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PEACE THROUGH TOURISM: A SWOT ANALYSIS

by

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Abstract

This paper applies the usually business-oriented instrument of a SWOT analysis in which the author looks at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats influencing the potential of tourism to contribute to a more harmonious and therefore more peaceful world. He distinguishes elements of tourism which are positive from those which are negative in this context, and concludes that, with appropriate management, tourism has greater potential than any other human activity. The use of the SWOT analysis approach is further illustrated in an examination of event tourism.

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PEACE THROUGH TOURISM: A SWOT ANALYSIS[1]

Ian Kelly

Men and women of goodwill seek ways of improving the quality of their own lives by contributing to the well-being of others (Rees, 2003: 21-22).

Introduction

The 'business' to be examined in this analysis is the ability of tourism to contribute to 'a harmonious relationship.'

The quotation above transcends everyday tourism concerns as a goal towards which, in an ideal world, all individuals would aspire. Although it is recognised that the world is less than ideal and likely to remain so, it is submitted here that tourism has some potential to contribute to the well-being of others. For example, Pearce et al (1996) refer to the conclusion which emerged from the First International Assembly of Tourism Policy Experts (Washington, DC, 1993) that there is a need, and hence an implied ability, for tourism:

- to recognise and implement carrying capacity limitations;
- to be pro-actively socially responsible;
- to be resident-responsive;
- to recognise cultural diversity; and
- to counter the growing gap between North and South.

The need for measures to help achieve a more peaceful world was confirmed at the Third Conference of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) (held in Glasgow in October 1999) which was directed to initiating a '21st Century Agenda for Peace through Tourism'. It was suggested at the Conference that the creation of such an Agenda be preceded by a SWOT analysis, a procedure generally carried out before the development of a business plan. It involves a detailed examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the business organisation, and the opportunities and threats in the environment within which it operates. The 'business' to be examined in this analysis is the ability of tourism to contribute to 'a harmonious relationship' (Var et al, 1994, p30) among the peoples of the world.

The Agenda may then be directed to building on the strengths, eliminating the weaknesses, taking advantage of the opportunities and avoiding or converting the threats. While recognising the potential for domestic tourism to improve a country's internal relationships (eg, between urban and rural communities) and even relationships within a community, the focus is largely on international tourism as an activity which brings together people of differing cultures on a scale matched by no other activity.

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[1] This paper is based on a presentation to the Third Global IIPT Conference, 'Building Bridges of Peace, Culture and Prosperity through Sustainable Tourism', Glasgow, 17-21 October 1999.

The SWOT analysis

1. Strengths

> **Scope, depth and influence can be deemed strengths only insofar as they contribute to the goal of a more harmonious world.**

The strengths of tourism in the current context are those attributes which help it bring people together in non-adversarial circumstances (a qualification which calls into question, for example, the impacts of some international sporting events). An examination of international tourism identifies three major areas of strength which may be termed scope, depth and influence.

Scope refers to the extent to which tourism has been adopted by individuals as a leisure activity. It is measured by such indicators as number and spatial extent of holiday trips, length of stay and average expenditure. Growth in international travel has been attributed to such factors as economic prosperity, improved transport technology and infrastructure, increased disposable income and time, airline deregulation, easing of travel restrictions, adoption of tourism policies by governments, and aggressive marketing by tourism industry organisations (Kelly and Nankervis, 1999).

Another aspect of tourism's scope is its pervasiveness or 'universalism' (Williams and Shaw, 1992), reflected in the establishment of tourist facilities in and the opening up to tourist visitation of even the remotest and least hospitable areas of the world such as the Gobi Desert, the Himalayas and Antarctica.

