemed useless for anything else. We are a world leader in endangered species. It could be argued that nowhere on earth have so few people caused so much environmental destruction in such a short time as here in NZ. The destruction caused by man (sic!) in the past shouldn’t be harped on if we are to move on, but we shouldn’t be afraid to tell the true story.

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many New Zealanders are still unaware of the true state of our natural environment, and the effort being made to save what’s left, falls short of what is necessary...with greater understanding of the need to protect what we have left of our wilderness and to encourage people to support conservation projects.

Education is the key to exposing the myths associated with New Zealand’s so called ‘Clean and Green’ image. Bush and Beyond has a philosophy of not being afraid to speak the truth, but at the same time, showing people what a very special place Kahurangi National Park is”

(Maryann Ewers and Bill Rooke, Bush and Beyond Guided Treks, New Zealand Ecotours, at [www.ecotours.co.nz](http://www.ecotours.co.nz)).

### **Counter-argument**

We can use our image as lever (Kevin Hackwell, conservation manager at Forest and Bird)

### **Counter-argument**

On the hard data, we don't see many places where we've gone past the point of no return, [...] We still have room to pull ourselves up. But it's going to take collective political will. And New Zealanders need to recognize that it's possible, that it's good for all of us, and finally, that it's damn good for the environment (Morgan Williams, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment).

### **Counter-argument**

It's unlikely any other country would institute a nationwide "Zero Waste" policy. Due to the tireless efforts of the visionary Warren Snow, NZ became the first country in the world with such a policy in 2002. Today, 38 of New Zealand's 74 local authorities have adopted zero waste targets, with a projected goal of meeting them by 2020 (Megan Tady)

Megan Tady has harsh criticism for NZ's ecological condition. Her views can be contrasted with those of Barry Carbon (Head of MFE) below:

### **Argument**

New Zealand falls just slightly behind the United Kingdom in terms of emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per unit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The country holds the ninth-highest rating of household waste, sharing the ranking with Australia, and is 11 th-highest in energy consumption among the 20 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries....Another problem is that New Zealand's oceans are being emptied at an alarming rate. Many native species, including the national bird, the kiwi, are at risk of extinction as non-native species like Australian possums munch their way through the bush. New Zealand's native kiwi is endangered and best seen in zoos. Agriculture is New Zealand's biggest industry, and intensive farming methods are taking their toll with pesticides leaching into the soil and polluting the groundwater. At least two thirds of the native bush and forest has been cleared since the country was discovered by Europeans – Megan Tady.

### **Counter-argument**

New Zealand does have significant environmental armor, including an impressive grid of national parks, nuclear-free and zero waste policies, and a rigorous program of defending native flora and fauna. New Zealand was also the number one nation on the international Environmental Performance Index (EPI), with a score of 88 (followed by Sweden with 87.8). Barry Carbon, Head MFE.

But the country also has an aggressive protection program for native species (*Listener Magazine* March 2007).

The polemic about the 100% Pure campaign and its imaging construction seems to be rooted in the overstatements and generalizations about the state of nature in the country which situate it on the borderlines of reality and intention.

The campaign uses the strategy of marketing the tourism sector as a cluster, rather than marketing it in a segmented way. For example, instead of marketing just Milford, New Zealand Tourism included it in a set of scenes and descriptions on TV and in the website, “the reasoning behind the ‘shared destiny’ hypothesis put forward by tourism is associated with a need to develop new markets, and a concern for the quality of what it views as a major asset” (Daugstad 2008: 403). In the 100% Pure campaign specifically, Milford and other vast, green, unpopulated areas are marketed in cluster in reference to the whole country.

As a communication device, the synecdoche for NZ; a term used to denote the part of something as being the whole thing. Such arresting linguistic disguise appears in marketed imagery or strategies for managing destination image. It creates an impression for some people that the campaign is misleading because not the whole country is as pure as those pristine areas. The hyperbolic language also adds to the polemic. Any comment about the state of the environment in NZ should be followed by a description of the environmental projects and local actions (Councils, DOC, private sector, etc) that have been implemented to improve the quality of the environment.

The Prime-Minister, Helen Clark, constructively envisages sustainability in New Zealand, and her bents and storylines fit in what Hajer (2005) defines as routinised forms of discourse in order to strategically promote group equilibrium [and cohesion],

*Why shouldn't New Zealand aim to be the first country which is truly sustainable – not by sacrificing...living standards, but by being smart and determined? I want New Zealand to be in the vanguard of making it happen – for our own sakes, and for the sake of our planet. I want sustainability to be central to New Zealand's unique national identity. New Zealand has an enviable reputation as a country with a clean and green environment, high achieving and honest people, an inclusive community, and a commitment to peace and justice. To maintain and build on our reputation New Zealand needs to lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase sustainability. That's why I've issued the challenge that New Zealand aspire to be a truly sustainable, and even a carbon neutral nation.’ (Ministry for the Environment, 2007 report, p.ii).*

For this book, the empirical evidence of the NZ actions for conservation on the ground will be drawn from a case study in the Bay of Plenty. Criticizing the 100% Pure tourism campaign, regarding it as deceptive, might become a unilateral approach. What has been done on the ground to sustain the 100% Pure New Zealand? In a survey, tour operators were asked about their role in order to give sense to 100% Pure claims (see Box 5.9). Nine replied of 33 contacted.

**Box 5.9 - How are you (tour operators) committed to 100% Pure?**

- 100% Pure is a marketing term, not a reality. We support the idea of 100% Pure Experience and ensure that is what our guests receive (NZSR-5)
- We provide a “real” experience. We fill ourselves and...[by]...promising and over-delivering (NZSR-6)
- We...maintain our penguin breeding area and in 1992 planted a 12-hectare forest to offset our business carbon (NZSR-7)
- We’re an eco-tour!! (NZSR-8)
- As a Qualmark accredited operator (NZSR-1)
- I like the brand. It captures the interest of prospective customers. That’s why they are in New Zealand, and my products seem to them to be consistent with it. I don’t consciously support it, but my products are all about nature, in nature, educational (NZSR-2)
- Launching the fight against 4WD access to DOC land; [being] 100% active conservationist, and [being] a committee member of the Ashburton branch of FOB (NZSR-3)
- Not committed (NZSR-4)
- Every day with my behaviour at home [...] and through education past onto our travellers (NZSR-9)

The nine tour operators were also asked about five key words or expressions that best would define their business and work. The question sought to check one’s self-perception of business and behaviour, and by defining and qualifying themselves, the tour operators were indeed demonstrating ‘how’ they have been committed to 100% Pure New Zealand. Unconsciously, they ended up answering further the question in Box 5.9. The key words also show how ‘tour operators’ discursively construct and define themselves socially and environmentally (see Box 5.9.1).

**Box 5.9.1 - Self-evaluation: Words and expressions that define own business in nature-based tourism in New Zealand**

Conservation, education, truth, honesty, responsibility, stewardship, genuine, friendly, wilderness experience, indigenous fauna and flora, interactive, philosophical, nature, saving endangered wildlife, observation, appreciation, enterprising, sustainable, exciting, rewarding, sustainability, Manaakitanga (welcoming guests and giving them you all), knowledge, passion, wildlife viewing, real experience, low impact, service, nature and culture.

**5.5 - Conclusion**

The 100% Pure campaign has employed marketing language that translates the ‘intentions of a reality’ rather than a ‘reality as it is currently experienced’. A motto that creates a virtual reality through imagery and imaging, reflects d’Hautesserre’s

observation that “most tourism representations ignore the smell and texture of the bodily space while the truth value of photographs has long been carefully nurtured” (2003: 2).

The ‘100% Pure’ and ‘Clean Green’ image has been devised to become a hallmark of product quality in nature tourism for New Zealand. It is a leading idea; it has been a driver for public policy and a best practice orientation for the tourism industry. Because ‘100% Pure’ and ‘Clean Green’ are still grounded on intentions and on incipient steps towards environmental restoration of the country (on the whole), some people may take it as misleading as shown by some of the statements and extracts. Moreover, other texts reveal that citizens and residents seem unsure ‘how’ to situate the campaign and the environmental state of the country.

New Zealand’s economic choices are both contradictory and challenging for the country to achieve a 100% Pure status. The country is unpopulated, mainly in the South Island, but highly agricultural and reliant on dairy. Forestry also has an economic weight. These three activities result in land transformation and various impacts. Agriculture, dairy and forestry directly compete with the demands and rhetorics for sustainable tourism. The competing discourses here are explicit as well as latent in the discussions on conservation, environmental protection, and innovative technologies such as GME and nuclear energy.

New Zealand and many other modern western countries have faced the same dilemmas of being permissive or corruptive on choices which can maintain the pulse of the economy but will impact negatively on the environment.

Based on this material, on my fieldwork, participant observation, my readings and as a temporary resident of New Zealand, I can say that New Zealand has not just rhetorically and socially constructed an environmentally friendly image of the country. The campaign translates a desire to improve the state of the environment. The country does not have all the answers yet; environmental awareness is still in its infancy; however, New Zealand has a historical tradition in terms of public consultation and public debates.

The holistic participatory approach to identifying and solving problems is important for consensus building. This tradition, the pursuit of an egalitarian ethos, social concern, the attempts to restore nature, low corruption rates <sup>18</sup>, strong institutions and a society that abides by the laws, all contribute to a scenario with fewer occurrences of strifes and conflicts in tourism development as compared to Brazil.

This chapter reveals that the attempts to construct a certain reality thrust groups to react against it; people are not passive to rhetorics. Competing discourses in ecotourism are not only conceptual; they are complex, cross-sectoral and multifaceted, and thus require complex arrangements to deal with them.

Resident dissatisfaction with tourism development is also motivated because of a disenfranchised system that does not allow residents to voice their needs. Then,

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<sup>18</sup> According to 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, New Zealand appears on top as the least corrupted country in the world on [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) retrieved 10 September 2007.

unbalanced power relations and lack of access to decision-making are issues to be addressed in management. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with issues of collective participation in ecotourism.

In December 2007, 100% Pure New Zealand campaign on the website has slightly changed the approach to the cleanness of the country. Rather than insistently using the motto '100% Pure', the video on the internet emphasises the age of the country as one of the youngest in the world. Some former scenes are re-used but the commercial does not have the hyperbolic sentences; it also seeks to have variety by including other ethnicities such as Asians and Africans.

The commercial continues to focus on the Pakeha-Maori links and on the same New Zealand's tourism hotspot (as accessed on the 11 December 2007). The chapters deconstruct the collaborative schemes in Itacaré and in the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand to reveal the processes for consensus building (power negotiation).



## *Chapter Six*

# **Collaborative ecotourism: Introduction and Itacaré case, Bahia State, Brazil**

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### **6.0 - Introduction**

**I**n this chapter, I study partnerships and collaboration in Brazil. Some of them are not institutionally structured collaborative arrangements. They are attempts to create networks for collaboration. Some stakeholders have been acting together to solve collective problems but they do not have formal and structured partnerships (e.g. Itacaré, in Brazil). ‘Stakeholder’ is defined as “any person, group, or organisation that is affected by the causes or consequences of an issue” (Bryson and Crosby 1992: 65). Itacaré and Silves are localities that initiated collaborative schemes for (eco)tourism development. Especial attention will be given to the role and documents of public agencies.

The investigation is not a comparative study between Brazil and New Zealand. Instead, cases in both countries can provide leads for partnership in nature tourism. The parallel approach can enlarge understanding of the complexities of implementing collaboration and shed light on how to build consensus in (eco)tourism development. The complex relational webs among stakeholders can be structured to deal with ‘power relations’ that affect collaboration outcomes in (eco)tourism development. It is a somewhat legitimate way of mediating conflicting issues of the collectivity. In the context of this book, the term ‘partnership’ will be used interchangeably with any collaborative arrangement.

### **6.1 - The challenges for collaboration: A regional context**

The challenges are various because collaboration is not a permanent structured institution. Collaborative initiatives are essentially volatile and can take place any time as the context and circumstances allow. Unpredictability of operation and of outcomes is one of the characteristics of collaborative schemes, even though researchers have found patterns for an archetypical framework for partnerships. Collaboration and partnership occur through ‘cooperation’ and ‘coordination’ (Plummer et al. 2006: 502). To convey a desirable collaboration for sustainable tourism, Bramwell and Lane (2000) recommend it operate through holistic cross-sectoral interactions (p.1). It is equally

important to learn about collaborative developments already used in policy making and environmental planning.

Collaboration in (eco)tourism development can involve ‘face-to-face’ interactions among stakeholders who may belong to the public, private or civil sectors, and they can involve pressure (interest) groups (Bramwell and Lane 2000: 1). It creates a situation and conditions in which groups negotiate power and political affairs. Many terms are used to explain and describe various collaborative arrangements: alliances, forums, coalitions, task forces, public-private partnerships (Bailey 1995; Bramwell and Lane 2000: 2-3) as well as networking, joint actions, consortium, co-management, cluster(s), and organisational and institutional cooperation.

Cooperation among individuals and organisations has opened up an area for innovative development strategies (Plummer et al. 2006: 500). The term ‘partnership’ seems to be well-accepted in the government sphere while ‘collaboration’ is more frequently used in academia and the tourism literature (Bailey 1995). In the United States, the term ‘partnership’ became part of the jargon of leaders who deal with environmental issues and conservation targeting sustainable development (Long and Arnold 1995). Even though the term ‘partnership’ has becoming a routinised word within the tourism sector, there has not been much consensus about what it means (Plummer et al. 2006; Brinkerhoff 2002).

Though not consensually defined, partnerships demand core elements such as ‘cooperative wills’, ‘networks’, ‘interaction’ and a ‘communicational process’. The partnership process is a voluntary event involving the sharing of resources (Gray 1985). Selin and Chavez (1995) complete Gray’s approach and define it as a “voluntary pooling of resources (labour, money, information, etc) between two or more parties to accomplish collaborative goals” (p.845). For them partnerships may be highly structured at organisational and institutional level with stakeholders bound by rules and agreements; or, partnerships can be informal, without protocols and without any official procedures.

There are two extremes in terms of collaboration purposes. At one extreme, partners get together “at the strategic level with advancement of a shared vision, or, at the other extreme, with the delivery of a short-term project”; they may involve actions with multiparty investment, or, they may establish a relationship for exchanging information (Huxham and Vangen 2005: 5). Some authors such as Craig and Courtney (2004) understand collaborative schemes as an evolutionary continuum through which goals, shared resources and trust become intertwined.

Collaborative arrangements do not always end in a win-win situation for tourism development. They are frequently plagued by the lack of ability to reach consent on representational and legitimate interests; and there are difficulties when dealing with matters of unbalanced powers within a group as in Silves where there is lack of trust and respect (Wilson et al. 1995; Reed 1995, 2000: 252).

According to Huxham and Vangen (2005), there are key motives that push individuals and organisations to participate in partnerships such as access to resources, shared risk, efficiency, co-ordination and seamlessness, learning and the moral

imperative (p.5-7). Organisations seek to collaborate if they feel they cannot achieve goals by their own means (resources); in terms of 'risks', organisations fear that chances for failures are too high to take the ownership of a project alone. 'Coordination' refers to a set of collaborative networks to harness skills and specialization to deliver a service.

The 'moral imperative' refers to the idea that societal problems are too complex to be tackled by organisations acting in isolation. Researchers investigating 'collaborative structures' argue that inter-organisational collaborations are expected to balance power among participating members (Walker 2003; Kumar and Van Dissel 1996). Their assumption is that all partners should be equal.

However, Walker (2003) states that a struggle over meaning is the main drive that forms power structures in collaborative arrangements. For him, power appears in semantic convergence and divergence, "the high degree of interdependence and relative autonomy of collaborative participants creates a situation in which struggle over meaning is paramount" (Walker 2003: 1). By using a cultural politics framework, Soliman (2001) confirms that conflicts and divergences in collaboration are rooted in the fact that particular groups manipulate meanings.

Those individuals or groups that become able to create and articulate meanings are more inclined to keep and reproduce relations of power for their own benefits (Mumby 2001: 601 cited in Walker 2003: 2). Clearly, "power in collaboration lies not in directly controlling the behaviour of individuals, but rather in defining/creating a situation that constrains and enables individuals" (Walker 2003: 2).

There are distinct forms of power; for example, 'normative control', where power shapes and moulds the identity of participants (Maguire et al. 2001: 303). By creating shared norms and goals, 'social control' influences individuals' and groups' behaviour (Das and Teng 2001; Walker 2003). McGroskey (1986) explains power in terms of rhetorics that influence people; he talks about *rhetorical power*,

Power is the capacity to influence people to do or believe something they would not have done or believed had they not been influenced. When we engage in rhetorical communication with other people, we are attempting to influence them. In other words, we are attempting to exercise our power over them (p. 80).

Forms of power are embedded in hackneyed and newly created discourses that politically not only construct but reinstate particular power relations within collective ventures (Skelcher, Mathur and Smith 2003). Atkinson (1999) understands 'partnerships' as sites of organisational power in which agendas are questioned and conflict resolution enacted.

Can collaboration alone be able to tackle unequal distributions of power that circulate within and act upon embryonic (eco)tourism settings (Reed 1997a)? There is then a "collaborative power" to be created by those partners/participants in a position to fix meaning, and it includes the meaning of collaboration/partnership itself (Walker 2003: 2).

However, as Clegg et al. (1996) remind us: we cannot overlook the fact that power can be concealed behind the disguise of ‘trust’ and behind the rhetorics of ‘collaboration’, and power can be used to promote ‘group interest’ by manipulating vulnerable partners (p. 678; Hall 2000: 150). This is the exact situation in Itacaré. Some of the residents have been skeptical about the creation of ITI because they think there will be manoeuvres by the powerful stakeholders (G-8) to get counterfeit consensus through a collaborative scheme led by ITI. As one of the interviewees explained:

*Boto Negro Association for example was created to support us [...] it was an ecological resistant movement [...] a member of G-8 is dividing his land into plots; he's selling the farm and can cause a huge impact [...] We still have struggles with him because he wants to create plots up to 1~2 hectares for selling for resorts, and it will include forest and coastal areas with pristine landscapes [...] We are struggling to avoid it [...] he will destroy the rest of the forests (Intwee 29).*

There are collaborative projects in which partners are only involved in the exchange of information without deep and prolonged interaction. Some collaborative arrangements are not physical. They can use virtual spaces such as websites which congregate affiliated members with common links and interests. For example, Ecotours New Zealand is an online directory and travel guide; it has served as a ‘virtual associative space’ for ecotourism operators.

The website allows the operators to be marketed globally by listing them as “a select group of environmentally responsible tour companies in New Zealand” (Ecotours.co.nz, retrieved on 15 July 2007). The website opens up an opportunity for its members to exchange ideas, to compare the scope of their business in environmental services and products, as well as to interact and debate in an open forum.

The website Itacare.com has not only served as an electronic marketing tool but also as an electronic travel planner, virtual debate Forum, and information and local news provider. It is a very comprehensive website, with an open and democratic affiliation, an online showcase for an array of organisations, business and grassroots associations. It promotes interactions and information flow with four language interfaces in Portuguese, English, French and Italian. Nevertheless, the extent to which discursive constructions can influence the social practices of operators is unknown.

Given the focus of this book on unequal power relations among stakeholders, it is appropriate to use case studies in which local actors have had levels of interaction that are not only digital ones. Community-based ecotourism development may provide more noticeable data about the processes through which stakeholders have overcome their differences. Power accounts are expected to be positive outcomes of collaborative processes; through collective agreements, ‘democratic deficits’ (Skelcher et al. 2003) are expected to be overcome.

Central to this Chapter 6 (and Chapter 7) is the investigation of whether or not power can be negotiated in a collaborative scheme to the extent that it balances

interests and promotes nature conservation. By paying attention to the relationships of the stakeholders, one can possibly understand **how** their various connections and interactive processes contribute (Plummer et al. 2006: 502) to produce a 'collective learning' and a 'collective gain'. Attention is given to three aspects of collaborative arrangements in nature tourism: whether they produce 'new meanings', 'shared meaning' in collaboration, and the way these meanings shape stakeholders' practices.

Can we validate Walker's (2003) assumption that "powerful stakeholders do not evolve as those who own the most resources but as those who provide interpretations of reality accepted by others" (p.2)?

In collaboration and partnerships in which there are very unequal and tense relations among local actors, all debates and discussions should start from the convergences (mister 'G', he is called here by this codename in order not to reveal his actual identity, former general-manger of ITI, at STWI 2015); otherwise, a communication process is not allowed to happen. Communal understandings are then expected to become a starting point to build new shared meanings that can make sense to all, and create the bonds (agreed semantic network) for consensus building.

To know 'how' power has been negotiated and the various discourses produced in collaboration, it is fundamental to understand the role of key actors in the interactive process. One must outline the different types of collaboration (i.e. Public Private-PPPs or Intra-governmental ones, etc), the dimension of the networks (vertical, horizontal or cross-sectoral), and the geographical scale of the reach of a partnership (i.e. community level, national level).

By knowing the geographical reach, one can get informed about the range of 'collective gains' for people directly or indirectly involved in tourism development. Regulations and norms are important because partnerships are not created in a vacuum. Partners abide by laws outside their mutual agreements. Such laws and rules contribute to shape the aims and the operating system of collaborative schemes. For example, district laws, bylaws, etc.

'Power relations' are presented as inherent in the process of collaborating and interacting. Agency and agents produce various discourses that may compete with each other as discussed in Chapter 4. In this chapter, the focus is how discourses linked to collaboration lead the stakeholders into 'power accounts' that contribute to the achievement of 'collaborative advantage' (Fig. 2.1, p.96 and Table 2.5, p.97). In a highly democratised and participatory partnership model, with actors aware of their role and rights, it is rare to have passive stakeholders.

The consensus building in such a context is pushy, intense and somehow cantankerous. The stakeholders who actively participate in collaborative schemes struggle to have their voice heard as "collaboration space can be a contested terrain where power and legitimation interrelate with process structures and activities" (Bramwell and lane 2000: 159). Such a scenario was observed in ecotourism development in Itacaré, Brazil.

Department of Conservation (DOC) and IBAMA are other examples of such a complex interaction in which concessionaires and local actors regard them as

‘watchdogs’ or as ‘partners’. The fact is that “when parties agree initially on a shared vision, collaboration among them is not necessarily free of conflict [...]. Also further problems typically arise when stakeholders try to implement their agreements” (Gray 1989: 9).

‘Power accounts’ can be considered a preliminary step for a democratic and legitimate partnership. Abstract elements such as ‘equity’, ‘transparency’, and ‘public participation’, legitimacy’ and ‘authority type’ can serve as indicators for ‘governance’ and/or for ‘levels of democratisation’. The process of a multiple stakeholder interaction is supposed to produce and/or reinforce ‘democratic accounts’. These accounts should be worked to produce a stable and long-term partnership, reducing risks of failures throughout the negotiation phases.

Trade-offs, bargaining, concessions, and agreed normatisation are some of the means to equate power distribution. Power accounts have a straight direct link to ‘collaborative advantages’, and should be the primary objective of ‘power negotiation’. For some stakeholders, what is relevant in terms of improving the environment, is not the application of ‘imported-concepts’ but environmental experience and learning on the ground. As a collective entity, in collaborative schemes, the local actors are purportedly shaped by a context merged in a dynamic and interactive exchange of views and values. Joint actions are first a work of understanding the other.

For Bramwell and Lane (2000), conflict can be constructive and/or destructive, enabling and/or constraining (p.174). ‘Constructive conflict’, as formulated by Tjosvold (1995) within the notions of a cooperation theory, is expected to replace ‘destructive conflict’ if stakeholders’ relations have been built through collaborative learning and through the techniques of listening and paying respect, repeatedly reinforced by facilitators. Conflict can help to develop individuals and organisations to deal with each other in a context of disagreement, in a way they can be more skilled and fulfilled. Tjosvold (1997) defends that “conflict is necessary for true involvement, empowerment and democracy” (p. 23). In community-based public spheres, change, resistance and dialogue are enabled through mediation between structures and agents participation (Jamal and Getz 1995).

We must recognize that power relations are an integral element to understanding the characteristics and consequences of community-based planning where tourism is emergent. The stakeholders – elected, appointed, professional or volunteer – are not neutral conveners of power. If we are to understand these relations, we must combine collaborative efforts with direct opportunities for learning (Reed 2000: 268).

The partnerships are cyclical and directed to provide outcomes. They are not static structures and processes. They are most times transient, ephemeral, and provisional in a sense that they exist because of a collective-problematic event (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b). Their ending is consequently a likely outcome, and its termination does not necessarily signify failure; there is an accumulative learning for individuals, groups and organisations involved in the process. According to Caffyn

(2000) it is much more beneficial to work for a positive concept and note the end of a collaborative scheme rather than collaborate for an uncertain conclusion (p. 224).

Dynamism in interactions, networks and collective learning has been one of the most remarkable aspects of successful collaborative arrangements (Huxham and Vangen 2005; Robson 1995; Gray 1989; Bramwell and Lane 2000). Taking into account all evolutionary models of tourism it is possible to outline the cyclical operation of partnerships, and there are levels, dimensions, scopes and steps of collaborative arrangements (refer to section 2.6, chapter 2). The types of partnerships ‘circulate’ among geographical scales (from community to national/international). The types themselves are not rigid either.

Partnerships are taken by many authors as being progressive in time with increased participation of stakeholders as observed in Figure 6.0, moving from ‘agency control’ to ‘stakeholder control’ even if they do not last. For example, a regional Tourism Bureau, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry for the Environment can begin a partnership with plans to market local destinations and to narrow stakeholders’ relationships in the form of a partnership to later deliver to local actors the full control of the process (stakeholder control) or delegate parts of it.

In the case of Northland Tourism Partnership in New Zealand stakeholders were supposed to have their own initiatives for further follow-ups in a government guided partnership. In Maripá, residents involved in the Puxirum Ecotourism Project have shown interest to control the project, with the decision-power transferred to them rather than being at the hands of outside organisations. It is patent that residents want to be able to decide themselves about issues that can affect their lives.

Stakeholders’ roles, position and relevance in joint action can serve to mirror collaborative models for (eco)tourism implementation and management. Bramwell and Lane (2000) emphasize the importance of having collaborative schemes with an ample and representative range of stakeholders from the local community in order to develop issues of sustainable tourism.

When there is a complex problem, or nodes of conflict, or a “problem domain” (Bramwell and Lane) which a single organisation or group cannot solve on its own, collaboration should occur (Gray 1989). Stakeholders can actively seek progressive bonds for mutual decision-making. For Jamal and Getz (1995), a ‘problem domain’ is a ‘system-level challenge’ formed of various parts over which no societal-sector has complete authority, knowledge, power or legitimacy to enact a system for solutions. As for achieving sustainable tourism, stakeholders make decisions that affect just part of the equation; the control required is beyond the grasp of each stakeholder acting individually (Jamal and Getz 1995).

In Itacaré, a series of partnerships (Table 6.0), collaboration and networks were already established with the objective to promote the development of a nature tourism sector (Lima, Chaveiro and Almeida, 2010a,b). There have been many local collaboration and cooperation arrangements among the NGOs, CAPA, ITI, SEMARH, and the public administration.

For example, Yonic, Floresta Viva and SOS Itacaré have been involved in waste management, environmental education, and conservation in an attempt to lessen the negative impacts of tourism on nature. In terms of structural and infrastructural development of the tourism sector in Northeast Brazil, Prodetur I and II are the most visible with ongoing projects since 1995. The programme has been implemented by the State government with loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and with partnerships with various organisations at national, regional and local levels. Costa do Cacau, in Bahia state, received US\$ 21 million in investments in Prodetur I. For Prodetur II, Bahia will get US\$ 140 million, which represents 35% of the overall investment.

The conditions for the Municipality to sign a contract under the loan scheme is: i) to have a specific agency to manage the construction; ii) to prepare an integrated sustainable tourism plan; iii) to have financial accountability; iv) to create the Municipal Tourism Council; v) to have eligible projects; and vi) the creation of the Municipal Council for Environmental Protection (CONDEMA). Itacaré itself has been awarded resources for urban revitalisation, sewage system and road construction (Itacaré-Camamu BA 001) that is expected to improve the life of the community as well as the sustainability of the tourism sector.

**Table 6.0 - Partnerships and collaboration for development of tourism in Itacaré**

<b>KEY DELIVERERS/SCOPE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>KEY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>
<b>Central and State government PRODETUR/ NE I – II (Regional/Local)</b>	I- 1995~2005 II- 2006~	-IDB -Banco do Nordeste -City Halls -Ministry of Tourism, etc	-Structural and infrastructural tourism development (roads, sewage, urban revitalization, etc)
<b>ITI (Local)</b>	2005~	-ABIH Itacaré -Instituto de Hospitalidade Brasil -Instituto Floresta Viva; SENAC; SEBRAE; ACERTI	-Accreditation programme for sustainable tourism (PCMTS)
<b>IESB (Local)</b>	1999~2000	-FUNBIO -FORD Foundation	Education and ecotourism programme in the APA, Conduru Park buffering zone
<b>SENAC (Local)</b>	1998~2005	-ABIH Bahia -City Hall, etc	Capacity building in tourism/ Training in tourism with courses for local community (waiter, hotel receptionist, chamberlain)

**Author:** Ismar Lima, 2007, with information from IESB, ITI, PRODETUR, SENAC.



## 6.2 - Notes on the textual analysis of statements and extracts

By systematically focusing on context, sociolinguistics and hermeneutics, the book fills a gap in the literature about the internal processes of organisational forms of collaboration (Bramwell and Lane 2000: 3), and how they may change the social practices of key stakeholders. According to van Dijk, the intricacies embedded in textual constructions require a critical reading; however, “interpretations and explanations are never finished and authoritative; they are dynamic and open, open to new contexts and new information” (1997: 279). The sharing of rules, norms and structures in collaboration is also of special interest for this study. In Chapter 4, ‘competing discourses’ in (eco)tourism were investigated as discursive power; it is a kind of power “subtly exercised via managing meaning” (Huxham and Vangen 2005).

The statements and extracts presented in the next sections are a selection from the minutes and reports of the councils and of the networks of Itacaré but not limited to them. They hold core ideas and views of the members. The statements do not reproduce literally the voice of the authors; instead, they are mostly in an impersonal style. It helps the reader to have a grasp about the organisational network.

Some statements have sequential follow-ups of ‘argument’ and ‘counter-argument’. Other statements are loose sentences but meaningful for the context. Some of the participants did not make any comments but contributed with their presence and votes. In the textual analysis, I will look for: i) the production of meanings in a collaborative arrangement; ii) rhetorics and views that suggest new social orders; iii) the internal dialogical processes of the negotiation of power (power accounts; IV) evidence or expectation of collaborative advantages. It is not an in-depth linguistic analysis. Rather, it is concerned with the systemic function of language and the social practices in Itacaré. The focus is the social character of the texts (Halliday and Hasan 1989; Halliday 1994). The social constructions through discourses are holistic; they encompass all sectors of Itacaré because the village is a collectivity.

Not all answers are in a text. By itself, textual analysis is limited, and there is no such thing as an ‘objective’ textual analysis. By interpreting or commenting a text, the biases exist because of subjectivity (Fairclough 2003: 14-15). The context of a textual production, its production sources, and the circumstances of its circulation are then elements outside the text to be considered. Interviews are a means to grasp the context.

Levels of immersion in the daily routines with participation in the key events allowed me to assess with confidence the various discourses related to my major case studies: Itacaré, in Brazil, and Kuaka educational travel, in New Zealand. Social practices in Itacaré are not divorced from nature/ecotourism or from the political scenario.

As mentioned by Benjamin Kromayer, “tourism and the environment of Itacaré are supported by a cultural and environmental heritage” ([www.sos-itacare.org](http://www.sos-itacare.org), retrieved on 10 February 2006). For the analysis, I will make use of the partnering framework (refer to sections 2.6 and 2.6.5, Chapter 2).

### **6.3 - Institute of Tourism of Itacaré (ITI)**

The proposal for a specific tourism-business web on June 2005, was regarded by its founders and sponsors as a milestone for Itacaré. It could harness interests without contravening laws and policies nor overlap any other existing authority. According to a report from HVS International Consultation, a company contracted by G-8, the actions for creating the ITI began in 2004 as the G-8 decided to put aside commercial and political divergences and to cooperate with other stakeholders and the community. The business group was worried about Itacaré's problems and about the demographic expansion. The perception was that their responsibilities could include issues beyond the business itself, so they could achieve equity and social fairness in tourism development for Itacaré.

For HVS consultants, joint management could fill gaps in the work of some government bodies for tourism implementation and development without overlapping any of them. Many business people regarded 'Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015' as a watershed between a past of conflicts and a new social order that would allow them to work together.

The workshop was entirely sponsored by ITI, and was run democratically: publicly advertised, exempted of fees, with open registration and with public debates between representatives of grassroots organisations, authorities and organisers of the event. It was a day event divided into three major discussion areas: *roundtable 1*, partnerships between private and public sectors for tourism management; *roundtable 2*, products and markets; *roundtable 3*, tourism and social-environmental conservation. An eclectic audience attended the workshop.

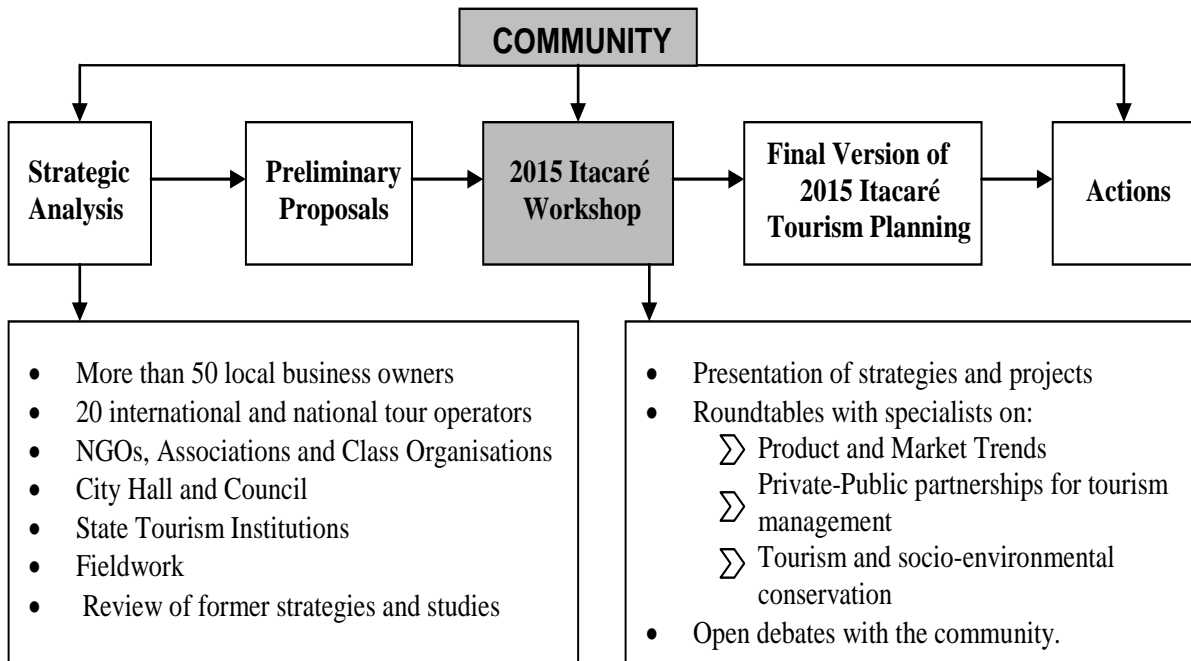
Among the guests were tourism specialists, scholars, and entrepreneurs from many parts of Brazil. However, the use of a mix of academic and technical jargon in the workshop, without systematic explanation and with expressions the local population is not familiar with made the topics and issues hard to be fully understood by a regular citizen of Itacaré and blurred how democratic and collaborative it really was. During the workshop the main goals of ITI were presented as well as the objectives of the Tourism Plan for Itacaré 2015.

- ✓ Creation of platforms for tourism to evolve in a sustainable way;
- ✓ Creation of a professional partnership between the private and public sectors, and civil society, to discuss actions for tourism development;
- ✓ Management of a 'tourism cluster'. Under this philosophy, the companies and institutions market themselves in block in order to become more competitive;
- ✓ Establishment of a civil society (ITI) open for individual or corporate affiliation, in which all members have decision making power.

The community was the major platform to understand the context of tourism in the district. For its strategic analysis, HVS claimed to have approached a number of stakeholders such as business owners, tour operators, NGOs, local government, etc.

However, during a public debate in the workshop, local organisations accused ITI/HVS of being biased in its approaches and in the collection of data. A meticulous and critical analysis of the discourses pronounced during the workshop shows that corporate, business and socio-environmental matters were brought into the same basket.

Figure 6.0 shows the participatory approach implemented by ITI. The Institute illustrates the re-encounter between community and powerful business holders (the landowners) by positioning Itacaré 2015 Workshop as the milestone, and the Itacaré 2015 Plan as a policy tool for tailoring an ecotourism of convenience for all. The plan is regarded as organic; thus, an adaptive document that can be shaped by the future needs of the stakeholders



Source: HVS/ITI 2005

**Figure 6.0 - Participatory approaches for nature tourism development by ITI/ HVS**

The report produced by HVS/ITI highlights that the implementation of the projects is subject to available financial resources. Some areas they act or plan to participate in may collide or overlap with ongoing public policies and government projects. ITI has situated itself at the core of the actions and this view may supersede the municipal government bodies, NGOs and SEMARH (Administrative Council of APA). If ITI wants to implement all the projects effectively, it must set itself at the level of the other stakeholders. Any authoritative posture might doom the projects to failure. In this context, ITI was created to serve as an appendix for sustainable tourism development; and it is expected to act through partnerships.

Itacaré has faced financial and logistical constraints at government and private sector levels. The village is not well-off in terms of tax collection, and many small-scale enterprises belong to locals who do not have the financial means to fulfil government and bank requirements to get loans. Maybe, ITI will need to set partnerships with the central and regional governments (i.e. Ministry of Tourism, Prodetur I and II, etc) to get enough official financial assistance.

The Sustainable Tourism Plan Itacaré 2015 was presented as an avenue for improving the tourism sector and relations among the stakeholders, as it is replete with positive statements. The rhetorics envisage and construct the imaginary of Itacaré as a perfect destination for selected visitors. At the same time the powerful groups promote discourses that expose their concerns for ‘social insertion’, ‘politics of egalitarianism’ and ‘wealth distribution’. Plan Itacaré 2015 highlights communication, integration, community inclusion, cooperation and partnerships as essential for a successful model of nature tourism development. The HVS consultants replicated in the plan the discourses on governance, decentralisation, social inclusiveness, social capital and partnerships (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1995, 2001; Falk 2000; Portes 1998; Fukuyama 2001; Danieri et al. 2002a, b; Muldera 2005).

On behalf of ITI, HVS consultants devised Itacaré for a tourism market regarding the following elements: i) a specific segment in which Itacaré can be competitive (i.e. ecotourism); ii) a segment with good prospects for expansion (i.e. ecotourism); iii) a market in which visitors/tour operators underscore Itacaré’s natural resources as a differential aspect compared to other localities; and iv) a market that can attract visitors year round. According to their report, the scenario for tourism in Itacaré, in terms of visitors in a timeframe of ten years, 2005~2015, is: national ecotourism (2005, 35%; 2015, 25.3%); international ecotourism (2005, 21.0%; 2015, 29.4%); “national top” (2005, 10.0%; 2015, 24.5%) and “international top” (2005, 1.5%; 2015, 3.7%).

In the plan, national entertainment is estimated to decline from 30.0% (2005) to 15.8% (2015) and regional entertainment from 2.5% (2005) to 1.3% (2015). These figures show that HVS recommended ITI to promote Itacaré as an ecotourism spot both in domestic and international markets.

Ecotourism is considered a promising sector even though it tends to decline by 10% within 10 years. Together the international and national ecotourism markets are expected to supply around 54.7% of visitors. Taking into account the guidelines proposed in the Plano Itacaré 2015, ITI should consider attracting visitors with more environmental awareness and with more money to spend.

#### 6.4 - ITI and its discourses

Discourse analysis in this chapter will be centred on two main sources: the storylines and views collected in the interviews; and the speeches and comments made during the 2015 Itacaré Tourism Workshop. There have been interactions, networks, and joint actions among the stakeholders but none has been formalised into collaboration.

ITI is an open organisation and multiparty membership is expected to become the final resort for discussions and deliberation. Apart from its members and partners, ITI has an executive board for decision-making on procedural and administrative issues. City Hall has been a partner of ITI but its manager says ITI is not politically driven. The following extract of the Mayor of Itacaré reinforces the political exemption:

Is the City Hall being managed by ITI? Is it being managed by the eight more powerful business owners of the region? Absolutely not! This is not the philosophical principle of ITI neither is it the principle of the Municipal administration. ITI is not an outsourcing instrument of the City Hall's responsibilities (Jarbas 2005, Itacaré's Mayor, Itacaré 2015 Workshop).

However, one of the interviewees has a different explanation of the Mayor's support of ITI:

*ITI is linked to the Municipal government [...] linked to the Mayor [...] the Mayor is working for them (G-8) by awarding construction permissions for them in inadequate places [...] it will impact on the environment [...] IBAMA and other state government also have provided permissions [...] There is corruption [...] They (the powerful stakeholders) do not recognise the Council of APA (CAPA) that was created by the state government and by the Ministry for the Environment. CAPA will not allow manoeuvres for the permissions, for the constructions (Intwee 29).*

Apparently, the Mayor, some politicians and local government bodies were in fact supporting ITI because of the collective essence of its proposal and plan for tourism development of Itacaré. As for the permissions, any construction in the Itacaré district must be approved by IBAMA and CRA, and the Administrative Council of APA, an independent state government body, monitors the new installations.

In his speech at STWI 2015, mister 'G' (in 2005), said that the Institute's goal is to have the local actors interacting in order to overcome their differences and the historical scars. According to Ernani (2005) president of ITI, the Institute was founded to become a catalyst of interests either economic or social.

