Sustainable Tourism Development: A Critique

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism has become an increasingly popular field of research since the late 1980s. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. However, the sustainable tourism debate is patchy, disjointed and often flawed with false assumptions and arguments. This paper is a brief critique of some of the weaknesses in the sustainable tourism literature. In particular, it explores six issues that are often overlooked but must be addressed in research: the role of tourism demand, the nature of tourism resources, the imperative of intra-generational equity, the role of tourism in promoting socio-cultural progress, the measurement of sustainability, and forms of sustainable development. Indicators have been identified for all three aspects of sustainable tourism development - ecological, economic and social. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) recently proposed the use of selected indicators for sustainable tourism. In order to be useful to tourism sector managers and administrators. The selected indicators are demand-driven; they respond to decision-makers' need to know and they are practical for most nations or regions.

KEYWORDS: Development, sustainable tourism, sustainable development, tourism

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, sustainable development has become a buzzword in development studies in general and in tourism research in particular. However, a literature review led the author of this paper to the belief that the 'muddy pool' (Harrison, 1996) of debate on sustainable tourism is patchy, disjointed and at times flawed. Indeed, 'little appears to have been written, in depth, on the meaning and implications of sustainable tourism development' (Hunter & Green, 1995: 69). Most research 'had advanced little beyond the stage of formulating and discussing various principles and assumptions' (Komilis, 1994: 65); while the case studies which explore the ways of applying sustainable principles to practice, often through small eco- or alternative tourism projects, provide at best a micro solution to what is essentially a macro problem (Wheeler, 1991: 93).

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and

helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

With a full appreciation of the contributions made by numerous writers towards the progress in tourism research, this paper attempts to make a brief critique of the research on sustainable tourism. However, it does not intend to inveigh against the literature at large; rather, it is a personal observation of the debate about tourism and sustainability. Indeed, it is a glimpse at the other side of the sustainable tourism debate, the side that has largely been overlooked, neglected or conveniently and implicitly assumed as unimportant or irrelevant by some writers. Furthermore, many of the issues discussed here have already been identified in varying contexts by some of the most insightful researchers in the field though only a very small amount of representative work could be reviewed and acknowledged in this paper.

The Concept of Sustainable Development
The pursuit of sustainable development thus requires improving the coherence and complementarities of policies across a wide range of sectors, to respond to the complex development challenges ahead. The concept of sustainability has its origins in the environmentalism that grew to prominence in the 1970s. The explicit idea of sustainable development was first highlighted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN, 1980) in its World Conservation Strategy. Sustainable development is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The "official" definition of sustainable development was developed for the first time in the Brundtland Report in 1987. Specifically, sustainable development is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term. This means taking into account both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity.

The Commission further emphasized that sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a dynamic process of changes which 'are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations' (WCED, 1987: 46).

In tourism, there are a multitude of definitions for sustainability and sustain- able development (Butler, 1999b; Page & Dowling, 2002). The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2001) prefers the following definition of sustainable development:

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities 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, and biological diversity and life support systems.

As the world's knowledge of global politics evolved the first historical conferences were organized. In 1972, it took place in Stockholm the UN Conference on the environment – the first big world leaders meeting organized by the UN to discuss the human impact on the environment and how it was related to economic development. One of the main goals of this gathering was to find a common outlook and common principles to inspire and guide the world's population to preserve the "human environment".

Prosser (1994) highlights four forces of social change that are driving this search for sustainability in tourism: dissatisfaction with existing products; growing environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity; realisation by destination regions of the precious resources they possess and their vulnerability; and the changing attitudes of developers and tour operators.

Sustainability has been widely viewed as holding considerable promise as a vehicle for addressing the problems of negative tourism impacts and main-training its long-term viability. It is praised by Bram well and Lane (1993) as a positive approach intended to reduce the tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, tourists, the environment and the host communities so that the long-term capacity and quality of both natural and human resources can be maintained. Cater (1993) identifies three key objectives for sustainable tourism: meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term; satisfying the demands of a growing number of tourists; and safeguarding the natural environment in order to achieve both of the preceding aims. Farrell

(1999) highlights the 'sustainability trinity' which aims at the smooth and transparent integration of economy, society and environment.

Sustainability, sustainable tourism and sustainable development are all well-established terms that have been used loosely and often interchangeably in the literature. Butler (1999b) and Harris and Leiper (1995) are among the few scholars who have tried to explore the differences between these terms. Without being preoccupied with a semantic debate about the terminology, in this short article, 'sustainability' is broadly considered state-focused which implies steady life conditions for generations to come; 'sustainable development' is more process-oriented and associated with managed changes that bring about improvement in conditions for those involved in such development. Similarly, sustainable tourism is conveniently defined as all types of tourism (conventional or alternative forms) that are compatible with or contribute to sustainable development. It should also be noted that development does not necessarily involve 'growth' as it is essentially a process of realizing 'specific social and economic goals which may call for a stabilization, increase, reduction, change of quality or even removal of existing products, firms, industries, or other elements' (Liu & Jones, 1996: 217).

Sustainable development was a term first coined in 1980, when the intent of the concept was merely basic. It was in the World Conservation Strategy, a union between three prominent environmental non-governmental organizations IUCN, WWF, and UNEP, where sustainable development took on the meaning of 'conserving the earth's natural resources. What the World Conservation Strategy had realized is that with the world's economic growth, came the near-sighted exploitation of the world's natural resources. The original, and sole, intent of the World Conservation Strategy was to bring nations together to stop the exploitation of natural resources, which in turn was negatively affecting the environment. Sustainable development was thus merely seen on quite a basic level, at the time of its coinage. Not even a decade later, did the definition take on much more of a multi-disciplinary approach?

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development devised a program entitled Agenda 21, which allegedly "is the blueprint for sustainability in the 21st century". It is a framework that nations and government strictly can adhere to. Nations that gave their consent to accepting Agenda 21 are monitored by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), who "is responsible for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; as well as providing policy guidance to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) at the local, national, regional and international levels". Both the Agenda 21 as well as the Brundtland Report have proven to be widely used frameworks that nations, agencies, and organizations use in modern times, yet even though they are accepted, a clear definition still is not evident.

The greatest problem with the concept of sustainable development is the sheer amount of definitions that are available. Unfortunately, a clear definition of sustainable development has still not been devised. Although the Brundtland Report's definition is widely-quoted, one can see exactly where it fails. When relooking at the definition "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", one can spot two clear issues. Firstly, the 'needs' are not defined. There is a major difference between the needs of a person living in a Third-World country, as opposed to the needs of a person living in Western Europe. Secondly, the definition does not offer any type of time frame, as 'generations' can only be vaguely interpreted. The incredible amount of definitions available for sustainable development, thus make it a topic that the common man does not wish to pursue. An interesting way of looking at the issues at hand with sustainable development is too look at the following quote, which states "a combination of uncertainty about what to do, and a feeling of guilt about what is not being done, means that many people seem afraid to expose what they feel is their lack of understanding of sustainable development. Therefore, it is often easier to pretend that it does not need to be addressed". It is quite clear that because of sustainable development's uncertain definition people, nations, and governments seem to act on it in varying ways. Yet, for those that have agreed on a definition, the problem of implementation arises.

Countries that have made a conscious effort to understand sustainable development and are willing to make changes, both nationally as well as internationally, face the problem of implementing sustainable development-geared policies. As with Agenda 21, the document that gave a framework to countries for sustainable development, there is no 'enforcer' of the document. That is to say, countries may claim to understand sustainable development, agree to make changes to their policies, but nobody actually enforces them to do so.