Depth refers to the network of relationships along the value chain involved in an economic activity, and may be seen in the growing global reach of some elements of the tourism industry. Smeral (1998) describes a 'post-Fordist' structure marked by horizontal, vertical and diagonal integration, widespread use of computerised information, network alliances and a flexible, highly skilled labour force. These strategies are most apparent among the large organisations in the air transport, hotel, vehicle hire, cruiseline and tour operation sectors. However, a degree of global reach is also available to SMEs (small to medium enterprises) through the use of computerised information technology. Sigala (2002) draws attention to the opportunities provided by the Internet for enhanced connectivity and interactivity at all levels of tourism business operation.

Influence is, of course, closely related to reach and much has been written about the impacts, positive and negative, of tourism. Curtin (1996) recognises tourism's significance as a 'culture industry' with the power to introduce change to the sociocultural systems of destination communities. Kelly and Nankervis (1998) note that locations where there is the greatest meeting of minds have tended to become core areas of innovation, a situation which has historically favoured routeway junctions and gateway cities. With its increasing focus on visitation to rural and remote areas, tourism activities can contribute to a reduction in this imbalance.

However, for this analysis, it must be noted that scope, depth and influence can be deemed strengths only insofar as they contribute to the goal of a more harmonious world. Unfortunately, they are frequently misused, and do not always work in the desired direction.

2. Weaknesses

**There is reference to the frequency with which
tourism is portrayed as analogous to a disease –
unhealthy and difficult to control.**

Weaknesses relate to attributes of tourism which hinder its ability to achieve the desired outcomes, and may even create hostility rather than harmony. These stem primarily from the nature of host-visitor contacts and the inequalities associated with many tourism developments and activities.

The power of tourism to bring about positive change may be weakened by the image of tourists. Pearce (1988) compares international tourists to a nation of people subject to prejudice (like other nations), and Var et al (1994) note the reinforcement of stereotypical images stemming from encounters with Japanese tourists in Singapore. In fact, Pearce et al (1996) refer to the frequency with which tourism is portrayed as analogous to a disease – unhealthy and difficult to control.

Furthermore, tourists are commonly insulated from contact with host communities (in so-called tourist enclaves), or experience only fleeting and superficial interactions with them, and tourists frequently display behaviour which is undesirable or offensive to the local people. While these conditions may be attributed mainly to so-called mass tourism, this is a firmly established activity whose impacts must be taken into account. Even where contacts are more substantial, there is a likelihood that the focus will lie on the differences, to the exclusion of the similarities between visitors and hosts – a process referred to as 'othering' (Hollinshead, 1998).

Mowforth and Munt (1998) provide a detailed analysis of the impacts which tourism has on the Third World, and emphasise, among other problems, the concentration of infrastructure ownership in the hands of a few industrialised national or transnational corporations. This imbalance permits practices causing resentment such as imposing access restrictions on local communities, commandeering of commons resources and inequitable distribution of benefits. It is argued that these weaknesses are unlikely to be eliminated while tourism operations remain primarily concerned with profitability based on attracting ever-increasing numbers of visitors.

Litvin (1998) (see below) submits that while tourism is a major beneficiary of peace, it is not itself a contributor thereto, and is not sufficiently influential to dissuade governments or revolutionary groups from implementing policies and practices which involve violence and denial or infringement of human rights. He, too, argues that, while tourism business interests are tied to constant growth in numbers of tourists, there is little hope of offering travellers a meaningful host-community contact experience.

Issue in focus: The negative argument*

Litvin (1998) argues that while there is a co-relationship between peace and tourism, the latter is a beneficiary rather than a cause of peace. He submits that arguments supporting

the view that tourism is a contributor to peace are not based on sound research and reflect a degree of wishful thinking among proponents. He notes the narrowness of a definition which regards peace as the absence of war, and extends it to incorporate the absence also of terrorism and random violence.

Litvin raises a number of points for consideration. It is submitted, firstly, that there have been no situations in which warring factions have been induced to forego violence as the result of growth in tourism. In fact, there are numerous examples of violent behaviour despite the damage done to the tourism industry. The second consideration relates to the targetting of tourists by terrorist groups. The presence of tourists and their value to a local economy may in fact encourage aggression, allowing the tourism industry to be held hostage. Thirdly, the regeneration of tourism in the aftermath of violence merely demonstrates its resilience.

