CONNECTING THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH AND TOURISM: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE TOWARD INTEGRATIVE THINKING

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been increasingly used for and directly linked with rural poverty reduction in developing countries. However, the application of, and to an extent the principles of the widely used organising framework for considering poverty reduction, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), may not fit fully the tourism situation, and vice versa. Based on a review of the literature, we first suggest that, sustainable livelihoods for tourism should be viewed in a broader tourism context rather than merely taking tourism as a development tool. Second, the SLA seeks household livelihood sustainability at the individual or household level, while tourism sustainability is often applied to the industry itself at wider more macro level scales. Thus, a deep understanding of the sustainability trade-off between the SLA and tourism needs to be found. Third, tourism research has demonstrated local residents' increasing concern about participation in political governance associated with tourism development, with less participation jeopardising local people's assets from a livelihood perspective. Therefore, an additional concept of institutional asset (mainly community participation) needs to be incorporated within the SLA. Given the above understandings, a sustainable tourism livelihood was defined and a Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism approach is proposed and discussed.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihoods, Rural Development, Poverty, Tourism, Sustainability, Community Participation

INTRODUCTION

Although poverty is one of the most compelling challenges confronted by humankind there remains numerous issues when considering scale, form, and evaluation of response within multiple contexts. When considering poverty alleviation, people naturally often link it to peasants and rural development as 75 per cent of the world's poor are in rural populations (Holland et al., 2003), and mostly in the 'third world' (Aziz, 1978). The chief economic activities aimed at poverty reduction have continued to be primary industries such as agriculture and fishing (Harriss, 1982). While professionals tried to improve rural conditions through approaches to soil fertility improvement, land reform and advanced technology, these development approaches have not saved the rural poor (Aziz, 1978; Schutjer & Stokes, 1984). In the 1980s, a new approach to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods (SL), was proposed (Conroy & Litvinoff, 1988). It emphasised holistic and integrated thinking about poverty reduction and rural development, and soon gained popularity among researchers, practitioners and developers (Chambers, 1992; DFID, 1999), while still typically being focused on agricultural practices.

Tourism is now the biggest and fastest growing industry in the world, having experienced enormous growth over recent decades (UNWTO, 2002). But only recently has tourism's potential of contributing to rural poverty reduction been introduced and gradually recognised by policy-makers and other stakeholders (Goodwin, 2000; UNWTO, 2002). Unlike agrarian change, the concept of tourism in rural areas originates from developed countries (Hall & Page, 2002). Research regarding rural tourism has centred on aspects of tourism products, marketing, planning, and impacts (e.g., Hall et al., 2005; Page & Getz, 1997). This trend has, however, recently been criticised for its diminished focus on rural livelihoods and poverty reduction, with some contending that this deficiency can be addressed by using the SLA (Ashley, 2000). Thus the question that arises here is: will the SLA fit the case in which tourism is taken as a livelihood strategy for rural development? This paper reviews the theoretical evolution of the SLA and tourism to address this question. Possible gaps between their applications are explored and a sustainable livelihoods (SL) framework for tourism is proposed and discussed.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

The SL approach arose from the broad context of rural development which has moved through three main bodies of thought since the mid 20th century, namely the population and technology model, agricultural development, and political economy theories (Ellis, 2000). More recent, integrated thinking about rural development, has led to the more holistic sustainable livelihoods concept, which has undergone substantial theoretical and practical development since its proposal in the late 1980s.

Although the term Sustainable Livelihoods has been used widely in poverty and rural development research, there is no broadly accepted definition of this concept, and different governments, organisations and individuals have adopted their own understandings (Cahn, 2002; Carney et al., 1999). The SL concept was first officially proposed by an Advisory Panel of the WCED in 1987 (Conroy & Litvinoff, 1988). Reviewing the WCED panel definition, Chambers and Conway (1992: 6) put forth their understanding of SL:

> "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term".

