

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
A Compilation and Analysis of Expert Views

by

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ABSTRACT

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Sustainable development, as an economic concept, became popular with the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987. Since then it has been independently applied and translated to a host of economic activities like agriculture, forestry, and the like. Within the tourism scenario there has been much debate and discussion over the utilization of the principles of sustainable development. It is now customary to use the terms “sustainable tourism” or “sustainable tourism development”. However, an analysis of the literature reveals that there are a number of ambiguities and inconsistencies when translating the principles of sustainable development to tourism, in theory and practice.

This study presents an in-depth discussion of the topic utilizing a combination of primary (interviews with a panel of experts) and secondary (literature review) sources of information. While the latter was used as a tool to identify and highlight contested issues, the telephone interviews with experts were used as the medium to discuss and extract opinion/recommendation/judgment on the highlighted issues. Besides bringing out some insightful points of view and recommendations, this study found universal acceptance over certain issues. It was accepted that sustainable tourism development must be seen as a means of achieving sustainable development, which could mean no tourism at all. All experts were of the opinion that some fundamental political and ideological changes need to be made in order for tourism to effectively contribute towards sustainability and sustainable development.

Keywords: Tourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development, sustainable tourism development, theory, experts.

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*Chapter One***INTRODUCTION**

The patronization of tourism as a developmental tool has been dynamic and prone to change depending on the outcomes of concentrated efforts. To map this evolutionary process, Jafari (2001) identified four stages or “platforms of thinking” that mirror the orientation of tourism literature during the different stages of growth and progression of tourism. They are the advocacy, the cautionary, the adaptancy, and the knowledge-based platforms. Jafari emphasizes that these platforms “have emerged chronologically, with the text and position of one leading to the next, but without being replaced by it; and indeed all four platform coexist today”(2001:29). These platforms of thinking would be a logical starting point for any discussion that seeks to understand the origins, applications, and implications of sustainable tourism development.

The demand for tourism has been growing manifold over the years and past action resorted to meeting this demand (advocacy platform), often at any cost. It was this orientation that led to the formation a reactionary, one-sided industry that focused on the needs of the tourist and requirements of tourism development. With the onset of negative repercussions of unplanned tourism development came an awareness of the “other side” of the two-sided coin that tourism is. This led to what Jafari calls the cautionary platform, which highlighted the economic and socio-cultural costs of tourism.

The adaptancy platform marks the introduction of alternative approaches to the conception of tourism and its development (Weaver 2001). The 80s heralded the start of this platform where attention was drawn towards promoting tourism that studied and/or followed an alternative development path (Jafari 2001). Thus academics and practitioners concerned themselves with promoting tourism that took into account the need for more sensitive approach

and that paid heed to the needs of the environment and its people. Eadington and Smith summarize some of the reasons of this new approach as “disillusionment with mainstream or mass tourism” and “mounting global concern about the social costs and environmental damage created by too much tourism” (1995:8).

The knowledge-based platform, a culmination of the first three has been portrayed in the following light; “it systematically studies tourism’s own structure; annexes it to various fields of investigation or disciplines; defines its place in this larger multidisciplinary context that generates and accommodates it; examines its functions at personal, group, business, government and systems levels; identifies factors that influence and are influenced by it; and more” (Jafari 2001:32)

Each of the different platforms, reflecting attitudinal changes toward tourism and its development, were in essence a response to growing awareness and consciousness of not only the impacts of tourism as an individual sector but also the social and environmental impacts of industrialized society even outside of the realm of tourism. Concepts such as sustainable development, environmental economics, natural resource management, conservation and preservation, and the like came to the fore and vigorous debates ensued on how to implement their principles in societal functions. Sustainable development, which was popularized with the publication of the Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, is considered the parental paradigm and precursor to the concept of sustainable tourism development.

The Brundtland Commission defined Sustainable Development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (quoted by WTTC, WTO and Earth Council 1995:30).

This notion has yielded a gamut of definitions seeking to establish the tenets of *sustainable tourism development*. The World Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council and Earth Council, put forth the “Agenda 21” urging governments to take action towards achieving environmentally sustainable tourism. They put forth the following definition for sustainable *tourism development*

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing 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 (1995:30).

From this basic definition, the concept has now evolved into a research niche of its own within the field of tourism. Today courses are taught at universities with the sole purpose of expanding knowledge and understanding of sustainability in tourism. Journals have been established with the sole purpose of discussing theories, concepts and issues that revolve around the sustainability debate in tourism. In the cumulative index (1974-2004) of the journal *Annals of Tourism Research* alone there are 77 entries under the terms “sustainability” and “development, sustainable”. Conferences and workshops bringing together either industry professionals or academics or both are held periodically to debate on the topic.

Problem Statement

With the proliferation of the discourse on sustainable tourism development into the above mentioned levels comes ambiguity and uncertainty on what it means to

different people, allowing for various interpretations of the same concept or idea. “Sustainable tourism is variously interpreted and its validity as a means and/or end of tourism development is questioned in many quarters, reflecting in part, the lack of clarity or consensus concerning its meaning or objectives” (Sharpley 2000:1). Just a brief overview of related literature brings out a number of inconsistencies on how sustainable tourism development is understood, interpreted and applied. While these inconsistencies are given due importance and discussed in detail by various researchers; they are more often than not singled out and discussed as independent topics. This inclination comes with valid justification, perceptibly owing to the unique research interests, expertise, and backgrounds of researchers. This study therefore seeks to serve as a compilation of the range of issues discussed under the banner of sustainable tourism development. It is in no way comprehensive or all encompassing owing to the vastness of the topic and the multitude of issues that can be brought under its umbrella of concerns. However, it will shed light on discussions related to the basic philosophies and principles of sustainable tourism development rather than its implementation.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism development by a two-fold process involving first the analysis and description of findings of a review of related literature and second the collection, analysis, and interpretation of opinions expressed by experts with regards to issues identified through the review of literature. Following are some specific research objectives:

- ◆ To understand the origins of sustainability in tourism, to underscore the reasons for tourism researchers and practitioners seeking new and better pathways to tourism development, and to establish both sides of the debate on the “evils” of tourism.
- ◆ To explore the literature for questions and concerns that consistently emerge in discussions of the theory behind sustainable development as it relates to applicability in the tourism scenario.
- ◆ To develop an open-ended yet structured questionnaire that would reflect the findings of the literature review and seek opinions from selected experts.
- ◆ To conduct structured telephone interviews with a selected panel of experts so as to delineate the opinions expressed by the academic elite regarding highlighted issues and draw out themes or patterns from the ideas that materialize.
- ◆ To make recommendations for future research in the field of sustainable tourism development.

Study Methodology

The goals of this study were achieved via the means of a structured telephone interview process with a panel of academic experts. The panel of experts was chosen based on an objective process, along the lines of the Delphi technique, so as to eliminate the possibility of researcher bias. A detailed description of this methodology is outlined in chapter three. The results of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed for themes and patterns of thought.

Definition of Terms

Tourism: “Tourism is a study of people away from their usual habitat, of the industry which responds to their needs, and of the impacts that both they and the industry have on the host and guests

sociocultural, economic and physical environments” (Jafari as quoted by Jafari and Pizam 2002:6499)

Qualitative Research: “... designed to uncover motivations, reasons, impressions, perceptions, and ideas that relevant individuals have about a subject of interest” (Peterson 1994:487)

Structured Interview: “The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. Questions are worded in a completely open-ended format” (Patton 2002:349)

Delphi technique: “A unique method of eliciting and refining group judgment based on the rationale that a group of experts is better than one expert when exact knowledge is not available” (Kayanak and Macauley as quoted by Miller 2001:353)

Expert: An individual within the academic sphere, who has been chosen by peers as being one of the top five scholars in the field of sustainable tourism development.

*Chapter Two***LITERATURE REVIEW****Introduction**

Sustainable tourism development has become a ubiquitous dialogue within the community of researchers and practitioners, one that is highly disputed and contested on most occasions. “Tourism researchers have not been slow to jump aboard the sustainability bandwagon, and a veritable flurry of books and journal articles have emerged over the past decade or so focusing on the perspectives that the concept of sustainability brings to the principles and practice of tourism” (Garrod and Fyall 1998:199).

Even with the ongoing literary activity within the field of sustainable tourism development, a number of questions remain unanswered. As has been noted by a number of scholars, the primary reason for this would be the innate complexity of its parental paradigm, sustainable development and sustainability, and also the lack of concurrence when applying its principles to tourism development. When developing indicators for sustainable tourism, Miller declares, “if ever a topic could be described as a complex problem and also one lacking in perfect knowledge then sustainability would appear to be so” (2001:353). McKercher seconds this opinion in saying that the inherent vagueness of ‘sustainability’ is its greatest weakness (1993a:131). According to Wall,

...Sustainable development can be viewed as being an oxymoron – as involving contrasting ideas that cannot be reconciled. Sustainability requires a long-term perspective and something that is sustained should be enduring and ideally, exist in perpetuity. In contrast, development implies change – a progression from an existing situation to a new, ideally superior state (2002:89).

Combining the concept of sustainability with the phenomenon that is tourism results in a rubric of sorts, where the end result, i.e. applying the principles of sustainable development to all types of tourism development, is possible but one that can be achieved only with skill, patience and consistent effort.

Prior to getting into a discussion on how the principles of sustainable development have been translated for the purpose of tourism, this chapter will first look at the manifestation of the concept in literary works like journal articles, books, encyclopedias, etc. The literature is classified into certain broad categories, following which each category has been used as the base from which further discussion on the concept of sustainable tourism development itself can be carried on.

Classification of the Literature

Literature on the subject of sustainable tourism development can be broadly divided into four main categories. Firstly, there are those that deal with the concept as a whole and discuss its theoretical underpinnings, offering ideas approaches and frameworks to better understand the concept. A second category is the literature dealing with the tourism “environment”. This group can be further subdivided into natural and socio-political. The “natural” talks about specifics of sustainability as it relates to the physical environment, like impact assessment, carrying capacity, and negative impacts of tourism to a particular destinations natural resource. The “cultural” deals with host-guest relationships, resident attitudes, and impacts of tourism on a destination’s culture and heritage. This second category consists of predominantly case studies. The third category can be referred to as “critiques” of literature on sustainable tourism development and of current practices. The fourth and final category consists of books and articles specifically written on

“forms” of tourism that are considered to be sustainable, i.e., ecotourism, nature-based tourism, alternative tourism etc.

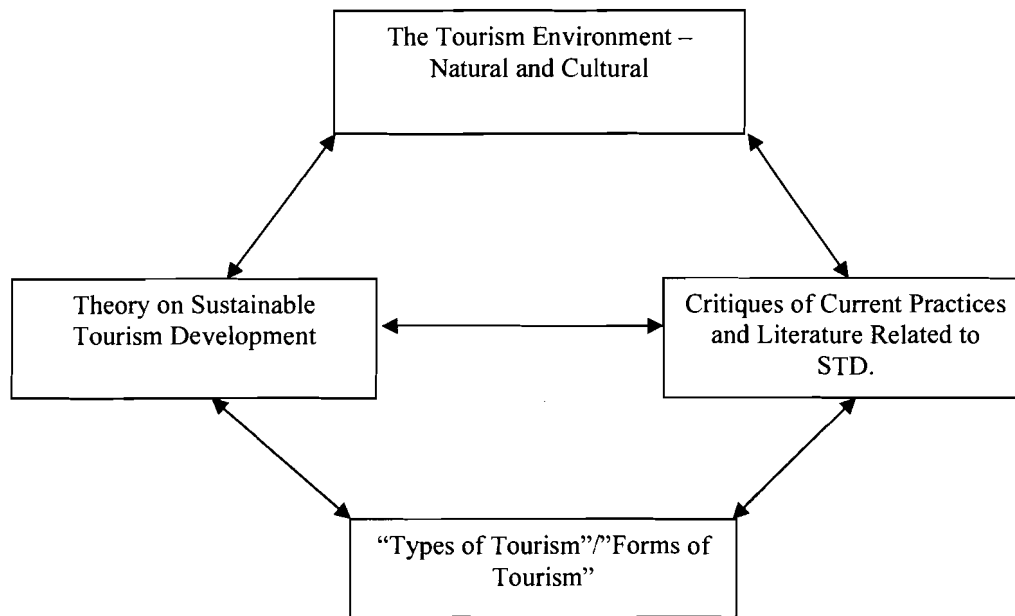


Figure 1: Classification of the Sustainable Tourism Development Literature

Considering the plethora of information out there, it can be argued that it is of primary importance to first assess one's sources of information and determine if they qualify to be considered as contributors to the discourse on sustainability. The logical next step would be to assess in what way they qualify by asking the question which facet/dimension of sustainable tourism development they shed light on. Thus having a framework of this sort would help assign a role to any literature that a researcher comes across in her/his search for information. The above chart does not in anyway serve as a map of the evolution of the literature on the subject; however it will assist in its classification for the purpose of clarity. Here this framework will be used as a lever to steer the discussion on sustainable tourism development.

The Tourism Environment

This section will discuss the tourism surroundings; the climate under which it flourished, how it was perceived during different stages of its development and its impacts on the economic, cultural and political functions of host countries. Graburn and Jafari (1991) touch upon the shift in attitudes towards tourism development, which started off with unquestioning acceptance and promotion of tourism, followed by an outbreak of critiques of its negative economic and non-economic impacts, finally leading to the establishment of tourism as a subject of scientific study whose impacts could be analyzed from various angles and disciplines like sociology, anthropology, economics etc.

“Modern tourism was created and expanded in the post-war growth era which began in the 1940’s; it continues to flourish” (Bramwell and Lane 1993:1). The discerning travelers’ quest for new and different sights and experiences led to the tourism market opening up in every possible location on the map. Every country/region, entrepreneur, and service provider jumped onto the tourism bandwagon with something “unique” to offer to the eager tourist. Jafari (2001) labeled this stage of the tourism industry as the “advocacy platform” where the industry zeroed in on only the positive aspects of tourism and advocated its development and expansion.