It may be that the prospect of tourism income is an additional inducement to seek or maintain peaceful conditions, but these are clearly of equal concern to farmers, factory workers and the general citizenry of a country. There is a need for research which would demonstrate the existence or otherwise of a causal link between increased tourism activity and subsequent improvements or reductions in conflict. Another approach could involve a survey of scholarly and professional opinion on the issue.

Litvin concludes by reminding us of the 'insanity' of many conflicts and emphasises the potential of tourism to add to intercultural understanding and enrichment of the human journey.

* Litvin, Stephen W. (1998), Tourism: The world's peace industry?, *Journal of Travel Research*, 37(1), pp 63-66.

3. Opportunities

> **The reality is that for many the world is opening up as information and transport technology reduce the friction of distance.**

Opportunities to contribute to the peace objective are, or may become present in the wider environment. They include developments which can contribute to an increase in the number of travellers and in the ability of tourism experiences to improve relationships among the world's peoples.

Globalisation, it is claimed, is bringing about 'a shrinking world', but the reality is that for many the world is opening up as information and transport technology reduce the friction of distance. The number of leisure and business travellers continues to increase and, thereby, the frequency of tourism-generated intercultural contacts. It is important to identify elements of the globalisation process which managers of tourism can use in contributing to a genuinely global world characterised by both diversity and harmony.

A number of governments have recognised that tourism, which brings economic benefits, requires peaceful circumstances in which to operate effectively. At other levels, tourism initiatives are called upon to break down political and ideological barriers in such places as the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula, Cyprus and Ireland. Calls for a tourist

boycott of Burma reflect a belief that the country's administration is seeking international acceptance through the encouragement of tourism (Philp and Mercer, 1999). It is possible that the presence of large numbers of tourists in a country will discourage abuses of civil rights.

It is also claimed that as travel becomes a more popular leisure activity, travellers become more confident and sophisticated (Pearce, 1988; Ross, 1994), and are likely to seek more meaningful travel experiences, involving deeper and more extended interaction with host communities. In conjunction with this is the widespread promotion of sustainability as an objective in all areas of human activity, and a corresponding increase in adoption of the ecotourism ethic, with its emphases on conservation, education and host community wellbeing.

Other trends which may offer opportunities include the expansion of tourism education in colleges and universities, providing a channel for the encouragement of enlightened attitudes and appropriate skills in travellers and tourism managers. Developments in virtual reality may assist in the educational process and be adopted into site protection strategies.

4. Threats

In many areas tourists demand a hedonistic, self-indulgent lifestyle which contrasts sharply with the community conditions in which these expectations are met.

Threats, too, lie in the external environment, present and future. They include developments which are likely to increase hostility among different social groups or contribute to a decline in tourism activity.

Brown (1998) offers a firm negative in answer to the question: Is tourism able to bring about or facilitate peace? She cites apparently insoluble problems in the Middle East, the use of tourists as targets or hostages for terrorist groups, the disintegration of countries such as Yugoslavia, the imposition of politics in mega-events such as the Olympic Games, and the continuing use of war as a solution to problems despite improved living standards. She does, however, recognise the potential for tourism to change the attitudes of individuals.

There is even a danger that tourism will come to be regarded as a beneficiary of war and violence. Seaton (1999), in referring to thanatourism (travel to a location for actual or symbolic encounters with death), reminds us of the crowds who flocked to gladiatorial contests in ancient Rome, who visit the sites of massacres and crimes, and enjoy re-enactments of battles. Smith (1998) also notes the value to tourism of sites commemorating violent historical events.

