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Sustainable Tourism: An Overview of the Concept and its Position in Relation to Conceptualisations of Tourism

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Reference to sustainable tourism is now made in most strategic tourism planning documents. Yet, despite its common use, definitional arguments exist over its meaning and subsequent operationalisation. In addition to this, literature on sustainable tourism rarely discusses its development prior to the publication of *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987) and its relevance to current conceptualisations of tourism. This paper analyses the context within which sustainable tourism was developed and has recently been conceptualised. It does this by assessing the development of sustainable tourism (with an Australian focus) and proposing a model which incorporates the development of sustainable tourism into tourism. The paper argues that sustainable tourism has traditionally given more focus to aspects related to the environment and economic development and that more focus should be given to community involvement.

Introduction

Reference to sustainable tourism is now made in most strategic tourism planning documents. Yet, despite its common use, definitional arguments exist over its meaning and subsequent operationalisation. Surprisingly, despite the plethora of literature which exists on sustainable tourism, literature on sustainable tourism rarely discusses how its historical development may have affected current conceptualisations of tourism. The purpose of this paper is to assess the historical development of the term and determine how this has influenced its current use. A model will be presented which incorporates the development of sustainable tourism into recent approaches towards tourism.

The Historical Development of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development: The convergence of conservation and developmental policy

The emergence of the concept of sustainable development marked a convergence between economic development and environmentalism. This convergence

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was officially illustrated at the Stockholm Conference on Humans and the Environment in 1972, the first of a series of major UN conferences on global issues related to the environment. The conference promoted the concept of eco-development whereby cultural, social and ecological goals were integrated with development (Sagasti & Colby, 1993). The philosophy of this concept was 'small is beautiful', typifying the eco-development approach (Wilbanks, 1994, citing Schumacher, 1973), and this was subsequently incorporated into the strategic plans of many industries, including tourism.

Although the evolution of the term sustainable development is commonly cited as being prompted by an increase in environmental awareness in the 1960s and 1970s (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Dovers & Handmer, 1993; Hall, 1998; Wilbanks, 1994), it can been argued that the concept of sustainable development originated many years prior to this in three forms: first, in the form of a conservation vision; second, in the form of a community vision; and third in the form of economic theory.

The development of a conservation vision

One of the key factors in the development of the term sustainable tourism was the development of a conservation vision. In the context of tourism, one of the earliest examples of sustainable development was hunting and maintaining recreational areas in reserves in Mesopotamia, thousands of years before the birth of Christ (Butler, 1991). Animals and vegetation within sections of grasslands and savannas were designated as the exclusive hunting preserve of the elite. These ideas were subsequently taken up by Alexander the Great and other Europeans and taken back to Greece and the Mediterranean (Nelson & Butler, 1974). Although these recreational reserves cannot truly be considered as sustainable development in the context of tourism in the modern sense, they can be considered an ancient form of it, as well as recognition that conservation of resources was necessary for future use.

Since these early times, it is possible to identify periods of environmental concern in the western world, particularly since the mid-19th century. These generally occurred at the end of sustained economic expansion (Lowe & Goydner, 1983), arguably at a time when people may have been more likely to react against materialistic values (Pepper, 1990). The first of these is discussed by Hall (1998: 15–16), who argues that the romantic vision in the 19th century was an antecedent to sustainable development. This vision valued the spiritual over the material, and humans came to be seen as part of nature, not superior to it. Around the time that this vision became predominant, a desire to preserve areas also emerged, encapsulated in Marsh's 1864 book *Man and Nature; or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1965). The theses of this book were: when nature is left alone it is in harmony; and humankind impoverishes nature.

The romantic era was also evident in Australia where the concept of sustaining an area culminated in Australia following in the footsteps of the USA and the Yellowstone National Park, by declaring the Royal National Park as Australia's first national park in 1879. The creation of the Royal National Park was an example of a growing recognition that areas should be preserved for future generations to use and thus an antecedent to sustainable development.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s a further rise in a conservation vision became

apparent. During this time, the World Conservation Union was established. In addition, in 1957–58 the International Geophysical Year drew attention to global challenges and in 1961 the World Wide Fund for Nature was formed, during a decade when a significant increase in environmental consciousness became apparent in developed countries (Wilbanks, 1994). Landmark publications promoting environmental protection appeared such as Hardin's (1968) *Tragedy of the Commons* and Carsons's (1962) *Silent Spring*. By 1972, an increase in the visibility of environmentally focused research organisations was evident, representing a further period of a rise in environmental consciousness. Many countries set up environmental protection agencies which worked to protect the environment in their respective countries with the help of International Assistance Agencies (Ludwig, 1990). During this time, the number of national environmental agencies grew from eight in 1972 to 113 in 1986 (Brown, 1996).

