

Sustainable tourism and community-based tourism in small islands: a policy analysis

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Abstract

The importance of the tourism sector to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) relies on their "islandness". Tourism contributes to its socio-economic development in many ways. However, their heavy dependence on foreign entities and expertise has encumbered processes that ensure greater local control, ownership, participation, and avoidance of leakages. Unshackling these dependencies is one of the biggest challenges faced by SIDS in their quest to self-determination and emancipatory futures. The article argues that new pathways and trajectories have to be found to induce the required change where sustainability and inclusivity become fundamental for self-determination, social justice, and a just tourism. The article suggests the establishment of specific island policies that support sustainability and Community-based Tourism (CBT). The suggestions also include the establishment of a regional CBT hub for Islands within a region. This article is a conceptual paper based on secondary data, journal articles, books and government documents.

Keywords: *tourism, well-being, community-based tourism, local population, host population, small islands*

Rezumat. Turismul durabil și turismul comunitar în insulele mici: o analiză a politicilor

Importanța sectorului turistic pentru micile state insulare în curs de dezvoltare (SIDS) se bazează pe „insularitatea” lor. Turismul contribuie la dezvoltarea socio-economică în multe feluri. Cu toate acestea, dependența mare față de entitățile și expertiza străină a împiedicat procesele care asigură un control local mai mare, proprietatea, participarea și evitarea problemelor. Renunțarea la aceste dependențe este una dintre cele mai mari provocări cu care se confruntă SIDS în căutarea lor de autodeterminare și a unui viitor emancipator. Articolul susține că trebuie găsite noi căi și traiectorii pentru a induce schimbarea necesară în care durabilitatea și incluziunea devin fundamentale pentru autodeterminare, justiție socială și un turism corect. Articolul sugerează stabilirea unor politici insulare specifice care să susțină sustenabilitatea și turismul comunitar (CBT). Sugestiile includ, de asemenea, înființarea unui hub regional CBT pentru insulele dintr-o regiune. Acest articol este o lucrare conceptuală bazată pe date secundare, articole de specialitate, cărți și documente guvernamentale.

Cuvinte-cheie: *turism, bunăstare, turism comunitar, populație locală, populație gazdă, insule mici*

Introduction

Globally there are about 180,000 islands "different in sizes and natural conditions and tourism" (Podhorodecka, 2018:163). Of those, only about 90 islands are larger than 10,000 square kilometres (Sharples, 2012:169). Islands have various characteristics such as remoteness, exoticness which represent romance, adventures, and escape (Sharples, 2012:167). Tourism is a significant sector in many islands (Podhorodecka, 2018:163; Pratt, 2015:148). For many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), tourism has become the main economic activity for jobs, incomes, and foreign currency (UNWTO, 2014:2). The tourism sector is relevant in the Pacific area for the next ten years is becoming an essential source of employment, economic growth, and poverty alleviation (Everett, Simpson. & Wayne, 2018:4). For the Caribbean area, the story is similar, as tourism is the vital economic sector contributing

15.2% of the Caribbean's GDP and to 13.8% of employment of the region (WTTC, 2017:7). The importance of the sector is arising from their islandness (in our parlance islandity), which surfaces their uniqueness. As such, tourism is uniquely positioned to contribute to their socio-economic development in many ways.

However, tourism in the islands has its challenges as a double-edged sword (Lasso & Dahles, 2018:473). Tourism can enhance or disrupt livelihoods. On the one hand, tourism can contribute to economic diversification, but, on the other hand, it can have adverse effects of dependence on tourism income by locals accompanied by related risks (Lasso & Dahles, 2018:473). Challenges or obstacles for small island states can be grouped into four main categories: small size; insularity/remoteness; environmental vulnerability; and socio-economic factors (Pratt, 2015:149). Many islands are small, with limited natural resources and high external

dependence (Anderson, 2013:61). The need to address matters related to economic, social, and environmental impacts and sustainability is a unique challenge for islands (Sheldon, 2005:1, 3). Hongbo (cited in UNWTO, 2014:3) argues that an additional challenge for island states is to spur further economic growth while protecting both their communities and the environment. Of equal importance is the sustainability issue in terms of their carrying capacity, community participation, and environmental policies (Sánchez-Cañizares, Castillo-Canalejo & Cabeza-Ramírez, 2018:2). Attention also needs to focus on issues of economic leakages and linkages (Cheer, Pratt, Tolkach, Bailey, Taumoepeau & Movono, 2018:450) as they have a bearing on their overall economic performance, growth, and development.

