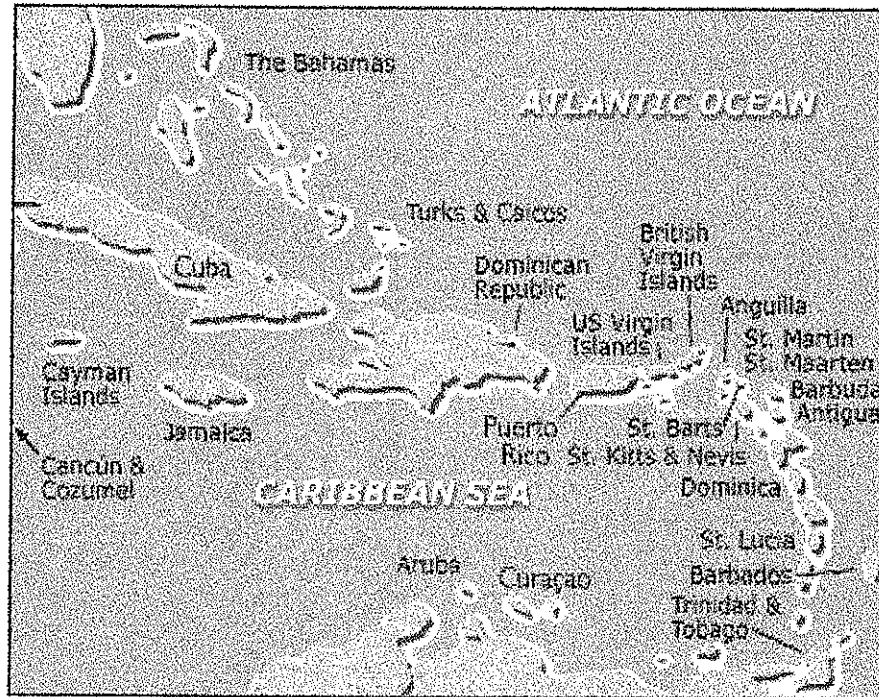


Ecotourism in Small Developing States: A Viable Development Path



Honors Essay

by

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on

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This Honors Essay Is Dedicated To My
Professor, Mentor, and Friend

James E. Wiley

For His Relentless Efforts To Prepare Me
For What Lies Ahead

Thank you

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Introduction:

This paper will argue that the development of ecotourism in Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) is a suitable option among development paths for promoting socio-economic development in the twenty-first century. The purpose of many LDCs in developing ecotourism is to attempt to implement a form of tourism that will provide the most sustainable benefits to the host country. The intentions of the paper are to examine the issues surrounding conventional tourism and investigate plans being pursued to institute ecotourism as a means to establish a long-term viable economy in several LDCs. This paper begins with an overview of important issues related to tourism development followed by an analysis of comparative documents from selected countries. This analysis highlights LDC's pressing need to choose a form of tourism that can be maintained indefinitely, while providing an industry that better integrates those countries into the world economy. Subsequently, the paper focuses upon ecotourism specifically and demonstrates how ecotourism serves as a promising industry that can promote economic development within LDCs.

Identifying Issues and Problems:

This essay explores the many issues surrounding the development of tourism in LDCs. Most LDCs have long experienced the crippling effects of the colonial period. The colonial period traditionally relied on implementing an economic structure that created supplementary economies among colonies and complementary economies between colonies and the colonizer. This economic structure was perpetuated into the neo-colonial period. Independence from their colonizers rendered very little change for

developing nations. Rather, it reinforced a relationship that left LDCs relatively powerless, dependent, and very vulnerable to underdevelopment. Many third world countries are dependent on a narrow range of foreign exchange-earning primary sector commodities, which have been protected by various bilateral agreements with former colonial powers (Conway 1998). The pressure recently added by the World Trade Organization (WTO) to abolish many of those trade agreements and the constant threat of external factors on the narrow range of primary sector goods have created the need for developing countries to diversify their economies. One neoliberal policy being pursued by LDCs to better integrate into the global economy is the development of tourism.

In recent years, tourism has been the most rapidly growing industry in third world nations (Lea 1998). There are many issues surrounding the development of tourism in developing countries. One important set of issues involves infrastructure, including hotels, roads, airports, shopping, piers, historical and cultural attractions, and restaurants. The issues concerning infrastructure is whether it is funded and owned publicly or privately. Infrastructure that is privately owned presents a tendency and an obstacle The tendency is the repatriation of profit back to the global north preventing most money from circulating in the local economy. This undermines a major purpose of having a tourism industry, which is to generate foreign exchange for the host country. The obstacle is that the ability to implement development projects many times hinges on the private owners' cooperation to allow their property to figure in proposed plans. For example, if a local government wanted to build a hotel by the beach and the land around the beach was privately owned, the project's fate would be dependent upon the owner's approval of a road through the property to the beach site. Local ownership of

infrastructure allows for most of the profits from tourism to circulate in the local economy, benefiting the entire community. In addition, public ownership of infrastructure also provides the host country with the sovereign control necessary to develop without consultation with an unpredictable variable such as a private owner.

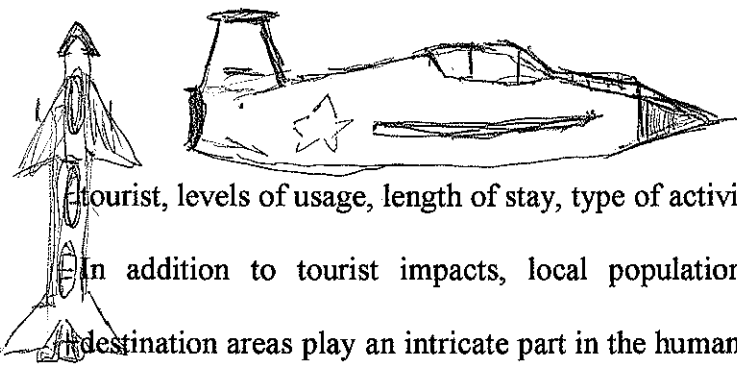
A second set of issues involves tourism and the environment. The environment is critically important because it is the most important pull factor alluring tourists to a particular destination country. Many developing countries are endowed with beautiful and unique environments that are very fragile and sensitive to development. The impacts of tourism on the environment are dependent on the interplay of three factors: conservation, conflict and stress, and carrying capacity and multiple use.

The first of these, the conservation factor is composed of four subcategories: re-habilitation, transformation, protection, and planning. Preservation of the environment of the destination depends on the ability to establish the activities necessary to achieve the objectives of each subcategory. Re-habilitation is necessary to restore ancient historical sites so as to allow them to both preserve the cultural past of the host country and accommodate the number of tourists. Transformation becomes an intricate part of conservation when former historical structures are modified to serve new purposes. For example, in former British colonies, old great houses are being reconstructed into luxurious hotels and are attractive because they offer a glimpse into the past. Protection is a very important component of conservation because it provides the means to maintain the environment for future generations. Protection of natural resources typically occurs in the form of national parks and wildlife areas. These would not be created, in many cases, in the absence of tourism and its demands for the preservation of natural habitat.

Planning is the most vital subcategory because it provides the means to control and manage the environment (Lea 1998).

The second factor, conflict and stress, considers the negative impacts of tourism on the environment. The creation of conflict and stress is rooted in the following: permanent restructuring, generation of waste, tourist activities, and population dynamics. The building of highways, resorts, and international airports causes permanent restructuring to occur, triggering a chain reaction of environmental and human responses that directly affect the wildlife and added need for conservation. A great deal of waste is generated from infrastructure and transportation related to tourism. The two most affected areas of the environment are water and air quality. The pollution of these resources creates hazardous conditions that disrupt the local environment by upsetting the ecological balance. Tourist activities create conflict and stress and destroying sensitive habitat by performing simple activities such as biking on trails, and walking on coral reefs. Population dynamics also play a critical role in creating conflict and stress by having large numbers of tourists visiting in concentrated seasons and overwhelming a particular environment by exceeding its carrying capacity (Lea 1998).

The third factor, carrying capacity and multiple use, needs to be determined carefully so that a balance between humans and the environment can be achieved. "Carrying capacity" refers to a simple concept of establishing the maximum sustainable limit of visitors to natural and man made attractions. The consequence of exceeding these limits is the destruction of the environment. However, the determination of this maximum limit is difficult because measuring the effects of the tourist on the environment is dependent on several factors, including the socio-economic profile of the



tourist, levels of usage, length of stay, type of activity, and levels of satisfaction to return.

In addition to tourist impacts, local populations and individual characteristics of destination areas play an intricate part in the human-environment balance. Therefore, the determination of carrying capacity of a particular environment requires that multiple factors be considered that are hard to accurately measure.

The strategy of multiple use proposes limits on the number of uses a piece of land may serve, in an effort to prevent the deterioration of the environment. To combat the risk of widespread destruction of the environment, many third world nations have adopted plans to develop selected "sacrificial" sites. The localization of development allows a large fraction of an environment to be spared by diverging traffic away from the majority of these fragile sites (Lea 1998). The U.S. Virgin Islands national park, located on the island of St. John, has successfully implemented a sacrificial site that channels day-tripping tourists to just one site within the park. This prevents massive human contact with the remainder of the park's fragile environment, thus preserving the majority of the park (Koenings 1993).

The interplay among these three factors, conservation, conflict and stress, and carrying capacity and multiple use, results in very different outcomes for the environment. To maintain an environment indefinitely, conservation needs to be the leading factor to cause awareness to preserve and continue sustainable development. The carrying capacity factor also contributes by providing statistical data and a means of preservation through designation of sacrificial sites. The conflict and stress factor is by far the most potentially devastating component of the triad; it needs to be controlled by

focusing on strengthening the other two components in an effort to maintain the environment.

A third issue in developing tourism in LDCs is employment. The problem involving tourism and employment is that many jobs are seasonal. During high season, locals are gainfully employed but during the low season, many are laid off. The number of employees per hotel room in the Caribbean fluctuates from 1.4 during high season to 0.9 during off-season (Lea 1998). These employment fluctuations can have catastrophic effects on the host country's economy, especially in those developing countries where tourism represents more than fifty percent of GDP. Another employment-related issue is the distribution of positions and its dependence on job skill. Locals in many third world nations lack the skills necessary for managerial and upper administrative positions. As a result, foreign investors bring in Europeans or other First World peoples to fill these positions. Tourism industries often offer training programs to locals as a means of increasing opportunities for their advancement. However, importing skilled labor from outside sources increases the level of competition for a limited number of jobs (Wiley 1998). The types of tourism activities offered also play a big role in employment because the labor intensity of activities varies. For example, a study in Mexico determined that local restaurants employed forty percent more people relative to restaurants based in hotels and motels. Another interesting correlation between the income-generating effects of tourism and the creation of employment is that high profits from tourism do not necessarily constitute more jobs (Lea 1998).

A fourth set of issues related to the development of tourism in developing nations involve its cultural impacts. The cultural impacts of mass tourism on the local population

are often considered to be negative. Many tourists visiting LDCs, particularly Americans, demand that the tourism infrastructure resemble that of their home country. Many of the cultural ceremonies, crafts, and music are highly commercialized for tourism, leading to degradation of the quality of local customs. Therefore, the local culture often becomes altered, corrupted and reshaped to fulfill tourists' expectations. In essence, much of the culture is commodified to progressively conform to western cultural norms. The rate of assimilation, however, is typically dependent on three factors: the type of tourists, the meeting grounds between tourist and locals, and the role of cultural brokers. The type of tourist can have profound effects on the culture by influencing locals to either value differences that exist between cultures or to corrupt locals by providing motivation to assimilate. (The tourist's behavior at the destination and character of the visit often shapes much of the type of interaction that will occur. The meeting grounds that tourists and locals meet have profound effects as well. If contact occurs in controlled environments such as in enclave resorts, very little quality communication will take place. Under unsupervised environments, however, like in local markets, people can freely interact. Cultural brokers play an integral part in assimilation by serving as intermediaries between locals and tourists. They usually function as tour guides and serve as a medium to transmit ideas and influences (Lea 1998).

A fifth set of issues related to developing tourism in developing countries involves its social impacts. Tourism's social impacts particularly affect the youth of third world nations negatively by creating a "demonstration effect". When local youth observe many of the life styles and consumerism of the tourists, they may feel less satisfied with their own lives and societies. This can lead to emigration as a means to achieve the

satisfaction they may crave. Another possible outcome is that hostility is created between tourists and locals because of evident socio-economic inequalities (Wiley 1998).

A sixth set of issues related to the development of tourism in LDCs relates to linkages. Linkages are an intricate part of a tourism industry because they involve the source of inputs utilized to conduct this industry. They include transportation, communication, and economic inputs amongst others. One great linkage problem particularly affecting the Caribbean is the dearth of travel links among the islands. To travel from one island to another may require a transfer in Miami or San Juan prior to departing for the final destination. The dendritic patterns in transportation perpetuated since colonial times are now replicated by the hub and spoke pattern of contemporary airline service. It serves to maintain the Global North's hierarchical superiority over LDCs by preventing the ability of Caribbean islands to establish transport networks among themselves, consequently retarding their development. This linkage issue creates an accessibility problem for many tourism host countries in the region, effectively determining the success of the tourism industry within each developing country. This phenomenon contributes negatively towards tourism development by crippling transportation amongst islands, thus, hindering their abilities to trade with and visit one another. Generation of a multiplier effect is another linkage issue. The multiplier effect pertains to the degree of circulation of money generated by tourism expenditures within a local economy. The Caribbean was observed to have the lowest multiplier effect among world regions because of the leakage of foreign exchange earnings that are used to pay for tourism related imports as with food, furniture, linens, etc.