The Institute of Tourism of Itacaré should not be a ‘small club’ but [with a wider role]: it is non-profit, and its organisational structure includes the participation of an independent constructive board. This board is composed of the president of the Common Council, of the Mayor, and of the presidents of main Associations, and of the active organised bodies of Itacaré such as ACERTI, ABNH, president of the APA’s Advisory Group, and of the fishermen colony’s association. ITI’s board will be in charge [when necessary and required for] to assess projects and guidelines of the Institute. ITI is an open organisation to anyone who wants to become a member [...] and ITI expects locals to get involved, to participate. The HVS’s role was to make a plan with chances for follow-ups in a way that sequential projects must be detailed by you, by all; it is not ITI, it is not HVs, it is not any other institutions that will [authoritatively] define [directions] but you (Mister ‘C’, he is identified here by this codename, an HVS consultant, Workshop Itacaré 2015).

In his statement, mister ‘C’ attempted to explain the democratic drives of ITI to locals in the workshop (June 2005). The decision of the president of the APA’s Advisory Group to consider the possibility of becoming part of the ITI’s board reveals that ITI and HVS were eloquent with their discourses on ‘collaboration’ and on ‘organisational unity’. The APA’s Advisory Group has been a symbol of resistance and of mobilisation in Itacaré by articulating grassroots groups around collective matters. On many occasions it fiercely opposed actions and unilateral decisions of the G-8.

ITI invited the local actors to create a structure that may allow the institutionalisation of a participatory sustainable nature tourism development (see Figure 6.2). ITI’s proposal comes as a further support for many of the actions that NGOs and the APA’s Advisory Group have been doing collaboratively in Itacaré.

This event [Sustainable Tourism Workshop for Itacaré 2015] is a milestone, it is a watershed for Itacaré, but in terms of management of the protected area [APA], the Workshop is not a pioneer because there has been work in the last five years in which the community voluntarily assists the management of the protected spaces of Bahia state, and the community is an excellent human resource for the management of this region (Sarah Alvez, in her speech at the Sustainable Tourism Workshop Itacaré 2015, on June 2005).

In the original version of the Sustainable Tourism Plan for Itacaré 2015 (194 pages), the correspondent words for ‘partnership(s)’ were mentioned 56 times; ‘articulation’, 36; ‘integration’, 30; ‘interaction’, 15; ‘cluster’, 11; ‘collaboration’, 9 times; ‘cooperation’, 9; ‘consensus’, 10; ‘union’, 1, the verb ‘unify’, 3; ‘jointly’, 5; and ‘support’, 82 times. On the other hand, the word ‘disagreement’ appears just once.

The document semantically urges local actors to get involved in some form of collaboration and/or interaction. Although ITI’s task is to strengthen Itacaré as a

tourism destination, the social affairs are not disregarded in Plan 2015. The storylines and rhetorics of ITI and of the HVS consultants fit into three types of discursive construction: the managerial, consociational and participative (Skelcher et al. 2003).

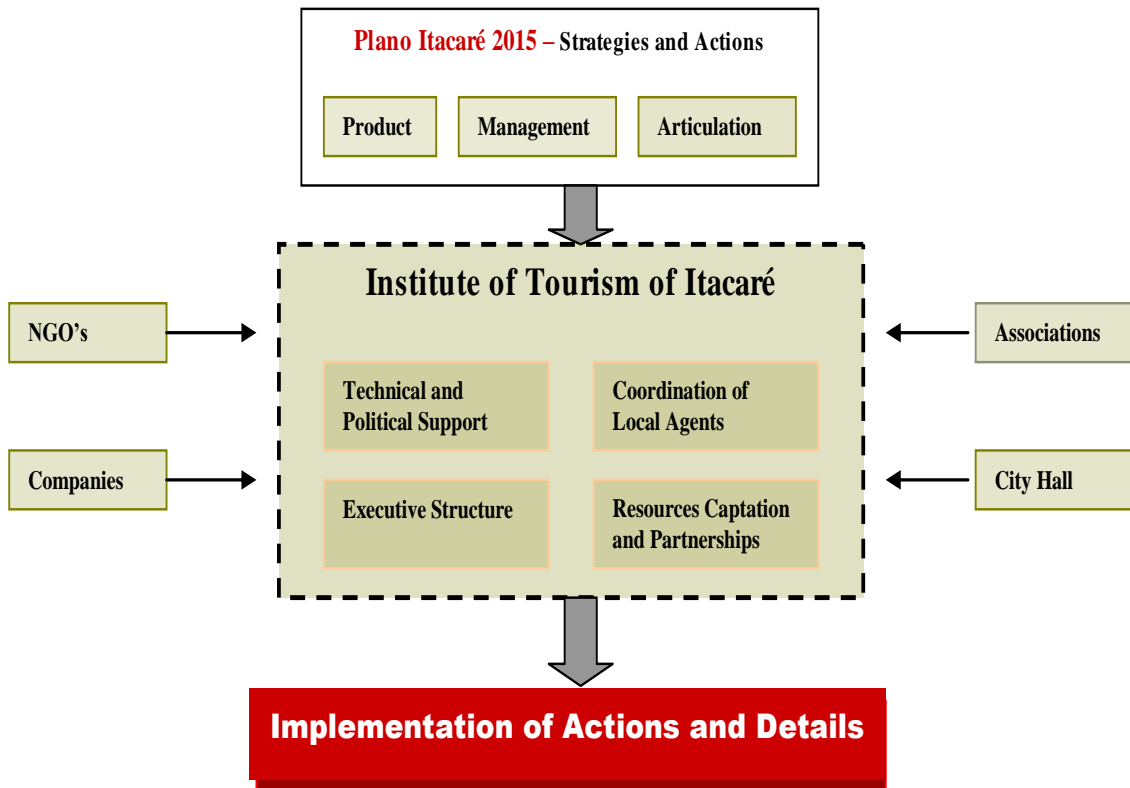
ITI's proposals aim to find ways of amalgamating the various interests of the stakeholders with practical projects. The projects, if implemented, are expected to strengthen ecotourism and to bring social benefits.

Overall, Plan Itacaré 2015 outlines 25 proposals for partnered projects with 'macro' actions for the development of Itacaré to which it dedicates 73 pages (37%). The projects would embrace three major areas: product, articulation, and management. For example, ITI has a proposal for capacity building in tourism and hospitality; the project would require a partnership between ITI, City Hall, State government, and SEBRAE and SENAC (civil society).

The partnered project would help to solve two problems: i) the lack of qualified local labour in the tourism sector, and ii) income generation. Another proposal for a partnered project is the spread of environmental and tourism education, see Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 - Proposal for partnership in nature tourism development in Itacaré**

<b>Agent (Partner)</b>	<b>Partnering attributes: Know-how and Resource</b>	<b>Role of the Agent (Partner)</b>
<b>ITI</b>	-Physical structure -Human resources -Financial resources -Relationship with the tourism agents of Itacaré	-Capacity of teachers in tourism issues and its pertinent current affairs -Outdoor learning and teaching. Activity to be implemented in partnership with the NGOs. -Preparation of educative material
<b>NGOs</b>	-Human resources -Financial resources	-Capacity of teachers in environmental conservation -Preparation of educative material -Outdoor learning (in partnership with ITI)
<b>- City Hall and State government</b>	-Control and management of the public schools of the district	-To include 'tourism' and 'environmental conservation' as compulsory subjects of the school syllabus
<b>- Instituto de Hospitalidade - SEBRAE - SENAC</b>	-Expertise on professional capacity and training	-Support in the production of educative material in tourism themes and environment -Capacity of teachers in tourism and conservation
<b>Associations</b>	-Legitimacy with various segments of the local population	-Institutional support -To promote local awareness about the new learning areas
<b>Source:</b> Plano Itacaré 2015, HVS/ITI, 2005		



Source: HVS/ITI 2005

**Figure 6.1 - Institute of Tourism of Itacaré and 2015 Itacaré Plan for Actions**

ITI was founded on participation and structurally has been one more space for public debates and for the negotiation of power in Itacaré; it has a role similar to the Common Council, the APA's Advisory Group and other ideological groupings.

ITI is not a political party entity; it belongs to civil society. The challenge is to have ITI and other organisations working jointly in order to achieve collective gains. In his speech, mister 'C' - the HVS consultant - publicly invited everybody to join ITI.

Figure 6.1 helps to illustrate the network and the grouping of stakeholders in Itacaré as envisaged by the HVS consultants in 2005. ITI has a steering role and a central position to articulate with the NGOs, companies, City Hall and Associations in order to enable and strengthen itself in terms of technical and political support, managerial structure, coordination of local agents and to obtain financial resources and partnerships.

The STWI 2015 became 'a discussion forum' in which outsiders were able to realise how contentious Itacaré is. The Itacaré scenario as on June 2005 confirms Bramwell and Lane's assertion (2000) that collaboration space can become a contested



terrain with ‘the manifestation of power relations’, ‘internal group affairs’ and ‘political matters’.

The content of the speeches, the views, rhetorics and storylines will be treated as ‘discourses’ because of the ideological orientation embedded in each of those public appearances during the event. Moreover, ‘discourses’ are “often understood as the sum of communicative interactions” (Sharp and Richardson 2001: 195).

Box 6.0 has speeches of founders and members of ITI and HVS consultants at the opening of the STWI 2015. They explain the objectives and strategies of the Plan and of the ITI. Previous frameworks guide the analysis (refer to Chapter three).

As part of the critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA), the context, circumstances, motives and the source of the discourses have to be further explained. My position in CDA is a critical realist one, in line with Fairclough’s (2003) approaches; he was guided by a realist ontology, bringing together concrete social events and abstract social structures (p.14).

**Box 6.0 - Speeches of members of ITI**

**Speech – Participant 1 – About the objective's of the Sustainable Tourism Plan for Itacaré 2015**

**1A)** In partnership with government, NGOs, entities, and communities, the plan will be implemented, and [partnership is] the best way of acting, of contributing... to contribute rather than to criticise... to organise the ideas, and then to identify the needs, and decide mutually the actions that can bring benefits such as the urbanization of the village's rim, to improve the sewage treatment, the revitalization of the historic centre, and the promotion of Itacaré. For it, we have to hold each other's hands...the 2015 Itacaré Plan was elaborated with the participation of everybody, and just in case someone did not have the opportunity to get in, the chance for participation is now, it is the moment for it because the plan is not finished yet, and when it is over it will become a large base, and this base will be just the outset of the work.

**Speech – Participant 2 - HVS consultant**

**2A)** The tourism model to be followed [by Itacaré] it is a cluster model...and in order to work with sustainability, tourism must have a more intense local participation, and the participation of other sectors not directly linked to tourism; the participation of the organised civil society and of the business [private] sector. The old model, in which the government defined the general rules of the process and the private sector had to market the product, is over. This model wore out, it is exhausted! Nobody works in isolation...and tourism is like that...it is the association of various segments in order to make tourism a reality. We notice that Itacaré chose this pathway...Itacaré perceives tourism within the concept of sustainability but there is a lot to be repaired...and the model for success is one of alliances. Tourism is not something of local government responsibility, it is not for the responsibility of the private sector; instead it belongs to everybody. Itacaré 2015 is a proposal for a collective action, and Itacaré will be the model for other regions; a participatory model of tourism development.

**2B)** Tourism of Itacaré is a gathering of themes; its tourism product fits into at least three themes that are integrated. The themes are: exclusivity; ecotourism, and Life in the Village. The understanding of these themes becomes the strategy for the implementation of the plan because it is a plan oriented to the tourism market.

**2C)** Your participation of [locals] in this Workshop is a good example that we are moving in the same direction, massing efforts and objectives, and for that we have to define directions, we need to have an agreement about the directions. The value of Itacaré is the sum of its scenic landscapes, local culture, the inhabitants; its value is the combination of all these elements, and they make Itacaré important. The word "participatory" hasn't been used here without a purpose, it is not an abstract rhetoric; it is not just 'idle talk'; the participatory model is important because without interaction with the local actors we will not achieve the objectives.

**2D)** The tourism timeframe is measured in decades...it is different from the timeframe...of a political party administration that has its shifts [via the electoral process] every four years; and then if we depend on the political timeframe for the management of tourism, it will not match; there are incompatibilities.

**2E)** The plan targets capacity building in Itacaré as the way to develop the tourism product; and these products have to be greatly permeated by the local resources and culture, in which everything should be acquired from local suppliers, to be bought locally. We need to have projects and actions that strengthen the local councils, the tourism Council, the environmental Council; and actions as background, 'social inclusion', 'environmental responsibility', and economic competitiveness.

**2F)** Conservation in Itacaré is fundamental and it must be taken into account. [For it] the role of NGOs is important... nature must be preserved because it is our main resource [for nature tourism].

The extracts in Box 6.0 have high levels of optimism about a promising future for Itacaré with explicit words of encouragement. Their goal is to convince locals of the importance and sincerity of the plan, of the workshop, and of ITI for promoting a participatory ecotourism development. For it, they used ‘modals’ and ‘predictions’ to encourage and persuade, such as “in partnership...the plan **will** be implemented”, “we **have to** hold hands”, “[we **need**] to organise ideas...identify needs, and decide mutually the actions that can bring benefits“, and “it **will** become a large base” (1A).

In speech 1, the person reproduces sections of the Plan Itacaré 2015 without really adding any further opinion. The only personal input is “to hold hands”. The metaphor for ‘collaboration’ has altruistic ends; “to hold hands” can imply ‘cooperation to shrink the distances’ between the better-offs and the poor.

The discourses grounded in ‘collaboration’ seem to have two objectives: first, to demonstrate the elite’s concerns about ‘inclusion’ and ‘local participation’ for tourism development; second, to break with a *historical distance*. Ideologically, the key words situate the discourses within the notions of ‘communalism’.

In speech 1, the participant states “the Plan Itacaré 2015 was elaborated with the participation of everybody” (1A), but, adds that “just in case that someone did not have the opportunity to get in, the chance for participation is now”. In the public debate it became clear that HVS and ITI did not approach all key actors, particularly the local community (refer to survey’s results at section 6.5.2, p.268).

The strategy to avoid disputes and struggles with locals was to have a plan and ITI permanently open for affiliation, and for textual inserts and amendments. The openness of these two projects was to avoid accusations of despotism. This impression may be confirmed as participant 1 said, “[partnership is] the best way of acting...to contribute rather than to criticise” (1A). The new social order in Itacaré is one that seeks to reduce antagonism.

Participants 1 and 2 (HVS) appeal to the idea of ‘communalism’, but mixes it with marketing and business language that foresees a thriving local economy led by the ecotourism sector. His view is filled with *Pollyannaism*, with bias towards a plan which he, and his team, elaborated. In reality, ‘infectious optimism’ was the ‘strategic action’ for convincing locals. Nobody publicly promotes a development model and introduces a new Institution with a negative approach. Words such as ‘shortcomings’, ‘failures’, and ‘bankruptcy’ are not part of their storylines and documents.

The discursive constructions are built on the ideas of ‘accomplishment’, ‘triumph’, etc., as noticed in: “to work with sustainability, tourism must have a more intense local participation” (2A); “the model of success is one of alliances” (2A), “the word ‘participatory’ hasn’t been used here without a purpose” (2C), and “Itacaré will be the model for other regions; a participatory model of tourism development” (2A), possibly a model with active socio-environmental advocates/multipliers.

## **6.5 - Storyline: Itacaré tourism as a cluster model**

A pertinent question is about the implications of the storylines of ITI and Plan 2015 for Itacaré. Ecotourism is widely perceived as a ‘model of development’ that is based on the rational use of green spaces for achieving the least impacting tourism economy; then, contrary to ‘mass tourism’, “an exemplar of modern development” but highly criticised (Butcher 2007: 40).

According to HVS consultants, the best model for Itacaré is a cluster model; since it would make the district more competitive as a destination. The ‘cluster model’ was designed to market the whole district as a unique eco-adventure tourism product. The model seeks to integrate and regulate price and services of ecotourism providers; it “gives rise to cooperative arrangements between firms within the region [...] in joint competition with other tourism destinations” (Huybers & Bennett 2000: 2). The cluster model for Itacaré is expected to bring about new collective arrangements and mutual understanding among the stakeholders.

The idea of cluster can connote an ‘(eco)tourism business community’, though some may well still be favoured over others. The appeals for a ‘business community’ may induce local actors into new values and postures. Some social practices may be shaped within this new collaborative environment. By defending a cluster model, mister ‘C’ (HVS) proposes a new role for local government and organisations, as “the old model, in which the government defined the general rules of the process and the private sector had to market the product, is over” (2A). It is ‘doing away’ with top down public initiatives.

### **6.5.1 - Itacaré as a collection of tourism themes**

HVS classified Itacaré as a destination with three major themes: ‘exclusivity’, ‘ecotourism’ and ‘life in the village’. The first theme seeks to explore the rural nature and the resorts located in a region called *Costão* (*literally*, Big Coast). ITI expects that in the next decade, small and top-end resorts can be built in the *Costão*.

At the time of the data collection, the location has four luxury resorts: Txai, Blue Tree Village, Eco-resort, and Warapuru. The structure of Warapuru cost more than R\$ 100,000,000 (NZ\$ 68,069,452), and between 2005 and 2007 directly employed 400 people from Itacaré (1200 people had been involved in the construction). But according to a report of the Executive Board of CAPA on 28 August 2005, the construction had negative impacts on the vegetation.

The second theme brings adventure activities under the label of ecotourism. ‘Life in the village’ explores the village’s potential: walks and swimming along the urban beaches and in the river de Contas, surfing, local culture, handicrafts, cuisine, and entertainment. All themes can be understood as discursive constructions of nature, culture, and of the village.

The local community and the NGOs believe that the idea is to make ‘Itacaré’ a destination for well-off visitors, a place for the elite only or ‘*elitization*’ of tourism. The powerful stakeholders of the tourism sector – acting as a cluster – have proposed the creation of price and cost mechanisms that would restrain visits. Boxes 6.1 and 6.2

show disagreements about a 'selective tourism' and 'carrying capacity' for Itacaré because it would affect the small and weak stakeholders.

#### **Box 6.1 - Selective tourism**

Do you plan to transform Itacaré in a selective tourist destination? But we do not have this right. We cannot "fence" the right of people of coming and going (Audience, traditional dweller, Itacaré 2015 Workshop).

You will not add a differential factor to Itacaré by taking the price of the tourism product as a lever; [it will not work] because there will always be visitors who will spend US\$ 22 dollars a day and those who will spend [much more] at the [luxury] Txai resort (José Zunquim, director of Environmental Expeditions and president of the Brazilian Association of Tour Operators, Itacaré Workshop in June 2005).

One month after the workshop, two key actors of Itacaré put forward the following environmentally friendly arguments in support of restrictive access and selective tourism:

#### **Box 6.2 - Carrying capacity as an issue for Itacaré**

We are not hypocrites to hide that there is an ongoing study to set 'carrying capacity' in the trails in order to halt any attempt to introduce 'mass tourism' that would destroy Itacaré as a destination. The Warapuru's proposals target excessive visitation, environmental degradation and the waste produced by mass tourism. The issue was discussed in public meetings in the Common Council and in the district of Taboquinhas (Bernard Mercier, manager of the Warapuru project, in interview to Atarde.com, 17 July 2005, Itacaré).

Resorts such as the Warapuru (at Engenhoca beach), at São José beach, and Txai at Itacarezinho beach are the solution, a model of tourism for Itacaré, with selectivity (of visitors), low human density, without devastation, without degradation, respecting the fragility of natural spaces [...]. Access to the beaches must be organised, guided with environmental education for the visitors...security [and] there are costs and these costs must be paid by the visitors not by the public administration (Marcos Lucato, general deputy of the Municipal Development Bureau, in interview to Atarde.com, 17 July 2005).

The consultants estimate an increase of 11% in the number of visitors per year which should reach 217,500 visitors in 2015 (an increase of 140,300 visitors compared to 2005). However, according to the plan, the highest percentages of increase should occur among the better-off visitors (international top, international eco, and national top, refer *to* Table 6.2).

The numbers reveal a stratification of the tourism sector with significant increases in the number of well-off visitors. Is it an *elitization* or just a way to keep under control standards and negative impacts?

**Table 6.2 - Estimates and projections for tourism sector in Itacaré**

	2005	2010	2015	Annual Average Increase
<b>Visitors (Total)</b>	77,200	179,000	217,500	11%
<i>Top International</i>	1,200	6,800	8,000	21%
<i>Eco International</i>	16,200	52,100	64,000	15%
<i>Top National</i>	7,700	45,600	53,400	21%
<i>Entertainment National</i>	23,200	29,300	34,300	4%
<i>Eco National</i>	27,000	42,700	55,100	7%
<i>Entertainment Regional</i>	1,900	2,500	2,700	4%
<b>Nights</b>	173,000	419,100	522,000	12%
<b>Employment offers</b>	1,990	7,300	9,400	17%
<i>Hotel-related jobs</i>	830	2,500	2,700	12%
<i>Others</i>	1,160	4,800	6,700	19%

**Source:** HVS, 2005, Itacare Plan

According to HVS consultants, providers of tourism products and services in Itacaré will need to adapt to the demands for quality of the new market. One way of setting and monitoring the quality of the tourism products is through ‘eco accreditation’. ITI will work closely with the Institute of Hospitality, situated in Salvador, Bahia state, in order to implement the eco-label as an indicator.

Backpackers and independent visitors contribute largely to the local economy. According to Bahiatura statistics, 85% of Itacaré visitors arrange their trip themselves without buying tour packages with agencies and operators, and they spend on average US\$ 22 per day compared to US\$ 75 spent by visitors who stay in hotels and come with organised tours. In 2004, the visitor source for Itacaré was as follows: 40% São Paulo state, 11% international travellers; 10% Rio de Janeiro state, 10% Brasília/DF, 6% Espírito Santo state, and 4% Bahia state (Meireles, Bahiatura, Itacaré workshop in 2005).

Because of their tourism style, backpackers spread money more equitably in the local economy. They have a pivotal role for income and revenue generation for

small-scale businesses. Studies in Australia and New Zealand demonstrate that backpacker tourism can facilitate “the achievement of local economic and non-economic development objectives in several ways” (Visser 2004: 285).

During the workshop, a comment on the economic limit to the expansion of (eco)tourism by the chairperson seemed to cause anxiety in the audience. His statement clashes with the expectations raised in the plan of a thriving economic cycle. If (eco)tourism causes an economic boom, it will not homogeneously benefit the 18,000 people of Itacaré. He mentions the need to strengthen and invest in other areas:

Tourism in Itacaré will not solve all the problems, it will contribute to improve the quality of life, to create more jobs...[but] in our assessment [HVS's one] we came up that the number of jobs reaches 2,000 in the high season, and Itacaré has 18,000 inhabitants, and half of that is working (the effective labour force)...so about 20% are working directly with tourism...there is potential for an increase but it is hard to predict...it may reach 40%, then, we need to strengthen and invest in other sectors, supply, etc (Chairperson, Sustainable Tourism Itacaré 2015 Workshop).

Tourism development is not a panacea or an answer to all social and economic deficits. It is a cyclical and volatile sector; “it is a fickle industry, being highly seasonal” (Page and Dowling 2001: 151). Locals cannot rely exclusively on the positive economic effects of tourism.

In Itacaré, *Maripá* community and Mamirauá Reserve, the traditional dwellers are aware that tourism/ecotourism is economically case-sensitive with an array of limitations. The dwellers have required the authorities and leaders to think of and develop alternative sectors in the district; “politicians need to strategically consider the economic structure of regions with limited economic potential” (Page and Dowling 2001: 151). Authors’ life experiences and their educational backgrounds matter because they reflect their perception of the world, holding different values for the same objects. For locals, Itacaré is not a ‘tourism market’ but ‘home’; Itacaré has no ‘tourism themes’ but a life style they want to safeguard. Sustainable tourism accreditation is not a priority; the priority is to keep their cultural identity. These insights came from various discussions and interviews with locals during the fieldwork (see items 1B, 3B, and 8B, Box 6.3). HVS was contracted by the most powerful business stakeholders to scrutinise Itacaré district.

The HVS staff was not in Itacaré for welfare promotion, for social work and charity. Their mission was to outline solutions that could make Itacaré a top profitable tourism destination. Collaboration and partnerships among all sectors of the community were mentioned during the STWI 2015 as the most promising avenue to re-order the social and environmental chaos in Itacaré in which conflicts are mediated by the pertinent institutions (CAPA, ITI, Tourism Council, Environment Council, etc) for conservation and development (Butcher 2007: 21). Items 1B to 10B show a process of understanding the other, of negotiating actions and of ordering new social

practices through open and public interaction. Queries and replies map the process of negotiating power, a process of mediation.

**Box 6.3 - Sustainable tourism workshop Itacaré 2015 (in June 2005)**

**1B) Dweller/travel agency worker – Inquiry**

You cannot speak about tourism product and market if Itacaré does not have security, hospital and social inclusion yet. So, how does ITI plan to bring the local population and include it in this process? Here, the locals are excluded because the information does not circulate, it does not reach us, and people do not know what it is going on [...] if the community is off, tourism is over.

**2B) Representative of ITI – Reply**

Itacaré population has been brave in relation to this sort of development process of the last years in which tourism brought impacts...sexual exploration, drugs, etc, and the community has borne the negative impacts of tourism. Now we reach a level of maturation and, with ITI it is time to go ahead, we need to progress, and build consensus even with individual agendas in mind and different personal ideologies. I was alerted about the divergences and the inter-personal and institutional difficulties in Itacaré but I was well-accepted here...and if there are 10 diverging issues to be worked out, and three of them are convergences, so let's focus on these three first... it is a question of synergy.

**3B) Fisherman/Vice-president of the Surf Association – Inquiry/Comment**

The civil society is getting organised and this is good because it encourages the others, but the truth is that Itacaré community is at the edge (periphery) of this [plan, ITI]. An dweller who rents a small room at *Passagem* (a traditional ward) to survive [to have income], and lives here for more than 40 years, this person is also a tourism business owner but this event is not for him [...] the local authorities behave always the same: beautiful discourses here and give us the back later [...] and right now we do not have even the right to go to São José (beach) to swim [because the trail is closed for the locals].

**4B) Chairperson – Reply**

We talked about social inclusion, and we talked about loans for small businesses, and there will be help [credit/capital] to everybody, and you will have the means to improve your service with the loans, and the family hostels will take advantage of it [...] and your comment (refer to 3b) mirror much of former conflicts Itacaré community already faced but we have to look ahead, we can't stay stranded in the past. We need to focus on the convergences as mentioned by the representative of ITI.

**5B) Former-Mayor of Itacaré – Comment**

The value of this plan is its capacity to give us tools [to work], and gradually to help City Hall and the Common Council in the tourism sector. Because I was the Mayor before I know the institutional fragility of the City Hall [...] We need to make our contradictions the motives for cooperation, and the projects will be built with sacrifice, and the community is all here in this Workshop, then let's use this opportunity to cooperate.

**6B) Representative of Floresta Viva/NGO – Comment**

In order to achieve something we need to dialogue...to change the posture of the society...in the process of cooperation we need to talk to and negotiate with people we don't like, to negotiate interests different from ours. We need to make use of social capital, the human capital of a region [Itacaré].



According to Silverstone (1999), “mediation involves the ‘movement of meaning’ – from one social practice to another, from one event to another, from one text to another” (as quoted in Fairclough 2003: 30). This move is observed in the attempts by ITI and HVS to transfer to the local community the notions of ‘organisation’, ‘associative initiatives’ (*associativism*), and of the need of a holistic ‘improvement’, so that, stakeholders can interact within a context with fewer hierarchical layers, “Now we reach a level of maturation and, with ITI, it is time to go ahead. We need to progress, and build consensus even with individual agendas in mind and different personal ideologies” (2B). Through mediation it is possible to achieve levels of recontextualisation (Bernstein 1990; Fairclough 2003).

**(Cont. Box 6.3)**

**7B) Representative of Instituto Aliança/NGO – Inquiry/Comment**

I felt the community tense here, and the community seems not to belong to this context; it seems not to feel included in the plan [...] congratulations for this Workshop but the true participatory debate is lacking [...] We need an ample partnership that includes not only the public and private sectors but also the civil society.

**8B) Member of Surf Association of Itacaré – Inquiry**

Let me talk about the access to the beaches; they are closed, now there is a fee charge to use the trails, to enter the beaches [before the locals had free access to them]. And this Plan does not mention anything about the ‘closed beaches and entry fees’. HVS did not report it. The consensus excludes access but this is what Itacaré wants, and the plan disregards it and loses credibility; it loses validity because it overlooks people’s wish.

**9B) Representative of ITI: Reply**

Free access to the trails and beaches will be an issue to be dealt with by a specific working group, and this group will be on this issue thoroughly until a solution comes up.

**10B) Chairperson: Reply**

About the trails and the access to the beaches? We need to check what is legal and illegal about it.

The concept of recontextualisation is centered on the “productive logic of the organizational process, proceeding from a relational or systemic perspective and focusing on what seems to be a semiotic logic governing the various recontextualised meanings” (Iedema and Wodak 1999: 6).

In Itacaré’s case, this is perceived in the ultimate claim for mutual recognition that can be interpreted as: ‘we [stakeholders] are socially and economically different but we have intersectional points that will result in collective gains’. That is, differences are not ‘walls’ against collaboration (Item 5B). ITI and HVS multiple stakeholder partnership(s) belong to the concept of ‘genres of governance’.

According to Fairclough (2003), genres of governance are “interlocking elements” of institutions that sustain our contemporary society; and regulate other networked social practices. In Itacaré it refers to the practices being shaped by ITI’s collaborative scheme. However, it is evident that ITI’s legitimacy needs to be built not only through an open and democratic administration but through daily actions that confirm the sincerity of their intentions.

The citations demonstrate the lack of trust of the locals in relation to ITI and the Plan (Box 6.3, 8B): “The Plan does not mention anything about the ‘closed beaches and entry fees’. HVS did not report it. The consensus excludes free access to the beaches but this is what Itacaré wants”.

In terms of legitimacy and credibility, one important lesson was the inability of HVS and ITI to bring tangible solutions to the crisis by the arbitrary decision of restricting access and imposing ‘access fees’ on locals. By postponing actions to solve it, HVS and ITI lost much credibility with the community during the workshop. “I felt the community tense here and the community seems not to belong to the context; it seems it does not feel included in the plan” (ILana, Instituto Aliança, NGO, 7B).

The core of the problem is that the City Hall and the Common Council did not create the legal instruments to regulate the law on Shore Management that guarantees public access. The farmers could not immediately be forced to stop restricting transit and visitation. There was a national, constitutional law safeguarding the community but the district did not have the means to apply it locally. There was then an issue of public and private use of land. The following statement mentions the historic struggle between weak and strong local actors,

The various existing conflicts in Itacaré are the result of postures mistakenly taken by the public sector. The conflicts are the effect of the culture [behaviour] of elder powerful entrepreneurs that were unable to build healthy relations with the community (Salvador Ribeiro, Instituto Floresta Viva (IFV), at the CAPA’s meeting on July 2005).

The representative of ITI successfully articulated with Itacaré community leaders, partly because he belonged to the *Costa do Cacau*, Bahia, so he knew the local culture, the way of approaching people and of communicating properly.

During the workshop, a local leader underlined, “the representative of ITI is not an outsider, mister ‘G’ belongs to this place; he is a son of this place”. He himself acknowledged that his local roots are part of his merits as convenor/facilitator for ITI: “I was alerted to the divergences and the inter-personal and institutional difficulties in Itacaré but I was well-accepted here” (Box 6.3, item 2B). However, the inertia to deal with the crisis possibly ruined a well-designed plan as mentioned by one participant, “it disregards [the beaches]...it loses credibility; it loses validity because it overlooks people’s wish” (Box 6.3, 8B). Items 9B and 10b are a reply to the inquiries of a member of the community (refer to item 8B).

In fact, a specific working group (GTAP) - formed by representatives of 23 different organisations of the public and private sectors, and of the civil society - was created to investigate the legality of restricting access to the beaches. According to CAPA, the group began its work on 4<sup>th</sup> July of 2005 and finished on 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2005. During this time, there were 11 meetings (three *in loco*) specifically to deal with access to the beaches.

The major actions of the GTAP consisted of: i) proposals for services and security along the trails and to the beaches; ii) study of legal actions and monitoring of their follow-ups; iii) technical assessment and mapping through GIS of all pertinent areas; iv) public presentation of the GTAP's reports; v) plans for short, middle and long term actions.

In one of the CAPA's meeting, participant observation allowed me to realise that more than holding an egalitarian ethos, the group is procedural and methodical in order to set and deliver an agenda with focus. The debate is organised within a timeframe, and questions and comments are listed in an orderly manner. The sequence of statements can refine the debates. Opposing ideas are reviewed repeatedly in a dialogical process, and the superposition of ideas and of arguments can influence the actors. This juxtaposition of statements is done systematically, in a way that the new views and positions are not taken as individual offences neither as the truth. The process can avoid risks of *elitism* in decision-making in which "one party or a select group controls access to the...forum...and agenda is restricted to a powerful elite" (Gray 1989: 114). By paying attention to others' view, the members can accept changes that will benefit the collective. A key person then wraps up the various statements in an attempt to lead the group to a rapport. The meetings are not free of heated discussion and tension but I did not witness any serious confrontation. In the first meeting of the CAPA on the 25 July 2005, the following aspects were debated concerning free access to the beaches (Box 6.4, items from S1 to S12).

#### Box 6.4 - Keynotes of a meeting of the CAPA on the 25 July 2005

##### *Dilemmas on public versus private use of land*

- S1** The charge of access fees to the beaches is for private profits, and the community has not benefited (Municipal Representative).
- S2** The money of the fees should be used to strengthen the community [in its demands]. (Local)
- S3** The charge can become very useful for the community; it can create jobs and revenue for the local tourism organisations. (Yonic)
- S4** The restrictions to access the beaches produce a strong socio-economic impact on the middle-class that can help to support the village. (SOS Itacaré)
- S5** For the visitors, the charge of fees creates a bad impression. Security, waste management and the maintenance of the trails are duties of the public sector. (SOS Itacaré-NGO)
- S6** Access to the beaches must be free and free of charge as established by the law on the use of the shoreline. The financial sources for infrastructural benefits should come out of a tourism tax charged from all businesses of Itacaré directly linked to tourism services and products. (SOS Itacaré).

**(Box 6.4, cont.) *Carrying capacity***

**S7** The study of carrying capacity for the beaches is limited. CAPA and ITI should organise two different assessments about the carrying capacity, and later the two independent reports should be compared. The aim of this study is to limit access to the beaches. (Surf Association of Itacaré)

**S8** There should be studies in order to determine a global carrying capacity for the entire district of Itacaré, not only for the beaches. The carrying capacity should be for the trails, availability of accommodations, etc. (Community)

**S9** It is important to have a global carrying capacity for Itacaré. (Mister 'G'/ITI)

**S10** It is not the local community that is destroying the environment but the new entrepreneurs [newcomers]. (Local)

**S11** It is not the visitors who are depleting Itacaré but the big entrepreneurs. (Yonic)

**S12** Legal instructions for the openness of the beaches should not be an issue to be decided [only] by the working group [GTAP]. (Mister 'G'/ITI).

The dialogical process involves the interpolation of viewpoints; and someone else's position can influence a particular or communal opinion. Some members agreed on the fee but to be reverted to the community, or used to finance local tourism organisations (S3). Others utterly refused of any fee because it is not legal practice (S6). S 4 defends the idea of restricting the number of visitors as beneficial to natural spaces.

However, S4 and S3 do not provide more details on how the fees could produce socio-economic impacts. For many, the public sector is directly responsible for the maintenance of tourism spots (structure and infrastructure). The opinion of a vendor to CAPA illustrates the resentment of the locals:

For more than nine years I have been selling my goods in my hub on the Engenhoca beach. Throughout this period, I have been looking after that beach, cleaning it, and paying district taxes. Now it is prohibited to use the traditional trail, and the new one does not provide the conditions to transport my goods in the trolley to the hub. The ground is very irregular. I insisted to cross through the former trail but I was threatened to be killed by one of the farm's employee. I also want to add that there was deforestation on the Engenhoca. They fenced the beach to isolate the construction of the resort but the fence has blocked the transit of animals out of the mangrove swamp (Local vendor, Itacaré, July 2005).

Access to the beaches was still debated by CAPA in 2007. The group also debated the concept of 'carrying capacity' for Itacaré. The leading views were that Itacaré needs segmented restrictions for the number of visitors in all tourism sectors and for all tourism spots (S8, S9). Some members pointed out that the new business

entrepreneurs are responsible for the degradation - not the community, not the visitors (S10 and S11). It was suggested that entrepreneurs should pay extra taxes for keeping the public areas for tourism (S6).

One proposal at that time was to have two independent studies about the carrying capacity for the beaches and for Itacaré carried by ITI and CAPA (S7). The extract reveals the struggle between anthropocentric and ecocentric positions,

The concept of carrying capacity for the beaches and Itacaré should be thought in maximum number rather than minimum number, and there should be freedom for the visitors to choose to go or not to the beaches once the limit is near the maximum allowed. The idea is to set flags at the beginning of the trails giving orientation. Green flag would mean free access; yellow one would require attention from the visitors [near the limit], and the red flag would imply that visitors and guides may go to the beaches but they are aware of excessive visitation and possible negative impacts on nature. It would be on them to cooperate with carrying capacity (Intwee 44, June 2007).

Months later, in October 2005, the working group succeeded in solving the problem. It was supported by the Adjustment Pact of Conduct (*Term de Adjustment de Confute, TAC*), a binding document - publicly agreed on and signed by organised groups, members of the private sector and the owners of the land of Itacaré. The document opens the beaches for public access. The document (TAC) aimed to normalize the enforcement of clause 10 and clause 214 of law 7661/88 that regulate the access of areas of 'communal and collective use' in Brazil.<sup>19</sup> There were no concessions for the powerful stakeholders. The normative instruments were used to frame collective practices.

### **6.5.2 - Itacaré residents' perception about ecotourism development and ITI**

In July 2005, two weeks after the Itacaré Workshop, the non-governmental organisation, SOS Itacaré together with the Surf Easy Drop School, carried out a survey on public administration and tourism development. With the help of local volunteers, the questions were openly discussed and then refined.

The survey reached 481 residents in the Itacaré district. With an estimated permanent population of 18,000 residents (Bahiatursa; Itacare.com, 2005), the survey covered 2.67% of the district (see Table 6.3). All answers were stored in a data bank and processed by Benjamin Kromayer, SOS Itacaré, and became available for public access on its website. I decided to use the results as supplementary to qualitative data. Language adaptation of the original version in Portuguese was necessary but it did not

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<sup>19</sup> Ministério Público do Estado da Bahia. Retrieved October 25, 2005, from [www.mp.ba.gov.br/noticias/2005/out\\_itacare.asp](http://www.mp.ba.gov.br/noticias/2005/out_itacare.asp)

cause distortions of the content. The survey’s results validate the views, interpretations and conclusions drawn from the textual analysis.

**Table 6.3 Itacaré respondents’ urban districts**

Downtown	Pituba	Passagem	Bairro Novo	Marimbondo
34.51%	25.36%	10.18%	8.93%	6.23%
People: 166	122	49	43	30

Porto de Trás	Concha	Campo	Tiririca
6.02%	4.98%	3.53%	0.2%
29	24	17	1

It is important to highlight that Passagem, Bairro Novo (São Antônio), Marimbondo e Porto de trás are the poorest wards of Itacaré village (see Figures C and D). Together they answered 31.36% of all questionnaires. Concha, Campo, and Tiririca are said to be inhabited by families with a varied income range, but one predominantly lower middle class. In the survey they accounted for 8.53% of the answers.

The downtown area and Pituba were said to have upper middle class dwellers, and they totalled 59.87% of all surveyed people (see pictures A and B). Except for luxury resort areas, social class boundaries are not clear throughout Itacaré. In terms of diversity other than social and economic, the survey has a balance of male and female respondents, young and elder ones; entrepreneurs, fishermen and unemployed people.

**A) Pituba**



**B) Downtown**



**C) Bairro Novo/ São Antônio**



**D) Porto de Trás**



**Source:** Pictures taken by the author during field trip in Itacaré. June 2005.

**Luxury Resorts and Residential Villages in Itacaré's Rainforest and Shore**

a) Where the financial resources should come from for the maintenance, waste management, and security of trails and beaches ?

City Hall	Business sector	Directly from Visitors
63.40%	34.09%	2.49%
305	164	12

b) Do you agree with the set of a limited number of visitors a day to visit the pristine beaches?

Yes	No
35.55%	64.44%
171	310

c) Should the visitors pay entry fees to visit the pristine beaches of Itacaré ?	
Yes	No
17.46%	82.53%
84	397

The last two questions reveal the community’s rejection of restrictive measures either to access the beaches or to limit the number of visitors. For them, ‘locals’ and ‘visitors’ should have free transit to any public area of Itacaré.

Carrying capacity is a concept to be negotiated at a local level rather than being arbitrarily imported. Respondents add that City Hall should be financially responsible to maintain the urban and natural environment by providing basics services (i.e. rubbish collection, tourism specialised police, etc). However, Itacaré has high levels of tax evasion (observed during the fieldwork). HVS consultants also identify fiscal and budgetary problems in Itacaré’s City Hall:

City Hall has not consistently managed its finances. That is, it has expenditures and monetary losses. Local taxes and duties (i.e. ISS and IPTU) are poorly collected, so that, Itacaré district is highly dependent on Federal and State Governments’ fund transfers. These transfers represent over 80% of all finances of the local government (Itacaré Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development).

Table 6.4 indicates Central/Federal and State government transfers to local government for fiscal years 2002 to 2004. The amounts are provided in NZ dollars on an approximate basis. The local government also has an excessive number of public employees, whose wages took up 64% of all available funds in 2002 (Itacaré 2015 Plan, p. 98).