Economic factors leading to sustainable development

The effect of the rise in a conservation vision in the 19th century was so significant that it extended into economic theory. The roots of economics are in the investigation of production (particularly agriculture) and the factors that affect this yield, such as the environment, as discussed by Malthus (1798, as cited in Costanza, *et al.*, 1997: 25), von Thunen (1826, as cited in Hall, 1998) and Ricardo (1926, as cited in Hall, 1966). Indeed, the mid 1800s saw the focus of economics rest squarely upon industrialisation, economic growth and prosperity.

Like the early view of conservationists in the late 1800s, who believed that humans could overcome and improve upon nature (Goldstein, 1979), economic models which arose in the post second World War Two era were based upon similar assumptions. These models were designed to return the industrialised world to pre-war industrial levels (Bramwell & Lane, 1993) and were based upon the assumption that humans could overcome poverty and overcrowding through technology and intelligence (Boyden, 1968). Economic models such as those by Rostow (1960) and Myrdal (1959, cited in Oppermann, 1993) were based upon this notion and were successful in that industrial production increased but agricultural supplies decreased as the world's population increased. This placed increased pressure on natural resources and resulted in deforestation, desertification, loss of wetlands and massive urbanisation. Inevitably, particularly in the developing countries, social problems also resulted from industrialisation, including poverty and inequalities (Carley & Christie, 1992).

The eventual failure of economic models (based on developmental economics) to alleviate poverty in developing countries highlighted the ecological consequences of economic expansion. Models such as the Marshall Plan and the European Recovery Programme (which were developed to stimulate economic growth in the post-Second World War USA and Europe through developmental economics) did not enjoy sustained success when applied to the colonies. Until this time it was felt by many economists that the problems of the environment were just issues of market failure and as such a simple application of neo-welfare economics would cure all ills, including unemployment and poverty (Foster 1997; Illich, 1989).

In 1966 Kenneth Boudling proposed an integrated system of the environment and economics and employed successful imagery to present the balance between

the two entities. In response to this and the failure of economic development models, books and articles emerged highlighting the need for an alternative, more sustainable developmental growth, whereby economics took environmental consequences into account (Bernstein, 1973; Hamilton, 1969; Meadows *et al.*, 1972; Mishan, 1967).

In addition, environmental economics grew from these concerns of society in the 1960s about deteriorating environmental quality and quantity and as a reaction to the prevailing 'western' focus of post-war limitless economic growth and expansion. The study was concerned with the economic interrelationships that existed between humans and the environment (Tisdell, 1993). In addition, the discipline investigated the concepts of public goods, externalities, unmarketable goods and future generations (Hanley *et al.*, 1996; Seneca & Taussig, 1974). However, its approach was based upon static, reductionist concepts, such that a holistic approach to problems was unachievable. This deficiency was addressed by authors who attempted to explore the integration of the environment and economic development, such as ecologist Holling (1978) who wrote on environmental management. Following this, ecological economics arose during the 1980s, which was an attempt to bring environmental policy and management and the well-being of future generations together (Costanza *et al.*, 1997). The initial effort of the proponents of this approach was to redesign national accounting systems to include issues that were being raised in the international arena such as the depletion of natural capital, and social and cultural issues (Hueting, 1980). Due to the generally pluralist methodology and theoretical basis that ecological economics has adopted (insights ranging from neoclassical economics, spatial economics, systems ecology, human ecology, sociobiology and ecological engineering) it is argued that integration of theories will necessitate holistic outcomes (van den Bergh, 1996). Ecological economics was an early step towards integrating different disciplines and theories on sustainable development, which range from anthropocentric to biocentrism or ecocentrism (Mazzotta & Kline, 1995).

A community vision

Much has been written about the rise in conservation and economic development being precursors to the development of the term sustainable development, and ultimately sustainable tourism. Less appears to be written about the role of sociocultural aspects such as local community involvement in the development of sustainable tourism.

The development of what could be described as a 'community vision' within tourism is one which has been through different phases. Early authors such as Schlenke and Stewig (1983, cited in Oppermann, 1993) suggested that tourism host communities would benefit positively from tourism as it would advance development in their society. Similarly, authors using the diffusion theory or trickle-down platform (Christaller, 1964) espoused tourism as a development instrument for peripheral regions whose benefits would diffuse into the local community.

A change in attitude towards host community research was evident amongst authors such as Britton (1980), who suggested that the trickle-down effect did not work but instead development at the core maintained dependency and

underdevelopment at the periphery. He argued that as a result, host communities did not benefit as expected. Other examples of this attitude towards tourism's impacts on host communities were what Pearce *et al.* (1998) described as stage or step models. These included models such as Doxey's (1976) four-stage irritation index of euphoria through to antagonism, Dogan's (1989) five stages of Strategies for Adjustment to Tourism by residents (including *resistance, retreatism, boundary maintenance, revitalisation* and *adoption*) and Butlers' Destination Life Cycle Model (1980).