Competition is the seventh issue related to tourism development. Competition can be viewed from two different levels. Firstly, competition can be viewed from a national level where different developing countries are competing for tourists. Competition can also be viewed from a subnational level where locals are competing with multi-national corporations for tourism business within a particular LDC (McKee 1990). Many third world nations are realizing that the very competitive nature of the global tourism industry requires each of them to identify and market those distinct features that provide it with a comparative advantage over competitor destinations. The model of tourism employed by each developing nation is therefore critical. It should allow for a more focused niche market strategy approach that targets a particular tourism sector rather than aim indiscriminately at the general undifferentiated tourism base found globally. Tourism marketing is very expensive for many developing countries to finance individually, so many LDCs use multilateral tourism organizations to represent their tourism products in the global north. A more focused niche market strategy allows for more effective marketing of a tourism product by targeting only those tourists who engage in that particular form of tourism. For example, ecotourists are typically upper income people who can absorb the higher costs often found in that form of tourism. The identification of ecotourists allows third world nations that pursue ecotourism to focus only on the wealthier market countries, a more cost-effective strategy for countries working with a limited promotion budget. The model of tourism pursued will also determine the level of competition that each developing country will encounter at both the national and subnational levels. Mass resort tourism is the dominant form of tourism found globally. It therefore is characterized by the highest level of national and

subnational competition. At the national level, most LDCs are competing with the entire world, adding to the challenge of providing a unique travel experience in an industry where so much is standardized. Subnationally, the industry requires a great deal of capital to create the appropriate infrastructure. This often leaves much of the ownership in the hands of foreign investors. Multi-national corporations have the financial means to provide more luxuries to effectively attract the mass-resort tourist, leaving many local investors unable to compete successfully. Ecotourism is more specialized; hence, it experiences less global competition. This form of tourism is a newly emerging alternative to mass resort tourism. It offers many developing nations potentially greater opportunities to create a very distinct product from the mass tourism norm. At the national level most developing countries do not experience internal competition with their ecotourism section to the same extent as within the mass tourism sector. Theoretically, ecotourism provides local people with the opportunity to exercise greater control within the tourism industry, allowing them to successfully compete at the subnational level against multi-national corporations. Many developing countries, recognizing the more numerous opportunities and benefits of ecotourism, are making a shift towards this form of tourism. This is particularly true in the Caribbean. There are many potential pitfalls, however, if too many third world nations all pursue ecotourism at one time. A flooded field within ecotourism undermines each LDC's ability to achieve its development goals. A more planned and coordinated approach among countries within regions could allow more LDCs to establish distinct forms of intra-regional or cross-national ecotourism. This could result in greater prosperity and development, through the rupturing of the colonial structure of supplementary economies among former colonies.

Methodology:

The research conducted for the project entailed the use of several primary and secondary sources, as well as a visit to the island of Dominica to observe personally the ecotourism model being implemented there. The main primary sources used included interviews of key government officials, such as the Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, and Director of Tourism of Dominica, tourism statistics from Dominica, Belize and the Bahamas, and government tourism planning documents from Curacao, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, and St. Kitts and Nevis. The interviews illustrate the issues involved and the manner in which ecotourism is being implemented in Dominica, the case study developed in this research project. Current tourism trends and profiles were identified within each developing country using statistics of immigration, hotel capacity, visitation sources, expenditures, and motivation factors related to visiting tourists.

Several secondary sources were also utilized to consult and demonstrate the suitability of ecotourism in LDCs among development paths for promoting their socio-economic growth. Tourism strategy plans for Belize, Dominica, Curacao, the Bahamas, and St. Kitts and Nevis, will be used to show current approaches of each individually selected developing country in implementing ecotourism. I also consulted several academic works to explain the various theories utilized to provide a framework for understanding underdevelopment in third world nations. Additional volumes were consulted to illustrate issues related to tourism as a development path and to identify the special characteristics of ecotourism. Finally, articles relating to tourism development issues were used to provide a basis for comparisons among selected countries. The

integration of these sources will provide a background of LDCs past development conditions, present situations, and future options.

I have organized the paper in the following manner. I began by explaining the issues and problems surrounding conventional tourism as a development path in the preceding section. The following section explores economic development in general by discussing different economic theories as they relate to developing nations. Next, tourism as a development path is discussed as a means to serve in generating foreign exchange earnings. Finally, ecotourism is considered as a development path serving as the most beneficial form of tourism. The third section features a comparative review of documents from Curacao, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, and St. Kitts and Nevis. It addresses each country's plans to overcome the obstacles identified previously confronted by tourism as a development path. Subsequently, I turn to Dominica as a case study to illustrate a more in depth look into the development difficulties faced by a small LDC. I focus on its attempts to employ ecotourism as a means to create socio-economic development in the twenty-first century. In conclusion, the essay evaluates each selected country's tourism development plans to determine a realistic assessment of their pursuits in establishing a viable development path for the twenty-first century by employing tourism.

Section 2: Literature Review

A. General Development Issues in LDCs:

To understand current development issues being experienced by LDCs, I feel it is useful to view development from a dependency theory and World Systems theory perspective, which provide a theoretical framework to view underdevelopment. This

framework allows each historical period to be analyzed to illustrate developing countries' growing dependence on the Global North. Subsequently, this perspective shows how growing dependence leads to an increase in underdevelopment in LDCs and an increase in development and wealth for first world countries.

The concept of a World System is very dynamic and can aid in explaining the inner workings of the unequal relationship between former colonial powers and LDCs.

World Systems theory is described as:

"A social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension, and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a life-span over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in others. One can define its structures as being at different times strong or weak in terms of the internal logic of its functioning" (Wallerstein 1974, p347).

Wallerstein's theory allows each historical period to be identified by specific structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and struggles that existed among different peoples within the implemented social system of the time. It also describes the dynamic forces within each period to maintain the social system and the efforts of others to manipulate it to their benefit. Each period, beginning with colonialism through the current situation of globalization and neoliberalism, will be analyzed in the context of Wallerstein's World System theory.

Dependency Theory explains underdevelopment and development as part of the same process. It defines dependency as:

".... a conditioning situation, in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. That is, dependence is based on an international division of labour which allows industrial development to take place in some countries while restricting it in others, whose growth is conditioned by and subjected to the power centres of the world. If

dependence defines the internal situation and is structurally linked to it, a country cannot break out of it simply by isolating herself from external influences; such action would simply provoke chaos in a society which is of its essence dependent. The only solution therefore would be to change its internal structure—a course which necessarily leads to confrontation with the existing international structure” (Dos Santos 1973, p.79).

Dos Santos' Dependency theory, which provides the framework to understand the implemented economic structure of each historical period, is constructed to allow a specific group of peoples to incorporate other groups into an irreversible-exploitative relationship. This theory will be employed to illustrate the growing economic dependence of third world nations on European markets throughout the different periods.

Wallerstein (1980, p.147-175), in his analysis of colonialism's impacts, states that the onset of colonialism created a core and a periphery within the world economy in an effort to generate one global system. During this period, colonial powers conquered and incorporated colonies into the world system. Most colonial peoples practiced subsistence agriculture, producing enough for immediate consumption. Subsistence farming was not useful to colonial powers desiring to integrate natives into the world economy; this would require a shift towards a commercial economy. The resulting commercial agriculture promoted cultivation of export crops such as cotton, indigo, sugar, tea, and tobacco. Natives were forced to engage in a commercial economy through taxation, simultaneously introducing them to a cash economy. The native populations of the Americas and the Caribbean suffered great losses due to disease and wars with colonial powers and a new labor force was imported from Africa in the form of slavery. Colonial economies were restructured to specialize in a narrow range of export commodities produced on haciendas and plantations. Clawson (2000, p. 233) states that the emergence of these early agribusiness established induced a shift from polyculture

agriculture system, in which several crops were cultivated on the same field, to a monoculture agricultural system. Colonial powers invested very little in their colonies' development, focusing instead on exploiting the natural resource base of each colony. Dos Santos suggests that the process of colonialism led to the development of Europe while simultaneously leading to the underdevelopment of colonies. In addition, a social class structure based of inequality was established, particularly within Latin America. This can best be characterized as a social pyramid that included the oligarchy and the military and Roman Catholic Church hierarchy's represented no more than 5% of the population but controlled the great majority of land. The remaining 95% consisted of poor Mestizos, descendents of African slaves, indigenous Ladinos, and unassimilated indigenous peoples. Virtually no middle class existed. (Clawson 2000) -

Wallerstein (1989,p193-229,250-256), states that the neo-colonial period rendered very little change after colonies gained political independence from the colonial powers. The same social and economic structures were maintained within the former colonies. As independent countries, they were still economically dependent upon the complementary economies of the United Kingdom and the United States and their development was also conditioned by events in Europe. This situation retarded the processes of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization in the developing countries. According to Dos Santos, economic development was dependent on foreign capital and was shaped by it. This included such aspects as the building of railroads in dendritic patterns, to facilitate the export of primary sector commodities, including new goods such as coffee, bananas, and meats. The social inequalities of the colonial period were still for the most part maintained by the elites. After enduring the economic shocks

of a Great Depression and two World Wars, leaders of many developing nations realized the need to restructure their economies. They embarked on inward-oriented strategies in an attempt to industrialize. This effort, known as Import Substitution to Industrialization, ultimately resulted in the accumulation of foreign debt in many third world nations by the early 1980s. Clawson (2000, p. 348) elucidates the responses to this foreign debt crisis included many features of the current neoliberal period. This included many so-called "bridge loans" to assist countries in servicing their debts while imposing certain conditions by the IMF and the World Bank. These conditions usually involve the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which attempt to restructure the economy of the particular indebted country. SAPs typically strive to open up the national economy, increasing the ease of foreign investment, but also increasing the level of foreign control. Many of the country's assets are sold in an effort to privatize and public sector spending is reduced. The economic opening generates a flow of capital into developing countries but, in the process, decreases social spending and ultimately creates tensions often leading to riots. Currently, LDCs are attempting to diversify their economies by pursuing nontraditional agricultural exports (NTAEs) such as melons, mangoes, kiwis, nuts, house plants, and shrimp, to achieve economic stability. In addition to NTAEs, developing countries are seeking new means of generating foreign exchange earnings and alleviating the dependence of traditional exports. One suitable option among development paths is tourism, and more specifically in some cases, ecotourism.

B. Tourism as a Development Path:

A. Types of Tourism:

Sambrook (1992, p. 219-225) identifies tourism as a development path that can serve as a great source of foreign exchange earnings to a host country. There are three main categories of tourism mass-resort tourism, special interest tourism, and ecotourism. Each type of tourism produces different effects on the host country, because each category targets a distinct audience and has different requirements.

1. Mass-Resort Tourism:

Mass-resort tourism, as defined by Honey (1999, p.9), primarily includes large-scale resorts and cruiseship tourism. More specifically, Sambrook (1992) stated, mass-resort tourism typically employs a self-contained enclave model, and has the tendency to be foreign-owned and foreign run. These resorts appeal to people who favor an insulated vacation experience. These enclaves are usually self-sufficient, after even having their own generators and water filtration systems. Mass-resort tourism in general minimizes contact with the local environment and people, encouraging the tourist to spend his/her money exclusively within the resort. The informal economy is usually prohibited from entering on resort grounds, through regulations typically enforced by security guards who restrict beach access to locals. Examples of this model include all-inclusive resorts like Club Med, Sandals, and Hedonism.

According to Honey (1999, p.39-40), cruiseship tourism is an alternative to the land-based resorts; however, the nature of the impacts upon visited host countries are usually the same. Cruiseships are mostly foreign-owned and their employees are usually recruited from eastern European countries, thus providing no employment opportunities

to third world countries. In addition, cruise line business injects relatively little money into the economies of developing nations by receiving many exemptions from taxes. Examples of this model include all-inclusive cruiseship lines like Carnival, Royal Caribbean Cruises, and Princess Cruises.

2. Special Interest Tourism:

Special interest tourism, as described by the Curaçao Tourism Development Bureau (1995, p.32), refers to travel for specific activities such as scuba, fishing, hunting, biking, study, or visiting historical and cultural attractions. In general, Sambrook (1992) notes that special interest tourism follows two types of models: the semi-insular-interactive enclave model and the integrated domestic-international resorts model. The semi-insular-interactive enclave model permits some structured and controlled interactions between locals and tourists. This type of enclave usually appeals to tourists who want to engage in a particular activity but prefer the supervision of resort employees. Therefore, this model of tourism has many of the characteristics of the self-contained enclave model, but differs by allowing some regulated interactions. Some examples of this model are found in the Playa Dorada Complex in the Dominican Republic and in many Barbadian and Cuban hotels. The integrated domestic-international resort model allows for maximum interactions between locals and tourists, and also allows for greater competition between the formal and informal economies. It may include some positive informal sector activities, such as the making and selling of indigenous art crafts, shoe polishing, and hair braiding. However, Lea (1998, p.68) states that its downside can involve illegal informal sector activities like prostitution and illegal drug sales. This type

of tourism is found in Dominica, Grenada, the French West Indies Islands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Sosua in the Dominican Republic (Wiley 1998).