The popularity and acceptance of tourism as a valuable commercial activity would not pose much of a threat if it were something that could be operated in isolation to other social, environmental, and cultural activities. The anomaly that separates the tourism industry from any other is that the resource base that is being tapped into for creating a product or experience for the tourist is not exclusively owned or operated for the sake of the tourism/travel industry (McKercher 1993b). It is interwoven into the very fabric of every society in which it is utilized as a tool for economic development. It is an industrial activity that could potentially encroach on

various aspects of the social, economic and environmental constitution of a destination area but at the same time it is also an activity that burgeons only when there is social, economic and environmental harmony around it.

McKercher in his paper titled “Some Fundamental Truths about Tourism: Understanding Tourism’s Social and Environmental Impacts” identifies eight “truths” about tourism which he says are “both the inherent and unavoidable consequences of embarking on the path of tourism development” (1993a:7). Following are the eight truths that he identified: -

1. As an industrial activity, tourism consumes resources, creates wastes and has specific infrastructure needs.
2. As a consumer of resources, it has the ability to over consume resources.
3. Tourism, as a resource dependent industry must compete for scarce resources to ensure its survival.
4. Tourism is a private sector dominated industry, with investment decisions being based predominantly on profit maximization.
5. Tourism is a multi-faceted industry, and as such, it is almost impossible to control.
6. Tourists are consumers, not anthropologists.
7. Tourism in entertainment.
8. Unlike other industrial activities, tourism generates income by importing clients rather than exporting its product.

A realization of the unique nature of tourism and its impacts, real and perceived, resulted in what Jafari (2002) calls the cautionary platform which was represented by “studies and views which argue that tourism is not all benefits and, significantly, comes with many sociocultural and even economic costs”

Impacts of Tourism on Physical and Cultural Environments

The discussion on “impacts” of tourism that began during the cautionary phase of tourism development continues to this day. Most reflections on tourism impacts fall under the following categories; economic, socio-cultural, and environmental.

In the introduction to the first edition of *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Smith (1977) outlines the various possible impacts of the tourism activity at a host destination covering both positive and negative sociocultural and economic impacts. She points out how in the economic arena, on the one hand tourism is praised for its ability to stimulate economies by creating jobs, increasing demand for local handicrafts, encouraging foreign investments, bringing in valuable foreign exchange etc. And on the other hand it is condemned for disrupting local economic systems, creating one-track economies, providing only low-skilled/semi-skilled jobs for locals, causing a neo-colonialism of sorts, and resulting in economic leakages. On the social side, she refers to the power of tourism in affecting cultural change through host/guest interactions. Whereas tourism can promote peace and understanding of and among cultures, endorse the preservation of ancient traditions, arts and crafts etc, it can also result in stereotyping of cultures and peoples based on the perceptions of the observer, commoditization for the purpose of making it palatable to the foreigner and the westernization of host cultures through observation, association and interaction.

In the second edition however, Smith (1989) starts of by pointing out that more sophisticated research methods have assisted in understanding the economic and social role of tourism in instigating change as compared with other economic activities. For example she questions the validity of blaming tourism for cultural change and modernization when considering other forces like television, radio that may have gained popularity in conjunction

with or prior to the introduction of tourism at a particular destination. On the economic front she refers to a Korean example where the promotion of tourism is justified on the count that the foreign exchange leakage from tourism proved to be much less than that from other key industries like electronics and machines.

On a similar note Gunn talks about the issue of misdirected blame and the importance of distinguishing between “true causes” in relation to environmental damage associated with tourism. He concludes that while certain levels of damage like erosion and pollution of resources can be attributed to excessive visitors, most environmental damage is caused by “lack of plans, policies and action to prepare for economic growth” (1994:83). Butler when talking of tourism, environment, and sustainable development also views the receiving institutions as being part of the problem of tourism impacts.

Unfortunately, all-too-often tourists are regarded as the scourge of the environment, perhaps similar to the Mongol hordes or the Vikings of ancient times. While there is no doubt that the effects of tourism can be similar to those of a visit from such groups, this should not be either inevitable or unavoidable (1991:202).

Thus the issue here would be to recognize to what extent these impacts can simply be attributed to the “nature of tourism” and acknowledge grey areas in tourism forecasting, planning, and monitoring so as to take corrective action in the future.

Types/Forms of Tourism

“After the advocacy and cautionary voices were heard, many researchers began to examine different forms of tourism development, arguing that all are not equal and indeed some are more desirable than others” (Jafari 2002). On a similar note Fennel (2002) talks about an “alternative paradigm” which came into being after about 20 years of conventional tourism,

offering a different mode of thinking, promises for prosperity, new opportunities, and hope for local people, tourists and service providers. He suggests that this paradigm led to the proliferation of new tourism types, each seeking to carve a lasting niche in the tourism market. Jafari termed this phase as the “adaptancy platform” where different alternative forms of tourism like ecotourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism etc were considered to be the right way to move forward.

The need for “alternative paradigms”, sustainability, conservation and preservation all arose from the realization of some of the negative impacts of (inadequately planned and badly mismanaged) tourism as an economic activity against a backdrop of growing environmental consciousness. Fennel attributes the origins of ecotourism to “the environmentalist crusade of the 1960s, the ecodevelopment movement which emerged during the 1970s and from sustainable development which took off during the 1980s” (2002:1). This need was manifested in the form of the popularization of the above-mentioned forms/types of tourism.

Thus more and more labels or brands were being assigned to the tourism activity like nature tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism, green tourism, soft tourism, alternative tourism, small-scale tourism, ecotourism, environmental tourism, ecological tourism, sustainable tourism etc. While the intent was to seemingly pay heed to the “cautionary voices” within the tourism industry as well as those outside, however much of these forms of tourism simply became a way of presenting a destination, product or service as being environmentally-friendly, people-friendly etc.

Cohen in his critique of “alternative tourism” draws two distinctions on how alternative tourism is conceived; first as a reaction to modern consumerism (he labels this as counter-

cultural alternative tourism) and second as a reaction to the exploitation of the third world (concerned alternative tourism).

The former inverts the values and attitudes of conventional tourism, engendering a quest for 'elective centres', found in the 'pristine' and 'unspoiled' parts of the world; but with its 'Vermassung' it engenders environmental and social problems of its own. The latter seeks to reverse the trend towards impersonal mass tourism, and to establish personal relations between (paying) guest and local hosts; but it is necessarily restricted in scale and hence not a viable alternative to mass tourism. (1987:13).

From the discussion on the advocacy, cautionary, and adaptancy platforms, it can be seen that tourism as an industry and a discipline is in a constant state of flux with new and different topics and issues being brought under the "tourism umbrella". This created a need for a clearer understanding of tourism as a science where theories and concepts are clearly explained and where research formed the basis of all discussion and debate (Jafari 2002, Bramwell and Lane 1993). The final phase has been termed as the "knowledge-based platform" (Jafari 2002). This phase was characterized by an outbreak of literature (books, journals and other publications) with tourism as the main topic of discussion.

The web page of Brian Garrod (a senior lecturer in tourism at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth) lists 76 journals that fall under the banner of hospitality, tourism, leisure or recreation. The sustainability debate in particular has attracted the attention of academics and practitioners alike. The Journal of Sustainable Tourism came out with its first publication in 1993 with its aim being "to foster research and practice in sustainable tourism to help develop both a theoretical base for the subject and reliable empirical evidence of its results and impacts" (Bramwell and Lane 1993:3). The Journal of Ecotourism was established in 2002 with the

primary aim of “examining the social, economic and ecological aspects of ecotourism at a number of scales” (Fennel 2002:5). Thus as can be seen there is an abundance of academic literature in the form of journal articles, books, case studies and so on, revolving around tourism in general and sustainable tourism development in particular. This study has utilized journals as the primary resource to understand and infer the concept of sustainable tourism development as it is portrayed in the literature.

Sustainable Tourism Development: Theory behind the concept and its critiques

When going over an assortment of literature written on the subject of tourism, sustainable tourism development, impacts of tourism etc, the common denominator in most literature is the expression of lack; (lack of) consensus on a particular issue/problem, or (lack of) further research in relation to specific idea/area of study or (lack of) application of valued social, economic and environmental principles in the development of tourism. This section will begin with an overview of the some of the most common allegations/accusations directed against tourism research and practice with regards to sustainability and sustainable development.

- ◆ “...tourism study has failed to capitalize on progress made in other disciplines. As a field of study it appears isolated and research and teaching appear to have grave shortcomings...” (Farrell and Twining-Ward 2004:277).
- ◆ “Despite the surely incontrovertible truth that the magnitude and nature of tourism development in almost any area will be affected by a wide range of other existing and planned development types, e.g. housing, transport, retailing, health service provision, light industry, nature conservation and agriculture, the tourism literature brims with plan, strategies, models and frameworks constructed solely, or most exclusively, from a tourism perspective” (Hunter 2002:6).

- ◆ The term “sustainable development” has been subject to many different interpretations with each author claiming that his or her use of the phrase is appropriate (Butler, 1999).
- ◆ “Despite the significant attention paid by tourism academics and practitioners to sustainable tourism development in recent years, there has been a consistent failure within the tourism literature to relate the concept to the theory of its parental paradigm, sustainable development” (Sharpley 2000:1).
- ◆ “Sustainable tourism research would benefit from closer inspection of the broader sustainable development literature which frequently demonstrates greater flexibility in charting potential development pathways” (Hunter 1997:863).
- ◆ “Sustaining the resource base on which tourism depends must be the focus of any discussion surrounding sustainable tourism development. To date, this debate has focused narrowly on controlling the adverse impacts of tourism development itself” (McKercher 1993a:131).
- ◆ “Researchers and critics have to realize that we are reaching a *saturation point* where there are too many ‘experts’ with too much advice on the one hand and too few agents with too few resources and too little time to act on the other” (Muller 1994:134).
- ◆ “Sustainable tourism was initially confused with alternative tourism and associated almost exclusively with small-scale indigenously run tourism projects in developing countries” (Twining-Ward 1999:188)
- ◆ “The concept of sustainable tourism development remains the subject of vigorous debate. It is variously interpreted and its validity as a means and/or end of tourism development is questioned in many quarters, reflecting, in part, the lack of clarity or consensus concerning its meaning or objectives” (Sharpley 2000:1).

Each of these selected quotes mirrors issues/debates that consistently appear in the literature. However, only the most appropriate ones were selected to represent the issues that the researcher seeks to highlight. Based on a review of the above-mentioned literature and others, the researcher came up with six broad categories under which most debates/discussions/issues related to sustainable tourism development can be classified. These categories formed the basis for the interviews with the panel of experts. They are:

- Subjectivity versus objectivity
- Developed Countries versus Developing Countries
- Sustainable Development versus Sustainable Tourism Development
- Means versus ends
- Sustainable tourism development versus ecotourism/alternative tourism
- Theorize versus operationalize

Subjectivity versus Objectivity

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary explains “subjective judgment” as that which is “modified or affected by personal views, experience, or background”. And it defines “objective judgment” as “expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations”. The question of subjectivity versus objectivity in relation to sustainable tourism is relevant when looking at two levels of participants; sectors involved in the tourism phenomenon and destinations/regions promoting or aspiring to promote tourism development. The multi-faceted, multi-sectoral tourism phenomenon when combined with the vague and fuzzy concept of sustainable development results in uncertainty over what it could mean to different classes of people; be it the different sectors involved in tourism

(academics, practitioners, environmentalists, anthropologists, politicians, entrepreneurs and so on) or destinations, nations or regions.

Given such a situation what would be the best possible approach? Cohen in his article “rethinking the sociology of tourism” concludes that research in the sociology of tourism should be processual, contextual, comparative and emic (1979:31). Two out of the four strategies he suggested are closely related to the issue of subjectivity versus objectivity. He talks of the importance of considering the geographical, ecological, economic, social, cultural and political context when conducting research on the process of tourism at a particular destination. He also stresses on the importance of incorporating the emic (“from the point of view of the participants in the touristic situation”) perspective in sociological research. A reflection of this thought process is seen in the conclusions drawn by Tosun in his comparative study of host perceptions of impacts in Urgup (Turkey), Nadi (Fiji) and Central Florida. He believes that host perceptions of tourism impacts are shaped by various site-specific conditions under which tourists and hosts interact (2002:252). Thus if perception of impacts vary within and among peoples, it is no doubt that strategies to battle those impacts (like sustainable tourism development) would also be seen under different lights.

While the application of the principles of sustainable development to the tourism process would certainly depend on the context where it is being considered, the question is if there is room for various interpretations of sustainable tourism development by participants involved in the tourism process? Can there be certain established non-negotiables/criteria that we can call benchmarks of sustainability in tourism regardless of who the contributor is?

Developed versus Developing Countries

Clancy (2001) in his study of tourism development in Mexico identified certain key problems faced by the country: balance of payments, rate of growth of exports lagged behind imports, trade deficits, high birth rates, rise in demand for jobs, migration from countryside, overcrowding in cities, unequal distribution of income and social unrest. This list of evils, though not exhaustive, could very well fit the description of most other developing countries, including of course their own unique problems. Besides these generic economic conditions that set developing countries apart from the developed, there exists a hidden force unique to each country that steers economic, social and political change, namely culture. This cultural difference, while stark between the developed and developing countries, also prevents us from treating all *developing* countries as a homogenous group.

The website of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provides some insights on what culture really encompasses. According to UNESCO culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes creative expression (e.g., oral history, language, literature, performing arts, fine arts, and crafts), community practices (e.g., traditional healing methods, traditional natural resource management, celebrations, and patterns of social interaction that contribute to group and individual welfare and identity), and material or built forms such as sites, buildings, historic city centers, landscapes, art and objects.