The importance of tourism in islands must be contextualised in its historical perspective. Tropical islands have been international tourism marketing memes since the start of the massification of the tourism sector (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:8). Two factors have been relevant decolonisation and the rapid growth of international tourism (McElroy, 2003:231). Today many SIDS experience mass tourism in which Trans National Corporations are the key drivers and beneficiaries while local communities suffer (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:9). There is an overstatement of the vulnerability and external dependence of small island states to reflect them as if they need urgent external assistance and only to mask a hidden agenda (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008:505). Therefore, it is necessary to dispel this myth so that SIDS can chart their course to self-determination (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008:505). New approaches and pathways that prioritize the islands and their disadvantaged community members need to be unearthed and implemented, taking into account matters of sustainability and redistribution to address the double-edged sword of inequalities and poverty.

This article aims to investigate the vision (and/or main objectives) of national tourism policies (strategy or plan) about sustainable tourism and community involvement (inclusive tourism and CBT) to verify the emerging trends. Consequently, the article aims to propose possible new directions on tourism development in SIDS, focusing on alternative tourism approaches, primarily community-based tourism (CBT) within the context of sustainable tourism (ST). In other words, the aim is to contribute to the broader debate about tourism and development with specific attention to islands and alternative (CBT) tourism approaches. The article includes a literature review that presents major issues confronting tourism and island development. After that, specific issues about tourism policies in selected islands will be presented. This is followed by a discussion section that suggests possible directions in tourism development in islands.

Methodology

This article is based on a review of the literature. It uses explicitly national tourism policies (strategies/plans) from six island nations with variegated contexts: two islands are from the Caribbeans, two islands from the Pacific region, and the other two islands are from the Indian Ocean region. The islands were also chosen based on differences in receipts in the destination as % of exports. A random choice that includes differences in the value of receipts in the destination can give a greater understanding of the specific trends no matter what the value of tourism is – that various islands can have, or may not, in common. If islands are 'identical,' it could be more likely they follow similar approaches. Thus, the chosen islands are Barbados 53% (receipts in a destination that is the percentage of exports), Trinidad and Tobago 2.3%, Maldives 75%, Seychelles 31.7%, Samoa 54.9% and Tonga 43.8% (UNWTO, 2014). The value of tourism as a percentage of export range from a maximum of 75% for the Maldives to a minimum of 2.3% for Trinidad and Tobago. This gives a wide range of values, thus allowing us to understand if an island pursues a specific trend. In this case, based on the vision and main goals as enshrined in the national tourism policy/strategy/plan. Also, this article focuses on the visions and goals of island states as well as their tourism policies/strategies. Visions and goals can be considered to be the overarching goal of the islands in terms of the proposed future tourism development. This finds articulation in the full text in the policy or strategies with specificities of how they will be achieved. Therefore, the article looks at the general trajectory of tourism development in the islands as an adequate measure to understand the visions and goals of each island's tourism policy or strategy. For purposes of this study, small islands are islands with less than one million inhabitants, however, we included Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbeans with 1.4 million to have two countries per region.

Literature review

Sustainable tourism and community-based tourism

In determining what elements are part of sustainable tourism, the role of host communities has always been noticed. The UNEP & WTO (2005:18) guide mentions, economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, community well-being, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource

efficiency, and environmental purity. The tourism sector (see UNWTO, 2017:6) is committed to participating in efforts towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Besides, the "Global Code of Ethics in Tourism" (UNWTO, 2001:5) article five: Tourism, beneficial activity for host countries and communities – read: "Local populations should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them" and "Tourism policies should be applied in such a way as to help to raise the standard of living of the populations of the regions visited and meet their needs..." Recently, UNWTO does not even use the term "sustainable tourism" but relates tourism to sustainable development goals - acknowledging the apparent truth that tourism is part of a global process and does not always contribute to sustainable development from a broader perspective.

Community-based tourism has been assumed to be sustainable. However, from the outset, we make a specific note on the relation between suitability, CBT, and conventional/mass tourism to indicate that all types of tourism (and not only alternative tourism such as CBT) must be sustainable; the poor must not take the burden (see Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2017:10). The United Nations also remark that all types of tourism should be sustainable as ST is not a special form of tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005:2). It is also important to note that the demand for CBT is growing (MTE, 2015:6). It "is not a brand of tourism, but rather a type of ownership and management arrangement" (MTE, 2015:4).