3. Ecotourism:

Ecotourism refers to nature-based tourism. When implemented well it can foster the preservation of the environment as the attraction which people visit to admire its natural beauty. Some ecotouristic activities include bird watching, whale watching, hiking, and diving. The model often employed by ecotourism is the integrated domestic-international resort model, which allows for maximum interaction between tourist and locals. In contrast to the other models, this model generates the need to preserve the culture since it is an integral part of ecotourism. In addition, in its ideal form ownership of the infrastructure related to ecotourism is primarily owned by locals, rather than by foreign investors (Whelan 1991).

B. Effects of the Types of Tourism:

The nature of self-contained enclaves tends to create social friction within a host country by preventing interaction between locals and tourists. Many locals living near resorts are dependent on tourists for their income but, where a legal means to earn money is not permitted, some locals may resort to crime as an alternative manner of interaction. Special interest tourism has a more mixed impact on the host country. The degree by which special interest tourism effects the host country depends on the number of resorts and the choice of model being implemented. The two models of special-interest tourism each promote a different degree of interaction. The semi-insular model is more restrictive

than the integrated domestic model in the amount and quality of interaction between locals and tourists. A less restrictive model yields a more positive and meaningful relationship because it removes the atmosphere of segregation. This atmosphere creates hostility because it heightens the perception of inequality between the two groups. Both models create less tension between tourists and locals than does the self-contained enclave model, but the degree of comfort felt is greater in the integrated domestic model. Of the three types of tourism, ecotourism can generate the most favorable effects because it removes the majority of the tension between tourist and locals. By allowing the two groups to interact in a free unsupervised environment, it contributes to an atmosphere of equality and mutual respect that is comforting to both locals and tourists (Wiley 1998).

C. The Economic Prospects of the Different Types of Tourism:

The prospects for development offered by mass-resort tourism with the self-contained enclave model are not particularly good for a host country, because it results in very little overall financial gains for the local people. It does generate some sources of revenue like airport taxes, but foreign resort owners make the majority of profits (Lea 1998). Some of this money is used to import tourism inputs (furniture, food, linens, etc) from the Global North, thus hindering the circulation of tourism earnings in the host country's local economy. According to Martha Honey, the only benefit mass resort tourism has on the local community is to create low-paying service-level employment as maids, waiters, and drivers.

Special interest tourism can be relatively more profitable to the local people, because more of the tourism money is flowing into the local economy at a greater rate

than from mass resort tourism. The nature of special interest tourism promotes more interaction between locals and tourists that allow money to flow into the local economy; again the degree of money flow is dependent on the choice of model selected to run this form of tourism. The prospects of earnings from ecotourism are even greater because the majority of the money is going into the local economy. The nature of ecotourism following the integrated domestic-international model is to maximize the financial gain of the host country and, in return, provide the maximum cultural experience to the tourist. This form of tourism removes many of the barriers that are seen in mass-resort tourism and to a lesser degree in special interest tourism (Honey 1999).

C. Ecotourism as a Development Path:

What is Ecotourism?:

Ecotourism is properly defined as

“travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (usually) small scale. In its ideal form it helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights” (Honey 1999:p.25)

Ecotourism is chosen by developing countries as a foreign exchange earner primarily because it is potentially less destructive than other means of generating revenue such as logging, cattle raising, banana cultivation, commercial fishing, or conventional mass tourism. This form of tourism minimizes negative environmental effects through engaging in low-impact construction, by limiting the number of tourists, and by showing care in the interactions with local flora, fauna, and human population. Ecotourism has been proven to be more profitable than other forms of earning foreign exchange source. For example, in South Africa it has been observed that the net income from wildlife

tourism was approximately eleven times greater than cattle ranching, and the generation of jobs was fifteen times greater (Honey 1999).

Honey (1999, p.63) identifies four criteria that are required to classify a tourism endeavor as ecotourism. The first criterion is that the infrastructure must be designed, built, and operated in a manner that minimizes the effects of man on the unique environment. Second, the established ecotourism site must contribute money to the local economy and local community services. A third requirement is that the site must supply funds for environmental protection. Finally, the manner in which the site is managed and presented should educate tourists and local community alike. Ecotourism has both plusses and minuses. If done correctly, it should provide

“a way to fund conservation and scientific research, protect fragile and pristine ecosystems, benefit rural communities, promote development in poor countries, enhance ecological and cultural sensitivity, instill environmental awareness and a social conscience in the travel industry, satisfy and educate the discriminating tourist, and, some claim, build world peace” (Honey 1999).

Ecotourism's minuses mostly revolve around the unmonitored control of the pristine environment. For example, if the number of persons exceeds the maximum carrying capacity of the fragile environment, the destruction of that environment may well be the final outcome. Ecotourism is best employed on a small scale. Since most countries need to earn a great deal of foreign exchange, they may be tempted to exceed the natural carrying capacity of their ecotourist sites to make up for the small-scale nature of the industry. Another pitfall of ecotourism is its potential to culture it attempts to protect. In Zanzibar for example, it was observed that ecotourists were more intrusive with the local people than were most other tourists. A balance needs to be achieved in the manner in which the host country ecotourism operatives educate the ecotourists. Other

problems revolve around the potential and social stability of the host country, but this can affect all types of tourism (Honey 1999).

As for mass-resort tourism, it attracts larger numbers of visitors to the destination country, consequently bringing in more foreign exchange, and more tourism-generated tax revenues. Other benefits include the improvements fostered by mass tourism in infrastructure that can be used by local people and tourists alike. For example, the building of an airport allows a country to receive tourists but also connects the local people to the larger world. Mass tourism's drawbacks include neglect of the environment by routinely exceeding the carrying capacity of the sites it utilizes. Another negative outcome is the foreign ownership of much of the infrastructure, resulting in the repatriation of profits abroad. Mass-resort tourism, and special interest tourism to a lesser degree, can also lead to cultural and social corruption, which have ultimately resulted in social friction between locals and foreigners (Pattullo 1996). For example, locals who are not satisfied with their socio-economic situation will beg or steal from tourists, leading to tensions between the two groups.

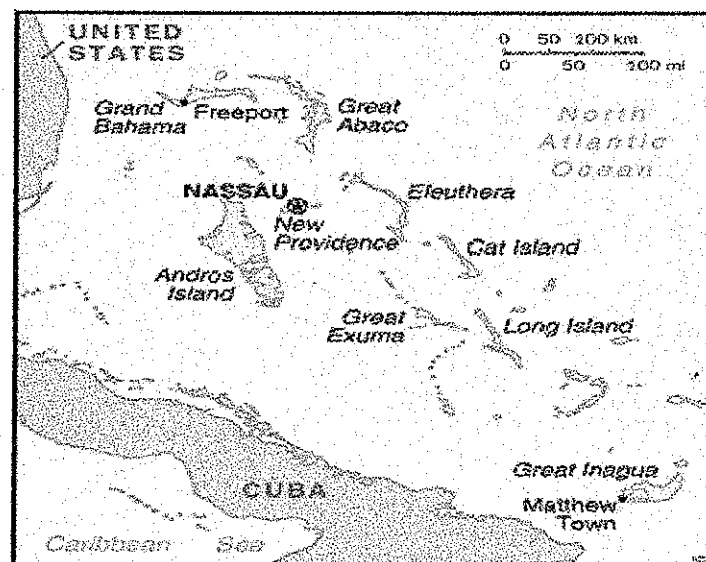
I now turn to specific countries and their individual tourism master plans to ascertain what each country is intending to accomplish with regards to tourism and development. The Bahamas, Belize, Curaçao, and St. Kitts and Nevis' documents will be reviewed and later compared.

Section 3: Comparative Document Review of Selected Countries

Most developing nations have endured similar socio-economic development problems throughout their histories. The Global North's incorporation of third world

countries into a world economy maintains and perpetuates their poor economics. Many LDCs are reliant on primary sector commodities to generate foreign exchange earnings and the price fluctuations for these products on global markets have forced developing countries to strive for diversification of their economies. In an effort to diversify and alleviate the prevailing dependency, primarily on agriculture, LDCs are attempting to address and implement their individual tourism development plans to pave a more financially secure and profitable path in the world economy. This paper will review selected third world country's tourism development plans to determine the quality of the individual projects, its ability to serve as a viable development path, and how each compares to the others.

The first country's tourism development reviewed will be that of the Bahamas. The Bahamas are a long archipelago of approximately seven hundred islands endowed with many reefs. The country is situated in the Caribbean Sea north of Cuba, and southeast of Florida (Bateman & Egan 1997). The islands of the Bahamas can be separated into three groups, New Providence and Paradise Islands, where Nassau, the capital, is located, Grand Bahaman Island, and the Out Islands.



The Bahamian economy is mostly reliant on tourism as the main source for generating jobs and foreign exchange earnings. The islands have been heavily engaged in mass resort tourism, particularly in Nassau, Paradise Island, and the Grand Bahama Island. However, the Out islands, located on the periphery of those core islands, lack the infrastructure and sustainable policies to handle the high tourist concentrations usually found on the main islands but have also suffered great environmental stress. The current government, under the Free National Movement (FNM) party, has released a mission statement to "implement programmes to position The Bahamas as the premier eco-sensitive destination in the Caribbean" (FNM Manifesto 1992 p.12). The Bahamian government intends to maintain mass resort tourism on Nassau, Paradise Island and the Grand Bahaman Island while pursuing ecotourism as the new type of tourism to be implemented throughout the Out islands (FNM Manifesto 1992).

The Free National Movement Manifesto (1992, p.12) identifies the agendas associated with tourism development on Nassau, Paradise Island and Grand Bahaman Island. All government-owned hotels are to be sold to responsible foreign investors because of their financial abilities to better market the industry to the world. The government intends to clean up selected sites to allow for further development of tourist resorts. Furthermore, the FNM would like to assist Bahamians in their pursuit of education in tourism-related subjects, integrating more local people into the industry. In addition, the government would like to include the promotion of entertainment, art, culture, music and history into their tourism product. Finally, the FNM wants to provide incentives for major cruise lines to relocate their home ports to Nassau or Freeport.

For the Out Islands, The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism (1995, p.1) focuses its planning on certain problems and policies, all of which concern environmental issues. As a result of the high concentration of mass resort tourism and activities, tourist littering and the lack of an effective waste management system, has negatively affected these islands. Cruise ships dump at sea and pollute their coastal waters. Over-fishing and illegal fishing by both residents and tourists contribute to devastation of the marine life. Also, inefficient uses of limited fresh water resources have depleted the availability of potable water. Finally, excessive imports of goods have prevented the Out Islands from becoming self-sufficient in locally produced items.

The Bahamas (1992, p.13) expresses an interest in pursuing ecotourism because it is perceived as a suitable economic development activity that could create employment and protect as well as preserve the environment of the Out islands. The definition used to describe Bahamian sustainable development is as follows:

“...that development that responds to the needs of present Bahamian visitors and the travel industry without compromising the ability of future participants in Bahamian travel industry and guests to meet their respective business and vacation requirements” (*Our Common Future*).

James MacGregor's (1993), in *The Encyclopedia of Hospitality and Tourism*, “Sustainable Tourism Principles” expands upon this definition by adding eight certain sustainable and interdependent principles. The first principle urges the prevention of exceeding the “carrying capacity” of the various Out Islands and limiting the tourism impact. This, in turn, would preserve their biodiversity and minimize the degradation of nonrenewable marine and terrestrial resources. Another principle is the establishment of a tourism development path that promotes economic and educational benefits from the islands' natural resources. Distributing benefits and participation of local peoples in the

industry equally is another principle cited. A final principle is the promotion environmental management and awareness to local peoples and tourists alike. (Out Islands of The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism 1995)

The government also prioritized sixteen agendas for tourism development in the Out Islands. The following all appear in the Sustainable Tourism Policies and Guidelines of the Out Islands (1995, 3-7). The first agenda, referred to as Sustainable Tourism Development, addresses the aspects of planning, economic impacts, local involvement and benefits, and public consultation. All planning involving the Out Islands will take into consideration tourism related activities and the possible affects they can elicit from natural and cultural environments. The government, to generate a positive economic impact, will create different mechanisms to assure the fair distribution of travel industry benefits and to increase job opportunities and involvement of local citizens in the local economies. In addition, all local communities and special interest groups will be consulted on proposed tourism development plans. The second agenda involves the marketing of the Out Islands of the Bahamas to the rest of the world. The marketing campaign will illustrate that these islands are environmentally responsible for their clean and pristine surroundings and attempt to educate the visitor to appreciate the endemic habitat. Thirdly, a hotel/resort green management program will be implemented on the Out Islands. The green management policy will create procedures that enlighten environmental issues. Hotels and staff, of families, communities and guests of resorts will have procedures for purchasing environmentally friendly products. In addition, energy and water conservation programs will be implemented to increase the efficiency of resources. Lastly, procedures will be established to educate and select, manage, and

apply pesticides and herbicides properly to prevent contamination of the environment. (Out Islands Ministry of Tourism 1995)