In tourism literature during the 1980s a significant trend became apparent, whereby arguments were made for the involvement of residents in tourism. Residents themselves were increasingly being seen as part of the 'hospitality atmosphere' and one of the key resources for sustaining the product (Simmons, 1994). Recently, the community has been viewed as a resource, or even partners, within protected area management and sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Dudley *et al.*, 1999; Leverington, 1999). As a result, recognition of the importance of community participation for sustainability may be found frequently in the literature (Ap, 1992; Joppe, 1996; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Simmons, 1994). It has been argued that involving the community lessens the likelihood that the community will feel alienated and harbour opposition to the development. At the same time, negative impacts on local communities are minimised (Keogh, 1990) and economies may be revitalised (Ap, 1992).

Overall, Pearce *et al.* (1998) argue that two broad approaches to community research may be identified. The first took a cautionary perspective, emphasising the negative impacts of tourism and resulting in stage models; whilst the second approach was concerned with perceptions and impacts, although few relationships between the two concepts were uncovered.

Sustainable Development

The rise of a conservation and community vision and dissatisfaction with developmental economics converged at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972. However, within the literature, early conceptualisations of sustainable development appeared albeit with a strong environmental and economic focus. In 1972 the Club of Rome released a report entitled *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al.*, 1972) which challenged the traditional assumption that the natural environment provided an unlimited resource base for population and economic growth and could cope with the increasing amounts of waste and pollution caused by industrial society (Harding, 1998). Similarly, in 1973 *Ecological Principles for Economic Development* linked the environment with economic development (Dasmann *et al.*, 1973) and the *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN, 1980), which was endorsed by various countries further developed Dasmann *et al*'s ideas to link the environment with economic development. This document was followed up by *Caring for the Earth* in 1991 (International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), 1991).

Romeril (1998) writes that other significant factors that contributed towards the evolution of sustainable development included the Brandt Commission Report of 1980. This too gave significant emphasis to economic development and

the need to care for the environment. However it was *Our Common Future* (The Brundtland Report) (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987) which brought sustainable development further into the political arena and had a positive effect upon government and non-government organisations. Joppe (1996) suggests it converted many leaders and popularised the concept of sustainable development. Although not containing the first definition of sustainable development, the simple, albeit vague definition contained in *Our Common Future* brought together the work of previous years in a concise persuasive argument (Driml, 1996) and has since been widely discussed (see Dovers & Handmer, 1993; Wall, 1997). Moreover, despite early precursors it gave a strong emphasis to community aspects and sustainable development was defined as a 'process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987: 8). The report elaborated two key concepts:

- 'the concept of needs and subjective well-being, particularly to the poor to whom priority should be given;
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet the present and future needs' (WCED, 1987: 43).

The international recognition of sustainable development brought about by *Our Common Future* was reflected at the G-7 Economic Summit at Paris in 1989. This was the first time the leaders of the world's largest democracies (United States, Canada, France, Germany, Britain, Italy and Japan) collectively recognised the importance of international environmental policy and the connection between development, international debt and the environment (Brown, 1996).

In 1992 the widely discussed Earth Summit, or United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held. The task of the conference was to review the Brundtland Report and broaden the sustainable development debate to ensure that the foundations of sustainable development were put into place. It has been argued that the international acceptance of sustainable development appears to be a success because of its timing. Indeed the concept emerged at a time when scientific, economic, sociocultural and environmental problems were converging. Moreover, it received bureaucratic support because of its relationship to economic aspects of development: it did not reject economic growth but rather put forward the notion that economic growth could enhance environmental protection and this could be done through a free market (Wood, 1993).

However, whilst recognising its support within governments and academic institutions, criticisms of the concept have been made by Butler (1999), Farrell (1999) and Twining-Ward (1999) for its uneven concentration on ecological and economic aspects. Furthermore, Butler (1998: 26) questions the support that the general public has for the concept, suggesting that 'sympathy for the goals of the concept does not translate into acceptance of costs and sacrifices that actual application may entail'. Similarly, Wilbanks (1994: 541) argued that sustainable development is more of a slogan or a screen 'behind which resources are being allocated and decisions made, regardless of whether the forcing term is understood or not'. The focus on environmental and economic issues arguably reflects

this misunderstanding. For example, the Australian government's use of the term ecologically sustainable development (ESD) centres on biological considerations, thus potentially compromising social and cultural factors such as meeting subjective needs. Interestingly, recent IUCN and protected area literature has recognised the need for a more responsible and responsive style of management which recognises the need for ecosystem management to be balanced against human needs (Dudley *et al*., 1999; Jeanrenaud, 1999). This highlights an important point for this article: a failure to recognise the aspects of the definition which relate to local community involvement and maintenance of livelihoods compromises the ability of sustainable development (and sustainable tourism) to meet subjective needs and achieve intergenerational equity.

Driml (1996) notes that the concept of sustainable development has developed in two directions since it was first defined.

(1) support for the concept at a local, national and international level. Examples of this are the UN's Earth Summit, the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development in Australia and regional strategies for sustainable development.
(2) work on the details of how sustainable development may be implemented, including conceptual and definitional argument and indicators and descriptors needed to operationalise the concept.

The following analysis will concentrate on the literature involved with the latter and attention given to incorporating sustainable development into the tourism industry.