The "Earth Summit", held in Rio in 1992, established sustainable development as the guiding vision for the development efforts of all countries. Governments also undertook to formulate and implement national sustainable development strategies. These were envisaged to be highly participatory instruments intended "to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations". The Rio commitments were reaffirmed most recently in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Box 1: Key challenges to sustainable development in developing countries

Extreme poverty still ravages the lives of one out of every five persons in the developing world. The social ills associated with poverty, including diseases, family breakdown, crime and the use of narcotic drugs, are on the rise in many countries.

Political instability, sometimes leading to violent conflict, hinders socio-economic progress in many countries and regions. Growing inequality of income both within and between countries as well as the marginalization of ethnic and other minorities contribute to this instability.

Environmental deterioration continues to increase. Natural resource depletion (soil erosion; loss of forests, habitats, and biodiversity; and depletion of fish stocks) and pollution are serious problems in most countries. Current patterns of production and consumption all raise questions about the continued capacity of the earth's natural resource base to feed and sustain a growing population.

The threat of climate change. Developing countries are expected to be the most vulnerable to the impacts of global climate change. The least developed among them are the most at risk, although their current contribution to the problem is very small.

Population growth is expected to exacerbate these pressures, although it is people's consumption levels that matter more than their mere numbers. Over 95% of the estimated increase of 2 billion people over the next twenty years will live in the developing world.

HIV-AIDS and malaria are particularly serious diseases, which erode the productive capacity and social fabric of nations. In the worst affected countries, HIV has already had a profound impact on existing rates of infant, child and maternal mortality.

Marginalization. Many countries are struggling under the combined weight of slow economic growth, a heavy external debt burden, corruption, violent conflict and food insecurity. They also suffer from actions taken in OECD countries, such as trade protection. As a result, they are increasingly marginalized from the global economy.

The Concept of sustainable Tourism

The term "sustainable tourism" does not imply a specific type of tourism but rather refers to a status of tourism being sustainable. However, every destination and all types of tourism should strive to be more sustainable in order to maintain their competitiveness. Competitiveness and sustainability are two main issues linked closely and thereby influence the future of tourism at a destination. Sustainable management and development of tourism is vital if it is aimed to assure the viability of tourism in the long run. UNWTO (2004) defines sustainable tourism development as the guidelines and management practices that are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

The travel and tourism industry is placed among the largest industries in the world. However, the degrading effects of tourism have become a big concern and need to be addressed quickly. With this in mind, the concept of sustainable tourism has emerged with the aim of reducing the negative effects of tourism activities, which has become almost universally accepted as a desirable and politically appropriate approach to tour- ism development (Sharpley, 2003). Sustainability covers all elements that constitute a complete tourism experience. According to the majority of scientists (Briguglio, Archer, Jafari, & Wall, 1996; Butler, 1991; Sharpley, 2000; Vellas & Becherel, 1999; WCED, 1987) 'sustainable tourism development' concerns an economic, social and environmen- tal tourism development that aims at the continuous improvement of tourists'

The concept of sustainable tourism development (STD) has emerged due the intent to decrease the consequences of mass tourism in the last forty years. The first important document to present sustainable tourism (ST) is the Rio+20 Outcome document (UN, 2021). The document states that "the only correct way to develop society is to alleviate poverty, strive for a society of social justice and conserve natural resources"

What is sustainable Tourism development strategy?

Numerous authors have discussed sustainable tourism as a topic (Zolfani, S.H.; Sedaghat, M.; Maknoon, R.; Zavadskas, E.K., 2015 & Bramwell, B.; Higham, J.; Lane, B.; Miller, G., 2017 & Dodds, R.; Butler, R., 2010). However, a relatively lower number of studies have focused on the development of strategies for sustainable tourism. It will be useful to provide a brief review of the literature on sustainable tourism development strategies from the standpoint of the purpose of this study.

Different regions have been subject to studies related to sustainable tourism development strategies. Using the benchmarking method (Helmy E., 2004), evaluated the Egyptian tourist planning mechanism from the sustainability perspective. He demonstrated that the tourist planning system lacks sustainable tourism development programmes and more cooperative efforts were necessary for the Egyptian tourist planning mechanism in order to achieve sustainability in tourism. Font and Serra (Font, X.; Serra, J.2017), improved sustainable tourism marketing strategies in Barcelona. They emphasized the criteria of sustainability, such as minimizing the negative environmental and social impacts, reducing the carbon footprint of transport, normalizing the behavior of the visitors, reducing touristic overcrowding, compensating for the negative impacts caused by tourism, serving the destination, and serving the needs of the city. (Grytsiuk et al.), built a strategy for the sustainable development of tourism in the Carpathian region of Ukraine under the conditions brought about by modern global changes. The basis of the sustainable development tourism strategy was to enhance the life quality of the inhabitants of the Carpathians. They also emphasized the formulation of an organizational development management mechanism of tourist destinations and the construction of an effective model of cooperation between government, business, and society. Another example is the one offered by Cortez, who presented the strategies that were adopted by the Government of the State of Bolivia to improve sustainable tourism. She highlighted that sustainable tourism development was linked to the community's self-actualization and requires planning. Mondal, determined that the present tourism activities in Bangladesh are unsustainable and analyzed a way to attain a sustainable tourism industry in Bangladesh using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis and a TOWS matrix. To develop a sustainable tourism industry, he suggested several strategies, such as ensuring the security of tourists, planning for sustainable economic profits, more environmental regulations, notifying people about sustainable tourism, and the development of the required infrastructure. He also implied that the findings of the study would help tourism stakeholders to analyze present problems of tourism. Feili et al., used the SWOT approach and fuzzy logic to find sustainable tourism development strategies in Iran. Their strategies included planning the progress of transportation in the region, informing people about tourism developers' activities in the media, providing accommodation for overnight and long stays, using professional managers in various tourist places, and implementing plans related to ecotourism. Rezapouraghdam and Esmaeili evaluated SWOT for sustainable desert-tourism development in Khara Desert, Iran.

They tried to provide a holistic sustainable strategic planning methodology for tourism authorities and practitioners in Iran. They concluded that if desert-tourism drew enough attention from tourism authorities, it would be seen as having a great potential for contributing to the economy, the prosperity, and the sustainable development of the environmental societies in Iran. They stressed that the most important step to be taken was to prepare a sustainable management master plan for the region.

Sulistyadi et al., used the SWOT analysis and a quantitative strategic planning matrix to build a sustainable tourism development model in their study and applied this model to the Thousand Islands Tourism Area, Jakarta. As a result, they summarized their tourism development strategies as strengthening the commitment of the stakeholder, increasing the role and capabilities of the local communities, re-enforcing the principles of sustainable tourism, and developing responsible tourism marketing. They also highlighted that the role of destination management organizations leads the applied tourism development strategy model.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is also counted among the institutions that use SWOT in order to present sustainable tourism strategies for better management and long-term planning on core issues in Bali, Indonesia. The resulting strategy included a shared vision, strategic objectives, and an action plan to be implemented by stakeholders.

Paunovic and Jovanovic, mentioned in their study that sustainable tourism was based on a holistic approach and a knowledge-based platform; thereby, all forms and approaches of tourism should be considered.

Integrating social, economic and environmental objectives, taking account of their implications for different socio-economic groups and for future generations, poses many technical and political difficulties. Such complex challenges cannot be tackled on an ad hoc or piecemeal basis.

First, countries need to have a vision of progress and where they want to go in the future. Such a vision must reflect the country's history and core values and be widely shared among the public as well as economic and other actors across the political spectrum. They also need multi-stakeholder for a (including representatives of government, business, labour and civil society) to examine available policy options and translate the broad vision into specific short and long- term objectives at the national and local levels.