Community-based tourism is originally meant for disadvantaged people and localities (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013:10) and it should empower "poor communities to take control over their land and resources, to tap their potential, and to acquire the skills necessary for their own development" (Mearns, 2012:72; see also Nagy & Espinosa Segui, 2020:5). Its goal is to give ownership and control to destination communities in tourism development" (Tolkach, 2017:287) such that there are no winners or losers but is about redistribution, equity and collective ownership (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013:2; Ullan de La Rosa, Aledo Tur & Garcia Andreu, 2017:469; Dangi & Jamal, 2008:12). It is also about local ownership of businesses, bottom-up decision-making, and ploughing back the benefits of tourism into the local community (Tucker, 2016:335). Community-based tourism is an alternative to conventional forms of tourism specifically about foreign ownership of the tourism sector, "which frequently results in loss of local control over the destination's resources and loss of local autonomy" (Tucker, 2016:335).

Community-based tourism is a type of tourism that also requires low capital investment. For example,

accommodation in village tourism does not require huge capital investment outlay but careful planning (UNWTO, 2002:14). Community controlled enterprises have low capital investment costs (Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme & WWF-Vietnam, 2013:23). This does not mean that CBT must remain small but can grow (Calanog et al., 2012:184; France, 1997:17; Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009:2; Jealous, 1998:12). Sustainable approaches to tourism, such as "low-density, sustainable hotels, and ecolodges," also require low capital investment (UN, 2010:18). The involvement of local communities in tourism is an essential tool that contributes to community development (Lasso & Dahles, 2018:473). For SIDS, the UNWTO (2014:2) indicates: "Sustainability – the only way forward." Therefore, it is essential to explore the various characteristics of the islands and correlate them to sustainability (Sustainable Tourism) and community involvement (CBT issues).

Tourism in islands: characteristics and challenges

Tourism is a vital economic sector in many islands and fundamental sources of employment and foreign exchange (Bojanic, Warnick & Musante, 2016:4). Therefore, while the value of the tourism sector in small islands must be recognized, tourism also suffers numerous challenges that, if mitigated or resolved, could increase the positive role of tourism in island development. Agenda 21 (UN, 1992:193) SIDS, notes that islands represent a special case because of the need to protect their small communities and the environment. Islands, especially small ones, have numerous characteristics that often become challenges that open their vulnerabilities. SIDS are deficient in resources; they have limited land surfaces; small populations and small GDP; isolation and remoteness; vulnerability to natural calamities; absence of economies of scale; weak and high costs in transportation, communication, and public administration and infrastructure; limited biodiversity, uncontrolled urbanisation; and high dependence on foreign economies (Stylidis, Terzidou & Terzidis, 2007; Puig-Cabrera & Foronda-Robles, 2019:61; World Bank, 2017:6; Connell, 2018:114; Sharpley, 2012:169). The small size of many islands is a fundamental development obstacle, making tourism development difficult (Jamal & Lagiewski, 2006:1). They also suffer from a deficiency of local experience and expertise in tourism development, making it very difficult for island communities to manage the negative impacts of tourism (Kokkrankal, McLellan & Baum, 2003:426) resulting in the need to rely on imported foreign expertise and experts. Such islands often have a heavy dependence on international tourists and expertise and, consequently, are

vulnerable to world developments (Sharpley, 2012:169). Also, competition between islands can compound economic pressures (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:8). This panoply of challenges requires astute and smart policies and programmes to overcome them, with some focusing on the local with others being regionally collaborative.

The dependency framework within which tourism operates in islands was noted in the 1980s by Britton (1983: 198) in his classical work on Fiji, where he states that tourism development in Fiji is part of the colonial system. Thus, because Fiji had few economic alternatives, it remains reliant on foreign capital for its development reinforcing its domination by metropolitan interests (Britton, 1983:200). Twenty years later, after Britton's seminal work, it was noted that the history of "many of these islands also functioned as nodes in center-periphery trade, and these links nourished the inflow of foreign private hotel investment encouraged by generous, pro-growth tax incentives. Besides, traditional political ties fostered the aid-financed transport infrastructure that forms the capital base of the visitor industry" (McElroy, 2003:237). The struggle to control and own the tourism sector is a never-ending story, such that Thomas, Moore & Edwards (2018: 146) note that in the Bahamas "dependence on foreign capital, foreign goods, foreign expertise, and foreign markets remains the norm in the postcolonial present." Unshackling these dependencies is one of the biggest challenges faced by small island states en route to self-determination and emancipatory futures.