Chambers and Conway (1992), in their definition, accentuated the importance of capabilities, not only the ability of being and doing, but also the ability of recognising and recovering from the potential shocks and stress which they in turn believe is a key feature of sustainability. Ellis (2000), however, points out that the meaning of the term 'capabilities' in the above definition overlaps greatly with assets and activities, and the use of the term 'capabilities' can bring confusion. Therefore, he stressed that access to assets and activities mediated by institutions and social relations should be highlighted, rather than capabilities. When applied to Pacific cultures, Cahn (2002) notes that culture and tradition is prominent in a Pacific livelihood, and proposed a sustainable Pacific livelihoods model with the integration of culture and tradition. Such deliberations indicate that a 'one size fits all' SL approach is neither possible nor appropriate – context is important.

Existing definitions of SL remain arguable and unclear (Carswell, 1997; Scoones, 1998; Cahn, 2002). Among various definitions, the SL work of Chambers and Conway (1992) was considered fundamental, and led to a number of government departments,

international agencies and (I)NGOs, for example the UK Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oxfam and CARE, adopting their own related understandings of SL and employing SL approaches to facilitate and help rural development in practice (Carney et al., 1999; DFID, 1999). Comparing various agencies' livelihoods work, the approaches employed appear to have much in common although there may be some different operational emphases. Among these approaches, the pentagram-based module (Figure 1) developed by DFID (1999) is most prominent, and this framework is believed by some to have captured well, the essential concept of 'livelihood' (Baumgartner & Högger, 2004).

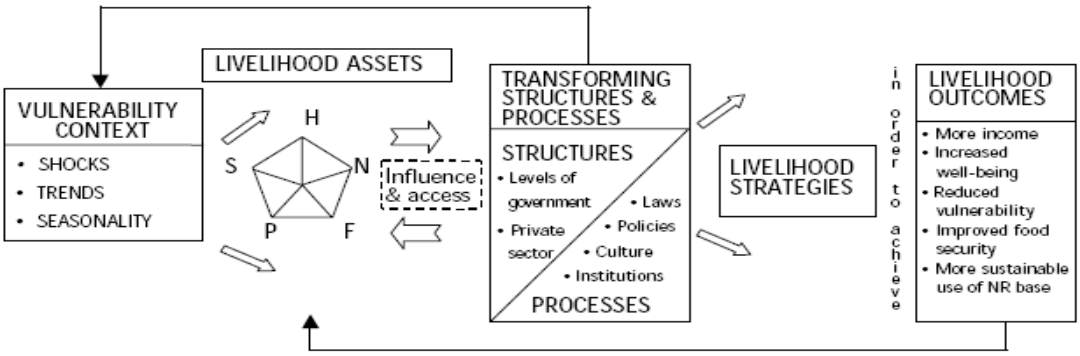

Figure 1. The DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Source: DFID, 1999: 11).

The DFID-based framework (Figure 1) reinforces a people-centred approach, based around five key features:

(1) Assets: livelihood assets consist of Natural, Physical, Social, Human, and Financial forms of capital (DFID, 1999). Assets are fundamental to the poor.

(2) Transforming structures and processes: In the framework, structures are hardware which involves public and private sectors. Process is made up of policy, laws, culture and institutions, and is more like software (DFID, 1999). Transforming structures and processes play important roles in shaping livelihood assets and outcomes in the SL system.

(3) Vulnerability context: Vulnerability is a key concept related to livelihood sustainability. It includes shocks, trends and seasonality (DFID, 1999). It can adversely affect the poor's assets and their choice of livelihoods although not all vulnerabilities are negative.

(4) Outcomes: Livelihood outcomes are successes and objectives that livelihood strategies achieve. Outcomes are always the pathway to assessing livelihood sustainability, and the scale of analysis is of paramount importance (Scoones, 1998).

(5) Strategies: Livelihood strategies are the activities employed to generate the means of household survival.