Mechanisms for cross-sectoral policy integration are essential to examine the interaction between policy decisions taken at different levels and in different sectors and their implications for different socio-economic groups. These must provide for the active participation of civil society and private sector stakeholders in policy formulation and planning at various levels.

Last but not least, a capacity to monitor current social, economic and environmental conditions and likely future trends is necessary to be able to assess options and constraints, define realistic objectives, monitor progress towards agreed goals and identify necessary changes of course.

Taken together, these elements form the basis of a sustainable development strategy. In other words, a strategy is not a "grand plan" or set of plans, but rather a set of instruments and ways of working which enable sustainable development challenges to be tackled in a coherent and dynamic way.

Based on a comprehensive review of experience in developing and developed countries, the DAC has sought to clarify the principles underlying effective national and local strategies for sustainable development. These are summarized in Box 2.

Box 2: Key principles of sustainable development strategies

These principles represent a set of desirable features of sustainable development strategies.

Country-led and nationally-owned. Countries must take the lead and initiative in developing their own strategies. Sustainable development strategies can- not emerge from outside pressures.

Rooted in a vision of long-term development. The vision should reflect a consensus among social, economic and political stakeholders across the political spectrum. High-level government commitment to the vision is also essential.

Defined through a participatory process, involving civil society, the private sector and political stake- holders to open up debate, expose issues to be addressed, and build consensus and political sup- port on action.

Based on a solid analytical basis, taking account also of relevant regional issues, including a comprehensive review of the present situation and forecasts of trends and risks, including those beyond the country's control. Such analysis depends on credible and reliable information on changing environmental, social and economic conditions, pressures and responses, and their implications for strategy objectives and indicators.

Focused on ensuring sustained beneficial impacts on disadvantaged and marginalized groups, notably the poor.

Comprehensive and integrated. Strategies should seek to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives through mutually supportive policies. But where integration cannot be achieved, and hard choices have to be made, they should be negotiated in a transparent and participative manner. Ensuring transparency and accountability is therefore essen- tial.

In developing the strategy key it is essential to:
Build on existing strategies and processes, rather than adding additional ones, and focus on improving the convergence, complementarity and coherence between different planning frameworks and policies. This requires mechanisms to co-ordinate different processes, and to identify and resolve potential conflicts, as well as good communication and information dissemination with a premium on transparency and accountability.

Set realistic and monitorable targets linked to clear budgetary priorities. Targets need to be challenging – but realistic in relation to financial and other constraints. The strategy needs to be fully integrated into the budget process to ensure that financial resources are available to translate it into action. Conversely, the formulation of budgets must take account of the priorities highlighted in the strategy.

Identify priority capacity development needs. This includes taking stock of the institutional, human, scientific and financial capacity of state, market and civil society stakeholders and finding ways to fill gaps.

"Build in" continuous monitoring and improvement from the outset. This requires developing mechanisms

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and indicators to track progress, capture lessons from experience, identify necessary changes of course. Local capacities for analysis and existing information should be fully utilized.

Define the roles, responsibilities and relationships of key participants in

Strategy processes early on.

Governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders should agree on the "rules of the game" and be bound to clearly defined standards of behaviour.

Link national and local levels. Policy-making and planning should involve two-way iterative processes within and between national and decentralised levels of governments. The main strategic principles and directions should be set at the central level but detailed planning, implementation and monitoring would be undertaken at a decentralised level, with appropriate transfer of resources and authority.

What are strategies for sustainable Tourism development?

According to Sharpley & Telfer (2002), the goal of the process is, in effect, the self-actualisation of individuals within a society, embracing at least five dimensions:

1. An economic component – the creation of wealth and equitable access to resources;
2. A social component – the improvement of health, education, security, employment and housing opportunities;
3. A cultural dimension – the protection or affirmation of cultural identity and self-esteem;
4. An ecological dimension – which reflects the emergence of environmental sustain- ability as a guiding principle of all development policies; and
5. The full-life paradigm – the preservation and strengthening of the meaning system, symbols and beliefs of a society This guidance defines a strategy for sustainable development as comprising: "A coordinated set of participatory and continuously improving processes of analysis, debate, capacity-strengthening, planning and investment, which integrates the economic, social and environmental objectives of society, seeking tradeoffs where this is not possible".

To substantiate the definition, this guidance also offers a set of principles. These encompass a set of desirable processes and outcomes which taken together are likely to help ensure success of strategies for sustainable development. The principles emphasise local ownership of the strategy process, effective participation from all levels, and high-level commitment. They point to the importance of convergence and coherence between different planning frameworks, integrated analysis, and capacity development.

According to UNWTO, 2023: A Tourism Strategy translates the tourism policy into action, setting the direction and activities to achieve the policy objectives. It may be expressed through a Strategic Development Plan or Master Plan. This should be comprehensive, encompassing all the factors and components involved in the operation, management, measurement and control of tourism in the country.

A tourism strategy may span a period of between 5 and 15 years depending on the circumstance of the country and the maturity of the tourism sector. It is implemented by action plans which set out annual activity and allocate tasks and resources. The strategy should be evidence based and informed by a detailed programme of research, assessment and consultation. Typically the strategic plan or master plan would cover:

➢ Tourism resources which have the potential to be converted into viable and attractive tourism products
➢ Tourist facilities and services, and opportunities for investment
➢ Current tourism flows and performance
➢ Type and scale of target markets
➢ Transportation access and service structure
➢ Current and projected economic analysis
➢ Socio cultural, environmental and economic impacts
➢ Resource management - energy, water and waste
➢ Institutional set up for tourism development
➢ Tourism related legislation and regulations
➢ Human Resources needs
➢ Tourism infrastructure requirements
➢ Tourism development areas
➢ Concept designs for development of tourist areas, resorts and attractions
➢ Community involvement and initiatives
➢ Tourism marketing and information delivery

Depending on circumstances, a sustainable development strategy may be viewed as a system comprising the following components:

Regular multi-stakeholder for and means for negotiation at national and decentralised levels, with links between them. A shared vision and set of broad strategic objectives. A set of mechanisms to pursue those objectives in ways that can adapt to change (notably an information system; communication capabilities; analytical processes; international engagement; and coordinated means for policy integration, budgeting, monitoring, and accountability). Principles and standards to be adopted by sectors and stakeholders, through legislation, voluntary action, market-based instruments, etc. Pilot activities, to generate learning and ownership. A secretariat or other facility with authority for coordinating these mechanisms. A mandate for all the above from a high-level, central authority such as the prime minister's office and, to the extent possible, from citizens' and business organisations.

How can external partners support strategies for sustainable development?

According to Darian Stibbe, Stuart Reid and Julia Gilber, 2019: Our world has limited resources whether financial, natural or human and as a society we must optimize their use. The fundamental core of good partnerships is their ability to bring together diverse resources in ways that can together achieve more: more impact, greater sustainability, increased value to all. The importance of partnership has been recognized fully by the UN, by business and by all leading institutions in international development. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the blueprint for global development represent a fundamental shift in thinking, explicitly acknowledging the interconnectedness of prosperous business, a thriving society and a healthy environment. They name all societal sectors as key development actors and require an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among civil society, business, government, NGOs, foundations and others for their achievement.

Development cooperation agencies have offered financial and technical support to strategic planning approaches such as National Conservation Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategies. This support has provided opportunities for country stakeholders to explore sustainable development options. Sometimes, however, bilateral and multilateral development agencies have heavily influenced the strategy process, its timing, and its outcomes – and then supplanted one strategy with another.