**Table 6.4 - Central and state government transfers to local government**

Year	2002	2003	2004
<b>Federal Transfer (NZ\$) **</b>	3,512,352	3,735,650	4,168,438
<b>State Transfer (NZ\$) ***</b>	499,124	613,481	771,775
<b>Total Transfer (NZ\$)</b>	4,011,476	4,349,131	4,940,213
Annual Real Increase of Transfers: 5.5% ** FPM; ITR; IOF; FUNDEF *** ICMS, IPI, IPVA, FIES <b>Source:</b> Tesouro Nacional; Secretaria da Fazenda do Estado da Bahia (Amount converted into NZ dollars).			



The local government of Itacaré will need to create mechanisms for public monitoring of its finances and budget. Recent openness has shown mismanagement of funds, biases towards group interests and against collective ones and abuses of administrative power.

In May 2006, the Federal Investigations Bureau (Controladoria-Geral da União), in its regular monitors, identified six major irregularities in the City Hall’s administration of Itacaré related to the misuse and evasion of funds of education and social welfare programmes, as well as irregularities in contracts with the private sector, involving R\$ 6,919,800.69 (NZ\$ 4,705,464.46) that should have been used to benefit 17,925 inhabitants.

These figures can explain partly the disillusion of locals in relation to public authorities and some politicians in Itacaré: “the local authorities behave always the same: beautiful discourses here that never become into actions for us” (item 3b, Box 6.3). This ‘item 3b’ contrasts to the appeals of a former Mayor of Itacaré (this person is not the Mayor whose administration was reported by CGU as financially inconsistent) for cooperation: “Because I was the Mayor before I know the institutional fragility of the City Hall [...] We need to make our contradictions the motives for cooperation.”

In my fieldwork, traditional dwellers and small-scale business owners showed themselves very skeptical about any transfer of economic benefits from the luxury (eco)resorts (Fig. 6.6) and residential villages, to the community. For them, the resorts plan to become highly centralized in their operation for quick returns on the capital invested, to repatriate it to Portugal, etc. The survey confirms their feelings.

<b>d) Do you believe that the luxury resorts and residential holiday villages in the shore area will contribute to improve your individual economic situation?</b>	
Yes	No
28.27%	71.72%
People: 136	345

<b>e) With the widespread building of resorts and residential villages in the Costão area, do you think Itacaré district will lose its appeals as an ecotourism destination?</b>	
Yes	No
80.66%	19.34%
People: 388	93

The new resorts and holiday villages at the coast have created unusual pollution. Some locals regarded Warapura as an ‘alien of cement’ encrusted on the boundary between the beach and the rainforest (intwee 29; intwee 07).

Some locals understand that the construction has been a temporary income source for many families of the district. One can observe the two-edged sword of

development: the resorts can bring revenues and income but they also cause negative impacts. As one of the members of CAPA said:

I have a small-scale business and I support tourism but the group [CAPA] should reflect about development with progress, and development without progress. How many people will work in these tourism ventures after their construction is ready? How many newcomers will they attract? But newcomers will not have the basic conditions to live in this region (Member of CAPA on 25 July 2005).

The survey also asked about the communication flow in Itacaré related to the workshop.

<b>f) Have you received information about and how to participate in public meetings?</b>	
Yes	No
26.19%	73.80%
People: 126	355

<b>g) Were you informed about the realization of the Workshop Itacaré 2015 ?</b>	
Yes	No
46.36%	53.63%
People: 223	258

<b>h) Did you participate in the Workshop Itacaré 2015?</b>	
Yes	No
9.71%	90.22%
People: 47	434

At the time of the workshop, it was explained that the event was publicly advertised but invitations for local registration were addressed to some key natives, leaders and organisations because of capacity limit (Intwee 12). I saw that even though the event had been scantily advertised, the space became packed with people.

<b>i) Do you know the content of the 2015 Tourism Plan?</b>		
Yes	Partially	No
5.82%	21.82%	72.34%
People: 28	105	348

<b>j) Do you agree with the proposals of the 2015 Itacaré Tourism Plan?</b>			
I didn't read it	I partially agree	No	Yes
73.59%	17.67%	6.23%	2.49%
People: 354	85	30	12

As mentioned previously, most of the content was hard to understand for an average attendee (Intwee 29). Tourism Plan 2015 became available online some days after the event but I noticed some obstacles for the community to access it: i) unfamiliar with the internet and websites; ii) expensive internet fees; iii) 189 page document which few locals would be eager to read throughout. Moreover, printers are in short supply, and the printing fees, prohibitive (as in 2005).

<b>k) In your opinion, how is the state of the environment in the Itacaré district?</b>		
Good	Reasonably acceptable	Bad
4.57%	44.49%	50.93%
People: 22	214	245

<b>m) Do you think that the traditional tourism of high season in Itacaré is economically necessary for your budget/income/revenue?</b>	
Yes	No
87.11%	12.88%
People: 419	62

Locals are aware of the importance of preserving the Mata Atlantica rainforest. For most of the population, this concern has not translated into less impacting practices. That is the paradox about locals' perception about ecotourism development: impact versus benefits. The numbers show that 87.11% of the respondents have different perceptions about the importance of independent travellers to the local economy compared to HVS consultants.

The attempt to make Itacaré a selective destination will seriously increase struggles between ITI, the community and the local small business owners. Mister C's rhetorics (Box 6.3, item 4b, p. 284) on loans for everybody became non-credible at that time (June 2005) given the economic and financial difficulties of Itacaré and the inexistence of specific credit programmes for tourism.

The project under law number 4783/05 is expected to be approved by the Brazilian Congress in order to set guidelines for a National Programme of small credit for the Tourism sector (Tourism Fund/Fungetur).

<b>n) Who should provide the financial means for the preservation of the Mata Atlântica rainforest of Itacaré?</b>			
Central Government	State government	City Hall	Business sector
39.70%	27.85%	19.75%	12.68%
People: 191	134	95	61

o) Would you get involved in a community movement to fight for a better future for Itacaré?	
Yes	No
91.06%	8.93%
People: 438	43

There has been strong predisposition of locals to participate in community organisations, but Intwee 26 underlined that the associations expect someone else to solve their problems. Conversely, the NGOs such as Boto Negro, Yonic, Floresta Viva have been highly proactive on behalf of the community.

p) Are you happy with the current public administration in Itacaré?	
Yes	No
14.55%	85.44%
People: 70	411

u) Why did you choose to live in the district of Itacaré?							
I am native	Quality of life	Family	Work	Nature	Surf	Business	Other
29.93%	27.65%	14.96%	11.43%	7.90%	4.57%	3.11%	0.83%
People: 144	133	72	55	38	22	15	4

Newcomers and migrants (27.65%) chose Itacaré because of the well-being it could provide for them. Surprisingly, only 7.90% of the respondents chose Itacaré because of its environment/landscape. However, the main challenge for Itacaré has been to maintain its current quality of life. Tourism has affected natives negatively.

## 6.6 - Updating: ITI in June 2007

ITI is still in its embryonic phase, and its manager and members are still learning. ITI has a well-devised plan for tourism in market terms but social and environmental issues are ancillary to the process of sustainable tourism development. Tourism entrepreneurs and profits are indeed the core. In 2005, ITI had 11 permanent members most of which belong to the G-8: Txai Ecoresort, *Villas de São José*, Warapuru, *Jeribucaçu Empreendimentos*, Fazenda Miramar, Fazenda Prainha, Conchas do Mar, Grupo Funchal, *Taguaíba* and Swedish Group. The small-scale entrepreneurs are mostly associated in ACERTI<sup>20</sup>, not ITI. The City Hall of Itacaré and CONDER (the

<sup>20</sup> ACERTI - Tourism Business Owners' Association of Itacaré

Bahia State building company) are partners; they do not participate as members because it may result in political implications. Floresta Viva is the only non-governmental organisation explicitly acting as a partner of ITI. On the other hand, ITI has coped with its promises of actively participating and supporting the forums and councils of Itacaré. ITI became a fully-involved member of CAPA as well as in the debates in the Municipal Common Council. It has supported CAPA and its members in terms of logistic facilities (i.e. transport, etc) and by offering its physical structure for meetings. Their website mentions

ITI's proposed actions as in 2005: 1) articulation with the State government of Bahia, Itacaré's City Hall, and the Municipal Council in an attempt to bring them in line for urban infrastructural work; 2) support to the Security Council of Itacaré; 3) articulation with the NGOs, City Hall and the Municipal Council for urban planning; 4) creation of an agenda for cultural and sport events for Itacaré at a national and international level; and 5) support and collaboration in relation to the legal decision about the free access to the beaches. In June 2007, actors of Itacaré said ITI just implemented a fraction of what was planned in June 2005. One NGO did not become a member of ITI because of differences in the line of work, "I also wanted to guarantee pluralism, a variety of views and exceptions for independent actions and postures" (intwee 45).

For Stepan (1978), 'pluralism' implies a political process in which groups of various interests clash with one another, "and conflicts among these groups are resolved through intense bargaining in prescribed arenas among groups of relatively equal power" (Dahl 1982, quoted in Gray 1989: 113). When I asked about the Tourism Plan Itacaré 2015, one answer was:

We need something new, something that comes out from within the community itself, the Plan is there and it is not that sure how successful it will be in the future [...], and honestly, for some people most of it is already past [...] until now few organisations engaged with ITI, and one organisation tried but its membership was declined, not clear about the reasons [...] but in Itacaré you need to be careful with the words you use because it can increase the tension, the conflicts [...] we do not need to add to the conflicts here so it is better not to comment too much about that refusal (intwee 45).

### **6.7 - Public debates in Itacaré: The role of CAPA and of other 'public forums'**

The goal is to find discursive evidence that the stakeholders have been able to accommodate differences and whether they have advanced or not the negotiation of power. Itacaré has had many networks among different groups but they haven't moved into more formal partnerships in ecotourism yet. Collaboration has happened at the inter-governmental level with agreements and alliances for tourism development. Grassroots groups and class associations have had levels of interaction and cooperation. However, these collaborative arrangements haven't been structured into an all-encompassing formal partnership model.

I would like to underline the pivotal role of the Administrative Council of APA (CAPA) for Itacaré and Serra Grande as an open advisory group since 2000. It is a Council for the community. It has 34 members (permanent seats), 16 belong to the public sector and 18 are part of the civil society. Members that are absent from three or more meetings/sessions get a non-active status but they continue as part of the board (refer to Table 6.5, p.298).

CAPA is open for any membership but the inclusion of new organisations is done through collective approval. The Council is primarily concerned with social and environmental problems and the impacts they can cause APA of Itacaré/Serra Grande, an area of 16,000 hectares of Mata Atlântica rainforest. Three conservation units (refer to Table 9, Appendix-I) form the environmental protection mosaic of the South Bahia/Costa do Cacau, region where Itacaré is situated: APA, RPPNs, and Conduru Park (9,275 hectares created in 1997). The main objective of CAPA is to manage the APA according to a set of regulations and norms. CAPA is a multi-representative body (see Table 6.5) with an advisory role not subordinated to any public or private institution. It articulates and coordinates many joint actions and collaborative schemes among its members and partners. It helps the organisations decide on a communal agenda, and has guidelines.

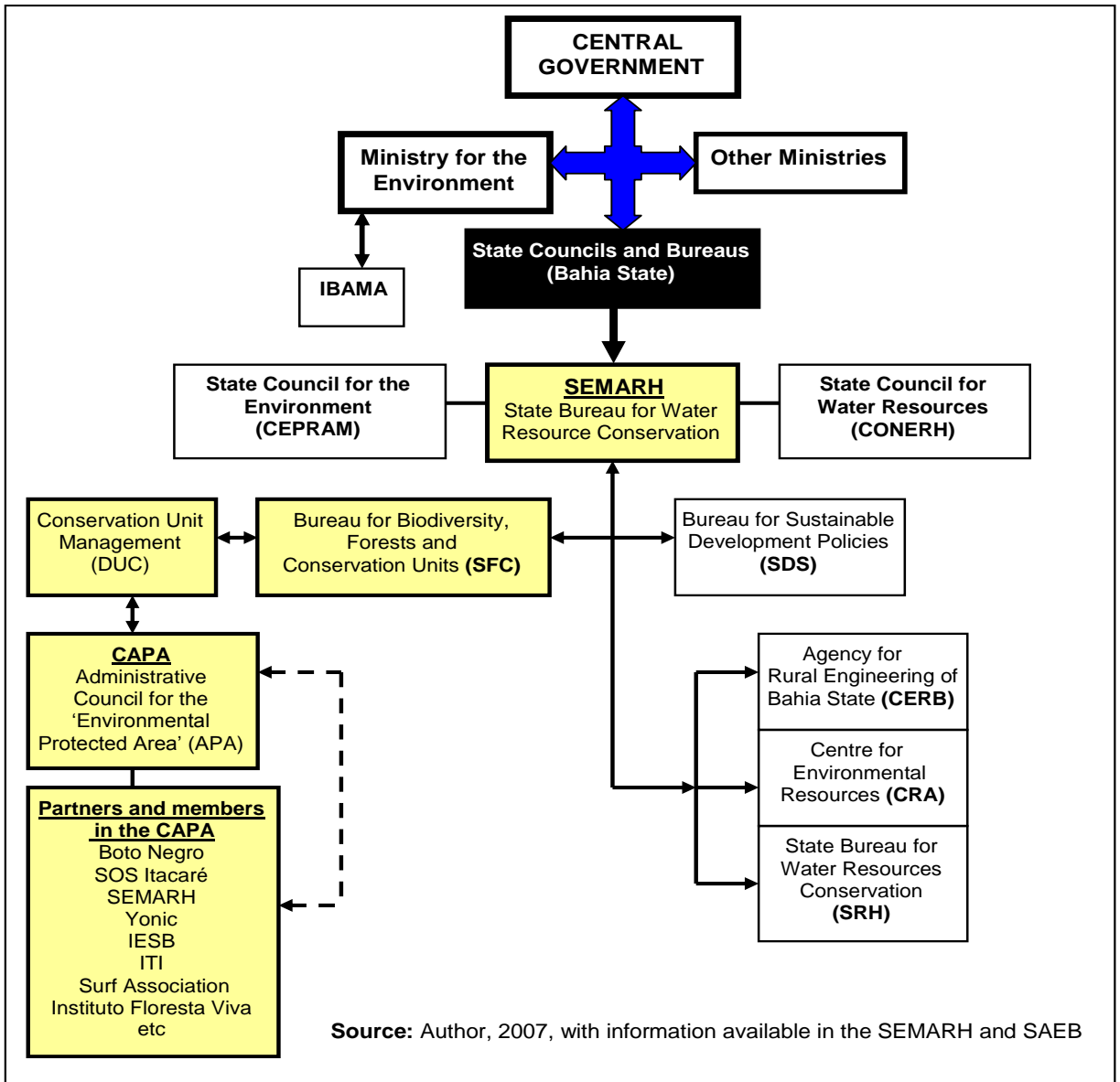
CAPA is not structured to formulate agendas that are not collectively approved neither does it overlap NGOs in Itacaré and Serra Grande. CAPA is an ‘associational public space’ serving as a platform where stakeholders can come to consensual discourses. The ‘agreed discourses’ are disseminated and used as ‘institutionalised speech’ in the process of communication with the authorities and with the community. They serve as avenues for social practices but they are normatively grounded. It does not have its own building, and it still depends on the support of partners to carry out meetings and debates.

According to its managers, the Council has been unable to implement all recommended actions. To solve this, the Instituto Tijuípe was created in 2003, as a subsidiary of CAPA. Tijuípe was to organise civil society to collectively find answers and actions for improving the quality of life and the natural environment. In 2006, Instituto Tijuípe closed its activities, and Instituto Boto Negro (NGO) assumed some of its tasks. CAPA together with the Municipal Common Council became the two major forums for debates on collective issues in Itacaré district. ITI was idealised to bridge two diverging streams: the private sector and NGOs/Associations (see section 6.3 on ITI). No tourism and ecotourism travel agencies participate in the meetings of CAPA (Table 6.5). CAPA has been the key advisory group, and the leading organisational body that has acted on behalf of the population. It is a group determined to have the powerful stakeholders and the community abide by the APA’s rules and by the environmental laws. It is a group attempting to set dialogue and coalition. Thanks to CAPA and the articulation of its members, many violations and law breaches have been promptly identified, disclosed, and legal actions have been suggested against them.

<b>Table 6.5 - Status of Members of CAPA in June 2007</b>	<b>Active/ Non-active</b>
<p><b>Public Sector</b></p> <p>1- General Manager of APA of Itacaré/Serra Grande (Marco Aurélio)            2- PESC – Administration of the Conduru Park (Marcelo Barreto)            3- SUINVEST (Reinaldo Dantas)            4- CONDER (Mário Gordilho)            5- IBAMA (Sérgio Ramos dos Santos)            6- CRA (Guilherme Mendonça)            7- Municipal Bureau for Tourism and the Environment of Uruçuca            8- Municipal Bureau for the Environment [not effective yet]            9- CEPLAC (Cândido)            10- INCRA (Eduardo Passos)            11- City Hall of Itacaré (Paulo Silveira)            12- Legislative Common Council of Itacaré (José Alcino)            13- City Hall of Uruçuca (Mayne Santos/Amélia)            14- Legislative Common Council of Uruçuca (Everaldo Ramos)            15- UESC - State University of São Carlos (Gilton Argolo/Rui Rocha)            16- COPA/PM – Environmental Police Quarter (Jose Francisco Leite)</p>	<p>Active            Active            Non-active            Non-active            Non-active            Non-Active            Active            Non-active            Non-active            Non-active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Non-active</p>
<p><b>Civil Society</b></p> <p>17- STR of Itacaré (Miguel Santos)            18- ACERTI (Raimundo Crispin/Lucelmo)            19- Pituba Dweller Association (Raimundo Sarmento)            20- Porto de Trás Dweller Association (Anadilson Santos)            21- ASI - Surf Association of Itacaré (Alisson Reis)            22- Taboquinhas Dweller Association (Aguinaldo Damasceno)            23- Association of Small-scale Farmer of Serra Grande (Maria Regina/Jeová)            24- Educational Association Dendê da Serra (Cláudio Lôpo)            25- Rural Association of João Rodrigues (Cassemiro)            26- Association of Homeless Dwellers of Itacaré (Israel Lima)            27- Mata Grande Association (Andreino dos Santos)            28- Rural Association of Fojo</p>	<p>Active            Active            Active            Non-active            Active            Active            Non-active            Active            Non-active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active</p>
<p><b>Non-Governmental Organisations</b></p> <p>29- IESB- Instituto Socio-Ambiental do Sul da Bahia (Flávio Leopoldino)            30- Boto Negro Environmental Institute (Cosme Nunes)            31- SOS Itacaré (Benjamin/ Pascal Voisin)            32- ITI-Instituto de Turismo de Itacaré (Cláudia Cruz)            33- Yonic NGO (Marcos Lucato/Branco)            34- IFV- Instituto Floresta Viva (Rui Rocha)</p>	<p>Active            Active            Active            Active            Active            Active</p>

**Source:** Author, 2008, information provided by Marco Aurélio, Administrator of the APA/SEMARH, 15 June 2007.

CAPA has direct links to SEMARH but acts independently from it. SEMARH is subordinated to RCA which is connected to a general chief for the Bureaus and at the top of the chart are the Ministries (Central government), in this case, the main one is the Ministry for the Environment (Figure 6.2). The double arrows represent the level of subordination and/or interaction and the exchange of information between different government departments, agencies and organisations. For example, the connection between CAPA and its members is based on affinity and good-will; participation and affiliation are voluntary. There is no internal hierarchy. These actors mostly have their decisions determined and controlled by a set of specific regulations and laws because Itacaré district belongs to an Environmental Protection Area (APA).



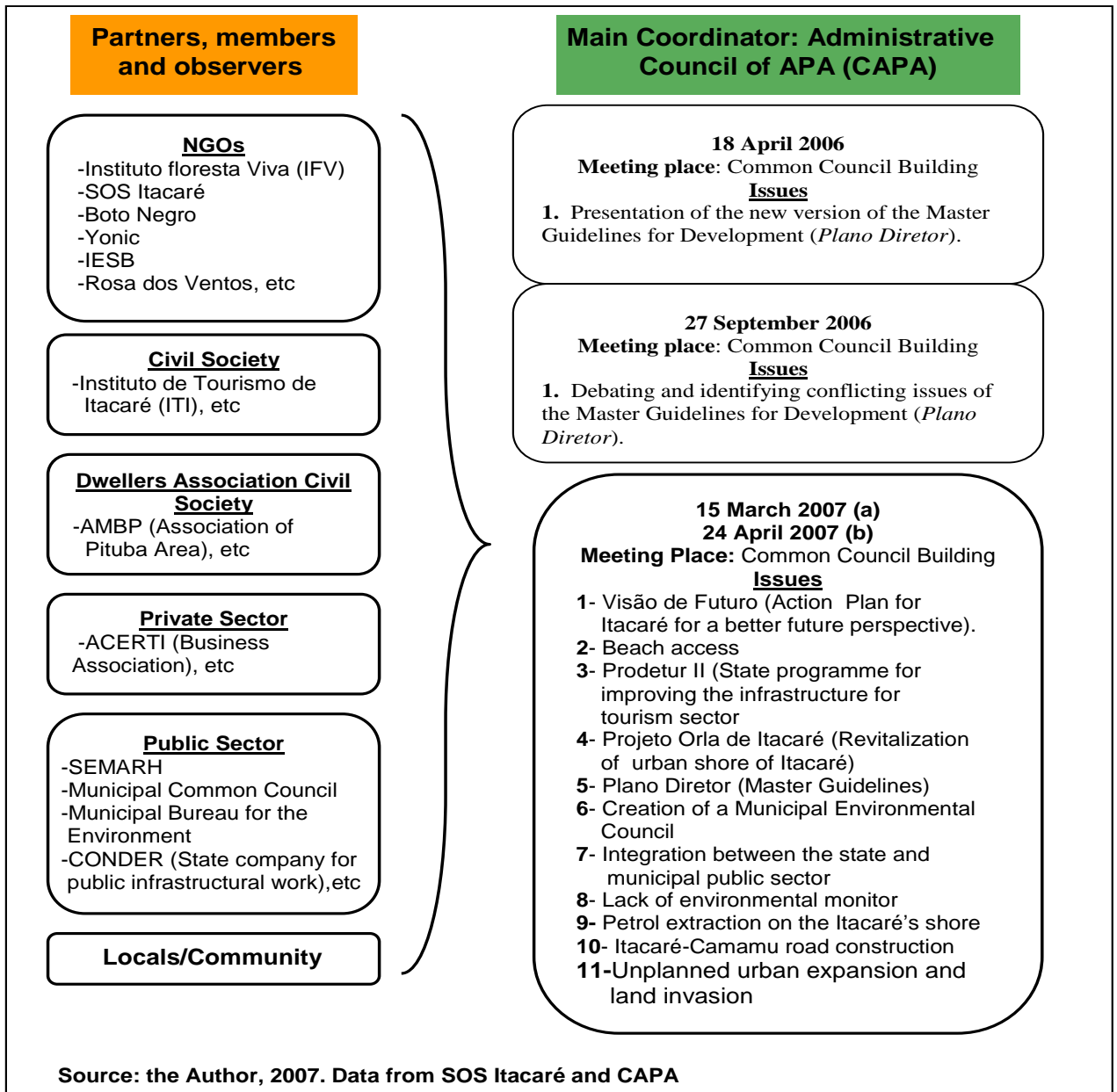
**Fig. 6.2 - CAPA and its subordination to the government institutional hierarchy**



### 6.7.1 - Analysis of extracts: CAPA's meeting and negotiation of power

The criteria for selection of statements were the variety of the discussions over a year. The exact dates are 18 April and 27 September of 2006, and 15 March and 24 April of 2007, and these meetings and themes are mapped in Figure 6.3. There are 39 statements split into six key themes/issues: a) tidying-up home for consensus; b) the public image of CAPA; c) taking advantage of a political scenario; d) financial constraints, e) new road construction: Camamu-Itacaré (BA-001), and f) broadcasting the meetings via radio.

Fig. 6.3 Mapping the CAPA's meetings



The organisations and their respective representatives are cited to give details of the institutional links and backgrounds of the participants. The statements do not deal with nature tourism development directly but they can help to understand how 'issues' are approached, approved or declined by the members of CAPA. In their interactive process, 'intersectional areas' on collective matters come up as the result of sequential account of ideas. However, the meetings are not free of edgy debates.

The following texts will also give an idea of operational aspects of CAPA. Attention is given to production of meanings that may suggest changes in the social practices in Itacaré.

Box 6.5 reflects collective positions on two aspects: planning for the future and internal procedural decisions. The first sentences show a general concern about the delegation of responsibilities and the group commitment to them.

Administrative discussions permeated the main debate which should be focused on 'visions for the future' (Visões de Futuro). Most members seemed to agree that before any further debates about the future, CAPA should be internally well structured. For some, a time sharing for group interaction should not precede the delegation of responsibilities. The planning workshop is taken as crucial to fill a gap of obligations and duties in CAPA (S7).

The internal re-organisation and definition of roles are regarded as the base for strengthening the Council, and should lead the group towards collaborative schemes with the private sector (S5). One member promptly declined the proposal for a virtual discussion about the future for Itacaré (S9). This fact demonstrates that CAPA is primarily a platform for face-to-face debates. I presume that an electronic discussion was not supported because it could dismantle the participatory foundations of the Council (S12).

The interactive dialogical processes in CAPA have been the means to identify group convergences (S3, S5). S6 questioned whether an individual view should be taken into account or not because it can clash with the institutional one. That is, in terms of planning it was defended that institutions shape individuals not the opposite.

Institutions have discourses and procedures that have been defined and refined over time. If an institution does not provide a participatory mechanism, such a position or rhetoric may only represent the ideas and views of a group within that institution. Moreover, an institutional demarcation of roles and of discourses can be fully permeated by political factors, and these events mostly do not mirror the thinking and wishes of its individuals. CAPA is then concerned first in keeping its participatory feature, and some members advocate for a series of group events in order to guarantee structural cohesion. 7

Box 6.5 has statements that promote the idea of 'unity', 'pledge', and of 'administrative consistency'. These key words reinforce the democratic multi-stakeholder aspect of CAPA, and posit its success as dependent on group consolidation.

**Box 6.5 - Statements of members of CAPA: 'Visions for the future'**

**ISSUE A**

**S1** - Members must envisage their own 'Visions for the Future' (*Visões de Futuro*) with dynamism so that attitudes can be negotiated to guarantee convergences.

**S2** - Administrative Committee of the APA should revise its organisational proceedings. The responsibilities and tasks are not clearly devised and assumed.

**S3** - It is relevant to set a planning workshop to solve the disorganization of the Committee. In the former meeting the members had decided first for time sharing in order to discuss and understand the individual positions about the future for Itacaré.

**S4** - It is not the moment for 'time sharing'. It is time for the NGOs to mobilize and act against land invasion.

**S5** - Time-sharing is important because it allows the members to know each other's views and position, and then to identify areas of convergences and of divergences. It was formerly decided by consensus that no action would be taken by CAPA in order to better connect the public and private sectors. It was decided that this connection should happen only after the Committee has "intersections" [internal mutual understandings] about a desirable social and economic development model for Itacaré.

**S6** - It is difficult to talk about single views of the members for the future because the views of the members of an organisation do not reproduce (or meet) the institutional ones.

**S7** - Rather than discussing 'views for the future', the reality of Itacaré first demands the definition of the role of each institution in the Committee. There is a vacuum of responsibilities in the Committee, and an institutionalised posture is necessary.

**S8** - The discussion of the 'visions for the future' (*Visões de Futuro*) should be done through electronic mails rather than orally in the meetings. The written format, sent by email, can facilitate the reading and the understanding of each particular position of the members.

**S9** - Not through emails, the discussions about the 'visions for the future' should be part of a planning workshop for the APA.

**S10** - The current meeting has served to reorder strategies, and debates on the 'visions for the future' should come before the 'planning workshop'.

**S11** - The priority is the installation of the office of the APA. Yonic has offered its building for the office.

**S12** - It is necessary to appoint the qualities and talent of each member in order to know the most suitable person to become the manager of the (new) office. CAPA has 'participatory features/principles'.

**S13** - Yonic established accords with CRA, IBAMA, CONDER and with the Superintendence for the Environment. The accords strengthen the participatory foundations. All these organisations should have access to CAPA's office.

**S14** - SEMARH should be part of this group.

CAPA has had a ‘watchdog role’ in Itacaré, and has been regarded by some stakeholders as a group that ‘queries’ and that ‘resists’. However, its members have decided to act to rub out the notions that CAPA is a ‘hassling group’ because it has intervened in the actions of the public and private sector.

In Box 6.6, S15, S16 and S17 propose to change the image that CAPA creates problems that affect the collectivity.

### **Box 6.6 - Public image**

#### **ISSUE - B**

**S15** - Actions should be taken to improve the image of the CAPA in the Municipal Common Council.

**S16** - A festival, organised by CAPA, could help to improve the image of the Administrative Council.

**S17** - CAPA should ask for a space in one of the open sessions of the Municipal Common Council of Itacaré. CAPA should explain about its role there in an attempt to change the negative image the Municipal Councilors hold of us.

**S18** - The image of the CAPA, after the events related to the interruption of the Warapuru’s construction is not good; it is really sad this happened after five years of quiet management of the Instituto Tijuípe (on behalf of the CAPA).

**S19** - The label ‘NGO’ should be debated because the term creates a negative image that does not mirror the work that the NGOs are doing. Instead of being labeled as ‘NGO’, they should be named ‘Institutions’. The public perception about ‘NGOs’ is more related to charitable activities. On the other hand, ‘institutions’ give an impression of being more supportive to the public administration.

**S20** - The term ‘NGO’ should be taken [by the members] as being of great value because it represents a new way of governance. The ‘social companies’ should be the new partners of this governance because these companies do not aim for ‘profits’. The focus of the NGOs’ should be poverty and the way of including the poor.

**S21** - From April 2007, more than 1,200 people will be unemployed with the end of the construction of the Warapuru Resort. A joint effort should be done to pressure the public authorities to build a worker ward. The ‘ward’ will help to reduce problems [i.e. land invasion]. CAPA will be only strong if it has body [for governance], and CAPA has to listen to the poor.

Intervention in the construction of the Warapuru resort, and consequently its embargo by the Judiciary system caused cracks in the relations between CAPA and the entrepreneurs/investors and the Common Council.

Some stakeholders believe that the embargo was an extreme action, and there should have been dialogue and negotiation at the local level rather than moving ahead with appeals in the Court. Members of CAPA agreed that the Council should be

perceived as a friendly group that has as a mission to promote the well-being of the community while watching over its natural spaces.

S19 and S20 are still focused on image construction, but S19 alleges that 'NGO' connotes a charitable role in which organisations are commonly perceived as apolitical and detached from the aims and projects of the public administration. S20 advocates that the label 'NGO' connotes the new ways of governing: through public participation and governance. S21 advises about embryonic problems due to unemployment since the Warapuru's construction was completed. Unemployed people may occupy fragile rainforest areas causing irreversible impacts.

The suggestion is to have CAPA acting as a pressure group to get the authorities to work on issues before they become problems. The creation of a worker village/ward is mentioned as a solution. In Box 6.7 the political scenario in Bahia state in 2005 is mentioned as an advantage to be used,

### **Box 6.7 - Taking advantages of a political scenario**

#### **ISSUE - C**

**S22** - The government, led by the Labour Party, has as a principle to promote popular participation, and within this context, there have been participatory budgets. CAPA has been the only regional Forum that advanced itself while all other initiatives failed. CAPA needs to become more participatory [within the public administration]. In the past, the project for participatory management was boycotted by the public administration because of political motives. The political moment is favorable now, and after the new government has initiated its administration, it is time for CAPA to approach the authorities again.

**S23** - There should be a collective effort in order to have access to public financial resources. The assessment of the profile of each organisation should be done so tasks and responsibilities should be settled, and then the allocation of public granted resources should take place according to the division of these tasks. The new political scenario in Bahia State is opportune to negotiate the 'decision power status' of CAPA and make it a deliberative Council.

**S24** - The Committee should approach SEMARH (the headquarters) and ask for the permanence of Marco Aurélio as the general manager of the APA of Itacaré because of the political scenario. The state Lower-House representative, Zé Neto may become a potential ally of CAPA.

**S25** - The Committee must stay united because as a unified body it will be a 'perfect body' for the current political moment.

I asked Intwee 45 for clarification of the sentence "the political moment is favorable" (see S22). S/he explained that the political shift in the government of Bahia State could open possibilities for dialogue and negotiations that would strengthen the Municipal Councils.

After 16 years of political administration of the PFL party in Bahia state, known as oligarchy *Carlismo*, Jaques Wagner who belongs to the Labour Party (PT) – the party of president Lula – has been quoted as a promising administration. Public bureaus, councils and agencies are expecting changes that will help them to implement social and environmental agendas.

CAPA members have voiced that changes in the legislation would allow CAPA to become a deliberative Council, with more ‘voice’ for mediation an issue of ‘legitimacy’ and ‘autonomy’. CAPA would have more power at district level. The Labour Party in Bahia has as a target to govern on participatory grounds (Intwee 45).

The changes are visible in 2007 with major environmental departments and agencies managed by politicians of the Green Party, a coalition party that is acting in line with the Labour Party (Intwee 45). S25 mentions that the power of CAPA resides in its ability to keep its members united.

Legislation frames the development of tourism of Itacaré, the social practices of the community and the private sector towards the environment. Institutionalised norms have been applied, monitored and enforced by an archetype of interlinked bodies and groups at the local, regional and national level.

Some laws and documents they have been revised, updated and reformulated on a participatory basis to cope with the demands, reality and context of a location (i.e. Itacaré district) as, for example, the Plano Diretor, a Major Guidelines Plan for Itacaré.

In Box 6.8, S26 and S27 expose the financial fragility of CAPA. Its members have struggled to find steady financial sources to sustain CAPA’s operations. In fact, most of its members participate voluntarily without getting remuneration and/or reimbursement for their time and transport to the meetings. Some members live kilometres away in neighboring districts.

Without financial means, CAPA can become vulnerable and limited in its scope for actions. Some member-organisations such as Yonic and ITI as well as the City Hall have given some logistic support for CAPA to continue its work.

### **Box 6.8 Financial constraints**

#### **ISSUE – D**

**S26** - The district attorney confirmed the availability of the allocation of public financial resources to CAPA; the resources result from environmental fines.

**S27** - The attorney does not have autonomy for unilateral decisions on the resource. The decision is taken by an Administrative board of the Court that defines the re-allocation of this type of resource. Moreover, the bureaucratic procedures to have access to this resource imply expenses of up to 50% of the claimed amount. Alternatively, to solve the financial constraints of CAPA, some products could be created to sustain it operationally. In addition to that, owners of hostels should financially contribute to CAPA. Yonic will help with the publication of three editions of the Bulletin of APA. Then, CAPA will not have any financial problems.

In Box 6.9, S28, S29, S30, and S31 discuss the institutional resources and means to be used to change a currently undesirable scenario. The scenario is the negative impacts caused by the construction of the road Itacaré-Camamu, called BA-001. S29 mentions the environmental shortcomings of constructing the road.

The first statements suggest very active interventionist actions backed by lawful instruments (breaches in the legislation). S32 alerts that CAPA may not be eligible to deal with the issue itself because ITI has already taken an institutional position about the road. There would be a conflict of decisions between ITI and CAPA. However, tension is observed within CAPA with S33 being adverse to the remarks of S32. Mediation can be clearly observed as S34 comes up with a third choice. Rather than blocking the BA-001 road, the group should work on a new route that would bring more benefits while reducing public expenditures in its construction. Statements S32, S33, S34, and S35 denote how members act and react to each other, and how they try to manage conflicting positions. Power is clearly negotiated through dialogue, arguments and rhetorics that bring new possibilities to avoid stalemates. The summary (*in italic*) is the group consensus about the building of the BA-001 road. Statement 35 refers to ‘consensus’ as ‘group discourse’.

### Box 6.9 New road construction: Camamu-Itacaré

#### Theme E

**S28** - The construction of the new road linking Camamu to Itacaré (BA-001) can affect the small communities that live alongside the road.

**S29** - The road (BA-001) will bring huge impacts with about 22 km of deforestation. Yonic is training gardeners that can collaborate in the reforestation alongside its edges. Deforested areas must be compensated with new vegetation there. The road planning does not include tunnels and aerial bridges for a safe transit zone for the wild animals.

**S30** - It was asked whether or not the decline of the construction, based on the General Guidelines for Development (Plano Diretor), could block the liberation of the IDB’s loans for the road (64% of all estimated resources).

**S31** - In case the construction is not approved the loans are not awarded. The elected state Governor did not manifest himself about the continuation of the policies for promoting the tourism sector on the Bahian shore.

**S32** - ITI has an institutional posture (decision) about the new road (BA-001), and ITI understands that CAPA should not manifest itself about this issue to the new state government.

**S33** - The Executive Committee of the APA has legitimate representation, and this representation enables CAPA, it gives power to CAPA.

**S34** - Rather than trying to block the construction, the community could suggest some changes in its original direction so it can cross Taboquinhas village. The change will reduce the initial costs and will enhance benefits by linking two key urban locations (Itacaré-Taboquinhas).

**S35** - For the next meeting, which elements about the road should be regarded as a group discourse to be used by the Executive Committee?

*The group began a debate about the possible new path for the road, and they concluded that the space between Itacaré-Taboquinhas-Ubaiataba should be paved, then allowing the continuity of the original road plan. On the other hand, the space between Itacaré and Camamu should be paved which would reduce its construction costs.*

CAPA is a body for debating and negotiating issues. It has open sessions. It is participatory and democratic but some members took the broadcasting of the meetings with reservation (Box 6.9.1). They fear that the real-time transmission of the whole process of decision-making in CAPA can become a disadvantage with other local actors aware of individual positions. CAPA has as a basic principle to act as a single body, and the personal views and positions are expected to be in line with the majority, the collectivity. By broadcasting the meetings, the members would become susceptible to attacks and coercions, with “possible politicization of the issues” (S37).

### **Box 6.9.1 Broadcasting the meetings via radio**

#### **Theme F: Broadcasting the meetings via radio**

**S36** - The meetings of CAPA could be transmitted live on the radio.

**S37** - In the last meeting, the Committee found the idea of radio transmission as potentially dangerous in the face of possible politicization of the issues.

**S38** - It was decided in the last meeting that CAPA needs to improve its political management.

**S39** - Most members of CAPA are not prepared to understand the discourses of the Executive Committee.

## **6.8 - Plano Diretor (Municipal Master Plan)**

The *Plano Diretor* is a basic (but essential) instrument for Municipal policies on development. It provides guidelines and orientation for the public administration and for the private sector in terms of sustainable occupation of rural and urban areas.

The *Plano Diretor* aims at securing public services that can improve the quality of life of the population. In order to be validated, it must be locally devised, and with a democratic and participatory basis. *Plano Diretor* was established by Federal Law 10,257 on the 10 July of 2001, and it has an interventionist role in municipal administration; “all citizens are eligible to participate and intervene in the reality of their municipality” (Ministry for the Cities, 2004, p. 13). Its elaboration is compulsory if the following conditions apply: i) the Municipality has more than 20,000 inhabitants; ii) the district is part of a Metropolitan area and of an urban conglomerations; iii) the district has areas of especial attractiveness for tourism; and iv) the district is located in areas where economic and business activities can cause significant environmental impact at a regional or national level (Ministry for the Cities).

The document regulates procedures and areas of priority which the public administration has to take into account for decision-making. It sets the goals and strategies to achieve such goals; and *Plano Diretor* offers instruments that can guarantee its implementation. However, it is not a standardised document for ready-to-apply. Each district will have particular clauses and topics for its *Plano Diretor*.

After being publicly discussed, the document is submitted to the Municipal Common Council for approval, and it must be endorsed by the Mayor. The final version becomes a binding Municipal Law, a ‘pact’ between the society and the



Executive and Legislative Powers (Ministry for the Cities). The Judiciary is advised to get fully involved in the whole participatory discussion, to make recommendations, and to help in its writing.

In Itacaré's case, the preparation of the *Plano Diretor* has been a subject of discussion in the Common Council since 2001. CONDER was the government agency responsible to write the initial *Plano Diretor*, CONDER took the initiative because of institutional requirements for the construction of the road connecting Itacaré to Camamu (road BA-001).

In terms of resources, 40% of the expenses of the road construction should come from the public administration, and the remaining 60% should be provided by loans of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as part of an accord with Prodetur-II (Programme for development of the tourism sector in the Northeast of Brazil).

However, the IDB can only sign contracts with those Municipalities that already have an approved *Plano Diretor*. The document is compulsory but Bahia State did not wait for its approval and authorised the building of the BA-001 in 2006. Because the *Plano Diretor* of Itacaré was formulated by CONDER without public and participatory consultation, it caused tension between the NGOs, CAPA and other stakeholders. The Municipal Common Council has not approved the Plano yet, and the debates and amendments continue.

The following statements reveal the internal communicational and interactive processes, and serve as an avenue to understand the negotiation of power and consensus building. The textual content is part of minutes written during the meetings of CAPA (25 April 2007 and of the Municipal Common Council (15 May 2007). Before becoming publicly available, the minutes are submitted to all participants for approval or for corrections.

The minutes are a valid summary of the meetings. For textual analysis, key sentences are selected because of their 'meaningful purpose' and of their orientation for social practices.

In Box 6.10, S1 and S2 indicate that the version of the *Plano Diretor* (PDMI) did not meet the expectations of some members of CAPA. The document must have a participatory basis. Whoever belongs to the local public power should endorse and submit it to the Common Council. For CAPA the document is not legitimate because it was prepared by CONDER, that is, without popular consultation is thus unconstitutional.

The PDMI is of extreme relevance for shaping the development of nature tourism in Itacaré because it becomes a complementary legislation for the use of the land in an environmentally protected area (APA).

The document mediates and sets to what extent the community and the private sector can intervene in the natural landscapes. The group is concerned because City Hall had begun a series of constructions in Itacaré not waiting for the approval of the PDMI: "the hurry for the infrastructural constructions seems to be a strategy from the Municipal and State public sector to avoid interventions and embargoes by using

the PDMI as a legal resource, but I am not sure” (Intwee 45). This aspect is also mentioned by S4 and S5. S6 reports the passivity of the community towards the PMDI.

