

## COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: AN EXPLORATION OF THE CONCEPT(S) FROM A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Tourism is always seen as a viable alternative means of boosting development in developing countries. Similarly, community-based tourism (CBT) is generally associated with development in poor, especially rural, communities. This article first presents CBT as a possible community development tool, exploring its conceptual and historical evolution, and then offers solutions for enhancing the opportunities and capacity of CBT in facilitating rural community development. To that end, a definition of community and notions of development are proposed, and a community development strategy, based on issues of empowerment, self-reliance, and sustainability, is explored. Special attention is given to local context issues in relation to community development. In addition, the origin and evolution of the CBT concept, and the linkages between the concept and alternative development paradigms from the 1970s are explored, including the notions of empowerment and self-reliance. This article makes two contributions. Firstly, it proposes that the current meaning of CBT does not coincide with the original concept of CBT because the contemporary policy milieu has changed. Secondly, it presents different CBT typologies in line with contemporary CBT concept(s) and issues of community development.

Key words: Community-based tourism; Community development; Empowerment; Self-reliance

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### Introduction

Today, tourism is recognized as the most relevant economic sector throughout much of the world, especially in postindustrial areas, and increasingly in impoverished urban and rural areas in developed countries, which are trying to enter

the industry in order to overcome economic stagnation or decay (Binns & Nel, 2003; Wyckoff, 1995). Poor countries also follow this trend by stressing the importance of tourism in boosting their national economies (Binns & Nel, 2002; Cater, 1995; Werner, 2003) and, as such, developing countries view tourism as a strategy for both economic

growth and poverty relief (Binns & Nel, 2002, p. 1). Although in the 1970s tourism was seen as a way to promote development, tourism only assumed the specific role to alleviate poverty in the 1990s. Consequently, the “pro-poor tourism” discourse emerged—a “more self-consciously *moral* approach to tourism, especially when practiced by community-based organizations under the broader rubric of ‘sustainable tourism’” (Harrison & Schipani, 2007, p. 87).

This article attempts to contribute to the debate on neoliberalism in tourism, which is an issue that “has received less explicit attention than the other three development paradigms of modernisation, dependency, [and] alternative development” (Telfer, 2002, p. 56). The aim is to investigate how CBT can be positioned, as originally intended, to promote holistic and locally based development processes. Neoliberal strategists tend to exploit and reformulate the CBT concept by pushing and advocating neoliberal friendly CBT strategies. This forms the basis of our discussion in this article.

As Britton (1981) insinuates, “the emphasis here, however, is not whether tourism is economically advantageous in aggregate terms, but to whom these advantages accrue” (p. 19) (see also Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, p. 115). The issue is therefore that “it is crucial to understand the basic matter of ‘who gets what, when, where, and how’” (Sofield, 2003, p. 92).

## Literature Review

### *Contextualizing Community*

A precondition to explore, and give meaning to this article, is to understand the significance of the concepts of community and development (and what this means for community development), as both terms have many interpretations.

Community can be divided into two main groups: geographical and functional or of interest (Ife, 2002; Reid, 2003). The geographical community is based on locality, while the functional community is based on a common sense of identity (Ife, 2002). In this article, the concept of geographical community is used in a sense of being related to issues of community development and community-based services (Ife, 2002; Reid, 2003). However, within particular geographic communities, tourism communities are

mostly seen as a physical entity or a group of people with a common interest in the tourism sector (Reid, 2003). Community has also been described as a human alliance within a specific geographical space that relates itself to a local social system of human alliances (Mayhew, 1997). People forming a community are able to organize cooperatively within it because of their common historical/geographical evolution. While the problem of unequal power relations within the community is acknowledged, the relationship with external influences and power structures may be of greater importance than those at community level (e.g., in a traditional chieftaincy structure). Internal relations are limited, mediated, or absorbed by the characteristics of the community, which provides the necessary checks and balances at that level (Giampiccoli & Hayward, 2012).

The concept of development has greatly broadened since the 1960s and the works of authors such as Seers (1963, 1969, 1971) and Goulet (1971), following changes to the meaning of development by institutions such as the United Nations and its Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI) (Thirwall, 2002, p. 44). Development now encompasses concepts of economic growth, human well-being, holistic (self-reliance and empowerment) and people-centeredness, and so forth (Burkey, 1993; Pieterse, 2000), at the individual, group and national levels. It also focuses on social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions (Pino & Wiatrowski, 2006) and aims to reduce economic dependency.

However, although the aim is to achieve complete community self-reliance, communities need to be open to the external world. Therefore, self-reliance does not consist of political or economical isolationism, but means that a community should depend on itself, not on others, while at the same time engaging in mutually beneficial trade and cooperation (Nyerere, 1974).

### *Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Context*

Nelson (2004) refers to community-based tourism as tourism activities or enterprises in which local communities participate, occurring on their lands, and scaffolding on their cultural heritage and natural attractions and assets. Nelson (2004)

observes that in the late 1990s, as many as 25 rural villages in northern Tanzania were engaged in some form of tourism activity, in conjunction with one or a number of private companies.