Various authors have considered the types of rural livelihood strategies. Scoones (1998) identified three, namely agricultural intensification or extensification, livelihood diversification, and migration. Ellis (2000) identified two categories, natural resource based activities and non-natural resource based activities. Regardless of groupings, the fact is that these strategies focus mostly on primary industries like agriculture, forestry, livestock, and timber harvest (Ellis, 2000). However, to what extent do these strategies help achieve sustainable livelihoods? In developing countries, few successes are referred to

in the literature (but see Carswell, 1997). During the last decade by contrast, the rapidly growing tourism industry, has attracted much attention from governments, NGOs, researchers and practitioners, including a particular focus on rural development. Implemented as a means of alleviating rural poverty, tourism has been introduced in rural development research and gained increasing attention (Butler et al., 1998; Hall et al., 2005; Holland et al., 2003). Tourism researchers have traditionally, however, focused on tourism impact and its economic contribution which have been recently blamed by rural developers for overlooking the rural poor and their livelihoods (Jamieson et al., 2004). Meanwhile, rural developers extol the SLA and believe that the SLA can be an ideal solution to those censures (Ashley, 2000; Jamieson et al., 2004). However, tourism is not same as other primary industries like agriculture. Thus, it is essential to put SL and tourism in a broader context – development theory – to understand their relationship.

DEVELOPMENT, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

As outlined above, the SLA is rooted in the evolution of rural development practice. Rural and tourism development both link to the parental paradigm – development theory (Sharpley, 2000; Ellis, 2000). To understand better the implications from connecting SL and tourism, therefore, the concept cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader development context. The term 'development' is, however, such an elusive concept and has suffered from the lack of a precise meaning, but one common understanding is that development is an evolutionary process moving from one condition to another, and is also the goal of the process (Welch, 1984; Sharpley, 2000). Since the 1950s, the concept of development has evolved chronologically through four main schools of thought, namely modernisation, dependency theory, alternative development, and sustainable development (Sharpley, 2000; Clancy, 1999).

With the modernisation paradigm, some indices, like GNP or per capita income, are the main indicators of development. In this phase, economic growth is synonymous with development. It was believed that all countries and regions will go through a similar process, from undeveloped to developed, and issues like poverty and social inequality will be tackled automatically with economic growth (Welch, 1984). In the late 1960s and 1970s, poor countries in the South did not follow the steps of the North to become, if not worse, then 'developed'. In this context, dependency theory prevailed, which contends that development was not a linear process, and the poor will remain with the status of underdevelopment owing to their high economic dependency on the developed (Clancy, 1999). In the 1980s, 'alternative development' emerged and became dominant. This paradigm signified a major shift from a traditional focus on things to people. It acknowledged grassroots' initiatives and called for an endogenous, bottom-up approach – 'alternative' development (Sharpley, 2000). In this period, people's concern about environment deterioration caused by unharnessed economic growth reached a summit which led to the emergence and flourishment of a new development philosophy – sustainable development, since the late 1980s (Hardy et al., 2002). This development paradigm stems from the convergence of economic growth and environmentalism. It is often related to words such as: *balanced growth; long-term development;, and social equity*. With time, implications of sustainable development evolved, from an emphasis on environment to people as evidenced by the development of new paradigms such as: poverty reduction, community empowerment, and social justice (See Sofield, 2003; Ashley, 2000). It is believed that sustainable development is a holistic, integrated, and long-term based development philosophy.

As subsets of development, rural development and tourism have experienced a similar evolving process. Rural development can be, in its simplest sense, understood as