The forth agenda addresses heritage restoration. Guidelines will be passed to assure the proper preservation and restoration of historical structures and monuments. Also, any site planning around heritage landscapes will be required to reflect the historic character and patterns on adjacent properties. Fifth, a framework will be created for site and facility development. All site planning that occurs will be conducted in a manner that provides the most minimal effects upon the environment by following ecologically sensitive procedures. The materials used in the actual building will attempt to be located locally before looking abroad. The sixth agenda is to require environmental impact assessments for every tourism project. This evaluation will attempt to estimate the possible environmental, social, and cultural impacts that will be created from each individual project. This agenda will provide the government with a basis to accept and reject proposed projects. (Out Islands Ministry of Tourism 1995)

Research and monitoring of environmental impacts is the seventh agenda. The environmental impacts of every tourism-related infrastructure will be monitored on a regular basis to establish the extent of impacts and the carrying capacity of each site. This would provide the government with the means to regulate the activities of tourists and locals based upon timely reports. The eighth agenda is to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources. All environmental, social and cultural resources will be safeguarded and improved to maintain diversity among tourism activities, such as ecotourism and cultural heritage tourism. This will ensure a better future integration of natural resources and cultural activities. The protection of marine life is the ninth agenda

to be established in the Out Islands of the Bahamas. The government has recognized that the preservation of the water quality of the coasts is vital if future generations are to employ tourism. Any tourism related activity that produces a significant level of pollution would be eliminated and the proper protection will be established to prevent further damage in correlation to this is the tenth agenda.(Out Islands Ministry of Tourism 1995)

The tenth agenda refers to marine debris reduction. The strategy employed would provide various cleanup operations and educational programs to reduce marine debris, as well as monitoring and enforcing existing legislation. Which in turn relates directly to the eleventh agenda. It states that the natural resources of the islands will be safeguarded from poachers, polluters and illegal fishing by strictly enforcing and applying the maximum penalty. Also of concern is waste management, the Ministry of Tourism's twelfth agenda. A solid waste management program will be established to decrease the level of non-biodegradable waste and attempt to recycle materials. In addition, the amount of packaged materials bound for the Out Islands will be reduced. Water conservation, another serious area of concern, is the thirteenth agenda. The appropriate procedures to achieve water conservation will be implemented to control all aspects of the tourism industry's uses of water. On some of the Out Islands water is a scarce resource and water conservation is necessary to prevent the need of imported water from neighboring islands (Out Islands Ministry of Tourism 1995).

In an effort to promote responsibility domestically, the training and education of the local citizens is the fourteenth agenda of the Bahamian government. The tourism related staff would be educated on the concepts of sustainable tourism and the manner by

which they can be established to safeguard the various island resources. The local peoples will attend environmental education programs annually to emphasize each individual citizen's role in environmental protection. Every tourist that visits the Out Islands will be educated on the concepts of sustainable tourism principles to engage them into participating in conservation initiatives. Also domestically oriented is the fifteenth agenda regarding National initiatives. The government would provide planning principles and guidelines for all tourism development that is proposed. Plans will also be developed to safeguard protected areas and national parks. Finally, the sixteenth agenda holistically incorporates the other agendas with focusing on the establishment of a sustainable tourism development unit such as the Ministry of Tourism. The role of the Ministry of Tourism is to direct all self-sufficient tourism principles on the Out islands. (Out Islands Ministry of Tourism 1995)

I turn next to Belize, a small country located on the Caribbean coast of Central America, bordered by Mexico and Guatemala. Belize's economy is mostly dependent upon agricultural crops such as sugar cane, citrus fruits, and bananas (Bateman & Egan 1997). The fluctuation of these crops on world markets has forced the government to seek other possible development paths. One development path being pursued is ecotourism. The tourism strategy plan of Belize is divided into several agendas.



The Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Belize (1998, p.7-1) states that the first agenda in their tourism plan is marketing strategy. The major challenge faced by Belize's tourism industry is that it is composed of many micro-enterprises, each of which is too small to market its own product. A cooperative approach is required to combine the efforts of government and private sectors to facilitate a viable marketing campaign. Furthermore, Belize's tourism industry consists of products from various sources, including its reef, rainforest, wildlife, archaeological ruins, "soft" and "hard" adventure travel, and cultural diversity, each of which appeals to different sectors of the market. The incorporation of these diverse products under a unified promotional image and development of a cost-efficient means to reach selected tourist markets are the main challenges of Belize's marketing strategy.

According to the Tourism Strategy Plan of Belize (1998, p.7-2), the country's marketing strategy includes eight objectives. The initial objective strives to feature a sophisticated, cost-effective, and focused niche-marketing approach allowing Belize to promote its different attributes to the various market sectors. Secondly, the plan focuses on differentiating Belize from its competitors by promoting its unique assets. The third objective is to target "desirable" tourists that are higher-yield, lower-impact, nature-based, and high-quality, as opposed to irresponsible, low-quality, mass-sector tourists. The next objective is to attract new markets not only to Belize's hotels, but also to its inns and guesthouses to increase the viability of all rooms supplied by the country. The marketing of Belize's Mayan ruins is another objective potentially attracting a new source market. A sixth objective is the marketing of the tourism products offered by all six Districts¹ of Belize in a balanced, thematic, and strategically effective way, in an effort to ensure that the economic benefits are equally shared by all participating in the tourism industry. Belize's seventh objective is to overcome the seasonality problem by also targeting markets that are more likely to visit during the off-season. The final objective is to provide a high return on the investment in marketing by increasing the number of tourists and length of stay.

Belize's Ministry of Tourism and Environment (1998, p.7-6, 7-7) suggests that it intends to market its various products to five distinct groups of travelers. These include North American "elites", advanced nature tourists, European "elite" FIT² tourists, the global diving market, and the budget traveler. These groups will be targeted for specific

¹ The country's primary subnational division is the district, of which there are only six. This corresponds to departments, states, or provinces in many larger countries, or to the parishes of many small countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

² FIT refers to the free independent traveler

months of the year to assure a year round visitation of tourists with relatively no gaps. The different economic-base and diverse background of each group will allow the economic benefits to be shared equally by all in the industry.

Belize (1998, p. 8-1) describes the main objectives and issues related to the next agenda, tourism land use. It is imperative to create a framework for tourism land use to provide for the proper development of its resources for the industry. Belize has many good existing resources, strengths, and opportunities. The fact that it has a very diverse natural and cultural resource base is an attractive element to tourists. In addition, its largely undisturbed natural beauty, due to the nation's small population, also entices visitors. The further restoration and development of Mayan sites will serve to draw larger numbers of tourists.

Another opportunity is represented by the revitalization of Belize City. This can include renovating heritage sites and developing a tourism zone in cities. The government would like to establish specific development guidelines. Current tourism attractions are individually developed with few linkages among them to unify the various elements into a cohesive product. Moreover, uncontrolled development can lead to environmental destruction and difficulty in marketing the country's tourism in a coordinated manner. The guidelines to be developed will coordinate the fragmented tourism product by forming partnerships among the government and other stakeholders to jointly determine appropriate planning and management practices. (Tourism Strategy Plan of Belize 1998)

The Tourism Strategy Plan of Belize (1998, p.8-3, 8-4, 8-5, 8-21) identifies two framework principles. The first is to plan with flexibility and to identify acceptable limits

of change and establish the best management practices for tourism. The plans require flexibility to allow refinement of resources over time, as new methods to improve each tourism product become available. The second principle is the "acceptable limits of change", which strives to determine the maximum level of endurable change within the natural, social, and economic environment by regularly observing the following indicators: drops in tourism visitation and complaints by tourists, sanitary waste disposal problems, proliferation of garbage and litter, site degradation, dust and soil erosion, silt deposition into waterways, pollutant levels, drinking water quality, noise levels, loss of wildlife species, and reduction in fish catch. Belize adopting the appropriate management practices will aid in reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment. Hence, it is expected such problems will be avoided. The tourism land use framework proposes that development be divided into several "tourism zones," four "tourism gateways," and two "tourism corridors." The four "tourism zones" of Belize are the Cayes and Marine Tourism Zone, the Coastal Mainland Tourism Zone, the Northern Ecocultural Tourism Zone, and the Mixed Use Zone, each reflects the main tourism resource categories. The division of resources into zones allows the Ministry of Tourism to address and implement policies that meet the specific needs of each territory. The creation of "tourism gateways" is to develop and promote inviting places that influence visitors to remain in Belize. Methods by which this can be accomplished are striving to improve access and transportation facilities, enhance visitor information and support, pursue activities such as seminars, conferences, to bring people to the area, generate additional leverage from regional demand generators, such as the Ruta Maya attractions in Mexico and Guatemala, encourage development of additional demand-generating

attractions, and programme events. The centers being considered to function as "tourism gateways" are Belize City, Corozal, Benque Viejo del Carmen, and Punta Gorda. The development of "tourism corridors" will promote designated travel routes that encourage tourists to remain within a region and spend time in multiple locations.

The Ministry of Tourism of Belize (1998, p.11-4, 11-5, 11-6) also addresses its third agenda: community-based initiatives. The government intends to provide work programs to educate local peoples about tourism principles, allowing them to effectively contribute to the industry. Belize also plans to provide tertiary-level study abroad programs to educate citizens to engage in higher level administrative positions. Additional programs are being offered to aid in sensitizing communities towards the visitor's experience. Furthermore, local peoples are being consulted on proposed protected areas and resorts to establish possible affects of these activities on the community. Native peoples are encouraged to contribute to the industry by providing food services to visitors. The employees of these facilities are monitored and trained by the Division of Social Services, Center of Employment Training, and Hospitality Services Unit. In addition, the Public Health Department provides training regarding hygienic food preparation methods. Tour guide positions are also available to locals that receive the appropriate training in the subject matter of the particular resource and learn tourist safety and security. Most programs are tailored to the needs and resources of the community.

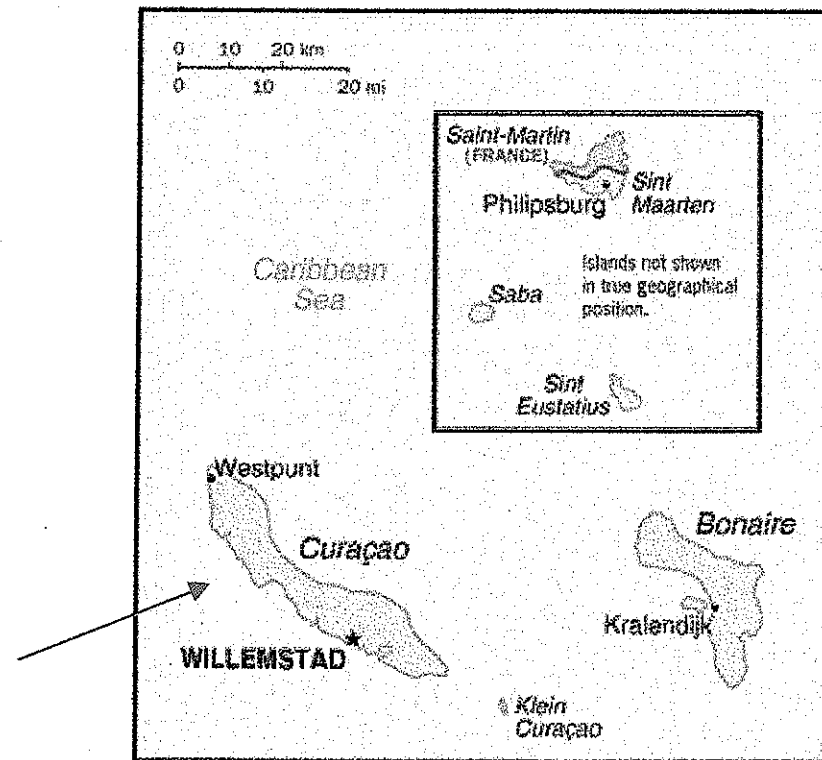
Belize's Ministry of Tourism (1998, p.14-1) identifies its final agenda as the costs of doing business: increasing tourism's price-competitiveness and long-term sustainability. For Belize to achieve a successful tourism product, the market must

perceive that the destination is providing a good "value for the dollar." The function of "value" is perceived by tourists through the quality of accommodations, products, goods, and services received during their stay in the host country. The price-value relationship is important to all income levels among tourists. In this regard, Belize encounters certain severe dilemmas. First, most accommodations found in Belize are directed towards the budget traveler, who currently avoids Belize because of its comparably higher prices, and the perceived better value in neighboring Latin American countries. Another dilemma is that Belize jeopardizes losing elite markets presently being captured, because the evolving perception is that the tourism product offered is of poor value relative to other competitor countries. Finally, Belize must work not to lose the price-competitiveness battle because the financial viability of the various elements of its tourism industry would be threatened by the subsequent decline in annual occupancy rates. The immediate challenge of Belize's government is to stabilize the present tourism industry. An avenue being considered is the provision of incentives to the private sector to invest in training, refurbishment, and upgrading, to allow the country to be more price-competitive. The government has not issued any special incentives aimed at tourism at the present time.

Curaçao is the third country whose tourism development plans I shall review.

The island is part of the Netherlands Antilles and is situated off the coast of Venezuela. Curaçao's economy is strong and diverse. It relies on petroleum refining, trans-shipment of oil, port-services, some agriculture (primarily fruits and vegetables), and offshore banking. Tourism is now receiving more priority as the country's development path.