The Application of Sustainable Development to Tourism

Driml (1996) refers to 'sustainable activity x' when talking about the emergent phenomenon of linking industry sectors' names with the concepts of sustainable development, following its populariation. However, it could be argued that the evolution of the concept of 'sustainable tourism' was evident in the literature before the term sustainable development was officially used. An example of this is Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979), who called for 'new tourism' which could preserve towns, not exceed carrying capacities, enhance environmental and heritage values and educate tourists. Other examples include Butler's Destination Life Cycle Model (Butler, 1980), which has been argued as reflecting the concept of sustainable development indirectly (Hunter, 1995) and the concept of carrying capacity (Stankey, 1973; Tivy, 1973). On a formal level, *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987) detailed six common challenges and recommendations including conservation outside protected areas, wildlife-based tourism and in the Australian edition, the role of small scale, culturally and environmentally sensitive tourism involving Aboriginal communities.

Tourism was given limited attention in its role for sustainable development at the Earth Summit in Rio. Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 recommended that governments promote ecotourism as a method to enhance sustainable forest management and planning (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). In response to this, in 1995 *Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry* was developed by World Travel and Tourism Council, the

World Tourism Organisation and the Earth Council (1995). This document outlined priority areas for action and objectives for moving the tourism industry closer towards achieving sustainable development, in line with the principles set out in Agenda 21. Most recently on an international scale, in 1997 the Asia–Pacific Ministers Conference on Tourism and the Environment, organised by the WTO, issued the Malé Declaration on Sustainable Tourism. This Declaration pledged support for the goals of a sustainable future, as articulated in *Our Common Future* and Agenda 21 (Gee & Fayos-Sola, 1997).

In Australia, following the release of *Our Common Future*, the application of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) (as it is known in Australia, emphasising environmental factors) to tourism was recognised in the *Australian National Ecologically Sustainable Development Strategy (NSESD)* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). It was intended that future policies and programmes would take place within the framework of the NSESD and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment that was brought into effect on 1 May 1992. Within the NSESD were characteristics for Ecologically Sustainable Tourism (EST) (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992: 45).

In the same year in Australia, the issues of sustainable tourism were more specifically dealt with, in the now outdated *National Tourism Strategy* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). In this document, the primary aim was to 'develop a sustainable tourism industry contributing to economic, environmental and social well-being' (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1992: 3). The strategy stated that the key to the future of tourism was ecologically sustainable development, thus giving a special focus to the environment. More recently, the current Australian tourism strategy, *Tourism: A Ticket to the 21st Century*, which devotes less space to issues related to 'ecologically sustainable tourism development' (Office of National Tourism, 1998) than its predecessor, gives less attention to factors related to the community and the environment than economic factors.

In addition to recognising the concept of sustainable development, attempts have been made to operationalise the concept. Briefly, these include indicators for sustainable tourism such as those developed by the World Tourism Organisation in 1993 (see Manning, 1999; Ryan, 1999), accreditation schemes (for example, that developed by Green Globe (21, 2001) and the Australian Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (Ecotourism Association of Australia, 2000) and extension guides (see Tourism Council of Australia and Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, 1999; Department of Industry, Science and Tourism, 1996).

Interestingly, in Australia when both hard and soft forms of tourism regulation address issues related to sustainable tourism, they tend to focus on environmental issues. Examples of this include *Best Practice Ecotourism* (Commonwealth Department of Tourism, 1995), *Developing Tourism: Projects in Profile* (Office of National Tourism, 1996) and *Being Green is Your Business* (Tourism Council of Australia, CRC for Sustainable Tourism, 1999). However, the *Local Government Association of Queensland National Parks Inquiry* (Local Government Association of Queensland, 2000), whilst not specifically referring to sustainable tourism, recommended that partnerships be formed between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and local communities, during the

planning and management of tourism. A similar recognition was in the *New South Wales Visions Statement for National Parks* (Steering Committee to the Minister for the Environment, 1998).

A Brief Overview of Sustainable Tourism and its Application in Tourism Literature

Since the term has been formally used, Clarke (1997) has noted that there have been shifts in positions regarding the relationship between the concept and the tourism industry. Clarke writes that four positions of understanding exist. The first of the four positions holds sustainable tourism in a dichotomous position to mass tourism, whereby sustainable tourism was small-scale tourism and mass tourism operated on a large, unsustainable scale. Twining-Ward (1999) argued that although being seen as an alternative, sustainable tourism in this form also opened up some areas to tourism and its associated impacts. The second position proposed by Clarke (1997) emerged in the 1990s and advocated that a continuum of tourism existed between sustainable tourism and mass tourism. With this position, scale was still a defining attribute of sustainable tourism and the notion remained that sustainable tourism was a 'possession' which could be defined by scale (Clarke, 1997). This second position was replaced by a third idea that mass tourism could be made more sustainable and the idea of sustainability was a goal for attainment, rather than a possession applicable only to small-scale tourism. As a result, operationalising current knowledge became the focus, codes of practice and guidelines were introduced, and governments and consumers encouraged more sustainable practice. The fourth position was of convergence. This is the latest understanding of sustainable tourism, whereby sustainable tourism is considered to be a goal that is applicable to all tourism ventures, regardless of scale. This position recognises that a precise definition of sustainable tourism is less important than the journey towards it.

