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Responsible Cruise Tourism: Issues of Cruise Tourism and Sustainability

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Cruise tourism is the fastest growing segment of leisure tourism. With its growth has come concern about the impact of cruise tourism on coastal and marine environments, local economies, and on the sociocultural nature of port communities. These three areas are key elements in analyses focused on responsible tourism, and form a critical base from which to consider strategies to ensure the sustainable development of cruise tourism. The goal of this article is to illustrate how a responsible tourism lens measures the impact of cruise tourism and, with its focus on the perceptions of host communities, more effectively addresses grassroots concerns. Case examples are used to identify and describe challenges faced by governments, communities, and the cruise industry. Analysis of these issues and challenges gives direction for how cruise tourism can grow in ways that are both sustainable and responsible.

Keywords: responsible tourism, cruise tourism, environmental impacts, sociocultural impacts, economics of cruise tourism

Cruise tourism is the fastest growing segment of leisure tourism, increasing 7.2% annually since 1990, doubling every decade (Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA], 2010). While typically greatest in North America, growth is in recent years increasingly at a quicker pace elsewhere in the world. Between 2006 and 2009 passenger numbers in North America were virtually unchanged, compared to a 68% increase (an average 17% annually) outside North America (CLIA, 2010). Growth 'downunder' has been even greater. Carnival Australia reports a 26% passenger increase between 2008/09 and 2009/10 (see Carnival Australia, n.d.) a level of growth that will continue with the addition of ships to the company's fleet. New Zealand reports a 513% increase between 1996/97 and 2009/10; an average 37% per year (Tourism New Zealand, 2010).

This growth is in part a result of redeployment of older ships from North America to other parts of the world, including Europe, Asia, and Australia (see Davies, 2009). The growth also reflects construction of ever-larger ships. Carnival Cruise Lines' and Royal Caribbean's first ships carried 1,024 and 724 respectively. Their newest ships carry 4,000 and 6,000 passengers, respectively (Klein, 2005a).

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As the size of ships has grown, and the number of ships has increased, new ports have been established and existing ports have found ever-growing numbers of day-visitors. The growth for some has been phenomenal. Belize saw a 2,000% increase in cruise passenger arrivals between 1999 and 2009 (an increase of 1,591% in just four years between 1999 and 2003; Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2010; Klein 2005a). Over the same period, the Bahamas, Saint Maarten, and Antigua saw increases of between 110% and 120% (Bahamas logging more than 3.25 million passengers annually). It is not only the Caribbean. Cruise passenger arrivals in Victoria, British Columbia, and Seattle increased more than 1,000% between 1999 and 2009 (Klein, 2005b; Port of Seattle, 2010; Port of Victoria, 2009) while arrivals in neighboring Vancouver decreased 5% over the same time period (Klein, 2005b; Port of Vancouver, 2009).

Cruise tourism's growth has brought with it concern about environmental impacts, including the footprint left ashore by cruise tourists — the number of cruise passengers has grown more than 30 fold between 1970 and 2011, which poses a much greater environmental threat. As well, there are debates about the economics of cruise tourism — the value of cruise passenger spending and costs associated with infrastructure required to host ships, including cruise terminals that can cost $100 million or more — and about the impact of cruise tourism on local culture and society. These three areas of concern — the environment, economic benefits, and maintaining cultural integrity — are embedded in the concept of 'sustainable tourism.'

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However, the question must be asked as to sustainable for whom. Corporations, including cruise lines, talk about 'best practices' as an example of sustainable practices; or they equate meeting or exceeding international regulations with sustainability (Seatrade Insider, 2010a). Directly impacted local communities and stakeholders are not normally included in the determination of sustainability. One way to put communities and stakeholders into the equation is to think in terms of responsible tourism. This article looks at select concerns about cruise tourism through a responsible tourism lens. The purpose is to demonstrate how this lens analyses the impact of cruise tourism. Data and insights incorporated in the article are generated from a range of sources, including dialogue with cruise industry executives and suppliers to the cruise industry; interactions with key actors and citizens groups in ports frequented by cruise ships; cruise industry, government, and nongovernmental organisation (NGO) publications, studies, and reports; mainstream media reports; and the author's involvement as an expert witness in cases involving the cruise industry and in giving lectures around the world sponsored by universities, grassroots community groups, and NGOs.

Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism emerges from the movement for sustainable tourism. Sustainability was defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). Five years later, the Earth Summit's Agenda 21 offered a blueprint for sustainable development focusing on environmental issues and equitable distribution of economic benefits derived from development and tourism (United Nations Environmental Programme [UNEP], 2002). According to UNEP on Tourism (cited in the Responsible Travel Handbook, 2006):

> Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. (pp. 12–13)

Ten years after Earth Summit's Agenda 21, in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development was convened. A preliminary report jointly prepared by four industry bodies (including the International Council of Cruise Lines) gave direction for the summit. The report reflected industry's interests and concerns, focusing more on best practices, certification programs, and the economic benefits of tourism than on the inherent challenges to achieving sustainability. The primary focus when it came to cruise tourism was waste management practices and procedures (see UNEP, 2002). These were addressed solely from an industry perspective.