(Bateman & Egan 1997)



The Curaçao Tourism Development Bureau (1995, p.19) identifies several benefits that it hope to achieve by pursuing tourism. Its plan strives to promote inward investment by engaging local financial resources and tourism monies in combination to stimulate job growth. The island would benefit by increasing foreign exchange earnings and from increasing tax revenues fueling the development of the tourism sector.

Curaçao's Tourism Development Master Plan (1995, p.20) addresses the four main agendas needed to establish an effective tourism industry. The first agenda is market selection, which attempts to highlight the potentially most profitable market opportunities that can maximize the economic and value added contribution of tourism to the local economy in a constant and sustainable manner. The three most profitable source regions for Curaçao's tourism industry are Europe, South America, and the

Caribbean. The market opportunity the island is pursuing is mass resort tourism. The plan is attempting to implement this type of tourism because of its ability to generate larger numbers of visitors to a host country. However, the Tourism Development Bureau, recognizing the numerous negative impacts of mass resort tourism, is attempting to utilize underlying ecotourism principles to sustain the island's vital resources. Among the ecotourism principles that Curaçao is employing are carrying capacity, environmental awareness-building, landscape protection, and historical and cultural heritage revitalization.

The Curaçao Master Plan's (1995, p.32) second agenda is the development of a marketing strategy. The product positioning of the island can be categorized into five segments. The first segment is general leisure sun and beach tourism, the underlying theme of mass resort tourism. The next segment is special interest tourism, which allows tourists to engage in various activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling, watersports, nature, and appreciation. Another segment is business travel, allowing the island to function as a center for conventions, trade shows, exhibitions, and meetings. Duty free vendor shopping by Caribbean and Venezuelan visitors is the fourth segment. The items purchased by visitors are later sold in their own countries for a profit. The final segment is cruiseship tourism, which provides for many visitors in a concentrated period of time. The plan indicates two fundamental priorities in their marketing campaign. First, Curaçao's Tourism Development Bureau wants to pursue a more proactive stance in marketing, sales, and sales promotion by engaging in co-operative ventures with travel trade partners overseas. Second, Curaçao has abandoned its previous supply and product driven approach towards sales and marketing decisions and has chosen to rely on market

needs and trends. The implementation of these two fundamental priorities will aid in generating a more efficient tourism campaign for the various segments by being conscious of world tourism trends and utilizing all available resources to market its tourism product. Furthermore, the island is attempting to create more profitable tourism investment by improving the coordination between investments and marketing strategy. This will enhance the productivity and added value of the industry through the pairing of supply and demand.

The Master Plan's third agenda (1995, p.49, A1) for Curaçao tourism development is product development. The island is attempting to improve its tourism-related infrastructure to further enhance the industry. The country's building heritage is acknowledged as a significant tourism attraction for its historic architecture. Willemstad, the capital of Curaçao, provides one of the rare opportunities to see Dutch tropical colonial architecture with wonderful canal houses that reflect the styles used in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities. Curaçao's architecture is worth conserving because few places exist where this can be observed. Vigorous improvement and preservation procedures are being implemented to sustain this vital resource. Beaches are an intricate part of mass resort tourism. As a result the island is protecting and improving existing beaches. To accommodate the larger numbers of expected tourists, plans are being considered to create additional beaches. The government would also like to expand the number of diving and golf facilities to meet the growing demand. Cruise tourism is becoming an increasingly important component of the industry and is viewed as having positive economic impacts. The development of pier facilities and tour activities are some of the accommodations established to serve these tourists better. The island is also

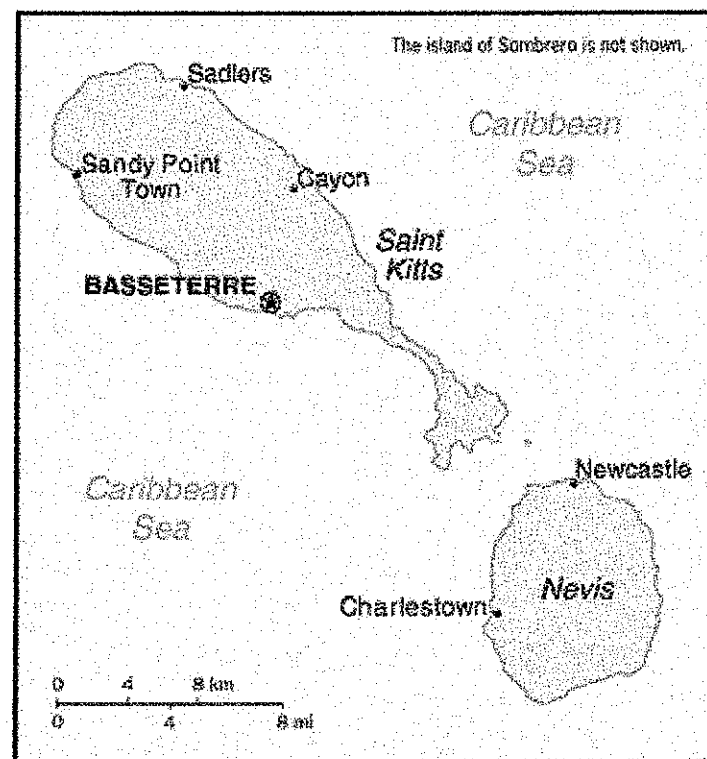
increasing its accommodations capacity by building more resorts. However, these resorts tend to be geared towards the higher socio-economic levels, thereby creating the need for a balance between the various types and levels of accommodations. The training of local peoples has been an ongoing process, educating them at all levels of the hospitality industry.

The strategic approach of development in Curaçao is to separate planning into zones. The first zone is the City Centre, referring to the area in and around the capital of Willemstad. Development in this zone is oriented towards building more shops, parking spaces, and pedestrian access. The Eastern Core is the second zone. Its development is impeded from reaching its full potential by numerous privately owned lands, making a coordinated development effort difficult to achieve. Most of the development occurring there is in the form of resorts, apartments, golf courses, dive centers, and creation of beaches. Another zone is the Western Core. It is undergoing development similar to that in the Eastern Core, with the exception of having a Conference Centre and a Yachting and Marina Club. The West is the fourth zone, which is composed of mostly protected areas and a few resorts. The last two zones, the East Coast and North Coast, are both being considered for national park status due to their undeveloped and desert-like conditions. (Curaçao Master Plan 1995)

The Tourism Development Plan's (1995, p. 51, 40) final agenda is development of environmental awareness. Curaçao has established carrying capacities both for the various zones throughout the island, and for the island at large. Its current policy is to limit the maximum annual number of visitors to 4.5 foreigners for every citizen. The government recognizes that exceeding the carrying capacity can be very environmentally

destructive and can undermine its tourism industry. Therefore, the island does not want to attract, nor cater to, more tourists than it can comfortably absorb. Curaçao is promoting programs to protect and preserve the various cultures and lifestyles represented on the island. The plan encourages continuing education for the local and tourist populations alike, to apprise both of the fragile environment and their role in preservation.

Next, I shall review the tourism development plans of St. Kitts and Nevis. These two islands are located in the eastern Caribbean and are part of the western chain of the Leeward Islands. The islands engage in some agriculture, producing such crops as sugar cane, coconuts, and cotton. Other products include salt and fish. The most important industry on the islands is tourism (Bateman & Egan).



The type of tourism that St. Kitts and Nevis is pursuing is a combination of mass resort tourism and ecotourism. The islands are attempting to implement four main agendas that will allow the country to develop a unique tourism product. The character of the tourism product and regional differentiation is the first agenda. The country has realized that current tourists have become more sophisticated in comparing different destinations and tourism products, and are more interested in the culture and the heritage of the host country. The tourism product, as identified by the St. Kitts and Nevis Tourism Master Plan, is to portray the islands as a "value added" destination, which offers sun, sand and beaches. In addition, the plan distinguishes the country from the rest of the Caribbean by offering tourists the opportunity to experience relatively undeveloped historical tourism resources. Some of these tourism resources include rainforests, mountain trails, and varied topography. Also, the development of significant historical sites into tourist attractions will further differentiate St. Kitts and Nevis from its neighbors, providing a competitive advantage. Certain generalizations can be made about the two islands. St. Kitts, primarily due to its size, is endowed with a greater abundance of the natural and historical attractions. Nevis is characterized as having more upscale "Caribbean" quality beaches. The islands have complementary strengths and appeals, allowing for very limited competition with each other.

The St. Kitts and Nevis Tourism Master Plan (1996, I-11,I-13) addresses the second agenda concerning the development of sites and attractions. The increase in cruiseship tourists to the islands has required an expansion of pier facilities and tour activities. Both St. Kitts and Nevis are equipped with adequate airport facilities, comparable to those of many smaller Caribbean islands. Current accommodations on St.

Kitts consist of 1200 hotel rooms and 400 on the island of Nevis. However, St. Kitts has become known as a high-risk area for investors due to past failures, resulting in a lack of interest for further development on the island by multinational corporations. Nevis, on the other hand, has successfully attracted investors interested in building new up-scale accommodations, although the island lacks the population size necessary to sustain a viable labor force. The inability to attract foreign investors to St. Kitts and the insufficient population on Nevis have crippled development, making the islands heavily reliant on public sector finances. Consequently, product development has been limited in its achievements. Nonetheless, the government is presently implementing activities and improvements to sustain the environment. Tourism planners are proposing the creation of a marine and terrestrial national parks, as well as laws and policies to protect important heritage buildings and historic urban areas. St. Kitts and Nevis has not instituted adequate protection measures toward the environment in the past but now intends to provide the appropriate human and financial resources.

The Tourism Master Plan (1996, p.I-20-22) discusses the third agenda that focuses upon marketing and promotion. St. Kitts' Ministry of Tourism is coordinating overseas tourism offices in London, Kronberg, New York, Chicago, and Toronto, to directly promote the country's tourism product. Tourism personnel are responsible for attending trade shows and travel agent educationals, breakfasts, and seminars. Furthermore, they are to become familiarized with organizations that promote trips for the travel industry. Nevis, on the other hand, utilizes the federal network of overseas offices to promote its own distinct tourism product. The island produces its own promotional materials which it distributes to the federal offices. St. Kitts and Nevis also

employs regional marketing resources to promote further its tourism products. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has provided additional access for St. Kitts and Nevis to the United States and European markets. The organization is internally financed by member countries and by the private sector. However, most funds are received under the EU's Caribbean Tourism Development Programme (CTDP). The CTO provides funds for stands at trade fairs and for a full time marketing advisor is located in Frankfurt. The CTO represents more than thirty countries. The actual impact in promoting St. Kitts and Nevis is not known, but the organization does provide some beneficial awareness in the form of current tourism offerings. The North East Caribbean Tourism Alliance makes another provision to promote the island pair. The alliance provides St. Kitts and Nevis with the opportunity to incorporate itself into a thriving sub-regional tourism industry. Through multi-centre tours and through day excursions, the participating islands of Anguilla, Saba, St. Maarten/St. Martin, St. Barths, St. Eustatius, Montserrat, Dominica, and St. Kitts/ Nevis, are able to spread tourism earnings to all members.

The ultimate goal of St. Kitts and Nevis is to establish a complete and varied tourism experience, exceeding that offered by all other nations in the Caribbean region. The cultural and historical attractions found on both islands are mostly unexploited and undeveloped, more so than in any other country in the region, thus serving as the center of the marketing campaign. Another sector of the marketing strategy is to portray the country as being a mass resort and cruiseship tourism destination, a norm throughout the Caribbean. Special interest tourism and ecotourism are underdeveloped and seek to be incorporated and assimilated into its overall image(St. Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Tourism 1996).

The Tourism Master plan (1996, p.I-25-29) concludes with the final agenda of human resources and the environment. The Ministry of Tourism has begun educating its citizens about the tourism industry and their contributing role in its growth. The Hotel and Tourist Association is offering programs through the local college in Front Office Operations³, as well as in-house training on affiliated properties. The government is realizing the importance of carrying capacity and has attempted to assess its current situation. It was found that St. Kitts could comfortably withstand an additional 1000-1500 more rooms. Nevis' small size does not allow for such a large number; in that 200-300 rooms is suggested as its carrying capacity. The carrying capacity of cruiseship tourism is dependent upon its interaction with stay-over tourists. Stay-over tourists are given priority since they contribute more into the local economy. The Ministry of Tourism proposes that controlling the number and timing of persons on sensitive tours can safely increase the carrying capacity for cruise ship tourism.

In comparing, the tourism development plans of the Bahamas, Belize, Curaçao, St. Kitts and Nevis to identify strengths and weaknesses within the context of the issues described in the introduction, I begin with their tourism infrastructure. The Bahamas intends to sell all government-owned hotels to responsible foreign investors due to their financial abilities to market the industry better. In the short-term, this will generate capital for the government to implement its various agendas on the Out Islands, as well as provide the financial means to educate the Bahamian people about the industry. In addition, most foreign owned hotels and resorts would be better built and renovated to resemble the comforts of the Global North and meeting the expectations of mass tourists. In the long-term, the Bahamas is surrendering control of its tourism industry to foreign

³ This is a program offering training for receptionist positions

investors, particularly on the designated mass resort islands. The government relies upon foreign investors to market the Bahamas because of its inability to market itself effectively in the Global North. As a result, most tourists will be directed to multinational corporate-owned facilities, through cooperative agreements with airlines, and travel agents, to develop all-inclusive packages. Hence, most tourism profits will repatriate back to the Global North, preventing most money from circulating the local economy. Eventually, the local citizens will supply nothing more but the social infrastructure and labor force to generate wealth for foreigners.