How does the distinctive economic and cultural make-up of developing countries influence development in general and sustainable tourism development in particular? Cohen's (1979) "geographical, ecological, economic, social, cultural and political context" is of specific importance in the case of developing nations. The "context" of a particular destination

determines how tourism development is received and perceived and how impacts are manifested. It would also determine the applicability and success of new strategies (to bring tourism development at a destination in line with the principles of sustainable tourism development).

Consider for example a widely promoted tool towards achieving sustainability namely, involvement of local communities in the tourism decision-making process. “The magic words here are local control, stakeholders, community and bottom-up-decision making” (Aramberri 2002:84). However the question which needs to be addressed, and in most cases is overlooked is whether the locals can handle this empowerment (Jafari personal communication 2003). Most developing countries have long colonial histories, one of the repercussions of which is a propensity towards subjugation and passivity. Faced with such cultures is it realistic to imagine that locals would welcome the move towards empowerment and make decisions that would benefit all those involved (Jafari personal communication 2003)? Aramberri brings out another dimension to the issue of local empowerment saying that “empowering the locals may open a can of worms, for the locals almost inevitably have divergent and often opposite interests” (2002:84)

Tosun (2001) in his study of the challenges of sustainable tourism development in the developing world with special reference to Turkey, points out that the principles of sustainable tourism development have been established by developed countries oblivious to the conditions in the developing world. He concludes that implementation of the principles of sustainable tourism development is restricted by prevailing socio-economic conditions in the developing world and warrant socioeconomic and environmental trade-offs.

The common thread is the present understanding that it is not a case of “one size fits all”. In the words of Gerard Hofstede, “it has become painfully clear that development cannot be

pressure-cooked” (1993:87). Careful thought and consideration is a pre-condition to any form of tourism development in developing regions. As Richter points out, “the fragility that characterizes their political institutions and the scarcity that pervades their economies, however, makes the successful use of tourism development dependent on careful planning” (1984:8). Thus each and every aspect of sustainable tourism development needs to be analyzed for applicability based on the characteristics of the country/region/nation in question.

Sustainable Development versus Sustainable Tourism Development

“Despite owing its origins to the general concept of sustainable development, the subject of sustainable tourism development seems to have evolved largely in isolation from the continuing debate on the meaning of the former” (Hunter 1997:850). The Brundtland Report published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 is cited in most tourism texts dealing with sustainability. McKercher (2003) points out that although sustainability is supported in principle, it has been difficult to achieve in practice because of its complex nature. In his presentation to the National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development, he identifies key principles of sustainable development that are elucidated in the Brundtland Report: -

Table 1. Principles of Sustainable Development

-
- Sustainable Development: Key Principles
 - Inter-generational equity – meaning that the range of activities and the scope of ecological diversity available to future generations is at least as broad as that felt by current ones
 - Intra-generational equity, social justice and poverty alleviation – improving the well-being of all residents in a community, and not just benefiting the powerful or the rich
 - Public participation – which means that we all share a role to play and that communities need to collectively make decisions rather than having them imposed by external forces
 - Environmental protection as an integral component of economic development – economic development without environmental conservation is no longer acceptable
 - Dealing cautiously with risk and uncertainty – in situations where environmental impacts of activities are not known, the preferred option is to proceed cautiously or not at all, until the likely impacts can be determined

Additional elements

- Use of renewable resources at a rate equal to or less than the natural rate of regeneration
 - Accountability – about setting clear standards, ensuring monitoring and enforcement
-

The Brundtland Commission also provided a simplistic definition pulling together the various principles discussed above; “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (quoted by WTTC, WTO and Earth Council 1995:30). This definition and the very term sustainable development have been dissected and analyzed in the literature for contradictions and inconsistencies. Sharpley conceptualizes sustainable development as being “a juxtaposition of two schools of thought: development theory and environmental sustainability (Development + Sustainability = Sustainable Development)” (2000:7). In the same vein Wall explains how emphasis can be laid on either sustainability or development depending on who the stakeholder is. He points out that there is significant leeway in the meaning of both the terms and therefore there is room for questions such as “what is to be sustained” and “what is development” (2002:89).

These analyses bring out the conflict of interests between sustainability and development. Wall views sustainable development as an oxymoron of conflicting ideas that cannot be reconciled. “Sustainability requires a long-term perspective and something that is sustained should be enduring and ideally exists in perpetuity. In contrast, development implies change – a progression from an existing situation to a new, ideally superior, state” (2002:89). Dovers and Handmer (1993) present a similar case saying that the words sustainable and development are in opposing positions and amount to an oxymoron. However the context in which they present this contradiction is very interesting. They see sustainable development as a one of the contradictions in the concept of sustainability in that it leads to the debate on growth versus limits. Sustainability is viewed as the overarching umbrella and sustainable development

is seen as only one of the goals of sustainability. It is regarded as a way of bringing economic growth in line with the goals of sustainability but questioned because of its contradictory nature.

When associating tourism with the concept of sustainable development a number of questions arise concerning the relationship between the two. A root cause of this as noted by various academics is the failure of tourism (research and practice) to draw its principles from sustainable development. “Although sustainable tourism should logically reflect the tenets of sustainable development, there exist significant differences between the two concepts” (Sharpley 2000:14). Sharpley arrives at this conclusion after assessing sustainable tourism as it is practiced now against the principles and objectives of a model of sustainable development which outlines the fundamental principles (holistic approach, futurity, and equity) of sustainable development, development and sustainability.

In its attempt at holistic development he criticizes it of being largely product-development centered rather than people-development centered. It is also accused of monopolizing and crippling economies rather than diversifying and empowering them. In its attempt at “futurity”, the focus is primarily on “ecological sustainability of tourism itself rather than the potential contribution to long term sustainable development” (2000:10). Finally towards equity, Sharpley concludes that tourism not only fails to contribute towards the goal of equitable distribution of income but also is responsible for creating pockets of wealth in its wake. As Cohen puts it, it creates “islands of luxury living in remote locations, often surrounded by an impoverished population, which had in some cases been removed from its grounds and prevented from exploiting the natural resources located on them” (2002:273)

Most if not all the inconsistencies that sustainable tourism development is accused of stems primarily from a lack of understanding of the relationship between sustainability,

sustainable development and tourism. A direct manifestation of this is seen in the debate on whether sustainable tourism development is a means of achieving sustainable development or is an end in itself. This debate is discussed in further detail below.

Means versus End

Hunter reflects the essence of this debate when asking, “should sustainable tourism be concerned with attempting to create the conditions whereby tourism flourishes as an end in itself, or should sustainable tourism thinking be directed at finding a role for tourism as part of a more holistic strategy encompassing the more general aims of sustainable development” (2002:7). Most questions raised in regards to the application of sustainable development principles in the context of tourism relate directly or indirectly to this debate. The question of means versus end has manifested itself in variety of ways in the tourism literature. Following are some illustrations: -

Coccosis (1996) is quoted by Butler in saying that “there are at least four ways to interpret tourism in the context of sustainable development: a sectoral viewpoint such as the economic sustainability of tourism; an ecological view point emphasizing the need for ecologically sustainable tourism; a view point of the long-term viability of tourism recognizing the competitiveness of destinations; and a viewpoint accepting tourism as a part of a strategy for sustainable development through out the physical and human environments” (1999:10).

Wall (2002) questions the appropriateness of advocating sector specific approaches like sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism and so forth. On a similar note McKercher (1993) wonders if sustainability is a hope or threat to tourism. He feels that if broken down into sectors then tourism has a lot to gain by adopting the sustainability ideology. He argues that in the wake of contrasting interpretations of sustainable development and natural resource management

(development-oriented perspective and ecologically sustainable perspective), tourism has much to lose if it attempts to apply both sustainable and ecologically sustainable concepts.

The concern around sustainable tourism development being misunderstood for another form of tourism (like nature-based, ecological, soft tourism, etc.) as opposed to a development philosophy also stems from a lack of clarity on 'means versus end'. Twining-Ward brings out this issue relating it to scale and intensity of tourism development. According to her there have been two main responses to questions on scale and intensity; one is the emergence of small scale alternative forms of tourism that seek to provide the opposite of mass tourism, and the other is the emergence of sustainable tourism development that seeks to make "all tourism more compatible with the needs and resources of a destination area (1999:187).

Clarke (1997) alludes to the 'means versus end debate' in her paper "A Framework of Approaches to Sustainable Tourism". She maps a chronological evolution of approaches to sustainable tourism, which started off with the conception that it was a possession of certain types of tourism or situation, moving thereon to the acceptance that it was more of a goal for all types of tourism to strive towards. The framework she proposed consists of four positions; in the first, mass tourism and sustainable tourism were considered as polar opposites, second, a continuum was seen to exist between the two, third, large-scale tourism (or mass tourism) was seen to be moving towards small-scale tourism (or sustainable tourism) and the last and latest understanding of sustainable tourism is that it is a goal that all tourism must strive to achieve.

Hunter (1997) argues that sustainable tourism should be regarded as an over-arching paradigm within which various developmental pathways can be considered depending on circumstances, rather than simply trying to strike a balance between competing interests like host community needs, environmental conservation/preservation needs, demand, and supply. Based

on this argument, he proposes four different approaches each to understanding sustainable tourism: -

- “Sustainable development through a ‘tourism imperative’”
- “Sustainable development through ‘product-led tourism’”
- “Sustainable development through ‘environmental-led tourism’”
- “Sustainable development through ‘neotenus tourism’”

Here tourism is seen as a contributor to sustainable development, wherein tourism development pathways are decided upon based on the destinations immediate needs or situation. So on the one hand, tourism development could be promoted simply because other forms of development at a destination are causing more harm than tourism could potentially cause or on the other hand, tourism could be discouraged for the greater good of the resources of the destination.

Sharpley calls Hunter’s approach as free-floating and criticizes it of “side-stepping the need for concise definition” and contributing little to “sharpen the focus of the study onto the processes and overall viability of the concept” (2000:1). He conceptualizes sustainable development as “a juxtaposition of two schools of thought: development theory and environmental sustainability (2000:7), and therefore suggests that there should be two sets of objectives for sustainable tourism development: development objectives which would relate to economic and social conditions of the local community and sustainability objectives which would encompass the local environment issues. Thus as Sharpley reflects sustainable tourism development is “variously interpreted and its validity as a means and/or end of tourism development is questioned in many quarters, reflecting, in part, the lack of clarity or consensus concerning its meaning or objectives” (Sharpley 2000:1).

Sustainable Tourism Development versus Ecotourism

As was discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, the adaptancy platform which was marked by a quest for better and more desirable forms of tourism, led to the proliferation of an abundance of literature pondering over the different types/forms of tourism. A consequence of this quest for better forms of tourism is that sustainable tourism (development) simply became another form or type of tourism rather than being adopted as a development philosophy. It is suggested that this could be due to the concurrence in timing (1980s) of the introduction of the concept of sustainable development and onset of the adaptancy platform. Another outcome manifested itself in the form of literary confusion over the terms sustainable tourism/sustainable tourism development and ecotourism, which began to be used synonymously without a clear understanding of what each one means and represents.

There seems to be uncertainty in the relationship between sustainable tourism development and ecotourism in particular. The terms are at times used interchangeably in the literature and ambiguity surrounds discussions to establish which one forms the broader umbrella over the other. Therefore, this study seeks to establish its standpoint using appropriate writing that throws light on the tenets of both concepts and also utilizing the reactions of the experts with regards to this dilemma. The following comparison of the definitions of sustainable tourism development and ecotourism, which highlight the key principles of both, help in identifying some differences in scale and intent:

Table 2. Sustainable Tourism Development Vs Ecotourism

Sustainable Tourism Development	Ecotourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using resources sustainably • Reducing over consumption and waste • Maintaining diversity • Integrating tourism into planning • Supporting local economies • Involving local communities • Consulting stakeholders and public • Training staff • Marketing tourism responsibly • Undertaking research <p>(Source: WWF 1992)</p>	<p>Ecotourism is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature based • Environmentally friendly • Sustainable managed <p>The last dimension is taken to encompass both the natural and cultural environments involved in supplying the ecotourism experience.</p> <p>(Source: Blamey 2001)</p>

In effect although both terms share a number of common objectives, sustainable tourism development looks at the big picture while ecotourism is more specific in its intent. While the “nature-based” component is a must for ecotourism it need not be the case for sustainable tourism development if the destination under question is a cultural site for example. While sustainable tourism development is a development philosophy, which can be applied to all forms of tourism, ecotourism is a particular type of tourism targeted at a specific market segment, which incorporates the principles of the former.

From these definitions it is apparent that ecotourism can be envisioned as *one* of the many goals of sustainable tourism development. Also the former needs to incorporate the concept of sustainability only then can it be referred to as environmentally friendly and thus distinguished from nature or adventure tourism. Muller sates in his discourse on ecologically

sustainable tourism that “when ecotourism is perceived as a part of a strategy of sustainable development, which incorporates amelioration measures like EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and EA (Eco-Auditing), then indeed ecotourism has the potential to enhance the welfare of both the tourists and the visited communities of these natural unique areas” (2000:250). Thus the two are inextricably linked; however it can be concluded that sustainable tourism development forms the broader umbrella.

Theorize Versus Operationalize

“Defining sustainable development in the context of tourism has become something of a cottage industry in the academic literature of late” (Garrod and Fyall 1998:199). While some scholars are of the opinion that it is time to move on from the fixation of defining sustainable tourism development to the task of implementing its principles, others consider the clarification of doubt and discrepancies on the topic a prerequisite to its successful implementation. Butler points out that one of the most frustrating aspects of the widespread acceptance and adoption of the concept of sustainable tourism development is that the implementation of the idea has been much less successful. He attributes this to the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the meaning of the term (1998:25). However, in another study he stresses that “although further discussion on the meaning of the concept is important, a great deal more attention must be paid to the problem of how to operationalize the concept and make it applicable in appropriate situations to tourism” (1999:9).