Immediately preceding the World Summit on Sustainable Development was the first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (RTD). The conference shared the same concerns as sustainable tourism (i.e., a focus on environmental, economic, and sociocultural impacts), but was grounded in ethics and human rights — companies are expected to do what is morally and ethically 'right' (McLaren, 2006) from the perspective of consumers and communities. It is not a matter of simply reducing negative impacts, but of mediating and/or ameliorating those that persist. RTD concluded with the *Capetown Declaration*. It defined responsible tourism as:

- minimising negative economic, environmental, and social impacts
- generating greater economic benefits for local people and enhancing the wellbeing of host communities, improving working conditions and access to the industry
- involving local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- making positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity
- providing more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- providing access for physically challenged people
- maintaining cultural sensitivity, engendering respect between tourists and hosts, and building local pride and confidence (see Responsible Tourism in Destinations, 2002).

Responsible Cruise Tourism

Responsible tourism has three broad areas of concern: (a) tourism's impact on the environment, (b) the equitable distribution of economic benefits to all segments of a tourist destination, and (c) minimising negative sociocultural impacts. These three areas shape the following discussion, with a view toward demonstrating how principles of responsible tourism may be applied to cruise tourism.

As already indicated, the determination of what constitutes 'responsible' is vested with stakeholders involved in the development of tourism products and in those impacted by that development. Thus, when considering environmental responsibility, it may not be whether a company uses 'best practices' or follows international regulations, but instead the environmental impact on people of those practices. In the case of wastewater treatment for example, the issue is not whether cruise ships have installed advanced wastewater treatment systems (AWTS), but whether the effluent of these systems has deleterious effects. Similarly, when considering economic benefits of cruise tourism the focus may not be on whether a port community realises income but rather the degree to which economic benefits are distributed equitably between the cruise line and port and among the stakeholders and segments of society in the port.

Environmental Issues

A cruise ship produces a number of wastestreams. Some, such as oily bilge water, ballast water, and air emissions

from fuel are common to most ocean-going vessels. Other wastestreams are specific to cruise ships, such as the volume of human waste and grey water, solid waste, and incinerator emissions and ash (Copeland, 2009; US Environmental Protection Agency [US EPA], 2009). Three wastestreams will be considered here for illustration: wastewater treatment, air emissions from engines, and solid waste.

Wastewater Treatment

Many notable technological advances have been applied to cruise ships in recent years (*Seatrade Insider*, 2010a), including systems for treating the roughly seven gallons of sewage and 90 gallons of greywater per person per day. These new systems, however, can produce as much as 28,000 gallons of sewage sludge per week (National Marine Sanctuaries, 2008, p. 43). While land-based tourism also produces greywater and sewage, treatment systems on board cruise ships are often less effective given the limited space available for the full suite of treatment systems commonly found on land.

Greywater (water from sinks, showers, galleys, etc.) has typically been discharged overboard untreated, which by international regulation is legal. Human waste typically has been treated by a Type 2 Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). A slow shift to AWTS began in the early 2000s after testing in Alaska demonstrated that MSDs failed to meet operational specifications: 79 of 80 samples from cruise ships were seriously out of compliance and posed an environmental risk (see Klein, 2002).

These new systems (AWTS) were initially installed on ships deployed to Alaska. But they still have problems. Sixty per cent of ships permitted to discharge in Alaska state waters were cited for violating Alaska Water Quality Standards in 2008, logging 45 violations; 72% were cited in 2009 with a total of 66 violations (see Klein, 2009, p. 3–4). The largest number of violations was for excessive levels of ammonia, but there were also violations for copper, zinc, biological oxygen demand, fecal coliform, pH, chlorine, nickel, and total suspended solids (TSS). In view of the poor results, the cruise industry successfully pressured the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to reduce the standards for wastewater (Golden, 2009; Marquis, 2010); citizen groups in the state challenged the reduced standards in court (Bluemink, 2010). They argue that discharges from AWTS have deleterious impact on fisheries and on mammals depending on sealife for their survival, and disagree with the cruise industry's claim that 'dilution is the solution' (i.e., the oceans are so vast that a bit of pollution will have little impact).