Financial leakages from tourism are very high in island states to become one of the negative consequences of mass tourism (UNWTO, 2004:14; Chong, 2020:159). Conservative estimates indicate "leakage rates of 55% to over 80% for some SIDS, such as the Bahamas" (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:8; see also examples in the Caribbean region, Walton, Hughen, Guggenheim & Escovar-Fadul, 2018:17; Cook Islands, Mellor, 2003:101). Leakages have been defined "as the part of the price of the holiday paid by the tourists, that leaves or never reaches a destination, due to the involvement of foreign-based transactions" (Anderson, 2013:62). Alternatively, leakages represent what "loss of tourism foreign exchange caused, in large part, by the need to import goods and services required by the tourism industry" (Spinrad, Seward & Bélisle, 1982:21). Examples of leakages are, amongst others, the import of materials and equipment for construction, the repatriation of profits, import of consumer goods, mostly food and drink (Walton, Hughen, Guggenheim & Escovar-Fadul, 2018:17). Leakages are considered negative for their negative impact on impairing the local communities to own and manage ventures for their benefit and encumbering future economic growth and sustainability (Alzboun,

Khawaldah, Backman & Moore, 2016:18). Their small sizes and populations and high transportation costs amplify the leakage problem (Cheer, Pratt, Tolkach, Bailey, Taumoepeau & Movono, 2018:451). Ironically, these are the same countries where tourism is supposed to assist with economic development, which suffers the most from leakages (Chong, 2020:159).

Leakages should not be separated from issues of the control and ownership of the tourism industry and the exclusion of local businesses because large transnational corporations (TNCs) "operators are vertically or horizontally integrated and use subsidiary companies to service much of the tourist's visit, including accommodation, transport, activities, and attractions. This leads to economic leakage (profits flowing off-island) to foreign-owned businesses, leaving little opportunity for smaller, local enterprises to benefit from tourist expenditure" (Chong, 2020:8; on similar issues see also Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:8; UN, 2010:16). External control of tourism in islands has been a historical remnant linked to colonialism. In the Caribbeans, the key players in the industry are mainly non-Caribbean entities (see Walton, Hughen, Guggenheim & Escovar-Fadul, 2018:12; on similar issues see also Sealy, 2018:82). Other islands such as Zanzibar, suffer similar issues related to foreign ownership with economic leakages reaching and often exceeding "80 percent of the prices of the tourist package" (Anderson, 2013:72). Foreign ownership is especially skewed in favor of high-end and all-inclusive facilities, and these are significant producers of leakages (Chong, 2019:84; Sealy, 2018:83). The transnational tourism system is linked to a specific tourism typology primarily related to conventional/mass standardised tourism where hotel foreign ownership accounts for substantial leakages of foreign currency, leading to both social exclusion and social polarisation in these island nations (Sealy, 2018:82).

Alternative proposals such as where locals can have some ownership stake in tourism ventures are possible as shown in St. Lucia where despite foreign entities owning and operating large hotels some local business people have invested in guesthouses, arts and craft shops, restaurants, tour-operating small firms, and other small entities with links to hotels (Spinrad, 1982:89). More shifts and positive change towards increasing local control and benefits is required. Tourism revenue should be retained in the local economy, and essential substitution and 'buy local' strategies become essential to reduce leakages and create linkages (Sheldon, 2005:4). To this end, tax and investment incentives, and subsidies for entrepreneurs are essential to boost the economy (Sheldon, 2005:4). It is of fundamental importance to decrease leakages and enhance linkages as a way of

finding new solutions for sustained economic growth and prosperity.

Leakages and linkages are a reflection of the strength of the economy. For instance, if tourism consumes goods and services mainly produced domestically, this is a reflection of strong linkages within the sectors of the economy and a mirror to a low level of leakages (Spinrad, Seward & Bélisle, 1982:22). The Dominican state in the Caribbeans represents "a low-revenue - low-leakage destination" (Walker & Lee, 2019:7). Many islands such as Seychelles (MTCPM, 2018:1), Samoa (STA, 2014:27), Cook Islands (Mellor, 2003:101), and Caribbean region (Thomas, Moore & Edwards, 2018: 147) admit the existence of the leakage problem and, often, the need to seek solutions that enhance linkages. In agriculture, tourism linkages have been proposed, such as keeping jobs on farms that supply hotels with agricultural produce, as a way of keeping tourism jobs and profits within the country (Thomas, Moore & Edwards, 2018: 147). Enhancing integration between the tourism and agriculture sectors can help decrease leakages from the local economy (Walker & Lee, 2019:12). Understanding supply chains and how they can be harnessed to benefit local economies is imperative for the economy.