The differences in attitudes towards sustainable tourism are also evident in the way in which it is defined. Some advocates of sustainable tourism tend to define it as a parochial, sectoral term, emphasising growth in order for viability to be maintained. It has been argued that although the concept may have areas of mutual concern with sustainable development, it has its own specific tourism-centric agenda (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Wall, 1997). Consequently, these authors prefer to use the term sustainable development in the context of tourism, rather than sustainable tourism, in order to prevent the parochial assumption implied in the term sustainable tourism.

In contrast to parochial definitions, many authors have tended to define sustainable tourism in broader terms, transferring the principles of sustainable development into the context of tourism needs (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Ding & Pigram, 1995; Hunter 1997; Muller, 1994; Sadler, 1993). Hunter (1997, 859) elaborates that sustainable tourism should consider all factors but recognises competing aspects:

> in reality, trade-off decisions taken on a day to day basis will almost certainly produce priorities which emerge to skew the destination area based tourism/environment system in favour of certain aspects.

Hunter (1997) has suggested a spectrum of four sustainable tourism approaches, based loosely on interpretations of sustainable development. This adaptive approach has been advocated by several other authors whose definitions range from being weak (emphasising satisfaction of tourists) through to strong (whereby tourism may only be allowed to operate at a small scale) (Carlsen, 1997; Coccossis, 1996). Interestingly, some organisations such as the WTO taskforce have chosen not to define sustainable tourism. They argue that it is a site specific or destination-specific concept and therefore should be defined on a case-by-case basis (Manning, 1999).

Relating Sustainable Tourism to Conceptualisations of Tourism

The plethora of arguments over the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism may exist because an explicit and universally accepted theory related to sustainable tourism is not yet in existence. This, in turn, could be attributed to the pre-paradigmatic nature of tourism theory (Pearce, 1993). Indeed, tourism has been described as a field lacking theoretical aspects and the unifying paradigms that characterise more established disciplines (Jafari, 1990; Oppermann, 1993; Faulkner & Ryan, 1999).

Despite being described as pre-paradigmatic, during the last 20 years models regarding tourism have arisen. In relation to tourism development models, Mowforth and Munt (1998) describe three types: those which deal with tourists' motivation, those related to the role of the tourist industry; and those dealing with the destination community. In addition to this there are models which attempt to explain the relationship between different elements of the tourism industry such as Smith (1978, cited in Pearce *et al*., 1998), Doxey (1976) and Butler's Destination Life Cycle Model (1980).

Two models regarding approaches towards tourism development have been developed by Jafari (1990) and Oppermann (1993). Oppermann (1993) looked at how economic models have influenced approaches towards tourism; and Jafari (1990) developed a framework for studying how approaches towards tourism have changed over the years. Both of these models provide a background for understanding the historical context in which sustainable tourism developed and how it is currently dealt with. In addition, they may provide an insight into how sustainable tourism may be viewed in the future.

Oppermann's tourism development theory

The late Oppermann (1993) assessed how tourism theories developed as a reaction to economic models. He argued that two predominant paradigms of tourism were evident following the Second World War. These were the diffusionist paradigm and the dependency paradigms. Opperman argued that two theories emerged within the diffusionist paradigm. The first was *development stage theory*, based on the notion of unilinear changes from less developed to developed (Opperman, 1993). During this time, it was felt that the overall obstacle to development was traditional society (Clancy, 1999). Oppermann writes that this approach was based on Rostow's (1960) stages of economic growth and that it was used in tourism by Miossec (1976, cited in Oppermann, 1993: 537), Thurot (1973, cited in Oppermann 1993: 537) and Schlenke and Steiwg

(1983, cited in Oppermann, 1993), with the latter developing a model directly related to Rostow's stages of economic growth, which suggested that host communities would benefit positively from tourism as it would advance development in their society .

The second theory to emerge within the diffusionist paradigm was *diffusion theory*. This was based on the trickle-down or multiplier effect, from more developed to less developed areas (Browett, 1979; Myrdal, 1959, cited in Oppermann, 1993). Authors such as Christaller (1964) argued that tourism would create this effect and could be used for developing regions where other economic sectors would not work. In particular it was seen as being suitable because of its high connectivity with other sectors (Clement, 1961, cited in Oppermann, 1993). At the time that this paradigm was most popular, mass tourism had emerged as a result of social advances such as paid leave, women in the workforce, flexi-time and transport advances such as the wide bodied jet (Buckley, 1995; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Advocates of this paradigm may have argued for tourism on the basis that it was a non destructive, capital generating sector and therefore had the potential to be a panacea for developing countries. Conversely, the diffusionist paradigm could be regarded as a precursor to sustainable tourism as it was out of dissatisfaction with this paradigm that calls for more sustainable tourism developments were made.