development in a rural area. As stated above, it has gradually developed from a techno-centric approach in the 1960s to a people, poverty-oriented approach – the SLA since the late 1980s (Ellis, 2000). In the case of tourism, Jafari's (1990) four-platform framework well elucidated the evolution of tourism. The first platform is 'advocacy' which considered tourism as 'without fault and tourism's economic contribution was widely, if not exclusively, supported. It was popularised after the Second World War and embedded in the modernisation paradigm (Jafari 1990). Some main traits, for example, foreign exchange earning and the multiplier concept were evidence of this platform (Sharpley, 2000). Upon entering into the 1960s, this platform was gradually substituted by the second platform, 'cautionary'. It recognised the negative prospects of tourism and criticised tourism's seasonal and unskilled employment, destruction of the natural environment, and de-integration of host society structure (Jafari, 1990). The cautionary platform directly related to dependency theory. With the passage of time, the debates between the advocacy and cautionary platforms led to the growth of the third platform – adaptancy in the early 1980s. This platform called for developing alternatives to mass tourism, for example ecotourism, rural tourism, and green tourism, in response to increasing concerns with tourism's negative impacts. The fourth platform is the knowledge-based platform. This platform has become evident since the early 1990s and can be compared with the 'sustainable development' paradigm. Unlike "the general foci of the advocacy and cautionary platforms on tourism impacts and of the adaptancy platform on forms of development" (Jafari, 1990: 35), the fourth platform accentuates holistic thinking of tourism as a system, including structures and functions (Jafari, 1990).

Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between SL and tourism development. Rural and tourism development are both embedded in the wider development context. SL for tourism is a convergence of sustainable, rural, and tourism development. Not only should SL be viewed and analysed in the context of rural development but also in the context of tourism. Accordingly, it is necessary to systematically examine the principles of tourism to obtain deeper understandings of SL and tourism.

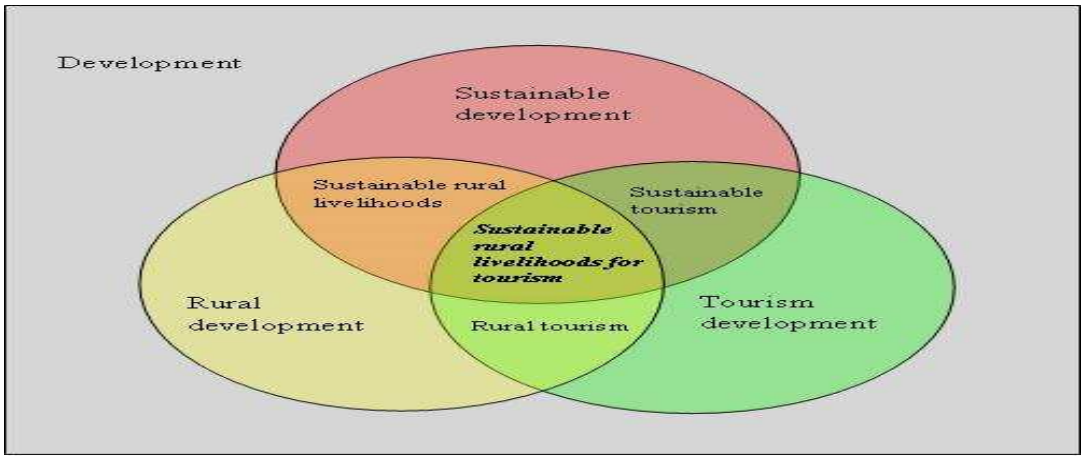

Figure 2: Relationship between Sustainable Development, Rural Development, and Tourism.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF TOURISM

Tourism is not new. However, it was only after World War II that air transportation became suitably reliable and comfortable to then be the key driver to boost tourism's growth later in the 20th century (Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Hardy et al., 2002). With tourism

growth, research interests increasingly broadened to embrace the study of tourism, e.g., tourism geography, tourism economics, tourism anthropology, tourism psychology, tourism planning, tourism marketing, and tourism sociology (Tribe, 1997). Tourism has a different set of principles to other (rural) industries such as agriculture that underpins traditional primary production and trade.

Tourism peculiarities

In the early 1970s, Jafari (1974) had identified tourism's peculiarities, focussing initially on a production-consumption perspective. From the standpoint of production, tourism 'products' include tourism-oriented products (e.g., accommodation, food service, transportation), as well as generic resident-oriented products (e.g., infrastructure, police force, hospitals, barbershops or hair dressers), and background tourism elements (i.e., landscapes, cultures and tourism attractions). Tourism products are characterised as monopolistic (there is no identical tourism destination in the world), non-transferable (tourism destinations are not shippable), perishable (tourism products cannot be 'stored' and are consumed at the point of production). From a consumption standpoint, the tourist product is experienced 'in situ' which involves the travel of the consumer to the 'product', and its simultaneous consumption as the 'tourist's experience'. This point is only attributed to the tourism industries. In addition, tourism is largely judged by consumers' non-economic values. Finally, tourism is not applicable to the law of diminishing marginal utility which defines the consumption of most 'physical' products (Jafari, 1974).

