

Ecotourism as a Western Construct

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Most of the burgeoning literature on ecotourism is essentially Western-centric, insofar as it accepts as given an approach that is deeply embedded in Western cultural, economic and political processes. Despite the plethora of definitions as to what actually constitutes ecotourism, the common denominator is that it is nature-based. However, in the same way as McNaghten and Urry (1999:95) suggest that 'there is no single 'nature', only natures', it therefore follows that 'nature tourism' will be variously constructed by different societies and that therefore there will be multiple 'nature tourisms'. This presentation will aim to highlight several issues that have arisen as a result of the internationalization of ecotourism, and its apparent universalisation as a concept, without due consideration of the different ways in which nature and, in turn, nature tourism and hence ecotourism, are interpreted in varying contexts.