Even where peaceful conditions prevail, it is apparent that a major threat to tourism as an instrument of peace is the volume and nature of the demand it generates (Muller, 1997), and this is not confined to numbers of visitors. As noted (Mowforth and Munt, 1998), in many areas tourists demand a hedonistic, self-indulgent lifestyle which contrasts sharply with the community conditions in which these expectations are met.

Furthermore, reliance on education and the sustainability ethic to assist in the development of more appropriate forms of tourism may be misplaced. Stabler (1997) claims that sustainability management tends to focus on viability and resource protection rather than community welfare, and suggests that it may be an industrialised nation concept foisted on developing countries. Wheeler (1997b) reminds us that the more educated people are the more they travel; that the numbers involved are too large for any sensitisation program to have effect; that host communities desperate for economic benefits have little bargaining power and will not impose environmental and growth controls; that there will continue to be conflict between micro- and macro-level planning; and that the problems will worsen as the scope of tourism expands. It may be true that, as Wheeler says in another paper (1997a:40), 'Simple commonsense surely screams that sustainability is a completely futile exercise'.

Case Study: The impacts of instability

Although the potential for tourism to contribute to peace is still questioned, there appears to be general recognition that tourism suffers in times of conflict and thrives in peaceful conditions. An illustrative example is the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, examined by Ioannides and Apostolopoulos (1999).*

Tourist visitation dates largely from 1960 when the island gained independence from Britain following the 1955-59 insurrection. It was incorporated into 5-year plans as a means of boosting foreign exchange earnings and diversifying the economy. There was heavy reliance on the British market, with major developments at Famagusta and Kyrenia.

Periodic interruptions to tourism growth occurred because of conflict between inhabitants of Greek and Turkish ethnicity and a terrorist campaign mounted by a movement seeking union with Greece in the early 1970s. In 1974 Turkish forces occupied the northern third of the island and in 1983 established the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), a political entity recognised only by Turkey. The partition is marked by the 'Green Line', manned by United Nations personnel.

Tourism in the south virtually ceased but revival was apparent by 1976. New international airports were developed at Larnaca and Paphos and the demand for visitor beds contributed to a construction boom throughout the 1980s. By the mid-'90s tourism was providing more than 40 percent of export earnings. Previously undeveloped coastal areas became thriving tourist resorts.

The authors note that there have been problems relating to uncontrolled ribbon development, destruction of native flora and fauna, diversion of scarce water supplies, congestion and pollution, and that these have contributed to some hostility against tourists. They fear that stagnation and decline may be imminent unless rejuvenation is undertaken.

Development in the north has been retarded by lack of government support, economic dependence on Turkey, avoidance by tour operators wishing to remain on good terms with Greece, and restrictions imposed on entry from other countries and the Republic of Cyprus. However, as the north is at the involvement stage of development, it

has not yet experienced the negative impacts of the south and can still offer an unspoiled environment.

It is clear that tourism would benefit from presentation of the island as a single destination, but such a cooperative relationship between north and south must await lessening of the intense hostility between them and a solution to the political problems. Efforts to narrow the gap have involved exchange visits by concert parties, school groups and visiting journalists, but these have had little effect. The authors believe that tourism interests on both sides of the Green Line should exert pressure on their respective governments to negotiate at least a relaxation of restrictions with respect to tourists.

* Ioannides, Dimitri and Apostolopoulis, Yiorgos (1999), Political Instability, War and Tourism in Cyprus: Effects, Management, and Prospects for Recovery, *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(1), pp 51-55.

Discussion

> **At the very least, there are major difficulties to be overcome if the peace objective is to be achieved.**

Questions which emerge from the SWOT analysis include the following:
- Will greater numbers of tourists provide a larger and more widespread resource for terrorists seeking international exposure for their causes?
- Will peaceful conditions be devalued by the recognition that tourism benefits in the aftermath of war?
- Will leisure travellers accept the less luxurious conditions and operators the reduced immediate returns likely to result from more modest demands?
- Will tourism be resisted as another of the globalisation processes leading to a world in which standardisation and homogenisation prevail or will it contribute to the retention of regional distinctiveness?
- Will the ability of tourism to make a positive contribution be encouraged by environmentalism or will it be restricted by preservationist or extreme environmentalist pressures?
- Will proponents of peace through tourism be dismissed as idealists for whom there is no place in the real world?