The second paradigm of tourism development was the *dependency* paradigm, which arose out of the dissatisfaction with the diffusion paradigm (Oppermann, 1993). Advocates of this paradigm argued that capitalism in the core perpetually created and maintained underdevelopment in the periphery (Browett, 1982; Frank, 1969). This paradigm distinguished between underdeveloped and undeveloped, saying that the former had developed ties with the West and experienced negative consequences associated with colonialism and western ties (Clancy, 1999). These writers were inspired by Marxist thought, imperialism and colonialism and argued development was not linear, but holistic, where wealth and poverty were linked on a global scale (Oppermann, 1993). Britton (1980) was a tourism academic who linked tourism and dependency. He argued that tourism resulted in enclaves of resorts, used by developing countries, thus increasing dependency. It was out of this dependency paradigm that sustainable tourism could be said to have emerged directly, as it precipitated anti-developmental and limits to growth arguments. As a result, calls began to be made for alternatives to mass tourism in the form of environmentally sensitive small-scale and therefore 'supposedly' sustainable tourism (Butler, 1991; Ceballos Lascurain, 1996; Wight, 1993a).

Although not specifically mentioning the development of sustainable tourism, Oppermann's paradigms provide an insight into how economic factors directly affected tourism thinking. Moreover, it illustrates how dissatisfaction with these paradigms led to a new one which incorporated the environment with economics. For these reasons, several authors (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1997; Wall, 1997) prefer to use the term 'sustainable development in the context of tourism' rather than sustainable tourism in order to prevent the parochial assumption implied in the term sustainable tourism. Despite sustainable tourism being an integrated concept in theory, the tendency to concentrate on aspects related to economics and the environment may be a direct result of its historical

development being one that has been largely driven by dissatisfaction with economic models.

Jafari's Platforms of Tourism Research

Jafari (1990) addressed the shifts in attitudes towards tourism in a historical context. However, rather than looking at the relationship between tourism thinking and economic development theories, he argued that platforms of tourism research had formed sequentially over time (although advocates of each are still evident within the tourism literature). The first two platforms may be directly related to Oppermann's (1993) tourism development paradigms and arguably the second two platforms provide an insight into the development of work related to sustainable tourism. Moreover, comparison with Clarke's (1997) four historical positions towards sustainable tourism can be made with the third and fourth platforms.

(1) Advocacy. Advocates of this platform wrote of the economic benefits of tourism and its ability to offer a viable economic alternative to developing countries, whilst generating foreign exchange. They also argued that tourism preserved cultures and revived traditions whilst having few environmental impacts (Jafari, 1990). Archer's (1977) seminal work addressed the issue of tourism multipliers whereby tourism expenditure is recirculated through the economy. This platform was popular following the Second World War and appears to be linked to the economic development models of Rostow (1960), which subsequently influenced tourism writers such as Thurot (1973, cited in Oppermann, 1993), Miossec (1976, cited in Oppermann, 1993) and Schlenke and Stewig (1983, cited in Oppermann, 1993). Thus, the advocacy platform could be seen to be related to the development and diffusionist paradigms discussed by Oppermann (1993). This early approach to tourism could be regarded as a precursor to the development of sustainable tourism, as it was out of dissatisfaction with these approaches that alternatives were explored, and the notion of sustainable tourism eventually developed.

More recently, examples of this platform may be seen in arguments by conservationists during such battles as the Fraser Island, Cooloola and the Franklin Dam debates. At the time, conservationists argued that tourism was an environmentally benign activity and an economically viable alternative to extractive industries such as mining and logging (Butler, 1991; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996; Coppock, 1982).

(2) Cautionary. This platform replaced advocacy in the 1960s. The cautionary platform advocated a high degree of public sector intervention and emerged from academics and social scientists who experienced the impacts of tourism such as disruption to the host community, seasonal jobs and environmental impacts (Jafari, 1990). Dowling (1992) argues that the advent of mass tourism in the 1960s paralleled an increase in environmental awareness, therefore it was not surprising that the two would interact, producing research which assessed tourism's ecological impacts. Following this, in the 1970s the conflicts inherent in tourism were realised, along with the relationship between the sociocultural environment (the community) and tourism (Dowling, 1992). Authors taking a cautionary approach included Budowski (1976), Butler (1980) Dasmann *et al.* (1973) and Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979). At that time environmental economics

was developing better methods for investigating these environmental impacts and the effects that they would have upon future development proposals (Mishan, 1967). The cautionary platform of tourism research could be said to be related to the Oppermann's dependency paradigm: both approaches probably occurred as a reaction to a growing environmental awareness and dissatisfaction with current economic development and its effect on the tourism industry. It seems likely that as a result of this approach, the concept of sustainable tourism is most likely to have developed. It could be related to the first of Clarke's (1997) four positions on sustainable tourism, as advocates of the cautionary platform would have argued that sustainable tourism was the opposite to mass tourism and a form of small-scale tourism capable of protecting the environment, whilst generating income and protecting cultures. It also marked a time when an increase in focus on sociocultural issues, such as involvement of the local community, became evident.