The current tourism system also influences working conditions – often poor working conditions are found in the tourism sector in island states (and arguably everywhere). Labour issues in tourism are important because of the large number of people employed in tourism in island nations (Jamal & Lagiewski, 2006:3). Reis (2016: 4) observes that neoliberalism delivered mainly low paying jobs, which are often seasonal, and part-time, ultimately failing to deliver on sustainable socio-economic development and a state of genuine independence. In the Dominican Republic, while many people are employed in tourism, "the number of hours worked, and the wage rates do not contribute significantly to the total household income," reinforcing the worry about leakages in the sector (Reis, 2016: 4). Many workers in the sector in island states endure poor working conditions (see Sealy, 2018:83). Often islands do not have enough workforce, particularly qualified workforce, such as in the Cook Islands, where a lack of a well-trained labour force is a deterrent to successful tourism development (Mellor, 2003:104). This implies that new pathways and trajectories have to be found to induce the necessary change in the direction of advancing tourism in islands where sustainability and inclusivity become fundamental for self-determination, social justice, and a just tourism.

However, two issues are relevant. First, policies, plans, and strategies on paper need to be correctly implemented and monitored for effectiveness – otherwise, they just remain paper. Thus, a "break may occur between policy implementation and actual

result, the so-called 'implementation gap,' in which a continuing lack of empowerment frustrates effective action" (Sofield, 2003:191). Developing a policy or strategy is only the first part of resolving the challenge. Implementation of strategies requires the participation of multiple players and sectors with conflicting interests and limited budgets, posing a challenge on their own (Everett, Simpson & Wayne, 2018:13). Implementation requires concerted effort, shared vision, and political will undergirded by principles of inclusivity and participation.

Secondly, stereotypical and standard/hegemonic thinking needs to be overcome. The need is to go "beyond stereotypical representations of island states, which suggest that they cannot appropriately plan for their futures" and avoid the general concept that globalization damages natural contexts but instead appreciate the agency of local people for development (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008:497). The strength, abilities, and resources of these islands to promote change should be recognized (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008:497). It can be surmised that some of these strengths include: being small is beautiful; small islands are good economic performers; they have high levels of cultural, social and natural capital, and respect for traditional, holistic approaches to development; strong international linkages and their political strength (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). Ultimately many have failed to come forward with credible strategies that enable island states to benefit optimally from their tourism industry (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008:497). Globalization and dependency are real issues, but there is a need to go beyond dependency to advance solutions to overcome the challenges associated with these two phenomena.

ST and CBT in small islands tourism policies

It is evident that a different approach to tourism development in islands is required to advance local development, decrease leakages (and increase linkages), and make tourism more locally profitable and participatory. As such, a more inclusive approach to tourism is required in order for islands to derive the maximal benefits tourism (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020:9) because "economic growth in itself is insufficient for fighting poverty and inequality unless it is both sustainable and inclusive" (UNWTO, 2018:9). Inclusive tourism is "transformative tourism in which marginalized groups are engaged in ethical production or consumption of tourism and the sharing of its benefits" (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019,298:592). Tourism can only be considered inclusive when marginalized groups are involved in it and addresses issues such as inequality and considers the case of the minorities (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019, 298:592). In order to tackle poverty, there is a need to involve

the poor in economic activities (Holden, 2008:140). From an island and sustainability perspective, the integration of the community is essential for the success of ST development, and this implies that stakeholders must be involved in all tourism planning and development processes (Sheldon, 2005:5). Fundamentally, the island community and the local culture of empowerment are a fundamental part of planning (Sheldon, 2005:4).

The advancement of strategies that enhance local control and ownership of the tourism sector is paramount to facilitate and advance local empowerment and the accrual of maximum benefits to locals. Indeed, a ST approach is well recognised as a fundamental issue for islands (as should be everywhere). Islands work in a global context, and this influences their development trajectory. As such, within a globalization context, "where shocks occur, 'think global, act local' translates poorly into practice. It makes only limited sense to consider SD [sustainable development] for a single island or island state, let alone a particular sector" (Connell, 2018:109). A conflict between global and local is inevitable because capitalism favours resource exploitation and mass tourism while local attempts at culturally acceptable development are fragmented and still have to contend with the uncertainties brought about by global capitalism (Connell, 2018:109).

Specific geographical conditions and the critical natural and cultural value of SIDS make them great tourist attractions. The specific challenges and vulnerabilities they face make ST the only plausible way to pursue their development and the protection of their fragile ecosystems (UNWTO, 2014:2). Tourists can damage the islands' natural environment; therefore, islands can adopt specific visitor regulations, such as arrival limits and quotas, to better protect the environment (McKinsey & Company and WTTC, 2017:42). Limits on the number of visitors based on specific local resources and conditions can also be elaborated and proposed to safeguard the totality of their ecosystem – their communities, heritage, culture, and the environment.