Agencies can effectively and efficiently support sustainable development strategies by applying the principles outlined in this policy guidance – assisting country-driven, capacity-enhancing participatory processes that reflect the priorities of stakeholders. Particular commitment to such principles is needed for any strategic framework that has its conceptual or institutional origins outside the country in question, so as to improve coherence between international frameworks and to strengthen and improve synergies with existing national strategies. The role of external partner's strategies should be catalytic and supplementary, with a strong focus on using and developing local capabilities, and methodological support. This is a challenging approach, which will require changes in the policies, procedures and capacities of development cooperation agencies. This guidance details action that agencies can take to put their commitments into practice and suggests ways of monitoring agency observance of the guidance.

Finally, strategies for sustainable development prepared by individual developing countries can be greatly compromised by external policies and institutions (e.g. those concerning trade and investment) over which developing countries often have little direct control. Development agencies can help by communicating such vulnerabilities to international stakeholders, including the private sector.

Theoretical Review in Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism defines by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is tourism that takes into account the full impact of the economic, social and environmental present and future, address the needs of visitors, industry (tourism), environment and host communities (Jakarta,2012).

According to Sharpley and Richard 2006, the aim of sustainable development is striking a balance between tourism environment, the local community needs and the needs of travelers. In other words, the achievement of sustainable development objectives are (1) The objective of development, focusing on economic growth through a grassroots approach for a development that focus on basic needs satisfaction of the community (2) The objective of sustainable environment, preserve and protect the environment, mainly preserving the un renewable resources. According (Jakarta, 2012) the objective of sustainable tourism is to decrease poverty, by respecting socio-culture authenticity, and the use of environmental resources responsibly, by not only encouraging but also facilitating and empowering the community so they will be able to take part in the production process

and gaining various direct benefits from the tourism activities.

Destination management organization (DMO)

DMO is an integrated tourism management system that has a completeness as a system. DMO has 5 functions that demonstrate the completeness of DMO as a system, that are (1) as economic driver in generating local revenue, jobs, and tax revenue that contributes to local economic growth (2) as community marketer in visualization of tourist destination, tourist activities thus becoming the choice of visitors (3) as industry coordinator that has the clarity to focus on gaining result from the industrial growth from tourism (4) as quasi-public representative is a representation of the opinion concerning the tourism industry that enjoyed by visitor or group of visitors (5) as builder of community pride with the increasing of quality of life (Morrison AJ, Baum T, Andrew R 1998). DMO is responsible on the fabrication of tourist destination to achieve good return on investment, market growth, quality of product, variety of brands, and profit for all parties, however DMO does not have the real factory, whether hiring people who work on it, or even controlling the overall process is done (UNWTO; 2007). There are three important components in DMO, namely (1) coordination tourism stakeholders, is the core of the DMO system. This component is the key of success because it focuses on the relationship network that set up the DMO system (2) destination crisis management, provide supervision from the system by implementation and management from design to program implementation and (3) destination marketing, become the spearhead in DMO component. The success of DMO is determined on how destination marketing can attract as many visitors to come to the area that has been promoted (Presenza A. 2005).

Community based tourism

According to Timothy DJ. 1999, community based tourism is related to the benefits obtained and the assistance planning efforts that protect local communities and other interested groups, which gives more control in the social process for creating prosperity. Meanwhile, according to Murphy PE. 1985, emphasizes strategies that are focused on the identification of the host community goals and desires as well as their ability to absorb the benefits of tourism. Every community should be encouraged to identify their own goals and directing tourism to improve local people's needs. Community based tourism creates a more sustainable tourism industry which focuses on local communities in planning and maintaining tourism development (Beaton Sue 2006).

If the tourism strategies become sustainable then the community development and empowerment should be developed as the main goal of the partnership itself. Not only in conjunction with the public, or through public participation, but as a form of local community development (Hughes G. 1995). There are many potential benefits when people who lived or worked in a tourist destination involved in the planning of tourism as it will enhance the legitimacy of the political community member. This means that members of the public have a greater influence in the decisions that affect their lives (Benveniste G. 1989).

Conservation oriented

Conservation is defined as management by humans used to ensure the use of organism and ecosystems in unsustainable manner. In addition to sustainable use, conservation includes protection, maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration and enhancement of population and ecosystem (*World Conservation Union*). Conservation region is an area of land or sea especially dedicated for protection and maintenance of biodiversity, and natural resources and its cultural resources in the long term managed through legal means and other effective ways. Sustainable tourism is committed in protecting and responsible to integrity of natural and cultural environment by planning and managing environment and socio-cultural (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural, 2008). Conservation orientation consists of (1) Conservation of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity (2) Conservation and reduces energy, waste and pollutants (3) Respecting and supporting local tradition, culture and society.

Protection of local culture emphasizing on protection efforts, thought and work of local communities on the tourism activity such as the threat on social degradation and kinship system, traditional life, ecosystem, also economy of local community (Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann; 2006).

Carrying capacity

Tourism carrying capacity is defined as total maximum people than could visit the tourist destination at the same time, without causing damage to the social environment, physical culture, economy and no decrease in accepted in the quality of visitor satisfaction (WTO,1981). Carrying capacity is a concept that measures the level of use of tourist to ensure the sustainability of a destination. Several concept of carrying capacity that useful in the tourism planning, namely: (1) management capacity, the ability of the number of tourists that can be managed by the destination management without affecting administrative issues, management, economical, also the services to tourists (2) physical capacity, is

physical capacity including facilities and infrastructures that able to accommodate the number of tourists without cause problems in the terms of smoothness of tourist in enjoying the destination both in physical quality or the extent of facilities and infrastructures (3) environmental capacity, the number of tourists that can be accommodated that not to cause damage to the environment and ecosystem (4) economic capacity, the number of tourists that can be brought before the local people began to feel the economic problems posed (5) social capacity, the number of people maximum, where higher numbers could cause damage to the culture that is difficult recovered (6) infrastructure capacity, the number of tourists that can be accommodated by the infrastructure of a destination (7) perceptual capacity, the number of people who can be served by a destination prior to experience of having holiday reduced (Dewi, Ike Janita. 2011).

Education and training
The important distinction between the form of sustainable tourism and conventional tourism lies in the element of education or training activity. This does not mean that it takes a high academic level to be a sustainable tourist; but a more natural understanding of how humans and the environment work and carry out activities to achieve the goal (Mowforth, Martin and Ian Mun., 2003). From the perspective of tourism management education and training is needed not only for the players linked with the development of tourism, but also tourists who make a visit to the tourist area. Training for the actors aim to implement the tourism organizing professionally done, while for the travelers intended to raise awareness, awareness and appreciation of the importance of preserving the natural environment and culture of the areas he visited.

Promotion
In marketing sustainable tourism, in addition to introducing, socialize, and to promote sustainable tourism sector in the tourist area specified promotional purposes is to increase stakeholder awareness of the principles of sustainable tourism. Including promoting tourist behavior in accordance with the behavior of the local community, to prevent behavior that could lead to non-material losses to the lives of future generations. The promotion was also minimizing conflicts of interest among stakeholders in the use of natural and cultural resources, as well as the development of tourism infrastructure (Jakarta, 2012).

Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring conducted by the stakeholders in a container which is formed together to stage plan that includes goals and schedules as well as monitoring the implementation phase. In this monitoring process is directed to supervise the principles of sustainability of tourism in order to be implemented consistently and consistently. Therefore, we need an information system. The information system is a process that performs the function of collecting, processing, storing, analyzing, disseminating information for a particular purpose. The information system should not be computerized, although most are computerized (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 2010).