When talking of operationalization of sustainable tourism development, the literature moves in the direction of discussions on indicators of sustainability (like carrying capacities of destinations), monitoring systems, environmental impact assessment, etc. The predominant focus is the natural environment. Miller in his study of expert opinion on sustainable tourism indicators

concludes that paradoxical as it may seem to develop indicators for sustainable tourism when there is lack of consensus on its meaning and definition, the process of developing indicators would help in determining the tenets of the concept (2001:361). Thus as can be seen this is an important area of discussion, it however only scratches the surface of the discussion.

On the other end of the spectrum there are also researchers such as Farrell and Twining-Ward who are suggesting a complete reconceptualization of tourism study. They argue that in order to facilitate effective transition to sustainability the field of tourism must accommodate transformations occurring in areas of research like ecosystem ecology, ecological economics, global change science, sustainability science and complexity theory (2004:274)

Therefore, the task at hand is to first understand the level of development of the literature on sustainable tourism development. And second to identify if there are areas/issues/questions being bypassed, evaded or shunned as irrelevant to the discourse. And finally gain an understanding of how to deal with the question on whether to continue discussions on theory or move on and simply try to put to practice what is know and agreed upon.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The chapter on methodology will detail all of the activities that the researcher engaged in during the process of data collection, subject selection, instrumentation, and data analysis. This chapter seeks to provide step-by-step information of the progression of the study so as to enable future researchers to understand and reproduce a similar or related study.

The objectives of the study revolved around presenting an in-depth analysis of the concept of sustainable tourism development, highlighting unresolved questions and concerns and obtaining expert opinion in regards to the resolution of the same. Secondary sources of information were used to identify issues related to the theoretical aspects of sustainable tourism development. These issues were then brought to the table with selected experts in the form of a questionnaire administered via telephone interviews. The study employed qualitative methods for data collection and analysis.

A number of administrative details were undertaken and completed prior to getting into the actual research process. After undergoing the human subjects training online and acquiring the certification, a copy of the proposal was sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of methods used. Only after the study was approved by the IRB data collection in the form of interviews could begin. Also this study employed a different style manual from what is prescribed by the Graduate School at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin. To enable this, a request was forwarded to the graduate school to sanction the use of “*Annals of Tourism Research*” format for the presentation of this paper.

The Data

Primary Data

A structured questionnaire, developed for the purpose of this study, administered to selected experts via telephone interviews was the source of qualitative primary data. Besides the interviews, the researcher also established contact with selected academics during the initial stages of the study to seek advice on possible pathways in topic selection and subject selection. Some of these academics were contacted based on the referral of the chair of the thesis committee and others based on the researchers interest in their published works.

Secondary Data

This study utilized journal articles, articles from edited books, articles from encyclopedias, information from Internet sites and other tourism related theses as the main sources of secondary information. Selected books were also used in the development of the literature review and methodology.

The Subjects: Selection of the Panel of Experts

Key Considerations

One of the most vital aspects of this research was arriving at a well-chosen panel of experts who could contribute effectively towards achieving the goals of the study. This in turn depended on the formulation and utilization of an apposite and objective methodology that would produce the required results.

This study used a Delphi technique of sorts to arrive at the final panel of experts. The methodology utilized was formulated based on input from the chair of the thesis committee. The aim was to be as objective as possible and to minimize researcher biases. The idea was to use the opinion of a third-party group of academics, whose area of expertise revolves around the

topic of tourism and sustainability, as the “voting population” who would then help in the selection of the final panel by nominating five scholars each who they considered as experts in the field of sustainable tourism development.

The first task therefore was to select the pool of third party individuals. It was decided that the size of this voting population needed to be at least 70-100 academics. Two possible pathways were then weighed for their pros and cons. The first method proposed that the researcher comb through issues (last 10 years) of selected top ranking journals (*Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Travel Research* and *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*) and make a list of all those who have published on the topic of sustainable tourism development. Article titles and abstracts would have to be the key areas used to determine if an author qualified to be part of the voting population. The second method proposed the use of the database of editors and referees maintained by the chief editor of *Annals of Tourism Research*, called “Research Expertise: Editors and Outside Reviewers” as the base from which the “voting population” could be drawn. Since this database consisted of personal information and research interests of 246 academics, it was suggested that this list could be narrowed down by conducting an electronic search of keywords like ‘sustain’, ‘ecotourism’, and ‘nature’. Thus a list of only those academics with research interests revolving around these topics would serve as the voting population.

Both methods had their own advantages and disadvantages. However, the second method was selected over the first as it was considered more effective in terms of eliminating researcher bias and was more time-effective. Also *Annals of Tourism Research* is consistently one of the top ranking journals in the field and academics associated with this journal will be of high standing whose opinions are backed by credibility.

Besides an appropriate methodology for choosing the voting population, another key decision revolved around the parameters to be set for the voters in nominating their five “experts”. The notion of expert is highly subjective. For the purpose of this study, it was decided that voters would be asked to nominate only those belonging to the academic community who have published on the topic of sustainable tourism development and related themes. Voters were required to simply provide five names without ranking them in any order. Nominations of scholars were not to be limited by location/country of residence.

The Process

The database of editors and referees maintained by the chief editor of *Annals of Tourism Research*, called “Research Expertise: Editors and Outside Reviewers” served as the tool for the identification of the “voting population”. Its 2003 version (used for this study) listed 246 volunteers who have all published articles in the journal at some point in their career and/or are part of the editorial board of the journal. This group of experts is international, multidisciplinary and multilingual in its constitution. This database details information on their academic backgrounds, institutional affiliations, and areas of expertise (tourism as well as non-tourism). However it must be noted that the scholars themselves have volunteered the information on their research expertise.

A keyword search of “sustain”, “ecotourism” and “nature” was conducted on the electronic version of the database. This search yielded a list of 71 names all of whom were contacted via email and informed of the details of the study and invited to rank, based on their personal opinion, the top five scholars associated with sustainable tourism development (a copy of the contents of this email is provided in the appendix section of this paper – Appendix A).

The Questionnaire

The objective of this study was to bring to the table certain issues and concerns that consistently appear in some way, shape or form in discussions of sustainable tourism development. The instrument developed for the interview process consisted of 13 questions that were categorized into six broad headings; subjectivity versus objectivity, theorize versus operationalize, means versus end, sustainable development versus sustainable tourism development, sustainable tourism versus ecotourism and developed countries versus developing countries. These categories were formulated based on the researchers analysis and understanding of various issues presented in the literature. Since the research is qualitative in nature the questions were used as a platform to guide the interview along a particular direction. Participants were expected to elaborate on their opinions as the questions were designed to be open-ended (a copy of the questionnaire is placed in the appendix section of this paper - Appendix B).

The Interview

Data was collected via structured telephone interviews conducted during Spring-Summer of 2004. Once the final list of nine experts was drawn up each of them were contacted via email. The email notified them of the objectives of the study, informed them of their selection to the panel of experts and requested their participation in the study (a copy of this email is provided in the appendix section – Appendix C). Positive responses were received from eight out of the nine experts. However only seven interviews were conducted as the researcher was unable to establish contact with one of the experts thereafter, during the time frame of the interviews. Of the seven interviews that were conducted, six were conducted over the phone as per the research plan. One of the interviews had to be completed via email owing to lack of telephone access of the expert.

The final list of interviewees is as follows: Richard Butler, Martin Mowforth, David Weaver, Erlet Cater, Pamela Wright, Colin Hunter and Michael Hall (e-mail interview).

Upon receipt of confirmation to participate interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the experts. This involved a flurry of emails going back and forth between the researcher and each individual expert matching calendars and time zones. An outline of the interview questions providing the key headings to be discussed (mentioned above) along with the statement of consent were emailed to each of the participants prior to their interview.

All interviews were recorded with prior consent of the participants. Participants were informed that the study was employing only minimal identifiers and that they were simply being listed by name as being a part of the panel of experts and that they would not be directly quoted in the findings of the study. On an average each interview lasted at least 60-65 minutes. The shortest interview was about 45 minutes and the longest about 85-90 minutes. For the sake of uniformity all telephone interviews were conducted in a similar fashion; questions were read out from the instrument as prepared. Any further elaborations on the questions were provided only if the expert requested for clarification.

For the email interview the same instrument that was used for the telephone interviews was sent. The expert was requested to be as spontaneous in his responses as possible and to limit corrections and modifications to a minimal level.

Data Analysis

Taylor and Bogdan identify certain activities that form a part of data analysis in most qualitative studies. The first revolves around “identifying themes and developing concepts and propositions”. They call this ongoing discovery. The second activity involves “coding the data and refining one’s understanding of the subject matter” (1998:141). And finally “understanding

the data in the context in which they were collected”; this is referred to as discounting data (1998:142). “The essence of the analysis procedure will be to return to the term of reference, the research problem and the questions of the research, and begin to sort and evaluate the information gathered in relation to the questions posed” (Finn, Elliott-White and Walton as quoted by Ramchander 2004:127).

This study utilized the content analysis method for sorting through the data in a systematic manner. The recorded interviews were first transcribed into Word documents for ease of analysis. This was followed by extensive reading and re-reading of the transcripts to determine the perspective and standpoint of each expert. Owing to the questionnaire itself been divided into six broad categories (themes), this was used as the starting point for dividing the collected information. Since the goal of the interviews with the experts was to seek opinion on “contested issues” that emerged from a review of literature, one of the outcomes pursued in the data analysis was an understanding of each of the experts general reaction to each of the six themes (subjectivity versus objectivity, theorize versus operationalize, means versus end, sustainable development versus sustainable tourism development, sustainable tourism versus ecotourism and developed countries versus developing countries), and their standpoint on the path to be taken in each of the debates.

Once this was established responses to each question within the broad themes were then compared and contrasted for similarities and dissimilarities. This was followed by a process of creating categories and assigning codes. “The coding process involves bringing together and analyzing all the data bearing on major themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations and propositions” (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:151).

Following the analysis and interpretation of the data decisions were made on how to present the data. Those questions requiring the respondents to list criterion or factors or constraints are presented with the aid of charts and figures. Those questions that elicited in-depth responses are narrated drawing on similarities, dissimilarities, suggestions and opinions.

Assumptions

- ◆ It was assumed that members of the “voting population” who chose to participate would understand the criteria for nominating their top five experts and comply with it.
- ◆ It was assumed that the panel of experts would be open to honestly expressing their opinions and elaborating on them when presented with the interview questions. It was also presupposed that the opinions expressed would not be clouded by personal biases, if any, against literary works of other panel members or of authors cited and referenced in the body of the interview questions.
- ◆ It was assumed that all the experts who chose to participate would be reachable by phone for their interviews.

Chapter Four

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter will present the reactions/responses that resulted from the structured interview process. The chapter will begin with a brief profile of experts where background information on each of the experts selected to the panel will be outlined. This information is seen to be relevant in providing an orientation to the caliber of the experts and also to recognize the perspectives from which the interview questions were tackled. Information on the experts was obtained from the websites of organizations/universities that they are affiliated with. This will be followed by a detailed discussion of each of the issues presented to the experts during the interview. The findings will be presented using a combination of narrative prose as well as pictographic charts, tables and figures.

The Panel

Table 4. Profile of Experts

Name of Expert	Current Affiliations	Research Interests
Dr. Colin Hunter	Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Environmental Geography, University of Aberdeen, U.K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory and practice of sustainable tourism; ecotourism • Urban environmental management; the sustainable city • Sustainable development and water resources • Bacterial quality of rural streams • Bacterial dynamics in constructed wetlands
Dr. Dave Weaver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor of Tourism & Events Management Dept. of Health, Fitness & Recreation Resources George Mason University, U.S.A • Serves on the editorial boards of <i>Journal of Ecotourism</i>, <i>Tourism and Hospitality Research</i>, <i>Tourism Geographies</i>, and <i>Pacific Tourism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination life cycle • Ecotourism • Sustainable tourism • Tourism management • War and tourism

<i>Review</i>		
Dr. Erlet Cater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, The University of Reading, U.K • Serves on the editorial boards of <i>Tourism Geographies</i> and <i>Journal of Ecotourism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems and prospects for sustainable tourism in the developing countries • The contribution of ecotourism towards improved local livelihoods
Dr. Martin Mowforth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting Research Fellow in Human Geography, Department of Geographical Sciences, University of Plymouth, U.K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New forms of tourism and their association with notions of sustainability • The broad field of issues of environment and development in the developing world, specializing in the region of Central America • Development aid projects • Disaster management • Issues of transport planning
Dr. Richard Butler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor of Tourism, School of Management, University of Surrey, U.K • Fellow Royal Geographical Society, Royal Society of Arts • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination development • Sustainability • Impacts and indicators • Tourism and the media • Tourism and security • Islands and remote areas
Ms. Pamela Wight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of Pam Wight and Associates (International consultancy specializing in sustainable tourism) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects involve environmental and resource planning, impact management, public participation, protected areas and conservation planning, community development and capacity building, and feasibility studies and development planning.
Dr. Michael Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Department, Department of Tourism, University of Otago, N.Z • Senior Research Fellow of New Zealand Natural Heritage Foundation at Massey University • Editor of <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism policy formulation and analysis • Strategic planning with special reference to tourism, heritage and regional development • Tourism in rural and peripheral areas, especially in relation to wine and food tourism • Heritage management, marketing and interpretation • Event management, planning and marketing • Sustainable development • Special interest tourism • Urban redevelopment and re-imaging strategies • National park, wilderness, and outdoor recreation management and evaluation • John Muir • Resource management and planning • Globalization

The Data

The cross-case analysis/cross-interview analysis method was used as the starting point to examining the data. The basic philosophy that guided the data analysis was based on Taylor and Bogdan's elucidation of "cross-case analysis".