Is the submissiveness the result of a lack of interest of the community or it is the lack of information about the PMDI?

ACERTI and some other members of CAPA decided to disseminate the content of the PMDI widely as well as to debate it with the locals in open forums once a week. However, ACERTI's initiative was criticised (S7 and S9), and created a tense environment within CAPA (S7, S8, S9, S10, S11).

Shortly after, the group continued with the meeting (S12, S13) but aware of diverging positions about the newest network. As one member underlined, “contentious positions within the CAPA are contemptible” (S10).

### **Box 6.10 - CAPA, Plano Diretor of Itacaré (PMDI)**

#### **CAPA and the Plano Diretor of Itacaré (PMDI). Meeting on the 25 of April 2007**

**S1** - Boto Negro: read keynotes about the development of the Plano Diretor of Itacaré (PMDI). The version of the PMDI as of March 2007 seemingly did not abide legal procedures, and so it cannot be submitted to the Municipal Common Council (MCC) because that version has no legitimacy.

**S2** - SOS Itacaré: The submission of the new version of the PMDI to the Municipal Common Council is irregular because of procedural inadequacies. The submission must be made by a convenor, and this person must belong to the Municipal Public Power. The correct procedure would be that the City Hall take initiative about the PMDI and, in the last resort, contracts an outside department or agency (i.e. CONDER) to prepare the content.

**S3** - ACERTI: We need a precise mapping of Itacaré in order to properly discuss the PMDI.

**S4** SOS Itacaré: City Hall has many ongoing infrastructural projects that should abide by the PMDI. Urgent actions should be taken about it.

**S5** - Participant: staff of the CONDER found big irregularities in almost all public constructions of Itacaré.

**S6** - Participant: a personal feeling of resentment because of the slow process related to the PMDI since 1991. The population has been passive not fully involved in the debates about such an important issue.

**S7** - ITI: **The initiative of ACERTI to discuss the PMDI with the community is not valid. This initiative should be taken by CAPA.**

**S8** - ACERTI: rejects Cláudia's comment and classifies it as a mistake. The aim of ACERTI is to keep the population updated about the PMDI.

**S9** - Boto Negro: disapproves the formation of a new 'associative network'. Such a network already exists through CAPA. The Working Group to deal with the access to the beaches became a 'parallel power' within the CAPA.

**S10** - *Yonic*: contentious positions within CAPA are contemptible. The most important thing is to keep the community informed about the PMDI. The Plano Diretor needs to be changed; its new version must be prepared and approved by everybody. In a rejection to Cosme's and Claudia's views, I [Branco] believe that any member of CAPA has the right to act outside the Council.

**S11** - Boto Negro: Each organisation [member] has to assume its institutional position but the organisations [members] cannot make use of the 'name CAPA' for backing individual actions.

**S12** - SOS Itacaré: Will CONDER financially support the review of the PMDI? It is important to know whether there will be resources for participatory review or not.

**S13** - SOS Itacaré: The Plano Diretor copied obscure clauses from the document PRUA rather than improving and adjusting it to the zoning system of the APA. There is a risk the documents of the PMDI will be manipulated after being approved by the Legislative.

*After discussion the Council of APA agreed that the final version of the PMDI should be numbered, officially stamped and signed on every page.*

For some members, the existence of this network can weaken the acting power of CAPA because it transfers the discussion of collective issues and agendas to other 'public forums'. The fear is that the network may create a power parallel to CAPA (S9). For them, the power of CAPA is the alliance of its members. On the other hand, some members believe that CAPA is not entirely a grassroots space because not all dweller associations and the poor participate in the Council (*Intwee 45*).

For some, CAPA should be fully participatory and lead the participatory agenda. According to one interviewee, the newest network (*Rede de Associações*) initiated by ACERTI was not expected to overlap the role of CAPA. It was created to fill gaps in the public debates about specific matters for Itacaré such as the PDMI. Members are not leaving CAPA, it is not tit-for-tat because of internal divergences; rather, some organisations are just seeking to be multi-participative in various forums (*intwee 45*; S8). CAPA is more environmentally oriented. Besides, some fellows believe that the correct action is to have 'pluralism' in terms of power representation (*intwee 45*).

CAPA has led many sessions and meetings since its creation, with important decisions, great ideas, and great proposals for projects. However, In practical terms CAPA does not have the means to make the public sector (City Hall, Common Council, etc) take their resolutions into account for decision-making because CAPA is not a deliberative body; it has no institutional power to move ahead with its resolutions and consensus. In the long term, this fact is discouraging. *Intwee 45* added that the creation of the Environmental Council of Itacaré (CONDEMA), with deliberative power, will become the centre for public debate.

Meanwhile, CAPA has studied ways of changing its legal status in order to become a deliberative forum. According to *intwee 47*, the Municipal Common Council of Itacaré already approved the creation of CONDEMA, and it will become effective in 2007.

The Network of Associations (*Rede de Associações*) has 17 participants and was primarily founded to discuss the PMDI. It had its first meeting, and the participants discussed a number of items related to the PDMI (On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2007) including what is underlined because of relevance to tourism development: 1) creation of a Municipal ecological Park; 2) the PDMI for the Taboquinhas district; 3) definition of a precise place for a public sport court and a Municipal stadium; 4) revitalization of the retailing area on Pituba street; 5) assessment of the compatibility of zoning areas of Itacaré, Taboquinhas and Serra Grande with the zoning set in the PDMI; 6) definition of the areas for the public market, central bus station, graveyard, entertainment centre, sport centre, public institutions; 7) the precise place, style and standards of the beach vendor hubs; 8) the acknowledgement of the Concha area (*Ponta do Xaréu*), currently privately occupied by one of the powerful stakeholders, as an area of public use; 9) transformation of *Porto de Trás* into a historical and cultural heritage place because of its value as a *Quilombola*, a settlement formed initially by African slaves in Brazil; 10) embargo on traffic of heavy vehicles in the historical areas; and 11) ratification of the local land-strip of Itacaré as a Municipal public property and to keep it in the current location (\*not to be transformed into a settlement area).

This list includes only the topics that were consensual among the participants of the Network.

Some organisations and individuals have used a list of emails of pertinent key actors for networking about issues of collective interest such as “the communication that the State governor was asked by letter to embargo the construction of a new luxury resort in the hill of the Rezende Beach (a private area), known as Fazenda Conchas do Mar, to be built by a corporate group” (email sent by Raiz Ecoturismo on the 16 of June 2007). The main problem about virtual communication is that most dwellers of Itacaré still do not have full access to the internet.

In Box 6.11, the Councillors comment about their role in the PDMI. They reinforce the transparent and democratic principles of the Legislative Power, and say that Itacaré community has been invited to participate in the open sessions about the PDMI. Power relations can be observed in MCC3 and MCC4. Some Councillors defend that public debates have occurred in the wrong place because the Municipal Common Council has the power of decision. MCC2 underlines the ‘absence’ and ‘lack of interest’ of the community about the Plano, “just some representatives of the vendors showed up”.

#### **Box 6.11 - Municipal Common Council: Issues on 15 May 2007**

##### *Municipal Common Council. Minute of the meeting on the 15 May 2007*

**MCC1 ACERTI:** asked the Municipal Councillors to approve the Plano Diretor after the community had been widely informed about it. ACERTI has organised weekly open forums to debate its polemic aspects. The local radio (Itacaré FM) was required to broadcast about the PDMI for several minutes.

**MCC2 Municipal Councillor:** the Common Council had invited the whole society to discuss the PDMI but just some representatives of the vendors showed up. As the Council has it approved, do not come here to accuse us – the Councillors - of any shortcoming in the PDMI.

**MCC3 Municipal Councillor:** the Municipal Common Council works with transparency, and the place for the organisations to debate the PDMI is here. The Council has open doors for the community. Any contribution [to improve the PDMI] is welcome, but the power of decision is of the Legislative.

**MCC4 Municipal Councillor:** the debates should be in the Common Council, the right place for it where the Councillors will decide about the PDMI, and the Councillors will take their time to assess the Plano Diretor in order not to cause damages to the population. It is expected that the amendments regarding Taboquinhas should be taken into account, otherwise the PDMI will not be approved by me [Noêmia].

**MCC5 Local dweller:** There is a misunderstanding because we are not saying you are trying to have it approved ‘on a tap’ (promptly); that is, quickly without being a participatory document.

The last version of the Plano Diretor (PDMI), not yet agreed and approved as on the 16 of June 2007, has roughly 500 pages, divided into three major sections. The

first one reports about the geographical, historical, cultural, and environmental aspects of Itacaré.

In the section, named ‘Analytical Scenario’, tourism and the environment are mentioned as the main promising activities, and together with cocoa plantation, are regarded as the pillars of an economic recovery for the district.

The second section of the *Plano*, named ‘Targeting Scenario’, has guidelines and proposals to solve current problems faced by the community, the public and private sector, and by the various organisations of Itacaré. The programmes for ‘housing’ the poor and the middle-class, and studies of impacts, and of efficient infrastructures, as well as the implementation of urban and natural revitalization, valorisation of the green areas, waste management, education, and improvement of the public sector have been set as the core for ordering a population boom in line with legislation of the environmental protection areas (APAs).

The last section of the *Plano* has a collection of 18 detailed projects, strategic for all sectors, to achieve the goals mentioned in section 2 of the PDMI such as the project for Municipal Forest Management. There are no projects directly related to tourism and ecotourism but the sector can be indirectly improved and managed. *Plano Diretor* (holistic, participatory and locally multi-sectoral) and the Sustainable Tourism Plan for Itacaré 2015 (managed by ITI and market oriented) complement each other, and should be worked with the City Hall, NGOs, Prodetur-II, CAPA, ITI and *Rede de Associações*, etc. One of the interviewees was asked ‘why’ the same issues are discussed in Itacaré over this two-year period, and the answer was: “because in Itacaré many people, particularly the powerful ones, have had the habit of overlooking rules, regulations and legislation, and then acting unilaterally as was convenient for them, running over collective rights, and this insistence brings old issues back to the arena, and the hope is that the *Plano Diretor* can be used to establish limits” (Intwee 45).

*Plano Diretor* can be said to be the last stage of a historical process of decentralisation of public administration. *Plano Diretor* can work as an instrument for implementing ‘local environmental governance’ (LEG), and can help to build a nature tourism practice with institutional orientation (Lima & Buszynski, 2011). LEG resembles some of Biehl’s (1998) ideas on ‘libertarian municipalism’, which consists of a revival of democratic possibilities dormant in existing local government, and to transform them into operative democracy (notes, viii). Decentralisation and *municipalisation* of power can be taken as a hallmark ensuring that local groups become accountable to the community (Lima & Buszynski, 2011).

In Brazil, since 1995 the public administration has passed through a process of debureaucratisation (Bresser-Pereira 1999) that transfers powers and public functions to civil society, private sector and non-governmental organisations. Debureaucratisation has been an embryonic stage of governance in which local demands for quick-fix managing solutions frame organisational and institutional decision-making and actions.

The independent councils and the NGOs have served as convenors in order to balance forces and build consensus. In this scenario, ITI was founded expecting to fill

an institutional gap in the local government for tourism development and, at the same time, to mediate three competing areas: ‘conservation’, ‘tourism development’ and ‘welfare/capacity building’. That is, to strengthen the economic means related to tourism or not. The Municipal Tourism Bureau of Itacaré has been poorly structured and without steady financial sources.

A subdivision of the City Hall, the Tourism Bureau faces organisational problems. It does not have a specialised and skilled team to support the actions and projects of the Bureau’s chief deputy. It lacks structure and infrastructure. The staff cannot work efficiently because they do not have physical space [room, division or building] in the Municipal structure. Under these conditions, it has been difficult for the Tourism Bureau to initiate and continue with its actions in Itacaré (Plano Itacaré 2015, ITI/HVS, 2005, p. 99).

Figure 6.4 (p.315) shows a multi-stakeholder collaborative scheme with individuals, organisations and the private sector acting in line for a participatory (eco)tourism development. Consensual actions are then positioned as essential for the institutionalisation of (eco)tourism.

Infringements and abusive authority are aligned with legal, political, and organisational arrangements. Under this archetype of public administration, the roles and actions of all stakeholders are defined and somehow delimited, but not coercively intimidated.

Three pillars sustain the democratic governing system: the executive, legislative and judiciary. Public independent forums work to form a fourth pillar to sustain the debates on communal issues.

The forums take place in the councils but are not limited to them. Each active non-governmental organisation in Itacaré has its own meetings, and they have views and positions that are discussed then later exposed for all members and participants of the councils.

The aim of the book is not to investigate the role and discourses of each stakeholder in Itacaré but to focus on areas in which ‘associational public spaces’ have been created. In this sense, the councils, with their forums, have served as a communicative and interactive platform through which various stakeholders deliberate about their views and negotiate actions.

The councils can be independent bodies or they can be a department of the public administration such as the Council of Tourism (COMTUR). They can also be attached to the public administration without being subordinated to it. For example, the Common Council of Itacaré Municipality is part of the political and party system and the members take a seat through an electoral process. It is an autonomous legislative body that provides the legal basis for the administrative decisions of the City Hall.

The Common Council has autonomy to allow or not participatory sessions through which locals can expose their views. These open-for-public sessions can help

the Municipal representatives to have a grasp on what the community thinks and expects from the public authorities about collective problems but does not participate directly in the public administration such as COMTUR.

The Councils can promote a redistribution of power locally. They can inform and approve guidelines that may determine social practices. Some of these guidelines can become part of a Municipal law or legislation, and enforced.

The legislative councils can have three levels of power: executive, deliberative and advisory. Their power status is defined by specific legislation and by internal organisation regulation. On the other hand, non-legislative councils such as CAPA can have either advisory or deliberative power only.

CAPA does not have executive power and some of its members have tried to make it deliberative. CAPA is autonomous and multi-representative, and is expected to operate in line with the organised segments of the community in order to become responsive and reactive towards collective demands. It works to identify the origins of the problems, possible implications and follow-ups, and to have its members lined up to list possible solutions with group consent.

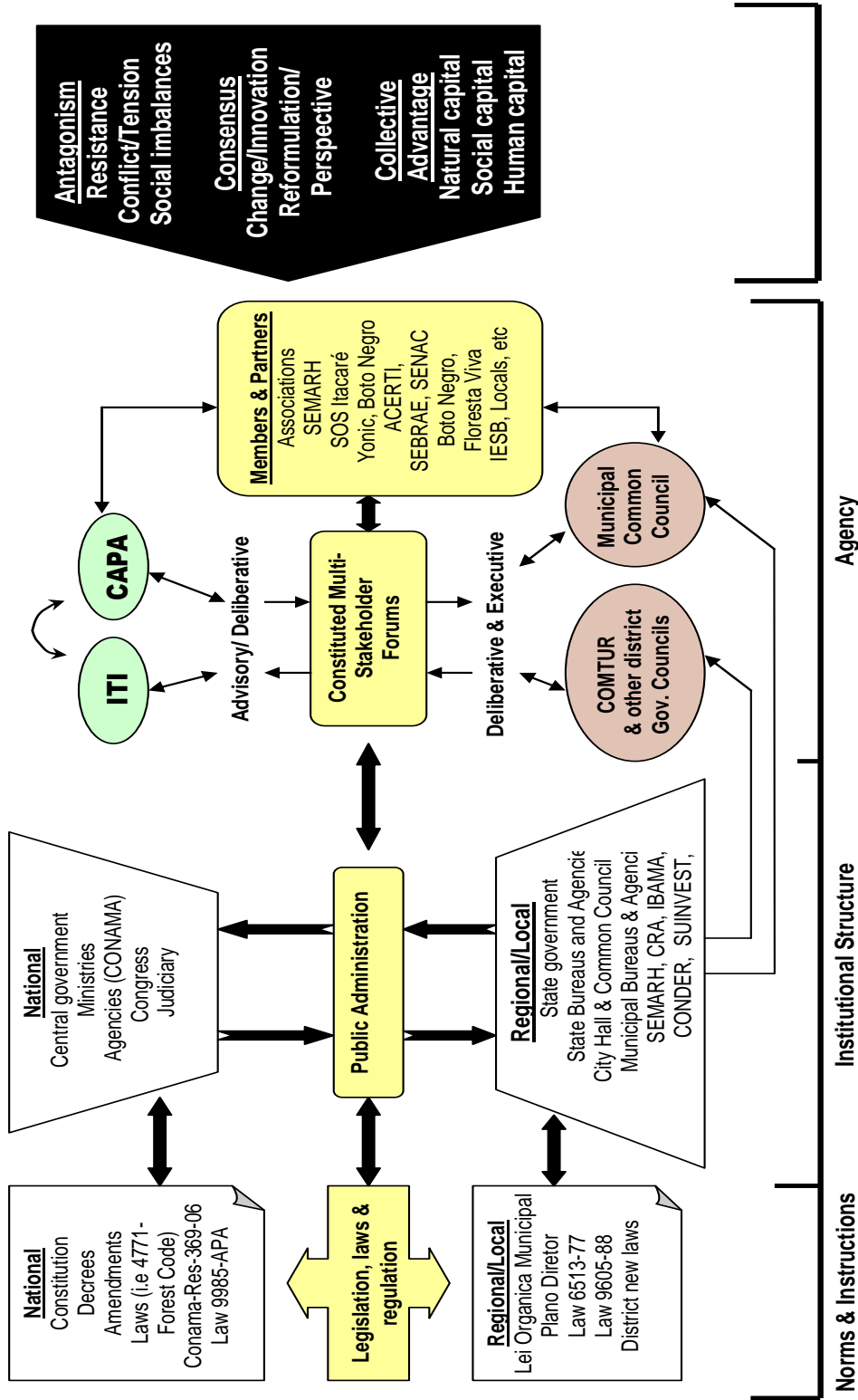
Group consent does not necessarily connote 'consensus' but postures of 'non-opposition' to a mainstream will; it permits the social construction of a 'group voice' (unit) in spite of ideological standpoints. They are 'passive' or 'subordinated' to others but choose 'silence' as a form of coalition; then they do not create obstacles for group action while they wait (as a minority) for the right moment to negotiate their views with the group.

Politically, CAPA has no means to intervene over the decisions in the Common Council. It helps to organise participatory debates and collect various viewpoints for consultation but without deliberating anything. It can advise and appoint members for the creation of 'working groups' to deal with communal problems.

In 2005, the working groups were created in two moments: i) to safeguard the free access to the beaches (GTAP), and ii) to monitor the construction of the Warapuru resort. CAPA is not eligible for legal claims, but its members and collaborating organisations can initiate litigation processes through the Judiciary system.

**Itacaré District**

**Archetype of Participatory  
Public Administration of an APA**



**New Social Practices,  
Achievements, Social control  
Retrogression**



## 6.9 - Conclusion

Ecotourism in the district is an evolving model for planning the tourism sector; a model with its particularity and uniqueness because it is emerging out of a highly contentious environment. The public forums have served as a platform for negotiating differences. In this process, stakeholder collaboration and interaction have contributed to strengthen the channels for dialogue and to develop a mutually acceptable proposal about 'how' nature tourism resources should be managed.

Social stratification in Itacaré shows powerful groups determined to manipulate public opinion and the political-administrative system but the disenfranchised groups decided to resist their manoeuvres. There are many institutions and organisations supporting the process of a participatory development, referred by Butcher (2007), as "advocacy of ecotourism as sustainable development" with communities taking a role and control about their own development (p.61).

For example, the existence of the Council of APA (CAPA), the creation of ITI, the plans to activate the Municipal Council for Tourism (COMTUR), the initiatives of the ACERTI, the implementation of a regional accreditation programme for sustainable tourism, the approval of the *Plano Diretor* and the vanguard work of many non-governmental organisations directly and indirectly dealing with ecotourism issues are inescapable evidence that 'nature tourism' in Itacaré has been formally structured. In fact, the Itacaré case reveals a process of institutionalisation of ecotourism activities through formal and informal arrangements.

ITI was created to market the village, articulate interests and enhance the tourism sector as a cluster. Plan Itacaré 2015 was designed to democratically accommodate historically opposing forces: locals, with social demands, and the market, with profit demands. Ideologically, the plan seeks to weave three extremes: 'communalism' (social affairs), 'conservation' and 'growthism'. The plan delivers messages of 'equity', 'inclusion' and 'economic prosperity'.

The rhetorics and storylines presented by HVS and ITI in Plan 2015 contain new acting orders for all stakeholders of Itacaré. This is what Fairclough (1989) called 'social orders' in a situational context (p.142). The new acting orders were defined and packaged by a group of consultants contracted by eight powerful business owners of the region rather than evolving from a participatory arrangement. It was not possible to confirm Walker's (2003) assumption that "the powerful stakeholders do not evolve as those who own the most resources but as those who provide interpretations of reality accepted by others" in Itacaré's case.

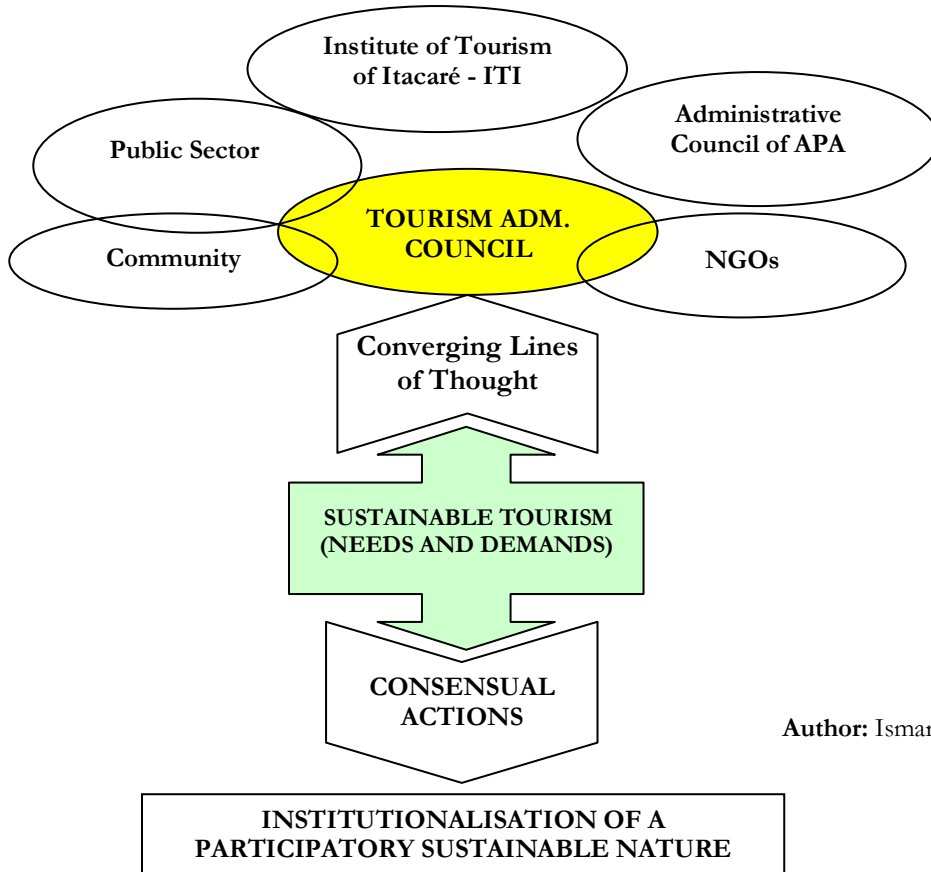
The historical and contextual events in that district show that the powerful stakeholders are those who own the resources. They have found ways to use their economic, financial and political instruments to impose their wishes and influence other stakeholders. However, I must recognise that Itacaré is changing, engaging in processes that are more democratic. The current scenario does not leave room for an oligarchic system or for distorted rhetorics. For the powerful stakeholders, the solution is to work hard to build trust and dialogue with the local emerging powers. It is of utmost relevance to remember that part of the successful democratisation and

institutionalisation of tourism practices in Itacaré result from a set of environmental legislation. Itacaré district belongs to an environmental protection area (APA), so its land occupation and transformation are regulated by sustainability parameters.

Forms of governance, mainly local environmental governance, should be implemented within a territory with specific laws and with the existence of deliberative associational councils (Lima & Buszynski, 2011). These arrangements should function as permanent institutional platforms for stakeholder communication and debate. It is equally important to have a free flow of reliable information about current affairs. If all these conditions are met power can be negotiated through trade-offs. Figure 6.5 shows the desirable collaborative scheme for Itacaré in which all the interest groups should be well-integrated for planning and managing tourism. Their integration is expected to mitigate biases, allowing the equilibrium of forces locally with social, economic and environmental (collective) gains.

As discussed in the theoretical and methodological chapters, the grasp on meaning-fabrication involves the comprehension of what is explicit in a text but also what is 'unsaid' (Fairclough 2003:11). The implied message of the chairperson was that the population and local organisations must be part of a decision-making process in which projects and government programmes are accepted by them as a 'collective enterprise'. I presume the chairperson was referring to a supra-party and supra-government management of (eco)tourism projects, controlled and monitored by independent, non-party bodies (i.e. ITI, Administrative Council of APA/Itacaré, etc). The implicit messages about tourism management here were three: 'collective enterprise', 'supra-party', and 'supra-government'.

In fact, ITI and CAPA fill a gap in Municipal tourism planning both in terms of physical structure, staff and as a market project. As awareness about the importance and role of collaborative arrangements for the dynamics of nature tourism management is increasing, Vernon et al. (2005) believe that the "emergence of local collaborative projects presents a rich vein for advancing the empirical and theoretical understanding of governance in tourism" (p.325). The functional model should integrate the key stakeholders in order to have collaborative scheme which would allow the institutionalisation of a participatory sustainable nature tourism development (see Fig. 6.5).



Author: Ismar Lima, 2008.

**Fig. 6.5** - Institutionalisation of sustainable nature tourism:  
An all-encompassing collaborative model for Itacaré

All these organisations, the councils, the public forums and the interactive processes situate Itacaré as part of a local environmental governance (L.E.G) in which groups try to make sense of themselves as political agents (Lima, 2002; Lima & Buszynski, 2011). The key learning issues about the Itacaré case have been:

- A multi-stakeholder governing system is a challenge because it is difficult to keep group cohesion even if there is a legitimate moderator. Internal divergences and group re-arrangement may create parallel power networks that can weaken the actions to achieve ‘collective advantages’.
- ‘Associational public spaces’ must have a ‘deliberative status’. If local actors get together for debating communal issues but their decisions and views are not taken into account by the executive and legislative administration in decision-making, such forums and debates become

pointless for most stakeholders to the extent that they discourage their participation and contribution.

- New meanings and acting orders can be created and disseminated by some groups in an attempt to influence other actors; however, this did not happen in Itacaré. The creation of ITI, Plan 2015 and STWI 2015 were not enough to change residents' perception about the structures of domination (refer to locals' opinion in the survey, at section 6.6). Two years after its foundation, ITI is still struggling to prove the sincerity of its storylines and intentions. Moreover, the meetings of CAPA are not free of tension. Trust is still an issue among stakeholders in Itacaré for successful collaborative ecotourism management. Its legitimacy and acceptance will certainly require time and effort to build trust.
- Collaborative arrangements do not always result in a win-win situation for tourism development. They are often plagued by the lack of ability to reach consent on representational and legitimate interests. As underlined by Bramwell and Sharman (1999) and Huxham and Vangen (2005), differences in terms of resource allocations, policy ideas and institutional practices can hinder a fully participatory collaboration. This situation was observed in Itacaré with locals not having 'voice' across the structures and agencies that had decided their future and the future of nature; confirming Jamal and Getz's (2000) understanding that "a consensus process is no guarantee that the voices and words of a participant will necessarily be heard or incorporated into the decision-making" (p. 174).
- Even though the Administrative Council of the APA (CAPA) has been a catalyst organisation for collaboration and debates with multiple stakeholder participation, it has not been able to promote all the changes or adjustments Itacaré demands for its development. Clearly, CAPA is not a tourism development agency as it focuses mostly on social and environmental issues.
- Ecotourism development projects must be somewhat supraparty; that is, they must be discussed and implemented from the bottom up. By doing so, it is more likely that local actors will have a feeling that such projects belong to the collectivity, rather than being political initiatives with electoral outcomes. This is necessary because there is an incompatibility between tourism development, planned for 10 year cycles, and the political-administrative timeframe, usually of 4 to 5 years.

## *Chapter Seven*

# **Collaboration, norms, institutions and the role of small-scale stakeholders: Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel, Bay of Plenty**

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### **7.0 - Introduction**

**T**his chapter examines the collaborative links and the role of small-scale stakeholders to deliver operative sustainability on the ground in the tourism sector. It explores the links between the public and private sectors in nature tourism/ecotourism; it also seeks to understand whether the ‘normative element’ shapes these links or not. In this sense, the role of legislation and of government bodies is part of the investigation.

The chapter is focused on New Zealand, through Kuaka NZ Education Travel, in the Bay of Plenty is one of the companies in the tourism sector working collaboratively with environmental government bodies, volunteers and community in order to achieve nature protection. Kuaka has a steering role in the process. It links various stakeholders, projects and visitors for natural space restoration. It also promotes a profound reflection about how interactions between humans and nature ought to be.

Central to enterprise sustainability are ways to bring business, conservation and community enhancement into the same basket. Some small and medium (eco)tourism companies in New Zealand have been looking for innovative ways to deliver a nature encounter experience with sustainable collective gains. They move ecotourism into a more robust educational learning framework interwoven with hands-on proactive environmental projects for both visitors and local actors’ participation, “an active ecotourism contributes to the protection of resources and the improvement of the natural environment” (Bjork 2007: 38).

The model pushes us to reflect on the need for a paradigm shift about the methods of learning about nature. Human encounter with nature should not be superficial and casual, but rather in-depth with the perception that we are not outside the ecosystem but essentially part of it. This is the main concept that drives the work of Kuaka NZ. Visitors come to New Zealand to get involved in projects that help them to understand the values of nature.

With the Kuaka case study, two collaborative models can be outlined: one that links the local and regional non-governmental stakeholders and a second model that covers the connections between the Local Government, the District and Regional Councils and the Department of Conservation (DOC) and its concessionaires. Both models can be classified as ‘institutional and formal’ and ‘informal and unstructured’.

Can the essence of collaboration build a level of dialogue among the stakeholders consistent enough to overcome contentious areas in the tourism sector? Can it help to accommodate ‘marketing rhetorics’ with ‘conservationist aims’?

‘Image construction’ and ‘power politics’ are inherent aspects of nature tourism, and the contentious areas lie in the discourses for conservation and in the marketing campaigns that “build” and promote landscapes (destination). An area of tension exists in the absence of a common language among government, environmental institutions, tourism organisations and tourism service providers.

Bureaucratization, unilateralism and authoritative decisions add layers of complexity to existing interactions, and make communication difficult. If information does not flow, stakeholders tend to waste time and money solving individual problems that otherwise would be easily approached and solved collectively.

The management of tourism resources requires the union of those who depend on it. Tourism resource management must produce collective gains for a destination. Business community and nature must maximise positive outcomes.

Nowadays, ‘destination’ has been perceived not as a ‘place to go’ but as an experience and experiences can be the same (or even better) regionally. In many nations, there is a change of focus with visitors looking for ‘experiences’ near home, and avoiding long haul trips. In this case, the ‘domestic market’ becomes of great value for the tourism industry with government incentives.

The challenge is to add value to New Zealand as a destination, in a way that it continues to be a unique experience (not only a destination), and by doing so the NZ operators expect to compete against a ‘fierce international tourism market’.

Kuaka New Zealand has explored ‘environmental education’, ‘environmental interpretation’, ‘hands-on resource management’ and ‘conservation inputs’ as a differential with other domestic and international destinations. Culture as a factor has been of great appeal. Educational nature tourism has been the driver. Kuaka New Zealand, as a concessionaire, also provides grounds for understanding the importance of the concession system for the systematic use of public land.

The aim of this chapter is to identify and outline a model of collaboration in which a small-scale enterprise has had a pivotal role in harnessing business, conservation, locals and visitors in the same project.

Central to the research is identifying ‘how’ the stakeholders’ practices in nature tourism have been shaped. The focus is to understand the dynamics of a collaborative scheme as well as to capture ‘how’ partnered stakeholders can be proactive for sustainable practices in tourism. Attention is also given to processes and messages that promote ‘human attachment to nature’.

Collaborative schemes supposedly create platforms for ‘institutional learning’ on how to deal with the complexities of environmental management (Schuet et al. 2001). New ideas and approaches to management such as ‘adaptive management’ and ‘corporate social and environmental responsibility’ (CSER) that have been applied in the public and private sector and are part of this study.

The cultural, historical and institutional differences between the two countries would make a comparative approach highly complex. The case studies are rather parallel investigations. They are self-contained cases to provide evidence on whether ‘public associational spaces’ are necessary structures to strengthen multi-stakeholder decision-making in nature tourism development.

Four key questions guide the analysis: 1) have the collaborative schemes in the tourism sector created a network responsive to the conservationist demands of the government bodies and legislation? 2) have the environmental outcomes of the small-scale tourism enterprises been externally framed by legislation? 3) can the collaborative arrangements in New Zealand accommodate the various interest groups in nature tourism activities? 4) to what extent have the dialogical and interactive processes in nature tourism produced new meanings and perceptions about nature?

One assumption is that the desirable environmental standards of the tourism enterprises have been shaped not by environmental legislation itself, but by a collection of contextual and individual factors. The best environmental performance is not a result exclusively of normative instructions.

Another assumption is that in a multi-stakeholder collaboration, the ‘collective gains’ just happen if the local actors are prone to make concessions while ensuring their position and interests; a successful partnership is thus one made of four elements: trade-offs, trust building, perceived collectivity, and negotiation of power through dialogue. Steady channels for communication make the interactive processes more transparent; by knowing the other better, understanding the thinking and intentions of the others involved, negotiations can take their course free of needless suspicions.

### **7.1 - Kuaka and Action Stations: An outline**

Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel company was idealised and founded in 2005 from a split between the owners of Action Stations (founded in 1994). Kuaka NZ and Action Stations are business ventures in tourism and environmental education (see section 7.3). Kuaka NZ has been working with international students and visitors while Action Stations currently focuses on New Zealand schools. They are independent enterprises with similar management and analogous techniques to promote environmental education. Some of my fieldwork and part of the data collected occurred when Action Stations was still managed by both of its owners: Doug Farr and Ken Hoare.

My first contact with Action Stations took place in October 2004, and I have followed them closely for almost three years, during which I got fully involved in some of Action Stations’ and Kuaka’s operations on the ground. The organisations have

committed themselves to tailoring specific educational programmes to different groups, including marine and coastal experiences, tree planting, forest and volcanic/geological learning and activities, resource management and other various environmental components. The fieldwork occurred in the Kaimai ranges, in the Bay of Plenty; in the McLaren Falls Parks with its botanical collection of trees and a variety of bird species; the Puketoki reserve between Tauranga and Katikati; Mount Maunganui; Papamoa coastline; the P'Anson Reserve; and the Omokoroa coastline region.

I decided to continue with Kuaka New Zealand after a split, rather than with Action Stations (or keeping both), because of Doug Farr's interest in this investigation and his wishes to become a genuine case study. Moreover, Kuaka NZ developed new models for collaboration and for delivering sustainable practices by linking tourism and conservation. Both Kuaka NZ and Actions Station developed an operating model that gathers all the components of ecotourism but advances the concept further with a strong emphasis on environmental learning and conservationist hands-on activities. It is featured as an 'educational ecotourism' model. Within the company, this view is not shared by everybody. For some, the way Kuaka NZ presents nature and instructs the visitors is 'environmental education travel' rather than 'ecotourism' itself.

## **7.2 - Nature tourism in New Zealand: Normatisation and institutional archetype**

A comprehensive explanation of the institutional archetype of tourism in New Zealand is critical in order to demonstrate the links between and the position of small-scale tourism service providers in the country's context. Moreover, various pieces of legislation create boundaries for the businesses, including tourism enterprises, which inform them about environmentally desirable procedures and practices. Tourism for New Zealand became a reality in earlier times. It began as the European settlement in 1840 brought curiosity and notoriety to the new British colony.

New Zealand's natural wonderland and its opportunities for exploration soon drew the adventurous traveller as well as the European immigration to its distant shores. Hampered by lack of access, accommodation, facilities and publicity, the path of the tourist was long, arduous and expensive in the latter half of the 1800s. But this was certainly no hindrance to those intrepid travellers with a sense of spirit, adventure and a few spare pounds (100 Years Pure Progress: 1901-2001: 6-7).

The institutional structure for tourism management started with the creation of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts in February 1901, the first government body set up to specifically deal with the tourism sector. Its role was to develop and improve the facilities for international visitors. An infrastructure was built of roads, tracks, huts, bridges, jetties as well as hotels. The department also promoted New Zealand overseas and served as a NZ tourism office in Europe.



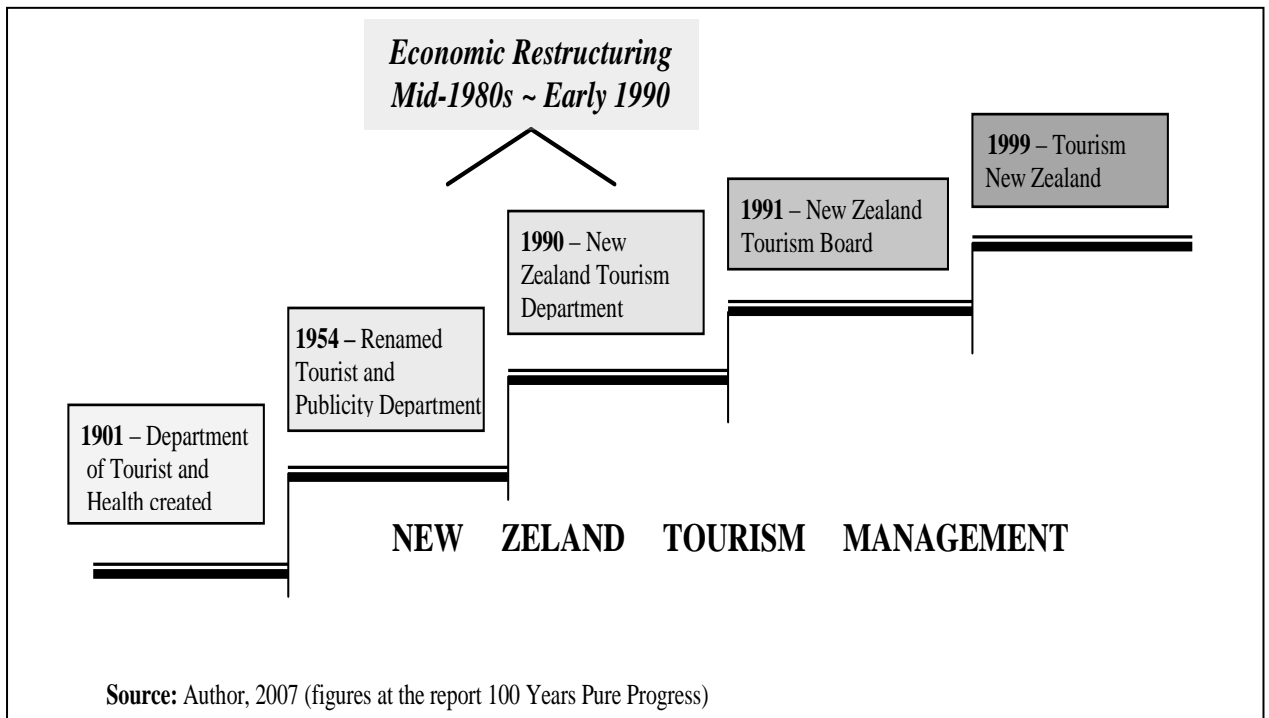
Locally, tourism was quickly linked to foreign exchange earning. The iconic places in New Zealand were formatted and marketed attracting waves of visitors, places such as geothermal Rotorua, Waitomo caves, Milford track, Queenstown and Whanganui River. Opportunities for adventure activities became the main fashionable attractions (100 Years Pure Progress: 1901-2001). Rotorua is the tourism birthplace for New Zealand. In 1882, the first government Bath House, known as Pavillion Baths (or *Rotorua Spa*) was inaugurated on the site of the Priest's Bath, advertised as 'Taking the Cure' because of its rumoured therapeutic thermal waters. The main challenge for the government was the maintenance of the structure. The Bath House was closed in 1966 and transformed into a museum for the public from 1997.

In 1954, the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts passed through reforms and changes and was renamed the Tourist and Publicity Department. However, the restructuring continued and in 1991 it was replaced by the New Zealand Tourism Board, and finally in 1999 was named 'Tourism New Zealand' responsible for marketing NZ worldwide but with special focus on some European countries (UK, Germany, France), the United States and Australia. Japan and South Korea have been steady sources of visitors as well. The watershed for tourism in New Zealand occurred during the economic restructuring and public sector reform that took place from mid-1980s to the early 1990s.

During this period, "substitution of a stable government sector with a relatively volatile private sector surrogate" occurred (Shone et al. 2005: 86), known as *Rogernomics*, a *portmanteaux* word of 'Roger' and 'economics', initiated around the time of the 1984 General Elections (Douglas 1986). Hall (2000) situates that period of economic restructuring as part of a worldwide neo-liberal impetus, stranded between "political rationales" and "broader philosophical perspectives",

The economic reasons [...] have most been associated with a 'New Right', corporatist or neo-conservative economic agenda which in various countries was labelled as 'Reaganism' (USA), 'Thatcherism' (UK) or 'Rogernomics' (Hall 1999b: 274).

The restructuring cut subsidies and promoted privatisation (Douglas 1987; Hall 2007). A shrinking state meant "rolling back the extent of state service delivery functions and of involvement in the productive sector" (Stolte 2006:106). For tourism, it meant government withdrawal as the official owner and manager of the sector. The following timeline with key dates helps to illustrate the evolution of the Department between 1901 and 1999 (see Fig. 7.0). It is important to highlight that the 'New Zealand Experiment' in the 1980s has been regarded as "the most comprehensive and sweeping economic restructuring undertaken by any OECD country" (Bray and Walsh 1998, quoted in Hall and Michael 2007: 12). One of the key issues of the restructuring was the devaluation of the NZ currency which made the country more affordable to visit.



