Ante Mandić
Lidija Petrić *Editors*

Mediterranean Protected Areas in the Era of Overtourism

Challenges and Solutions

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ISBN 978-3-030-69192-9 ISBN 978-3-030-69193-6 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69193-6

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Chapter 16
Changing the Growth-Focused Mindset: A Pathway Towards Sustainable Tourism Development

Nicola Camatti, Carolyn Smith, and Jan van der Borg

Abstract Many tourism destinations have long pursued the goal of growth 'at all costs'; the result in many instances has been environmental, socio-cultural and ecological degradation. Amidst mounting evidence of the unsustainability of this approach, we are now witnessing a series of healthy, albeit still timid, attempts to move towards more sustainable tourism development models. Such initiatives experiment with alternative goals and development paths which emphasise the quality rather than the quantity of tourism, alongside the pursuit of wider social and environmental objectives. Yet, despite these positive case studies, change remains slow, and many destinations continue to manage tourism via top-down governance tools—an approach which limits their capacity for sustainable development. Even the most rigid sustainability criteria and the adoption of new governance models have been shown to be insufficient in the absence of a radical change of mindset of tourism stakeholders. A more holistic system is needed, which not only considers but actively engages tourism's wide range of stakeholders to effectively navigate sustainable tourism development.

Keywords Sustainable tourism development · Stakeholder engagement · Transition, mindset · Growth · Knowledge · Awareness-action gap · Sustainability education

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A. Mandić and L. Petrić (eds.), *Mediterranean Protected Areas in the Era of Overtourism*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69193-6_16

16.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline some of the new ways to frame and deliver sustainable tourism development and highlight key areas for future exploration and elaboration. To this end, the chapter first recalls the well-known consequences of unsustainable tourism growth on the competitiveness and survival of a destination, while highlighting the limitations of the strategies implemented by many destinations to deal with these undesirable effects and their inexorable decline. The contours of an alternative model are then sketched, one which includes the resident population and local entrepreneurs as key tourism stakeholders to determine not only the destination development path but the long-term goals and priorities which will guide its course. The second part of the chapter examines the awareness-action gap, which stymies many sustainability initiatives. The need for educational tourism initiatives, and a consideration of the 'inner dimension' of man and mindfulness, is then examined. The overriding theme of the chapter is the need for tourism destinations to undertake complementary strategies which address sustainable development challenges in a holistic, inclusive and iterative manner. Governance frameworks, business models and socio-cultural values are all key instruments to achieve sustainable development, but all are insufficient alone.

16.2 Unsustainable Tourism: Causes and Consequences

The development of the tourism market knows various, distinct phases. The first phase of this development process is widely known as the period of the Grand Tour: the phenomenon that lies at the very basis of the word 'tourism'. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, young, upper-class men travelled Europe as a rite of passage to read in foreign libraries; study works of art and architecture; admire the landscape and meet their peers. Travel was motivated by a desire to collect both knowledge and experiences; the challenging nature of the journeys was part of the appeal. As Europe's rail network improved, and the preoccupation with neo-classical culture abated, the tradition declined. In its place: 'Cook's Tour' (as associated with Thomas Cook) capitalised on the new railway networks and growing hospitality sector to make travel accessible for the first time—bringing about the birth of contemporary tourism.

After the second world war tourism evolved again. In many industrialised countries, the average income per capita, the amount of paid vacation and car ownership rose quickly, and tourism rapidly became a mass phenomenon. Not only did the number of people travelling rise exponentially, but tourists were inclined to visit the same places at the same time of year: coastal areas during the summer months. Mass tourism was born and with it the mass tourism business model, based on the replication of successful formulas, economies of scale and price competition. Although the tourism market diversified significantly in subsequent decades, this particular business model continues to dominate, both within specific forms of tourism (such as cultural tourism or urban tourism) and for connected industries (such as the cruise industry or the airline industry). This business model focuses on the economic drivers and impacts of tourism; this legacy is evident from the reports of tourism organisations (such as the WTTC or the UNWTO) from the 1990s and the early 2000s.