In a broader sense then, tourism has developed its own body of knowledge in many research fields. Butler's (1980) 'Destination Area Life Cycle' revealed a model for the evolution of tourist destination areas. From the viewpoint of planning, Getz (1987) identified four tourism planning approaches: boosterism; an economic/industry-oriented approach; a physical/spatial approach; and a community-oriented approach, and called for an integrated approach to tourism planning. Hall (2000) elaborated this latter approach for sustainable tourism planning. From a community perspective, Doxey's (1976) irridex model indicates the level of local communities' increasing irritation with tourism growth, although this has subsequently been refined to accommodate more dynamic models of tourism community support or concern (Murphy, 1985; Mowforth and Munt, 1998). From a tourism industry standpoint, Clarke (1997) reviewed the evolution of the tourism industry and proposed a four-position pathway to understand the relationship between mass tourism and sustainable tourism, from a dichotomous position to a continuum, movement, and finally a convergence position. Summarising many of these models, Jafari (1990) theorised the evolutionary four-platform framework (i.e. advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy, and knowledge-based platforms) as an academic response to tourism development.

From the above it can be seen that tourism has formed its own ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases, all underpinning an increasing set of theoretical paradigms (Jennings, 2001). Although arguments remain about whether tourism is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or extradisciplinary (Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Tribe, 1997), a common ground is that tourism is increasingly not viewed as a separate phenomenon or as an isolated development tool. It has its own research disciplines, a body of knowledge, and it is a context for wider considerations.

Sustainability

Since officially proposed in "Our Common Future", the concept of 'Sustainable(lity)' has become a common policy and development focus (Becker & Jahn, 1999). The

sustainability concept stems from people's concern over environmental deterioration caused by rapid economic growth (or industrialisation) in the 20th century (Hardy et al., 2002). There have been multiple debates about the notion of sustainability, but one common thread is that the sustainable development paradigm traditionally includes economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Spangenberg 2002). However, practitioners have begun to realise that achieving a balance among these three dimensions is difficult without an institutional perspective to manage, mediate and facilitate growth (Eden et al., 2000; Spangenberg 2002). Meanwhile, more and more researchers have recognised that equality, justice, poverty alleviation, and local community empowerment should be the core of sustainable development (Ahn et al., 2002; Reid, 2003; Sharpley, 2000; Sofield, 2003). Thus, among various interpretations, the Prism of Sustainability (PoS) proposed by Spangenberg (2002) has combined economic, social, environmental and a fourth institutional dimension into a single framework with clearly defined links among the dimensions.

The tourism sector has also witnessed the proliferation of applications of the sustainability concept. Various terminologies, e.g., 'new tourism' 'Destination Life Cycle Model' and 'carrying capacity' have been discussed since the 1970s and were believed to indirectly address the concept of sustainability (Hardy et al., 2002). In the last decade numerous theoretical, conceptual and empirical studies have contributed to the debate about sustainable tourism development (Hall & Lew, 1998). The debate as to whether sustainable tourism is part of the whole notion of sustainable development or whether sustainable development should be considered in the context of tourism still remains unclear (Butler, 1993, Hardy et al., 2002; Sharpley, 2000). However, an undeniable fact is that sustainability has become an overarching philosophy in tourism research as indicated by the emergence of the term 'sustainable tourism' in the early 1990s and the launch of the 'Journal of Sustainable Tourism'.