Alaska is unique — it is the only jurisdiction where onboard observers (Ocean Rangers) are placed on cruise ships permitted to discharge in state waters. Observers monitor waste treatment systems and regularly sample effluent (Klein, 2009, pp. 23–24). While these systems are likely to be installed on ships sent to Alaska, they are not necessarily on ships deployed elsewhere. There is variation by company. For example, Norwegian Cruise Line had AWTS on their entire fleet by 2008, whereas only one of Carnival Cruise Lines' 22 ships was equipped with this technology (Brannigan, 2008). The other major player, Royal Caribbean International, despite an assurance in May 2004 that it would have AWTS on all of its ships by 2008 (Klein 2005a, pp. 147–148), still had 11 ships (almost half its fleet) without AWTS at the start of 2010 (RCI, 2010).

Despite AWTS not being installed on many of the world's cruise ships, the industry often says: 'Cruise Lines International Association members have a policy to treat all blackwater (sewage) prior to discharge anywhere in the world. Before discharge in U.S. waters, it is treated by an Advanced Wastewater Purification System, which produces an effluent cleaner than what is discharged from most Municipalities' (Hansen, 2010). While it can be argued that AWTS are an example of responsible practices, it does not appear responsible to claim these systems are more broadly used than they are. There is also no mention of what is done with greywater, of which there is a much greater volume, which is still frequently discharged untreated, and which some AWTS cannot treat.

Perhaps more troubling is that cruise ships have different practices based on the jurisdiction. Rather than adopt a common policy of responsibility applied across locations, practices are based on what regulations permit. For example, Celebrity Cruises' Mercury in 2005 dumped a half million gallons of sewage and untreated gray water into Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca 10 times over nine days in September and October (American Bar Association, 2007; McClure, 2006). The company initially denied the claim but it acquiesced when shipboard documents indicated otherwise. It then appealed to state officials for relief from the $100,000 penalty because three of the violations occurred on the Canadian side of the international boundary and Washington did not have jurisdiction — the cruise corporation argued the discharges, while a violation of its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Washington, were not illegal in Canada (McClure, 2006). The citizen backlash in Canada was predictable with some labelling British Columbia as the industry's toilet bowl. The Haida Nation, on the northern end of the Queen Charlotte Islands, convened Gaaysiigang — An Ocean Forum for Haida Gwaii, a conference and meeting with experts in January 2009 to address this issue specifically, exploring strategies to protect its territorial land and waters. Other First Nations have subsequently followed suit.

Practicing responsible cruise tourism would suggest having consistent practices, at the highest level of responsibility, across jurisdictions rather than variable practices based on what is permitted by one jurisdiction versus another. The issue is not what one can get away with, but what is responsible behaviour for the environment.

Air Emissions From Fuel

Air emissions from ship engines are an obvious source of pollution, resulting in an estimated 60,000 deaths worldwide each year, and estimated to grow by 40% by 2012 due to increases in global shipping traffic (Corbett et al., 2007). According to the US EPA, ocean-going ships that

used Category 3 marine engines and operated in the US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in 2007 emitted 870,000 tons of nitrogen oxide, a key contributor to smog (US EPA, 2007). Cruise ships comprise 12% of the world's commercial ships (Sutton, 2010), however, they pose a unique problem as they run auxiliary engines while in port to drive their onboard power plant. Some ports have introduced 'cold ironing' (a requirement that ships plug into the power grid for electricity while in port); however, the practice is still quite limited (see Klein, 2008, 2009).

Conventionally a cruise ship's daily emissions are likened to the impact of 12,000 automobiles (Oceana, 2003, p. 1). A study published in 2007 raises an even greater alarm. It found that bunker fuel on average has almost 2,000 times the sulfur content of highway diesel fuel used by buses, trucks, and cars and that one ship can make as much smog-producing pollution as 350,000 cars (Waymer, 2007). This varies widely depending on the fuel being burned.

Current international standards set maximum sulfur content for ocean going vessel fuel at 4.5%, making it easy for cruise lines to say they meet or exceed international regulations since bunker fuel averages 3% sulfur content (low sulfur fuels such as on-road diesel have sulfur content as low as 0.0015%). Limits will reduce to 3.5% in 2012 and 0.5% in 2020 (Annex VI, 2008). To date, cruise lines have been resistant to using fuels below 2.5% sulfur because of higher cost, except where cleaner fuels are required. Ships transiting the Inside Passage of Alaska and British Columbia, for example, typically use fuel between 1.5 and 1.8% sulfur content (Montgomery, 2007).

Governments have recently taken action to curtail air pollution from ships. The European Community issued Directive 2005/33/EC requiring all ships while in European ports to use fuel with sulfur content of 0.1% or less effective January 1, 2010. Six months later, provisions in Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) regarding Sulfur Dioxide Emissions Control Areas (Baltic Sea, North Sea, and English Channel) placed a limit of 1.0% sulfur content; the limit reduces to 0.1% in 2015. Following developments in Europe, the US and Canada partnered to establish the North America Emission Control Area (extending 200 miles from the coast), which was ratified by the International Maritime Organization on March 26, 2010 (Lagan, 2010). It limits sulfur content in fuel to 1.0% effective 2012 and 0.1% by 2015.