The exponential growth of tourism demand—and the corresponding growth of the tourism industry—alongside the spatial and temporal concentration of tourism within both high season and vacation hotspots, sparked the first criticisms of this model (see for example Krippendorf 1971), in particular with respect to tourism in natural areas. In the 1990s, a number of authors began to argue that other destination typologies (cities, for example, as Van der Borg (1992) has shown) also suffer from excessive touristic pressure—pressure related to the mass tourism business model they were embracing. Today, cities like Venice (Bertocchi et al. 2020) and Barcelona (Russo and Scarnato 2017) suffer from what is now frequently termed 'overtourism' (UNWTO 2018).

While overtourism is a growing area of research, many directly involved in tourism development processes—stakeholders such as policymakers and those within the tourism industry—still very much foster the traditional business model which favours quantity over quality and the economy above a destination's socio-cultural and environmental and ecological dimensions. The success of a destination is still predominantly measured in the number of overnight stays and the total expenditure of visitors, and this is reflected in the statistical information that is systematically gathered for tourism in countries, regions and places.

This form of development, as Van der Borg (2017) has argued, is partly related to the intrinsic nature of the tourism product. Primary tourism products, or attractions, are often both unique (and therefore extremely scarce), and public goods. This combination of factors often leads to the spontaneous overutilisation of tourism assets, whether they are natural or cultural assets, touristic facilities, infrastructure or public spaces. Spontaneous market forces do not automatically induce optimal allocation of destination assets, but rather maximise their utilisation in order to pursue economic gain. This is what might be called the 'tragedy of tourism commons', to paraphrase Hardin (1968). It has proven to be very difficult to keep popular destinations from following a similar, devastating development path and to embrace a radically different business model.

This form of tourism asset misallocation is evident in the framework presented by Butler in 1980, namely that of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (or TALC, see Fig. 16.1). The life cycle illustrates an early phase of underutilisation (the the 'Exploration' and 'Involvement' stages in Fig. 16.1)—the polar opposite to overtourism, where the non-optimal allocation of tourism assets (or market inefficiency)—where many attractions are already in place, but demand and the associated income is not yet sufficient to cover the costs. This phase is unsustainable as the absence of demand, and hence value discourages entrepreneurs and local policymakers from investing in tourism. In contrast, overtourism is reflected in the 'Stagnation' stage of the life cycle. Butler indicates the existence of a 'critical range of elements of capacity'; he,

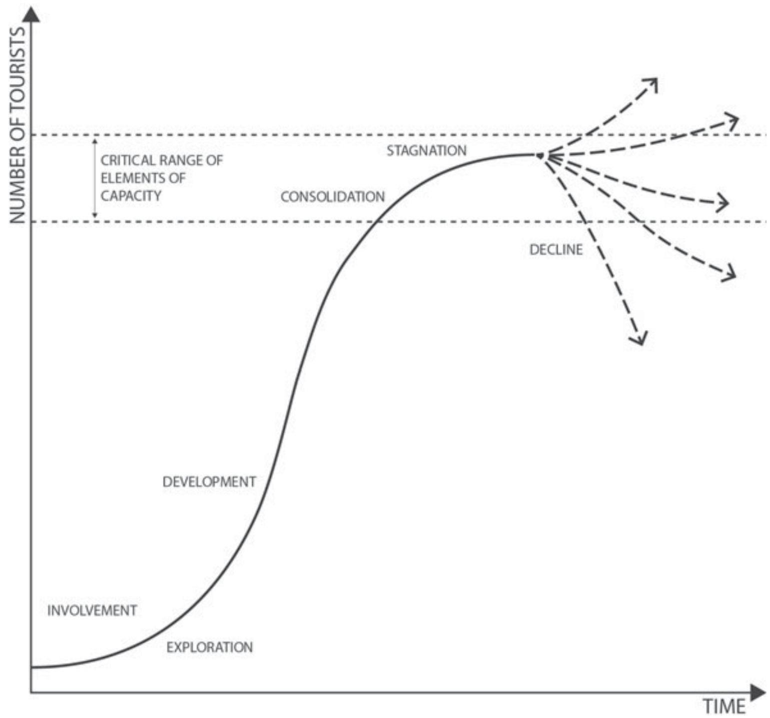

Fig. 16.1 Butler's tourist area life cycle. *Source* Adapted from Butler 1980, p. 7