This preliminary SWOT analysis indicates that, at the very least, there are major difficulties to be overcome if the peace objective is to be achieved. However, reports to IIPT Conferences communicate some grounds for optimism. There are tourism operations devoted to the provision of labour and funding for schools, clinics and solar-power generators in remote areas of Nepal; North American First Nation tourism developments designed to inform the non-native population and assist with the national reconciliation process; an international network of Peace Museums (as a counter to the more common commemorations of war); cooperative government-sponsored programs in Central America and southeast Asia; and a growing market for study tours (such as those

offered by Oxfam/Community Aid Abroad) involving meaningful contact with host communities, often in remote locations. These are, of course, not representative of mainstream tourism, but they serve as examples of ways in which tourism can contribute to a better world.

There is also some encouragement in other areas of investigation. For example, a summary of findings relating to racial integration in the United States (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978) noted that, in initial interactions between groups of differing race, existing attitudes (positive *and* negative) are intensified. However, over time and with increasing familiarity, attitudes tend to become generally more favourable, especially if the groups share similar goals and beliefs on many issues. These findings may be seen to confirm the view that the superficial contacts offered in most host-visitor interactions can be counterproductive, but that more substantial exchanges may be more effective in the effort to promote harmonious relationships.

There is also some relevance in factors identified as facilitating political integration (Kelly, 1987). Despite abundant evidence that it does not preclude hostilities, spatial proximity (bringing people together) is seen as a contributor to mutual understanding. The likelihood of this is enhanced if there is also social homogeneity (common culture elements), high levels of interaction, mutual knowledge and shared functional interests. Efforts should be directed to providing host-visitor exchanges which emphasise the universality of the problems faced by all societies, encourage understanding of the different ways in which these problems are addressed, and facilitate appreciation of the alternative solutions thereby offered.

It is clear that some elements of the tourism industry may have greater potential than others to make the desired contribution. Writings on tourism and peace have tended to focus on the interaction between visitors and host communities, with representatives of the tourism industry (tour operators, guides and travel writers) as mediators, positive and negative, in the experience. However, Tomljenovic and Faulkner (2001, p 31), in their review of tourism as a contributor to world peace (and analysis of two empirical research projects), conclude that 'while tourism has the potential to promote intercultural understanding and tolerance, it has an equally strong potential to have the opposite effect (and that) *one of the core conditions for ensuring positive outcomes is the quality of services provided at the destination'* (emphasis added).

Thus, while it may be assumed that the hospitality sector is included in the tourism-centred commentaries which have been published to date, it appears that there is a need for an examination of the potential for hospitality to play a key role in facilitating the type of experience which generates goodwill between travellers and host communities. An additional channel for influence by those involved in hospitality services follows from their increasing reliance on partnerships with transport and tour operators for the realisation of mutual benefits.

In such an analysis it may be appropriate to define 'hospitality' in the broadest sense, not only as accommodation and catering, but as a destination attribute ideally present in all host-guest interaction settings; for example, visitor information centres, retail outlets, taxi hire and galleries.

It is clear that many tourists are not interested in learning about the culture of their hosts, but there are also many who take pleasure in demonstrating their knowledge of how to behave in alien environments. Reisinger (1997) outlines the difficulties commonly

encountered in intercultural contacts and suggests that such problems may be alleviated by educational programs for those involved in international tourism; an emphasis on the service attributes of potential hosts; arrangements for licensing and certification; and greater use of intermediaries.