**Figure 7.0 - Historical brief: New Zealand tourism management**

In 1999, Tourism New Zealand launched its worldwide campaign ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ (see Chapter 4). It is a national organisation set under the New Zealand Tourism Act 1991, a Crown Entity, whose objective is to expand the tourism market for New Zealand as well as to maximize tourism long term in the sector. It shares the marketing ventures with Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs).

Ecotourism began early in the 1990s with Kaikoura Whale Watch, one of the first operations in New Zealand to work within the principles and philosophy of responsible and sustainable travel. Kaikoura village, which had an uncertain economic future in the 1980s, received its ‘eco’ through marine ecotourism. About 30 percent of the population is involved with ecotourism; the contingent working for 40 operators who bridge the encounter between visitors, dolphins and whales.

Other examples of ecotourism operators include the ‘Elm Wildlife Tours of Dunedin’, and the tours of the Otago Peninsula to visit an albatross colony and the rare yellow-eyed penguins, as well as the Waimangu Volcanic Valley (100 Years Pure Progress report, 2001). There are many tour operators and agencies throughout New Zealand that have already taken initiatives to be acknowledged as ecologically friendly. Among them, we find DOC’s concessionaires as well as independent companies affiliated with the Green Globe accreditation programme, or associated with the ‘sustainable tourism charters’.

Kuaka New Zealand is among those companies that have concerns about the social and environmental impacts of visiting, and have designed management tools to mitigate them. New Zealand is all about eco-tourism (Tourism New Zealand, Centenary Magazine 1901-2001, p. 37). 'Ecotours New Zealand' ([www.ecotours.co.nz](http://www.ecotours.co.nz)) has 21 affiliated ecotourism enterprises as in October 2007. However, Higham and Carr (2003b) identified 410 operations in the whole country (including adventure tourism) as being nature-based, but 257 out of 410 such as Catlins Wildlife Trackers and Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre for Tourism follow the principles of ecotourism with environmental interpretation programmes (p.239, 242-245).

At different levels, both tourism and (eco)tourism operators as well as government tourism bodies and departments abide by a set of specific legislation, mostly giving directions about how to manage and/or sustain the natural and urban spaces for the well-being of all, locals, visitors and the ecosystems.

In New Zealand, policies, legislation and institutions are said to highly influence the small-scale (eco)tourism operators. The majority of the documents mentions co-operation, integration, networks and partnerships as one of the means to deliver and achieve conservationist targets. 'Proposals for partnerships' seem to be the trend to overcome obstacles in resource management and governing.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA 1991) is the main environmental law used by the local and central governments to limit human impacts on the water, soil and air. The Act is a master document with which all other organisations (including the private sector) abide. Nevertheless, there are layers of environmental regulation and legislation that stakeholders get involved in for delivering acknowledged best practices in tourism.

The Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Tourism in association with the private sector and civil society have also created specific norms and codes for tourism management such as the sustainable tourism charters and the Tourism Strategy Plan 2010. Figure 7.1 has further details of the legislative pieces and strategic plans that deal with tourism and environmental issues. In practical terms, there should be a change of perception at the local government level, in that the RMA 1991 is "silent on the need to specifically plan for tourism. Some councils have misinterpreted this to mean that they have no statutory mandate at all to respond to tourism demands" (A Good Practice Guide, 2004, p. 10).

**National**

<b>Non-Statutory</b>	<b>Local Government Act (LGA)</b>	<b>RMA 1991</b>	<b>LTMA 2003</b>	NZ Walkways Act 1990 Conservation Act 1987 National Parks Act 1980 Marine Resources Act 1971 Wildlife Act 1953	Other Relevant Legislation Reserves Act 1977
NZTS 2010		NZ Coastal Policy Statement 1994 (Minister of Conservation)	Transit NZ Ministry of Transport		
Postcards from Home		National Policy Statement (Minister for the Environment) Draft NPS on Indigenous Biodiversity	-State Highway Strategy Studies	Department of Conservation (DOC)	
		National Environmental Standards		Visitor Strategy	

**Regional**

<b>Strategic</b>					
- Regional Tourism Strategy - Regional EDS	LTCCP	Regional Policy Statement	*Regional Land Transport Strategy	Conservation Management Strategy	
	Annual Plan Asset Management Bylaws	Regional Coastal Plan		Conservation Management Plan	Reserve Management Plan
		Other Regional Plans * discharges of contaminants * Water quality/quantity * Soil conservation * Natural hazards	Land Transport Programme	National Park Management Plan	

**District**

<b>Strategic</b>	LTCCP			
* Coastal Management Strategy * District Tourist Strategy * Economic Development Strategy * Open Space Strategy * Retail Strategy * Urban Growth Strategy * Transport Strategy * Recreation Strategy	Annual Plan Waste Management Plan Asset Management Plan Bylaws Annual Report	District Plan	Land Transport Programme	Reserve Management Plan

**Author:** Ismar Lima, 2008.

**Figure 7.1 - New Zealand Legislation dealing with environmental matters**

The Guide brings various examples of how sections 6 and 7 of the RMA can be translated into practical actions for tourism. It links the sections to the geographical areas of New Zealand that may demand such ‘government interventions’ and the enhancement of ‘tourist values’ (see Table 7.0). The list is not exhaustive taking into consideration that each district Council can interpret and innovatively look after its resources against depletion.

**Table 7.0 Practicability of RMA in nature-based tourism**

<b>Sections 6 or 7 of the RMA</b>	<b>Tourist Value Derived from Obligations</b>
6 (a) Preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, lakes and rivers	Far North and Whangarei beaches, South Island lakes, and Coromandel beaches
6 (b) Protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development	South Island high country, Whakatipu Basin, geothermal areas in Taupo and Rotorua, Waitomo Caves, The Catlins, Auckland’s west coast
6 (d) Maintaining and enhancing public access to the coast, lakes, and rivers	Bay of Islands, Viaduct Basin, Wairarapa coastal tracks, Rotorua Lakes, Kawerau and Shotover Rivers
7 (d) Intrinsic Values of Ecosystems	Kaikoura whale watch, Dunedin’s Yellow Eyed Penguins
<b>Source:</b> A Good Practice Guide, August 2004, p. 12	

In a survey (Table 7.1), tour operators were asked about which of the Acts, pieces of regulation and other ‘norms’ affect and influence their way of making decisions and manage their business. Twenty documents were cited, and the participants were asked to choose seven in order of relevance. They should select the seven most influential ones by numbering them. Table 7.1 shows that operators have had different experiences with normative documents, including accreditation programmes and charters.

It is not possible to identify which document influences the most the operators’ decision-making. For example, they can be affiliated to Qualmark but not to Green Globe leads to different perceptions and live different realities. Items D, E, F, H, K, and M were mentioned more frequently. Conservation Act 1987, A Good Practice Guide, RMA-1991, Qualmark and Green Globe have more indications by the operators but one cannot conclude that they are the most influential documents.

In another question, participants were asked about which accreditation programme and/or norms they would regard the most satisfactory in terms of promoting sustainability and environmental practices. Three respondents mentioned their own code of conduct, two cited Green Globe, one indicated Sustainable Tourism Charter; one, Qualmark and three others mentioned their individual attitude and decisions as the drives for best practices.

The respondents were asked ‘why’. One participant said: “none of these...[they are] only...first box exercises that may be useful for marketing but don’t necessarily describe the environmental friendly nature of the organisation” (NZSR-2). The codes of conduct, one respondent underlined, “...are the most useful but are not binding. Sustainable tourism charters seem to serve this but at present not in our area” (NZSR-5). Another highlighted: “no charter makes any difference. It is our decision to treasure our environment and social responsibility in our business. No legislation can give people this mindset; it comes from within” (NZSR-8).

**Table 7.1 - New Zealand tour operators and normative documents**

Piece of legislation, regulation, and norms	Ranking					
A- New Zealand Tourism strategy 2010 and/or 2015	1	7				
B- NZ Walkways Act 1990						
C- Sustainable Tourism Charters	1	1				
D- Conservation Act 1987	1	1	1	3	6	
E- Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991	1	1	3	4	5	
F- National Parks Act 1980	2	2	3	4		
G- Marine Resources Act 1971	5	5				
H- Wildlife Act 1953	3	3	4	4	4	6
I- Green Globe 21	2	2	3			
J- LTCCP	5					
K- Conservation Management Strategy	1	2	5	5	5	6
L- District Tourist Strategy	1	2	7			
M- Qualmark	1	2	2	4		
N- Recreation Strategy						
O- Waste Management Act	3					
P- Tourism and the Resource Management Act	1					
Q- A Good Practice Guide	1	1	1			
R- Bylaws	1	6				
S- Annual Plan	1					
T- None of those above influences or shapes my business	1					

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008

### 7.2.1 - Local Government Sector

Local Government is one of the two branches of government in New Zealand ruled by a statute but as an independent body, is committed to community well-being. New Zealand local authorities are composed of 12 regional councils and 73 territorial authorities, which in turn, comprise 16 city councils and 57 district councils. The councils' work is to plan and manage annual budgets, long-term financial strategies, funding, and accounting practices to ensure the value of assets, to separate policy from operational duties, and to prepare policies for resource management, biosecurity as well as land transport.

According to 'The Good Practice Guide', the planning tools available to Local Government for "successful tourism planning are likely to involve a combination of approaches under an umbrella vision or strategy and include both non-statutory and statutory approaches" (Local Government New Zealand, August 2004, p. 22). The Guide is also a response to the need for orientation on how to weave legislation and local decision-making in tourism planning in line with the RMA and with the New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010. The target is to have planning, decision-making and policies grounded in economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

The Guide makes a clear distinction between 'tourism values' and 'tourist activities'; the latter are activities developed and operated specifically for visitors, while the former refers to the local human and natural resources and their cultural and biophysical relevance to a certain location. In the document, the importance of planning for tourism is highlighted as,

The tourism sector is important and steadily growing in New Zealand. Tourism has substantial role in job-creation and export earnings. Over the 10-year period between 1990 and 2000, there was an 85% growth in international visitors and a 40% growth in domestic tourism. International visitor arrivals reached an all-time high of 2.25 million to June 2004. TRCNZ forecasts international visitor numbers will reach 3.02 million by 2009. The number of overnight trips made by New Zealanders is expected to reach 21 million by 2009 (Tourism and the Resource Management Act, August 2004, p.4).

The avenues open to the Local Government reside in the planning tools and in community support. The tools include the Local Government Act 2002 with consents for local authorities to embark on or provide funds for activities. The Act encompasses the Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), the Asset Management Plans (AMP), and Council funded projects and works and facilities (Good Practice Guide, 2004, p. 23-24). As part of its strategies, the Local Government have moved to join 'tourism strategies' together with the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), as for example,

North Shore City will develop a tourism industry that attracts high yield visitors to its unique blend of natural beauty, urban amenities, cultural diversity, educational excellence and heritage. Adopting sustainable practices and assuring that tourism strengthens local economic development and quality of life is a priority (p. 26).

According to Doug Farr, director of Kuaka NZ, the role of local government is exceedingly difficult because it demands a complex operational system with interplays with multiple stakeholders. One of the roles played by Kuaka NZ as a small-scale enterprise is to bridge any gap between local government and the community, easing the interaction and advising on ways for slotting in the local actors in decision-making,

The role of local government is inordinately difficult because it requires very visible operational activity in front of variously informed and affected stakeholders. The actual role of interfacing has no perceived expert value [...] Anyone can do it and everyone has an opinion. Therefore local government is prone to act with a closed hand and give away little. Kuaka NZ's role is aimed at supporting local government where they have their main pain – the interaction with and engagement of community (interview, 2007).

Doug Farr mentions the case of *Tangata Whenua* as a classical example of contentious relations between local community and local government as development threatens to prevail over 'conservation' without regarding the locals' wishes for land for the future.

The need for Tangata Whenua to ensure that they maintain the land for the future is often swamped by the momentum of development – an example is the construction of a sewerage line connecting Omokoroa to Tauranga city's system in the Bay of Plenty. This scenario mirrors many where the various needs of stakeholders are in conflict to the development momentum of a growing population (Interview, 2007).

### **7.2.2 - NZ Tourism Strategy 2010**

The NZ Tourism Strategy 2010 has been a key document for a 10-year timeframe, which sets out wide-ranging principles, goals and enablers to support the sustainable development of the tourism sector to 2010. The Ministry of Tourism has noted that Strategy 2010 can be better delivered through inter-government department cooperation and through partnerships; it is expected that a cross-sectoral network between Local Government, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), Tourism New Zealand, Māori Regional Tourism Groups, and the private sector can achieve that. As underlined by the former Minister of Tourism, Hon Burton, in 2001:

The partnership approach between the public and private sectors applied in the development of the Strategy has been consolidated and enhanced in the implementation process, and there are many examples of where this partnership input has been critical. For its part, the Government is pleased to have a strong sector to work with as we pursue the sustainable development of tourism as part of our wider objective of strengthening New Zealand's economy through innovation, sustainable development and regional growth [...] an alignment of responsibilities and a desire to work together to achieve shared objectives (Towards 2010, p. 2).



The New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010 was the first move towards partnered actions with the document being prepared jointly by the industry and government, and it marks the beginning of the process itself. The concept of Strategy 2010 is to have visitors and host communities engaged in the spirit of *manaakitanga* (hospitality), and to have *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) prevail for cultural and environmental preservation (Local Government New Zealand, 2004, p.5). However, the scope of the document is broader encompassing the mission of delivering on the country's promise as 100% Pure; the actions for it consist of quality from product inception to delivery.

The document underlines that sustainability is “the intergenerational management of the physical, natural, social, environmental and economic factors that make New Zealand unique for the enjoyment of New Zealanders and visitors” (New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2010, p. 8; 17).

In the former paragraph, four key-concept words are used: integration/collaboration, guardianship, hospitality and quality. The order words denote the areas and intentions for restructuring the tourism sector with the burden shared by public and private actors. NZ Strategy 2010 outlines four proposals: 1) commitment from Local Government to tourism in order to raise public awareness, to plan and to set relationships; 2) initiatives to increase understanding among tourism actors; 3) inclusion of Māori in the tourism sector at regional and national levels; and 4) partnerships between RTOs and other stakeholders to better align destination marketing and management.

Item four indicates the importance of weaving ‘destination marketing’ and ‘destination management’ in a way that tourism can grow steadily while being responsive to the pledges on 100% Pure NZ and being implemented according to the RMA (1991). As highlighted in the sustainable tourism charter project, given the present global awareness (and success) of this advertising campaign, “it is important that tourism operations ‘on the ground’ are consistent with the industry’s brand image” ([www.tourism.govt.nz](http://www.tourism.govt.nz)).

The project was built through a ‘bottom-up approach’. Participatory practices in tourism clusters can enhance the 100% Pure Brand in New Zealand. However, its achievement is linked to the private sector. For Doug Farr, sustainable tourism projects usually have “pretty generic charters as per the Bay of Plenty (BOP) one. Providing funds to kickstart sustainable practice cannot endure change if the model becomes RTO driven because the call will be to find more funding when the existing funding runs out” (Interview, 2007).

Despite many funding constraints, one of the most pertinent items of the document is its emphasis on the need for partnership and collaboration. The idea of ‘working together’ and maximize collective benefits has been a tendency at government level. For example, NZ Strategy 2010 seeks to weave ‘marketing language’ and ‘conservation language’ in planning and environmental management:

Essentially about cross agency co-operation areas of planning and environmental management, provision of visitor information centres, management of infrastructure, marketing and site management [...] there is a need to build and maintain effective working partnership between these players if a sustainable future is to be achieved (NZ Strategy 2010, p. 4, 5).

On 16 May 2007, the Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister of Tourism, together with Fiona Luhrs, Chief Executive of the Tourism Industry Association (TIANZ), launched the New Zealand Tourism Strategy to 2015. The document is an updated version of the NZTS 2010; it raises the same priorities, tools and goals for conservation, sustainability, and integration/cooperation among the stakeholders for a period of eight years (2007-2015).

However, Strategy 2010/2015 is just one of the government initiatives to improve the NZ environment holistically. The initiatives include strategies such as the 'sustainable water programme of action', 'the draft New Zealand energy strategy', 'energy efficiency and conservation strategy', and 'the clean air programme'.

The sustainable tourism charter project has been adjacent to but fundamental to policy planning for the best practices in tourism development. It came out of a joint initiative of two Ministries: Tourism and Environment, and has been funded from the NZ Tourism Strategy 2010. The target is to increase awareness in the business sector of the relevance of environmental management to the tourism industry, because the sector is mainly reliant on the environment, and resource-based, "rendering it capable of disrupting ecosystems and having significant impacts on tourist destinations (McNamara & Gibson 2008: 85).

The project is equipped to support stakeholders at the individual level. It embodies six major stages for sustainable practices, and since 2005 the charter project has been applied through six regional RTOs in New Zealand: Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing, Enterprise Northland, Lake Wanaka Tourism, Latitude Nelson, Venture Southland Destination Fiordland, and Tourism Bay of Plenty.

The New Zealand tourism industry is basically formed by small to medium-sized businesses, and the charters are flexible codes that allow the local business actors to cooperate and act on specific domains such as waste management, sustainable design, and/or sustainable practices in the workplace.

The individual motivations to participate in the charter have been the possibility of acquiring 'personal values', 'to achieve a differential in being marketed as environmentally friendly', and 'the opportunities to reduce costs'. Throughout New Zealand, there are 160 businesses signed up to the charter as at of March 2007 (Ministry of Tourism).

A combination of 'agent', 'structure' and 'norms' has given direction to the practices in tourism regarding conservation. 'Legislation' and 'free will' from the private sector combine to improve the quality of their operation. NZ government

bodies have worked as facilitators in the process either by providing funds or by operationally supporting stakeholders.

The charters work as a catalyst tool gathering tourism service providers nationwide, and keeping them indirectly networked around general guidelines for actions. This type of satellite network can possibly create standards for the private sector in terms of impact control.

If an area has a high concentration of tourism businesses oriented by the charter, their performance concomitantly has the potential to enhance the tourism product and the environment locally.

An interactive and collaborative scheme that weaves government needs and community expectations can help to break with the notions of 'authoritative planning' and reduce clashes and conflicts. The role for the small-scale tourism operators could be one of interlocking the delivery of tourism and of best conservationist practices in a way that fills the institutional gaps. Under-funded government departments and bodies have limits on ability to support all the needs for conservation. Working outside these constraints, the small-scale tourism operators can become enablers and partners to fulfil the demands of the RMA.

Kuaka New Zealand seems to have this enabling role in line with the councils and DOC, but, it is not engaged in the Sustainable Tourism Charter and Doug Farr raises two questions about that scheme concerning the financial means for sustainability in business, "Is giving money so businesses can take up sustainable practices an effective means of embedding these practices in the culture of the business? How do the businesses allocate funds to this area when the government funding stops after three years?" (Doug Farr comments, in December 2007).

Doug Farr's position of not affiliating Kuaka New Zealand to Sustainable Tourism Charter in the Bay of Plenty shows how complex it is to think of a holistic and harmonic integration of stakeholder for conservation. The companies have their biases and may not participate in collaborative schemes that have goals and agenda that put their interests at stake. In this case, there is an obvious competition to be a leader as a benchmarking organisation for sustainability in New Zealand, namely, Green Globe, Qualmark and the Charters.

According to Weaver (2006), a successful ecolabel is one that adds to a brand or product and, by providing an added value it sets benchmarked companies with a differential in the market, "a successful ecolabel is widely recognized and patronized by consumers and other stakeholders, thereby conferring the bearer with a competitive advantage over rival products that do not possess the ecolabel" (p.116).

The case shows the need to create communication channels for the negotiation of agendas and of power, in a way that these programmes can be integrated and strengthened. The benchmarking companies should play a more interactive partnered role, that is, they should not only assess and award ecolabels (passive role); they should rather work to have their members interacting and growing as a sustainable business, and through dialogue and debates to share their views, experience and expertise (active role).

### **7.2.3 - DOC, concession system and nature-based tourism**

After NZTIA, DOC has been the second “forefront agency” to deal with New Zealand tourism (Higham and Carr 2003b: 236) by managing a concession system for the commercial use of public conservation land for recreational and non-recreational purposes. The system is also a tool and avenue for public policy implementation at the private sector level. The goal of the concession is to allow activities that can develop regions economically without compromising the environment. Commercial activities are regulated by a set of norms to ensure the caring of New Zealand’s heritage and to limit adverse impacts. The concessionaires are expected to provide “an environmentally sound, safe, educational and enjoyable means of experiencing New Zealand’s spectacular natural and cultural features” (DOC brochure).

The concession is a mix of ‘user contract’ and a ‘partnering system’ between DOC and its concessionaires the New Zealand case study. It seeks to capture the various ways to promote conservation and environmental education through collaborative and interactive nature tourism. However, in a segmented survey with tour operators, three respondents said the concession system is a sort of partnership, two of them answered ‘no’, and four operators did not have an opinion about. The DOC’s policy (2000) is explicit about the concessionaires to provide ecotourism experiences pinned by three aspects: 1) mitigation of visitor impact, 2) learning opportunity, and 3) high quality environmental-cultural interpretation. There are four categories of concession: lease, license, permit and easement. The ‘permit’ is for a use timeframe of less than 5 years, and it does not confer “interest in the land” (sic!). ‘License’ is for more than 5 years and allows interest in the land (non-exclusive one). ‘Lease’ infers the exclusive use of land, and ‘easement’ gives the right to use land for transit/passage.

The type of activities the concessions are awarded include: guiding, commercial education/instruction activities, land transport services, accommodation facilities, and sport and adventure activities such as fishing, hunting, tramping, climbing, ski tours, kayaking, canoeing, bungee jumping, etc. In general terms, the concession can be outlined as: 1) awarding legal rights to enterprise(s) to carry out their activity on land or protected marine zones managed by DOC; 2) being a two-way advantageous relationship between DOC and the concessionaire; 3) securing a tenure term if the concessionaire has been acting in conformity with DOC’s regulation. The enterprise must be in harmony with four major pieces of legislation: the Conservation Amendment Act (No.2) 1996, The Conservation Act 1987, The National Park Act 1980, and The Reserves Act 1977. That is, the concession as a partnership must allow two issues: ‘conservation’ and ‘economic viability’.

Partnerships need consent not coercion. Partnerships between protected area management agencies and private commercial tourism interests can provide benefits for both in some circumstances; but only where all parties can decide freely whether or not to enter into any such partnership...Such agreements need to recognize that the aims and interests may be very different [between agencies and operators]...[but]...without threatening the core priorities of either: i.e. ecosystem conservation and public recreation opportunities (Buckley 2002: 79).

The partnering feature of the concessions does not make them free of tension. Some concessionaires take “an adversarial role with DOC” (Parr 2000: 10). Some prospective contractors complain about the lengthy and bureaucratic processes for getting the concessions running, and about the lack of parameters and criteria to assess the diverging issues. For example, tour operators in the Bay of Islands did not accept DOC’s decision to create ‘sleeping and resting zones for the dolphins’. The new rules created an intermission of two hours in the tour peak period. The zoning system would directly affect the timetable for visitation and potentially reduced the profit margin. According to one of the interviewees,

I cannot believe, cannot understand it, for years we are operating here, and now they come and say the dolphins need a spare time, and zones to relax and sleep. How come?! It is known that dolphins do not sleep, and if they want so, they can do it anywhere. Such a thing as ‘resting and sleeping zone’ came to us without proper consultation with the operators; moreover, small boats are going and coming anytime, and they are not noticed by DOC, just the big companies (Interview, Bay of Islands, 2005).

The concession system requires various procedures for application. This is in part because of the legislative framework. Another reason is the internal bureaucracy:

It took some months to have our concession [...]; it was a tiring process, many documents to submit [...] talks and talks [...]. We believe the application should not be like that too complex [...]. We continue with it because the business to guide visitors in the Parks was idealised and planned a long time ago, and we did not want to put it off again [...] after the exhaustive proceeding we have no complaints on DOC (Interviewee 16, Rotorua, 2005).

Another interviewee said that the problem of DOC was its hierarchical structure,

Too many bosses make it hard to deal with [and] ...a highly useful officer (at DOC) is in risk of extinction nowadays” (Interviewee 09).

In the survey, the tour operators were asked about three most important gains and three disadvantages of being a concessionaire of DOC and/or dealing with DOC. Table 7.2 has the answers they provided.

**Table 7.2 - Being a DOC’s concessionaire: Gains and disadvantages**

Main Gains	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking with other operators</li> <li>• Occasional workshops</li> <li>• Authentication of operation</li> <li>• Being able to show people what is left of our natural world</li> <li>• Working with people in DOC who are dedicated</li> <li>• Credibility and endorsement</li> <li>• Able to contribute to tourism facilities financially</li> <li>• It helps control and maintain quality</li> <li>• Assists with environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Provides us with access to information and a marketing edge</li> <li>• Good environment. Good walkways. Protection of animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has a major drawback for small operators – the cost of getting a concession – and, no provision for a trial before incurring the costs</li> <li>• I try and avoid them, unfortunately. My expenses with them have been unsatisfactory</li> <li>• Overly burdened with their red tape</li> <li>• DOC’s lack of funding to improve facilities (nothing happens) – or, if it does, it is very slow.</li> <li>• Time taken for DOC to act on any initiative</li> <li>• Cultural limitations by dealing with Māori</li> <li>• Not always reciprocal experience, depends on individual</li> <li>• Sometimes unreasonable restrictions</li> <li>• Inconsistency in dealing with different operators</li> <li>• DOC’s staff and their attitudes toward concessionaries</li> </ul>

**Author: Ismar Lima, 2011.**

An interviewee said that it has been DOC’s concessionaire for years and mentioned the importance of key contacts for business,

in New Zealand it is patent that you need to have friends otherwise things may take longer [to happen]. Without friends you go nowhere with your business (Interviewee 14).

This perception of having ‘strategic friends’ is shared by another interviewee, “New Zealand still has many things working and moving ahead based on friendship [...] it is possibly a cultural aspect of the country “ (Intwee 09).

In a review of DOC’s allocation of recreation concessions, Parr (2000) identified some weaknesses in the system. The issues involve visible inadequacies in legislation, in the setting of carrying capacity, in decision-making, in its hierarchical bureaucracy, administrative demands and excess, etc. The main issues are:

- “It is too reactive – it relies on external pressure rather than a considered strategy;
- It is driven and restricted by legislation;
- It does not provide guidance on when to stop issuing permits (when capacity is reached);
- There are inconsistencies (perceived and real) in applying for and negotiating concessions between conservancies and concessionaires;
- Links to recreation planning are inconsistent;
- The required ‘environmental assessment’ cannot fully provide evidences to say whether a commercial operation will be or not sustainable;
- The strategy level documents do not define limits on visitor impacts. For example, the statutory right of access to national parks limits this opportunity” (p.10, 11).

For Parr (2000), the real fact is that some tourism hotspots have had visitor numbers beyond their capacity, and DOC has used the concessions as an opportunity to control them but, the origin of the problem is that overcapacity demands optimization between ‘increasing visitors number’ and ‘tourism experiences in natural spaces’ (p. 13). This possibility requires redistribution of visitors in terms of ‘timing’ and ‘location’.

New tourism products and sites can be formatted to serve as managerial tools for balancing the excessive visitation demands for a few areas. Parr (2000) suggested “attracting visitors to alternative sites, or increasing the capacity of facilities such as toilets” (p. 13).

Some of the interviewees changed their perceptions about DOC within a period of three years. In the first interviews with them, DOC was mentioned as a tough government department to talk to. They also outlined DOC as extremely bureaucratic and not economically advantageous for a business that wished to expand because the concessionaires must pay fees to use the public land.

The perception was of rigid regulations, and no flexibility to manage nature tourism activities. There was a feeling that DOC put emphasis on its ‘watchdog role’ which compromised its role as a partner. DOC’s position and structure tensed up possible interaction.

This vision changed when Kuaka New Zealand found a key person who served as interlocutor for their business within DOC, and they decided to become a concessionaire operating in the Kaimai ranges, in the Bay of Plenty: In the survey, three operators see DOC with emphasis on its ‘watchdog role’ (rather being a partner), three other operators take it as a partner, two respondents classified it as being both ‘partner’ and ‘watchdog’, and one respondent did not answer. One tour operator

underlined: “if you are a reasonable operator you can work closely with DOC. If you think they are a “watchdog”, you must be doing something wrong. The owner of Kuaka NZ has his own experience, and the following statements summarise some of his key views:

We are now concessionaire...we have helped DOC with replanting...the relationship is smooth...DOC is underfunded and our model is highly effective for conservation for DOC. We are concessionaires but because of our agreements and our costs at operational level, DOC indeed pays some resource costs for us to have the volunteers maintaining the public assets, the bushes, the trails; It has been a somewhat fruitful and promising partnership in the Bay of Plenty (Doug Farr, 18 July 2007).

The concession system works on a cost-recovery basis. In Kuaka’s case, the DOC’s gains are not straight up fees but labour and the gains are the successful achievements on natural landscape restoration and revegetation; for Shelton and Tucker (2007), “longstanding controversies within conservation, highlights the utility of a restoration narrative, and promotes the development of sustainable nature-based tourism” (p.1, abstract).

As observed by Holzapfel (2003), and confirmed by my research, DOC does not employ the terms ecotourism and ecotourist explicitly; rather, the Department refers to the visitors and operators under a specific terminology. The concessionaires may choose to name their nature tourism activities as ‘ecotourism’ such as Waimangu Volcanic Valley.

For DOC, ecotourism is a marketing tool that does not translate DOC’s work on conservation,

No, we [DoC] don’t really use the word ecotourism a lot...  
But we [DoC] [...] we don’t refer to it [DoC administered land] as the ecotourism resource...And really it’s [ecotourism] related to the industry component [\*DoC employee], (excerpt quoted from Holzapfel 2003, p. 342).

In terms of tourism management, DOC participates by limiting the number of visitor and impacts on some specific sites using car park size, bunk beds in huts, access restrictions, and concession assessment and awards.

Apart from the concession system, DOC’s authority and participation in tourism development is minimum, restricted to “damage control measures [...] It proactively attempts to influence and balance the spatial and temporal distribution of visitor impacts in ecologically sensitive or crowded areas” (Holzapfel 2003: 344-345).

However, Higham and Carr (2003b; 2002) emphasize that the policy setting for ecotourism in New Zealand is ascertained regionally by DOC through the Conservation Management Strategies that impose conditions to the operators “providing [that] ecotourism experiences in the conservation estate will be monitored



not only in terms of mitigating adverse visitor effects, but also by providing [environmental] learning opportunity” (p.20).

The public-private partnerships (PPPs) through the concessions have strengthened the conservation role of DOC. The stakeholders, committed to follow the Acts that regulate operations on public land, end up serving as an extension of DOC in terms of caring for the environment, otherwise, they can lose the right to commercially exploit the area.

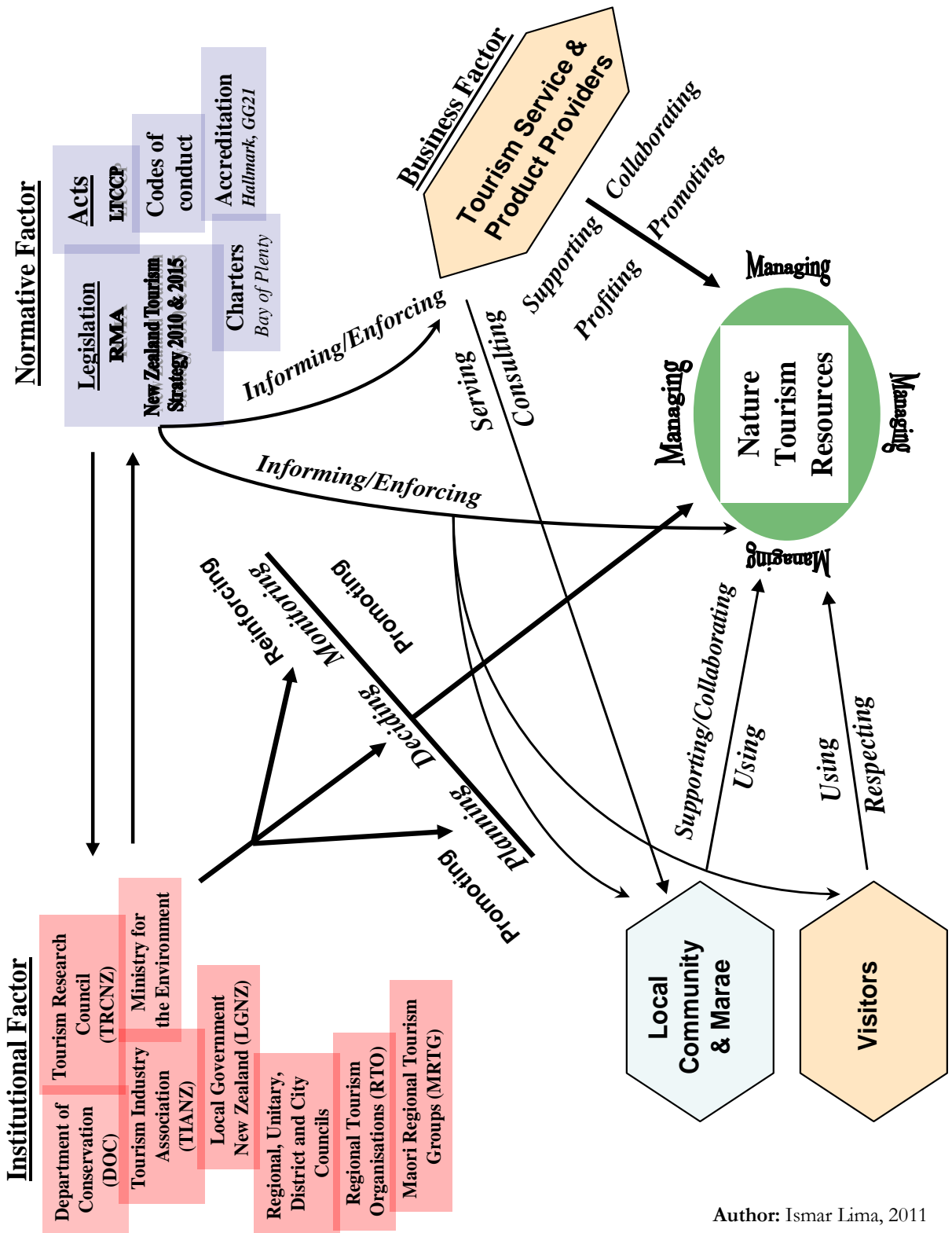
The partnerships/concessions have two obvious beneficial achievements: there is the delegation of power to the tourism service providers; it is a temporary assent for authority. In turn, DOC manages to sustain a monitoring role despite underfunding. However, in the survey one respondent highlighted: “not everyone deals with DOC. We are an arc concessionaire primarily” (NZSR-8).

The New Zealand tourism and ecotourism sector is thus directly and indirectly informed by a set of legislative pieces and by key government bodies. The private sector operating in tourism abides by an institutional and legislative mosaic through which roles and power are defined and distributed (Fig.7.2, P.341).

This mosaic helps to set a ‘conservation advocacy model’ that adds value to the community and its living environment as well as to the pristine areas. New Zealand legislation praises communalism in the use of land; that is, the interests of the community above the interests of the individual. The civic and public domain prevail. Enterprise sustainability demands social and environmental responsibilities. The notion should be mainstream for a praiseworthy business role. Partnerships are then complementary to the process. A strengthened partnered business is expected to play in favour of conservation advocacy (see Fig. 7.2).

The connections in Fig. 7.2 help to illustrate the various roles, functions and attributes of the stakeholders as well as the most influential documents for conservation. The institutions and government agencies create legislative pieces and they regulate with ramifications in the tourism sector. Tourism operators do not act autonomously, they have to comply with norms and standards that may be statutory or not.

The ‘accreditation programmes’ and ‘sustainable tourism charter’ are non-statutory elements that can help the small-scale operators to enhance their tourism activities by giving them a differential compared to the market. Moreover, those stakeholders who opt for the charters and eco-labels have in hand guidelines for procedures and standards that can contribute to conservation.



Author: Ismar Lima, 2011

Figure 7.2 – Advocacy conservation in nature tourism: Normative, institutional and agency links

### 7.3 - Kuaka New Zealand Environmental Educational Travel: A steering role in conservation

Kuaka New Zealand has been a business-operating model in nature tourism that has advanced the social and environmental outcomes at a regional level. It does not operate following the standards of a traditional ecotourism venture. Kuaka's system works on sub-contracts and pre-arrangements with groups, normally high school and tertiary students and teachers, domestically and internationally. It brings visitors from a 'passive enjoyable stay' into a more 'ecological and culturally proactive experience'.

Through interactive processes with locals and nature, 'visitors groups' can live through a singular experience which would otherwise be hard to achieve in a short period without the enabling role of Kuaka NZ Environmental Education. Other companies in NZ such as Action Stations also provide nature encounters with different levels of interaction and environmental outputs. The most noticeable aspect of Kuaka NZ has been its way of applying 'environmentalism' in visits. The company mediates the encounters with contextual landscape learning and hands-on 'eco' actions grounded on two items: environmental interpretation and environmental education.

Kuaka NZ works in collaboration with three main international agencies: the International Student Volunteer (ISV) in the United States and UK and the Singaporean Schools/College. With ISV, Kuaka NZ manages to have a partnership mixed with sub-contracts. ISV operates in NZ by outsourcing, and has Kuaka NZ as an in-bound partner to deliver the environmental volunteer programmes. Its main area of focus is the Bay of Plenty (Fig. 7.3).

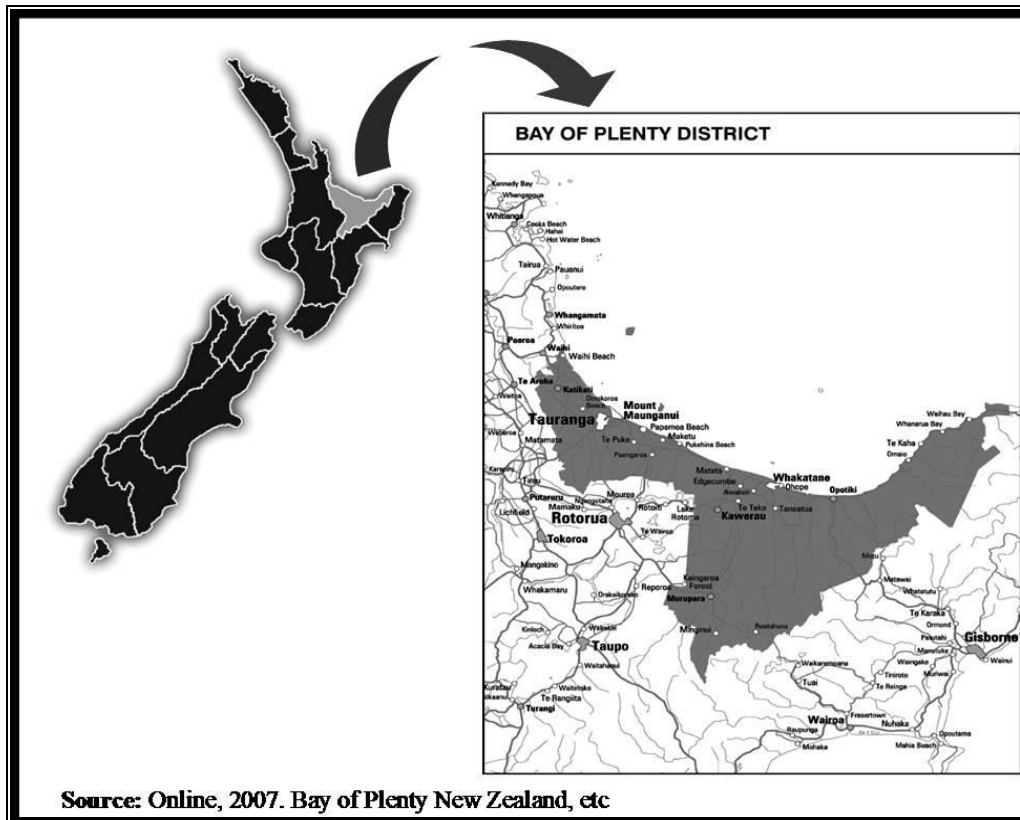
The Bay of Plenty is a region located alongside the picturesque Pacific Coast Highway, two-and-a-half hours from Auckland, with a shoreline between Waihi Beach and Whakatane outwards, and stretching to the Kaimai ranges in the west (see Fig.7.3). The Bay of Plenty has two main urban centres: Mount Maunganui and Tauranga, a harbourside city. According to one of the official Bay of Plenty tourism information brochures,

The region is one of the country's most popular destinations with visitors and locals alike, and in the past decade, has experienced a huge population boom with people drawn to the vibrant, coastal lifestyle [with] 2,400 sunshine hours a year [and] hiking through magnificent native bush, past waterfalls [...]. Swim in the crystal clear harbours, surf the rolling waves, enjoy the thrill of jet skiing (in the turquoise water)... an adrenalin adventure, a family holiday, a romantic get-a-way or simply want to soak up the sun on a magnificent beach, with a fantastic combination of Ocean, Spirit, Earth [...] (p.1-4).

The description of the Bay of Plenty's landscape, apart from the hyperbolic language and excessive use of adjectives, is true but not complete. The region has 'needed-for-improvement-areas' in terms of revegetation, erosion, and weeds. Kuaka

New Zealand works to assist DOC, the councils, and the conservation groups to approach and solve part of these problems.

The company receives the international visitors not only to enjoy the splendid landscape; but also to deepen understanding of environmental themes and to volunteer in the restoration of natural spaces. This way, Kuaka NZ works to bridge the interests of two sides: nature conservation by the government institutions; and the demands for nature learning by the visitors. The word ‘bridge’ is used because, literally, Kuaka NZ links organisations to visitors and to the local community, and vice-versa.