therefore, suggests that above a certain threshold tourism becomes what now is called overtourism. Surpassing this critical range of elements of capacity, or the Tourist Carrying Capacity (see for example Van der Borg 2017 or Bertocchi et al. 2020), provokes a range of economic, logistical, social and environmental externalities that cause the balance between collective benefits and collective costs to become negative. This not only damages the quality of life of the local population and the business interests of local firms that are not part of the tourism industry, but eventually also degrades the visitor experience and, therefore, the tourism industry itself.

16.3 The Path to Sustainability: What (or Who) Is Missing?

The debates surrounding sustainable tourism development have successfully drawn widespread attention to the need to balance economic interests with socio-environmental concerns; in recent years the concept has become increasingly important within policy frameworks at all levels of governance, adopted within the industry and recognised by consumers. Yet despite this apparent success, the implementation of sustainable tourism development remains relatively limited and highly localised;

both Buckley (2012) and Sharpley (2020) observe little evidence of progress towards sustainable tourism development in recent decades, or even of a more sustainable tourism sector.

Undoubtedly, industrial change has failed to keep pace with academic research; meaningful progress towards sustainable tourism development has become stuck in academic and governance circles (Murphy and Price 2005; Sharpley 2020). This disconnect—between research and policy, and the practical realities of the industry and consumer priorities—is a significant barrier to sustainable tourism development: it situates academics and policymakers as the only far-sighted actors within the tourism system, places the burden of sustainable development on policymakers and largely relies on traditional policy tools to implement and enforce sustainable practices.

16.3.1 The Limitations of Traditional Policy Tools

The challenge of sustainable development, both more generally and with respect to tourism, has highlighted the limitations of traditional governance methods and policy instruments.

The traditional tourism policy domain is primarily concerned with legal and fiscal manipulation via market-based and 'command-control' tools (Hudson and Miller 2012). Market-based instruments are designed to allow governments to incentivise or discourage tourists, companies and other stakeholders in adopting certain patterns of behaviour by adjusting prices. Meanwhile, the introduction of rules, obligations and prohibitions for both tourists and businesses can aim to control access to historic city centres or regulate production standards. Equally widespread are tools that use public spending to ensure the provision of certain services or the protection of public resources which are essential for the sustainable development of a destination (Bramwell 2012). In addition, Zaccai (2012) highlights the recent growth of voluntary tools which have become more commonplace within the tourism policy domain. These voluntary schemes (such as Corporate Social Responsibility, see Taback and Ramanan 2016) have been shown to be more effective for industrial stakeholders than for consumers (McKercher et al. 2010; Zaccai 2012), but their inclusion within the available range of policy instruments and incentives is important for 'beyond compliance' initiatives (Rivera and De Leon 2005; Budeanu et al. 2016).

The limited ability of these tools to address sustainable development has long been recognised (Butler 1991; Dovers 1996; Hunter 2002; Sharpley 2009). The reality is that policy frameworks evolve far more slowly than the current pace of environmental (and related socio-economic and political) change; a result is a reactionary approach to sustainable development which leaves policymakers 'playing catch-up' (Hall 2011, p. 654). However well-designed and implemented, this limits the efficacy of traditional policy-driven approaches to sustainable development; criticism largely centres on the propensity for initiatives to either fail or to result in unforeseen, undesirable consequences (Fodness 2017). Efforts are often undermined by a lack of information: at its most basic, this could concern the appropriate weighting of tariffs or subsidies but, more often, this data gap concerns an understanding of how measures can best be deployed to influence the choices of stakeholders, how and why actions result in unexpected indirect costs, the extent of management costs, and the fundamental efficacy and feasibility of policy aims (Bramwell 2012). The issue is not that these instruments have no value, but alone they are simply unable to address a challenge as complex as sustainable development.