Demographic developments
Demography is the study of human populations that include population size, age structure, geographical distribution, and the distribution of income and other statistics (Kotler, Philip, Kevin Lane Keller., 2009), with a description like the following (1) Size of population (2) The age structure (3) Level of education (4) Distribution of income (UN, 2007 & Miles MB, Huberman., 1984).

Economic development
The economic health of a nation affects the performance of individual companies and the industry. Therefore, it is very necessary to study the economic environment to identify changes and trends and their strategic implications (UN, 2007).

Political and legal developments
Politics/law is an arena in which organizations and groups with an interest in competing for the desired resource, and there is supervision of legal entities and laws (Timothy DJ., 1999).

Social and cultural development
Socio-cultural segment related to attitudes and cultural values of a society. Because attitudes and values form the foundation of a society, where people always participate, encouraging conditions and changes in demographic, economic, political / legal, and technology (UN, 2007).

Technological development
Technological developments affecting many elements in society. The effects of arising technology are through products, processes, and new materials (UN, 2007).

Increased globalization
Global segment includes relevant new global market, global market is changing, political events of international importance, and cultural and institutional characteristics that determine global markets (UN, 2007).

Key Issues to be addressed
The author feels that the following are among the main weaknesses of the sustainable literature which

must be addressed if we are to advance further in this field of research.

1. While emphasizing the sustainability of tourism resources, no due attention has yet been paid to that of tourist demand, especially at the destination level, where a sustained flow of tourists cannot be taken for granted though this might be the case at the global level.

2. When discussing resource sustainability, it is often limited to the preservation and conservation of resources and fails to appreciate that resources are a complex and dynamic concept, evolving with changes in the needs, preferences and technological capabilities of society.

3. While emphasizing intergenerational equity, no due attention has yet been paid to intra-generational equity, that is, the fairness of benefits and costs distribution among the stakeholder groups of tourism development. Where such attempts were made and community involvement was advocated, many writers fail to recognise that the host population is often not empowered to take control of the development process.

4. While emphasising the interests of the host population, an overwhelming majority of the writers in the field appear to have a view that the destination community should reap the economic benefits of tourism but keep its culture intact. Many argue that the social and cultural impacts of tourism are primarily negative and any tourism-related socio-cultural changes should be avoided.

5. The determination of the absolute level and pace of development has not been without problems as well. Many tourism organisations and academics have searched for ways to set the limit or threshold to tourism growth, through identifying carrying capacities and indicators of sustainable development, but with limited success.

6. The means and instruments advocated for achieving sustainable tourism are often fraught with simplistic or naïve views. Many writers and practitioners enthusiastically promote ecotourism, alternative tourism, responsible tourism, soft tourism, low-impact tourism, community tourism, and so on, as the path to sustainable tourism development. But experiences show that none of these forms can be relied on as the way forward for a sustainable and growing tourism industry worldwide.

Is Sustainable Tourism Solely a Supply Issue?
Sustainable tourism requires both the sustainable growth of tourism's contribution to the economy and society and the sustainable use of resources and environment. Neither can be achieved without a sound understanding and proper management of tourism demand. But demand issues have generally been ignored in the sustainable tourism debate, with the exception of few writers (e.g. Butler, 1999b; Middleton & Hawkins 1998) and the case of on-site visitor management which is often used as an impact control measure. This is probably because the concept of sustainability was originally taken, rather conveniently and with little adaptation, from the general sustainable development literature where a constant or increasing overall demand for resources is a given condition. However, as demand patterns and economic structures change, no industry, and in particular no industry at the national or regional level, could or should assume that there is a constant or increasing flow of demand for its outputs and thus focus solely on resource issues.

Tourism development is both supply-led and demand–driven. The provision of tourist facilities and services may arise as a response to growing demand or aim to stimulate tourist demand. Whatever the initial impetus, successful development in the long term necessitates a balance of supply and demand in terms of range, quality, quantity and price. An evolution on one side of the demand- supply equation will usually be accompanied by changes in the other, whether this represents growth, stagnation, decline or some qualitative transformation. Moreover, the nature and extent of the demand and the associated facilities and services provided will also directly influence the broader aspects of development (Pearce, 1989). Indeed, 'Tourism development is a dynamic process of matching tourism resources to the demands and preferences of actual or potential tourists' (Liu, 1994: 21).

Generally speaking, the demand determinants push a tourist into a travel decision while the supply factors pull the tourist towards a particular destination. The size and preferences of global tourist demand are determined by variables in generating countries, whereas the spatial distribution of tourist flows will be influenced by the competitiveness of various tourist destinations.

Globally, tourism has been growing rapidly during the last half a century, from 25 million international tourist arrivals in 1950 to 698 million in 2000 (WTO, 2002), and is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 4.3% until 2020 (WTO, 1998). However, no destination can take the growth of its tourism industry for granted as increasing tourist demand will be shared by, and distributed across, many competing destinations. Therefore, for each individual resort or

country, it is unrealistic and pernicious to assume that there is always an increasing demand for its product, and ignore changes in the tourist market. The tourism industry is also vulnerable to external events. For instance, the September 11th terrorist attacks in America led to an 11% decline in world international tourist arrivals during the final four months of 2001 (WTO, 2002). The remarks made by Levitt (1960) 40 years ago are still pertinent: there is no such thing as a growth industry. There are only companies organised and operated to create and capitalise on growth opportunities. Industries that assume themselves to be riding some automatic growth escalator invariably descend into stagnation.

Even though the total scale of world tourism demand is predicted to increase in the foreseeable future, the types and quality of products tourists search for are changing constantly. Tourists are becoming more experienced, more critical, more quality conscious and seek new experiences as well as 'good value for money'. Furthermore, tourist destinations across the world are facing increasing competition from other leisure industries and other destinations as well as constantly changing tourist tastes and behaviors. Some well-established tourist resorts in the Mediterranean have already experienced stagnation or even decline and have started to differentiate their largely homogeneous offerings by developing new products, improving the quality of existing products and penetrating new markets (Morgan, 1998). In order to develop tourism sustainably, demand management, in terms of finding enough tourists to fill capacities, is often more critical than resource management since tourist demand usually fluctuates more frequently and abruptly than tourist resources. For instance, in 1997 global international tourist arrivals increased by 2.4% but one fifth of the WTO member countries recorded a decline in visitor numbers from abroad (WTO, 1999).

The motivations, preferences and perceptions of tourists influence the tourism resource itself in the sense that they determine what object or site becomes a tourist attraction and its relative value in the marketplace. Tourists never buy 'resources', they go to tourist destinations, visit attractions and use facilities. The dynamic nature and changing value of various kinds of tourist resources can largely be explained by the evolution of tourism demand. For instance, before the mid-18th century, nature was not normally regarded as an attraction. The Alps, where some of the world's most popular scenic and ski resorts are located, was to be avoided during the Grand Tour.

Demand management is also important in sustaining tourism resources in that effective marketing can channel tourist demand to places that are more impact-resilient, such as urban and seaside built environments rather than to more fragile wilderness areas. Purpose-built attractions such as theme parks, and resort towns like Orlando and Las Vegas in the USA can absorb millions of tourists and reduce the touristic pressure on the natural environment. Other-wise, the world will find it difficult to cater for the extra one billion international tourists projected by WTO (1998) in 20 years' time in national parks and heritage sites. Visitor management techniques can also be applied to select or deselect tourists, control their flows and influence their behaviour through promotion and education.