The challenges he observed were external groups jostling to “profit at the expense of local people,” variability in the abilities of communities to effectively and efficiently manage tourism revenues, ventures, and other resources (Nelson, 2004, p. 2). He notes that the boon for these areas has been that they are underdeveloped with little or no tourism infrastructure and therefore making these lands attractive to the high-paying tourist in search of an “exclusive, isolated wilderness experience” which congested national parks do not provide (Nelson, 2004, p. 5). Additionally as an attraction, horseback riding, walking, and night game drives which are prohibited in national parks are allowed in communal lands (Nelson, 2004, p. 6). This is corroborated by Zapata, Hall, Limdo, and Vanderschaegh (2011, p. 741) who observe that “bottom-up CBT projects” had a substantial absorptive capacity in creating jobs with positive spin offs for the community including indirect impact by tapping into local supply chains of the informal economy in which poor worked.

Simpson (2008) posits the notion of Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) in which the fundamental principle is the transmission of benefits to the community regardless of ownership or control, location, involvement as well as level of wealth. Thus, he argues that,

the tourism initiative need not always involve the community in any rights, tenure or control of the project. Ideally, community participation, control or a level of ownership should be aimed for, if only to ensure delivery of the appropriate proportion and type of benefits to the relevant community. CBTI focuses on delivering livelihood and other benefits as a result of a tourism enterprise. (p. 2)

Hardy et al., cited in Sebele (2010, p. 137), argues that community participation, which Simpson (2008) disparages, is important on the basis that it reduces opposition to develop, minimizes negative impacts, and revitalizes economies. However, Simpson (2008) further emphasizes that of interest is the transmission of the benefits to the

community as a whole while taking a broader socioeconomic perspective without focusing primarily on the poor or any other predetermined segment of the community. Thus, Simpson (2008) argues that the CBTIs can operate in any region of the world, rich or poor, in the southern or northern hemisphere and that direct community involvement is not critical. Such a scenario allows such players as governments and NGOs to design projects that deliver benefits to communities without the “baggage” associated with community involvement in decision making (Simpson, 2008, p. 2).

In contrast, Keane, Lemma, and Kennan (n.d.) argue that within the concept of Rural-based Community Tourism (RCT) in Nicaragua and Guatemala, there is an embedded assumption that “participants are not employees but managers, protagonist actors throughout the organisation and management of the process.” RCT initiatives are collective enterprises with a bias towards poverty reduction through increased income and strong application of development management and planning (Keane et al., n.d.).

Honggang, Sofield, and Jigang (2009, pp. 3–4) posit a different strand of CBT, namely “Communities Benefiting through Tourism” (CBT) in which community members using their resources and labor participate in the value chains of tourism operations by providing goods and services to existing tourism enterprises. In such an arrangement, community members either provide labor or indirectly interaction with tourists as this will be done by those in the front line sectors (Honggang et al., 2009, pp. 3–4). Honggang et al. (2009) further argue that this arrangement allows communities to engage in mass tourism, which is beyond SMEs, and link to operations outside their locations.

Okazaki (2008) posits a concept of a CBT model based on “ladder of citizen participation,” characterized by collaboration and power redistribution as well as the creation of social capital. He argues, “societies with good governance and high levels of bridging social capital, via external associations, achieve complementarity between state and society. The social capital required for tourism development is available, and there is little need for external assistance” (p. 525).

Okazaki (2008, p. 526) further argues that this should be undergirded by elaborate information

dissemination and purposeful community empowerment to allow communities to scale the ladder of participation while allowing for bonding and the creation of sustained social capital.

This plethora of CBTs means that all these arrangements have a place in tourism. However, the question that begs the answer is: Which one is appropriate for a given context? The Simpsonian CBT can work where ownership of assets is not contentious and also assumes a “trickling down” of benefits. Okazaki’s preoccupation seems to be about sustainability; hence, the themes of empowerment, social capital including governance are key in the formulation of his conception of a CBT. Honggang et al.’s (2009) CBT assumes a “business as usual” and casual approach to community tourism while combining some elements from Simpson as well as from Okazaki.

### *The Politics*

The concept of empowerment must be understood as intrinsically associated with issues of community development, as a social transformative process through (in Gramscian/Freirian terms) the understanding and opposing of hegemonic structures and working towards alternative development solutions. Empowerment must be seen as a community (or class) conscientization process (Craig & Mayo, 1995). Therefore, facilitating community empowerment means to “provide people with the resources, opportunities, vocabulary, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity to determine their own future, and to participate in and affect the life of their community” (Ife, 2002, p. 208).

Within the tourism context, empowerment is also seen as a key condition for community development (Reid, 2003; Scheyvens, 2002; Sofield, 2003). Sofield (2003) specifically argues that “without empowerment, sustainable tourism development by communities is difficult to attain” (p. 7). Furthermore, the need is to shift from participation to empowerment (Sofield, 2003).

It is essential not only to verify who gains from tourism development, specifically CBT development, but also to understand the international/global context, especially how CBT, which is embedded in the processes of international cooperation, translates into local realities. The tourism

development debate is part of the development process and therefore needs contextualizing (Honey, 1999).