Traditional policy instruments are best suited to specific, spatially defined problems at the local scale (Dovers 2005). This may seem an obvious place to implement sustainable tourism development initiatives, given the industry's dependence on its host destination, but tourism development is an inherently multi-scalar phenomenon; dependent on the external environment and tied to external sectors. It, therefore, cannot be fully understood in isolation. Hall (2011) suggests that as the territorial scale increases (beyond local to regional, national and international levels), tourism sustainability becomes increasingly influenced by factors *beyond* the tourism policy domain. In today's interconnected society, and in the context of global climate change, large-scale dynamics often determine local patterns of development. These large-scale dynamics, therefore, have the potential to undermine the localised approach to policy-making, leading Hall to argue that if tourism policy focuses solely on micro-scale solutions 'it may be inherently doomed to fail' (2011, p. 654).

16.3.2 Innovation, Inclusion and Engagement: A Model for Sustainable Tourism Development

There is growing consciousness of the requirement for innovation to develop new approaches to sustainable tourism development; address the limitations of traditional policy tools and subvert Butler's model of decline, as outlined earlier in this chapter (Smith 2004; Hjalager 2010; Brandão et al. 2019; Hall and Williams 2020). Yet the study of tourism innovation, particularly at the local level, remains in its relative infancy (Costa and Carvalho 2011; Bagiran Ozseker 2019). Both tourism and innovation are highly rooted to place: tourism is entirely dependent on the host destination, while successful innovation systems are embedded within institutional and socio-cultural networks. Authors, therefore, highlight the importance of tourism innovation at the local level and argue that this 'destination point of view' should provide the foundation from which larger-scale innovation is developed (Bagiran Ozseker 2019; Brandão et al. 2019, p. 227).

A destination's innovation capacity hinges on the formation of effective, collaborative stakeholder networks; these are critical to ensure access to the necessary knowledge, infrastructure and financial resources (Jacobsen 2005). Various models have been developed to better articulate the role played by governance, business, research institutions, education and civic society in a networked system of tourism stakeholders (see Costa 1996; Fundeanu 2015; Bagiran Ozseker 2019). Figure 16.2 illus-

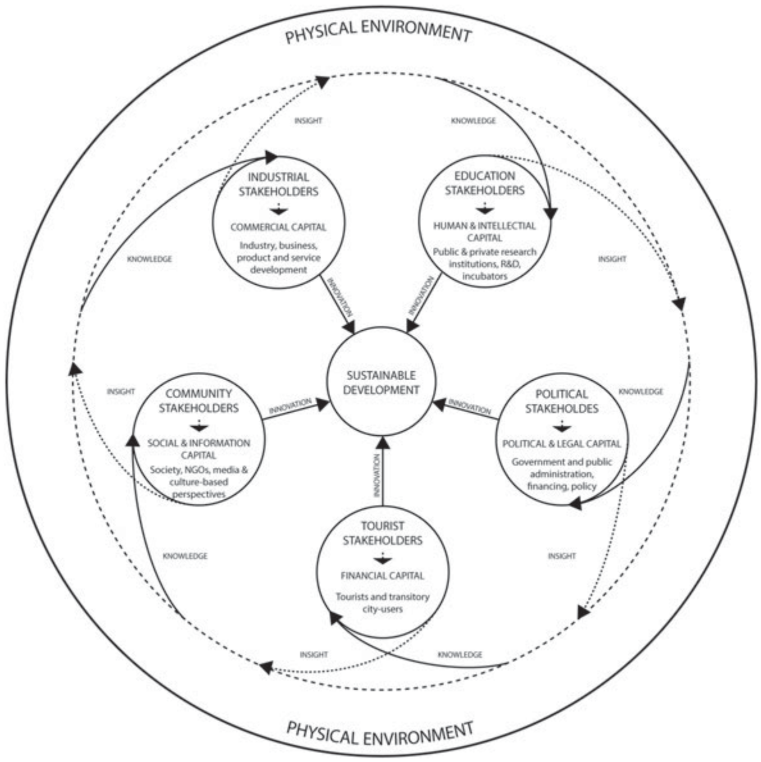

Fig. 16.2 A model for sustainable tourism development based on the collaborative circulation of knowledge. *Source* Drawn after Levett (1998), Laine (2010), and Carayannis et al. (2012)