Conclusion

It may be inappropriate to anticipate the findings of a more complete SWOT analysis, and readers are invited to identify shortcomings to be corrected, propose additional items for inclusion, and suggest imaginative solutions to the problems raised.
   However, it is submitted that the following conclusions will be widely accepted:
- That there are few, if any, alternatives to match tourism as a generator of intercultural contact.
- That peace-related objectives will only be achieved by purposeful management of tourism directed to enhancing intercultural relations..
- That responsibilities for purposeful management lie at all levels, from individual traveller to national government.

In this author's opinion, the greatest threat identified in the SWOT analysis is the view that the goal of a 21st Century Peace Agenda is unachievable and therefore not worth pursuing. It is submitted here that progress towards a peace objective will be partial, painfully incremental and marked by frequent setbacks and failures, but that any progress, no matter how slight, is preferable to a fatalistic acceptance of the *status quo*.

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Action Agenda: Peace through events

In discussions of the role tourism might play, the potential of events to contribute to the peace objective has not received much attention. The mission statements associated with some events imply peace-related goals, but these usually have a specific focus, for example on women's rights or revolutionary literature. In Australia, events such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge Walk in 2001 have been directed to encouraging the process of reconciliation with the indigenous community, but these have little or no tourism significance. There are numerous references to social and cultural impacts in journal articles and textbooks on events (eg, Walsh-Heron and Stevens, 1990; Getz, 1991; McDonnell et al, 1999; Van Der Wagen, 2001) but they tend to focus primarily on economic advantage, management and marketing. A conference held in Sydney, Australia in July 2000 ('Events Beyond 2000: Setting the Agenda') included papers on similar issues, with a few touching on cultural and environmental impacts, education and training, and measuring customer satisfaction. None of the listed texts or conference papers makes specific mention of peace as an event objective.
   However, the above authors note that festivals and events have been elements of community tradition for a long time, are growing in number and variety, and are increasingly linked with tourism. It is, therefore, appropriate to examine the extent to which events might contribute to the peace objective, defined for the present purpose as a

state of harmonious relationship among the people of the world. Although events attracting international visitors are deemed of major importance, there is recognition of the role played by local events in contributing to harmonious relationships among people of differing backgrounds within a country.

It should be noted that, in the following analysis, the term 'event' is used for visitor attractions which are staged infrequently and are of short duration. According to Getz (1991) events are distinguished by openness to the public, a central theme, infrequent occurrence, and predetermined opening and closing dates. Events are commonly based on sporting activities (racing, tournaments and carnivals), festivals (commemorative, entertainment, cultural and special theme), business and community interests (conventions, exhibitions and agricultural shows) and political affairs (state and government special occasions).

1. In an application of the SWOT analysis approach, the strengths of events are those attributes which bring people together in circumstances conducive to goodwill and improved understanding among them. Mega-events such as the Olympic Games attract many thousands of visitors and command the attention of billions through media broadcasts and reports. Contact between host community and visitors is not confined to those attending an event, but usually extends throughout the destination area as visitors make use of accommodation and other facilities, and indulge in sightseeing and shopping.

Unlike mainstream tourist attractions, some events have the advantage of being 'footloose', in the sense that they need not be tied to a particular location. Dance, musical and theatre groups are taken on tour, and provide audiences around the world with a taste of a culture different from their own. There are also those, such as the Edinburgh Festival (Scotland), which demonstrate how a cohesive program can be developed in one location by involving participants from a range of countries.

Events can also be freed from temporal restraints, and are widely used to reduce fluctuations in visitation levels or encourage visitation by market segments such as retirees who are not bound by work commitments. The goodwill of the general public in affluent societies is sometimes called upon in the form of events mounted to raise funds for specific causes such as disaster relief and refugee support.

In recent times, the attractive power of events has been greatly enhanced by the growth of an 'events industry' (McDonnell et al, 1999) comprising individuals and organizations devoted to the development of facilities (often with government funding) and the promotion of destinations as sites for events. Professionalism in the industry is encouraged by the provision of courses in educational institutions and representation and supervision by industry associations.