For hundreds of years, the world has witnessed the intensified concentration of production in larger plants and accumulation of capital in larger companies: “capitalism had become a world system” (Barratt Brown, 1995, p. 31), especially in the “last quarter of the twentieth century [which] was marked by dramatic steps toward the achievement of global neo-liberalism” (De Martino, 2003, p. 402). Using the Gramsci notion of political, economic, and cultural hegemony, Giampiccoli (2007) and Giampiccoli and Nauright (2010) describe how neoliberal globalization works and translates into local policies in developing countries, and how it facilitates movement towards divergence and convergence. The emphasis is in the interconnection between the cultural, political, and economic milieus supported by, and supportive of, a specific neoliberal discourse (Giampiccoli, 2007; Giampiccoli & Nauright, 2010).

Sofield (2003) uses a similar perspective in his study of tourism and international cooperation, where “the three areas of colonial domination of the political, economic and cultural may be interpreted as manifestations of dependency theory” (Sofield, 2003, p. 164). At a more general level, international relations based on hegemony have been recognized not only to exist among states but also to encompass the hegemonically leading mode of production and social classes of the various countries (Cox, 1996a). Global hegemony must therefore be understood as a system comprising three different structures: social, economic, and political, characterized by the homogenization of norms, institutions, and mechanisms that establish the rules of behavior necessary for governments and the international class to sustain the dominant economic system (Cox, 1996b).

A specific discourse is required to understand the specific actors, and the cultural, political, and economic framework in which they operate, as it “is impossible to understand the global/local nexus unless we examine the prevailing discourse on internationalization and globalization” (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001, p. 373). These interconnections control global tourism and continue to promote a kind of tourism that works against the wider

distribution of benefits. Thus, this system works against the full development and potential of CBT, as Peet (2003) argues:

the depth of a hegemony resides in the ability of a discursive formation to specify the parameters of the practical, the realistic and the sensible among a group of theoreticians, political practitioners and policy makers [and] where critical discussion is limited to variants of a given discourse. (p. 17)

With regards to a Global Intellectual Hegemony (GIH), much has been done through the skilled use of words and terminology, both to reinforce the hegemonic creed and to maintain unchanged the current order by attaching positive qualities to these words and terms (Gosovic, 2000).

Tourism, like other economic sectors, “evolved in a way which closely matches historical patterns of colonialism and economic dependency” (Lea, 1988, p. 10). Milne and Ateljevic (2001, p. 371) describe international tourism as involving multinational corporations, with the attendant geopolitics, economic forces of change, and local interactions (workers, residents, visitors, entrepreneurs, and governments). Therefore, CBT needs to be understood in the broader international framework. International interest in funding the tourism sector commenced in the 1960s within a modernization framework, but tourism as a way to enhance foreign exchange earnings increased with the move towards neoliberalism (Telfer, 2002).

### *Alternative Development and Tourism*

The study of the relationship between tourism and development began in earnest after the Second World War, when many countries were attracted by the idea of using tourism as a quick and convenient way to earn foreign currency. Interrogating the role which tourism can play in development (in whatever economic orientation or rather with a more holistic perspective), Telfer (2009) finds that tourism “has been used as a development tool, influenced by shifts in the larger conceptualization of development” (p. 148).

In agreement with Brohman (1996) and Telfer (2009), who show the linkage between development theories and tourism, it is proposed here that the concept of CBT can be traced back and

associated to the alternative development approaches formulated during the 1970s. These approaches were concerned with issues beyond strict economic reasoning, such as empowerment and self-reliance (Telfer, 2009). Telfer (2009) specifically argues that “one of the pillars of the alternative development paradigm is local empowerment and this has been the focus of research on indigenous tourism, community-based tourism, ecotourism and the empowerment of women through tourism” (p. 156).

Cornelissen (2005) echoes this, stating that community tourism has a long history steeped in the “participatory and empowerment development models/[paradigms]” (p. 21) that emerged in the 1970s development discourse.

A relevant issue is whether alternative development approaches can improve the poor living conditions of local people, or whether even alternative forms of tourism will continue to promote dependency frameworks and unequal power relations between the western world and developing countries (Scheyvens, 2002, p. 22). However, if properly supported by appropriate legislation and institutional structures, alternative tourism development (such as CBT), coupled with proper understanding of development and community development concepts, could contribute to a separation from, or decreased influence of, the dependency structures of neoliberal diffusionist approaches implemented in recent years.

In this article, the development of tourism is viewed from a diffusionist paradigm where “at some stage in the process of the development of the more developed areas, there will be a spread, a filtering, or a diffusion of growth/development impulses from the most developed to the less developed areas” (Browett, 1980, p. 65). In other words, “this ‘spread,’ ‘trickledown,’ or ‘filtering’ effect will lead eventually to an adjustment of the regional disparities after initial polarization” (Oppermann, 1993, p. 538). However, such a diffusion of the tourism industry will lead to a change in tourism ownership structures, as “while initial control of the industry is held locally, eventually larger multinational firms enter the market” (Telfer, 2002, p. 123).