Sustainability is a fundamental matter in island tourism. ST suggests that the provision of a quality visitor experience does not preclude enhancing the quality of life of the host communities and the environment (Kokkranikal, McLellan & Baum, 2003:427). For example the World Bank (WB, 2015 cited in Giampiccoli, Muhsin & Mtapuri, 2020) notes that the Maldivian growth model is not inclusive threatening its social, fiscal and environmental sustainability against a backdrop of high levels of inequality and a sense of unshared prosperity. As such, it is prudent for islands to focus on ST (Bojanic, Warnick & Musante, 2016:3). For Campling et al., (2011 cited in Giampiccoli, Mtapuri & Nauright, 2020),

by focusing on top-end tourism to maximize the benefits and minimize environmental degradation through imposing ceilings on visitor intake, the Seychelles was promoting 'sustainable tourism' before it became a key international policy discourse. Faced with their many challenges, many SIDS have embraced the sustainable development agendas (Van Beynen, Akiwumi & Van Beynen, 2018:99) in which they prioritise policies that promote sustainable tourism development and ensure local benefits (UN, 2010:18). Besides ST, CBT is suggested in island states for jobs and community empowerment. In Jamaica CBT, has been proposed since 2004 as "the latest positive response to the development by a government that is keen to stimulate, engage, embrace and support the Jamaican people as partners, participants and beneficiaries in progress" (UNWTO, 2004:38).

Findings

Islands nations have adopted tourism approaches that seek more inclusivity. An example is the mission statement in the Seychelles Tourism Master Plan (MTCPM, 2018:1), which strongly supports local ownership and benefits. The same document (MTCPM, 2018:1) also indicates sustainability as part of its mission statements: "To adopt a policy of a conservative number of beds per island and the mainstream environment in tourism development notably by fostering responsible and ethical tourism and encouraging energy-saving, water, sanitation, waste, and other environmental conservation/management practices in daily tourism-related operations." One of the themes in the Strategic Action Plan of Maldives' fourth tourism masterplan 2013-2017 is about 'Promoting sensible ways for communities to participate in tourism' (MTAC, 2013:46), indicating "a strong appetite for wider participation in tourism from many sections of society. This enthusiasm needs to be channeled in commercially viable ways, and that will complement mainstream tourism."

Market trends and inclusivity seem to favour the Maldives as they target visitors who travel unbooked and exploring as they travel, and many guesthouses which have spurred community-based tourism development in Asia (MTAC, 2013b:118). The Samoan Samoa Tourism Sector Plan, 2014-2019 (STA, 2014:35) as part of the Product Development Strategy proposes cultural and natural attractions as essential products showing that the tourism sector is differentiated with the growing importance of local linkages to cultural and environmental tour products coupled with CBT products such as handicrafts and homestays are being encouraged at the village level

and initiatives that support this were to be developed (STA, 2014:40).

The Secretary-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Tourism Organization greatly amplify the possible role of CBT in the Caribbean by stating that "all tourism in the Caribbean should be community-based tourism. Tourism should be of, by, for, and with the full consent and embrace of the community. Defining it in any other way marginalises an effort that should be at the heart of our sustainable development. Communities are the carriers of our culture and our lifeboats to the future" (Vanderpool-Wallace, 2007:VIII). The Jamaican National Community Tourism Policy and Strategy indicates that CBT "means putting local communities in control of

the development of the wider tourism product and ensuring that the benefits of tourism are spread widely within the community" (MTE, 2015:4). It was imperative to check if issues of sustainability and inclusivity have the necessary prominence in national tourism documents – the visions and primary goals.

Table 1 presents the main vision/goals of tourism policies/strategies/plans of selected islands. The islands belong two each to an ocean, the Seychelles and Maldives to for the Indian Ocean; Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados to the Atlantic Ocean (Caribbean Region); and Tonga and Samoa to the Pacific Ocean.