The cruise industry argued against the emission control areas (ECA) in Europe (Seatrade Insider, 2010b). It also voiced concern about increased fuel costs associated with the North American ECA (Canadian Press, 2010) and asked that consideration be given to '… alternative means, such as scrubbers, that ships could use to meet emissions goals, and to take a piecemeal, rather than blanket approach. 'The ECA area should be tuned to prioritise those areas where urgency exists and the greatest health and environmental benefits can be achieved' (Stueck, 2010, p. A4). Ironically, while saying they support the health and environmental goals behind the creation of the ECA, cruise industry associations questioned the research on which the regime is based and warned it could hurt the Canadian and North American cruise sector insofar as ships relocating elsewhere (Power, 2010; Stueck, 2010).

Despite the increased cost, estimated to be between US$7 and $15 per day per passenger (Seatrade Insider, 2009), principles of responsible tourism suggest cruise operators would embrace internationally sanctioned and locally legislated regulations in order to enthusiastically demonstrate their commitment to the environment. After all, using cleaner fuel compliments what has already been achieved through greater fuel efficiency, more efficient itinerary planning (including travel at slower speeds), and energy-saving practices on board (see, e.g., Costa Cruises, 2009; Royal Caribbean Cruises [RCCL], 2010). The public relations value of behaving consistent with their environmental image would appear to be a better payoff than a stance that contradicts claims of environmental concern and responsibility. The industry could demonstrate its moral high ground, consistent with underlying principles of responsible tourism.

Solid Waste

A cruise ship produces a large volume of nonhazardous solid waste, including huge volumes of plastic, paper, wood, cardboard, food waste, cans, glass, and the variety of other wastes disposed of by passengers. It was estimated in the 1990s that each passenger accounted for 3.5 kilograms of solid waste per day (Herz and Davis, 2002:11). With better attention to waste reduction this volume in recent years has been cut nearly in half. But the amount is still significant, more than eight tons in a week from a moderate sized cruise ship. Twenty-four per cent of the solid waste produced by vessels worldwide comes from cruise ships (Copeland, 2008). While land-based tourism also produces solid waste, cruise ships pose a unique problem given the amount of waste discharged at sea and, some would argue, the greater volume of waste per guest.

Glass and aluminum are increasingly held on board and landed ashore for recycling, but only when the itinerary includes a port with reception facilities; it is otherwise discharged at sea. Food and other waste not easily incinerated is ground or macerated and also discharged into the sea, legally beyond three miles from shore. These '… food waste can contribute to increases in biological oxygen demand, chemical oxygen demand, and total organic carbon, diminish water and sediment quality, adversely effect marine biota, increase turbidity, and elevate nutrient levels' (US EPA, 2008, pp. 5–11). They may be detrimental to fish digestion and health and cause nutrient pollution (Polglaze, 2003). An additional problem with discharging food waste at sea is the inadvertent discharge of plastics. Under Annex V of MARPOL, throwing plastic into the ocean is strictly prohibited everywhere. Plastic poses an immediate risk to sea life that might ingest or get caught in it (Reid, 2007).

Solid waste and some plastics are incinerated on board, and then the incinerator ash is dumped into the ocean. Incinerator ash and the resulting air emissions can

contain furans and dioxins, both found to be carcinogenic (Klein, 2009), as well as heavy metal and other toxic residues. For this reason Annex V of MARPOL recommends, but does not require, that ash from incineration of certain plastics not be discharged into the sea (US EPA, 2008). At the very least, incinerator ash should be tested before each overboard discharge in order to determine whether it should be categorised as solid waste or hazardous waste (US EPA, 2008).

Although cruise ships have reduced their volume of solid waste, the total amount is still significant. Royal Caribbean's commitment in 2003 to not dump any trash overboard is admirable (Fain, 2003), assuming it has been practiced. While companies have been adept at promoting what they do to be environmentally responsible, they are not always transparent about practices that to some may not be viewed as responsible. The first step toward responsible cruise tourism is that cruise corporations need to be more transparent about what they do and what they don't do. Stakeholders, consumers, and interested parties should be able to determine what systems operate on which ships and be informed about the environmental impact of each ship and each itinerary. Given the wide variation, whether it be between ships with AWTS and those without, or between ships on itineraries where there are recycling facilities versus those where there aren't, it is important that detailed information be available. Such transparency reflects a sense of responsibility. It also permits local communities and stakeholders to make informed judgements about whether cruise lines are behaving responsibly.