Dependency theory maintains that capitalism perpetuates inequalities between developed and underdeveloped countries, which is also the case

for the tourism sector, as Britton (1982) writes, "The international tourist industry, because of the commercial power held by foreign enterprises, imposes on peripheral destinations a development mode which reinforces dependency on, and vulnerability to, developed countries" (p. 355).

Moreover, historically, colonialism and tourism can be seen as proportionally correlated, as metropolitan tourism capital shapes the organization and outlook of tourism in developing countries (Britton, 1982, p. 355). Following the historical trend of colonialism, multinational corporations have played a role in facilitating tourism in developing countries (Lea, 1988). According to Telfer (2002, p. 55), international tourism is controlled by large multinational firms located in the developed world because they control tour wholesaling, airlines, and hotel chains. Thus, "the dependency model tended to conflate a generalised system of domination between metropolitan and peripheral states with a specifically unequal capitalist mode of (tourism) production" (Sharma, 2004, p. 66).

Oppermann (1993) to a certain degree integrates and links the diffusionist and dependency paradigms using his tourism sector model (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). The model distinguishes between the formal and informal tourism sectors and acknowledges the role of Western cultural taste, exemplified by the international tourism segment, in tourism development (Oppermann, 1993). The role of the local elite in replicating the western cultural taste in tourism is also shown to be an important factor of structural change in the tourism development process (Oppermann, 1993). According to Oppermann (1993), tourism development occurs in five phases, starting from the capital city and large urban areas and expanding towards more remote locations. During the process, the formal sector, based on Western-style holiday taste, follows and, to a certain extent, replaces the informal sector. Therefore, CBT, which is organized by poor communities and with very low initial human and capital resources, must be correlated to the informal tourism structure. Each new location will eventually follow the same pattern of a central node with its correlated change in tourism structure (formal/informal), spreading the same tourism development patterns to more peripheral underdeveloped areas (Oppermann, 1993). Therefore, it is possible

to extrapolate that the formal tourism economy will expand, marginalizing the informal sector and small companies, but benefiting larger companies with high capital and human and technological resources.

Lea (1988) already noted this situation in the conceptual base of a "linear model," rewritten by Telfer (2002) who says that "in the context of regional development it is important to note that while initial control of the industry is held locally, eventually larger multinational firms enter the market" (p. 123).

### *Revisiting the Notion of CBT*

Since the 1980s, like for other forms of alternative tourism, the literature on CBT has increased. However, although enlarging the debate, the literature has not addressed the issue of to what extent tourism can alleviate poverty (Harrison, 2008, p. 853) and remains skeptical, doubtful, and ambivalent about whether CBT can promote poverty alleviation (Kiss, 2004).

Globally, within the general tourism sector, "community-based tourism is increasingly receiving attention as tourism initiatives combine aspects of community development, poverty alleviation, cultural heritage, and conservation. Community-based tourism lends itself as a window to achieving broader development goals at national, regional and local levels" (Equations, 2009, p. 62).

Besides the proposed positive aspects of CBT, this article suggests that the role of CBT in community development needs to be explored in the light of the contemporary economic system. For example, international cooperation in CBT projects show the "unfortunate result of this reliance on external development agency funding [which is] a top-down Western imperialistic process of ecotourism development" (Fennell, 2007, p. 149).

Ideally, CBT should be understood as a community-wide (meaning a group of local people) structure in the form of a trust or cooperative. Nevertheless, certain conditions need to be in place for the CBT entities to succeed. For example, in South Africa, in a study of farming cooperatives in poor communities, van der Walt (2008) found that a necessary condition is "the principle, the value system from which African people have evolved, which says a person is a person through other

people—[ubuntu]” (p. 6). However, other factors are also required for the success of a cooperative, such as effective management, support from members, innovation and commitment, cooperative education, and government support (van der Walt, 2008). At the same time, a mentorship program is desperately needed, to manage the cooperative until members can take charge and responsibility (van der Walt, 2008, p. 17). Another success factor for CBT is community leadership, which is necessary for community cohesion, participation, and community decision making.

### *CBT, Facilitation, and External Support*

To understand the notion of community development, the distinction between participation and facilitation must be made. Mere participation is not enough to climb the “ladder of empowerment” (Sofield, 2003, p. 60), while facilitation must be understood differently from participation/involvement. Involvement is seen as being inserted in an external, prefabricated development strategy that favors a strengthening homogenization process within a hegemonic framework (Giampiccoli, 2007). Thus, facilitation provides the instruments, whether material or non-material, to promote empowerment and self-development. Facilitation is a prerequisite for promoting community development, supplying what the community lacks, in both the material and nonmaterial form, and promoting a self-empowerment process that allows the community to fulfill its needs in the context of self-reliance and a community-owned historical development process. Choguill (1996) supports the idea that community participation, “implies also an identification of the required external support, be it from the government or from NGOs, which can facilitate the outcome of the community effort” (p. 432). According to Arnstein’s ladder of community participation, facilitation is located in the last three steps of the ladder (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control), where the local community holds the decision-making power (Arnstein, 1969). In Tosun’s (2006) typology, the corresponding level of participation is spontaneous participation, a level of participation that gives full responsibility to the local community (Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Tosun, 2006, p. 494).