However, the contributory ability of events cannot be measured merely by the numbers of visitors or the expertise with which they are organized. Are there event attributes which help people from different social and cultural backgrounds to understand and empathize with each other?

It is widely submitted that community pride and internal relationships may be strengthened through involvement in mounting an event, and visitors may acquire greater understanding and appreciation of the community traditions and way of life. Small-scale events such as village festivals draw visitors from surrounding districts and may help give visitors from urban areas a more accurate perception of rural life. This aspect of

events may best be seen in local wine and food festivals, usually heavily dependent on voluntary inputs, and providing a means by which communities can confirm and communicate pride in their local products.

An illustrative example at the local level is South Australia's Barossa Vintage Festival, Australia's oldest wine festival. Success is attributed to the partnership of winegrowers, tourism interests and the general community, and to the quality of the experience offered to visitors (Salter, 1998).

Another strength of some events is the perception of authenticity attached to them. There are many events – such as those involving local foods, wines and craftwork - at which a visitor can see or even participate in a genuine manifestation of the local community way of life. Although they are obviously staged, historical re-enactments, if faithfully rendered, can contribute to a visitor's understanding of a community's formative influences.

In short, the strengths of events in the current context lie in their ability to bring large numbers of people together in circumstances where they can share experiences with and learn to look at the world through the eyes of others.

2. Weaknesses relate to those attributes of events which hinder the achievement of the desired outcomes and may even contribute to hostility and division among people. For example, there has been opposition to the Formula 1 Grand Prix events from those who condemn them as noisy, wasteful, polluting and responsible for the 'hoon' effect among young drivers, and from residents who are disadvantaged by noise and the interruption to normal traffic movement during the race period. In Melbourne the race organisers have been faced with strident protests from residents seeking to protect the park area in which the event is held.

These and other events may be seen to divide rather than unite a community, and are tolerated only because of their economic input. Indeed, it may be that events dedicated to attracting large numbers of visitors and generating substantial revenues – that is, those most valued by governments and the events industry - are least likely to contribute to harmony within and among communities. Even mega-events such as the Olympic Games, encourage individual ethnocentrism and competition among nations rather than a world view and a spirit of cooperation. Furthermore, it is likely that some potential visitors interested in acquiring a better understanding of the host community will be discouraged by the crowding and increased costs associated with such events (de Souto, 1993).

However, events of a more positive nature are limited in their impact for a number of reasons. Although attendance at an event may provide visitors with intercultural contacts, the experience is fleeting and still relatively superficial. In addition, certain events, particularly festivals, are valued because they emphasize the differences, rather than the commonality, between hosts and visitors. Events may also share with mainstream tourism a condition of inequality between host and visitor – a condition not conducive to the kind of relationship desired.

It appears, then, that while events may be a major factor in the success of a destination's tourism industry, there are many which contribute only economic advantage, and which may even create division and reinforce pre-existing prejudices.

3. Opportunities are elements of the wider environment which may serve to enhance the strengths of events as contributors to harmony. The Snowy Mountains, a regional tourism area in New South Wales, is a well-known destination for winter sports. However, the local tourism authority has been seeking to promote the area to spring, summer and autumn visitors on the basis of its varied and scenic natural environment. An association spokesperson (Last, 2001) reported on plans to mount a hallmark event – the Snowy Mountains Muster - based on the theme of the Banjo Paterson poem, 'The Man From Snowy River' and taking advantage of the popular television series of the same name. The goal was to create a feeling of regional cohesion and ownership among the tourism operators and the wider community, and establish the region as an Australian 'icon'.

The report demonstrated how event developers may draw inspiration and support from apparently unconnected occurrences in other fields. Such opportunities are likely to increase with globalization. In addition, events can provide a means by which the distinctiveness of a region can be protected and displayed in a world moving towards standardization and homogenization, but in which travellers are seeking more meaningful experiences. The development of educational courses in event management offers opportunities for the encouragement of enlightened attitudes among event managers.