Is Tourism Resource a Fixed Entity?
It has been argued that tourism is a resource industry and natural environ- mental assets are the very foundation upon which all tourism rests and are usually the most successful in attracting tourists. This perhaps partly explains why the sustainable tourism literature has overwhelmingly focused on the preservation and conservation of natural resources. However, sustainable resources management requires a broader and better understanding of the characteristics of tourism resource.

Natural assets or resources can be classified, according to availability, into four main groups: ubiquities, which exist everywhere; commonalities, which are widely available across many areas; rarities, which occur in very few locations; and iniquities, which occur in one place only (Healey &Ilbery, 1990). Preserving and promoting the rare and unique tourist assets, rather than all resources, is the key to achieving competitiveness and sustainability in tourism. Based on the utilities of natural resources, the following resource types can also be easily observed:

1. Touristic resources, which are only suitable for tourism purposes, such as sandy beaches and snowy slopes;

2. Shared tourist resources, which are mainly used in tourism and a limited number of other industries like fishery and agriculture, such as sea and forest;

3. Common resources, which are used in most industries and everyday life, such as land and water.

Whether, how and to what extent the various types of resources are employed in tourism depend on the comparative merits and opportunity cost of the industry in relation to other economic sectors.

From a broader perspective, tourism resources encompass more than nature's endowment. As a place product, tourism requires three levels of resources: the attractions for tourists, including natural, cultural and purpose-built; the infra- structure and superstructure, to support tourist activities; and the physical and social settings, including the hospitality of the community. The transformation of these resources into an effective tourism product usually requires the effort of the tourism agencies, in particular tour operators, travel agents and national tourism organisations, in packaging and promoting the whole destination.

All the components of tourism supply are interrelated with attractions as the core. A coordinated and balanced development of all components is critical because the capacity of the tourism industry is determined by the capacity of the weakest components (the bottleneck). Generally speaking, the number, quality and size of tourist attractions decide the maximum potential tourism (attracting) capacity of a destination. Infrastructure and amenities determine the actual or effective tourism (carrying) capacity while agency and administration normally set the level of the realised capacity in a given period of time.

As the natural resources, though deemed to be finite, are still perceived as abundant and often come free in many destinations, it is often the other categories of resources that decide the effectiveness of tourism development. For instance, it is the lack of capital, technology and marketing and management expertise that restrains the growth of tourism in many less developed regions in the world. The inefficient use of many tourist facilities (hotels for example, often have annual bed occupancy rates of 50–60% in most countries), indicates that the effective marketing of these tourist resources is of great significance in reducing resource wastage.

The concept of a resource itself, as mentioned earlier, is both functional and cultural. Resource does not apply to an object, but to a value placed upon it in view of the function it may perform. The perception of any resource thus does not rely on its physical properties, but on a range of economic, technological and psychological factors. Resources are not, they become (Zimmerman, 1951). Tourist attractions, like resources in general, need not refer to a fixed or finite quantity or quality. What constitutes an attraction from the human perspective depends on the kind of knowledge and technology acquired by a society and upon human tastes, values and lifestyles. Therefore, how can one anticipate the needs and preferences of future generations? Will they value a wilderness area more highly than a comfortable built environment? Will they enjoy the Pyramids more than Disneyland? Will virtual travel replace holidays to the rainforest since 'technology can give us more reality than nature can'? (Eco, 1986: 44).

Pearce et al. (1990) summarise the minimum resource condition for achieving sustainable development as 'constancy of the natural capital stock' which can take on several different meanings: constant physical capital stock; constant economic value of the stock; and the constant value of all capital stocks both man-made and natural. Applying the constant capital rule to tourism, Garrod and Fyall (1998) propose two approaches to sustainable tourism: the macro and micro approaches. The former involves the use of environmental balance sheets to measure sustainability conditions, while the latter entails the use of social cost-benefit analysis at the level of the individual tourism development project. Fossati and Panella (2000) make a distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' sustainability. They argue that the former stresses the importance of irreversibility with regard to certain critical aspects of natural capital while the latter allows substitution between man-made and natural components.

This leads us to the question of how we use resources. Should we try to maximise the physical capital stock or maximise the total capital stock? Should a destination keep its natural assets such as wilderness areas untouched, or trans- form them into tourist attractions and through tourism increase capital stock in the forms of improved technology and infrastructure while accepting limited changes or reductions of the natural assets? This author believes that research on tourism resource should recognise its complex and dynamic nature and advance beyond the stage of pleading for conservation and preservation to a realm of retaining a balance between the consumption, transformation and creation of tourism resources.

Is Intra-Generational Equity Less Imperative?
'If social and economic development means anything at all, it must mean a clear improvement in the conditions of life and livelihood of ordinary people' (Friedmann, 1992: 72). A meaningful way to evaluate sustainable tourism is to examine how it can meet the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term. Tourism is said to have a unique quality in income generation and distribution compared to many other industries in that it promotes regional development, has a high multiplier effect and consumes a wide variety of local goods and services.

However, global experience shows that this potential of tourism has rarely been fully realised. In less developed countries in particular, poverty and social desperation necessitate a great need for the local community to benefit from tourism development, but the inability of the host population to fully participate in the development process results in the lion's share of tourism income being taken away or 'leaked' out from the destination. It is thus argued that 'a greater level of local involvement in the planning and development of tourism is an essential prerequisite of sustainable tourism' (Hitchcock et al., 1993: 23–4).

Bramwell (1998) rightfully highlights four arguments for intra-generational equity in the sustainability debate. First, it is the local community, especially the disadvantaged social groups, who bear the brunt of negative costs. Second, poverty encourages unsustainable practices in order to seek quick returns to meet immediate needs. Third, high charges for the use of some scarce resources tend to exclude poorer people. And lastly, it is hard to justify caring about fair-ness to future generations without extending this concern to people in society today.

There is another strong argument for involving and rewarding the local community. The host population is itself a part of the tourism 'place' product. The locals are subjects to be viewed and interacted with, or settings for tourist activities, and their attitudes and behaviour constitute the 'hospitality' resource of a destination (Smith, 1994). The more that local resident's gain from tourism, the more they will be motivated to protect the area's natural and cultural heritage and support tourism activities. If they do not benefit from tourism development, they may become resentful and this may drive tourists away from a destination as tourists do not like visiting places where they are not welcomed.

When the needs and interests of the local communities are emphasised, many writers fail to realise that local communities are not some kind of homogeneous mass but contain deep divisions of class, status and power. Community tourism or community involvement in tourism development is often difficult to implement, especially in developing countries (Tosun, 2000). Harrison (1996) argues that it is hard to see how the wishes of local people and communities could ever be sufficiently unified to offer a practical guide to tourism development. There is also a wide range of models for community involvement. The ideal is 'self-mobilisation' and active participation in the planning and management of tourism, but in reality, community involvement in most cases is 'relational' rather than participatory. Without proprietorship, most forms of participation

become co-optive, cooperative or collaborative arrangements (Honey, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999). Clearly effort needs to be made to empower the local population economically as well as psychologically, socially and politically (Friedman, 1992).

Nevertheless, intra-generational equity is not only about local communities. Generally speaking, sustainable development is determined largely by what the stakeholders want it to be. There are a range of actors who have the right and, to a varying extent, ability to make changes to the tourism system and influence the process and consequences of development. These actors or stakeholders include tourists (domestic and foreign); tourist businesses (investors, developers, opera-tors; shareholders, management, employees; public and private); the host community and their governments. These groups often have conflicting interests in, and different perceptions of, tourism development. To be successful and sustainable, tourism development should involve 'various government departments, public and private sector companies, community groups and experts' (Wahab&Pigram, 1998: 283).