In CBT external actors, be they government, NGO, or private companies, should only play a facilitative role, helping the community to develop and manage plans and ideas, or to access the market. However, the local people should retain full ownership and control of tourism structures and resources. A key issue for long-term CBT development is proper support, as a “characteristic of community-based tourism is that it requires multi institutional support structures in order to succeed and sustain” (Anonymous, cited in Ramsa & Mohd, 2004, p. 584). It is “by facilitating the community themselves to own and operate ecotourism activities in their own homes through community-based initiatives [that] constraints arising from social discontent, unsustainable utilization of resources and economic leakages and other related problems could be reduced” (Ramsa & Mohd, 2004, p. 584).

However, in reality, to believe that a multitude of community-based development projects can start spontaneously and be sustainable in the long term is unrealistic, as factors such as the lack of local capacity and resources, a weak understanding of the general economy, and the short-term project approach all influence the negative outcome of community-based projects (Tiffen, Mortimore, & Givhuki, 1994). In other words, community self-reliance initiatives are “unlikely to achieve more than small sporadic victories for the disadvantaged majority” (Stock, 1995, cited in Binns & Nel, 1999, p. 394). In most cases, limited external guidance and support have a defined role and place, as “self-reliant participatory development processes normally require an external catalyst to facilitate the start of the process and to support the growth of the process in its early phases” (Burkey, 1993, cited in Nel, Binns, & Motteux, 2001, p. 3). Without external facilitation the chances of self-started community-based projects succeeding are difficult (Nel et al., 2001).

The contradiction that government support in development results in diminishing community involvement is not often acknowledged, although the opinion exists in development circles and much literature. Other views on community participation “have argued that state involvement is not only necessary but desirable [claiming] that community participation is dependent on the service that only government can provide” (Midgley, 1986, p. 38).

For long-term CBT development, a key issue is that ad hoc institutions able to facilitate the process need to be established and properly supported. In the South African context, Rogerson (2009) emphasizes the link between CBT and the development of poor people, suggesting that “the development of successful community-based [tourism] and marginal enterprises requires direct funding support from the national government for enhanced tourism development and route promotion” (p. 36).

### Discussion

This article argues that CBT belongs to an alternative development approach, which seeks different ways to community development instead of being part of the pro-poor tourism framework that, as argued by Harrison (2008), it still remains within the capitalist system and part of the status quo (Harrison, 2008). The poor are unable to participate effectively in the tourism industry because they cannot compete with capital-intensive, vertically integrated multinational enterprises, and they have limited, poor bargaining power and face huge market-entry barriers, especially without any government intervention (Schilcher, 2007, p. 62).

The type of activity, which Scheyvens (2002) portrays as “[j]oint ventures which see community resources being used for tourism in exchange for profit sharing, jobs and other material benefit have also become increasingly popular” (p. 194), is best described as Community-Based Partnership Tourism (CBPT). In CBPT thinking, the move towards a more neoliberal influence is noticeable, and in many development countries and institutions, contemporary tourism policies emphasize the need to create partnerships between communities and the private sector. Two approaches can be identified in CBPT. One approach focuses on setting up the community as full owners (in control) of all aspects of the tourism project—in other words, a community-driven approach that subsequently involves the private sector. The second approach advocates using a private sector-driven initiative, but ensuring community involvement. The first approach starts from the community and then invites the private sector to participate, while the second begins as a private sector initiative, which gradually determines the level of community involvement in the project.

### *Reformulation of CBT*

The conceptual framework proposed here demonstrates how the neoliberal environment has reshaped the original context of CBT to its benefit. Three different strands of understanding of the CBT concept can be identified: Community-based Tourism (CBT), Community-based Partnership Tourism (CBPT), and Community Tourism (CT). CBT represents the original concept of community-based tourism within the alternative development approaches; CBPT occupies an intermediate position, while CT is completely inside the neoliberal framework and at the opposing end to the CBT principle. Figure 1 shows how the neoliberal environment can reformulate the original concept of CBT to satisfy and ingratiate the neoliberal ideology. In the classification, each CBT approach is positioned along the continuum, which ranges from alternative development to neoliberal approaches. It is important to note that the evolution is not rigid, which means that, from a global perspective, different approaches have room to coexist.

CBT is the typology most closely associated with the alternative development approaches of the 1970s, from which CBT sprang. In essence, in a CBT project, the community should fully own (control) and manage the tourism facility and natural resources on which tourism depends, as “CBT is tourism that takes environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life” (Suansri, 2003, p. 14). CBT “should not be seen as an end in itself, but a means towards empowering poor communities to take control over their land resources to tap their potential and to acquire the skills necessary for their own development” (Mearns, 2003, p. 29). In CBPT, the community forms some kind of partnership with an external entity, and the resultant benefits will depend on the precise relationship or type of agreement in place and, even more importantly, on the degree to which such agreements are respected and honored.