It is submitted, therefore, that there are trends in the wider environment which favour the expansion and diversification of tourism event offerings and the inclusion of more events dedicated to the development in individuals of positive attitudes towards people from other societies and cultures.

4. Threats, too, can be found in the external environment. In early 2002, admission prices to major golf and tennis events in Australia and New Zealand were increased to cover the costs of additional security necessitated by fears of terrorist activity against the venues or key participants. Similar precautions were being taken in a number of other countries.

However, it must also be recognised that event tourism is already a beneficiary of war and violence, with many events commemorating battles and other instances of 'man's inhumanity to man'. Some, such as the Orange Walks in Northern Ireland (celebrating a Protestant victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690), are designed to keep alive hostilities of the distant past.

As with other forms of tourism, there may be problems relating to levels of demand created by numbers of visitors and expectations contrasting with the host community conditions. To repeat the question asked previously, can event tourists be persuaded to accept the less luxurious conditions and operators the reduced immediate returns likely to result from more modest demands?

This brief analysis confirms the view that the superficial contacts offered in most host-visitor interactions can be counterproductive, but that events involving more substantial exchanges are likely to be more effective in the effort to promote harmonious relationships. Efforts, therefore, should be directed to providing host-visitor exchanges which emphasize the universality of the problems faced by all societies, encourage understanding of the different ways in which these problems are addressed, and facilitate appreciation of the alternative solutions thereby offered.

It is submitted here that large-scale events are least likely to provide the required type of contact, and that there is a need to recognize the value of small, everyday events

in informing visitors about the essential character of a community (Kelly and Dixon, 1991). Opportunities to mingle with parents and children at Little Athletics, to discuss gardening with fellow enthusiasts at a local garden festival, to see a school concert, to judge a children's art competition, or to attend a church service could constitute particularly memorable experiences, valued all the more because of their non-touristic nature.

It is further submitted that positive impacts are more likely to occur if those involved, both hosts and guests, are open-minded, free from prejudice and inclined towards goodwill (Kelly, 1998). As noted above, this is recognized by schoolteachers in Cyprus who have sought to counter the suspicion and hostility prevalent among the adult populations by arranging events involving the exchange of school concert parties across the line which has divided the island since 1974. Similar approaches have been tried in the difficult environments of Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine.

It is recognized that small-scale events of the type proposed are unlikely to receive support from the 'events industry' because of their non-commercial orientation. However, this does not necessarily preclude sponsorship support from organizations pursuing or likely to benefit from association with the peace objective. In addition, the Internet now provides a means whereby people can identify others with whom they share a common interest, exchange information, and lay the groundwork for subsequent face-to-face contact (Getz, 2000), thereby reducing the need for expensive promotion campaigns.

Recommendations stemming from this discussion are:
1. that events be encouraged as major contributors to the ability of tourism to bring people together;
2. that tourism educators work in conjunction with peace and conflict resolution educators to identify the types of events likely to encourage appropriate attitude change, conduct research on how the contribution of events to the peace objective might be optimized and to devise measures for evaluation of their effectiveness;
3. that educational and training courses in event management be designed to recognize peace objectives along with commercial, management, political and environmental objectives;
4. that support be provided for events, no matter how small, which encourage participants to share knowledge and skills, work together or cooperate in problem-solving; and
5. that efforts be directed to ensuring that event hosts and guests are provided with information about each other, and/or that contacts are carefully mediated to avoid conflict.

As Getz (2000, p13) has noted,

> *Many governmental agencies and non-profit organizations produce events or assist the events sector in order to help generate community pride and cohesion, foster the arts, contribute to healthy people, or conserve the natural environment. … Many other events are held to raise money for charities and causes of all kinds.*

There appears to be no reason why peace could not be one of the causes to which at least some events are dedicated.

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