trates a new conceptual cluster model for sustainable tourism development, which draws inspiration from the general 'Russian doll' model for sustainable development (see Levett 1998), the stakeholder network model proposed by Laine (2010) and the Quintuple Helix model for innovation (see Carayannis et al. 2012).

The model describes a holistic system, composed of five *equally important* stakeholder clusters (or subsystems), linked by a circular process of knowledge sharing and collaboration. Here, the academic and governance spheres are not set apart from the other stakeholders, and the emphasis has been shifted away from economic capital alone by acknowledging that each of the five stakeholder subsystems has a valuable asset (capital) at its disposal which is necessary to effectively navigate sustainable development challenges (Carayannis et al. 2012). The importance of formal knowledge production (within the education subsystem) is recognised but not given precedence over other forms, such as local knowledge from community stakeholders. Innovation occurs as knowledge produced by one set of stakeholders is shared and developed using fresh insight from another group.

- *Political stakeholders*: the governance system remains critically important; it generates ‘political and legal capital’ in the form of plans, regulations, policies and political leaders.
- *Education stakeholders*: the academic system includes all levels of education and research in universities, institutions and schools; it generates two forms of capital. First, the system develops ‘human capital’ with the necessary skills and insight for sustainable development; second, it produces ‘intellectual capital’ through the formal knowledge created within this system.
- *Industrial stakeholders*: the tourism industry is ultimately the subject of sustainable development patterns; it primarily focuses on the generation of ‘commercial capital’ through its activities.
- *Tourist stakeholders*: as the primary consumers of tourism ‘products’; tourists predominantly generate ‘financial capital’ for the destination or sector.
- *Community stakeholders*: the final subsystem is composed of the local population or wider public at a larger scale; it is concerned with two forms of capital. The first is ‘social capital’, as associated with culture and social values; the second is ‘information capital’, derived from local empirical knowledge and communication networks.

Tourism is an inherently spatial phenomenon: it is an industry centred on selling an experience of a specific place; as such, the success and competitiveness of the tourism industry is entirely dependent on the destination itself. In other words, unsustainable tourism development risks undermining its own source of income by degrading the quality of its host destination. Tourism stakeholders are, therefore, mutually dependant on one another to ensure that the industry retains long-term resilience through sustainable tourism development. The model situates all stakeholders within the finite constraints of the ‘physical environment’ accordingly, and the widest possible participation and inclusion within this framework is necessary for its success.

The model in Fig. 16.2 is generic and can be applied at different scales, as illustrated in Fig. 16.3. The priorities for sustainable development will change according to the territorial scale: the local level is primarily concerned with site capacities (i.e. Tourism Carrying Capacity or waste management), resident participation and industrial engagement, while the international scale is likely to focus more on sociocultural factors (as explored later in the next section of this chapter) and global climate impacts (e.g. air travel emissions). In each network, for each given destination, a group, actor or agency will serve as a ‘broker’ to initiate and coordinate the process described by the model. In many contexts, this is likely to be a government agency (as in the model presented by Fundeanu 2015, p. 748) or a working group of key public and private stakeholders, but the precise dynamics will vary considerably according to the specific dynamics of power and trust in a given locality. It is critical, however, that the local networks form the foundations from which the larger networks (regional, national and international) are developed, allowing local dynamics to influence initiatives at larger territorial scales.