Beginning with cross-case analysis means grouping together answers from different people to common questions or analyzing different perspectives on central issues. If a standardized open-ended interview has been used, it is fairly easy to do a cross-case analysis or cross-interview analysis for each question in the interview. With an interview guide approach answers from different people can be grouped by topics from the guide, but the relevant data won't be found in the same place in each interview.

Since the interview questions were divided into six broad categories, these were used as the logical starting point for the analysis. Each category was considered as a "theme" and questions under each theme were broken down through a process of coding and categorizing of responses, recording agreement/disagreement in the viewpoints expressed, and highlighting key thoughts and recommendations articulated by the experts. A seventh and final theme added was "recommendations for the future".

Subjectivity versus objectivity

Questions two, three and four from the interview correlated to the issue of subjectivity versus objectivity. Four out of seven experts expressed that our approach to understanding the meaning and applications of sustainable tourism development could be nothing but subjective. Two experts stated that it was not an "either-or" situation but one where a combination of subjectivity and objectivity needed to be employed. And finally one expert declared that we should aim at being as objective as possible but being mindful of the fact that we can never really achieve it. This approach was assigned the name "conditional objectivity".

All reasons justifying subjectivity, objectivity or a combination of both stemmed from two realities; “*place specificity*” and “*personal biases*”. Below is a table that illustrates, through excerpts from the transcripts, how these two reasons were singled out.

Table 5. Emergent Codes

Approach	Excerpts from transcripts validating the coding	Codes Assigned
Subjectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The kind of sustainability and sustainable tourism that would be relevant to New York City would be very different from the kind of sustainable tourism that would be relevant to say Antarctica, or say to a technologically primitive culture in the Amazon etc.” 	Place specificity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All understanding is subjective – tourism or otherwise...” 	Personal Biases
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are very few places that have really set up any mechanism or framework to objectively decide if they have become more sustainable”. • “Sustainable tourism is open to interpretation and open to bias and I think that’s a good thing as long as people make it clear when they say what they think sustainable tourism development is”. 	
Conditional Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...our level of awareness will come into it, our values will come into it, balance between our level of objective interest and our level of self interest will always come into it”. 	Personal Biases
Combination of Subjectivity and Objectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You have to be subjective in terms of place specificity according to the destination, country, level of development, physical geography, technological backgrounds etc...within that hopefully you can be objective as to certain criteria”. 	Place Specificity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...we are part of the process”. 	Personal Biases

As a follow-up to the issue of approach the experts were asked if, in view of the subjectivity involved, sustainable tourism development could be considered as a universal concept with a basic common definition that outlined certain criteria to be met regardless of the destination or region. This question elicited a consensus on two counts. First, all of the experts agreed that certain common “principles”, or “goals” or “elements” of the concept could be established. They seemed not to want to use the term “common criteria” as that would be leaning

more into the realm of implementation. Second, there was agreement that the concept could not be called universal since the implementation of its principles was purely subjective and would therefore need more place/region/destination specific approaches. One expert however expressed skepticism over established common goals or principles explaining that they raised more questions than they answered. “There is always a question on the degree to which something should be done”.

The final question in this section aimed at arriving at a list of factors that needed to be considered or outcomes that needed to be pursued when planning for tourism at a particular destination. Based on a review of the range of topics covered the following figure was established illustrating the broad themes and the thoughts/ideas expressed within those themes.

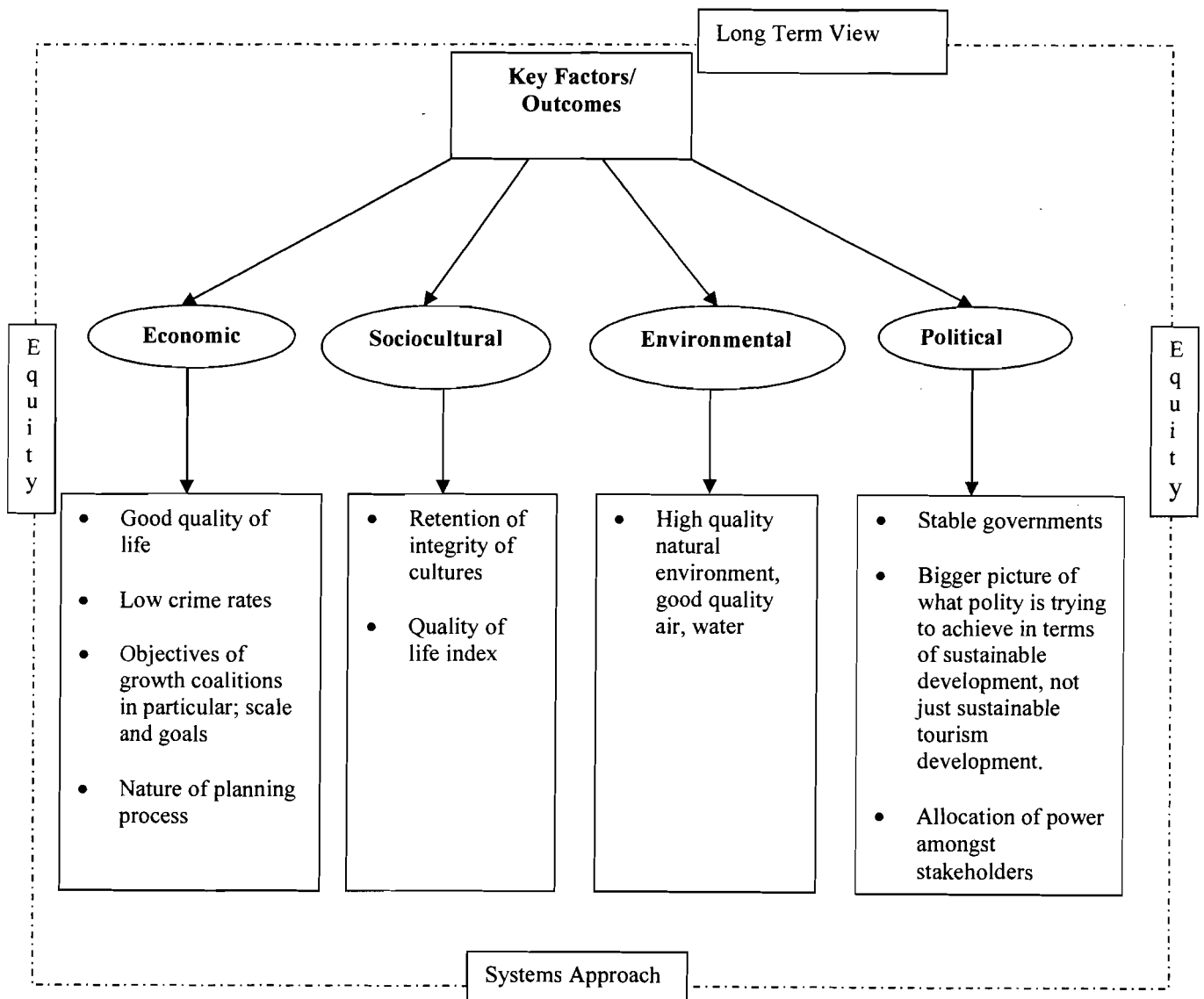


Figure 2. Key Considerations in the Tourism Planning Process

Developing versus Developed Countries

This section relates back to the issue of subjectivity versus objectivity. The goal of introducing this section in the interview was to go deeper into the issue of subjectivity and find out (a) what unique factors/characteristics affect the process of tourism development in developing countries and (b) how can these factors can be used as a lever to steer (tourism) development along the right path rather than deem them as obstacles?

The responses to the first question were broadly categorized under two headings; “*state of affairs*” and “*remedies*”. When talking of the existing state of affairs in the developing world the issues that experts touched upon were seen to fall under the following five themes: economics, politics, ideology, cultural make-up, and infrastructure. Following several readings of the responses of experts to this particular question, it was determined that all issues raised could be placed under one of the above mentioned categories.

State of Affairs

Six out of the seven responses contained references to the economics of tourism development in the developing world. These responses could be further subdivided into two categories: economic priority and economic dependence. Four out of the six experts touched upon the fact that most developing countries were looking for a ways to inject the process of development into economies so as to create jobs and income for the local people. Tourism is therefore seen as an ideal tool to achieve this goal. Thus when introduced into the economic system to satisfy this immediate necessity environmental concerns, planning for sustainability and the like does not come into the picture.

“The level of indebtedness or poverty is such that they will often utilize tourism as a means of development regardless of the costs because they are desperate for the benefits of modernity”. One expert commented on the irony of this situation wherein, “in the developing world sustainability is bit of a luxury... it is a bit of a paradox since it is more urgent to achieve it, it’s a long ways from achieving it, but it is still perceived as a luxury”!

Besides the economic facet, politics was the next recurrent theme in the most responses. Six out of seven experts made references to issues directly or indirectly related to the political set-up of a developing country. It must be noted here that observations concerning community involvement and stakeholder relations were brought under the umbrella of politics.

The concept and application of “development”, as developed countries understand it, was contested by three out seven experts. On the one hand the very efficacy of using such labels as “developed” and “developing” was attacked, based on the argument that it led to the impression that “western development is the only form of development” and that the so called developing world was expected to live in the image of the developed. And on the other hand the hypocrisy of developed countries expecting developing countries *not* to do what they did in the past was highlighted. The general argument of developing countries is that “we will develop first thank you very much and make money off of the environment and then we will go into environmental protection afterwards”! Considering the fact that developing countries did exactly that, the righteousness of expecting developing countries not to do the same was questioned. And finally developed countries were also accused of expecting developing countries to implement things that even developed countries have been “too lazy, selfish, and careless to introduce themselves”.

In addition to these three main streams of thought, certain infrastructural and cultural constraints were also brought up. Only one expert each however raised these issues. Following is a table that consolidates the thoughts expressed under these five themes.

Table 6. Developing World – The State of Affairs

Theme	Characteristics
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A developing country is looked upon as an exotic culture/climate/environment for the benefit of the foreigner. • Foreign ownership predominates since investments come from developed countries. Therefore economic benefits float back to the investors. • Economic necessity/priority precedes concern for environment and culture. Tourism is seen as a means to development; a quick fix to the existing poverty and economic backwardness. • Lack of sufficient economic and human resources.
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption, conflict of interest, and illegal activity. • Lack of collaborative approaches, little transparency in decision-making, little accountability because of top-down command and control approach. • Legislations, regulations, and rules exist on paper rather than in practice. • International tourism industry, ecotourism, sustainable tourism etc are dominated by center-periphery relationships; by the political economy of tourism. • Politicians are much closer to people and this affects permissions being granted, planning controls being imposed/not imposed etc. • Community involvement is more germane in developing countries.
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western-centric view of development • Developing countries are expected to do things even developed countries have not introduced themselves.
Cultural-Makeup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information sharing. • Tendency to prefer outside help/counsel rather than going through the learning process itself
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry associations are not well articulated or well funded

Remedies

The second part to this section asked for input on how developing countries could use their many constraints as a lever to steer (tourism) development along the right path. The importance of providing developing nations with adequate reasons and explanation as to why they should engage in sustainable development was stressed. It was felt that if developing countries were expected not to do what developed countries did in the past then they must be told “what’s in it for them”. One expert however, while stating that this would be the standard answer to such a question, talked of the possibility of letting developing countries in essence do what developed countries did; in the first phase of development for example build hotels and create a certain level of economic development and then fix things up. The example of Korea and Taiwan were enumerated wherein these countries experienced massive economic development accompanied by massive environmental deterioration during the 50s to the 70s, but now have achieved substantial levels of improvement in environment. The following statement made by this expert provides the reasoning behind this idea, “I certainly see that there is a problem in saying that no don’t build the hotel, keep yourself poor because then you will have clean air. Then you are always going to create that pre-development stage where you never quite kick-start economic development”. However it is also suggested the developed world must assist developing regions in understanding what is appropriate where, identifying alternatives etc so as to minimize impacts.

A number of responses also alluded to the importance of building local capacity or human capacity in terms of teaching them how to benefit from their own resources. They must be required to participate and work through processes. One expert emphasized the need to also provide financial and human resources and not just verbal support for their cause. Another expert

focused on the importance of regulation, calling *deregulation* as the recipe for exploitation. It was suggested that moving away from regulation would mean moving away from sustainable development.

Sustainable tourism development versus sustainable development

This section consisted of two questions, the second of which has been detailed under a separate heading (recommendations for the future) at the end of this chapter. The first question aimed at establishing if there was congruency when comparing principles of sustainable development and the principles of sustainable tourism development as understood and discussed by the academics and perceived and implemented by the industry. This question had two parts to it; one requiring the experts to compare sustainable development theory with sustainable *tourism* development theory, to evaluate the level of congruence, and identify grey areas. The second part asked for an analysis of the industry's contribution towards understanding and implementing the tenets of sustainable development.

While most of the experts expressed an opinion with reference to achieving congruency within the literature, none of their responses could be classified as a simple yes or no. Hence it was decided that they should be categorized as being "*optimistic*" or "*pessimistic*". It must be noted here that each expert may have a different standard of expectations that needed to be met with regards to this aspect before they can even be optimistic. Four out of six experts were optimistic in their viewpoint and two pessimistic. One expert did not provide an opinion on that part of the question.

The optimists believed that a certain level of congruence had been achieved, to the extent that the sustainable tourism development literature did always mention 3-5 core principles/criteria of sustainable development like equity, environmental stewardship, and long-

term view. Three of these experts pointed out that the issue to be noted however was that of implementation. While one expert stressed on the fact that congruency in thinking/discussion did not necessarily mean that we had achieved agreement on the principles of sustainable tourism development and its implementation; another expert stated that the implementation allowed for different places and players to emphasize different aspects of the core criteria.

Out of the two experts who were “pessimistic”, one of them felt that “we had a long way to go” because there was much to learn from the sustainable development literature and that “we are in danger of re-inventing the wheel”. The other expert stated emphatically “we certainly haven’t”. The reasoning behind this opinion opens up an area that nobody else touched upon.