Obviously, the needs of one group may take precedence over those of the others in development decisions depending on the specific circumstances of each destination, such as the stage of development, economic conditions or market situation. For example, in the early stages of the destination life cycle, in order to attract the badly needed foreign investment, governments in developing countries may offer generous incentives to multinational companies to develop tourist facilities and introduce expatriate managers to run these facilities in the destination. When the destination becomes more established and local workers are more experienced, a stronger emphasis on local control is often required.

However, the history of tourism developments has shown that all these groups are equally important and that long-range objectives and sustainability cannot be achieved if one group is continually subordinated to the others. Sustainable tourism development requires simultaneously meeting the needs of the tourists, the tourist businesses, the host community and the needs for environmental protection. It calls, as Bramwell and Lane (2000) argue, for the effective planning and implementation of collaboration and partnerships among various stakeholders in the process of tourism development. By integrating and reconciling these needs and concerns, an improved quality of life can be achieved for the community, while the tourists gain satisfactory experiences, the tourism industry makes a fair profit and the environment is protected for continuous future use.

Although the complete integration of such diverse interests is unlikely in many destinations, sincere attempts at integration which include the involvement of local communities are more likely to be sustainable than development for which no effort is made to reach compatibility with local, economic, social and ecological conditions (Butler, 1999a).

Does Cultural Integrity Reject Change in Destination Societies?

While recognising the economic benefits of tourism, many writers appear to have a view that its social and cultural impacts are primarily harmful. Croall (1995), for example, claims that tourism has trivialized cultures, brought about uniformity, and had adverse effects on traditional ways of life and on the distinctiveness of local cultures. Preserving cultural heritage, maintaining traditional values and providing authentic experiences for tourists have often been high- lighted as important elements of sustainable tourism. However, the author believes that most sociocultural changes brought about by tourism development are beneficial and the unique role of tourism in promoting modern values, social progress and cultural evolution should be greatly appreciated.

Todaro (1997: 16) emphasised that development is 'a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structure, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty'. Tourism, through its face-to-face contact between the hosts and the visitors and the 'demonstration effect', often introduces new ideas, values and lifestyles and new stimuli for both economic and social progress. Since most international travellers are generated in the developed world, the cultural impacts of tourism are often seen as Western influences, which in the author's opinion are largely desirable. The developed countries are not only developed technologically and economically; many elements of the modern Western culture such as fairness, openness, social mobility and human rights represent the universal values of mankind (though these values are not always observable in the touristic host–guest interaction). Even mass consumption and materialism are usually conducive to economic development.

If Westernization, following the values and steps of developed countries, is undesirable, does it imply that the Western culture is inferior to the traditional cultures? Or does it mean that the Western culture is only good for the West but not suitable for the rest of the world? Are traditional societies really better than modern ones? Are host populations in developing countries happy with their lives? Are they not tempted to change their traditional ways of life when they become aware of the many alternative lifestyles? Even if the changes are detrimental, is tourism the only cause? Do the developing countries really have the choice of not to change?

Changes have been an intrinsic part of human evolution. What is different in the modern world is that changes are occurring more rapidly and are caused by a wider variety of forces. Which changes are negative and damage the cultural integrity of the destination is a subjective judgement based on development objectives and public values (Wight, 1998). Furthermore, the globalisation and homogenisation of culture, often summed up in terms like 'Coca-Colaisation', 'McDonaldisation' or 'Hollywoodisation', cannot be solely attributed to tourism. The mass media, through modern telecommunication and information tech- nology often play a greater part in shaping the values, opinions, lifestyles and fashions across the world.

The author feels that the uniqueness of primitive and traditional society, to a large extent, is more a culture of a particular historical period than a particular ethnic group. The now developed West was once traditional. Many developing societies are still in the 'traditional' stage: it is only because they have failed to keep pace with the development of the world as a whole, that their social values and ways of life have become 'traditional' or 'primitive' in the eyes of modern (Western) culture. It should not be assumed that people in less developed countries do not want change, though they may, appear to be happy to the outsider who may be reluctant to see them change and would be happy if they retained their marginalised positions (Oakes, 1992). 'Paradoxically, in a tourism context, residents of destination areas may be encouraged to retain their traditions in order that they can develop!' (Wall, 1997: 1).

It is also unfair to expect the less developed world to keep its traditional culture for the sake of the tourists who wish to seek exotic and authentic experiences. Although for many less developed tourist destinations the key attraction to tourists is their exoticness or primitiveness, whether it is reflected in the forms of pristine environment, primitive ways of life or traditional crafts and artefacts, not all tourists are seeking authentic cultural attractions all the time. MacCannell (1976) argues that mainstream tourists' experience 'staged authenticity' as a general rule. Most mass package holidaymakers are happy to enjoy a commercialised, 'manufactured' or 'pseudo-culture' of the host community. The tourists themselves are often part of the hybrid resort culture, like that developed in some popular Spanish coastal resorts

where many tourists are more interested in inter-acting with other tourists rather than mingling with the host community (even when authenticity is emphasised by both tourists and the tourist businesses). It is usually 'created by entrepreneurs, marketing agents, tour operators and travel guides' (Hughes, 1995: 781) to reflect tourist expectations rather than portray what actually exists. Therefore, tourism destinations do not have to be authentically 'traditional' to meet with the expectations of tourists since local people can 'negotiate both their own "traditional" identity in the presence of tourists and the latter's quests and experiences in themselves' (Tucker, 2001: 868).

Has Sustainability Been Usefully Measured?

It is said, 'the greatest criticism of the tourism industry relates to the problem of its exceeding desirable limits. It is often "too much of a good thing"' (Rosenow & Pulsipher, 1979: 213–14). But how much is too much? What is exactly the sustainable level of tourism development? How can this level be measured? 'While it is relatively easy to conceptualize and proselytise about the needs for sustainable tourism development, it is far more challenging to develop an effective, yet practical, measurement process' (Murphy, 1998: 180). After more than a decade's debate on sustainable tourism, there is still disagreement on what should be sustained and on the appropriate indicators for measuring sustainability (McCool et al., 2001).

Pigram (1990) argues that the tourism industry should adopt a 'safe minimum standard' approach to development which minimises the risk that irreversible changes will foreclose development opportunities for future generations. But as development effects tend to be accumulative, how can one foresee the final impact of the many incremental changes made to the environment through tourism development over a long period of time?

The carrying capacity concept has often been used to identify the 'thresholds' of a system to absorb changes. It is argued that sustainable tourism can only take place if carrying capacities for key tourism sites are computed and then rigorously implemented through a system of effective planning and operating controls (Wearing & Neil, 1999). The concept of carrying capacity implies the existence of fixed and determinable limits to development and is generally defined as the maximum number of visitors an area could accommodate without there being excessive deterioration of the environment or declining visitor satisfaction. This limit is difficult, if not impossible, to determine as it depends on the nature of the

destination, the type of products it offers, the kind of tourists it attracts, and the stages of its lifecycle.

The many dimensions of carrying capacity – physical, ecological, psychological, social and economic – further complicate this task. Each of these carrying capacities has different thresholds and different implications for tourism development. Physical carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of tourists a site or destination can physically accommodate, based on the minimum space a tourist needs, say a couple of square metres on a crowded beach. Ecological carrying capacity is related to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment and the long-term viability of the natural resources. Psychological carrying capacity is concerned with the perception and satisfaction of tourists, which varies across different types of tourists, holidays and destinations. Social carrying capacity involves the sociocultural impacts of tourism that will influence the attitude of the local community towards tourism. Economic carrying capacity has strong connections with the profitability and opportunity costs of tourism development. Carrying capacity and visitor impacts are also affected by tourist behaviour, developer practices and resilience of the destination's socioeconomic-physical environments.