The last strand of the CBT concept (CT) can be understood from a consultancy document of the World Bank:




CBT typologies	Basic description	Position within ideological framework
CBT (Community-based tourism)	Community fully own (control) and manage the tourism enterprise.	Alternative approach  Neo-liberalism
CBPT (Community-based partnership tourism)	Community engage private sector in partnership	
	Private sector engage community in partnership	
CT (Community tourism)	Community assets as a private investment.	

Figure 1. CBT typology relationship with development theories. Source: Giampiccoli (2010, p. 84).

The major investments financed by the private sector are accommodation and related tourism services. Given appropriate policies, private sector investors could be interested in the full range of tourism categories in Africa, i.e.

- resort hotels and complexes, mostly in the coastal zone but also on lakes and rivers;
- business hotels in major arrival and departure cities and in secondary cities that form part of a tourist circuit;
- nature/ecotourism related to wildlife and parks and protected areas;

*community-based tourism, which provides access to ethnic groups and the natural and cultural assets of which they are custodians; and*

- cultural heritage preservation and promotion. (Christie & Crompton, 2001, p. 37, emphasis added)

As this CBT approach does not resemble the original concept of CBT, this article proposes a different terminology: “Community Tourism” (CT). The term CT seems more appropriate and reflects similar common terminology such as beach tourism, or nature tourism, where tourists gaze on, exploit, or “consume” natural resources. In the case of CT, tourists, organized by private companies, can gaze on communities, having “access to ethnic groups and the natural and cultural assets of which they are custodians.” The impression here is that CBT is just a consumer product in which private

capital can invest. Neoliberal hegemonic doctrine seems to have completely appropriated this concept of CBT, which bears no resemblance to the original concept of CBT. Consequently, the original meaning of CBT can only be retained in a context that desires, and aspires to foster, community empowerment, and self-reliance.

A major difference clearly exists in the interpretation of the CBT concept, which has been related to various possible associations. For example Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) (n.d.), the tourism body for the SADC area, notes that:

Community Based Tourism adds a whole new dimension to traveling. Not only do you take away an incredible experience, but you also give back to the community that you have visited. As a community-based tourist, you actually contribute towards conservation and poverty alleviation, thereby creating sustainable development of tourism in that specific region.

These community-based accommodation options are either:

1. located within a community (e.g. on communal land, or with lease fees paid to the community); or
2. owned by one or more community members (i.e. for the benefit of one or more community members); or
3. managed by community members (i.e. community members can influence decisions made with regards to running the business).

In this last case, different possible levels of community involvement in the CBT ventures are recognized, which also gives ample margin for external actors to interpret (and exploit) the concept of CBT, despite the initial statement stressing that CBT is a contributory component to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

### *Towards CBT for Community Development*

After reviewing the literature and looking at the proposed CBT typology and nomenclature, it is now possible to locate CBT for community development within various development approaches. Figure 2, which is an elaboration of Figure 1, shows a proposed correlation between the CBT typology, development theories, and community development. It illustrates in more detail the previously proposed CBT typology, within the context of development theories (dependency, neoliberalism, and alternative development) and associated community development concepts (self-reliance and empowerment).

Labor/job provision forms and more exploitative forms of development are clearly strongly correlated to the concepts of CBT as found in the World Bank consultancy article by Christie and Crompton (2001), where community-based tourism “provides access to ethnic groups and the natural and cultural assets of which they are custodians” (p. 37), thus aligning CBT to CT.

In contrast, CBPT belongs in the middle range. The possibilities provided by partnerships are important to note, but understanding the balance of power between the community and the private sector in that arrangement is critical, as usually the poorer the community, the weaker its negotiating position within the partnership, and “if the private sector actors have more power, then they will be likely to negotiate an agreement which prioritises their interest” (Scheyvens 2002, p. 191). Furthermore, owning part of the venture does not automatically mean having control over the CBT venture (Scheyvens, 2002). Therefore, as Scheyvens (2002) emphasizes, “without adequate support, communities can end up receiving only token economic benefit (e.g. employment in menial positions) from joint tourism development rather than broader benefit, such as equity in the venture or training for

skill development,” and, “[c]ommunity partners will thus typically need strong support in negotiating and managing such partnerships over the long term” (p. 191). Such support should be underpinned by policy legislation and institutional backup in the form of dedicated offices to deal with the matter. The public sphere should be the relevant actor to support community interests in the face of private capital. With particular reference to Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET), Ramsa and Mohd (2004, p. 583) argue that community-based initiatives should be owned and managed by the communities themselves in order to deliver, “higher intensities of participation,” and hence spread the derived economic benefits.

In a people-oriented, alternative, development approach, the facilitation process should come from government structures and must go beyond mere policy development. In an ideal case, Ramsa and Mohd (2004) suggest CBT:

Since community based ecotourism is a people oriented approach, working towards a fair benefit sharing and uplifting poverty will encourage the government and the community to conserve their natural and cultural resources. As a result it always has a positive response from the government. Government agencies usually act as a facilitator, coordinator or advisory agency to the local community by establishing local institutions and helping the institutions in terms of human and capacity building. (p. 584)

Unfortunately, at a practical level, in the community-based development approach, government involvement on the ground is often absent, weak, or minimal.