Below is an excerpt from that section of the interview: -

The people that are talking about sustainable development probably never used the word tourism, you never see the word tourism in the Brundtland report and therefore their assumptions, their theories, their gurus, their everything is different from us poor people in the tourism studies because we are extremely isolated from the debate...If you went to anybody outside of tourism studies and you talked about Jafari’s four platforms they would look at you with a blank stare and similarly if you look at a lot of the mainstream economic theory and such most people in tourism studies wouldn’t have a clue. So we borrow principles from sustainable development, I think we all agree on the idea, I think we agree on a lot of the ends we are trying to achieve but beyond that there is no inter-fertilization if I could use that word between the mainstream sustainable development debate and sustainable tourism.

Besides a status check of the theory of sustainable tourism development against sustainable development, the responses also brought to the fore a number of grey areas in the

same regard. Below is a table that highlights specific inconsistencies that the experts raised, with reference to two sets of players: industry and academics, in the utilization of sustainable development principles in tourism.

Table 7. Sustainable Tourism Development – Grey Areas

Academics	Industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity in tourism is not explored adequately due to lack of knowledge of the needs of future generations. • More research is required in the area of financing. It must be determined how to make sustainable tourism ventures more economically viable. • Tourism academics are mainly concerned with how tourism can be moderated, manipulated and managed in such a way that it brings about certain outcomes. • Lack of close partnerships with industry; lot of mutual mistrust. 	<p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development given precedence over all other core principles by tourism industry and governments (national and local). • Industry is dominated by private sector and bottom-line for private sector is money. • Industry and trade organizations are pursuing a “ghetto cause”. They simply pay lip service to notions of environmental stewardship, local empowerment etc. “When it comes to really effecting major systemic, economic, and social change the tourism industry does not want to go there”. • Equity – lack of understanding in principle therefore failure to implement. • Carrying capacity has not been given due attention. Real carrying capacity of a tourism destination remains unknown. • Social benefits/disbenefits and various issues of irresponsibility are shunned. For e.g. Air travel and sex tourism.
	<p>Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly superficial sustainability achievement; recycling, energy-use reduction etc; activities that generate positive publicity and generate income for corporations. • Industry has the notion that they are partaking in local empowerment and improvement of quality of life by simply providing jobs and generating income. • Industry, media, politician focus all their attention and recognition on small scale developments that are operating somewhat sustainably rather than trying to get places like Las Vegas, Atlantic City etc to be more sustainable.

Means versus end

This section brought to the table discrepancies in the conceptualization of sustainable tourism development; whereas to some it is a means of achieving sustainable development and to others it seen as an end in itself.

There was universal agreement on the notion that sustainable tourism development must be conceptualized as a means of achieving sustainable development, with the only exception being that one expert went one step further and presented two possibilities. The first scenario is that of a destination that is yet to achieve sustainable development; in such a case that destination is practicing “sustainable tourism development” (means to an end). The second scenario is that of a destination that has already achieved a certain level of sustainable development and is simply trying to maintain it; in this case they are practicing “sustainable tourism” (an end in itself).

Besides this variation, all other responses led to the same conclusion. This question produced some interesting viewpoints on how sustainable tourism development must be conceptualized. The broad theme that emerged was that sustainable tourism development was not about just the tourism industry. It was a part of a bigger whole, namely sustainability. And it was closely interlinked with other sectors and economic activities. Figure 3 highlights different ways the concept was referred to:

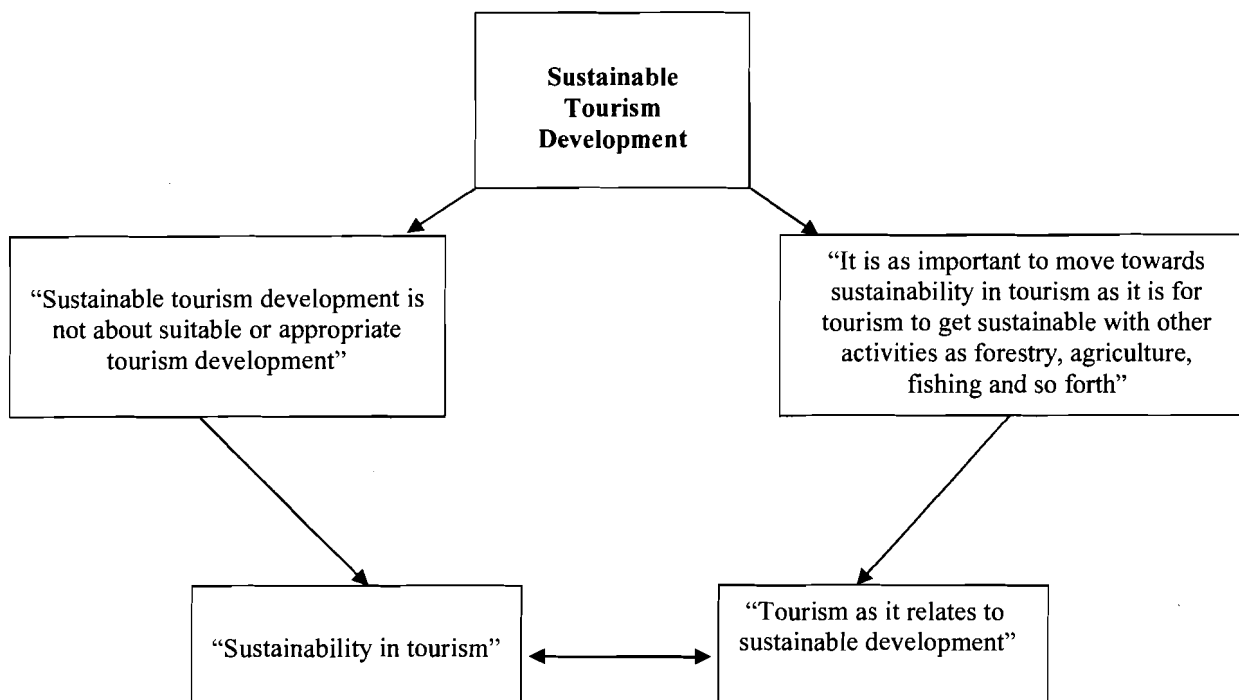


Figure 3. Conceptualization of Sustainable Tourism Development

Also part of this section the experts were asked to comment on the issue of scale and the relationship between mass tourism and sustainable tourism development as portrayed in Clark's (1997) framework. Three predominant streams of thought emerged:

- Scale does not necessarily equate to sustainability
- Mass tourism is not always unsustainable and so also ecotourism sustainable.
- Sustainable tourism development should be as applicable to mass tourism as it is ecotourism.

Sustainable Tourism Development versus Ecotourism

Five out of the seven experts assigned roles using either a venn diagram or a scale. Only two of the experts simply made a statement of their opinion. Two broad themes became apparent from an analysis of all the responses. Firstly, sustainable tourism development is seen to form the broader umbrella over other forms of tourism. Secondly, sustainable tourism development is seen

as a reference point in any representation of tourism types that all the different forms of tourism should measure up to, strive towards or comply with.

Of the two experts that made statements one simply declared that, “all tourism should ideally be regarded as a form of sustainable tourism development”. The second expert saw all forms of tourism being similar but slightly different “in varying degrees and varying areas from the concept of sustainable development or sustainable tourism side... I see sustainable tourism more of an umbrella and others differing are more specific forms of tourism that follow many of the same principles”. The same expert also expressed dislike for the term responsible tourism stating that “Responsible tourism is a terrible term, it should be banned!”

Illustrated below are Venn diagrams/scales representing verbal responses given by the experts when asked to position sustainable tourism development in relation to other forms of tourism.

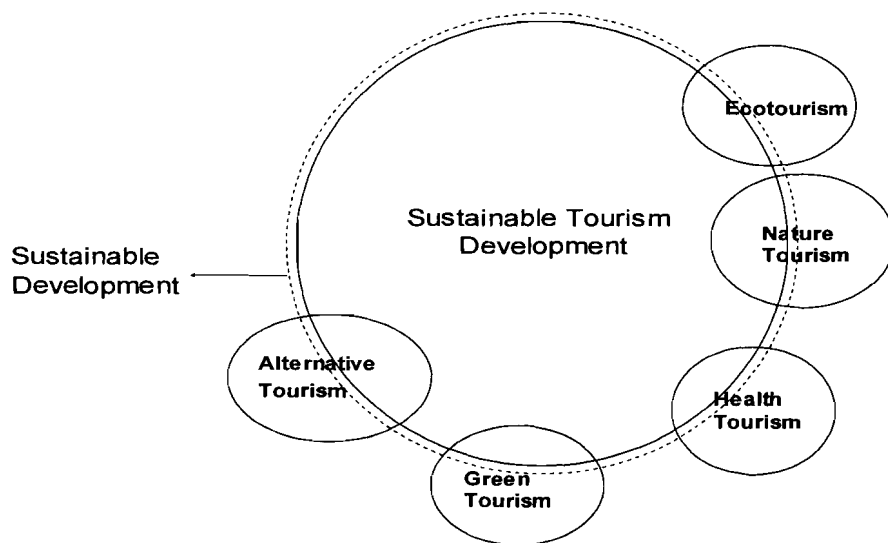


Figure 4. Illustration of Verbally Expressed Image – 1

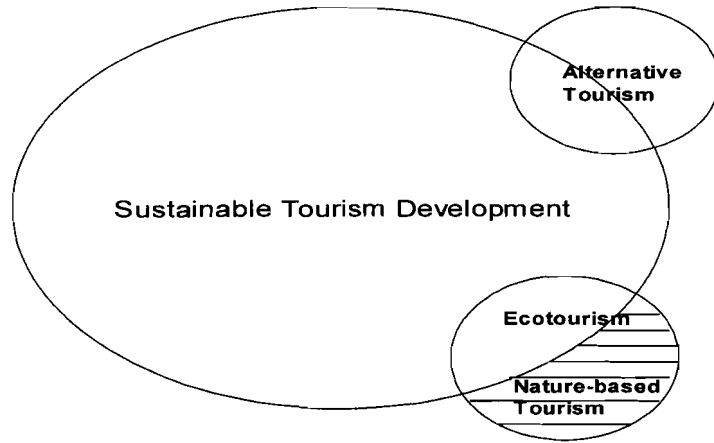


Figure 5. Illustration of Verbally Expressed Image – 2

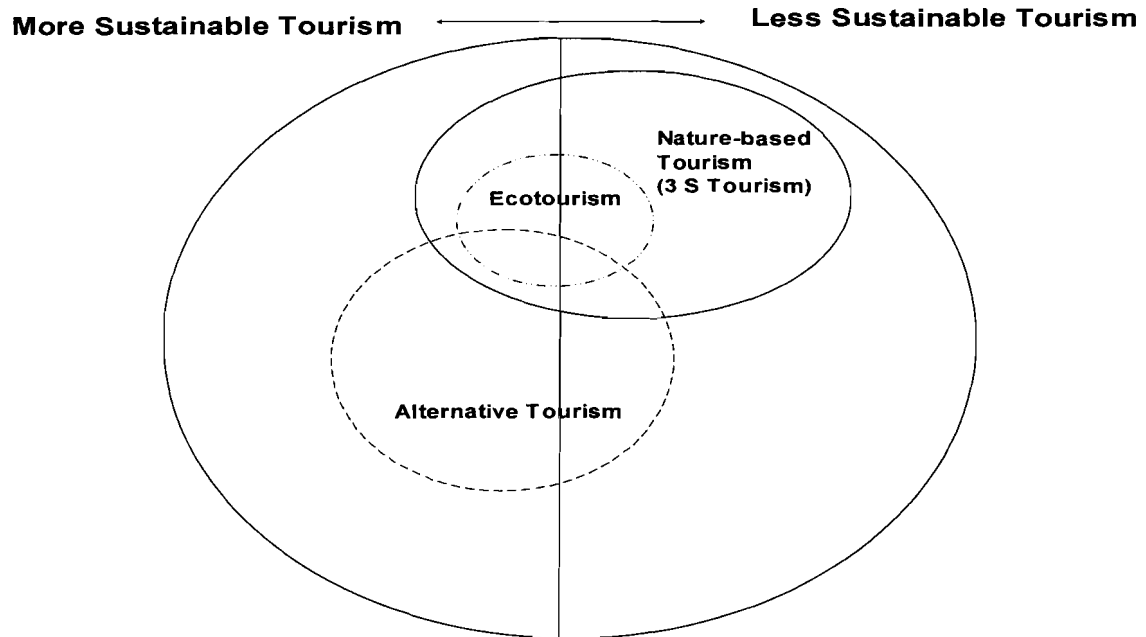


Figure 6. Illustration of Verbally Expressed Image – 3

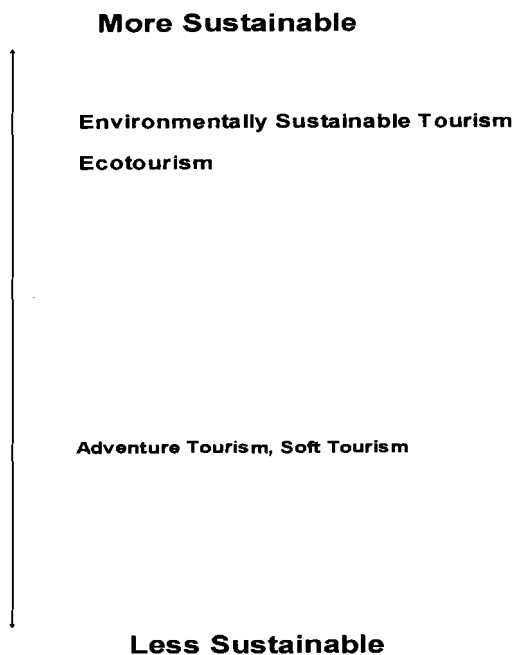


Figure 7. Illustration of Verbally Expressed Image – 4

Theorize versus Operationalize

Relevant to this topic were questions five, six and seven from the interview. The intent of this section was to understand the state of the literature on sustainable tourism development and to address the recurring debate on whether to continue to theorize on the topic or lay it to rest and go about operationalizing its principles.