Belize's Ministry of Tourism divided the country's tourism infrastructure into zones, gateways, and corridors. Each division attempts to isolate a specific resource allowing the government to address its individual needs. Belize is endowed with many different environments and is taking the proper precautions to develop the infrastructure in and around the different habitat in the most environmental friendly manner. Much of the environment is undeveloped. Initially instituting the proper planning in the development of facilities and roads should help sustain it indefinitely. In many cases, the proper planning of infrastructure is not accomplished until after much destruction has come to local environments, as in the case of St. Kitts and Nevis. The country is also developing travel routes linking the different divisions to encourage visitors to spend more time in multiple locations. This approach will improve the entire economy by distributing tourist expenditures throughout most of the country, rather than in localized areas. A major problem encountered with tourism related infrastructure is due to the fact that some of it is owned by micro-enterprises. The government is attempting to interlink these enterprises with each other, as well as with the government itself to create more

viable industry. This is difficult to accomplish with the many competing interests of individual investors. Belize encourages foreign investment within the country and runs the risk of losing control of a portion of the tourism industry. A limit must be established on the percentage of foreign owned infrastructure within the country to uphold a fundamental ecotourism principle, namely that most of the industry is owned by local citizens. Local ownership of most of the tourism industry will secure that most profits will circulate the local economy, thus benefiting the entire community.

Curaçao is improving its tourism-related infrastructure to enhance the industry. The island recognizes that its architectural heritage serves as a significant tourism attraction that needs to be improved and preserved to maintain its appeal. The preservation of these historic structures is not only an attraction, but also a resource that provides insight to future indigenous generations of their past. The government is increasing its accommodations and gearing them toward the upper class. Since Curaçao is pursuing mass tourism, it is important to balance and be sensitive to accommodations of all financial levels because this type of tourism involves peoples of all economic levels. Conference centers are also being built to attract additional visitors to the island apart from the existing mass tourists. This allows Curaçao to function as a center for regional meetings and distinguish itself as being more than just a tourism destination.

St. Kitts and Nevis' current infrastructure includes an airport and accommodations on both islands. The island of St. Kitts harbors most of the historic attractions and middle to low level of accommodations. In contrast, Nevis has mostly upscale accommodations because of its better beaches, and tourists willing to pay more to visit. The island also has some historic attractions. This distinction between

accommodations offered allows the islands to cater to different types of tourists and minimize the competition between them. However, in recent years, St. Kitts has experienced a decrease in its infrastructure development because most foreign investors have failed to produce profits. Consequently, foreign investors have labeled St. Kitts as a high-risk destination, forcing the island to rely solely on public funds. Nevis has attracted interested foreign investors, yet lacks the adequate population to sustain new facilities. Both islands are presently experiencing a period of limited development.

Curaçao and Belize seem to be the best of the four in implementing their infrastructure in a manner that will preserve all its resources indefinitely. However, Curaçao's more diversified economy makes foreign investment in infrastructure relative less significant to its economy, limiting foreign control. Belize, having a less diversified economy, relies on tourism for a higher percentage of its economy, leaving the country susceptible to greater foreign control. The Bahamas, selling off its accommodations, is surrendering its control of the industry. St. Kitts and Nevis is experiencing little development related to infrastructure.

The second issue to be compared is the environment. The Bahamas is attempting to preserve the environment of the Out Islands by designating Paradise Island and the Grand Bahama Island as sacrificial sites. The designation of these sacrificial sites channels tourists to just two of the seven hundred islands of the Bahamas. This prevents massive human contact with the remainder of the islands' fragile environment, thus preserving the majority of the islands. The government is establishing carrying capacities for all the islands and monitoring them on a regular basis for tourist impacts. It seems the Bahamas is funneling most of its mass tourists to the designated islands. However, it is

unrealistic to assume that those visitors and their impacts will not affect the neighboring Out Islands. Furthermore, The Ministry of Tourism is clearing more land on the designated mass tourist islands to expand the tourism-related infrastructure. The additional building and the increase in the number of visitors could possibly destroy the existing environment. To designate an island as a sacrificial site does not imply that measures should not be taken to preserve it and only protect the rest of the islands indefinitely. The Bahamas is also instituting various clean-up operations and waste management programs to safeguard the natural resources of the islands.

Many of Belize's tourism attractions are individually developed with few linkages among them. This decentralized model of development can lead to environmental destruction if not carefully regulated. The government is taking the initiative to provide guidelines to investors on development with minimal effects on the environment. The country is also adopting the appropriate management practices to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the environment by regularly monitoring certain impact indicators.

Curaçao has established carrying capacities both for the various zones throughout the island, and for the island at large. The island is limiting the maximum annual number of visitors to 4.5 foreigners for every citizen annually, to safeguard the environment and tourism industry. Each zone within Curaçao has had a carrying capacity value assessed to control and distribute the number of visitors throughout the island accordingly. The island has established a national park in one zone of the country and is considering two other zones for creating additional national parks.

St. Kitts and Nevis has recently considered the importance of carrying capacity and the environment. Initially, the environment was not the government's main priority

but, since much degradation was observed, the island has now changed its policy. The government has now established a carrying capacity for both of the islands limit the number of accommodations, cruiseship, and stay-over tourists. St. Kitts and Nevis has currently focused its efforts on implementing activities that will preserve the environment and to create a national park for the country.

All four countries value the environment and realize its important role within tourism. It seems the Bahamas is the only country employing sacrificial sites. Belize, Curaçao, and more recently St. Kitts and Nevis, are attempting to protect all of their resources. The Bahamas must employ stricter environmental policies to protect its designated sacrificial sites or they risk being destroyed by the increase in visitor numbers and development. If that is the case, they will no longer serve their intended purpose. Curaçao has opportunities to create several national parks because it is less reliant on tourism to generate foreign exchange earnings, relative to the other nations. This allows Curaçao to set aside a good portion of its land to be designated as protected areas maintained for future generations.

The third issue to be compared among the four countries is employment. The Bahamas is locally training its citizens and sending others abroad to educate them on tourism-related subjects. This will increase their opportunities of acquiring positions at all levels. The country is also creating different mechanisms to assure the fair distribution of travel industry benefits and increase job opportunities and involvement of local citizens in the economy. Belize mostly trains its people locally through various work programs, allowing them to contribute to the industry. The country is also planning to provide tertiary-level study abroad programs to educate citizens and have them engage in

higher level administrative positions. Belizean citizens are encouraged by the government to build and operate tourism-related facilities and form their own micro-enterprise. This, however, generates problems for the government as it attempts to market the industry under one image. Belize's Ministry of Tourism also monitors and trains on an ongoing basis to sensitize locals towards the visitor's experience. Both Curaçao and St Kitts and Nevis are providing local training for their citizens on a regular basis to educate them at all levels of the hospitality industry. The Bahamas and St. Kitts and Nevis are very sensitive to employment fluctuations experienced with seasonality because tourism represents more than fifty percent of their GDP. Since tourism represents a smaller percentage of Curaçao's and Belize's economy, they are able to avoid the catastrophic effects of highly specialized economies. Belize is attempting to avoid the fluctuations of seasonality by targeting different markets to visit at specific months of the year when others are unable or unlikely to do so. All four of the countries are attempting to educate their citizens to occupy positions at all levels of the industry. This will provide investors with a capable labor force and avoid the need to import foreign employees to fill these positions.

The fourth and fifth issues, regarding cultural and social impacts respectively, will be compared together. The Bahamian government, lacking the financial means to renovate its infrastructure to resemble that of the Global North, decided to sell its resources to foreign investors that can afford to make the necessary changes. The government would like to include promotion of entertainment, art, culture, music, and history in its tourism product. It seems that the Bahamian culture risks becoming highly commercialized for tourism, which usually leads to the degradation of the quality of local

customs. However, these phenomena would occur primarily on the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama, and to a lesser degree on the Out Islands. The Out Islands are an ecotouristic destination and typically attract higher quality tourists who appreciate the country for its unique attributes. The negative social impacts would be centered mostly on their mass tourism islands, where the local youth observe many of the life styles and consumerism of tourists.

Belize employs ecotourism as its main type of tourism, avoiding many of the negative cultural and social aspects of mass resort tourism. Most of Belize's accommodations are geared towards budget travelers. These types of tourists do not demonstrate sharp differences in consumer levels, hence not aggravating the dissatisfaction level of the local youth with their socio-economic situation.

Curaçao, primarily being a mass tourism destination, does experience some negative cultural impacts. The extent of the cultural impacts on the island are limited to the accommodations resembling the comforts found in the Global North. Curaçao's planning document does not indicate any plan that would commodify their culture in any manner. The social impacts have also been minimal because the county's diverse economy does not rely so heavily on tourism as to allow it to create migration push factors for Curaçao's youth.

St. Kitts and Nevis does experience some negative social impacts, but not cultural ones. The island lacks the foreign investment to expand its infrastructure and now experiences, a bad socio-economic situation. This, in conjunction with the numerous cruiseship tourists, make the youth feel there less satisfied with their own lives and society. Also, the country's relatively limited accommodations for stay-over tourists

renders those visitors not numerous enough to stimulate the commercialization of their culture.

The two mass tourism islands of the Bahamas experience the most negative cultural and social impacts. St. Kitts and Nevis has the potential of generating numerous cultural and social impacts, should increases in development and the number of tourists occur. Mass tourism is the primary type of tourism being employed by St. Kitts and Nevis. If considerable growth were to be observed in this sector, its culture and facilities would be commercialized to make up for the current period of limited development. Curaçao's diverse economy is able to prevent many of mass tourism's negative impacts from affecting the island. Belize, utilizing ecotourism, sustains little negative cultural and social impacts because of the quality of its type of tourists and their ability to minimize wearing observable western consumerism.

Tourism linkage is the sixth issue to be compared. The mass tourism islands of the Bahamas experience a low multiplier effect because most of the infrastructure is owned and operated by foreign investors. These two islands use their foreign exchange earnings that they generate to pay for tourism-related imports, such as food, furniture, and linens. The Out Islands experience a relatively higher multiplier effect because they employ ecotourism which utilizes more locally sourced tourism inputs.

Belize experiences few linkage problems because the tourism industry is composed of mostly individual micro-enterprises, which source local products. The government is encouraging partnerships among individual enterprises and other sectors of the economy. The Ministry of Tourism is building roads to link the various sectors together to allow for more effective transportation of tourism inputs to the country's

tourism product allowing for an efficient industry that retains most of its foreign exchange earnings.

The final issue to be compared is competition. According to the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, the government would like its tourism industry to be marketed as being "the premier eco-sensitive destination in the Caribbean". However, the marketing strategy is to be financed and developed by the multinational corporations. The government, lacking the economic resources to finance its marketing campaign has given the sole responsibility to its foreign investors. Most of the investments of foreigners are located on Nassau and the Grand Bahama Islands, so their strategy is targeted at marketing these destinations only. These two islands involve mass tourism, resulting the Bahamas being portrayed as mostly a mass touristic destination. Since the Out Islands' facilities are mostly government or locally owned, foreigners have no incentive to market those islands. In theory, the Bahamas offers two types of tourism: mass tourism and ecotourism. However, this is not evident in their marketing campaign. Multinational corporations target mostly U.S. and European mass markets. The Bahamas does not project a comparative advantage over other nations in the region, but its close proximity to North America and easy accessibility accounts for its large number of visitors. There is very minimal subnational competition within the Bahamas since most of the industry is foreign owed. In addition, very little competition is observed between the mass tourism and the ecotourism destinations since they attract two different types of tourists.

Pursuing ecotourism, Belize is employing a focused niche market approach to promote its different attributes to the various market sectors. The Ministry of Tourism, identifying different groups of ecotourists, allows Belize to target wealthier market

countries, which is a more cost-effective strategy when working with a limited promotional budget. The Belizean government's attempt to unify the entire country as an ecotourism destination becomes more difficult, however, when much of the industry is individually owned. The country's tourism attractions consist of reefs, rainforests, wildlife, archaeological ruins, soft and hard adventure, and cultural diversity, all of which appeal to various marketing sectors. Belize's diverse unique assets provide for a comparative advantage over the rest of the region. At the national level, Belize's exclusive ecotourism industry did not experience a great deal of competition until recently because it is a newly emerging alternative to mass resort tourism. At the subnational level, a great deal of competition is observed because the country consists of numerous individual micro-enterprises.

Curaçao, in addition to of having a diversified economy, has a very diversified tourism product. The island offers general leisure, sun and beach tourism, special interest tourism, business-oriented tourism, and duty-free vendor shopping. The different offerings of the island provide a comparative advantage for Curacao by being able to host a business event that can also offers the visitor the opportunity to engage in some specific interest tourism and accomplish shopping all in one destination. At the national level, no other Caribbean country can offer this combination making Curacao a very distinct destination. Also, at the subnational level, most infrastructure is locally owned, providing for minimal competition with the existing multinational corporations. The three most profitable source regions for Curacao are Europe, South America, and the Caribbean. The government primarily markets to these regions. The country is economically able to afford its marketing campaign because the island generates foreign

exchange from multiple sources, and because marketing within South America and the Caribbean is relatively cheaper to the Global North.