(3) Adaptancy. The adaptancy platform, which appeared in the early 1980s, consisted of articulated recommendations for modes of tourism which would produce more positive outcomes for host communities and the environment (Jafari, 1990). This platform is typified by advocates of alternatives to mass tourism who suggested green tourism, soft tourism, small tourism and ecotourism (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996; Wight, 1993a). The difference to the last platform is that advocates of this approach were involved in debates over the definition of sustainable tourism and how it could be operationalised. Moreover, this platform advocated the involvement of the community and encouraged community ownership in tourism developments (Ceballos- Lascurain, 1996; Murphy, 1985; Wight, 1993a). It could be considered a reaction to Oppermanns' (1993) dependency paradigm as it recognised a need for all stakeholders to be able to benefit from tourism. Dowling (1992) describes the early 1980s as a time when there were idealist attempts to achieve tourism which was considered to be compatible with the environment. The adaptancy approach could be compared with Clarke's (1997) second position of sustainable tourism as it was typified by the belief that a continuum existed between unsustainable and sustainable tourism, thus making the goal of sustainable tourism achievable by all operators.

(4) Knowledge-based platform. This platform has become evident in recent years, where authors have attempted to understand how tourism works as a system, including its structures and functions. This development from static to dynamic investigation mirrors the move to ecological economics and system dynamic approaches to investigating development, such as investigating the sustainability of practices using a multi-criteria approach (Janssen, 1996). The knowledge based platform is one where tourism impacts have been accepted by proponents and the emphasis is on understanding how they occur (Jafari, 1990). Dowling (1992) recognises this era as one where idealism regarding tourism impacts was replaced with realism, whereby cooperation was advocated and conflicts between tourism, the environment and cultures were accepted as being ever present. He describes the 1990s as a period of integration whereby the possibilities of coexistence, conflict and symbiosis (as described by Budowski, 1976) are recognized; and activities are encouraged provided they are environmentally sustainable, minimise impacts and maximise benefit, thus advocating a holistic view. Indeed, the creation of the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* could be regarded

as a reflection of the growing desire to understand the concept and its operationalisation within the tourism industry.

In terms of sustainable tourism, advocates of this approach could be said to have embraced Clarke's third and fourth approach towards sustainable tourism whereby operationalising current knowledge is now the focus. Advocates of this third position would have been involved in the development of indicators for sustainable tourism, codes of practice and extension guidelines encouraging more sustainable practice which were discussed earlier in the paper. Clarke's (1997) fourth position, which also falls under the knowledge-based platform is that sustainable tourism is applicable to all tourism ventures, regardless of scale. It also advocates that a precise definition of sustainable tourism is less important than the journey towards it. This and the previous platform (adaptancy) could also be compared to Clancy's (1999) suggestion that since the 1980s tourism and development debates have been less popular, with researchers preferring to concentrate on developmental patterns and the nature of the industry. Examples of academics who have taken this platform are Gunn (1994), Leiper (1995) and Mill and Morrison (1985).

Jafari's (1990) platforms of tourism research reveal a change in thinking which is comparable with the development of the term sustainable tourism. For example, Jafari (1990) describes the cautionary platform as the realisation in the late 1960s that tourism impacts occur. This realisation amongst tourism practitioners coincided with the growth of the environmental movement and with a time when the abilities of developmental economics to distribute wealth were being questioned. Moreover, the cautionary platform and subsequent platforms outlined by Jafari (1990) followed the trend which was occurring in developed nations, whereby it was becoming recognised that multiple interests (such as the environment and local communities) are affected by tourism. This recognition can therefore be seen as a catalyst for the concept of sustainable tourism.

Therefore it appears that when the historical context, and notably the theories of Clarke (1997), Jafari (1990) and Oppermann (1993) are combined, it is possible to understand the context in which sustainable tourism developed. This is illustrated chronologically in Table 1.

Overall the table illustrates several key factors. First, the context in which sustainable tourism developed was one whereby tourism was reacting to three dominant paradigms: economic development, a community vision and a conservation vision. However, it appears sustainable tourism has often given local communities less attention than economic or environmental factors. This uneven concentration was previously highlighted by Butler (1999), Farrell (1999) and Twining-Ward (1999).