With regards to the debate on whether to theorize or operationalize only one expert felt the need to continue to focus on theory. The rest of the votes were split in half between two groups. One group expressed the need to move on to implementation and the second group felt that the two processes could not be separated.



A commonality between all those in favor of implementation was their agreement on the fact that the theory was in no way ironclad and need not be laid to rest. However considering that the basic principle was obvious they felt more emphasis needed to be placed on implementation.

On the other end of the spectrum another expert argued that theorizing could never be put to rest because development changes from time to time and therefore the need to constantly debate these issues. “In terms of activating the principles of sustainable tourism development; we need to continually discuss and review what those principles are and we need to accept that they will change from time to time, society to society and that it is a little constrained to be producing works of academic worth which are telling people how to do this and that; how to build your eco-lodge, how to run your eco-tour, how to run your environmentally friendly business, as this will change”.

A third stance, taken by three out of seven experts, declared that it could never be an “either-or” situation and that theory and implementation needed to go hand in hand. It was referred to as an “ongoing process”, a “parallel process”, and one where “practice must inform theory”.

Table 8 illustrates a side issue that was discussed in relation to the above debate; can and should sustainable tourism development be defined? The tally marks represent agreement/disagreement and the excerpts outlined throw light on the reasons for their stances.

Table 8. Can and should sustainable tourism be defined?

Yes	No
<p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>“...if it isn’t defined it leaves it open to people pulling anything they like into sustainable tourism without really any check as to what they mean by it”.</p> <p>“Of course it has to be in terms of framing what the area of discourse is actually about...”</p> <p>“We can try to and maybe we need to in order to have some sort of goal post to move towards but whether we will actually achieve a perfect understanding or perfect definition I am very doubtful”.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>“I think it will be subject to individual nuance of interpretation...as long as people are clear and open on what it means to them before they give a description of their own particular experience of operationalizing sustainable tourism, then that’s fine”</p> <p>“Rather than saying it should be defined, I would say it should be discussed”</p>

Also included in this section was a question clarifying the stage of development of sustainable tourism development literature since there is considerable speculation over whether the literature has matured, or saturated, or been beaten to death. The experts were also asked to identify areas/subjects that they feel are not given enough coverage.

One expert categorized the literature as being in its adolescent years or teenage years, where there is a lot of confusion but also a lot of evolution. The early 90s was classified as “infancy”. Another expert seconded this notion in saying that it had certainly passed infancy (however not crossed maturity or saturation), but was “maturing”. A third expert validated this viewpoint also stating that the literature was moving in the direction of maturity. A fourth expert however directed thought along an opposed path saying that “it was meaningless to talk in terms of infancy or maturity as that implies that society (and hence development) is static – literature reflects broader societal, economic and political movement as well as that of institutions, universities, government and the career of individuals”. The remaining three experts did not express opinions on this count.

Following is a compilation of all the issues and ideas raised with reference to the grey areas in the literature:

1. No cross reading across tourism.
2. Very little reading outside of tourism. Majority of the innovative work is happening outside of tourism. Need to learn more from land-use planning literature and sustainable development literature.
3. Barely any coverage on systems approach, lack of understanding on the complexity of systems. Need to discuss whether or not systems are resilient and how to maintain that resilience. Need to evaluate if change is equal to damage.

4. Literature useful at the most local level
5. It is parochial in the spatial sense, focusing only on the destination area; impacts beyond destination area are not considered.
6. Sustainability in new areas is given more attention. Major established tours and destinations are avoided. Mature destinations use sustainability as a marketing tool; this topic has not been by-passed but is not treated properly.
7. Lack of in-depth analysis of sustainable tourism development
8. Interpretations of sustainable tourism development need to be clarified before rushing into operationalization
9. Western centric view of what constitutes sustainable tourism.
10. Role of tourism in contributing positively or negatively to sustainable development has not been covered.
11. Lack of holistic view of development, lack of understanding on how tourism can work with other sectors
12. Fails to address underlying factors that lead to development issues occurring in the first place.
13. Less work on how to do sustainable tourism right as it varies from place to place, person to person, and time to time.
14. Not enough research on Indicators. Need to take a look at indicators currently in use and assess if they are appropriate. Establish the appropriate thresholds and benchmarks. Evaluate if the thresholds and benchmarks that big corporations (like Marriott, British Airways) are using are really sustainable.

Recommendations for the Future

Question eleven from the interview asked the experts to comment on the changes that needed to be made for sustainable tourism development to directly acknowledge and contribute towards the goals of sustainable development. All of the recommendations made fell in one of two categories that the researcher came up with; paradigm or player. Suggestions either centered on a shift in mindset/paradigm or it revolved around the role of players in the tourism business.

The following figure enumerates the different propositions: -

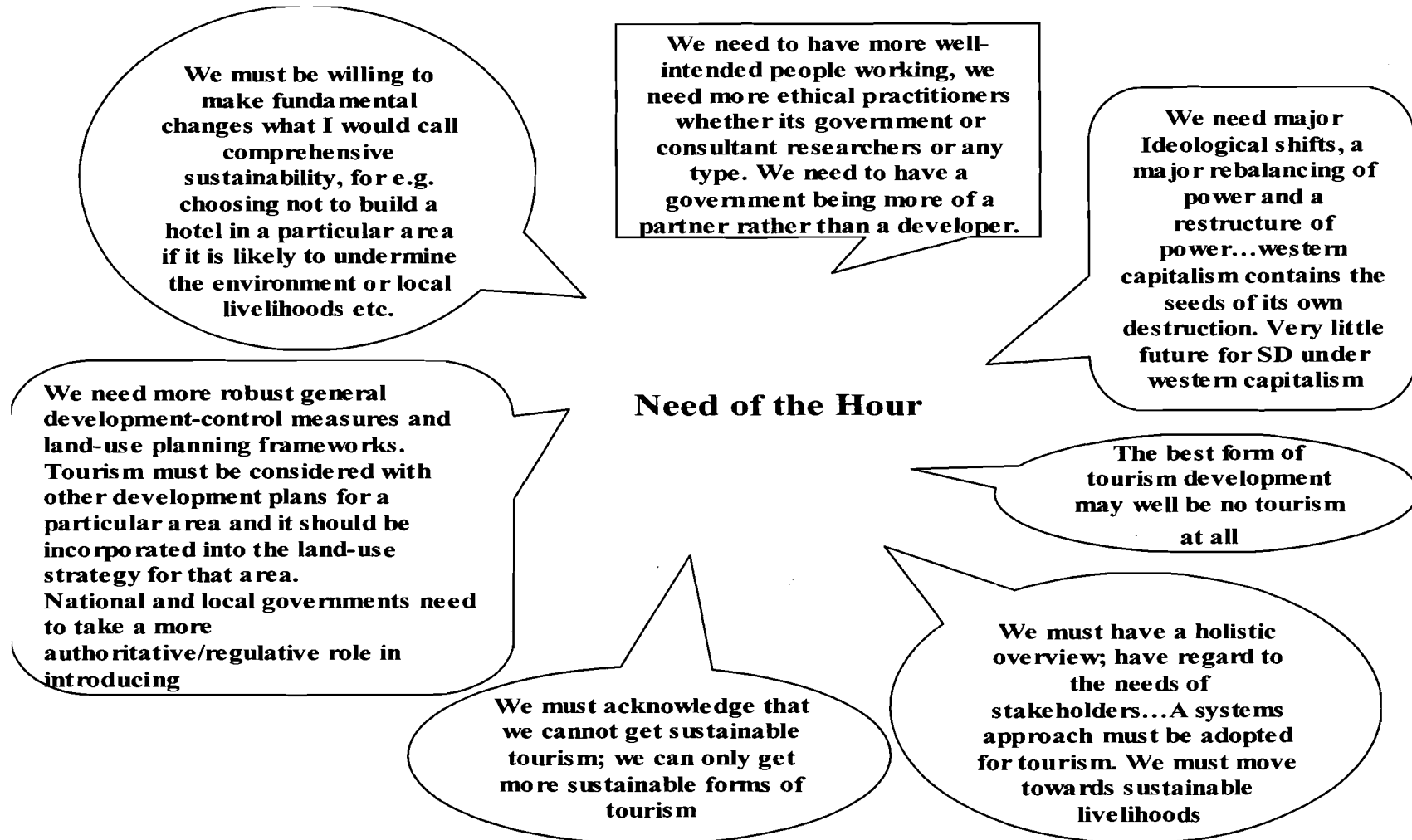


Figure 8. Need of the Hour

*Chapter Five***CONCLUSION****Introduction**

Sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable tourism development have become recurring themes in the tourism literature. Much has been written about them. They are vital concepts that will and need to be habitually included all tourism texts. They are also cumbersome and contested issues that are left wide open to interpretation. This study revolved around the concept of sustainable tourism development; its theory, its conceptualization as a subset of sustainable development, and its points of deviation from the ideal. The objective of the study was to bring together in one single document imperative/central issues surrounding the concept, assimilated from a combination of primary and secondary sources.

Journal articles, dissertations, books and edited volumes, and websites of trade organizations served as principle sources of secondary information. Telephone interviews with a panel of experts provided the raw material for presentation of primary information. In retrospect it was found that the primary information validated some of the conclusions/assumptions drawn from the literature review and also produced interesting viewpoints, ideas and recommendations.

Summary of Findings*Individual Case Analysis*

Besides doing a cross-interview analysis/comparison, each interview was also looked at as an individual case. Some of the findings from the analysis of individual interviews help bring out the dominant thought process of each individual expert. Just as how certain common threads were seen to be running across interviews, it was found that within each individual interview also there was always one (sometimes more) common vein that ran all through the discussion. For the

purpose of the individual case analysis each interview/expert has been assigned a number from one to seven in random order. Discussed below are some of the highlights of each individual interview.

Expert 1 continually referred to two aspects, one a “reality” and the other a “requirement” related to sustainable tourism development. The reality that was constantly referred to dealt with bias or subjectivity. Expert 1 persistently stressed on the fact that everybody was biased and that as long as people explained at the very outset what their own particular biases were when talking about sustainable tourism development then that was acceptable. This idea was restated at various points in the interview; when asked about subjectivity, when asked about the need for defining the concept, when asked to take a stance on either theorizing or operationalizing and when asked about congruency of discussion in the literature. The requirement that this expert brought up at every juncture was the need to have a holistic view of tourism development along side other development plans for a particular area, the need to integrate with all other sectors and the need to incorporate land-use planning strategies.

Expert 2 emphasized heavily on the issue of “context” or “place specificity”, stating that what was appropriate for one place need not be so for another. The case of a New York City type destination and an Antarctica or Amazon type destination served as the basis of all arguments. This aspect was referred to in discussions on subjectivity, outcomes/factors to be considered when planning for sustainable tourism development, and appropriateness of large-scale or small-scale tourism.

Expert 3 stressed on the importance of taking local communities into consideration and building local capacity. The interview was peppered with the term “sustainable livelihoods”.

Expert 4 stressed on two “realities”. Firstly, it was articulated all through that development, definitions, and implementation techniques are in a constant state of change; from time to time, place-to-place and person-to-person. Secondly, the importance of accepting and acknowledging that sustainability could never really be achieved was highlighted. Sustainability was compared to two concepts, one political and one mathematical. “We can never really achieve sustainability or objectivity or freedom or democracy...sustainability is best seen as a continuum rather like probability, somewhere between 0 and 100 percent and you will never reach 100 percent”.

Expert 5 was guided by one “reality” concerning the “travel” side of tourism. This expert was of the opinion if we were to take into consideration air travel in international and long-distance domestic tourism it could never really be sustainable or contribute to sustainable development because of the energy consumption involved. The following statement displays the sentiments of this expert, “I don’t regard ecotourism as being sustainable either, if you fly 3000 miles before you start engaging in ecotourism it can be sustainable on the site but as a form of tourism it is no more sustainable per head and perhaps less sustainable per head than mass tourism”.

Expert 6 again emphasized on the highly subjective nature of tourism and the difficulty in arriving at definitive answer to questions posed in the interview. The phrase “it depends” (depends on the destination, stakeholders, space and time etc.) was used frequently. This expert also spoke of the importance of adopting a systems approach to tourism development, envisioning different regions as complex adaptive systems and involving different sectors, stakeholders, and dimensions (social, political, ecological etc.).

Cross-Case Analysis

One of the debates over which there was mutual agreement amongst experts was with respect to the notion that sustainable tourism development must be viewed as a means to achieving sustainable development. A validation of this conclusion was seen in the broad theme that emerged from all the interviews, either directly stated by the expert or inferred from their discussion. This had to do with the possibility that sustainable tourism development could very well mean no tourism at all. Another theme, which came logically from this point of mutual agreement, was that sustainable tourism development formed the broader umbrella over all other “forms” of tourism.

Based on the above discussion and that enumerated in chapter five an important question to answer is whether tourism is really capable of contributing towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. What should the mindset be when getting into theorizing or operationalizing “sustainability in tourism”? All of the experts agreed that tourism could contribute towards the goals of sustainable development given certain conditions or circumstances. While one expert simply declared that it could only contribute at certain scales of analysis, another was doubtful of tourism making a contribution stating that we can at best have more sustainable forms of tourism. While one expert pointed out that tourism has the capability of contributing positively towards one facet of sustainability while it is creating undesirable outcomes elsewhere, another expert underscored the importance of approaching and managing tourism in such a way that it becomes a positive force.

Some of conditions laid out in order for tourism to better contribute towards sustainable development are as follows: -

1. Tourism must be set into the context of all other economic activities and viewed as such.
2. We can move towards sustainability, but probably never achieve it.
3. We must consider the circumstances and its constraints and think creatively around them.