Economic Issues

Ports of call are a focal point of any cruise. They provide value to passengers and economic benefits to local merchants and tour providers. It appears on surface to be a perfect arrangement — everyone benefits. But on closer inspection there are issues. For example, economic benefits are not always distributed equitably between the cruise ship and the port. The issue is not that ports do not make money; they obviously do (see Business Research and Economic Advisors, 2010; Douglas, & Livaic, 2004; Marusic, Horak, Tomljenovic, 2009). It is whether the income generated exceeds direct and indirect costs (including environmental costs; see Caric, 2010; Scarfe, 2011) and whether income distribution is responsible. A second issue of concern is that ports increasingly feel pressure to construct new cruise terminals and often compete with neighbors for business.

Distribution of Benefits

Belize is a good illustration. Passengers arrive by tender at Fort Street Village in the centre of Belize City. The village is contained by a wall and security fence and has within a range of shops and eateries/bars, many of which are found in other Caribbean ports (including Diamonds International, which until 2011 co-owned the Fort Street Village with Royal Caribbean). The retail space is expensive so few local merchants can afford to be there; there is a small crafts market for them in another area, but the rents again are relatively significant given the degree of income. The result is that merchants in the Fort Street Village have income, despite heavy overhead costs, but merchants outside do less well given the relatively few cruise passengers who venture independently from the Fort Street Village.

Most passengers take shore excursions. These are major money makers for the cruise ship, which holds back 50% or more of what passengers pay on board for a tour. This creates two problems. First, a passenger spending US$50 for a shore excursion expects a $50 product, but the shore excursion provider only receives US$25. While the cruise ship walks away with its cut, the shore excursion provider must provide a quality product that pleases passengers and the cruise line while still retaining a small profit. If passengers are unhappy they will blame the shore excursion provider, unaware of the cruise line's cut, which can exceed 50%; one cruise line retains 90% of the cost of a shore excursion in St Vincent and the Grenadines (Carribean Media Corporation [CMC], 2007); 80% on an excursion in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Sandiford, 2003, p. 1). Though not unique, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island an authorised taxi picking up a cruise passenger at the port must give 30% of every fare to the cruise line (CBC, 2010). Those willing to pay the 30% 'fee' have access to passengers while they are still in the cruise terminal; other taxi drivers are left behind the security gate entrance to the terminal. Those barred from cruise passengers question the equitability of these arrangements.

A second problem relates to the distribution of economic benefits within the port community/country. Again using Belize as an example, there were several speakers at the third International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in October 2009 who talked about a small hand full of individuals making money from cruise tourism, but that the majority of Belizeans realise little if any benefit. In fact, cruise tourism earns considerably less for the economy than traditional land-based tourism. A 2007 study found cruise visitors spent less than half as much per day as land-based visitors (US$44 vs. US$96). Cruise passengers accounted for 75% of arrivals to Belize, but only 10% of employment in the tourism industry (Centre of Ecotourism and Sustainable Development [CESD], 2006). While cruise tourism brings many more visitors, its economic impact is relatively small and concentrated in a few hands.

The situation in Belize became more problematic in early 2011 when Carnival Cruise Lines announced it would no longer use locally owned tenders to transport passengers from the ship to shore. The cruise line insisted that tenders must accommodate at least 200 passengers. Many local tender owners fear going out of business, especially given the debt incurred to purchase vessels that previously met the cruise corporation's requirements. Subsequent to its initial demand, the cruise line called on tender operators to reduce their fees and it boycotted the port (Kelly, 2011a, 2011b).

Economics and Cruise Terminals

As cruise tourism has grown, demand for terminal facilities has also expanded. Port cities without terminals build facilities hoping to attract cruise ships. This was the case of Prince Rupert and Campbell River, British Columbia: Campbell River's C$14 million terminal has been used rarely; Prince Rupert's C$12 million terminal has had less traffic than originally projected and expects little or no traffic in 2012 (250 News, 2010). Many existing ports are either expanding what they have or building new facilities. Some are based on assurances from a cruise line. That was the case for Saint John, New Brunswick, which spent C$12 million on a cruise terminal, specially built to accommodate *Voyager of the Seas*. It subsequently learned in August 2004 that one-third of its cruise ship passengers would be lost in 2005 because the ship was replacing Saint John with Bermuda (Klein, 2005a).