Table 1 Selected Visions / main approaches from Islands tourism plans/strategies

Country / Document	Vision / main approaches
Trinidad and Tobago (MTTT, 2020).	"Tourism development shall be undertaken in a sustainable and responsible manner so that the sector realizes its full potential to engage local communities, create economic opportunities and alleviate poverty" (MTTT, 2020:1).
Samoa (STA, 2014)	"By 2019 Samoa will have a growing tourism sector, which engages our visitors and people and is recognized as the leading Pacific destination for sustainable Tourism. Applying the principles of Sustainable Tourism Development (UNWTO) are integral to the achievement of this Vision" (STA, 2014:III).
Tonga (TRIP, 2013)	"Tourism drives Tonga's future sustainable economic growth, optimizing wealth and prosperity for all Tongans" (TRIP, 2013:4).
Maldives (MTAC, 2013a)	We will maintain Maldives' position in world markets We will deal with environmental and conservation issues We will engage more Maldivians in tourism careers We will find sensible ways for communities to participate in tourism We will promote investment towards sustainable growth???? Growth and high product quality (MTAC, 2013).
Seychelles (MTCPM, 2019)	"Be a higher performing and inclusive Tourism Sector with greater inter-sectorial linkages" 1. Deliver superior economic performance; 2. Develop the brand image; 3. Promote sustainable tourism practices; 4. Diversify the product offering; and 5. Increase Seychellois participation in the tourism sector (MTCPM, 2019:14).
Barbados (HLA Consultants, 2014).	..."to deliver an unmatched experience that is truly Barbadian, created by warm, welcoming, friendly people, ensuring benefits to the entire nation" (HLA Consultants, 2014).

Source: MTTT, 2020; STA, 2014; TRIP, 2013; MTAC, 2013a; MTCPM, 2019; HLA Consultants, 2014

Table 1 shows that all islands (except Maldives and Barbados) explicitly refer to the word 'sustainable' in their vision or main goals. However, the Minister of Tourism Arts & Culture of Maldives in the Maldives fourth tourism masterplan 2013-2017 (MTAC, 2013a: VII) states that he "wishes to see the successful

implementation of the 4TMP, development of tourism in a sustainable manner contributing to the national development and Maldives remain a highly sought-after competitive destination." For Barbados, despite their vision not explicitly indicating 'sustainability' but when the Government commissioned the Master Plan

for the Development of Tourism in Barbados (2014-2023), it indicated as Terms of Reference, amongst other (HLA Consultants, 2014:8) to "Ensure the sustainable growth and development of the tourism industry to meet the current needs of Barbadians, visitors, investors, and other stakeholders." The mentioning of the concept of sustainability in the tourism plan/strategies indicates that, at least on paper, all islands are devoted to promoting sustainable tourism. Other islands also seem to follow a similar trend. In Mauritius, for example, the

Mauritius Tourism Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 states that its vision is to make Mauritius become "A leading and sustainable island destination" (SUS-ISLAND, 2018:3).

A different story, with similar trends, emerges related to the local community engagement. Although using different terminologies, all islands indicate the desire to involve local people and that the benefits should accrue to local people (see selected words/sentences in Table 2).

Table 2 Selected words/sentences from Islands tourism plans/strategies

Country / Document	Vision / main approaches
Trinidad and Tobago (MTTT, 2020).	"... engage local communities, create economic opportunities and alleviate poverty" (MTTT, 2020:1).
Samoa (STA, 2014)	"... engages our visitors and people " (STA, 2014:III).
Tonga (TRIP, 2013)	"... optimising wealth and prosperity for all Tongans" (TRIP, 2013:4).
Maldives (MTAC, 2013a)	"We will find sensible ways for communities to participate in tourism" (MTAC, 2013).
Seychelles (MTCPM, 2019)	5. Increase Seychellois participation in the tourism sector (MTCPM, 2019:14).
Barbados (HLA Consultants, 2014).	"... ensuring benefits to the entire nation" (HLA Consultants, 2014).

Source: MTTT, 2020; STA, 2014; TRIP, 2013; MTAC, 2013a; MTCPM, 2019; HLA Consultants, 2014

Table 2 shows the concepts related to community involvement and local benefits, clearly indicating that, also in this case, at least on paper, all islands are dedicated to promoting local community involvement and benefits accruing to locals.

Challenges remain. For example, the Maldivian Strategic Action Plan of Maldives fourth tourism masterplan 2013-2017 (MTAC, 2013:48) states how community participation is weak compared to other Asian countries, but that it can be facilitated (MTAC, 2013:48). A case from St. Lucia indicates that the development "of local entrepreneurship and managerial capabilities is an extremely positive development that should be expanded and nurtured by government and the private sector through specific policies and advantageous lending programs" (Spinrad, 1982:89).

The role of Government becomes fundamental to enhance local benefits, involve communities, and increase linkages, amongst other things. Governments should promulgate policies that strengthen local tourism players (Sealy, 2018:88). The Government can help strengthen inter-sectoral linkages, encourage local entrepreneurship, and develop an indigenous craft industry (Sealy, 2018:88; UNWTO, 2004:14). The Government can specifically assist small-scale businesses with grants, loan training, and education (Sealy, 2018:88). Empowerment should be enforced as a right, and

countries should make the environment conducive for community capacitation and decision-making for sustainability (Sofield, 2003: 89). Similarly, Government should have a vested interest and crucial role to play in CBT. For instance, Government should create a national policy framework that embraces CBT principles that facilitate good local governance, participation, inclusive planning, investment, control, ownership, empowerment, and just distribution of benefits (Tasci, Semrad & Yilmaz, 2013:80). About community participation, the Trinidad and Tobago National Tourism Policy mentions explicitly that the Government shall: "Develop viable models, policies and strategies for community-based tourism designed to encourage communities to own, develop, implement and manage feasible community-based development projects" (MTTT, 2010:28).