The cultural Māori immersion with sleepovers in the *Marae* is an important part of ‘getting connected’ to the local lifestyle. Visitors can then absorb the dual side of New Zealand culture: Māori and Pākehā (European descendents). Moreover, it is through a collaborative scheme that conservation has been delivered at the level of a small-scale business (see section 7.3; 7.5). Profits and cost recovery matter for Kuaka NZ and for all other businesses because without it, it would become impossible to sustain a year-round team, to pay taxes, equipment, vehicles rentals, fuel, calls, office maintenance, marketing, etc. The contribution of tourism to sustainability requires economic viability (Wall 1997). Profitability contributes to its competitiveness its business expansion and, most important, also contributes to its autonomy to deliver a service with quality.

In the survey, New Zealand tour operators indicated what comes first to them in terms of priority and importance in participating in nature-based tourism: first, nature conservation; second, visitors; third, business survival; fourth, money and profits; and in fifth place, ‘eco’ brand. Seven participants out of nine said that in the face of a tourism sector crisis, they would not put ‘the financial health’ over ‘conservation’ and ‘sustainable practices’. One respondent mentioned staying ‘on the borderline’, and one participant did not answer. They were also asked whether or not ecotourism could agglutinate different interests and issues such as business, visitors and conservation into the same basket (project); some of their views were cited in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 - Business, visitors and conservation into the same nature tourism project: New Zealand tour operators’ opinion**

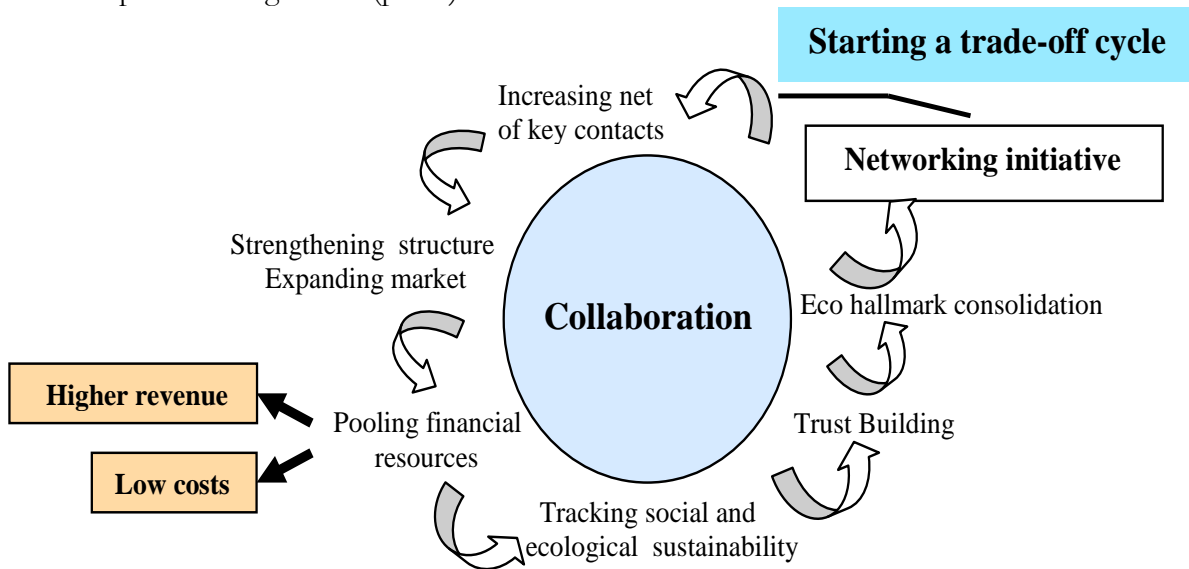
<b>Based on your experience in nature-based tourism, how can ‘business’, ‘visitors’ and ‘conservation’ to be brought into the same basket (Survey in October 2007)?</b>
1. Sharing, passion, commitment and vision. Having a real passion...no facades (NZSR-5)
2. There are many ways, but, first, the whole tourism industry has to face the reality that the world is slowly seeing [NZ] through [a] Clean Green image. There must be honesty and open approaches regarding our past record before we move on (NZSR-4)
3. In the case of my business, it is all in the one basket as we are using the business to sustain our environmental activities (NZSR-1)
4. Promoting the essence of your business; authentic experience of nature; maintaining good sound environmental practices (NZSR-3)
5. Very easy with the right attitude (NZSR-8)
6. Government should restructure DOC...let DOC get on with conservation and create a new department to manage people’s access to parks and reserves (NZSR-2)
7. [through] the symbiotic relationship (NZSR-7)

**Author:** Ismar Lima, 2008.

However, the gains are indeed not just financial ones; they help the company to lower costs as well as consolidate it as environmentally friendly through concrete actions. The partnership and the networks it produces bring gains to a business in a cyclical way in terms of trade-offs such as marketing, and the process must be continuously nurtured.

Effective communication channels help the process. Six phases can be identified (refer to Fig. 7.4): 1) to increase the net of key contacts; 2) to strengthen the structure of an expanding market; 3) to pool financial resources; 4) to track social and ecological sustainability; 5) to build ‘trust’; and 6) to stabilise the market with the

consolidation of a hallmark (the company's ability to become eco-friendly). By networking, the companies should be aware of sharing, the trade-off behind the partnership: companies share to grow in their area and expertise. Figure 7.4 below complements Figure 7.1 (p.327).



Author: Ismar Lima.

Fig. 7.4 - Collaboration, business and trade-off cycle

Kuaka NZ has four focal areas, and it tailors its programmes according to the needs and demands of incoming groups. The areas are anthropology, ecology, geography, and conservation. ISV provides 'voluntourists' who spend two weeks dealing with conservation projects and two weeks on adventure and nature tourism in various 'hot spots' in the North and South Islands. The Singaporean students and teachers from high schools, colleges and universities come to New Zealand for environmental education. Their package usually does not include volunteer work. Research interests and academic fieldwork is managed within 1~2 week periods by the Kuaka NZ team.

The company also operates with New Zealand schools, focusing more on tertiary students. According to Doug Farr, the intention is to tailor educational components and hands-on actions on planting, which give the students the real practical challenges in environmental planning and management. For Doug Farr, the programme is to be framed according to the syllabus of scholars/students as well as in association with the lecturers and supervisors, in a way that the learning process fits and adds immensely to their curriculum and life overall.

In its collaborative scheme, Kuaka NZ has an enabling and steering role. It harnesses the interests of the public and private sector, as well as of the civil society,

refer to Figures 7.5 (p.351) and 7.6 (p.352) for Kuaka's main networks and sectorial partners. It has formal and informal agreements with its partners.

In five main cases, Kuaka NZ operates its partnerships through contracts: with the ISV; with NZ and International schools/Universities; the Western Bay of Plenty District (WBOPDC); and with DOC, where Kuaka is a concessionaire.

With the Green Globe accreditation programme (GG), Kuaka is already a benchmarked tour company and, through its business subdivision, the Sustainable Business Company (SBC), it retains the "contract to exclusively manage the entire Green Globe programme in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands" (Doug Farr, interview, 2007).

On its website Greenglobe New Zealand refers to Kuaka NZ as a 'strategic partner', reinforcing the notion that the certification programme is also featured as a partnership,

Its New Zealand presence is administered by the Sustainable Business Company (SBC) based in Tauranga. Together, with the help of its strategic partners Kuaka and Reserve Group, SBC assists tourism operators in all areas of sustainable development and facilitates growth of Green Globe. It is helpful to understand the global interests that help make Green Globe the most robust and respected brand in sustainable travel and tourism.

The benchmarking programme covers all aspects of the company. The stakeholders have their flexibility to apply to accredit the entire business or just some aspects of it. Green Globe can be progressively awarded if the company fulfils the baseline indicators (Parsons and Grant 2007).

In 2007 Green Globe New Zealand redesigned its benchmarking categories as Benchmarked 'Bronze', Certification 'Silver', and Certification 'Gold'. In order to achieve this last level, the operators need to satisfy all of the requirements of the GG programme for ecotourism such as its eleven key principles (including the 3Rs, reduce, reuse, and recycle) for managing the business,

Each sector of the tourism industry is further differentiated with unique Sector Benchmarking Indicators (SBI's) depending on the type of operations [...]. The four GG standards are: company, community/destination, international ecotourism, and precinct planning & design (Green Globe New Zealand, retrieved 08 December 2007).

The levels and statuses of the eco-labels may not be promptly noticed and differentiated by a lay person. The issue is also debated by Hall (2007b) whereby he observes that acceptable quality standards in the ecolabels may vary comparatively from firm to firm, destination to destination, among jurisdictions, and between the various certification schemes, and this complexity may potentially create "confusion in the minds of both producers and consumers of ecotourism products"(p.250).

Schott (2006) mentions that the findings in a questionnaire survey of domestic and international visitors reveal that "awareness levels of ecolabels to be small and ecolabel knowledge to be inherently confused...and Green Globe produced similarly

sobering results” (p.81); though, in the context of previous research, the findings show an increase of ecolabel perception and awareness within a period of two years (Schott 2006: 81).

In-depth research on visitors’ perception about the eco-labels should be developed nationwide in New Zealand, particularly in those regions with intense nature-based tourism activities; otherwise, any assertion about the weight and functionality of ecolabels may generate only partial results or may risk being a mere speculation without no empirical grounds. The certification is however a differential for tourism companies and for the type of work and commitment they have in terms of sustainability and conservation.

Auditing and monitoring have revealed an important means for assessing ecotourism products - services, travel companies, in/outbound operators and the destinations themselves – compared to other sectors, because ecolabels such as Green Globe can be used as a lever for “environmental friendliness” as well as to contribute to a ‘green’ image for marketing and promotional purposes (Hall 2007b: 249-250). The following extract explains the GG process,

Established operators enter the Green Globe programme at Benchmarking. In addition to putting a sustainability policy in place, they collect 12 months data for their operations, based on the requirements of the SBI, and submit to Green Globe for assessment. The data [...] but usually includes consumption of electricity, water and waste to landfill. Upon submitting the required data a Benchmark Report is issued by Earthcheck, a partner company of Green Globe. Benchmarking is an ongoing process and emphasizes continuous improvement in the indicator areas over time. This is an opportunity to realise cost savings in improved efficiency in business operations. The Benchmark Report enables an operation to view their progress (Online, on [Greenglobenz.com](http://Greenglobenz.com), retrieved 08 August 2007).

But, one question is to what extent the GG has been the main normative instrument used to guide the businesses towards a sustainable tourism standard; mainly for the ecotourism activities (Farr and Cavanagh 2006).

Kuaka NZ uses GG to continuously improve clients’ experiences; and to engage its partnered operators in maintaining standards for their products and services. In a collaborative system, ‘sustainability’ is a collective gain, and all associates must play accordingly, “We insisted that the standards [of Green Globe] are meaningful” (Doug Farr, comment on 8 December 2007).

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) for example is a forum that links businesses for the exchange of ideas and experiences, and its goal is multifold: corporate governance and ethics; economic prosperity; social equity; and environmental quality. When asked about the extent the environmental legislation in New Zealand shapes tourism enterprises in terms of ‘sustainability-seeking’ and ‘sustainability-promoting’ (\*the best practices in sustainable tourism), Doug Farr goes straight to the point:



Legislation does not drive the business; it provides tools like management plans, which are mandated of local government in their management roles for natural resources and natural areas. Kuaka New Zealand uses the results of planning processes...to provide a strategy to engage with various communities and environments. The result of this approach is that Kuaka NZ is always working within a framework of compliance and is providing a supportive role to Local Government, Iwi, community and others in delivering appropriate development/conservation and real life experiences for visitors (Interview, August 2007).

Doug Farr states that “the real masters” Kuaka NZ answers to are those actors it has strong relationships with, and with whom it shares the vision of collaboration such as academic clients, key personnel in local government, Iwi, corporate staff, and individuals from the community.

For Kuaka NZ, integrity and constructive relationships become the drivers for the creditable actions in terms of being a business, which regionally paves the avenue for social, economic and environmental outcomes.

To be collaborative is the way “to ensure that supply chains and complementary businesses become active in providing similar quality of experiences, to be supported across the whole business” contributing positively to their businesses sustainable performance as well (Interview, August 2007). Farr advocates that sustainability needs to be championed in the tourism sector – by the operators themselves.

However, Komppula (2004) found that the environmental performance of micro and small tourism businesses is “suggested to be significantly influenced by the individual characteristics and behaviour of the owner-manager” (quoted in Rainford 2007:132). Sustainability in tourism is a function of one’s personality for taking initiatives towards environmental management.

Rainford’s (2007) study reveals that the “owner-managers of micro and small tourism enterprises may not be accepting of their participation in maintaining environmental qualities due to apparent low levels of environmental management implemented” (p.132). Her findings show that the lack of environmental management is likely the result of a series of factors: i) low levels of knowledge and experience in tourism; ii) limited human resources; and iii) owner-manager too busy with business to think about environmental management. As for the certification programmes and the networks for sustainable practices in tourism, Rainford (2007) noted that the main barriers for adhesion are: cost of participation in the schemes; their complexities; and the perception that such schemes are of little utility for small-scale tourism enterprises.

Except for ISV, Western Bay of Plenty Council, and DOC, the remaining Kuaka NZ’s business relationships are mostly based on trust and loyalty, without a formal written document/contract. Informality gives some flexibility in the interactive

processes until partners feel they need to move into contractual formalised arrangements through which ‘rights’ and ‘obligations’ are clearly defined and sealed.

From an economic perspective, the volunteer groups (ISV people) are both ‘free labour’ and a source of ‘revenue generation’. From a social side, “travel that is more rewarding and meaningful than other holidays and focuses on the altruistic and self-developmental experiences...and assistance can be delivered to communities in terms of scientific research or ecological/heritage restoration” (McIntosh and Zahra 2007: 543; Wearing 2001).

The combination of ‘tourism’, ‘cultural immersion’ and ‘volunteer work’ in conservation projects is still incipient worldwide; ‘*ecological voluntourism*’ has its emphasis on learning in areas of visitors’ specialization and interest. *Voluntourism* gives a ‘feel-good’ perspective to a traveller who can contribute to a local environment and its people, refer to Figures 7.6 (p.352) and 7.7 (p.356). The environmental and cultural learning groups are the human resources for Kuaka NZ, and the company works to enhance this human capital, “international volunteering is increasingly recognised as a form of alternative tourism” (McIntosh and Zahra 2007: 541; Wearing 2001; Brown and Morrison 2003). Following this line of thought, the visitors should be provided with the means to contribute to create a pro-environmental behaviour, fulfilling their pursuit for values about nature.

Involvement of tour operators with alternative forms of tourism such as volunteer tourism and agritourism mostly makes them to tread more carefully the interactions with the ecosystems and communities (Stronza and Gordilho 2008). During the fieldwork, it was possible to realise how these groups pass through a process of becoming linked to nature (attachment to nature). The Kuaka NZ model contributes to reduce the “nature deficit” (Louv 2006), a sort of human detachment from the natural world presumably partly due to a modern lifestyle led by technological and consumerist drivers. Section 7.5 explains further the environmental education model managed by Kuaka NZ.

The connectivity and partners illustrated in Fig. 7.6 (p.352) show how local and regional stakeholders in the Bay of Plenty can be set into three major partnering groups: community, corporate and public sector. These groups are mutually supportive with varied gains in terms of human and natural resource management and knowledge sharing. The New Zealand schools and Universities are positioned as both ‘community partners’ and ‘learning groups’. The Interactional scheme sometimes brings ‘international visitors’ to share time with New Zealand students for environmental and cultural activities.

Kuaka NZ definitely has an enabling role in the process but each actor has its share. The SBN is equally relevant for supporting and sustaining the corporate stakeholders. The SBN functions as a path for businesses to follow sustainable tracks; it provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, and its main goal is to integrate those actors who seek economic growth, social equity and environmental management.

Rainford (2007) used the five schemes (Green Globe, Sustainable Tourism Charters, the Sustainable Business Network, Natural Step, and the Nature of Good Business/Qualmark) that aim at improving sustainability enterprise in New Zealand to gain an insight into the owner-managers' thoughts about best practices in the tourism sector.

Reiser et al. (2005) mention the WTO's (2002) understanding of the ecolabels as the institutionalisation of voluntary initiatives for sustainable tourism such as self-commitments, awards, and ecolabels, but there has been "low customer recognition" about ecolabelling and certification of tourism products possibly because the process is still embryonic and small in scale (Reiser and Simmons 2005: 2).

This perception is presented in the form of a pyramid in which the environmental awareness of tourism businesses begins with their self-commitment to codes of conduct, moving towards 'best practices' in environmental management, and to have the 'ecolabels' as the next step (p. 191). They say that a 'body accrediting voluntary initiatives in sustainable tourism' has not yet been set, but, the pyramid for environmental awareness should show (local and regional) ecolabels and worldwide accreditation programmes (see Fig. 7.5).

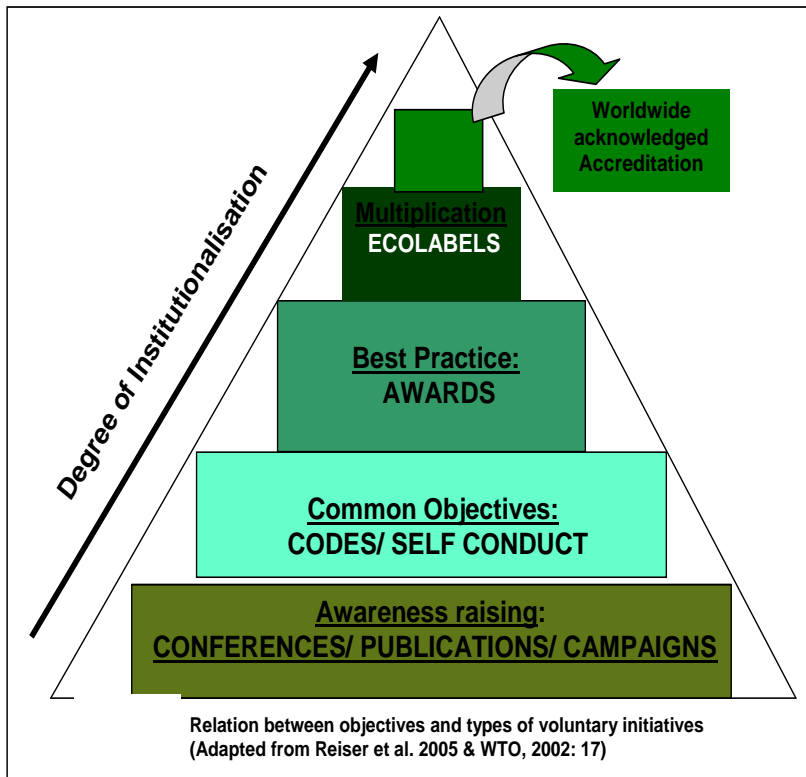
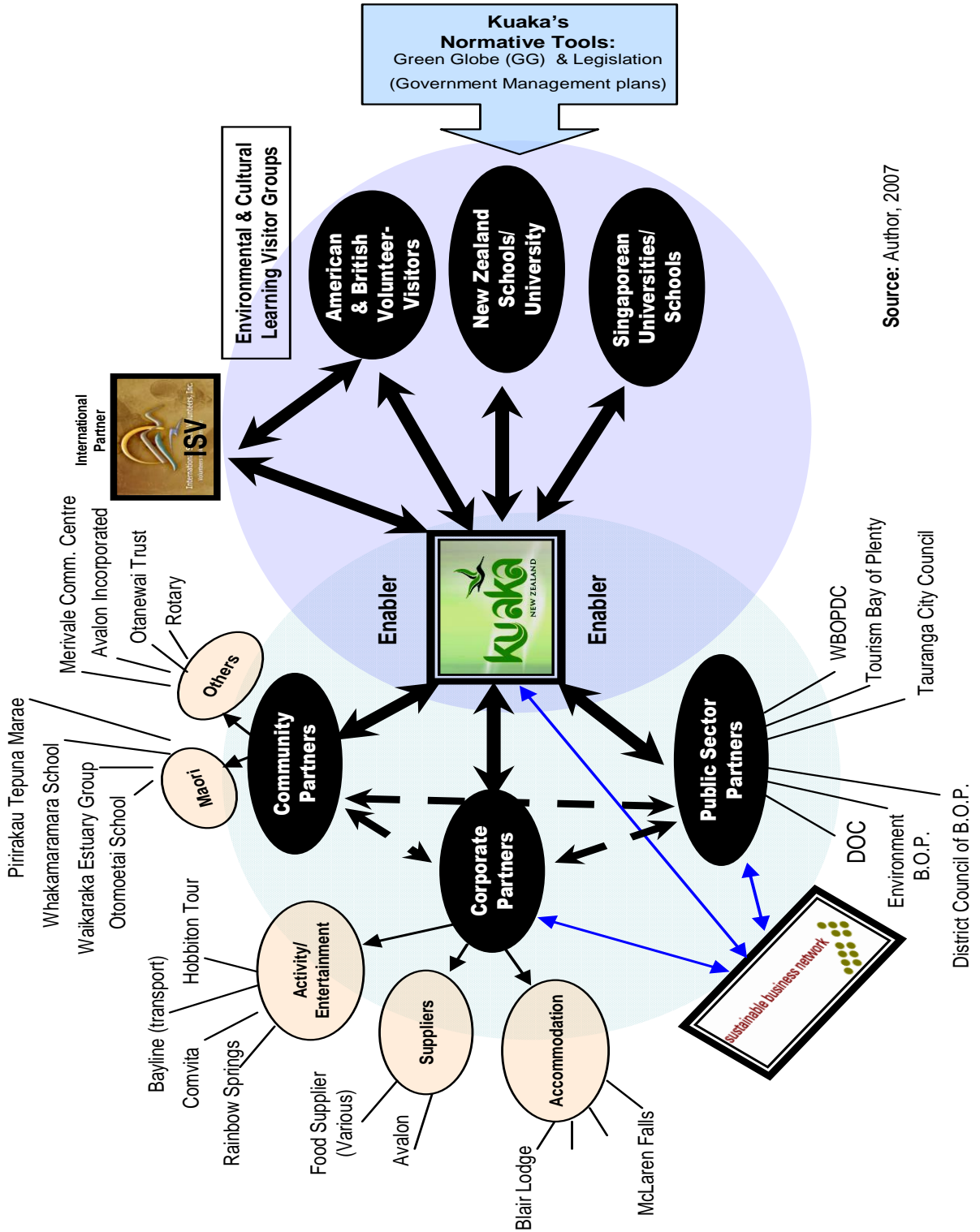


Figure 7.5 - Environmental certification and the degree of institutionalisation



Source: Author, 2007

The links are the ‘*boulevards*’ through which knowledge, skills and revenue are enhanced and shared. In order to sustain healthy interactive channel, Kuaka NZ has developed a set of values and goals to be promoted, revised and advanced. With sustainability as a core, to deliver what is promised, assured learning, continuous development (learn from what has been done), being professional, loyalty to people, and respect and care. These values and goals are part of a corporate system that grounds actions in social and environmental responsibility. It shapes the ecobusinesses and may promote behaviour change through the adoption of a conduct code grounded on environmental ethics.

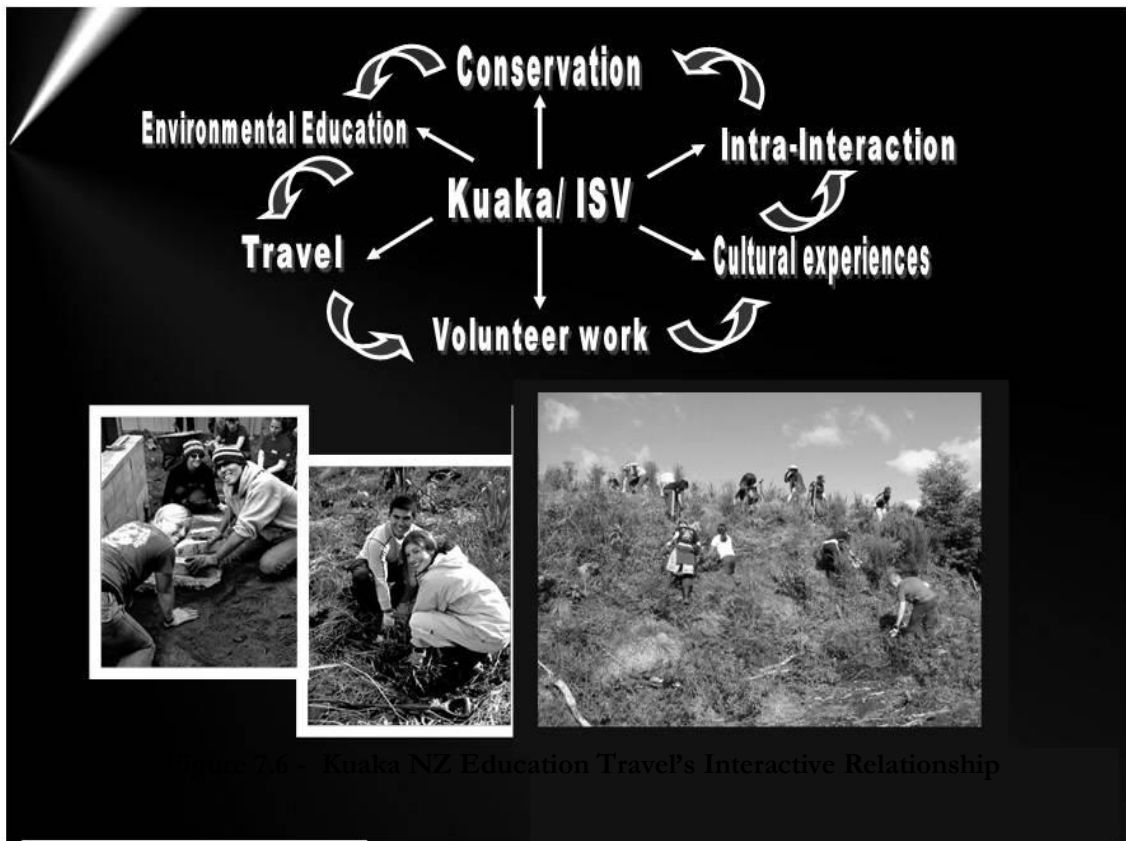
Doug Farr (Kuaka NZ) advocates that ‘collaboration’, ‘expertise’ and ‘guardianship’ must be taken into account in decision-making and business management. In one of its internal documents, Kuaka NZ underlines the importance of “collaborating with all stakeholders to support guardianship of cultures and environments by local communities with expertise, resources and facilitation skills”, see Tables 7.2 (p.337), 7.4 (p.345) and Fig. 7.6.

**Table 7.4 - Local and regional stakeholders and their functional relationship with Kuaka NZ**

Local Government	Community	Education	Iwi/Hapu (Maori)	Operators/Business	Other
WBOPDC, Environment Bay of Plenty (EBOP), Tauranga City Council (TCC), DOC	Care Groups Landcare Trust	Schools U.O.W.	- Pirirakau - Wakaraka Estuary Group	Tourism businesses Resource suppliers	Avalon T.C. Sust. Business Company (SBC)
<b>MECHANISM</b>					
Management plan	Management Plan	Curriculum	Contract	Contract of service Green Globe accrued	Contract
<b>OUTCOME</b>					
Worksites provided	Fieldwork	Fieldwork	Kaitiaki support	Quality supply	Joint Marketing
Community input	Support locals	Theory and Practice	Cultural value	Joint ventures	Triple Bottom Line
Revenue generation	Funding located	Funding	Funding	Revenue generation	Funding/ Revenue

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008, with information provided by Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel.

All volunteer-visitors I have talked to expressed strong feelings of self-realisation by visiting New Zealand while giving back something to the community and to the country, in terms of conservation. The motivation of the “voluntourists” was high throughout the experience (Figure 7.7). For Higham and Carr (2002), the environmental experiences of visitors and their pursuit for values about nature contribute to create a pro-environmental behaviour (see picture set below).



Source: Kuaka NZ. Author, 2007.

#### 7.4 - Addressing the principles of the Triple-Bottom Line (TBL)

Conceptually, Kuaka NZ has committed itself to corporate social responsibility, as well as enhanced its work by drawing on the ideas of a ‘collaborative and adaptive management network’ and ‘sustainability appraisal’. If the tourism industry is considered by many scholars as an inherently non-linear system (McKercher, 1999; Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington 2007), why should management of tourism on the ground be static and linear?

Schianetz drawing on Holling (1978) explains that “adaptive management...is based on continuous and collective learning concepts that acknowledge uncertainties,

and allow for timely adjustment of planning and management strategies” as the means to advance sustainability in the tourism sector (p.1). For it to happen, private sector stakeholders should promote collaborative schemes and learning with other stakeholders.

The approach is similar to the idea of a ‘learning organisation’ in which organisations continually adapt and learn to be responsive to changes, and by managing the challenges (jointly), facilitating growth and success (Senge 2006).

Partnership encompasses the concept of ‘learning organisation’ but it has a much broader scope. A successful partnership model must be able to nurture the ‘human capital’ and ‘natural capital’ of a learning destination. Kuaka New Zealand has been working along this exact conceptual line and has contributed to a “learning tourism destination” (Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington 2007). This is related to the ability of the stakeholders to increase their own skills, and the Kuaka NZ team has shown that it seeks innovative solutions to a variety of challenges in its mission to deliver sustainability regionally, while keeping its market competitiveness and staying financially healthy.

Kuaka NZ also reproduces aspects of the already known 3Ps (Planet, People, and Profit), as the drivers in decision-making. Kuaka’s main leading thought is that “the success of an organisation should not just be judged on an economic basis, but on the effects that the organisation has on the environment and on society” (Kuaka NZ, 2007).

In Kuaka’s case, the ‘triple-bottom line’ is not just rhetoric as it has bridged the ‘conservationist interests’ with the local community well-being. It has fulfilled the satisfaction of visitors and institutional gaps in environmental management, then confirming previous studies on the benefits of collaborative environmental management (Schuet et al. 2001; Long and Arnold 1995). The three capitals are then managed jointly in single projects for environmental education. The natural capital (natural spaces) in the Bay of Plenty has been assisted and maintained; the human capital (staff, community, Māori, and visitors) has been enhanced; the financial capital (profits, revenues, income generation, etc) has been produced and used to sustain the human and natural capitals.

For O’Connor (2006), the triple-bottom line is a normative reference for “a complex quality criterion” in which economic imperatives and organisational self-reliance should be “in the service of the wider social sphere” (p.286), it has adopted ‘corporate social and environmental responsibility’.

Hall (2007b) understands the ‘triple bottom line’ as a key component for assessing the environmental dimensions of tourism, mostly serviced by ecocertification schemes bundled with specific reviews such as the compliance, site, corporate and activity audits (p.250-251) and the ‘doing-the-right-thing concepts’ for an eco-friendly management.

Kuaka NZ and Action Stations as well as many other companies in New Zealand have supported existing community and local government initiatives through networks. Structured networks have served as channels through which knowledge,

goals, resources and commitments are mutually shared among the key stakeholders and the District Council of the Bay of Plenty in the case of Kuaka NZ.

The company has helped the two government bodies in their mission on 'landscape restoration'. Kuaka NZ has been paid for each tree its volunteer-visitors plant while the visitors themselves also pay for having such an experience in New Zealand. Kuaka's profitability is not high because of the costs of accommodation, meals, transport and educators for assisting the volunteers during their two-week stay in the country. However, what matters is the flow of information, the learning, and the way interests are interlocked. There is a collective gain as the small-scale tourism providers take a more proactive posture for conservation.

### **7.5 - Collaborative schemes can ease environmental learning and conservation**

Conservation and environmental education come together through the collaborative and interactive model operated by Kuaka New Zealand. By linking the social, cultural and environmental goals, (eco)tour providers have become an extension of the government bodies.

By assisting them with the maintenance of the ecosystems and the quality of life of local communities, the small-scale companies have demonstrated their importance for environmental planning and management. According to the director of Kuaka NZ, since 2005 his team has coordinated 36 ISV groups. The most noticeable achievement of Kuaka NZ in terms of combining social actions and environmental issues has been its partnership with Avalon Training Centre, a charitable organisation, partly funded by the government. It has as a mission to socially rehabilitate and reintegrate people with intellectual and physical disabilities, by improving their self-esteem and skills. The disabled trainees learn how to produce crafts, arts and pack products; and they also grow fruits and vegetables.

The role of Kuaka NZ is to promote the interaction of international visitors and volunteers with Avalon's trainees. They work together in environmental duties such as the propagation of seedlings. According to Farr and Cavanagh (2006),

Invariably the groups start singing together as they work, start conversations and then eat lunch together. Sometimes it is the first time the students have come in contact with a person with disabilities, and it is often a profound experience. For the training centre, the interaction is priceless. The plant propagation not only supports the centre with an income stream by raising the plants over the year [...] the spin on effects [...] it is a win-win interaction (p.4).

Since its creation in 1994, Action Stations and later Kuaka NZ have claimed an array of beneficial contributions to the Bay of Plenty as well as strengthening relationships between the Māori community, local people, outsiders/visitors and among other stakeholders (see Table 7.5).



**Table 7.5 - Kuaka and Action Stations ISV achievements**

Environmental Contribution	Social Contribution	Community Group Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Over 56,000 trees planted</li> <li>* Over 29,000 m2 of weeds cleared</li> <li>* Over 15,000 trees released</li> <li>* Over 37,000 seedlings potted</li> <li>* 18 estuaries indicator species monitored</li> <li>* Over 4,930m of tracks created/completed through native bush</li> <li>* Over 10,000 m of DoC tracks Maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1210 School children interacted with and taught how to plant</li> <li>* 33 visits (over 61 hours) spent with trainees at Avalon Disability Centre</li> <li>* Over 48,000 volunteer hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Avalon trainees (plant propagation)</li> <li>* Waikaraka Estuary managers (assisting with revegetation work)</li> <li>* Pirirakau Incorporated Society</li> <li>* Merivale Community Centre</li> <li>* 3 Marae with more than 80 visits, and riparian planting.</li> </ul>

**Author:** Ismar Lima, 2008, with information provided by Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel, 2007

The volunteer-visitors reported being even more sensitive about nature protection and conservation; and the experience in New Zealand helped some to define direction in their career,

I went to New Zealand in 2005 and would just like to tell that it changed my life. This trip gave me an insight on how other parts of the world manage their resources. I started as a forest resources management major before I went, but I never thought I would want to do something internationally with it. Because of my trip to New Zealand I want to have a career outside of the United States, helping countries to better manage their resources. I'm very grateful for the opportunity that you have given me and I would encourage anyone on the fence about spending a month in another country to do it. You will learn something about yourself and the world around you (Ian, Sunny Environmental Science and Forestry, USA).

In a survey after their stay with Kuaka NZ, the ISV volunteer-visitors and Singaporean groups commented on their experience in New Zealand. Instead of citing individual feedback, key ideas were selected to reveal that Kuaka's collaborative system has had a cognitive factor, building up the sense of connection to nature. The cognitive factor is not ephemeral; extensions are created as the visitors go back to their countries. The corporate and non-corporate networks maintained by Kuaka for conservationist goals have shown to comprise benefits for conservation and for the

partnered stakeholders. A long-term fieldwork, with participant observation combined with an assessment of the visitors' statements in the scrapbook became the initial stage to understanding the processes of their attachment to nature. Because they say what they feel, the statements are permeated with declarations of rediscovery, reencounter and attachment to the natural world that they had never experienced like that before.

The interactive process seems to retrieve a missing link in the intrinsic values of nature. Even the environmental educators seem to have their environmental knowledge revived and enhanced. This type of collaborative educational (eco)tourism, purposefully designed for environmental and cultural learning, is embodied with tools and drivers that put visitors and the natural world at the same level. It contributes to reinstate the notions that humans are essentially part of nature rather than exogenous to it. Sustainability is contingent upon human performance to keep the non-human world healthy and sustained. Semantically, what takes place is an epistemological construction of the intrinsic and instrumental values of nature. Based on the feedback, Kuaka's model impacts positively on the visitors' views. In this case, an immediate behaviour change may be a corollary of the environmental and cultural experience in New Zealand:

The time spent sweating and getting dirty while planting trees, laying track, and pulling invasive species left me feeling great, but working at Avalon and planting with the school kids left a mark on my soul that I can't begin to explain (Andy Kellner, Madison, USA).

By interpreting 'nature' and by explaining how imperative its services are to sustain the Earth and humankind, social constructionism is employed in interplay with the visitors. In the specific case of Kuaka NZ, environmental education involves a process of instruction in which 'cognitive elements' (core concepts) are the messages to be delivered and tested in an experiential world. As mentioned by Farr and Cavanagh (2006),

The design of the program means that the students are able to gain new skills and understandings in a truly meaningful way. The progressive nature of their learning allows them to build up a deep understanding of conservation in a New Zealand context [...] Through their contributions to the environment – riparian planting, estuarine and stream monitoring - they develop a sense of connection with the local catchment (p.3, 5).

Some key aspects underlined by the visitors during their stay in New Zealand serve to demonstrate changes of attitude and attachment to nature. For example, when asked about the most valuable things they would take back home with them, they answered: self awareness, making a difference, environmental awareness, memories, respect for each other and the environment, little things make a difference, groups can accomplish a lot, sense of importance, teamwork, motivation to make a difference back home, conservation knowledge, appreciation of the environment, helping others, impact made, group bonding, giving back to the community, working for a cause, and 'our home, the earth'.

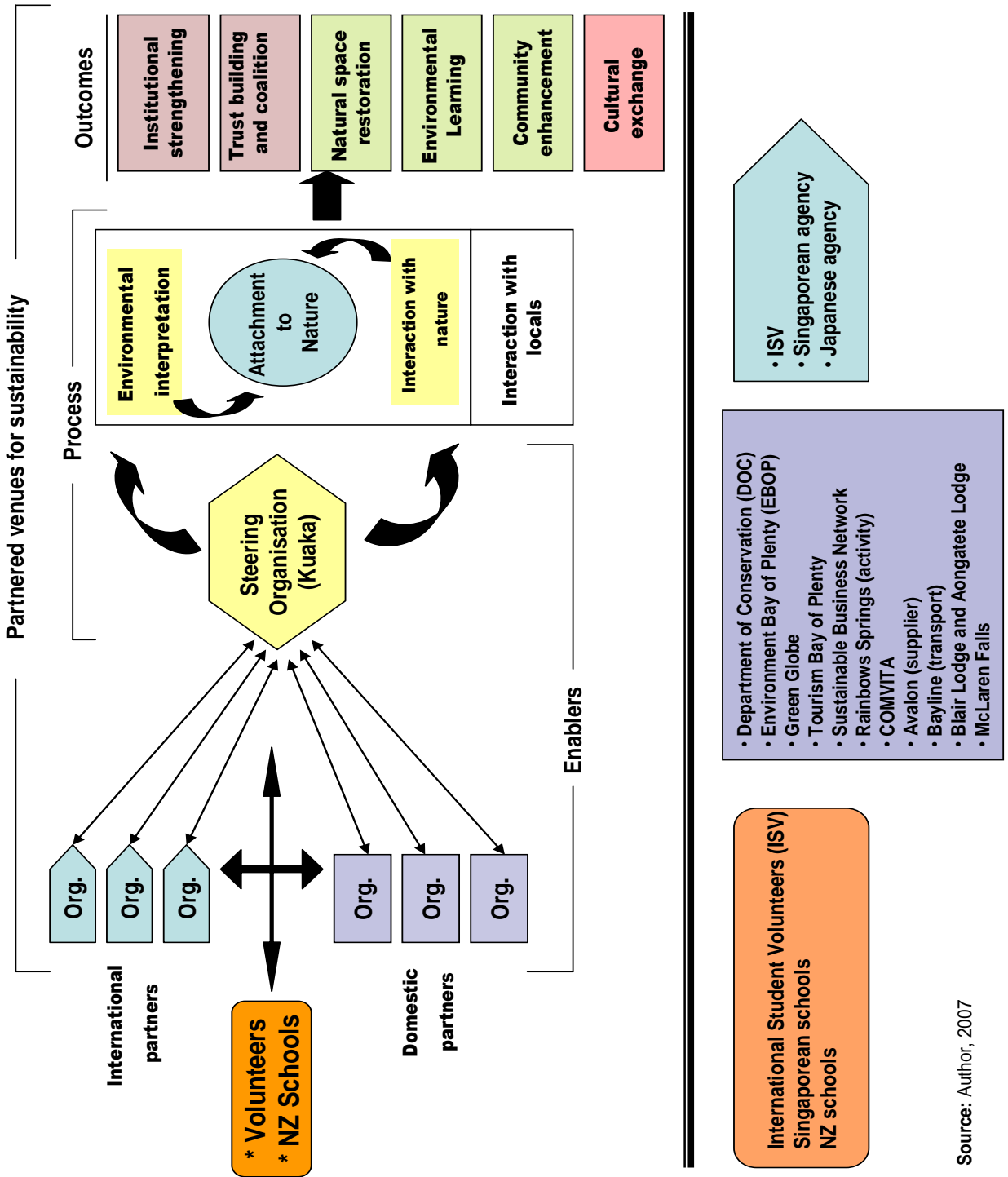


Figure 7.7 - Partnered venues for attachment to nature, conservation and collective gains

Source: Author, 2007

Social constructionism has a broader scope and includes all pertinent stakeholders. It is possible to infer that knowledge is not passively received but built up through communication, interaction, observation and also through genuine contextual experiences. Kuaka NZ contributes to ‘institutional strengthening, trust building and coalitions, community enhancement, and cultural exchange’, refer to Fig. 7.7, and also Figs. 7.5 and 7.6. This partnering model for managing an educational ecotourism and “*voluntourism*” produces collaborative advantages; the environmental work on the ground is somehow in line with the promises of making ‘New Zealand 100% Pure’. It helps to recreate the natural spaces and the ecosystems.