The top level of Figure 2 shows the CBT fully materialized. Here, the community fully owns, manages, and receives the total benefits from CBT ventures and can therefore foster its own development through an empowerment and self-reliance process. At this stage, the community, if properly supported, can undergo a self-empowerment and development process.

Figure 2 also highlights the problem associated with the shift towards neoliberalism. The position of disadvantageous partnerships implies that tourism assets are being externally controlled, as only minor informal consultation, labor and benefits are given or derived. Although legally owned by the

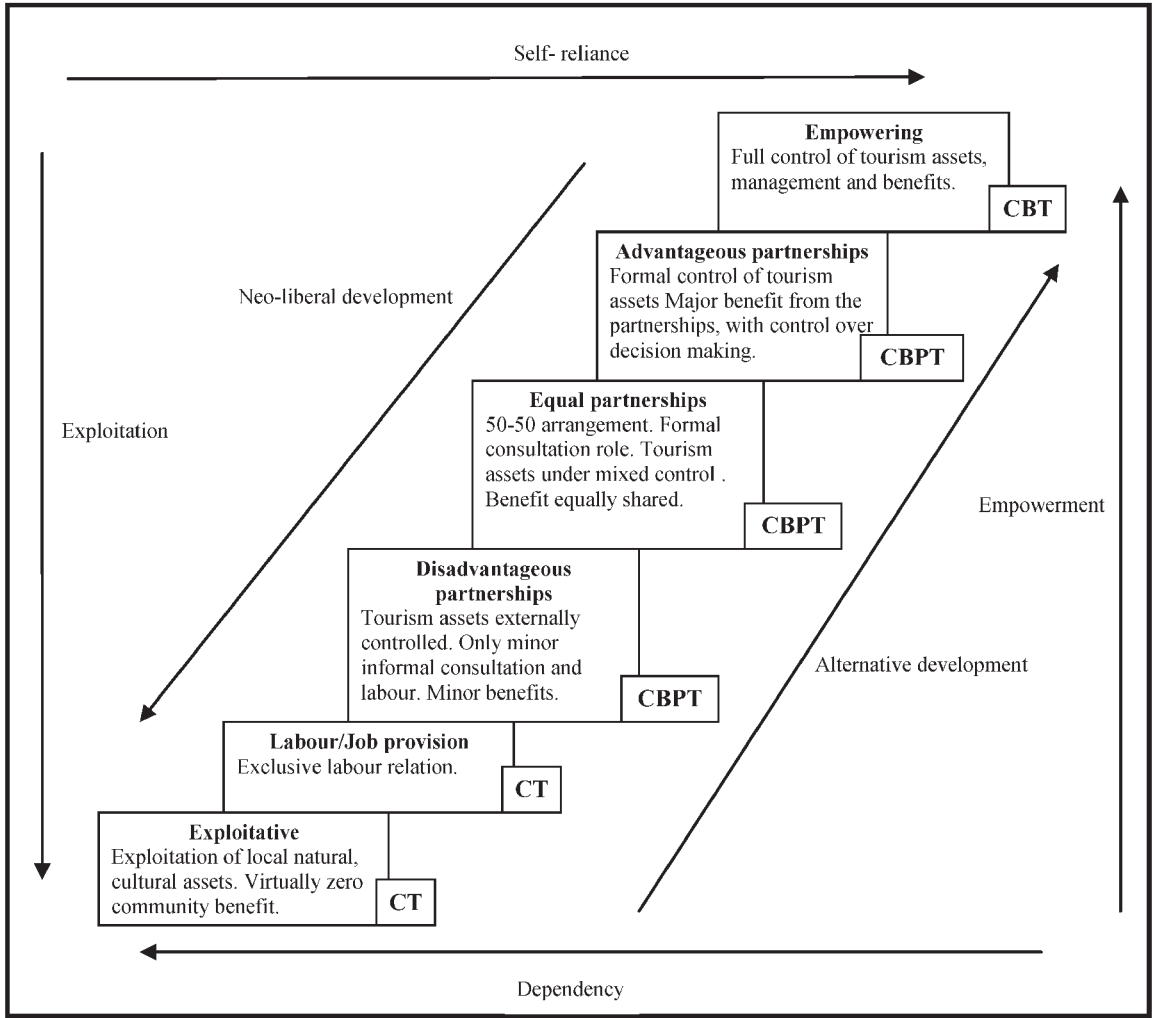


Figure 2. Correlation between development theories and CBT terminology. Source: Giampiccoli (2010, p. 253).

community, in practice the tourism assets are controlled and managed by the private partner. Figure 2 shows that the partnership positions (three positions of CBPT) shifting four levels downwards compared to the alternative development level. Four levels have been lost in favor of neoliberalism, exploitation, and dependency, rather than alternative development, empowerment, and self-reliance, which could have been the desired outcome. This implies that the initially proposed CBT, which could promote empowerment and self-reliance, has been verifiably jeopardized and altered.