New, larger ships dictate renovations. The financial burden for construction and maintenance of these cruise facilities is often on local governments that may or may not recoup their investment – the Government of Jamaica is spending more than US$120 million on a new US$225 million cruise terminal at Falmouth. Like many other ports, they may end up subsidising the cruise industry. They feel forced to make investments, but at the same time are pressured to keep cruise passenger head taxes as low as possible (in the Caribbean considerably lower than fees paid by those arriving or departing by air). However, some ports appear to negotiate better deals than others. St Maarten received a $34.5 million loan from Carnival Corporation in 2007 for construction of a new pier. Royal Caribbean loaned it an additional $10 million for a fixed berth on the new pier. Given terms of the loans, agreed to passenger head taxes, and maintenance costs, the port is likely to end up subsidising the construction project — anticipated revenues will barely keep up with expenses (see Klein, 2008). At the same time, Port Everglades (Fort Lauderdale) agreed to renovate one of its new terminals at a cost of $37.4 million in order to accommodate Royal Caribbean's *Oasis of the Seas* and *Allure of the Seas*, but in that case neither the port nor taxpayers will foot the bill.

Royal Caribbean will instead pay for the work through a $5.70 surcharge on passengers when they leave and arrive. That's in addition to a $9.95 port user fee all passengers pay. The result is that while St Maarten has to pay for its new piers with existing port fees and is left at the margin with regard to generating enough income to cover all expenses, Port Everglades maintains its usual port fees and collects an additional fee to specifically cover construction costs (Klein, 2005a, p. 126).

An increasingly common arrangement that avoids this problem is that cruise corporations are building and operating their own cruise terminals. Carnival owns terminals in Cozumel, Roatan, Turks and Caicos, Long Beach California and elsewhere; controls a terminal in Savona, Italy; and in partnership with Royal Caribbean holds the concession for the cruise terminal at Civitavecchia (Rome). Royal Caribbean holds the concession for cruise terminals at Falmouth, Jamaica and Kusadasi, Turkey, and in partnership with Diamonds International owned the terminal in Belize. The effect of these arrangements is that income generated from cruise tourism increasingly goes into corporate coffers rather than local purses. As well, as was seen in Kusadasi, shops within the cruise terminal take business away from shops traditionally visited by cruise passengers (Klein, 2008). The economic value of cruise tourism to local constituents and stakeholders is dwindling while the cruise line's income increases. This does not constitute responsible tourism.

These corporate owned terminals in some regions compete with other ports and may factor in bargaining as nearby ports negotiate with the cruise industry. Ports are potentially played off against one another. This is certainly the case in British Columbia where five ports have been encouraged to build terminal facilities, yet the number of cruise passengers is not increasing (see Klein, 2005b). With alternatives, cruise lines are able to ensure they get the best possible deal while some ports win and others lose.

The difference between responsible tourism and sustainable tourism is relevant here. While these business practices might be considered sustainable from a cruise line's perspective, the moral and ethical slant of responsible tourism makes them problematic. Is it responsible to encourage ports to build terminals knowing they will be underutilised or left unused?

At the same time that a corporation is responsible to stockholders for generating profit, it has a responsibility to the ports and communities it visits. Port communities should receive fair, equitable, and widely disbursed benefits from cruise tourism. The issue here isn't that cruise tourism is doing nothing, but it can do more. Carnival Corporation's goal should be receiving a score of 10/10 for social responsibility rather than the 3/10 it received in 2004 on The London Times Corporate Profile (London Times, 2004).

Sociocultural Issues

There is again a range of possible issues, but three will suffice for illustration: people pollution, homogenisation of the port experience, and authenticity of cultural experience.

People Pollution

People pollution refers to the point at which the carrying capacity of a port is exceeded (Baekkelund, 1999). This has increasingly become a concern as the number of cruise ships has increased and the size of these ships have grown. In the 1990s, five ships calling at a port would have offloaded 10,000 passengers or less; today five ships could easily bring more than twice that number of passengers. The experience of passengers is impacted, however, more importantly local inhabitants are forced to deal with overcrowding and other problems associated with this growth. These problems are in many ways unique to cruise tourism given the short-term daily influx of large numbers of people and that land-based visitors stay at their resort or are disbursed more broadly across a region.

Curson (2009) describes the cruise passenger problem differently, calling it pack behaviour:

> … almost as if all passengers were connected by a common behavioural umbilical cord, is the order of the day. Thousands disembark

> together, congregate in the terminal area, and then proceed through the city centre en masse, often producing more than a ripple of unease to run through the local population, who may well avoid the downtown area when large cruise ships are in.

This can be seen in most ports in Alaska that see 10,000 or more passengers a day in communities such as Skagway with a population of less than 1,000.