Tourism cannot hope to meet the needs and desires of *all* stakeholders *all* of the time; balancing these needs requires communication, empowerment and trust

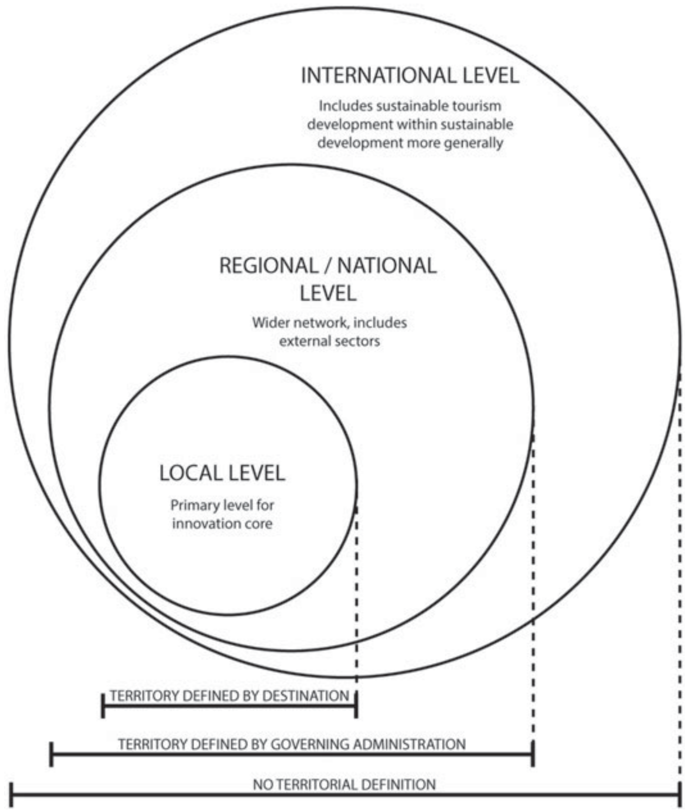

Fig. 16.3 The interdependent territorial scales for sustainable tourism development. *Source* The authors

(Higuchi and Yamanaka 2017; Nunkoo 2017). This must be approached as a *continuous process* to be managed, based on knowledge sharing and active engagement, which will allow specific sustainable development goals and practices to remain resilient, evolving as new challenges, priorities and conflicts emerge.

16.3.3 Locating a Holistic Policy Paradigm

In today's globalised and interconnected society, power structures in most developed democracies have become decentralised, liberalised and market-orientated; this has dramatically decreased the efficacy of 'top-down' policy models (Loorbach 2010). Yet despite dissatisfaction with the 'creeping irrelevance' of tourism policy tools to address sustainable tourism development (Fodness 2017, p. 1673), viable alternatives have been slow to emerge. Hall (2011, p. 656) attributes this to an inability to learn effectively from policy failure, arguing that governance is largely stuck in a 'superficial' pattern of social policy learning, which tends to focus on the incremental modification of existing policy tools. This style of technical learning is comparable to 'single-loop' learning (Argyris 1976; Leeuw et al. 1994; Grin and Loeber 2017), as opposed to 'double-loop' or 'triple-loop' learning, where the failure results in the reassessment of not only the goals and tools but the core framework of ideas and assumptions that were used to define the nature of the problem (Argyris 1976, 2002; Cartwright 2002; Hall 2011).

Transition Management is one response to this challenge: an emerging complexity-based policy paradigm which aims to accelerate the development of a governance framework capable of guiding sustainable development at a systematic scale (Loorbach 2010; Loorbach and Rotmans 2010, p. 239). In the past two decades, Transition Management has been applied at regional and national scales in a range of contexts for various sectors including waste (Paredis 2011), mobility (Kemp and Rotmans 2004; Kemp et al. 2011; Scuttari et al. 2016) and energy (Kern and Howlett 2009); it was first applied to tourism via a Norwegian national initiative in 2010, with 'mixed results' (Gössling et al. 2012, p. 913). The main characteristics of Transition Management are summarised by Rotmans et al. (2001, p. 22) as being concerned with shaping short-term innovation through long-term sustainability considerations (25 years or more); integrating multiple domains, actors and territorial scales; focusing on learning philosophy; aiming for both system innovation and system improvement and maintaining a wide variety of options for future use.