It is no surprise, therefore, that limited success has been achieved in measuring and applying the carrying capacity concept to a destination. Many have started to abandon the idea of a specific capacity for a tourism destination. Butler (1997) argues that there can rarely, if ever, be a single definitive figure that realistically represents the maximum number of visitors who should visit a site over a particular period of time. Furthermore, even if limits could be identified and accepted, there is rarely a clear and effective method of enforcing those limits. Tourism is a fragmented industry and many of its resources and facilities are privately owned.

Therefore, the primary question underlying carrying capacity should not be 'how many is too many?' but rather determining how many changes to environ-mental conditions are acceptable given the development objectives of a destination (McCool & Lime, 2001). McCool and Lime (2001:381) argue that 'ultimately, impacts cannot be avoided, but they can be managed based on established objectives or an understanding of the biophysical or social conditions desired'. In order to define important values, particular issues, indicator variables and desired or acceptable conditions, they further advocate the adoption of several established decision-making frameworks, such as the Limits of Accept- able Change (LAC), Visitor Impact Management (VIM),

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection, and the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (VAMP).

Is Ecotourism the Path to Sustainability?
Due to the problems associated with, and sometimes unfairly attributed to, conventional mass tourism, many academics and practitioners enthusiastically promote some 'ideal' forms of tourism – alternative tourism, appropriate tourism, soft tourism, responsible tourism, low-impact tourism, and eco-tourism – as the means of achieving sustainability in tourism development.

However, close examination shows that these 'sustainable forms' of tourism are 'far from fulfilling their promise to transform the way in which modern, conventional tourism is conducted. With few exceptions, [they have] not succeeded in moving beyond a narrow niche market to a set of principles and practices that diffuses the entire tourism industry' (Honey, 1999: 394). In particular, it is a fallacy to suppose that ecotourism, which is generally defined as environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed or protected natural areas (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996), though its exact definition varies widely in the literature (see Fennell, 2001), can be the path to sustainable development.

It is precisely these more remote and pristine areas which eco-tourists seek that are extremely fragile and sensitive to human impact, however lightly they tread, and most vulnerable to cultural disruption and environmental degradation. Ecotourism's impacts will be exacerbated by the growing tourist flows encouraged by the tour companies' marketing activities and the insatiable demand of increasingly large numbers of tourists for getting off the beaten track. 'Getting "off the beaten track" often means that the track soon becomes a road, even a highway' (Wearing & Neil, 1999: xiii), thus disturbing and even destroying the very few undisturbed areas of the world! Through exploitation, dislocation and desecration, ecotourism is arguably the prime force today threatening indigenous homelands and cultures (Johnston, 2000).

Globally speaking, all the non-conventional or alternative forms of tourism are at best playing a complementary role in tourism development. As they are 'essentially small scale, low-density, dispersed in non-urban areas, and they cater to special interest groups of people' (Mieczkowski, 1995), alternative forms of tourism cannot offer a realistic general model for tourism development. For instance, even in the high profile 'ecotourism destinations', like Costa Rica, Kenya and Thailand, ecotourism is negligible in size and is directly dependent upon the existence of well-developed mass-tourism sectors (Weaver, 1998).

Obviously, one cannot find locations for the 'millions' of eco- or alternative-tourism projects that are required to accommodate the extra one billion international tourists a year expected by 2020 (WTO, 1998). Therefore, ecotourism or alternative tourism is at best a micro solution to what is essentially a macro problem (Wheeller, 1991: 93). Whether the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 launched by the WTO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) really contributed to world tourism sustainability remains to be seen.

In fact, ecotourism is mainly promoted not for the purposes of resource conservation but for marketing reasons. It is often an attempt by destinations to diversify their tourism products, where a mass tourism industry is already in existence, to attract more tourists or increase their length of stay. It is also promoted by destinations that lack popular sun, sea and sand attractions or have location disadvantages that make them less attractive for conventional mass tourism. It could even be a marketing ploy or tactic to give businesses an apparent 'green edge' on the competition. What we really need in seeking sustainability is not to develop small-scale tourism in undamaged areas but to repair the damage caused by earlier tourism initiatives (Butler, 1998). More fundamentally, our task is to develop conventional mass tourism sustainably and supplement it with all sorts of alternative forms of tourism where and when appropriate.

Conclusions
This paper has briefly analysed the main weaknesses of the sustainable tourism literature. It appears that the sustainable debate is flawed with some misconceptions, faulty measures, and inadequate means. In addition, these issues cannot be easily addressed even if every researcher in the field shares the same view. However, at this point, the author does not wish to paint a gloomy picture of sustainable tourism research: we must acknowledge the substantial progress made in research so far and try to find the ways forward. We have now understood the interrelationships between tourism, the environment and the local community, the need for a long-term perspective in both development planning and resource conservation and a broader view in managing tourism to include the needs of all stakeholder groups. The following four issues are seen to be of critical importance if we are to carry out further research on sustainable tourism development.

First of all, there should be a balanced view about the concept of sustainability. As sustainability has its origin in environmentalism, many researchers show a kind of 'nature worship' and are somewhat anti-

change. But we must not forget the role of humans in 'mastering, harnessing and utilising nature' rather than simply considering ourselves as part of nature.

The denigration of human progress embodied in the sustainability paradigm is likely to hold back humanity from facing up to and solving problems of poverty and underdevelopment. It is hence a far bigger problem than some of the troublesome by-products of unplanned tourism development. (Butcher, 1997: 31)

Tourism will grow, sometimes rapidly, as at present only about one tenth of the world population travels internationally. Our main task is not to limit growth but to manage growth in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination environment and the host population.

Second, there is an urgent need to develop policies and measures that are not only theoretically sound but also practically feasible. Without the development of effective means of translating ideals into action, sustainable tourism runs the risk of remaining irrelevant and inert as a feasible policy option for the real world of tourism development. In particular, we should research ways of applying the principles of sustainable development to mainstream, conventional mass tourism rather than preoccupying ourselves with inventing or relabeling the various side-shoots of mass tourism. Greater effort should also be made to promote codes, standards and best practices in sustainable tourism across the globe, through accreditation bodies such as the WTO and the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (Font &Sallows, 2002).

Third, a systems perspective is necessary in order to improve our under- standing of the characteristics and change patterns of tourism and its dynamic interaction with the natural, technological, social and economic environment (Liu, 1994). The systems approach is not only 'a way of looking at our world' and 'a framework for thought', but also 'undeniably an attitude of mind or a philosophy' (White et al., 1984: 473). It 'makes it possible to analyse, describe and synthesise different viewpoints from an overall perspective' (Kaspar, 1989: 443). The systems approach views sustainability as an exercise in the conditional optimisation and fine-tuning of all elements of the developmental system so that the system, as a whole, keeps its bearings without one of its elements surging forward to the detriment of the others (Farrell &Runyan, 1991: 35).

Finally, to enable researchers from varying educational and intellectual back- grounds to work together in a more harmonious and effective fashion,

an interdisciplinary approach should be adopted in researching sustainable tourism where synergies between different disciplines are developed to produce a more holistic synthesis. An interdisciplinary approach, as recommended by Faulkner and Ryan (1999), will facilitate the development of a more coherent body of theory, techniques, beliefs and attitudes among scholars and advance sustainable tourism research towards a more scientific platform.

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