Cruise tourism takes its toll:

> Crowds disrupt usual routines and the activities associated with cruise tourism can themselves be a problem. People living in Juneau, Alaska, complain of the constant sound of helicopters ferrying cruise passengers to glaciers or other sights. Residents in Victoria, British Columbia, complain about sail-away parties and horn toots after midnight when ships sail through a residential area as they leave the port. Lobster fishers in Prince Edward Island complain that ships pass over buoys and sever lines to which traps are attached, causing them to drift, with captive lobsters inside — a loss of the $100 trap and lobsters. Norfolk's Elizabeth River Run, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2003, was canceled in 2004 because it conflicted with a cruise ship visit. A benefit walk for multiple sclerosis in San Diego had to be relocated because of traffic concerns stemming from the arrival of a cruise ship. And pier expansion plans in Maui would have ended outrigger canoe racing, regattas, and other paddling events in Kahului Harbor and severely impacted traffic congestion had the government not backed off under staunch public pressure. These are impacts on quality of life. (Klein, 2008, pp. 99–100)

Quality of life is directly impacted by the volume of visitors. The United Nations Committee on Sustainable Tourism notes that when the social carrying capacity of an island is surpassed, cost of living increases along with overcrowding, traffic congestion, and noise pollution. A lower standard of living results for a significant segment of the population and an attitude shift occurs whereby the tourist is blamed for the majority of social problems (Baron, 1999). This describes in part the citizen backlash in Key West, Florida after cruise tourism exceeded the city's carrying capacity, negatively impacting traditional, land-based tourism and local residents alike, and contributing to the city's 'getting ugly' label by *National Geographic Traveler* in 2004. There were citizen forums, a lawsuit calling on the city to undertake a quality of life study, media and public relations campaigns, and demonstrations. The quality of life study was completed in 2005 (see Murray, 2005) and the number of cruise ship visits reduced (Klein, 2008). Unlike Key West, key decision-makers in many ports will accommodate as many cruise ships as want to come, and not seriously consider sociocultural impacts.

Homogenisation of the Port Experience

The Caribbean is an example of a mature cruise destination. As such, ports have to a degree become homogeneous — jewellery stores, duty frees shops for liquor and other goods, and an assortment of tourist-oriented products. A number of companies (e.g., Little Switzerland, Diamonds International, Colombian Emeralds, etc.) have stores in various ports. While this homogenisation may have economic value to the outside corporations that own the stores, it takes its toll on local people.

Take Ketchikan, Alaska. With a population of less than 8,000, it had 43 jewelry stores downtown in 2004; a decade earlier there were only a handful (Markell, 2003). 'Locals call the migrants who own and run these jewellery and curio shops taking over downtown the "Pirates of the Caribbean", since they follow the wake of the ships' (Dunning, 2000, p. 37) and because many of these stores are owned by the same companies that own the stores on Caribbean islands. Not only have these stores changed the character of the downtown, which is largely boarded up from the end of one cruise season and beginning of the next, but the volume of cruise tourists makes the downtown unattractive to local citizens, who have to wait until the end of the season to again enjoy their quiet city. In addition, many store employees come from 'the lower 48 states', taking their savings with them at the end of the season.

It is essential that the growth of cruise tourism not have a negative impact on the quality of life of citizens in and around a port. If anything, the impact should be positive. As quality of life is a largely qualitative concept, the best indicator is people in and around the port — all walks of life and all segments of society. A responsible cruise operator works with a community to grow cruise tourism at a pace and in a manner that is mutually beneficial to all involved (not just a few stakeholders). They engage and listen to local people and provide as much economic benefit as possible to as wide a segment of the community as is possible.

Sociocultural Authenticity

Concern is with whether visitors have an opportunity to interact with and to experience local culture, and that local cultures are treated respectfully. Here again the sheer volume of cruise passengers can compromise the experience for both. In Belize for example, locals warn visitors not to visit Xunantunich on 'cruise day,' one of the main Mayan sites in Belize for cruise passengers (Krohn, 2010). Passengers' experience of the sacred site is limited by both the length of time spent and by the number of other cruise passengers sharing the site — on most days the site is quiet. Cruise day is especially busy for the operator of the hand-cranked bridge that crosses the river to get to the Mayan site (quaint when crossing in a single vehicle on a lazy day), and for some of the craftspeople selling wares at the crossing point, but otherwise passengers stay on their bus and are whisked someplace else. There are many other sites and communities in other countries about which the same can be said — where the sheer number of passengers negatively impacts the quality of the sociocultural experience. Awareness that it is qualitatively falling short ideally paves direction for the cruise industry to redesign its product for better delivery. This challenge is ever-greater as cruise ships are larger, carrying more and more passengers to the ports they visit. But then again, the ship is increasingly the destination; cruise lines want there to be so much to do that passengers do not want to leave the ship while in port. It is clear that cruise tourism is not sensitive as it could be to local communities, their citizens, and the range of stakeholders.