Community participation

Consideration of community participation is not new in the tourism literature. In the 1970s Doxey (1976) had documented the model of the local community's attitude to tourism with an initial euphoria being taken over by apathy, irritation, and eventually antagonism, which reveals the importance of community participation in tourism development. In the last two decades, much research has involved local participation. As Richards and Hall (2000:1) point out, "human communities represent both a primary resource upon which tourism depends, and their existence in a particular place at a particular time may be used to justify the development of tourism itself". The significance of community participation has been widely recognised in tourism research, and the participation of local people has come to be an essential condition of sustainability. Mowforth and Munt (1998: 240) even argue that "the greater the degree of local participation, the better (by whatever definition) the project". From a planning perspective, a community-based tourism planning approach was specially developed to emphasise the importance of community participation (Murphy, 1985; Reid, 2003). Simmons (1994) enriched the discourse by adding debates about participation techniques in tourism planning practice.

Clearly, the normative concept of community participation has originated and been popularised in developed countries (Tosun, 2000). Community participation has traditionally meant power distribution (Arnstein, 1969). Timothy (1999) points out that participation should be viewed from at least two perspectives in the tourism development process, namely 'participation in decision-making process' and 'tourism benefits sharing'. In developing countries particularly in rural areas, local people, however, are commonly "denied any significant opportunity to participate in the tourism market" (Goodwin, 1998:

3), which was an attribute proven to be of great importance to the poor's livelihoods (Ashley, 2000). Thus, access to the tourism market needs also to be identified as a significant form of community participation.

In regard to the extent of participation, Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995), and Tosun (1999) provide typologies of community participation ranging from manipulative participation (in which participation is just a 'token' gesture or appeasement), to citizen power (in which people initiate tourism projects by themselves without external intervention). However, whatever the means of assessment there is now a realisation of the desirability of high levels of participation, and power sharing as meaningful participation in decision-making processes is critical (Reed, 1997). Undoubtedly, participation has become a key principle of sustainable tourism development.

GAPS BETWEEN THE SLA AND TOURISM

Conventionally, tourism development initiatives "tend to focus exclusively on economic, commercial or environmental impacts"; whereas for local benefits, they "focus only job creation and cash income" (Ashley, 2000: 6). These perspectives have been recently criticised by rural development researchers for their lack of concern about the rural poor and poverty. As a result, some contend that the SL approach should be employed to understand and analyse tourism in rural development (Ashley, 2000). Thus there is a growing view that the SL approach is a perfect solution to all criticisms imposed on the so-called conventional tourism perspectives in rural development (Cattarinich, 2001). However, as indicated above, tourism is not the same as other typically 'productive' rural sectors. Simply using the SL framework to analyse tourism may over-formularise and oversimplify actual complexity and fail to provide a holistic understanding of rural tourism livelihoods.

With primary industries, the rural poor are the producers. They sell products on the market and gain some of the benefits. Consumers are typically outsiders who consume products while distant from their sites of production. Such consumption does not entail consumer's direct social-cultural influences on the rural poor and affect their social integrity. For tourism however, producers are most likely outsiders like external investors, national or local governments rather than local rural residents themselves. In decision-making about how and where tourism will develop the local rural poor's voice is rarely heard (Reid, 2003; Richards & Hall, 2000). Thus local people are no longer the only 'sellers' but often their livelihoods and daily activity patterns constitute the core of the tourism product/destination experience. In terms of consumption, tourists, have to travel to the rural poor to consume tourism products. In coming from different environments the development and cultural divergence between guest and host ensures that social, cultural and ideological differences are often significant issues in tourism development and management. In fact, "the literature on tourism impacts has long since assumed a central position within the emergence of tourism research" (Hall & Page, 2002: 223). Tourism is therefore no longer a simple production-consumption phenomenon. It develops within a complex multi-stakeholder context which involves local people, governments, enterprises, tourists and sometimes (I)NGOs. Consequently, it may be argued that tourism should not be treated the same way as other productive sectors in addressing livelihood strategies. Rather, tourism should be considered as a context from which the SLA is considered and viewed. This is the first gap between the SLA and tourism.