The two CT levels in Figure 2 show CBT

absorbed and exploited by the neoliberal framework, where the community serves mostly as a tourism attraction, with possible menial labor tasks as “benefits,” instead of being an active, beneficial participation in the tourism development process.

Other studies support this understanding of the influence of privatization and neoliberalization on community development through tourism. With regard to community-based tourism enterprises (CBEs), Manyara and Jones (2007) conclude that:

CBEs reinforce a neo-colonial model, with foreign control of tourism resources and heavy reliance on

donor funding reinforcing dependency, and it advocates an urgent review of the support framework for community tourism development in Kenya in order to integrate the principles of sustainable development. (p. 630)

In a study of Lesotho, Mashinini (2003) argues that

it has to be borne in mind that the current emphasis on privatisation and private sector-driven tourism militates against wider community participation in preference for individual private initiative which is championed for efficiency. . . . [consequently] it is also necessary to re-visit privatisation in tourism planning and management. (p. 91)

### Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the link between the different concepts of CBT and development theories, by exploring the interrelation between the three development schools (neoliberalism, dependency, and alternative development), the basic concept of empowerment and self-reliance, and the different concepts attributed to the CBT terminology. The proposal is that different terminology should be used to describe the different forms of community-based tourism (CBT, CBPT, and CT). Overall, the article argues that the original concepts of CBT foster empowerment and self-reliance, while CT favors continued exploitative forms of community involvement. CBPT lies in the middle and its results depend on the quality of the partnership agreement.

Referring back to the hegemony–discourse nexus discussed at the beginning of this article, Peet (2003) makes a useful observation:

economic policy does not come from science's ability to mirror the exact structure of social reality in a structure of truthful statements called exact theories. Instead, policy is socially produced by a community of experts who agree, more by convention or political persuasion than factual backing, to call a certain type of thinking and speaking "rational." (p. 16)

Within CBT, it is very important to support procedures and processes that allow communities to pursue and satisfy their own needs and wants. In this regard, a paradigm shift is needed, from an involvement/participation approach to a facilitation

approach. Local community involvement often falls under the direction of outsiders and/or more powerful people, who usually adopt a top-down approach, while communities try to catch up by following unfamiliar and external instructions on how to develop. Current globalization processes have emphasized and strengthened these tendencies. While involvement/participation philosophies favor homogenization within a context of "forced" involvement in the main development ideologies, facilitation encourages diverse approaches where each community can promote its own vision of development (Giampiccoli, 2007, p. 188). Ad hoc institutions are needed to facilitate the process, with public institutions at the forefront. The authors agree with Sofield (2003), who stresses "the need for empowerment to be based on a constitutionally recognized right [and] the nation state as the key actor required to create an environment conducive to ensuring that the community has the capacity to act upon its decisions and sustain them" (p. 89). Since the 1990s, the interpretation and use of CBT has changed; "CBT differs from general community development theory and process in that it does not have the transformative intent of community development and does not focus on community empowerment" (Beeton, 2006, p. 50), which was the original intent of CBT—to contribute to community independence through holistic sustainable development.

What is clear is that contemporary CBT, as managed and organized within the neoliberal framework, jeopardizes the CBT's possible contribution to holistic community development, by shifting the priority to neoliberal, private sector imperatives and often private, external investment prerogatives. However, it is important to emphasize that "hegemony is not singular; indeed that its own internal structures are highly complex, and have continually to be renewed, recreated and defended; and by the same token, that they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified" (Williams, 1976, p. 205). While in the past, alternative solutions could come from cooperation between developing countries, today what is required is to disarticulate part of the neoliberal context of globalization and international cooperation structural milieu in which developing countries are located.

Although CBT alone cannot solve all the poverty-related problems of poor, marginalized

communities, it has the potential to contribute to a more comprehensive development, despite the difficulties such as the heterogeneous social structures at community level. Such problems are controllable, or can be avoided. Because of its specific characteristics, such as its small scale (at least in its initial stage), CBT should not be seen as a panacea for development, but as a sector that could complement a more general, community-based development strategy. Thus, CBT can be used as a tool/driver for promoting community development. Nevertheless, to be able to foster community development, the original meaning of CBT must be maintained, as reformulating CBT within the global, hegemonic, policy-making structure jeopardizes the achievement of its potentialities.

A further and crucial aspect is that physical assets, such as community-owned campsites/lodges, can foster both community cohesion and poverty alleviation, by providing individual and community-wide benefits. This infers that the positive psychological and social effects underpin and buttress social cohesion within the community (Mtapuri, 2005). Given this precept, the conditions necessary for social inclusion can be reproduced, allowing the “ ‘poor to do better’ steeped in an asset-focused redistributive project [where] asset redistribution should ordinarily be linked to a theory of justice” (Mtapuri, 2005, p. 250). According to Ife (2002), a “way in which the resources of a local community can be realized and valued is through community ownership. . . . A widening community ownership is an important aspect of building community; it can help support a community’s sense of identity, it can give people more reason to become actively involved at community level and it can be a more efficient use of resources” (p. 213).

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