Another issue regarding sociocultural authenticity is the knowledge and accuracy of information provided by onboard port lectures and those leading tours. Passengers tend to depend on these cruise ship employ-

ees for accurate information, however it frequently is limited or incorrect. According to a seasoned cruise lecturer there is a great deal of misinformation given by both cruise ship port lecturers and tour guides. But to be entirely fair, the misinformation

> … starts not with the guides but with the cruise line brochures, where glowing prose and brightly colored pictures (usually of Santorini's white houses and blue roofs) entice customers with fantasies of 'exploring' the ancient world. 'Wander down the back streets of Venice'; 'Visit Ephesus and walk in the footsteps of St. Paul'; 'Come to the Acropolis, the birthplace of democracy'. This inevitably entails their serving up some factoids though the ad writers are often unsure if the Parthenon is on the Acropolis or vice versa, or if the Parthenon is really the Pantheon. Pompeii, we are told, was buried in molten lava, all theaters are regularly upgraded to amphitheaters, and in one Silverseas brochure Imperial Rome was called Empirical Rome (suggesting that the barbarians who sacked the fifth century were a bunch of Emersonian transcendentalists). (Clarke, 2010, p. 24)

The point this is meant to illustrate is the need to accurately represent sociocultural sites and to take responsibility for accurately educating passengers about what they are about to experience. Cruise lines need to maintain standards. An example of falling short is something told to the author by a native Hawaiian in Hilo in 2003. He was among a group that was upset because Norwegian Cruise Line fired all of the Hawaiian musicians playing Hawaiian music on ships in Hawaii and replaced them with Filipino musicians playing Hawaiian music. The Filipino musicians cost less, worked more hours, and appear Hawaiian when dressed in Hawaiian shirts. Most passengers knew no different, but to the native Hawaiians it was an insult on multiple levels. This is another case of falling short of responsible cruise tourism.

Seeing Through the Responsible Cruise Tourism Lens

Cruise tourism's pace of growth and the nature of its product presents many challenges to the industry and to ports and port communities. While it is easy to think about sustainability in terms of shipboard operations, when considering the interaction of cruise tourism with local communities the concept of responsible tourism may be more useful. One obvious reason is the mobile nature of cruise ships. Its passengers are day visitors and the ship itself is not part of the communities it visits. Impacts must be measured from the perspective of the port community. This becomes even more important as ships get larger given the greater volumes of waste and the increasing number of visitors. While some stakeholders may benefit, others may not. A focus on responsible tourism places priority on benefits being fairly distributed across a community.

The goal of this article was to illustrate how principles of responsible cruise tourism may apply to issues faced by the industry. As seen with environmental issues, it was suggested there could be greater transparency about environmental practices in place and greater care in not generalising innovations on one set of ships to others with such innovations. There is no question that the cruise industry has made many strides when it comes to environmental practices. It shouldn't detract from its achievements by not embracing internationally sanctioned regulations such as emissions control areas and by not handling solid waste as well as they can. Royal Caribbean's 2003 pledge to not discharge any solid waste at sea is a goal to be sought. As well, the industry can be more transparent about its environmental practices, taking pride where achievements have been made and admitting where achievements have not been made.

Several areas related to the socioeconomic benefits of cruise tourism were also discussed. As was seen, the distribution of benefits between cruise ships and shore excursion providers appears to be tipped heavily in favor of the cruise ship. Not only is the shore excursion provider apparently short-changed, but their low level of income means others in the supply chain also receive less. The scenario around cruise terminals also appears to put port communities at an economic disadvantage vis a vis the cruise industry. Cruise corporations are out to make a profit, and they do that very well, however they can do better at sharing the profits from cruise tourism with the ports on which they depend for attractions and entertainment for their passengers. This income needs to reach all segments of the society — not just the relatively few merchants and guides who come into contact with the passengers.

The final area discussed was sociocultural impacts: the problem of overcrowding, homogenisation of the port experience, and the need to honestly represent cultural and historical sites. The most immediate problem to address is the issue of overcrowding — people pollution. Ports and cruise lines together need to determine the realistic carrying capacity of port, port cities, and tourist attractions and then design itineraries and port calls that stay within these limits. A port can absorb only so many passengers at a time, and can tolerate only a certain number of days being inundated by cruise passengers. A responsible approach to cruise tourism would add these elements to the equation when cruise corporations or the cruise industry determines whether it is responsible.

Using the responsible tourism lens to view cruise tourism can be a useful exercise. It helps focus the analysis of 'sustainability' on the local community and stakeholders that are effected by cruise tourism. While it may be useful from a corporate perspective to think in terms of sustainability, viewing cruise tourism from the grassroots — the ground up — may be best accomplished with the responsible tourism lens. This shift in focus has yet to be adopted by academic researchers. There is limited research on the challenges posed to local communities and governments by cruise tourism, and virtually no research focusing specifically on responsible cruise tourism. It is an area that begs for attention, not only research focusing on how impacts of cruise tourism are viewed differently from an industry perspective versus from the viewpoint of stakeholders and effected citizens in ports of call, but in regard to the social and environmental policy implications of insights provided by that research.

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