While these suggestions were made at the beginning of the interviews, this aspect was dealt with in-depth towards the end. The responses to this aspect were presented in chapter four in the form of a figure entitled “need of the hour”. It was found that none the responses had anything to do with the mechanics of implementing the principles of sustainability or sustainable development in tourism. The focus was on “the big picture”; a paradigm shift in politics and development and an alteration in the mindset of those involved. The experts touched upon systems approach, holistic overview, rebalancing of political power, and integrating tourism with other sectors in development efforts.

A review of some of the newer articles published in a theory-based journal like *Annals of Tourism Research* demonstrates this need to focus on the big picture. Fundamental changes in tourism theory and planning are seen to be heavily emphasized. *Tourism Planning: A Third Way* by Peter Burns and *Reconceptualizing Tourism* by Bryan Farrell and Louise Twining-Ward are two such articles. The article by Farrell and Twining-Ward stresses heavily on the need to incorporate knowledge from related disciplines/fields of study into the understanding and execution of tourism development. The following excerpt from the abstract of this article reflects some of the very things the panel of experts drew attention to when discussing the state of the tourism literature.

This article argues that in order to facilitate a more effective transition to sustainability, tourism researchers need to keep abreast with transformations occurring in related fields, especially ecosystem ecology, ecological economics, global change science, and complexity theory. New knowledge from these spheres relating to complex adaptive systems, a necessary retreat from reductionism, extensive integration of human and natural systems, new interpretations of sustainability, and the emergence of sustainability science is of great relevance to contemporary tourism study. This article provides an introduction to the potentially extensive application of this knowledge to tourism and concludes by suggesting a reconceptualization of the field of study to accommodate it (2004:274).

The thrust of the paper by Burns (2004) is a proposal for a new way of tourism master planning where governments, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), sectors of tourism, stakeholders etc are engaged in a different level of involvement. This new path to tourism development is called the “Third Way” approach. The following excerpts from his paper provides an orientation to the paper itself and also reveal inter-relationships with the ideas expressed by the panel of experts.

This paper takes Anthony Giddens’ proposals for a Third Way in politics and applies them to tourism in the context of the developing world... The general thrust of Giddens’ argument is that the political processes of the past are insufficient to deal with the social complexities of the future, which is precisely what this paper claims... Moreover, the paper suggests that planning could be framed by development thinking and characterized by the central tenet of Third Way politics: “no rights without responsibilities” (2004:24).

Recommendations for Future Research

1. One concern/comment that the researcher was faced with during all interviews was that the topic was the too vast and the scope of the questions very broad. The experts felt they needed more time to mull over the questions so as to provide appropriate answers. Based on the feedback/thoughts of the experts on the interview questions a few changes to the data collection instrument are suggested: -
 - a. Considering the goal of the study was to bring all possible aspects of sustainable tourism development under one title, it has not been recommended to scale down the topic. However, each of the issues discussed could potentially become a study in itself (for example, ecotourism, developed countries versus developing countries, etc).
 - b. It is suggested that the first question (Can tourism really contribute towards achieving the goals of sustainable development?) should be divested from McKercher's illustration of the "fundamental truths of tourism". This technique is suggested because it was found that although the intention of tying McKercher "truths" with question one was to simply set the question in perspective of the number of issues clouding tourism development in general, majority of the experts at the outset launched into any analysis of the "truths" outlined before proceeding to answer the question. It is also recommended that this question be placed at the very end. This would give each expert the opportunity to respond based on their own personal opinion on what the constraints and restrictions of (sustainable) tourism development are, instead of those outlined by a third party.

- c. The five broad categories can be broken down into more number of questions so as to be more specific. For example it was found that language used in question ten did not completely reflect the intentions of the researcher; which was to establish if there was congruency of thought and discussion when comparing sustainable tourism development with sustainable development, amongst two sets of players – academics and industry. However since this did not come across to the experts the question could be reworded to reflect this division and also the sub-sections (a, b, and c) in this question could be asked as separate questions within the same section.
2. This same study can be conducted using the Delphi technique for data collection. This would allow greater understanding of the perspectives of each expert and also data collected would be refined to reflect exact opinions.
3. The scope of this study can be enlarged to include industry/trade “experts” in the panel. This would allow for an understanding of the viewpoints of two sets of players (academics and industry) on the concept, especially with regards to implementation of the principles of sustainable tourism development. This would mean having two panels of experts, one consisting of academics and the other of industry professionals. Similar interviews can be administered and the results from the two sets of interviews can be compared and contrasted.

Limitations of the Study

The topic under discussion “sustainable tourism development” is one that is inherently vast and ambiguous in nature. This study is in no way all-encompassing in terms of coverage of issues/concerns identified within the study since each topic could become a study in itself. Also owing to the multitude of topics that could be potentially brought under the umbrella of

sustainable tourism development, the study could be criticized of having left out certain areas of research/literature/concern in relation to sustainability and tourism. More specific limitations related to data collection and analyses have been outlined below: -

- ◆ The approach adopted in selecting the “voting population” may be criticized in its partiality in selecting only those people associated with *Annals of Tourism Research* in some form or the other. However this can be justified on the count that this is the top ranking journal in the field and academics associated with this journal will be of high standing whose opinions are backed by credibility.
- ◆ Another limitation revolves around the definition of “expert” and its elimination of all those who do not belong to the “academic” world and who have not published on the subject. A study, which was conducted on similar lines, has this to say in defense of this limitation, “the existence of published research as a mark of expertise meant potential respondents had their expertise assessed by two or three anonymous referees during the publication process” (Miller 2001).
- ◆ The qualitative nature of the data collection process and the subjective nature of the topic under discussion left considerable leeway for interpretation of the interview questions based on the respondents own personal understanding of the topic. However it was found that overall there was a pattern of consistency in all of the responses, except in certain questions which were discussed in the recommendations section of this chapter.
- ◆ Finally, certain technological limitations during the interview process would apply since all the interviews were long-distance/overseas phone conversations that were recorded by means of a voice recorder. Network/recording issues in certain interviews caused words/sentences to be erased/blotted out.

Significance of the Study

This study looked at the theoretical aspects of the concept of sustainable tourism development. An attempt was made at highlighting issues and concerns that cloud its discussions and presenting these to selected experts in the field so as to arrive at fruitful conclusions. The research objectives outlined in the beginning of the study were achieved in the research process and new ideas and possibilities for research were also identified. This research has made a valuable contribution to the literature on sustainable tourism development in that it has brought together ideas and opinions of some of the most sought after researchers in the field. The methodology also helped identify the “who’s who” in sustainable tourism development research by drawing up a list of the top ten. This paper can serve as a source of reference for fellow student researchers who wish to explore the field, scholars/academics who seek variety of perspectives when educating their students on the subject, and industry professionals who seek a better understanding of theoretical aspects.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Dr. _____,

Under the guidance of Dr. Jafar Jafari, I am working on my Master's thesis in Hospitality and Tourism (University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA). Among other things, the study will compile views of experts on what the concept of sustainable tourism development entails. Towards this end, ten leading individuals will be telephone interviewed.

The bio-data of editors/referees of Annals of Tourism Research were searched for those listing "sustainable tourism", "ecotourism", and/or "nature-based tourism" as one of their research/interest areas. As you belong to this distinguished group, I would like to ask you to kindly identify five individuals who in your opinion have contributed to the development of this subject. Based on the names received (please rest assured that all replies will be treated anonymously); the top ten will consequently be interviewed by phone.

Due to time constraints, I hope to hear from you by _____.

I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dhivya Balasubramanian

APPENDIX B

Sustainable Tourism Development: A compilation of views and opinions of Experts in the field Structured Interview

Statement of Consent

I understand that by partaking in this telephone interview I am giving my informal consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that there are no potential risks involved. I also realize the potential benefits that might be realized from the completion of this study. I am aware that the study is employing only minimal identifiers and that I am simply being listed by name as a participant in this study. I understand that the information gathered from this interview cannot be linked back to me whatsoever. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during this study will be respected with no correction or prejudice.

NOTE: Questions of concerns about the research study should be addressed to Dhivya Balasubramanian (715-529-2619) or, Dr. Jafar Jafari (715-232-2339), the research advisor. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone 715-232-1126.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to contribute to the body of literature that discusses the topic of sustainability as it relates to tourism, in a manner that it addresses key issues and concerns that plague the understanding and application of the concept. The study seeks to highlight these issues and bring them to the table in interviews with selected experts who in their right as scholars can comment on current practices and voice their opinions on how sustainable tourism development must be approached and utilized.

Directions: For the purpose of uniformity of all interviews conducted, a set of pre-determined questions will be used as a base for the discussion on the subject. The initial set of questions seeks to set the stage for the discussion and elicit basic opinions on the concept as a whole. This will be followed by questions that have been divided into five broad categories, which have been identified as the core issues, namely, theorize versus operationalize, means versus end, sustainable tourism development (STD) versus sustainable development (SD), sustainable tourism development versus ecotourism/alternative tourism and developing countries versus developed countries. All questions are open ended.

Setting the Stage

Some Fundamental truths about tourism

1. As an industrial activity, tourism consumes resources, creates wastes and has specific infrastructure needs.
2. As a consumer of resources, it has the ability to over consumer resources.
3. Tourism, as a resource dependent industry must compete for scarce resources to ensure its survival.
4. Tourism is a private sector dominated industry, with investment decisions being based predominantly on profit maximization.
5. Tourism is a multi-faceted industry, and as such, it is almost impossible to control.
6. Tourists are consumers, not anthropologists.
7. Tourism in entertainment.
8. Unlike other industrial activities, tourism generates income by importing clients rather than exporting its product.

(Source: McKercher 1993)

Taking into considerations these “truths” about tourism, can it really contribute towards achieving sustainable development?

Should our approach to understanding its meaning and applications be subjective or objective (subjectivity that is country/destination specific, not sector/entrepreneur specific)?

If a subjective approach is adopted, can it still be considered a universal concept where a basic common definition that outlines certain criteria, which must be met regardless of the destination or region, can be pre-determined?

If it has been agreed upon that STD cannot be treated as an objective universal concept what are some of the key factors to be taken into account when planning for (tourism) development in a particular region/state/city.

Has the literature on the subject matured and reached saturation? Or is it still in its infancy? If yes, then what are the areas that are being bypassed, evaded or shunned as irrelevant to the discourse?

Addressing the Core of the Issue

Theorize versus Operationalize

Can and should sustainable tourism development be defined?

Should the debate on its definition and theory be laid to rest and focus be shifted on how to implement principles of sustainability to tourism or are there gray areas in theory yet to be resolved before this shift can occur?

Means versus ends

Should sustainable tourism development be conceptualized as a means of achieving sustainable development or is it acceptable to consider it as an end in itself as is the predominant practice?

The “means versus end” debate is evident in the current usage of the terms mass tourism, sustainable tourism, alternative tourism, ecotourism etc, wherein those “types” that are environmentally and people sensitive are considered as the ideal forms of tourism to promote. Clarke (1997) proposed a framework of approaches to portray how sustainable tourism was conceived in relation to mass tourism. He identified four evolving approaches, which placed mass tourism and sustainable tourism as first polar opposites, second as a continuum, third as a movement of mass tourism towards more sustainable forms and finally a situation of convergence where both forms of tourism (large-scale and small scale) are moving towards sustainability. Comment on the situation that is and what should be in relation to this debate.

Sustainable development versus sustainable tourism development

If the current theory on STD is superimposed on the principle areas of focus of SD (economy, environment, community, inter-generational equality and intra-generational equality) can we say that we have achieved congruency of thought and discussion in all of these areas? If not then, (a) are we simply paying lip service to all three when planning for tourism development, (b) is there any one aspect that the industry chooses to focus on and (c) which of them has been sidelined in most development efforts?

Hunter (2002) talks of “sectoral parochialism” and the tendency of most literature to take a tourism-centric view. McKercher (1993) points at the irony of how the principles of sustainable development itself can become a threat to (sustainable) tourism development the way it is currently conceived and implemented. What changes need to be made in order for tourism to start directly acknowledging and contributing towards the goals of sustainable development?

Sustainable Tourism Development versus Ecotourism/Alternative Tourism/Nature-based Tourism

Sustainable tourism is more often than not simply referred to as a “type” of tourism like ecotourism, alternative tourism, green tourism, soft tourism etc. If asked to provide a framework for all these different types, what would be the position accorded to STD in relation to all the above-mentioned forms of tourism?

Developed Regions versus Developing Regions

This section relates back to the question on subjectivity versus objectivity. What unique factors/characteristics affect the process of tourism development in developing countries? How can these factors used as a lever to steer (tourism) development along the right path rather than deem them as obstacles?

APPENDIX C

Dear Dr. _____,

Under the guidance of Dr. Jafar Jafari, I am working on my Master's thesis in Hospitality and Tourism (University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA). Among other things, the study will compile views of experts on what the concept of sustainable tourism development entails. Towards this end, nine leading individuals who have been identified through a voting process (outlined below for your reference) will be telephone interviewed.

As you belong to the distinguished group of nine, I would like to request your participation in my study. I wish to conduct the said telephone interviews between mm/dd/04 and mm/dd/04. Please be assured that the process will be totally anonymous and the panel of nine experts will simply be listed by name at the beginning of the study and results of the interview cannot be linked back to any one participant. Results of the study will be provided upon request. The interviews should not take more than 40 minutes of your time.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could confirm your participation before mm/dd/04, so that I can set up the date and time for the interview based on your availability. Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dhivya Balasubramanian

The voting process

The biodata of editors/referees of Annals of Tourism Research were searched for those listing "sustainable tourism", "ecotourism", and/or "nature-based tourism" as one of their research/interest areas. This select group was then contacted via email and asked to recommend

five individuals (in no specific order) who in their opinion are experts in the field of sustainable tourism development. The final list of top nine individuals was drawn up based on the frequency of their names being cited.