In summary, the collaborative model discussed in this chapter positions Kuaka NZ with a steering role for conservation grounded on two instructional elements: environmental interpretation and interaction with nature. It acts in cluster with other key organisations for strategic environmental management. Kuaka NZ acts networked with other companies and organisations (e.g. suppliers, volunteer recruitment agencies, etc) regionally and internationally, and these formal and informal partnerships indirectly strengthen Kuaka NZ’s role for the promotion of environmental education, ecological restoration, ‘voluntourists’ attachment to nature and their

### **7.7 – Conclusion**

Kuaka NZ is still an evolving collaborative model; it is under construction but has already promoted a lasting positive impact upon the destination, particularly in the Bay of Plenty. The environmental experience and learning managed by Kuaka New Zealand Travel has shown to have a positive impact not only on nature but on the life of some people. Most feedback from the eco-visitors and “voluntourists” underline that the combination of travel, volunteerism and environmental learning is highly desirable because outsiders come to New Zealand, give something to the locals, so when they go back to their countries, they take with them a set of new values and a different perception of the world,

I don’t know how to express strongly enough the impact that this trip had on me. Well...maybe I do...I moved here just over a year later! Ha! The combination of the environmental work that we accomplished last year and the cultural awareness factor involved in the trip were phenomenal! I truly enjoyed getting to know about the land, the people and the impact that we all could entertain on the environment so far away from home, which in turn helped me to focus on how much more impact I could have at home (and did start to prior to moving to NZ!)... Thank you for such a memorable and impactful journey! It has lead me to an even greater journey since then, and I’ll continue to be grateful for everything I learned through...(Jessica Mallernee, Phoenix, AZ. Currently living in Christchurch).

The blending of education, tourism and volunteerism has been highly successful for conservation and raising awareness. The statement is supported by three years of fieldwork with Kuaka NZ. However, because of the volatile nature of the

tourism sector, Kuaka NZ needs to build a more consistent domestic market reducing consequently the dependency on single visitor sources (i.e. I.S.V).

Though it has a reasonable set of contacts and key links, it was observed that some key partners are still not present in the synergic scheme for collaboration. Moreover, some actors which could be a strategic network such as TIANZ, are not strong enough; this weakness may restrain the collective outcomes.

The lack of a more consistent network is not necessarily Kuaka's flaw. The government bodies are not entirely sure on how to establish and maintain networks. I presume that the origin of the problem is a highly hierarchical structure that demands time to incorporate new amendments (i.e. the need for partnership).

New Zealand has plenty of forums and organisational clusters that Kuaka NZ has overlooked, and these schemes may not bring an immediate material gain except for publicity. For example, Kuaka NZ has become featured as a tourism enterprise rather than an 'environmental education provider'. It would be reasonable then to be affiliated to Ecotours.com and other tourism networks that gather small-scale ventures. To be linked thus, is an opportunity to be in the spotlight. Other challenges for Kuaka NZ are: the need to remain healthy financially; to set strategy and scenarios for risk management; to expand partnerships with international organisations such as Tour Operators Initiative (T.O.I).

In conceptual terms, it has to expand its research capacity. Its contribution surpasses the role of being a 'tourism and environmental provider'; its future seems to be a leader-consultant for other companies and government. Kuaka NZ will need to prepare policies that can continually ensure its role as a contributor to the environment. Again, its challenge is to run a business in which 'profitability' should not rank above conservation but rather, in line with it. The boundaries must be systematically defined for the promotion of a 'collective gain' and of a 'collaborative advantage'. By doing so, it may break down the popular suspicion about the lack of sincerity of businesses towards conservation.

Kuaka NZ, Action Stations and many other companies (e.g. Sustainable Business Network, Ecotours.com, the charters and their affiliates, etc) in New Zealand have already undertaken actions that begin to demystify such a belief. Some of these organisations have taken a leadership role in conservation to foster and reinforce a certain corporate behaviour. They are not exactly 'guardians' of nature, but ecological facilitators; there is evidence that their proactive role can pave the way for a local environmental governance (Lima, 2002; Lima & Buszynski, 2011). Contrary to this view, Rainford (2007) found that owner-managers have "limited knowledge and determination...to implement effective environmental management activities within their micro and small tourism enterprises" (p.132).

According to her, the lack of interest in sustainability packages (Green Globe, Qualmark, and Sustainable Business Network) originates from three factors: 1) cost of participation in the schemes; 2) complexity of schemes; and 3) an apparent lack of utility for micro and small tourism enterprises. This confirms Higham and Carr's (2003b) position that the application of Green Globe to the ecotourism sector is a

“complex challenge” because “most operators consume few products and very little energy”. Moreover, ecotourism has “intrinsic factors” such as a particular experience of a visitor as well as the “personality, knowledge and values” of the operators towards nature and conservation that make their activities environmentally creditworthy but not possibly measurably by Green Globe (Higham and Carr 2003b: 238, 252).

It is through interactions and networks that each stakeholder benefits from the educational travel model of Kuaka NZ. The connectivity allows ‘financial capital’ to circulate. By contracting out to food suppliers, the entertainment sector, Māori performance and sleepovers in the Marae, and accommodation providers, Kuaka feeds the economic channel regionally.

The gains are not only financial ones. There are trade-offs. Because Kuaka NZ has a very specific type of visitors other than the typical and casual ecotourist, its model needs adaptation to be used by regular tour operators. The model is commendable because it aggregates interests, and balances anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives. It also has many tools for sustainable practices that translate all the principles of ecotourism. ‘Learning destination’ is a concept to be further explored in the management of tourism resources.

In order to build a system that assists the government bodies with sustainable practices, the small-scale tourism enterprises must have a proactive role for innovatively approaching administrative, environmental and community problems.

A proactive tourism company does not add to existing problems; instead, it works within a cluster seeking the best solutions. A clustered proactive role requires the existence of a ‘collaborative adaptive management network’ (CAMnet). This type of network is needed because of the complexity for decision-making in natural resource management. By sharing ideas and experiences, a multiple stakeholder participatory system can play a leading role by pointing to the appropriate policies.

CAMnet is believed to create the conditions and mechanisms for science-policy dialogue and the exchange of information that links policy makers, planners, and researchers. The Sustainable Business Network, Green Globe and Qualmark, and the sustainable tourism charters are examples of this trend towards CAMnet.

The greatest advantage for small-scale tourism service providers is their ability to quickly adapt and respond to new paradigms such as ‘collaborative management’. This happens mostly because of their simplified managing structure stripped of hierarchies. Highly hierarchical organisations are immersed in unnecessary bureaucratic proceedings that make them look neglectful in the face of demands for quick decisions and positions.

According to Doug Farr, Kuaka NZ and other companies have learned how to operate in a dynamic, volatile and competitive tourism market by acting as a team, with partners, by sharing risks and by being able to foresee problems ahead of time (Interview, 2006). He also highlights that environmental experience does not need to be in pristine areas but within the limits of already-impacted landscapes; for him, the real sense of ecotourism is using it to restore natural spaces and for environmental education.

In conclusion, a sustainable model for tourism is a model that should evolve within the companies involved - by doing, experimenting, repeating, improving, and advancing workable components. It should be an imbedded model that is framed by the successful enterprise practices of yesterdays'.

## *Chapter Eight*

# Conclusion

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## 8.0 - Introduction

Let me start the chapter by reinstating the key research question:

**Can collaborative schemes allow levels of interaction and communication among stakeholders in a way that they are able to achieve collective advantages (gains) in and for (eco)tourism, positioning it at the intersections of the discourses of ‘profit’, ‘nature conservation’ and ‘social justice’ ?**

**B**efore answering the question, I would like to highlight some general lessons and findings of this ‘academic odyssey’ that lasted nearly three years and eight months. Researchers fill existing researchable pores in the literature, and their findings lead to new scientific, conceptual, theoretical and methodological inquisitions. The process is cyclical and non-ending in Academia because knowledge has no boundaries, and no timeframe. Consequently, no thesis is entirely conclusive neither does it hold all the truths. Knowledge is a collection of empirical and non-empirical experiences.

Knowledge about (eco)tourism is still being shaped through a process of evaluating the best practices and models. Ecotourism is upheld as a model for regional development but each (eco)tourism venture has self-contained characteristics. In this sense, my understanding about ecotourism is subject to a set of readings and fieldwork that may appear to contrast in a biased fashion to, for example, a researcher investigating the theme in Mamirauá Reserve (Amazonia), in Costa Rica or in South Africa.

My insights are presented in this book to enhance understanding about the 100% Pure campaign in New Zealand, ecotourism in Silves and in Itacaré in Brazil, and about educational (eco)tourism developed by Kuaka NZ, in the Bay of Plenty.

These case studies have provided empirical data in ecotourism, to enable me to talk about them with confidence. The cases became the major informational sources that directed my contribution and inputs to the literature; though it is not an excuse - of course - to avoid delving deeper into the complexity and richness of ecotourism as a modern western event.



Even though the investigation is not comparative, I need to write a few lines about ecotourism as it has been envisaged and implemented in Brazil and New Zealand. Both countries have very distinct characteristics and approaches to ecotourism in terms of public policy, planning and management.

The most noticeable difference is that Brazilian governmental and non-governmental organisations are clearly positioned about ecotourism as a ‘segmented theme’ and a ‘choice for development’. As its policy for tourism development, the Brazilian central government initiated the national ecotourism programme (Proecotur) in the early 1990s; the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has financially supported it. The programme progressed steadily in the research phase with the production of geographical, social and market studies and statistics.

The studies aimed to identify potential areas and attractions for ecotourism. It has been adopted by planners as one of the choices for regional development of the Amazonia.

The country has a myriad of private and public projects and programmes committed to create an organisational archetype that have struggled to make ecotourism viable, environmentally and economically. Such a goal has not yet achieved many successful outcomes. Only infrastructural benefits have occurred such as the building of visitor information centres.

In recent years Proecotur has, however, been agonizing for lack of an institutional model to manage and monitor the programme locally. Moreover, the size of the Amazonian territory requires well-integrated mega-investments. Physical, geographical, structural and infrastructural limitations have made the continuation of Proecotur a challenge. Conversely, the most thriving ecotourism projects have been those managed through public-private partnerships as in *Mamirauá* (Amazonas State) and *Bonito* (Mato Grosso do Sul state). Non-governmental initiatives have also reached positive outcomes as in *Silves*, Brazil.

In New Zealand, government has been somewhat dormant in terms of creating public policies that target ecotourism as an unambiguous theme. For example, there has been a trend in some nations to incorporate ecotourism units within tourism departments and agencies such the Tourism Queensland’s Environmental Unit (Hall 2003: 24) and Proecotur.

The New Zealand government by not typifying the distinctiveness of ecotourism vis-à-vis other nature-based tourism operations (Higham and Carr 2003b: 252) as well as other economic sectors, creates barriers to investments, funds, incentives and subsidies that would specifically address and be granted to organisations and local stakeholders. We are talking about having an ecotourism tourism policy and an institutional arrangement <sup>21</sup> in New Zealand which can be “developed at multiple

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<sup>21</sup> Institutions are ‘an established law, custom, usage, practice, organization, or other element in the political or social life of a people; a regulative principle or convention subservient to the needs of an organized community or the general needs of civilization’ (Scrutton, 1982: 225, quoted in Hall 2003: 22-23). Institutions can be thought of as a set of rules which may be explicit and formalized (e.g.

scales of public governance” (Hall 2003: 21-22). The problem resides in positioning ecotourism within public policy priorities.

Because of its “integrative nature”, linked to ‘tourism’ and ‘conservation’, ecotourism is then more related to “conservation and environmental concerns than it is to those seeking tourism development” (Hall 2003: 25). Proecotur, for example, is a programme directed by the Bureau for managing Amazonian Issues (SCA) within the Ministry for the Environment.

A desirable policy would be one that makes local entrepreneurs the ‘expanders’ of regional sectoral development through policy instruments such as ‘expenditure and contracting’ and ‘public-private partnerships’.

Even though these features can be identified in the concession system, neither New Zealand nor Brazil has yet achieved this public policy maturation in ecotourism. In Australia, for example, public tourism policy has been the result of “the political system; social values and principles; institutional structures; and the government’s power to make policy decisions” (Zeppel 2003: 60), so that a public-private partnership was implemented in the Northern Territory; a multi-stakeholder task force with the engagement of Aboriginal Land Councils, tourism operators and government agencies (Zeppel 2003: 63).

Another example in Australia is the cooperation in Tropical North Queensland’s Nature-Based Tourism Industry (Huybers & Bennett 2000). In New Zealand, the Northland Sustainable Tourism Partnership strategy of the Ministry of Tourism in 2004 can be cited as a short-term public-private partnership experiment with marketing goals instead of cultural and conservation ones.

In fact, in New Zealand, rather than talking about the implementation of an ‘ecotourism public policy’, regional development and conservation have been underpinned by the government under the rubric of ‘sustainable tourism’ and marketed domestically and worldwide as such.

In terms of marketing though, New Zealand Tourism has the same role and task as its Brazilian counterpart, EMBRATUR. Similarly, the New Zealand Regional Tourism Organisations are institutionally similar to the state-managed tourism bodies in Brazil.

At a Council level, New Zealand does not have specific departments to deal with ‘tourism’ and ‘ecotourism’ as a thematic area, and “the working party has been charged with the task of investigating the definition of ecotourism in New Zealand and with accreditation...by Green Globe 21” (Higham and Carr 2003b: 236).

In Brazil, the municipal and State Tourism Bureaus have this task. On the other hand, at a national level both countries have a Ministry of Tourism seeking to integrate projects with those of the Ministry for the Environment through ministerial partnerships.

In comparison to other countries, Australia has already taken a series of initiatives to build up frameworks, partnerships and to have ‘research groups’ – in Academia, and at government and private sector levels - for promoting, planning and managing ‘ecotourism’ as a distinguishing segmented activity for regional development.

Dowling (2001d), highlighted that ecotourism in Australia is one “with increasing industry interest, continued government support, a strong industry association, improved research and raised consumer awareness [with] a firm grasp on...leading ecotourism destinations” (p.316).<sup>22</sup> Green Globe, the EcoGuide Australia Certification Programme (supported by Ecotourism Australia Association) and the Australia’s National Ecotourism Accreditation Programme (NEAP) can be regarded far-advanced benchmarking schemes, at national and international level, by setting ecotourism as a specific unit for assessment and for ecolabels.

In New Zealand, Qualmark has been leading the way in terms of cross-sectorial accreditation” (Twining-Ward 2007: p.130) even though it does not have ecotourism as a focus. New Zealand has also taken solid steps to improve sustainability in the tourism industry. It is concerned, too, about the overall condition of environmentally impacted areas; these steps include the work of DOC, TIANZ, Regional Development and Conservation Bodies (e.g. Environment Waikato, Northland Enterprise), the Sustainable Tourism Charters, and a series of partnerships in the industry.

In Brazil, there is no national certification scheme for ecotourism. The ecolabels for the sector have been mostly developed at a municipal level by the Tourism Bureaus in association with the private sector and other government agencies.

Buckley (2004c) and Honey (2002) say that if ecocertification programmes can improve environmental management of large-scale public and private organisations, this can contribute to the sustainability of the tourism sector. Ecolabels – as a type of self-regulation – may cause delays of more effective environmental legislation or regulations (Buckley 2004c).

Ecotourism development in Brazil is by far more contentious and problematic than in New Zealand. As explained in Chapter 6, the reasons for it are historical, political, administrative and even cultural. More specifically, it is a result of the failure of institutions and of law enforcement; the corrupted system, high-income concentration, lack of authority; and lack of political good-will for genuinely promoting changes with long-lasting outcomes and other forms of mismanagement complete the still chaotic scenario.

When I look at Brazil I see much injustice, self-seeking individuals and groups not really interested in building a promising nation; I see silences and omissions.

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<sup>22</sup> High profile Australian ecotourism destinations include the Great Barrier Reef, the tropical and temperate rainforests that extend intermittently from Cape York to Tasmania, Fraser Island (Queensland), and Rottneest Island, the Kimberleys and Shark Bay (Western Australia). Other venues include Kakadu National Park (Northern Territory), the alpine region extending through New South Wales and Victoria, Philip Island (Victoria), and Kangaroo Island and the Flinders Ranges (South Australia).

Within such a scenario, no ecotourism, no business, no economic sector can grow auspiciously to provide large-scale benefits to society and the environment.

The well-being of nature is understood as the integration of policies, of government sectors and of economic and environmental partners, rather than the result of single, isolated efforts.

The approach in the book is beyond the sociolinguistic realm; the study deals with meaning and interpretations of a contextual reality as told by the 'interested voices'. This book *per se* is a further discourse within discursive constructions in ecotourism. Academia demands for validity and reliability do not give room for researchers to be meaning makers (Le 2005). They must remain unbiased in their research; but by deconstructing discourses, for example, researchers are involved in meaning making by decoding and/or encoding texts; any use of language is ideologically and semantically loaded (Le 2005: 336), and no researcher arrests all truths.

### **8.1 - Ecotourism within a non-relativist social constructionist perspective**

I advocate that themes in ecotourism should be examined as socially constructed through the lens of a non-relativist position (critical realism). In fact, it would be better to talk about the 'constructionism of environmental issues'; that is, the 'construction of nature' or 'fabrication of nature' with its social effects (Cater 2006; Castree and Braun 1998; Escobar 1996).

Natural phenomena exist by themselves but the discursive constructions serve to give them a series of interpretation and explanation, and this affects individual and collective understanding of meanings in their social life. The problem has been indeed the distorted and biased discourses used to serve the interests of a few groups.

The book is a holistic work that focuses on micro occurrences of power and of interaction in nature tourism activities, particularly on language used as a form of group control, stimulus and influence. This type of power relations can be considered as 'micro geopolitics of (eco)tourism discourses' with causal relationships between political and structural powers within a geographic space. This was witnessed in ecotourism development of Silves and of Itacaré where various interest groups seek to justify their actions and intentions against the interest of the collectivity.

As commented by Hall (2007c), "issues of power have not been at the centre of understanding tourism" (p.247); this book then attempts to remedy this lack. The case studies show that there are various discursive constructions of nature within ecotourism development, with 'human agency' and 'structures' contributing to its vicissitudes.

As Giddens (1989: 256) explains, 'structure' is what gives shape and form to social practices through human agents (p.256). Human agents are the 'social factor' in constructionism, and interpretation of realities; the discourses supporting such realities that have evolved are then manifested and vocalised by individual, group(s), organisation(s) or institution(s).

It is axiomatic that normative and non-normative facts play a defining role in shaping the practices of individuals and their organisations. Thus, reality holds objective facts but with many of its occurrences subjectively interpreted. The intrinsic values of nature, the sense of belonging and of attachment to land and people's perceptions about nature are subjective, but human impacts on nature are physical occurrences. I do not disregard the relative merits of social constructionism in the face of realism; but seek to break with the existing dichotomy between these two perspectives.

Institutions are part of that objective reality and play their role in framing society, and the approach makes me turn to Giddens's (1984) structuration theory. In this theory, 'subjectivism' and 'objectivism' reflect a dualism that has to be conceptualised as a duality of structure (p. xx). For example, "the structuration of institutions can be understood in terms of how it comes about that social activities become 'stretched' across wide spans of time-space" (Giddens 1984: xx).

Hall (2003) comments that, "institutions are an entity devised to order interrelationships between individuals or groups of individuals by influencing their behaviour" (p.23). For sure, social constructionism is a latent aspect in structuration.

The case studies showed the use of a utilitarian and abstract language in the geopolitics of (eco)tourism planning and management. Language was referred to as a vehicle to deliver coercive and cognitive messages of various interest groups in ecotourism. I talk about 'objective realities' in ecotourism as phenomena experienced by local actors across time-space.

The cases show that the 'real world' exists outside discourses because it is a reality experienced locally by the stakeholders in their day-to-day life; it is a bottom-up reality that clashes with that reality built by external sources (agents or structures).

In Itacaré and in Silves resistance against coercive and manipulative discourses was palpable. In New Zealand, tour operators have been critical and resistant to the creation of an image of the environment that does not correspond to their reality. Local actors have refused to take subjective realities for granted and have regarded their own realities (or the reality that makes sense for them).

'Agent' (actor), 'agency' (action) and 'structure' - as recursively organised sets of rules and resources involved in institutions (Giddens 1984: 24,25) - are some of the elements that determine practices in (eco)tourism within a context. We cannot overlook the importance of "sociospatial relations" (d'Hauteserre 1999: 201) in ecotourism development. The social and spatial nexus was initially developed by Hägerstrand (1975, 1976) as 'time-geography', what Hall (2005) refers to as 'time-space geography'.

We cannot discuss competing discourses and collaboration in (eco)tourism separately from 'structuration' and 'social constructionism'. Concisely, 'structuration' refers to the structuring of social relations across time and space (Giddens 1984: 376), and 'social constructionism' infers that all human meaning is created through a process of social interaction (Gergen 1999). Both theoretical approaches refer to the

integration of social relationships or of social systems in the process of understanding and giving sense to the world (reality) which they share and live in.

Giddens (1984) affirms that the social reproduction of structural properties (social systems) of collectivity by individual actors depends on “the location of actors and of collectivities in different sectors or regions” (p. 24).

For example, Itacaré stakeholders are constrained and conditioned by two legitimate means: the legislation that regulates the territorial occupation and economic expansion in that district; and by the short timeframe of the political administration with its projects, priorities and policies.

For Giddens (1984) rules have either ‘sanctioning of conduct’ or ‘constitution of meaning’ qualities. The rules and official documents are discursive structures across time and space that determine the social practices in the village as well as the directions of nature tourism activities.

The same thing is observed in New Zealand but in a different context; for example, with DOC regulating and monitoring the concession system for commercial use of public lands. RMA-1991, Strategic Plan for Tourism 2001, Qualmark, Green Globe and codes of conduct are also examples of discursive structures that impact on decision and practices of individuals and organisations.

Thus, it is correct to say that the social practices are chronologically reproduced and transformed in a certain contextual reality ruled by a set of codes and institutions. In this sense, I can identify two types of structures influencing ecotourism development: discursive and institutional.

For Hall (2003), “institutions are an entity devised to order interrelationships between individuals or groups of individuals by influencing their behaviour” (p.23). Mitchel (1989: 245) for example sees institutional arrangements as including: 1) legislation and regulation; 2) policies and guidelines, 3) administrative structures; 4) economic and financial arrangements, 5) political structures and processes, 6) historical and traditional customs, and 7) key participants or actors (as cited in Plummer et al. 2006: 507).

Institutional arrangements, as explained by Mitchel (1989), should be constituted of multiple actors in a way that they can translate the ‘voice’, values and the ‘agreed meanings’ of the collectivity. The problem is that the structure itself, the institutions, their regulations and norms are conservative and rigid, with little room for external interventions.

Networks, cooperation, partnerships and collaboration are the very means whereby local stakeholders can ‘bargain’ for such interventions; they can then express themselves as actors, and seek to give legitimation to their understandings of problems (and their approaches for solutions) within the pertinent institutional structures.

CAPA for example became a ‘public associational space’ where the collective interests, once disregarded or overlooked by the official institutions and/or at risk of becoming an object of manipulation by the powerful agents, are debated, agreed and proposed for enactment.

CAPA's meeting and articulation reflect the efforts of local actors to have their wishes and socio-environmental positions listened to and legitimately regarded in the decision-making at government level; within networks, individuals and groups attempt to make space for themselves (Bramwell 2006). Giddens calls it the "dialectic of control" in social systems in which the "regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors and collectivities in contexts of social interaction" (1984:16) can influence the decisions and positions among themselves and/or of superior agents. Silves district lacks such public forums for debates with ASPAC, Guanavenas and the municipal administration struggling over the allocation of resources and over the legitimation of authority and decisions.

The lack of regulatory environmental boundaries in Silves makes ASPAC and Guanavenas ecotourism ventures anarchical, without any legitimate convenor to mediate crises, to act on behalf of the communities, or to negotiate for public participation in decision-making. Community involvement in decisions is an issue.

Silves is spread in a huge area; the distances become physical barriers for promoting a truly participatory management of human and natural resources. Not all communities in Silves have the means to communicate effectively with ASPAC.

In New Zealand, I found that conservationist trusts such as the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, in the Waikato province, and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, in Dunedin, are forms of associational public spaces (forums of debates) with stakeholders networked to strengthen themselves as an institution for nature protection. Individual entrepreneurs also have their contribution for conservation. For example, Kuaka NZ is not a trust, but it has some key networks and partnerships for conservation; Kuaka NZ shows how important is the role of single operators to give meaning to nature-based tourism activities with 'voluntourism' resulting in ecological restoration.

From the perspective of small-scale businesses, Kuaka New Zealand is a model for educational collaborative ecotourism. Kuaka NZ has been an enabling actor for conservation. It has demonstrated 'how' nature tourism businesses can act jointly to address environmental problems without compromising profits and business targets. Kuaka NZ has been an adaptive learning organisation that took the challenge to make sense of 'sustainability' on the ground. Lack of internal bureaucratic structures within the organisation has made the process easier. Constructive postures, innovative vision, teamwork actions, and hands-on initiatives were identified as some characteristics of Kuaka NZ as a 'learning organisation'. Its environmental ecotourism has contributed to bringing visitors closer to nature. Visitors attachment to nature may take place through interaction, ecological insertion and environmental interpretation/education. Kuaka NZ has played a role to reduce a "nature-deficit disorder" (Louv 2006).

As observed in the investigation, associative schemes can contribute to the communication of meanings in interaction with "reciprocity of practices [of autonomy and dependence] between actors and collectivities" (Giddens 1984: 28). In constructionism, any form of communication involves the "contextually contingent" resulting in the social fabrication of realities or at least, the collective perception and

understanding of certain events. Such functions become noteworthy if stakeholders are able to communicate their problems and speak out about their ideas and solutions.

As d’Hauteserre (1999) observed in French Polynesia, ecotourism niches can “articulate a dynamic constellation of relations” providing a high standard of living for local inhabitants while it protects a region from mass tourism and avoids the commoditisation of culture (p. 201). But, there has been indeed a “new cultural economy of space” with old and new processes participating in the “construction, fragmentation, reconstruction of our postmodern realities and landscapes” (d’Hauteserre 2006: 239, 242). It should be a bottom-up discursive construction and implementation of (eco)tourism, with coherent and integrated planning and management as well as ethical, moral and conceptual debates within a local perspective and through local legitimate negotiation. Talking about ‘land ethics’, Callicot (1998) reminds us that,

Human beings, plants, animals, soils, and waters are all interlocked in one humming community of cooperations and competitions, one biota (p. 128)...[and]...a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (224-225).

## **8.2 - Ecotourism: A self-governing system?**

Two former sub-research questions guided the study of whether ecotourism can or cannot become a self-governing system. The approach involves some key issues linked to the consensual development of ecotourism such as the decentralisation of decision power, authority and legitimation, and the importance of collaborative schemes in planning and management. Can community ecotourism become a self-governing system? Can local environmental governance (LEG) become a strong decentralized political system under the auspices of a liberal democracy?

Ecotourism is certainly not a panacea to all capitalist evils nor a lab for neo-Marxist ideas. Conservation is the foundation of ecotourism development, not social justice! Equity may indeed become a peripheral outcome.

Within the ecotourism realm, sustainability as a target has been changing continuously; it has been organically shaped by human agency and by wider socio-cultural structures as well as by the availability of resources and technological innovations. For example, one item cited as a key motive for companies and organisations to adhere to collaborative schemes is the potential to overcome long-term costs of adversarial conflicts among interest groups.

Ecotourism cannot stand alone as a governing system. This is utopia because ‘ecotourism’ is not a political system *per se*. It is not apart from the agencies, structures and norms that regulate it. Silves and Itacaré reveal ‘how’ dynamic and multifaceted ecotourism is.

There are many geographical, spatial, normative and institutional variables to be taken into account as one analyzes ‘ecotourism’. There are many models and structures framing ecotourism planning and management. There are for example



‘community enterprise’ (e.g. Kaikoura, Maguari, *Maripá*), ‘the single private enterprise in a location’ (Waimangu Volcanic Valley, *Ecoparque de Una*) or ‘many (eco)tourism providers within a county (e.g. Itacaré, Bay of Plenty, Northland). All these elements influence conflict resolution and environmental impact control.

Possibly the future of ecotourism is one in which visitors and operators take more pro-active attitudes towards nature depletion. Ecotourism should not be just for nature contemplation in pristine areas; rather, it can become an interactive nature-human hands-on activity with visitors restoring already depleted regions. I call this a pro-active ecological tourism.

Tourism planning and management are based on the notions that urban and natural areas should be restored and/or improved for the convenience of the outsiders and for the maintenance of the market. This is the most paradoxical aspect in tourism planning. The whole area should be improved first for the well-being of those who live there. This difference in terms of quality of life and of structure is perceived and experienced by the visitors as they decide to practice tourism in a developing country rather than visit a developed one (Brazil and New Zealand, for example).

A more complex governing system for dealing with social, environmental and economic issues demands ‘local environmental governance’ (LEG) as in Itacaré; in fact, LEG has been a latent aspect of Itacaré development. The integration of government and non-governmental organisations in Itacaré for managing collective problems and power give to that governing system the decentralised participatory characteristic desired in a LEG model.

The deliberative role of CAPA, or of any independent multi-stakeholder grouping, is fundamental for the equalisation of power through which disenfranchised groups may have their decisions and proposals considered at the legislative level.

A deliberative status creates a sub-layer of power within the legislative and administrative process through which peripheral organisations (or marginalised groups) are able to break with ‘omissions’ and silences of ‘bureaucracies’, and directly influence the decision-making and the approval of laws of broad interest. However, as highlighted by Higham (2007) the challenges associated with ecotourism are far from being adequately managed,

Yet remarkably, blind adherence to the principles of ecotourism development as a universal template and panacea for community, indigenous, regional development and employment issues (among many others) persists in many quarters. Because of this many critics found the United Nations declaration of the International Year of Ecotourism in 2002 both premature and problematic (p.429).

Can collaboration pave the way towards agreements on social and environmental issues in a way that promotes a “shared ownership” (Susskind and Elliott 1983) of (eco)tourism development? How can collaborative arrangements help to bring, in practical terms, the concepts of sustainable development in ecotourism?

The very notion of ‘partnership’ brings with it “strong overtones of co-operative and consensual behaviour” (Skelcher et al. 2003: 9). The idea of ‘collaboration’ is that it always brings consensus and consensual practices. The moves towards it have become an international phenomenon (Plummer et al. 2006: 500). Stakeholder collaboration can contribute to strengthen dialogue and to develop a mutually acceptable proposal about how tourism should be managed. Collaboration becomes part of strategies for risk management in business.

Competing discourses simply do not disappear even in a well-structured partnership. Collaboration itself does not connote ‘universal consensus’, neither do ‘conflicts of ideas and of interests’ have a negative connotation. Power relations are an unavoidable issue in any discussion about promoting consensus building among heterogeneous partners. Knowledge does become accumulated for those involved in interactive and collaborative processes.

The investigation confirms Walker’s (2003) understanding that power in collaboration resides not in controlling the behaviour of participant-members, but in devising a situation that constrains and enables individuals.

The partnering framework in Chapter 2, Figure 2.0 (p.95) shows stakeholder relationships and the negotiation processes with power accounts (democratisation, devolution, equity, transparency, public participation legitimacy and authority) contributing to collaborative advantages such as decentralisation of decision-making, influence in public policy, better allocation of budget, team-work, reinforcement of the notions of belonging, inclusion, politicisation, responsiveness to changes, improvement of area knowledge and know-how, and outcomes in conservation.

For example, Itacaré residents have increased their perception of the importance of ecotourism as a tool for strengthening the local economy and for promoting conservation. By getting engaged in the many networks and public forums (e.g. CAPA), they have experimented a process of politicisation. Similarly, Kuaka New Zealand Education Travel has found in the collaborative schemes with the district councils, DOC and with other stakeholders a chance to grow in the environmental education and tourism sectors.

Kuaka NZ has learned how to deal with and succeed through government bureaucracies, to increase area knowledge and to share ideas and vision with key government staff about workable environmental planning and management.

I observed throughout the investigation that sustainability is a versatile concept; it is organic with its meanings and feasibility being locally allocated. It allows technical, methodological and hypothetical inputs from various sources in ways that reinforce the concept itself rather than disregard it; sustainability develops organically through attempts and experiments with standards and models built for the best conceived practices that reconcile ‘economic’, ‘social’ and ‘environmental’ dilemmas within a local contextual reality. For example, 100% Pure and Clean and Green New Zealand are valuable discursive structures (of institutions) that seek to create an imagery and imaging for what the state of nature ought to be. The campaign claim is a

challenge that demands cooperative efforts of all stakeholders, including government bodies, for making a holistic sustainability a reality.

### **8.3 - Approaching the key research question**

The query is whether or not stakeholders have been able to negotiate power (discourses). It is equally relevant to know what the others think about communal problems and their approaches to solve them (know-how), and to witness the process of trust building, the sharing of resources, the marketing of stakeholders as a cluster, the rise of a collective identity, the opportunity to get informed, the flow of information, the reaction of groups against the attempts of control (power of cohesion), the vanguard posture, the rise of a territorial perception, the understanding of the uniqueness of nature, and the ability to innovate and adjust to new acting orders and norms as they become commonsense. Production of a 'collective learning' and a 'collective gain' has occurred.

Collaboration in (eco)tourism is pretty much a chance to work out differences in order to improve the relationship and outcomes between 'society-society' and 'society-nature'. Sustainability is latent in this union of efforts to maximize environmental, economic and social gains.

This investigation has revealed that each actor has his/her own grasp about individual and collective roles as well as an autonomous realization of what 'sustainable practices' ought to be. Stakeholders have different levels of comprehension about conceptual aspects of 'sustainability'.

If one does wish to approach social deficits in line with environmental and economic issues, one needs to talk about complex managerial structures; it would be advantageous to debate 'local environmental governance' instead (refer to section 7.1). Consensus building does not imply 'subordination'; rather it means surrendering to group decisions if they bring benefits to the collectivity.

Debates on ecotourism have moved to a higher-level and the institutionalisation of ecotourism is now more salient. It has happened through the creation of multi-stakeholder collaborative schemes, sustainable business networks, and funds available for the sector as well as charters and accreditation programmes.

My case studies reveal the tendency towards cooperation, consensus building and a common language. The most used 'order words' have been 'integration', 'union', 'partnership', 'mutual understanding', 'coalition', 'association' and 'alliance'.

I have observed that as stakeholders become networked, they do not necessarily create new meanings; rather, they seek to strengthen 'existing meanings' in ecotourism in order to reinforce and justify their associativism. They look for common language, convergences and the blending of forces to overcome differences, gaps, and external threats. Power has gained value as a 'collective power', or rather 'collaborative power'. The very notion of 'cluster in (eco)tourism' and of 'associational public spaces' corroborates the assertion.

The claims for collaboration have become the 'acting orders'. And through the process of integration, actors agree on 'meanings' which map the course for group

actions. In Itacaré's case, these orders have served as a stimulus to the creation of 'group identity' and 'collectivity' because they act jointly to solve communal problems. Speech communities seem to have materialized to share news, transfer knowledge and allocate tourism resources (Patrick 2001). They have merged in situated actions (Suchman 1987) for ecotourism development and consolidation. 'Situated action' refers to how people act in a context.

'Speech community' refers to a community that promotes debates about the meanings for nature, conservation and development. It involves communicative purposes and collective behaviour within a social space. The 'legitimacy' of actors, of decisions and long-lasting trust are some of the challenges to be faced in collaboration. However, Itacaré's case shows the importance of having 'associational public spaces' such as 'participatory councils' with advisory and deliberative powers.

One of the roles of 'collaborative arrangements' is to lobby political powers and governments in order to integrate the various environmental and social projects into ecotourism. Preferably, these integrated projects should have a supraparty nature; they should not be tied to any political administration. The strategy is to have ecotourism projects running across political timeframes. In Brazil, opposition parties (if elected) have a tendency to demote and/or create barriers to ongoing projects initiated by former administrations. Participatory councils and other associational forums should build a general perception that ecotourism development belongs to the collectivity.

Within a critical realist position, ecotourism can be regarded as not ready-to-take-and-apply conceptual project. It is still an evolving activity to be locally framed through experiences. Ecotourism is a 'seedling' that can grow vigorously in one 'terrain' but may perish in another. The continuation and success of ecotourism will depend on the ability of stakeholders to adapt to contextual demands.

There is no recipe but determination to make it thrive, particularly if negative drivers (e.g. corruption) permeate the governing system of a region. These 'rogue mechanisms' are used to appropriate public assets, and they work against the democratic sharing of wealth and transparent decision-making. As commented by Hall (2003), in less developed countries corruption "within the administrative process and role of political appointees" affects institutional arrangements for ecotourism (p.23).

The cases in Brazil and in New Zealand demonstrate that 'collaborative arrangements' do not necessarily end conflict. A community-based collaborative arrangement for nature-based tourism development can however facilitate the move from destructive to constructive conflicts.

That is, conflicts still continue but they have a positive prospect as long as 'associational public spaces' have been created for dialogue, change and resistance. Bramwell and Lane (2000) explain that "adversarial conflicts can be wasteful as stakeholders entrench their mutual suspicions, improve their confrontation skills and play out similar conflicts around each subsequent issue" (p.6).

The collaborative schemes, as deconstructed through CCDA, reveal that they function as 'interpretative schemes' that contribute to mounting stocks of managerial

knowledge. That is, local actors take a think-tank role as they engage in conservation advocacy, in nature-based tourism and filling policy gaps in regional development.

Bramwell and Broom (1989) call 'knowledge stock' the 'learning capital' (p.393) that can add value in products and services, in this particular case, the 'rationalisation of actions' in ecotourism. For Giddens (1984), "rationalization of action...is the principal basis upon which the generalized competence of actors is evaluated by others" (p.4).

In practical terms, the assessment of rationalisation of actions takes place through the adoption of eco-labels, accreditation programmes, EIAs, and through monitoring tools in the concession systems and even through carrying capacity. One key finding of this investigation is that 'legislation' seems not to drive the tourism sector business, rather it provides tools and directions like management plans for sustainability and conservation.

It was noted that the creation of platforms for dialogue and interaction is one of the most important aspects of collaboration. Pre-existing channels for communication enable stakeholders to address minor issues before they worsen. Itacaré's case shows that participatory deliberative councils can become public spaces where local actors manage diverging issues before they cause a crisis.

There is then a dual aspect to collaboration: it integrates stakeholders while it emancipates them from the discursive structures of control. The case studies show that the primary collective gain in collaboration is not physical. It lies in the advancement of participatory processes and systems for regional development. It was observed that within collaborative schemes, stakeholders tend to look for solutions based on objective facts; the relativism inherent in daily occurrences becomes very peripheral for the debates. Stakeholders prefer to focus on areas and issues they can clearly understand and manage. Networked stakeholders, through discursive practices and interaction, can create routines and reproduce routines that open up new perspectives in nature-based tourism management.

Routines for actions can become a product of collaborative arrangements for collective gains. Because of their regularity, routines are regarded as 'security resources' within which local stakeholders are conscious of legitimate powers and the decisory mechanisms to use in case of 'critical situations' (Giddens 1984). This is the most paradoxical and contradictory aspect of collaborative schemes because it clashes with the ideas of emancipation inherent in collaboration. However, routines connote stability in a sense that the individual, organisational and institutional roles, boundaries and power are clearly defined, and respected by the collectivity. ITI, CAPA and ASPAC have taken steps to be acknowledged as representative authorities in their districts.

The routinization of practices and decisions can help to manage unpredictability (Allan 2006; Craib 1992). Weak institutions and uncertainties in defining legitimate authorities make ecotourism development anarchical and contentious. That is the reason ecotourism scenario in Brazil is more problematic than in New Zealand.

The case studies and the readings confirm three things: the prevalence of partnerships and networks in the tourism sector; the institutionalisation of (eco)tourism as a distinct activity concerned with conservation; and most important, the relevance of collaboration that positions ‘adaptive management’ as central for successful nature-based tourism.

‘Collaborative adaptive management’ is necessary for the rationalization of practices in a very dynamic tourism sector. Another finding is the importance of getting locals involved in the process of designing, developing and managing ecotourism activities. By taking them as key partners and getting them involved in decision-making create a feeling of ownership and of belonging to, which substantially heightens self-esteem, nurturing the continuation of actions essential for the well-being of individuals, development of their regions and for a pro-ecological behaviour through a multi-purposeful ecotourism. The increase of human capital, by linking locals and ecological projects, can contribute extensively for effective natural resource management.

As Bovarnick and Gupta (2003) argue, “locals are likely to gain incentives for protecting areas, but only if they receive a good portion of these benefits” (p.449).

#### **8.4 - Recommendations for future research**

This study can be concisely described as the micro geopolitics of (eco)tourism discourses in planning and management and shows that the harvesting of ‘collective gains’ out of ‘ecotourism practices’ is not an easy mission.

I take the same position as Bramwell and Lane (2000) that more research is necessary to understand the processes by which collaboration occurs, and its influence on public policies and planning systems for the nature-based tourism sector. Because of the complexity of implementing ‘collaborative schemes’ in a way that they can support ‘ecotourism’ and address conservation, future research opportunities exist across all dimensions of environmental planning and management.

I can identify five themes. Explorative research can investigate the influence and contribution of specific sets of legislation on the role of small-scale tour operators for the promotion of conservation. Methodological tools could be devised for assessing the interplays, perceptions and reactions of stakeholders vis-à-vis those codes and norms they are in contact with.

This research tried to understand the legislative influence on social practices of nature tourism actors, but due to the scope of the investigation there was no room for investigating specific norms or codes in isolation. Some stakeholders affirmed that the main source for their conservationist practices are self motivation, and their good-will is what really matters in shaping their practices. A study of such practices should be comparative (regarding codes of conduct) and interdisciplinary, involving behavioural sciences.

Definitely, an in-depth study comparing the role and influences of Green Globe, Qualmark and of the sustainable tourism charters for conservation in New Zealand is missing. One leading question is to what extent these accreditation

programmes and charters have been the main normative instrument used to guide the businesses towards a sustainable tourism standard (mainly ecotourism). Chapter seven has already some findings and directions about this issue, but one may want to develop it further.