The second gap lies in the notion of sustainability. As discussed earlier, sustainability is a predominant tenet in much tourism research as well as within the SLA. According to DFID (1999), sustainable livelihood approaches should seek social, economic, environmental as

well as institutional sustainability. However, sustainability in the SL framework, just as the definition of SL implies, seeks to strengthen the rural poor's capability and resilience for dealing with external shocks (DFID, 1999). Therefore the operationalisation of SL is very often delivered at the individual or household level. In contrast, the sustainability of tourism mostly focuses on the tourism industry itself at the macro level rather than the rural poor at the micro level (UNWTO, 2004). Livelihood sustainability may therefore conflict with tourism sustainability in some cases, e.g., over the allocation of water rights. Accordingly the issue of sustainability within a SL framework for tourism should be addressed, taking note of the potential trade-off between SL at the individual/household level and tourism at the community/collective level.

The third gap concerns community participation. The SLA sheds light on the local poor and calls for participatory analysis in practice. But in SL research with conventional livelihood strategies, there is little evidence to show local people's desire for participation in decision-making processes (Ashley, 2000). Most tourism research, in contrast, has demonstrated local people's concern about involvement in tourism marketing and political governance over time (Cottrell et al., 2007; Tosun, 2000), and its significant influence on local people's livelihood outcomes (Farrington et al, 1999) Notwithstanding, participation by local people in many developing countries is all too often confronted with operational, structural and cultural barriers (Tosun, 2000). Neto (2003: 9) notes that "it is increasingly realised that promoting greater community participation in tourism development can lead to a more equitable sharing of benefits and thus greater opportunities for poverty alleviation". Accordingly, community participation should be taken as a crucial factor which can significantly change the rural poor's livelihood outcomes in a tourism system. According to the previously mentioned 'PoS', the institutional dimension of sustainability calls for strengthening local people's participation in decision-making processes (Spangenberg 2002). Thus, an additional livelihood asset – the institutional asset – needs to be identified and be treated as of equal importance to the other five livelihood assets in theory as well as in practice.

Overall then, tourism is different from other productive sectors. This is especially true for rural development in terms of the tourism sector being deployed as a livelihood strategy. Neither the SL approach nor conventional tourism research theories can exclusively guide tourism to achieve sustainable rural development. Consequently, knowledge about an integration of SL and tourism is needed.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FOR TOURISM

Based on the discussion above, a tourism-livelihood approach needs to be broadened to include core community assets (natural, human, economic, social and institutional capital), activities related to tourism, and the access to these which provide a means of living. A sustainable tourism livelihood is embedded in a tourism context within which it can cope with vulnerability, and finally achieve livelihood outcomes which should be economically, socially, environmentally as well as institutionally sustainable without undermining others' livelihoods (adapted from Chambers & Conway, 1992; Ellis, 2000). Thus, sustainable tourism can only exist within a sustainable destination.

A sustainable tourism livelihoods approach aims to incorporate key principles of SL and tourism. A proposed 'Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism' (SLFT) (Figure 3) has been developed to highlight and explain the key features of a tourism livelihoods system. SLFT is a system which includes assets, activities related to tourism, outcomes, institutional arrangements and vulnerability context. In SLFT, tourism is seen as a context in which all factors in SLFT are embedded, influenced, and shaped. Tourism with different

market orientations has different impacts on shaping tourism products and on the local community (Cattarinich, 2001).