St. Kitts and Nevis is attempting to establish a complete and varied tourism experience, that, in its works, will exceed that of all other nations in the Caribbean region. The islands offer the typical leisure sun and beaches, rain forests, mountain trails, and varied topography. The islands' numerous historical sites serve as great tourist attractions, differentiating St. Kitts and Nevis from the rest of the Caribbean, and providing them with a comparative advantage. To ensure an effective promotion of its tourism product, the country has positioned two tourism offices in Europe and three in North America. St. Kitts and Nevis is participating in various tourism organizations to promote its product. The country is also interested in incorporating ecotourism and special-interest tourism into its overall package in the future. The islands are attempting to utilize all available resources to market their tourism industry to the masses of the Global North. At the national level, St. Kitts and Nevis encounters a great deal of competition because its product is mostly mass resort tourism with an emphasis on historical attractions. Its current product has yet not been sufficiently developed to provide the country with a true comparative advantage. At the subnational level, the country experiences some competition among the multinational corporations and the local establishments on each island.

Belize is the only country targeting a particular niche market; the rest are targeting the masses of different source regions of the world. Consequently, Belize attracts a higher quality tourist, and currently experiences the least competition for its tourists. The Bahamas, Belize, and Curaçao demonstrate true comparative advantages,

allowing each country to distinguish itself. St. Kitts and Nevis has not developed or marketed its historic facilities adequately enough to allow for a comparative advantage. The Bahamas, Curaçao, and St. Kitts and Nevis, all realizing the great competition involved with mass resort tourism, are all attempting a shift toward ecotourism in some degree. A flooded field within ecotourism will undermine each country's ability to achieve its development goals. A more coordinated approach among countries of the region can allow for each country to prosper by being slightly different than the next.

Section 4: The Dominica Case Study

Introduction:

Dominica was chosen as a case study because this island represents the classic colonial and neocolonial problems. It also demonstrates the pitfalls of a highly specialized economy and the need for diversification to alleviate the dependence on a narrow range of agricultural exports. Dominica's small size, as well as its rich and unspoiled environment are ideal for the implementation of ecotourism as a development path. This country is also a good example of one that still has local ownership and control of most of its resources.

This research explores the many issues surrounding the development of ecotourism in Dominica. Dominica has long experienced the problems inherent in a monocrop economy. The island has relied on banana production since the 1950s as its main foreign exchange-earning primary-sector commodity. The peasant-farming model employed in its agricultural-sector, however, does not permit Dominica to produce at the

level of efficiency of the Latin American banana plantations due to the lack of mechanization and the inability to achieve economies of scale (Wiley 1998).

The recent demise of the Lomé IV Convention is another dynamic that has added to Dominica's need to diversify its economy. That convention was a trade agreement between the European Union and 71 of its former colonies. It provided preferential access to European markets to mostly primary sector exports from the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Lomé countries. This agreement provided a secure market for Dominica's banana's. However, the expiration of the convention agreement in February of 2000, posed many uncertainties about this guaranteed market (Wiley 1998).

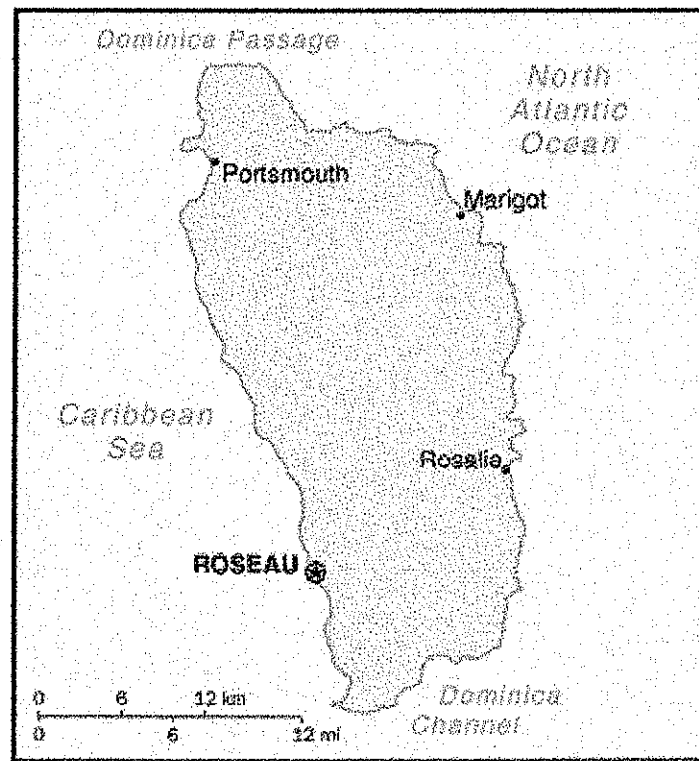
Tourism is one of the development paths now being pursued by Dominica. The country is endowed with a virtually untouched, beautiful environment that lends itself well to ecotourism. It has been labeled the "nature island", drawing numerous ecotourists from many parts of the world. Currently, Dominica's tourism involves both ecotourism and mass-cruiseship tourism (Wiley 1996). Dominica's government has decided that ecotourism is a viable path for development that will alleviate the great dependence on agriculture. Ecotourism, if done correctly, allows for the generation of foreign exchange and employment, as well as the means to sustain the environment indefinitely. Consequently, Dominica's environment provides the comparative advantage that allows Dominica to enter a market that is distinct from the mass-resort tourism found elsewhere throughout the Caribbean. This alleviates the need for Dominica to compete directly with the mass-tourism resorts by drawing from a specialized group of travelers, the ecotourists. Mass-resort tourism would not be viable for Dominica because it entered the

tourism industry so late. It would not have the means to distinguish itself from the other Caribbean islands in that market, thereby, preventing the island from effectively competing against more established destinations (Christian 2000).

Dominica's purpose in developing ecotourism is to further diversify its economy. I will examine the reasons leading to the need for diversification and investigate the plans being pursued to establish a long-term viable economy. The development of ecotourism in Dominica is the most suitable development path for promoting socio-economic development in the 21st century. This case-study first introduces background information about the inherited economic tradition and the many problems with which Dominica is confronted. An analysis of these problems illustrates Dominica's need to diversify its economy. Subsequently, I focus upon ecotourism and demonstrate how ecotourism serves as a promising industry that can aid in creating economic development within Dominica.

Dominica's Island Profile:

Dominica is a small, volcanic island situated in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean. The dimensions of the island are twenty-nine miles in length and sixteen miles in width. Two French territories, Guadeloupe to the north and Martinique to the south, are its closest neighbors (Honychurch 1995).



The island's landscape is composed of many steep mountains that are covered by very thick vegetation. This prevented the creation of settlements and plantations of any large scale throughout Dominica's history (Honychurch, 1995). Dominica's climate tends to vary in terms of rainfall between the leeward Caribbean coast and the windward Atlantic coast. The leeward (west coast) side receives about 80 inches of rain annually, and remains relatively dry for 6 months of the year. The windward (east coast) side receives a range of a 100 inches to 300 inches of rainfall per year, and the dry season does not last longer than a total of 3 months annually. This phenomenon allows for the luxuriant growth of plants, contributing to the islands unique natural beauty. Temperatures on the island vary from the coast to the mountains. On the coast, the temperature on any given day may range from 22 to 33 degrees Celsius. In the

mountains, it ranges from 19 to 27 degrees Celsius. These variations in rainfall and temperature allow a visitor to choose any particular climate at a time. The island's variation in rainfall and temperature has allowed a range of habitats to form. These habitats include open dry coastal woodlands, rain forests, swamplands, lakes, rivers, coastal beaches, cliffs, plantations, grasslands, and gardens. This habitat diversity has spawned diversity in wildlife. The wildlife includes crustaceans, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, freshwater fishes, birds, and mammals. Many species found on the island are endemic to the island, and are not found anywhere else in the world. For example, the Imperial parrot (sisserou) is endemic to the island and serves as a national symbol. The diversity in endemic birds has made Dominica a world-renowned destination for bird watchers. In addition to having terrestrial diversity, Dominica possesses a diverse marine life as well. The marine life includes turtles, seabirds, fishes, shorebirds, whales, and dolphins. The vast diversity in marine life and natural marine habitat allows for many world-class diving sites in Dominica. One negative aspect of Dominica's climate is the threat of hurricanes from July to October. Although the strength and number of hurricanes vary each year, they pose many threats to the infrastructure and crops of the island (Evans 1997).

The island currently has a population of about seventy five thousand people. The majority of them lives in the coastal regions of Dominica. The capital city, Roseau, has a population of approximately twenty one thousand residents. Most Dominicans (91%) are of African origin, while 6% are a mixture of Black and Carib, 1.5% are entirely Caribs, and 0.5% are white (Bateman 1997). The Caribs are the direct descendents of the original inhabitants. The official language of Dominica is English. However, due to the past

influence of a French plantocracy, a French-based Creole is widely spoken. As for religious affiliations, 76.9% of Dominicans are Roman Catholic, and 15.5% are Protestant (Bateman 1997). Life expectancy at birth in Dominica is 74.1 years of age for males and 79.9 years of age for females (Bateman 1997), comparable to that in many developed countries. The form of government found in Dominica is a multiparty republic with a one-house parliament. The island does not have any armed forces, but instead employs paramilitary police. The currency of Dominica is the East Caribbean dollar, whose exchange rate is roughly 2.6 EC\$ per U.S. dollar. The Gross National Product per capita in 1999 was \$3,170 U.S. With regard to the economy, the most important crop in Dominica is bananas, followed by citrus fruits and coconuts, while cocoa, bay leaves, and vanilla also yield revenue. Tourism is another growing industry that is becoming a greater source of revenue. Dominica imports some foods, fuels, and most manufactured goods. The island has adequate medical services; however, heart disease is becoming a growing problem with people living longer (Central Statistical Office 1996).

II. Dominica's Inherited Economic Tradition:

After the Seven Years War, The Treaty of Paris transferred the islands of Dominica, Tobago, St Vincent, Grenada, and the Grenadines, to the British. Prior to the war, it was the French who introduced the plantation system to Dominica, and it eventually became the inherited economic tradition of Dominicans. This economic tradition also included protection of a narrow range of cash crops abroad and selling the crops as a source of revenue. This tradition would, after independence, continue to serve as the chief means of earning foreign exchange (Honychurch 1995).

The French developed large coffee plantations on the island, which were run as industrial agricultural systems. All aspects of processing and packaging were completed on the island, and the finished products were later exported to France. The British takeover increased the number of plantations, allowing French plantations to exist, while regularly taxing them. In addition, the British built their own coffee plantations and also introduced sugar cultivation to the island. Dominica's volcanic soils were very fertile; however, the mountainous landscape did not easily accommodate the increase in the number of plantations on the island. To create more usable land, the British leveled terraces on steep mountains at a greater rate than the French had previously done. African slaves were an integral part of the plantation community providing most of the labor force that worked on the production of the two major crops. However, a greater shift to sugar plantations occurred after coffee crops were plagued by disease in the nineteenth-century. The plantation system continued for many years, until slave codes were changed by the British assembly. On July 31, 1834, Britain approved the Abolition of Slavery Act, and the slaves of the British West Indies were liberated to an extent. To safeguard planters, however, an apprenticeship period was implemented, which required ex-slaves to work for six years as "apprentices" before gaining full freedom. This theoretically permitted ex-slaves to gain skills to become self-sufficient, but in reality continued to provide a labor force for plantations. A British group sent to Dominica to observe the outcome of the apprenticeship advised the British government that this method was a failure. Most British planters lived in Britain. Thus, the ex-slaves gained nothing in terms of knowledge. The apprenticeship system was terminated on August 1, 1838, completely freeing the ex-slaves. This complete liberation, however, created a

labor crisis for the planters, causing many to abandon their plantations. The remaining plantations survived by "industrial apprenticeship", the importation of laborers from India and China as indentured workers (Honychurch 1995).

Meanwhile, many of the freed slaves established their own smallholdings, a process facilitated by the fact that land was abundant in Dominica. The establishment of many small farms allowed for the creation of Dominica's independent peasant society. In 1838, a mulatto majority was established in the House of Assembly, allowing mulatto people to increase power. Their first action was to pass legislation to better the welfare of liberated citizens of the island. There was a great deal of opposition from Crown Colony members of Britain, to prevent the level of control mulatto members had over government. Many mulatto citizens revolted but the British military put down all rebellions. Britain's theory of economic development was directed at maintaining the existence of large plantations, by ensuring cheap labor and high incomes for owners. The British forced mulatto citizens to work on plantations by taxing them for their landholdings. To ensure that mulatto citizens chose to work on plantations to pay their taxes, the British prohibited the creation of markets where small peasant farmers could sell their produce (Honychurch 1995).

In 1846, the Sugar Duties Act passed by the British removed the preferential access of West Indian sugar to British markets. Dominica's low quality sugar could not compete well in British markets, leading to very hard times for the island. To improve the situation in Dominica, Britain sent aid to develop better infrastructure on the island. The building of schools and the library were among the improvements that benefited all residents of the island. The British also shifted from coffee and sugar to limes and cocoa

cash crop production. Cocoa, and especially limes, by 1892, became two of the most important industries on the island. By 1916, Dominica was the world's largest limes producer, boosting the island's importance on world markets. In 1922, however, disease plagued its lime crops, devastating the planters of the island. In the absence of Dominican limes, demand shifted in the world markets towards Sicily's lemons. As a result, Dominicans suffered from shortages of essential supplies, because of their inability to generate revenue from exports (Honychurch 1995).