Discussion and way forward

New solutions are required. Business as usual solutions is not viable. Thus some suggestions are given here on how to overcome dependency and to move towards a more sustainable and inclusive/CBT tourism development in island states. These actions are based mainly on a strong cooperation perspective. Islands need to focus on the local in a context of cooperation among island states to 'standardize' the development approaches while taking cognizance of the local context and putting in

place specific 'uniform' limits and parameters on foreign investment policies. Unity among them could reinforce their voice at the regional and international levels. The suggestions posited here should be developed by islands as a single entity and include:

- Establishing specific islands policies related to sustainability and CBT
- Establishing CBT offices/network – CBT hub for the Islands
- Establishing limits and regulations on investment/incentives policies – this is meant to avoid the 'race to the bottom' – regulation on:
 - o Labor standards
 - o Environmental protection
 - o Investment incentives
 - o Minimum requirements on local supply – increase backward-forward local linkages
 - o The limit and regulation of investment/incentives policies can be modelled to break away from the usual investment/incentives approach and advance an incentive approach based on the redistributive effort of a company (see for example the Investment Redistributive Incentive Model (IRIM) propose, Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020)
- Establishing uniform limits on foreign ownership
- Establishing a specific common CBT organization to advance and enhance CBT in the islands
- Establishing a joint fund to assist in sustainable/ CBT tourism development
 - o This fund should also give special loans to small local entrepreneurs
- Cooperatively apply for financial resources to international entities
- Establishing a SIDS Common Tourism Market
- Diversify and adjust the local agricultural/fisheries sector based on tourism requirements to increase the backward and forward linkages
- Establishing common education institutions where students from various islands can study
- Establishing common research tourism centers
- Establishing a Common Disaster Recovery Centre
- Establishing common tourism-related guidelines on:
 - o Sustainability issues
 - o Corporate Social Responsibility in tourism
- Establish specific carrying capacity indexes based on
 - o Social impacts
 - o Environmental impacts
 - o Local economic sector (i.e., agriculture) supply carrying capacity

The supply capacity of the local economic sectors (i.e., agriculture, fisheries, or furniture) may also need to be expanded to decrease leakages and increase linkages. This can be done via a deliberate process of analyzing tourism supply chains to ensure that local people fully participate. An exercise of such a nature can be called the Local Economy Supply Carrying Capacity (LESCaCa) analysis and could be fundamental in increasing the benefits that derive from tourism. It is possible that based on this carrying capacity methodology, the number of visitors will decrease. However, it is also possible that linkages will dramatically increase to balance the loss of tourists.

Each island will be able to advance its specific tourism strategy by recognizing and accepting these issues and their associated regulations. Competition amongst islands will happen within these proposed regulations to establish specific limits in the competition race.

The commonality of the problems and challenges that SIDS encounter suggest that new ways of doing things are needed that would catalyze the tourism sector for the benefit of all island states in the various regional body to emerge from the suggestions above. The initiatives span education, research, disaster recovery, capacity building to the adoption of uniform policies that cover labour, the environment, and investments. An investigation into supply chains and their engineering to benefit locals has the dual benefit of decreasing leakages while enhancing backward and forward linkages. These initiatives will help to transform the tourism sector to benefit local players in terms of incomes, jobs, improvement in standards of living of locals, foreign currency earnings, and their retention as well as overall economic growth and development. For SIDS, operating and letting their communities live in silos increases their vulnerabilities.

Conclusion

This article presents suggestions on how SIDS should cooperate and advance local tourism strategies to foster more significant beneficial tourism impacts and shift the tourism sector towards a more sustainable CBT mode. The article highlights the various characteristics and challenges islands face about tourism. The article specifically pays attention to issues of leakages and ownership of the tourism sector, and it proposes that the tourism sector should be oriented towards a more inclusive/CBT approach to enhance its positive local impacts. Sustainability was looked at as all SIDS strives to achieve it as reflected in their visions and missions. Their smallness acts as both an advantage and a disadvantage. It is an advantage because its affairs are manageable, and a disadvantage because resources and expertise are thin. Their reliance on

tourism meant that sustainability is vital for their economies, communities, and their environments.

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