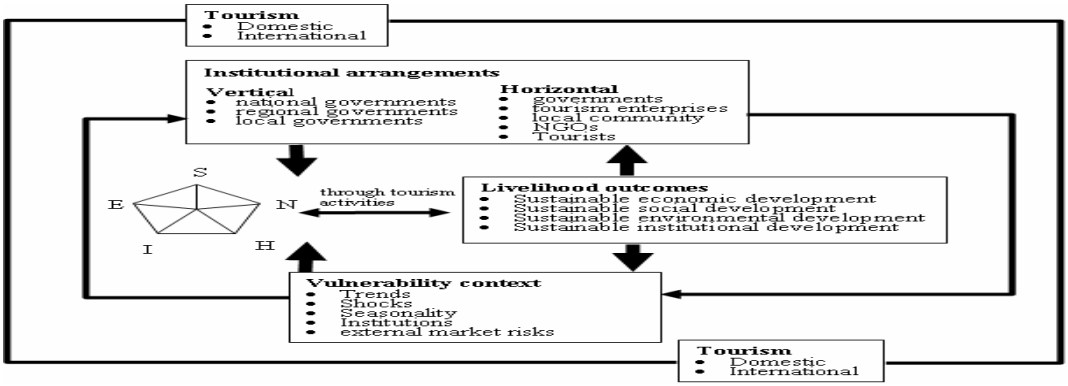

Figure 3. Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism

In a tourism context, individuals, governments, (I)NGOs, enterprises and tourists interact and each party's behaviour may have a direct or indirect influence on individual livelihoods. Consequently, the mediating process of vertical as well as horizontal institutional arrangements becomes of paramount importance to help ensure the tourism system runs as harmoniously as is possible in often contested contexts.

In a broader sense, physical and financial capitals both belong to the orthodox economic concept of capital. For the rural poor, what they know and care about is economic benefits rather than how the framework terms are academically defined. Thus for the sake of operationalisation, it is both justifiable and necessary to combine these two forms of capital into 'economic capital'. The notion of economic capital here is different from the rigid academic definition – "the capital level that bank shareholders would choose in the absence of capital regulation" (Elizalde & Repullo, 2004). The new institutional capital livelihood asset introduced here is defined as 'providing for people's access to tourism markets, tourism benefits sharing, and access and participation in the policy-making process, and the extent that people's willingness is reflected in political decisions to achieve better livelihood outcomes'. It calls for strengthening people's participation in political governance.

The vulnerability context includes shocks, seasonality, trends, institutions, and tourism external market risks (terrorism, disease, etc). For a tourism livelihood, inappropriate institutional actions sometimes do increase vulnerability, so institutions should also be considered one of the vulnerabilities. Vulnerability at different levels varies. At the national and regional level, trends are more of a concern than shocks, seasonality and institutions. At the local level, seasonality is a more direct risk; institutions also can harm local tourism development, while shocks and trends become less important. Tourism external market risks are hardly predictable and manageable, but the outcomes they cause can be fatal for tourism livelihoods both at the macro and the micro levels.

Livelihood outcomes have conventionally been discussed and measured at the individual and household level. However, within the tourism context, the image of rural tourism products is based on the local community as a whole rather than just every family or individual. In addition, the notion of sustainability can be embodied in the achievement of livelihood outcomes according to Scoones (1998). Therefore a trade-off between sustainable household livelihood outcomes and sustainable tourism outcomes needs to be

understood.

CONCLUSION

Tourism has been increasingly used for rural poverty reduction due to its perceived development advantages, especially in developing countries, and has been regarded by some as a panacea for rural development. The emerging SL approach provides an organising framework to analyse individual and household livelihoods at the local level and offers basic information for macro policy-making at a nation-global level. However, the principles of SL do not appear to easily fit the tourism context. Conversely, tourism has formed its own research system theories and practices. The principles of tourism research mainly focus on tourism evolution at the (macro) destination level. Accordingly, theories and methods of tourism research might not be able to guide livelihoods research properly at the micro (household) level. Thus, new thinking is needed and knowledge about SL and tourism need to be constructed and developed in order to maximise benefits brought by tourism to the rural poor, and guide sustainable rural development with tourism as a livelihood strategy in practice, and further facilitated to reach the goal of poverty reduction.

The SLFT proposed here, does not intend to be all-inclusive but rather to seek to bridge the gaps between SL and tourism. Its intention is to provide for broader scale thinking about the complexity and dynamism of a tourism livelihood system in its wider development context. In fact, the tourism context is always case-specific and research and application results may vary in multiple circumstances. It is therefore suggested that more practical work needs to be undertaken to evaluate and improve the proposed framework's applicability.

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