The British, recognizing the poor social and economic conditions in Dominica and its other colonies of the British West Indies, passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940. The agency that implemented this act built new infrastructure for the island, in an effort to build a new society in Dominica. While this development in infrastructure occurred, Dominica's long plantation tradition was restructured and various new cash crops were introduced. The selected cash crops included vanilla, bananas, coconuts, bay leaf, and citrus fruits. These were projected to yield the greatest revenue for the island. Bananas emerged to become the most profitable of Dominica's cash crop for several reasons. First, bananas can be grown and harvested all year round, providing Dominicans with a regular cash income. Second, special arrangements were made by the British government to which provide a secure market for Dominican bananas. By the 1960s, bananas accounted for about 80 percent of all exports, which started to concern the Dominicans. The dominance of banana exports was solidified by the creation of a banana quota for Dominica in the first Lomé Convention of 1974. In 1978, when Dominica gained its independence from Britain, it faced a devastating experience when its banana cash crops were plagued by disease. In addition, several hurricanes struck the

island destroying the banana crops, nearly wiping out the industry. In the 1980s, when Dominica was desperate to restore its banana industry, it sought and gained U.S. aid to revive its economy. This permitted the reestablishment of bananas as the chief export earning commodity, a situation that continued throughout the 1990s (Honychurch 1995).

Overall, the effects that the economic tradition of producing a narrow range of export commodities has had on the country were mixed. Initially, the plantation system served to suppress and exploit the people of Dominica. Eventually, the skills and knowledge that were gained through the generations of small-scale independent farming served to provide the means for Dominica to compete on the world market (Honychurch 1995).

III. Dominica's Current Economic Situation:

Dominica's current priority is to alleviate the dependence on banana cash crops by diversifying its economy. Several factors have warranted this change in economic policy. The first two factors were the disease and hurricanes that nearly destroyed the entire banana crop in the late 1970s. These experiences showed the Dominican people how fragile and susceptible to collapse their economy was due to its dependence on just one crop. The third factor is increased competition on world markets from banana producing countries in Africa, Central America, and South America (Honychurch, 1995). The Lomé IV Convention granted Dominica preferential access to European markets, thereby, providing a guaranteed market for Dominica's bananas. The expiration of this agreement in February of 2000 posed many uncertainties about Dominica's future access to this guaranteed market. Another dynamic that poses a threat to Dominica's economy

is the emergence of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is attempting to eliminate all forms of preferential trade agreements. The main objective of the WTO is to create free competitive trade among the countries of the world, which favors those nations able to achieve economies of scale (Wiley 1998).

Dominica's attempts to diversify its economy are stimulated by its inability to compete in the production of bananas with the larger scale economies. For example, countries like Ecuador and Costa Rica are able to produce bananas more efficiently because of the mechanization of their large-scale plantations and their low salary scales, in comparison to the small-scale peasant farming found in Dominica (Wiley 1998).

The major goal of Dominica's diversification programs is to maintain democracy by providing several industries to employ locals, thus sustaining a viable economy. The inability to maintain a viable economy could result in civil unrest. Other goals include raising the standard of living on farms, and increasing foreign exchange earnings. The three realistic development paths for Dominica are agriculture, industry, and tourism. Dominica is diversifying its agriculture by pursuing nontraditional agricultural export crops (NTAEs), including mango, avocado, hot peppers, and flowers. Dominica is following a niche market strategy to enter specialized industries as well. It is seeking to produce unique, high quality goods, targeting upscale markets where cost is not a major factor. For example, Jamaica produces a very high quality coffee in the Blue Mountains. It markets this product to coffee drinkers (mostly in the global north) who have a preference for exotic tastes, and are willing to pay a higher cost to support this habit. This strategy also allows Dominica to fill crop cycle gaps, which refers to producing a product during a period when major producers are at a down time (Wiley 1998).


The third development path is tourism. Dominica is endowed with a virtually untouched beautiful environment that lends itself well for tourism. Currently, Dominica's tourism involves both ecotourism and mass-cruiseship tourism. Dominica's environment provides a comparative advantage over other islands of the Caribbean, because no other island poses an environment of the same magnitude in the region. Most Caribbean islands compromised their similar environments to create mass-resorts, consequently, giving Dominica an advantage over the other islands, that can be easily marketed as being distinct (Esprit 2000).

VI. Why is Ecotourism ultimately Dominica's Best Option for the 21st Century?:

The concept of ecotourism has many more benefits, if done correctly, over mass-resort tourism, because most of the advantages are meant to last indefinitely. As a small island, the aspect of maintaining something for the long term is very important for Dominica. Dominicans realize their resources are limited and need to utilize them very carefully. Dominica's small size is perfect for establishing ecotourism on the island because this form of tourism is ideal for small-scale destinations. The island's small size will make monitoring and sustaining the environment very possible. In addition, Dominica's relatively small population and projected diversified economy will not require great numbers of visitors to the island to have a significant foreign exchange impact on the country. This will allow Dominica to determine a healthy carrying capacity and sustain the environment and industry indefinitely, while Dominica's agriculture and new small-scale manufacturing industries also support a portion of the economy. Dominica can use a niche market strategy for promoting its ecotourism

abroad. A niche market strategy allows small economies to compete with larger-scale economies by targeting a particular group instead of the world at large. In Dominica's case, the wealthy need to be targeted because traveling and lodging on the island is very expensive for the average traveler. Another niche market category is to make affiliations with various universities that can use the environment for educational purposes, consequently, generating visitors to the island (Christian 2000).

Theoretically, ecotourism is the most beneficial form of tourism because it allows for the majority of the tourism infrastructure to be run and owned by the locals. With Dominicans owning the hotels, restaurants, tour operations, most of the benefits of tourism will go straight to the locals themselves. In addition, ecotourism provides the means for locals to preserve their environments for future generation's to use. It also allows for the future economic opportunity with the ability of the locals to be able to support their families (Honey 1999). Most other Caribbean islands are not in control of their tourism industry or country because the majority of the tourism sector is foreign owned. Dominica owns almost every aspect of the tourism sector providing the people with most of the control over their industry and island. Ecotourism benefits locals in many ways. This form of tourism does not permit the creation of a localized strip of hotels and tourism related infrastructure to dominate the community (ex. Cancun, Mexico). Rather, the tourism infrastructure is distributed throughout the island to spread the wealth to all regions of Dominica. Another benefit is that most ecotourists tend to stay for longer periods of time in a host country, allowing for more revenue to be injected into the economy (Martin 2000)



Dominica's environment clearly provides a comparative advantage that allows Dominica to enter a market that is distinct from the mass-resort tourism found throughout the Caribbean. Dominica lacks the beaches necessary for mass-resort tourism, promoting a different feel from the "Sun-Surf" atmosphere found with mass-resorts. These two phenomena provide Dominica with the means to compete with the dominating mass-resorts by drawing from a specialized group of travelers, namely ecotourists. Ecotourism constitutes for only 5% of the world market; however, Dominica's small size renders this market as sufficient. Mass-resort tourism would not be viable for Dominica because entering the tourism industry so late would not provide the means to distinguish the country from the rest of the Caribbean islands, therefore preventing the island from effectively competing against more established destinations (Martin 2000).

Case Study Conclusion:

The Dominican government has created plans to develop ecotourism on the island that include improving their current tourism infrastructure, such as roads, hotels, historical sites, and water sanitation, in addition to conservation programs to protect the environment. A balance between nature and people is being established by determining the carrying capacity of the island and a manner to monitor and manage the sustainability of the environment. An international airport project is currently under consideration as a way to improve access to the island. In addition, Dominica is educating its people about their unique environment and its importance to generate awareness to the new generations (Douglas 2000).

Dominica is attempting to utilize the island's small size to its advantage by pursuing a form of tourism that is ideally suited for its small scale, and that will sustain the delicate environment indefinitely for future generations to use as a source of income. The island's small scale makes monitoring the environment very possible. In addition, using a niche market strategy to sell ecotourism to the world serves as a realistic and cost effective method for Dominica. A niche market strategy will allow Dominica to compete effectively with larger scale economies by targeting only the wealthier travelers who can afford the unique experience. This strategy can be expanded further by making affiliations with various universities that can use the environment for educational purposes, which coincides with the philosophy of ecotourism. Most importantly, with ecotourism, the Dominicans will continue to own the majority of infrastructure related to the tourism industry, allowing profits to benefit them directly. This also provides Dominicans with the majority of control over their industry, which is often not seen with mass resort tourism, since most infrastructures are foreign owned. Furthermore, Dominica sources most of its tourism-related inputs locally, especially in agriculture, allowing for a high multiplier effect. Clearly not every Dominican will have the means to own a hotel or a tour operating company, but alternatively one can earn a living as a park ranger or by making crafts. The overwhelming positive qualities of ecotourism provide an appealing incentive for its development in Dominica since the industry is geared to allow each local to contribute in his/her unique manner to the industry.

Dominica has seen the pitfalls of a monocrop economy and the uncertainty that trade agreements entail, and is trying to establish a development path that does not compromise the well being of its citizens. The island's diversification effort hopes to

create revenue from multiple sources to allow ecotourism to be sustainable indefinitely without making the nation dependent upon it. Consequently, Dominica's environment serves as a comparative advantage over other Caribbean islands that can generate economic development in a sustainable and positive manner. The Dominican government has realized that ecotourism serves as a suitable development path for promoting socio-economic development in the twenty-first century, and is in the initial stages of establishing this form of tourism (Martin 2000).

Section 5: Conclusion

Since colonial times, LDCs have been experiencing the many difficulties of being incorporated into a world economy that maintains and perpetuates their poor economics status. Third World countries have witnessed the Global North becoming more developed while the LDCs were becoming increasingly underdeveloped. Furthermore, many developing nations have become dependent on a narrow range of foreign exchange-earnings primary sector commodities. As a result, these economies are very fragile and susceptible to collapse, creating the need for most countries to diversify their economies to alleviate their traditional dependence on agriculture. Tourism serves as a suitable option among development paths for promoting socio-economic development. However, the pursuit of tourism as a development path is complicated by many issues and problems.

The type of tourism selected by the government of an LDC plays an important role in determining the number and degree of issues to be encountered pursuing this development path. Dominica and, to a lesser degree, Belize, the pursuit of ecotourism

exclusively allows them control of most of their infrastructure and preservation of their environment. As the most important resource of ecotourism, the environment is a crucial incentive for preservation of not only the industry, but also for future generations to utilize and admire. Pursuit of ecotourism allows a country to avoid the numerous negative cultural and social impacts of mass tourism, by targeting a higher quality tourist who is sensitive to the host country's environment and people. Many of the resorts found on the core islands of the Bahamas attempt to isolate the visitor from the local people, employing a self-contained enclave model that creates tension between the two groups. In Dominica and Belize, employing an integrated domestic-international model allows visitors and locals to interact freely and gain a mutual understanding of each other. In addition, Dominican and Belizean citizens own most of their countries' tourism-related infrastructure, allowing most of the tourism-generated monies to circulate in the local economy, providing higher multiplier effects. On the other hand, Curacao, St. Kitts and Nevis, and the Bahamas primarily engage in mass resort tourism where most of the industry is foreign-owned and most tourism-related profits flow back to the Global North. This yields very low multiplier effects within the host country. In the case of Curacao, it has a very diverse and strong economy and is able to sustain many of the negative impacts of mass resort tourism. But for a economically less stable country like St. Kitts and Nevis, the negative impacts have detrimental effects on the country. Ecotourism, as a relatively new alternative to mass resort tourism, allows Dominica and Belize to experience minimal competition for those high quality, upper income tourists. However, the Bahamas, Curacao, St. Kitts and Nevis and other third world countries are all attempting a shift toward ecotourism in some degree. Many problems may arise if too

many LDCs all pursue ecotourism at one time. Saturation of the ecotourism market will undermine each developing nation's ability to achieve its development goals. A more planned and coordinated approach among regional countries will provide for better prosperity and development, through the rupturing of the colonial structure of supplementary economies among former colonies.

The paper's preliminary research findings indicate that ecotourism represents a viable development path for promoting socio-economic development in the twenty-first century for select counties. Ecotourism provides many advantages to the host country: higher multiplier effects, greater percentages of local ownership and control of the industry, and an environment regularly monitored and protected to sustain the resource indefinitely. However, ecotourism is really only viable for relatively small-sized economies because the environment has an upper limit on the number of visitors it can handle safely. For small countries, such as Dominica, a large number of visitors is not required to generate profitable earnings for its citizens. Unfortunately, in larger countries like Mexico, ecotourism would not be able to generate sufficient employment to have a positive impact on such a large population. To do so, they would have to attract far larger numbers of visitors, thus exceeding the environment's carrying capacity, and ultimately leading to its demise. These effects of size can be readily observed when comparing Dominica and Belize. Belize's larger size provides for a greater number of individual micro-enterprises and unifying them under a single image and creating linkages among them, are increasingly difficult tasks. The larger environment of Belize makes monitoring and protecting this resource more challenging as well. Therefore, it can be inferred that the smaller the size and the population of the host country employing

ecotourism, the more viable a development path this form of tourism becomes. Of course, further research is needed to support these preliminary findings.

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