In addition, perceptions of sustainable tourism have changed dramatically since the idea was first used in the 1980s (Clarke, 1997). As sustainable tourism is a concept conditioned by social context, in order for it to be met, stakeholders must be identified and their subjective needs met. Despite the apparent rise of a community vision within the academic literature, the importance of incorporating communities and cultures into planning for sustainable tourism has only recently been given significant attention in much of the academic literature and extension documents. The knowledge-based approach to tourism, advocated by Jafari (1990), is evident in integrated approaches to sustainable tourism, which

Table 1 The conceptual and operational context within which sustainable tourism developed

	Economic Vision	*Conservation Vision*	*Community Vision*	*Academic Response*	*Industry Response*
1880	Industrialisation & Economic Growth	Romantic Vision (Hall, 1998)			Protection of Resources (e.g. National Parks)
1940	Development Stage Paradigm 1946: Rostow 1947: Marshall Plan	1948: Formation of IUCN			
1950	1951: European Economic Recovery Programme 1959:Myrdal				Mass Tourism
1960	1966: Environmental Economics 1967: Dependancy Paradigm (Frank) 1969: Hamilton calls for development to conserve resources	1961: Formation of WWF	1964: Christaller	Advocacy Approach	
1970	**1972: Stockholm Conference on Humans and Environment**				
	1978 Ecological Economics (Holding)		1976: Doxey's Irridex 1979: Dogan's Five Stages of Adjustment	1973: Thurot and Cautionary Platform 1976: Miossec	
1980		1980: World Conservation Strategy	1983: Schlenke and Stewig	Adaptancy Approach 1980: Butler's Life Cycle Model 1982: Dependency Paradigm (Britton)	1982: WTO/ UNEP Accord
	1987: *Our Common Future*				Calls for Alternative Tourism

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Economic Vision	*Conservation Vision*	*Community Vision*	*Academic Response*	*Industry Response*
1990				Knowledge Based Platform	Extension Guides with Environmental Focus
		1991: Caring for the Earth			Sustainable Tourism polularisation
	1992: Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)				Agenda 21 for Tourism
			Increased focus on community role (Simmons, 1994; Bramwell & Lane 2000)		Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism (Australia)

have recently been advocated by Butler (1998) and Bramwell and Lane (2000). These authors have argued that, sustainable tourism will not be achieved unless all those affected by tourism are consulted. This integrated stakeholder approach includes those representing not only the environment and economic development but also local communities and cultures.

Third, from the table and the previous analysis it is evident that a fundamental difference separates tourism theories and economic theories. Economic theories, such as those developed by Myrdal (1959, cited in Oppermann, 1993), and Rostow (1960) were proactive, that is they were developed in response to existing problems so as to facilitate change. However, concepts within tourism such as sustainable tourism are reactive concepts which have largely been developed in reaction to prevailing economic theories and environmental problems.

Conclusion

Given the reactionary nature of sustainable tourism to current paradigmatic approaches and the difficulties associated with defining it, this leads to the question of whether sustainable tourism will be able to be developed theoretically and practically or is it simply reactionary rhetoric? There is no doubt that many facets of the tourism industry, from operators to government agencies, have adapted their operations to practice sustainable tourism. However, whether these have accounted for significant or merely cosmetic changes is debatable (Mowforth & Munt, 1998). Butler (1998) argues that if any real changes are to be made in terms of sustainability, then changes must be made by looking backwards and fixing longstanding problems rather than by building more tourism developments that are 'sustainable'. A danger exists that unless sustainable tourism is demonstrated to be attainable by all stakeholder groups, it will follow the path of ecotourism, whose popularity has arguably suffered as a result of it being perceived as little more than a marketing label (Wight, 1993b).

On the positive side, as illustrated in the historical section of this article, the context in which sustainable tourism evolved signified a change in people's

perceptions of nature which, in turn, affected economic development and the nature of the tourism industry. Therefore, it could be argued that the concept of sustainable tourism is real and grounded in the general populous and thus is more likely to be developed beyond the point where it is considered rhetoric.

This article has exposed an irony in the way in which sustainable development has been applied to the industry and is often discussed within the academic literature. When sustainable tourism has been applied to the industry, more emphasis has often been given to tourism's effects upon the environment and economy, rather than to factors related to its effect on communities. This is ironic given that the definition in *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987) defined sustainable development largely in terms of a process whereby local communities' subjective needs should be met. Based upon this, it is proposed here that future conceptualisations of sustainable tourism must address the local community to the same extent as the economy and the environment. This may be achieved through processes such as stakeholder involvement.

Future conceptualisations must address whether sustainable tourism is a process whereby balances should be struck between the environment, economy and community issues *or* whether it is up to the community to decide where the balance should lie. In the context of sustainable tourism, this is a philosophical debate which requires resolving the potentially conflicting concepts of an empowered community *versus* 'balanced' decisions being made for the 'greater good'. More discussion and research is need to resolve this issue.

This article has illustrated the conceptual and operational development of the term sustainable tourism. It has suggest that the concept, despite being subjected to definitional and conceptual arguments, is one that has primarily given focus to environmental and economic issues, despite its development and early definitional focus on subjective well-being and intergenerational equity. Perhaps due to the difficulties inherent in studying human behaviour and perceptions, issues related to local communities have historically been given less attention in debates surrounding sustainable tourism issues. However, the popularisation of a knowledge-based platform in recent years has facilitated a more integrated approach towards sustainable tourism issues. By developing a framework in which to place sustainable tourism both historically and theoretically, a basis has been provided upon which more substantial theories regarding its development and application may be built.

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