A second area for investigation is on the processes of knowledge transfer among networked stakeholders in ecotourism. Symbolic interactionism is one of the theories that can be applied to elucidate the various nuances in the interplays of accumulating 'area knowledge' as a security resource in management.

The third area for further research could focus on the different methods of environmental interpretation and education that can make ecotourism a more incisive activity for environmental awareness. The education component in ecotourism practices should take a central role for promoting people's attachment to nature. The work of Kuaka New Zealand was thoroughly examined but more comparative research can be developed in this area.

The fourth area can focus on the applicability and gains of 'adaptive resource management' (ARM) as an interactive process in decision-making in the face of uncertainties faced by stakeholders in nature tourism practices. My case studies show that within networks there are struggles and competition over resources and meanings. This is a salient character of the micro geopolitics of (eco)tourism that requires ARM to be one of the pillars of collaboration.

The fifth theme is about mapping and identifying the boundaries and criteria for making local environmental governance a distinct governing system and for decision-making concerned with the effectiveness of advocacy conservation.

Future research can develop further these topics by using critical contextual discourse analysis (CCDA) as one of the methodological tools. In addition, the understanding of micro geopolitics of a specific location can help planners and managers to deal with issues of power and the various scenarios that can cause constraints to regional development. It involves the understanding and assessment of 'deliberative policies and systems' and of 'local environmental governance' as a conservationist network; this is an essential knowledge for advancing and consolidating multi-stakeholder nature-based tourism ventures and projects.

## **8.5 - Insights**

I must say that after four years of research on regional ecotourism in New Zealand and Brazil I have come to understand that 'sustainability' is not a target, but a long-lasting process of revising judgments, thinking, behaviour, stances and choices. What we face today is an ever-increasing human density and demands, combined with highly negative impacting production and consumption. This scenario has produced an exhausted world.

Whatever the rhetorics of neoliberals and political economy advocates can be, humans need to learn how to live within the system of nature, because if the biophysical system collapses, risking our existence here, there is no other immediate place to go to.

Society must re-think its interactions with nature while governments and institutions create and orchestrate globally a forceful framework of ecological principles alongside impact mitigation measures. Reconciliation with nature demands coordinated actions at all levels – cross-sectorial – within and outside a nation.

To deal with colossal environmental challenges such as climate change, the undertakings call for transnational task-forces and partnerships that can help to alleviate social, economic and environmental strains locally. There is certainly no better prescriptive way, except tidy up the house.

‘Eco’ has been the most trendy gimmick prefix nowadays, whether it has been righteously employed or disgracefully misused. ‘Eco’ comes from the word ‘oikos’ in Greek; it means ‘house’, thus, ecotourism, which is ‘ecological tourism’ in its etymology, essentially means ‘a travel for understanding the house’. ‘House’ has a metaphorical connotation corresponding to ‘the Earth’s ecosystems’, ‘their values’ and ‘environmental services’.

I do believe that the mission of ecotourism is to serve as a venue through which humans can become attached to nature, overcoming therefore the disconnection produced by our consumerist “post-modern” society.

‘Ecotourism’ is not just a case of going to the southern or northernmost reaches of the planet, to tropical and sub-tropical areas – a pristine somewhere - for passive green consumption. It is the utmost opportunity for environmental learning and to understand ‘us’, humans, as part of fantastic interconnections of live beings, which for millions of years have adjusted to survive.

Of necessity, we also have to adapt to a world constrained by its carrying capacity. For it to happen, we need to break with neglectful environmental lethargy. By not adopting a minimalist perspective, we need to exercise environmental ethics, nurturing them for the well-being of the collectivity, and, with new values acquired, to make them the basis of our behaviour.

Certainly only humans are in a position to create new institutions and norms to heal the scars left by civilizations. We need to stop giving fanciful excuses a mile long, and act. What the best remedy is permits no simple answers. All in all, a change of behaviour is one of the paramount needs. We do not need a Midas, the fabled Greek king who miraculously turned everything into gold, but good sense. Renouncing short-sightedness brings hope. Such contemporary dilemmas entail existential paradigm shifts in our society.



## Appendix I - Land Status and Amazonian Ecotourism

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### 1.0 - Land status and community (eco)tourism: *Res communis* versus *res nullius*

*Res communis* and *res nullius* land statuses can be comprehensively discussed in terms of added value to ecotourism. *Res communis* refers to land or territory that belongs to a community. The land can be a concession, a donation or acquired by the community. The local dwellers may have the ownership or not. Conversely, *res nullius* is land without a specific owner. State land that does not hold proper demarcation and mapping usually fits into this category. In this study, *res communis* is interpreted as one way of adding value to any *res nullius* land. When the government transfers land ownership or makes land concessions to a community, it transfers new rights and obligations to it; in this way, the government enhances the role of rural communities. By owning its territory, locals are expected to develop feelings of belonging to that region.

In Amazonia, the transformation of *res nullius* forest land into *res communis* forest land has had immeasurable economic and socio-environmental implications. Examples of *res communis* status can be found in the conservation units such as Flona and Resex (see Table 1-Appendix). When making concessions of forest land to existing communities in these areas, the government created a perpetual link between those people and land. With a feeling that the land belongs to them and their future generations, they have been more cooperative for protecting the forest areas. In a broad sense, they became the guardians of Resex and Flona.

The sense of belonging gives motives for conservation: it is a type of added value to forest areas. *Res communis* status gains more dimensions if ecotourism activities are practiced in these areas. In this case not will only land get an added value but any activity that is developed in the region. The point is that the community will work to make ecotourism successful as a complementary income source and as an environmental protection mechanism. Community ecotourism in regulated conservation units may have potential to successfully balance 'people', 'nature conservation' and 'profits' over the long-term.

Under the neo-liberal economic perspective, *res nullius* forest land just has market value if the forest is logged. A standing forest has no exchange price. In a highly capitalist world, powerful economic groups look at forest areas seeking ways to make them profitable. Without any conservation principles, these groups sponsor deforestation. They promote corporate logging, agriculture and ranching. Why in Amazônia?

Because roughly 40% of Amazônia is land that belongs to the government. Lack of demarcation and of monitoring had transformed it into *res nullius* territory. The powerful groups, local farmers, politicians and traditional elite have taken advantage of regulation loopholes and grab state lands to exploit them. Others grab land to speculate or to get financial compensation from the government to leave the land. Grabbed land is *res nullius*; with low market value.

In Brazil there are two major categories of protected areas: integral protection units and sustainable use units (see Table 1-Appendix, p.365). The first group there are five sub-

categories that have very strict regulation about human intervention and presence in those areas; they are usually forest regions reserved exclusively for scientific research and restricted visitation because of its ecological relevance and scenic beauty. These integrally protected areas are named 'biological station' (ESEC), 'biological reserve' (REBIO), 'national park' (PARNA), 'natural monument' (MONAT), and 'wildlife refuge' (REVIS) (refer to Table 1-Appendix).

On the other hand, the protected units under the 'sustainable use status' allow human interventions, settlement, construction, non-extensive agriculture and ranching, timber, ecotourism and forestry, but these activities must obtain IBAMA's permission and monitoring as well as an 'environmental impact assessment (EIA)'. The point is that by 2010, the creation of 50 million hectares of new Flonas will be set aside not for integral protection; rather, they will be mainly allocated to legal industrial timber production.

The emphasis on "50 million hectares" gives the impression that the forest will become untouchable, and pristine. The phrase is a misleading statement; it masks the true intentions behind the creation of 'new Flonas'. In Box 2-Appendix Lima et al asked why not also expand the 'integral protection units' such as biological reserves to 50 million hectares by 2010? The authors also compare the Brazilian concession system to the U.S. National Forest System.

With counterfeit land possession titles, farmers without the means to exploit huge Amazonian areas sell them to powerful groups for a very low market price. The "new owners" usually opt to deforest the area to make easy profits. *Res nullius* land favours the action of speculative and unscrupulous people. These people do not have any feeling of belonging to Amazônia. Consequently, they will not care about the destruction of a unique biodiversity. They just want to quickly capitalize at the expense of the forest. In the free market view, added value for forest areas implies their transformation rather than their preservation.

Market demands push land owners into farming, ranching and mining. Economic interests have persuasively converged for the destruction of Amazônia.

What are the commercial values of millions of hectares of standing forests? Little. But how does one create value for a standing forest in a way that it can become invulnerable to the capitalist driver-forces of deforestation? It seems there are three ways.

The first one is transforming forested land, particularly those areas unsuitable for agriculture, into conservation units. Second, the implementation of commercial and grassroots concessions for sustainable exploitation of selected Amazonian areas can add value. By doing this, the government is trying to create land tenure that virtually brings added value to forests.

**Table 1 - Appendix -Protected Areas in Brazil -Conservation Unit Categories**

<b>Integral Protection Units</b>	
<b>1) Biological Station (ESEC)</b>	Government land and ownership. Nature Preservation. Area reserved for scientific research only.
<b>2) Biological Reserve (REBIO)</b>	Government land and ownership. It does not allow direct human interference and/or nature transformation, except for environmental recovery.
<b>3) National Park (PARNA)</b>	Government land and ownership. Protection of ecosystems of utmost ecological relevance and scenic beauty.
<b>4) Natural Monument (MONAT)</b>	Mixed ownership. It may be publicly or privately owned. Its objective is to preserve rare natural resources and sites with singular scenic beauty.
<b>5) Wildlife Shelter/Refuge (REVIS)</b>	Protection of natural environment and species habitats as the means to guarantee their reproduction and existence. It includes flora and fauna, endemic, fixed and/or migratory.
<b>Sustainable Use Units</b>	
<b>1) Environmental Protection Area (APA)</b>	Public or private lands/areas. It comprises huge areas with some human occupation. Its objectives are to protect the biodiversity and to regulate the occupation/settlements through sustainable use of natural resources.
<b>2) Ecological Relevance Area (ARIE)</b>	Public and private lands/areas. With little or no human occupation. This type of unit usually shelters rare regional flora and fauna.
<b>3) National Forest (FLONA)</b>	Public ownership and domain. It is a forest area with native species. It allows the presence of already established communities. It has the target to balance the well-being of local inhabitants, multiple sustainable activities with scientific research and conservation.
<b>4) Extractivist Reserve (RESEX)</b>	Public domain area and ownership but conceded to local communities for unlimited period. Conditions apply. Sustainable use of the area.
<b>5) Sustainable Development Reserve (RDS)</b>	Public ownership and domain. It has traditional dwellers whose livelihood is based on sustainable practices of natural resources exploitation. A set of techniques and practices that have been passed through generations and have a crucial role for safeguarding the biological diversity.
<b>6) Private Natural Heritage Reserve (RPPN)</b>	It is a private area voluntarily converted into perpetual protection status with the means to conserve the biological diversity. RPPN implies some modest tax breaks and top-list for some public funding.
<b>Author:</b> Ismar Lima 2008, with data available at the Brazilian Ministry for the Environment	

In practice, the government can change the *res nullius* status of the forest by offering it partially to the business sector through bidding concessions. Alternatively, it can add value to *res nullius* land by granting it to forest people, to communities that for decades have been living in Amazônia and do not hold land ownership. By making these concessions the government changes the status of land. Standing forests will technically have value.

There is significant difference in purpose when state forest lands are granted commercial use and when those lands are for grassroots use in Amazônia. Grassroots concessions are permanent and aim to benefit Amazonian dwellers by providing them with plots for their livelihood. Grassroots concessions took place in the 1980s with the creation of Flona and Resex. Recently, the government has also made such concessions for landless people, known in Brazil as MST (Landless Movement). They have been settled on the confiscated farms; properties that were illegally owned and/or had been unproductive.

#### **4.3.4 - Institutionalisation of the industrial timber in Amazonia**

In 2006, the Brazilian parliament passed law 4776/05 that regulates the management of public forests for commercial exploitation. The law sets out guidelines for *extractivism* (forest product extraction) and forest services. The concession system encompasses activities such as industrial timber as well as ecotourism in federal lands, more precisely in the National Forests (Flonas). The law also sets the parameters for the creation of new institutional instruments for forest management: the National Forest Development Fund (FNDF), and the Brazilian Forest Service (SBF). The SBF will be the government agency responsible for the concessions and monitoring.

Within a 60-year timeframe, the commercial timber and other forest activities in the Flonas must be in line with sustainable principles. Many “green economists” and specialists from within the environmental NGO group have hailed the law. The enactment of the new forest law has been regarded as institutionally advanced because it addresses illegal logging and deforestation in Amazonia. It regulates it officially and commercially since, “no legal mechanism existed to properly allocate public forestland to timber extraction, driving much logging into illegality” (Cifor 2005). Although the commercial concessions will be granted based on open bidding, scepticism and suspicion remain among some researchers, scientists and non-governmental organisations. Their concerns are about the transparency of the concession system and of the institutional deficits that may increase deforestation badly rather than tackling it. Different positions and viewpoints have created two diverging storylines.

Box 1-Appendix is part of an article published in the magazine *Science* on March 2003 by a team of ecological researchers placed at the Instituto do Homem e Meio Ambiente da Amazônia – IMAZON (Amazon Institute of People and the Environment), Belém city, Brazil. IMAZON is a non-governmental and non-profit research Institute. The authors were Adalberto Veríssimo, Carlos Souza Jr., and Mark A. Cochrane. At that time, Cochrane was contracted by the Centre for Global Change and Earth Observation, in the USA, but he was one of the IMAZON’s associated researchers. Veríssimo’s academic background is in agronomy and ecology, with a master’s degree on Zoning of Timber Extraction in the Brazilian Forests, awarded by the University of Pennsylvania. He has been a facilitator and key advocate of the concession system. IMAZON had been contracted by the Ministry for the Environment for consultancy and advice on the concession system for private use of the public forests.

The project under law 4776/05 was presented to the parliament in 2002 by the central government and was supported by the Ministry for the Environment. The authors of the article, entitled National Forests in the Amazon, got online feedback from a team of scientists and researchers from the Virginia Tech (USA) and of the Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia (INPA). INPA is a Brazilian government body directly linked to the Ministry of Science and Technology. Lima et al.’s views (Box 2-Appendix) and criticism of Veríssimo et

al. (Box 3-Appendix) and the concession system will be exposed in Box 2-Appendix. Apart from these extracts in Boxes 1, 2 and 3-Appendix, other citations will be used to reinforce the analysis, and they will function as a third voice in the strife; a sort of textual ancillary to a comprehensive analysis.

The article of Veríssimo et al. was written during a period of intense public debate in the National Congress about the positive and negative impacts of the forest concession system. Veríssimo et al.'s article uses 'strategic action' to construct a positive perspective of the concession system for commercial use of Brazilian public forests. It has a conciliatory tone between two worldviews: anthropocentric and ecocentric. The authors' conceptual standing fits the ideas of 'ecological modernisation' (Hajer 2003), 'natural capitalism' (Hawken et al. 1999), and 'ecological economics' (Costanza 1996; Daly 1997). These multidisciplinary fields deal with the dynamics and interdependence of two different streams: natural ecosystems and human economies.

The article mentions the divide between 'natural resources' and 'economic development'. Veríssimo et al are very explicit about their standpoint which advocates the reconciliation of 'ecology' and 'economics': "In an attempt to reconcile this issue" ("conservation-versus-development dichotomy"). The words 'reconcile', 'to balance', 'stability' (last paragraph) are used to reinforce the idea that 'managed deforestation' is in line with 'preservation'; that is, they can come together as a project for development. In this sense, 'sustainable development' in Amazonia takes place through "a forest policy based on well-managed timber production, implemented within a greatly expanded system of National Forests (Flonas)".

#### Box 1 Appendix - National forests in Amazonia and concessions

**By Adalberto Veríssimo, Mark A. Cochrane and Carlos Souza Jr. (IMAZON).**

Brazil, with its vast natural resources and a great need for economic development (1), is a prime example of the conservation-versus-development dichotomy. In an attempt to reconcile this issue, the Brazilian government is planning to balance its Amazonian development plans (1) with a new forest policy based on well-managed timber production, implemented within a greatly expanded system of National Forests (Flonas) (2). By 2010, 50 million hectares of new Flonas will be created, an area the size of Spain. The scale of this initiative is equivalent to the 1908 establishment of the U.S. National Forest system and is unprecedented in the tropics.

Without incentives for sustainably managed production, the timber industry will continue to sweep through the Amazon, catalyzing forest destruction, unplanned development, and the industry's own demise (2). With proper management, the negative impacts and cutting cycles of logging can be substantially reduced and the profitability of sustainable logging operations increased (3). Managed timberland area rose from almost nothing in 1993 to more than a million hectares in 2001 (4), with more than 0.3 million hectares certified by the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Although often underfunded and understaffed, protected areas in tropical countries are surprisingly effective in reducing deforestation and other forms of degradation (5). Flonas are sustainable-use conservation units, whose purpose is to produce goods (timber and nontimber products) while maintaining environmental services. Brazil's Flona system will complement its other protected lands and enhance conservation of Amazonian biodiversity. The mosaic of conservation areas, combining Flonas with fully protected parks and biological reserves, will provide corridors that allow movement between core protection areas, enhancing the conservation potential of the entire system of protected lands.

Federal- and state-controlled Flonas provide for practical, long-term management of Amazonian forests, a better option than reliance on numerous, uncertain, and corruption-prone frontier governments with stewardship (6). Strategically planned expansion of the Flona system may further contribute to biodiversity conservation and economic stability in the Amazon by constraining predatory activities, limiting land availability, increasing land values, and encouraging land use intensification. This would reduce the negative impacts of programs like Avança Brasil (1).

(Source: *Science* 297, 30 August 2002)

The authors use textual devices to build the idea that ‘deforestation’ is not ‘impacting’ if it is ‘well-managed’. The expressions “a great need of economic development (1)” and “within a greatly expanded system of National Forests (2)” are strategically positioned in the text to persuasively convince the addressee/decoder that ‘Amazonia needs a timber industry for its development, and only timber will help overcome the backwardness of a vast Amazonian territory. The relationship between the two sentences is what Fairclough (2003) calls ‘hyponymy’<sup>23</sup>; the ways in which textual coherence may ordinate levels of inclusiveness of meanings. The sentence (1) is a hyponymy of “National Forests” in which ‘expansion of Flonas’ connotes ‘economic development’.

The new meaning attached to Flonas reinforces the authors’ aphorisms. It reproduces old government mottos of the 50s and of the dictatorship period (1964-1985) in which ‘development for Amazonia’ should be through a highly impacting model with incentives for occupation, deforestation and the installation of industries.

In the second paragraph, the sentence: “without incentives for sustainably managed production, the timber industry will continue to sweep through the Amazon” reveals an attempt to link ‘development’ to ‘deforestation’.

Nobody is in a position to say whether the Brazilian concession system will sweep Amazonia or not in the same way that the illegal logging has done. Is timber the best development (exploitation) for Amazonia? The main inquiry here is: because the market does not provide a competitive commercial value for ‘standing forests’, with secular trees and a unique ecosystem, the solution is to despoil them with the “help” of corporate groups acting legally under the auspices of Brazilian institutions.

The article is mostly made up of ‘predictions’ and ‘statements of fact’ (Fairclough 2003: 175), as one can observe in “protected areas in tropical countries are surprisingly effective in reducing deforestation...” (first paragraph). Language resources are strategically used to deliver “assertions of certainty” to get one’s consent. The most common ‘textual device’ is the epistemic modality in the sentences (Fairclough 1993). ‘Modality’ helps the speaker to construct statements about notions of factual probabilities and/or obligations (Halliday 1994, Fairclough 2003).

In the words of Verschueren (1999), “modality...involves [...] ‘pure’ reference-and-predication content of an utterance, signalling factuality, degrees of certainty or doubt, vagueness, possibility, necessity and even permission...” (as quoted in Fairclough 2003: 164). In modalised clauses, there are levels of commitment (certainty/probability) to values in discussion, and the realization of these levels is done by the identification of ‘markers of modalisation’ (Fairclough 2003: 170). The following sentences taken illustrate the case: “the timber industry will continue to sweep through the Amazon” (*prediction*, second paragraph), “Brazil’s Flona system will complement its other protected lands...” (*prediction*, third paragraph), “Flona system may further contribute to biodiversity conservation...” (*uncertainty*, fourth paragraph).

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<sup>23</sup> Fairclough (2003) identified three categories for the analysis of ‘meaning’ as it appears through the relations of words and sentences in discourses. In summary, when two or more sentences are in relation to each other, there may appear: ‘*hyponymy*’ that refers to ‘meaning inclusion’, ‘*synonymy*’ for ‘meaning identity’, and ‘*antonymy*’ as there is ‘meaning exclusion’. For example, “in the discourse of social cohesion, the antonymy of ‘social cohesion’ may find its ‘meaning suppression’ in sentences like ‘polarization’ as well as ‘social exclusion’ (p.130). The three categories complete the taxonomy for ‘meaning’ in critical discourse analysis (CDA).

The article estimates that by 2010, 50 million hectares of new Flonas (National Forests) will be created. Although Veríssimo et al. say Flonas can provide non-timber products, they avoid coming up with examples. Their emphasis is on ‘timber’ and its economic importance. There are silences in the text about impacts of the timber industry. Logging in a rich ecosystem like the Amazonian one will cause a huge impact. In order to reach the most market valuable trees, they will need to cut through the dense forest. And, for each tree they cut, the surrounding ones will be badly impacted.

Veríssimo et al. have provided little or no evidence to sustain their arguments. In the third paragraph, the statements sound slightly paradoxical when compared to each other, as in the sentence: “Brazil’s Flona system will complement its other protected lands and enhance conservation of Amazonian biodiversity”.

Veríssimo et al. do not explain, with clear examples, ‘how’ this will happen. How will the timber industry in the Flonas help to conserve Amazonian biodiversity? Maybe they refer to the fast-becoming strategy advocated by some ecological economists: ‘sell it to save it’. For example, they say that the ‘industrial timber’ will result in ‘conservation’ and it will somehow replace the “corruption-prone frontier government with stewardship” (fourth paragraph). What is the basis of such an assertion? Their references are vague and imprecise.

Another enigmatic sentence is: “Flonas, with fully protected parks and biological reserves, will provide corridors that allow movement between core protection areas, enhancing the conservation”. Again, the statements are an attempt to induce readers to believe that ‘industrial timber’ connotes conservation; they are trying to convince that expansion of Flonas is for conservation rather than to provide wood. The article is imbued with distorted meaning fabrication.

Scholars and scientists have been sceptical about the formation of a “mosaic for conservation” (refer to extracts in Box 9). Environmental agencies know that the protected areas of Brazil (third paragraph) are often “underfunded” and “understaffed” (Intwee-21, Ministry for the Environment, 2005; Intwee-36, *Novo Airão* city, 2005). Although in properly financially assisted by the government, the protected areas are supposed to have functioned as “barriers” blocking the advance of the deforestation frontier. However, IBAMA, the key governmental agency to monitor Amazonia and the protected areas, has been unable to do so.

During my field trip in the region, some IBAMA employees said that the ‘agency’ does not have enough money and personnel to realistically monitor Amazonia. It is a huge region with thousands of square kilometres for one official alone. This problem combined with corruption at all administrative levels of the government, of the judiciary and of the legislative, raises concerns about the effectiveness of a concession system. IBAMA should be institutionally powerful enough to manage and monitor the concessions rather than have the concessions fund themselves.

The point is: If IBAMA is currently unable to control deforestation, can the newest agency, Brazilian Forest Service (SBF), do so? Can the newest National Fund for Forest Development (FNDF) really provide the money needed for conservation?

Godoy (2006) explains that the concession system is ‘decentralisation of power’ from the central government to local authorities, communities and to authorities at state and municipal levels; she explains that the central government, by transferring the management of natural resources to the private sector, works with the principle that these ‘resources’ will gain a somewhat ‘private property status’ and consequently will be better managed than they would be at the hands of the public sector (p. 636).

About 75% of the Amazonian territory are composed of public areas formed by indigenous territory and conservation units, and the remaining public areas of Amazonia do not have any type of designation (LBA 2005; Godoy 2006), leaving them open for plantations, logging and extensive ranching. Godoy (2006) raised two questions: is private management an alternative to public management? Because the government has been inefficient in promoting conservation of forests (Lima 2002), then can the private sector manage the forest resources in a way that may result in economic stability for the local communities and conservation for nature?

In terms of the hierarchy of inter-governmental agencies, the creation of the SBF overlies the institutional role of IBAMA. According to decree 1.298, of 27 October 1994, IBAMA should be the key agency to look after the public forests (Godoy 2006). There have been institutional and administrative struggles around this issue. IBAMA's administration has complained about the way the concession system is designed to operate. Some say that instead of strengthening IBAMA, the central government has opted to pass the buck of forest management to the private sector while putting down the agency. Nevertheless, this is not entirely true.

IBAMA may lose part of the decision-making power and independency at hierarchical and institutional government levels, but, it continues its pivotal role for assessing, approving and monitoring projects in the public forests. With law 4776/05, IBAMA has the right to receive 30% of all funds related to, or produced by, the concession system and these funds can strengthen IBAMA for an effective "watchdog role".

On the 14 of May 2007, IBAMA's staff began a strike demanding adequate government assistance to that institution and against central government pressures on the environmental concessions. According to the president of the IBAMA's Staff Association (ASIBAMA), "the feeling we have is of indignation. It is a feeling that the government betrayed us...and the government has structured IBAMA in a way that other sectors can get the concessions easily even if they impact badly on the environment" (Correa, 2007, in interview to *Folha Online*). IBAMA's strike is a reaction against president Lula's administration and its Plan for Growth Acceleration (PAC), presented in January 2007, which aims to generate US\$250 billion in public and private investment within four years. According to IBAMA's staff, only half of the PAC's projects, 864 out of 1,646, are under acceptable levels for implementation (*TMCnet.com*, 11 May 2007).

The article by Veríssimo et al., metaphorically endorses the idea that the Brazilian government has been unable to manage and monitor the 'public forests' properly, those areas under the status of *res nullius*.

Therefore, the authors advocate giving status to this land, transforming it into Flonas for industrial exploitation. The policy and development model are exclusive because the various communities will not be able to compete with powerful groups, and there are no mechanisms in the policy that would empower them to do so.

Box 2-Appendix is a criticism of Veríssimo et al.'s article by Lima et al. They confront the predictions with a positive outlook of the concession system, ignoring possible negative side effects. Merry and Amacher belong to the Department of Forestry, Virginia Tech (USA), but they were working in association with INPA (Brazil).



## Box 2 Appendix - A Risky forest policy in Amazonia?

By Erivelthon Lima, Daniel C. Nepstad, Frank D. Merry, Gregory S. Amacher

In their Policy Forum "National forests in the Amazon" (30 Aug., p. 1478), A. Veríssimo *et al.* seem assured that a new system of national forests will solve the problems of uncontrolled forest exploitation in the Brazilian Amazon. Unfortunately, we are far less optimistic. Attached to the laudable effort to develop an expanded network of national forests is an ill-advised plan to harvest timber on half of that land through a system of forest concessions. This plan apparently has been formulated without regard to the widespread problems of forest concessions in developing countries and will provide the large-scale forest industry with subsidized access to substantial remaining old-growth tropical forests of Amazônia.

The decision to adopt concessions is based on the mistaken premises that harvesting on public lands is more profitable than harvesting on private lands and that the government of Brazil will be better able to monitor forest industry activities, thereby reducing illegal harvesting and increasing the adoption of sustainable forest management practices. In fact, concessions may have considerable unintended and negative side-effects, many of which have so far escaped serious discussion.

Some complications that may arise include the following: subsidized timber production from concessions may crowd out legal logging on private lands; monitoring concessions will add costly administrative and professional responsibilities for which the government is unprepared; concessions will not deter illegal logging; and they will give preferred access to large-scale producers while missing opportunities to direct industry benefits to private land holders.

The recent effort by the Ministry of the Environment through its National Forestry Program is commendable. They are consulting the public and entertaining a variety of opinions in a transparent manner. The products of this effort, however, are as yet inadequate for a policy decision that encompasses the largest tropical forest of the world. National forests for the Brazilian Amazon are a good idea -- they will provide initial protection for vast areas of the forest--but the Brazilian government must think carefully before allowing industrial harvest of these forests.

**Source:** *Science* 299, 21 March 2003

Veríssimo *et al.*'s article has "levels of abstraction" (Fairclough 2003: 124), using repetition and commonalities, to build the concept that 'nature' must be conditionally subordinated to development. The authors have chosen simply to defend the idea that nature is to serve capitalist interests (Zimmerer 2003). Under a capitalist and neo-liberal reasoning, the discursive construction of nature transforms it into a mere commodity (Escobar 1996).

Box 3-Appendix with extracts of Lima *et al.* makes use of 'realist statements' (Fairclough 2003) that seek to expose contradictions embedded in the storylines of Veríssimo *et al.*; a set of arguments that were elaborated for the 'aestheticisation of governing instruments'. Merry *et al.* criticize Veríssimo *et al.*'s image of public policies. This section will not repeat a methodical scrutiny of the text; rather, parts of both extracts will be contrasted. Another text by Veríssimo *et al.* in reply to Merry *et al.*'s criticism is also included (see Box 3-Appendix, fourth section: 'added retort').

**Box 3 Appendix - Extended criticism on Veríssimo et al.'s concession system**

**Veríssimo et al.:** Flonas system will complement its other protected lands and enhance conservation of Amazonian biodiversity [...] Federal and state-controlled Flonas provide for practical, long-term management of Amazonian forests, a better option than reliance on numerous uncertain, and corruption-prone frontier governments for stewardship.

**Merry et al.:** Veríssimo et al. seem assured that a new system of national forests will solve the problems of uncontrolled forest exploitation in the Brazilian Amazon. Unfortunately, we are far less optimistic.

**Merry et al.:** ...an expanded network of national forests is an ill-advised plan to harvest timber on half of that land through a system of forest concessions [...] the decision to adopt concessions is based on the mistaken premises that harvesting on public lands is more profitable than harvesting on private lands [...] thereby reducing illegal harvesting and increasing sustainable [...] practices.

**Veríssimo et al. [added retort]:** Merry et al. express doubts that Brazilians have the capacity to overcome the predatory and illegal logging [with] its new system of National Forests. Contrary to their opinions, Brazil has learned from troubled concession systems in other tropical countries. The strategy for locating new Flonas is based on social, economic, and biological criteria. The actual concession system will be defined this year, in part, through an open public debate within the National Congress, with participation of nongovernmental organizations, forest scientists, and logging industry representatives. This transparent and democratic process is very different from what has occurred in other countries. The Flona system is designed to break the status quo of predatory logging wherein loggers extract timber from unclaimed public lands without paying fees. Stumpage fees will be used to strengthen management, monitoring, and administration of Flonas

(*Science*, March 2003, edition 299).

A comparison of the discourses reveals two things: institutional power relations and conflicting worldviews. Brazilians and Americans are on both teams. Although the link is not obvious, their views reflect the ideological stand of two institutions, IMAZON and INPA. It seems that IMAZON has adopted an ecological economics orientation while INPA has kept a traditional environmentalism.

In their retort, Veríssimo et al. claim that 'Brazilians' have the capacity to overcome the problem of deforestation through such a concession system. By using the word 'Brazilians', they seem to pass on the idea that the 'concession system' has been a consensus, agreed upon to become a national project.

The sentence is permeated by 'statements of fact' and with high levels of certainty about its success. It contains 'excessive optimism' with no empirical grounds for it as underlined by Merry et al. (third paragraph): "we are far less optimistic", "ill-advised plan for harvest timber"..."based on mistaken premises". Veríssimo et al. also mention that the system was publicly debated in the National Congress which makes it transparent and democratic.

Discussion was open to any one, but the approval of the law evidently stayed in the hands of the legislative power. Ruralist congressional bloc represents a powerful network which has succeeded in many occasions to lobby for its interests, i.e. the expansion of plantations, cattle breeding and logging in the rainforest areas (Lima 2002). Moreover, the central government was working with its political base in the Congress to have it endorsed.

The law 4776/05 was finally approved on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2006 by 221 votes to 199. The balloting reveals a Parliament highly divided on whether to endorse or not a concession system for public forest management.

It is important to explain that the Congress approved the concession system but its full implementation depends on positive outcomes and on evaluations of independent consultants after five years. Initially, the number of concessions will be limited and used as pilot projects; they will help specialists to track the whole development of the timber industry and of its impacts on Amazonia.

Only 20% of the public forest areas will become available for concessions in the first 10 years of the programme. The concessions are awarded through open bidding, and the winners need to present a sustainable forest management plan to IBAMA ahead of their operations. The maximum timeframe for the renewal of ongoing concessions is 60 years.

Table 2-Appendix summarizes the main characteristics, concerning points and institutional/individual positions about law 4776/05 by Greenpeace, Merry et al. (INPA) and Veríssimo et al. (IMAZON). Data was collected from publications and on the internet in 2003, 2005, and 2006. The mentioned individuals/organisation may have changed opinion and position over time, so that the content is not restricted to the information provided on the table, and may not reflect the views of INPA and IMAZON on the whole.

**Table 2 Appendix - Concession system and National Forests (Flonas in Brazil)**

Issues/ Organisations	Greenpeace	Merry et al (INPA)	Verissimo et al. (IMAZON)
Positive aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No incentive for land grabbing</li> <li>-Creation of a Fund for forest management</li> <li>-Selective logging</li> <li>-Communities were taken into account in the concession system</li> <li>-The law regulates the use of public forest in Brazil</li> <li>-It is not privatization of the Amazonia; it is a concession system for land use</li> <li>-There is a binding cutting cycle to be followed by the logging entrepreneurs. The time gap between one cutting and another is of 30 years</li> <li>-There has been transparency and open debates on the concession system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The efforts of the Ministry for the Environment, through its National Forestry Programme, is commendable</li> <li>-Consultation with the public and NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Concession system will provide the means for a sustainably managed production of timber</li> <li>-Negative impacts and cutting cycles of logging can be substantially reduced</li> <li>-Profitability of sustainable logging operations will increase</li> <li>-Flonas contribute to reduce deforestation</li> <li>-National Fund for Forest Development</li> <li>-Brazilian Forest Service (SFB)</li> <li>-Expanded Flonas and concession system will possibly increase land values, contribute to biodiversity and economic stability in Amazonia.</li> </ul>
Side effects/ Inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highly dependent on state presence</li> <li>-The existing management techniques are of low quality (highly impacting ones).</li> <li>-Lack of an environmental and economic zoning, through participatory mechanisms, can impact very negatively on the local and traditional communities</li> <li>-Land grabbers and trespasser may insist to stay on the land</li> <li>-Law 4776/05 is not clear about the liability of the concessionaires in case of abandonment and/or bankruptcy</li> <li>-The law does not establish the need to maintain forest spots (witness forests)</li> <li>-The law is not clear about the mechanisms that will keep the environmental services of the forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Subsidised timber production from concessions may crowd out legal logging on private lands</li> <li>-Monitoring concessions will add costly administrative and professional responsibilities</li> <li>-Concessions will not deter illegal logging; instead, they will give preferred access to large-scale producers of timber rather than directly benefiting private land holders</li> <li>-Inadequate policy decision that encompasses the largest tropical forest of the world</li> <li>-ill-advised plan to harvest timber</li> </ul>	<p>(No negative aspects or side-effects about the concession system were mentioned by Verissimo et al.)</p>

**Source:** Ismar Lima, 2008, with data available in *Science*, issues 297, 299, and Greenpeace.com

### **Local communities and the forest concession system**

In addition to the regulation on sustainable management of public forests, the concession system also sets the guidelines for concession of forest areas for community occupation and use such as 'forest product extraction'. In this sense, the traditional communities will be virtually competing with the timber industry and with other groups.

The Amapá's governor, Capiberibe, in an interview to *Comciencia* in 2005 underlined that law 4776/05 has interesting aspects, and for the first time the forests in Brazil gain an institutional and economic importance. However, for him, thousands of inhabitants living alongside the rivers and in hinterland areas will need to get mobilised and integrated in order to avoid forest depletion as well as to make sure the concessionaires will comply with the law.

Capiberibe emphasized that one negative aspect of the law is its complete decentralisation, and it includes the creation of municipal and state forests whose management may be transferred into the hands of local elites which normally support the timber industry. His concern is with a possible institutionalisation of deforestation of Amazonia in which powerful groups will have the legal means to continue the devastation of the forest.

Capiberibe is firm on his position that the local communities are the most legitimate entity to have preference over the concession system. He mentioned the economic importance of *açaí*, an Amazonian fruit, which has an expanding market and whose extraction has employed thousands of locals; moreover, the cosmetic industry has been another sector exploring the economic power of Amazonian plants and employing the locals.

The concession system is decentralisation in the form of a third party contract. Godoy (2006) alerts that one of the recurrent arguments against decentralisation of management is that communities do not have complete control of the forests. Her approach is similar to Capiberibe's, by underlining that the local elites are powerful groups, and traditional groups are disadvantaged by their inability to organise.

Godoy (2006) explains that based on the premise that 'decentralisation' usually reorders pre-existing power relations in a way that may weaken the democratic decision processes, with the redistribution of power at local and regional levels, the decentralisation process often imposes new roles and authorities over forest resources. These new actors ignore previous local institutions for forest management (p.647).

Godoy (2006) defends the thesis that the Brazilian government ignored the various social arrangements in Amazonia in promoting private forest management. For her, the locals should be considered for the management of forests. Some communities situated in the Resex (i.e. *Maripá*) and in the Flonas (i.e. Maguari, Jamaraguá) have thus been marginalised without the means to compete with the timber industry.

In order to survive socially and culturally and become competitive, under the new economic order rooted in the concession system, the traditional populations should create community associations or cooperatives with legal and legitimate status to act on their behalf (Godoy 2006: 649)

### **Conclusion: Proecotur and the concession system**

It is disturbing to realise that during the debates on the concession system and in the final version of law 4776/05, ecotourism was placed in a very peripheral position. The concession system should have been woven together with an ongoing public policy for ecotourism in Amazonia, the Brazilian Programme for Ecotourism Development (Proecotur).

The programme has been implemented since 1994 and has faced several setbacks, institutional constraints, financial limitations, and it does not have an ideal institutional model for a partnered management of ecotourism. Surprisingly, the Ministry for the Environment, which hosts Proecotur, lobbied intensely to approve a concession system that has an obvious bias towards industrial timber.

The administrative decision of the Ministry is an intra-institutional contradiction in terms of public policies. Instead of strengthening Proecotur through the concession system, including the transference of funds out of FNDP, the Ministry opted to leave Proecotur to its own fate. The Ministry has claimed and defended partnership models but internally (inside its own home) was unable to idealise a programme that would address common goals.

Proecotur is a programme structured into three major components: the first one was the study of spatial, geographical and market issues as well as the institutional structure for developing ecotourism in Amazonia. The second component involved investments in small-scale infrastructures (i.e. information centres) to assist the visitors and organisations dealing with ecotourism. The third component focuses on capacity building and environmental education. Its key objective is to promote sustainable ecotourism development in nine Amazonian states (Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins) in order to: protect and develop ecotourism products; implement basic services infrastructure; create positive conditions for investments; survey national and international markets; propose a legal framework for the activity; train human resources; foster the use of appropriate technologies; value local culture; and help finance biodiversity conservation (Soavinski 2001).

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## The Micro Geopolitics of Ecotourism Ismar Borges de Lima (Author)

This is an interdisciplinary book on tourism, sustainability, nature conservation and preservation, public policies and development, politics, power relations, partnerships and discursive constructions which presents tourism-related topics and current themes with remarkable in-depth analysis and discerning views serving as a source to various purposes of scholars, researchers, professors, government staff, planners, policy makers, people of trade and of private sector, civil society, NGOs, and by those interested in the subject.

It is a book written to be used by individuals of any discipline within the Social Sciences, such as human geography, planning and management, and sociolinguistics, etc. Conceptually, the author discusses and applies Social Constructionism, Critical Realism and Theory of Collaboration to empirical data, and he discusses and adapts the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough as a methodological tool. Ismar's contributions to Academia are many and lie in the development of the Contextual Critical Discourse Analysis (CCDA) as a qualitative method; as well as in his approach on sustainability as socially constructed in which he labels it as 'liquid sustainability'. He was also the first scholar to develop the concept of 'local environmental governance' (LEG) in 2002 and to apply it to real cases as an essential element of new ecologically oriented development models.

This book is a very interesting reading with unique approaches. There are general chapters accessible to a broad audience in reason of case studies in Brazil where the author draws on empirical experiences in Amazonia region such as in Marajó Island, Tapajós-Arapiuns, Maripá, Jamaraguá, Maguari, Silves, Novo Airão, and in the northeast region of the country, specifically in Bahia state, namely Itacaré, Ilhéus, and Una municipalities. This book is also based on a four-year fieldwork in New Zealand. The author visited and collected data in Mount Maunganui, Rotorua, Waimangi, Maungatautari Ecological Island, Bay of Plenty with a focus on Kuaka Organization, Bay of Islands, Wairere Boulders in Hokianga, Kauri Park, and other green areas in Far Northland. In this book, the author examines collaboration schemes and partnership models by deconstructing them as institutional and organizational arrangements, and he seeks to underline the various impacts on local and regional development. It is a praiseworthy pioneer study and writing on nature-based tourism activities in protected areas, either being labelled as community-based or not, as well as (eco)tourism as a public or private endeavour in both countries.

The original version of the academic manuscript was reviewed by Michael C. Hall, an internationally acknowledged scholar in the tourism field, professor at the University of Canterbury, who said "the author is to be congratulated for the overall quality of the research and the written quality of the work". Heather Zeppel, highly prized in Academia for her publications on ecotourism, professor at James Cook University, also manifested her views on the work, "the manuscript...provides new insights...through discourse analysis...and the author should be encouraged to publish key findings of it".



***Ismar Borges de Lima*** got his PhD in the field of tourism and human geography at the University of Waikato, in New Zealand. His Master's degree in International Relations, with a major on sustainability and public policies, was awarded by the International University of Japan - IUJ. Ismar Lima has built an international career and he has a collection of publications on tourism and environmental issues. He has been invited for article presentations and speeches in Conferences around the world. He is also the author of the book, 'Development in the Amazon Rainforest and Local Environmental Governance',

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