Essentially, Transition Management is a process which empowers a small working group of key stakeholders (usually less than 15) from different backgrounds to actively participate in the formation of new governance tools and approaches (see Loorbach 2010); it is best described as a perspective, rather than a policy instrument (Kemp and Rotmans 2004). The stakeholders are engaged in envisioning exercises to devise long-term sustainable goals, determine potential barriers, define potential pathways and develop new experimental strategies. These strategies are then subject to reflexive monitoring and evaluation, which informs and iterates the aims and approach. The experimental approach to policy development is key; the learning process is as important as the goals and strategies it defines (Loorbach 2010).

At a smaller scale, the Living Lab methodology is gaining popularity across Europe and is of growing interest to policymakers, despite its limited presence in academic literature (Kvisleius et al. 2009; Dell'Era and Landoni 2014). The Living Lab emerged from the intersection between Transition Management, Open Innovation and Collaborative Consumption (Mastelic et al. 2015); the concept has been widely applied to product and technology development, and city design. Essentially, the Living Lab is a participative, learning-focused development of the community consultation, which integrates end-users within design processes. The approach is highly pertinent for the local dimension of tourism development and has been successfully applied to tourism destination management to increase stakeholder engagement, destination innovation capacity and the development and adoption of voluntary sustainability criteria (MacPherson et al. 2008; Guimont and Lapointe 2016).

Both Transition Management and the Living Lab are relatively new methodologies; they are processes rather than prescriptive strategies and therefore offer no guarantees of success. The literature highlights the extent to which both approaches are highly dependent on specific contextual dynamics (place, sector and scale) and active governance (Loorbach and Rotmans 2010; Guimont and Lapointe 2016): Gössling et al. (2012, p. 912) warn that little will emerge from the process itself if stakeholders identify the need for new or modified regulation and this is not followed up by policymakers. The methodologies have been developed in a European context—Transition Management, in particular, has, so far, largely been applied within Nordic political cultures (Loorbach and Rotmans 2010; Gössling et al. 2012)—and questions, therefore, remain as to how adaptable they may be within different political contexts with varying degrees of informality and potentially inconsistent support from distinct levels of governance. Yet both approaches do illustrate the potential role for active (rather than didactic) governance to engage with and empower stakeholders as a pathway for sustainable development.

While the critical importance of tourism stakeholders to the success of sustainable development initiatives is often treated as self-evident in academic, policy and planning literature; little attention has been given to detailing guidance as to how stakeholders might be identified, engaged and included (Moscardo 2011; Budeanu et al. 2016, p. 288). The vast majority of tourism enterprises are small businesses; these firms have a lot to gain from inclusion within a collaborative network such as the system proposed in Fig. 16.2, and processes like Transition Management and the Living Lab (Lynch and Morrison 2007; Brandão et al. 2019), but communicating this immaterial value can be challenging (Hakkarainen and Hyysalo 2013; Mastelic et al. 2015).

In practice, maintaining the engagement of, and managing conflict between, stakeholders remains a significant barrier to sustainable tourism development (Moscardo 2005; Dodds and Butler 2010; Vellecco and Mancino 2010; Hatipoglu et al. 2016). Although many models describe the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders, the groups most often included and empowered in practice tend to be large businesses and government agencies (Moscardo 2005, pp. 33–35; Budeanu et al. 2016, p. 288). Transition Management actively engages only a small group of 'frontrunner' stakeholders (Loorbach 2010); the criteria by which these stakeholders are identified and are judged to be worthy of representation will directly affect the characteristics of the resulting approach to sustainable development. In contrast, the Living Lab tends to operate at the microscale where a wider variety of smaller stakeholders can be more easily engaged, yet questions remain as to how this model might be best scaled up, or included within larger-scale models (Guimont and Lapointe 2016).

While it may make the process of defining shared goals and strategies more challenging, the inclusion of the widest possible range of stakeholder perspectives is necessary to effectively develop a resilient approach to sustainable development. Examining who is empowered by these processes, how key stakeholders are effectively identified, and what impact this selection has on the outcomes are critical elements within the future research agenda, best expanded through case study analysis. What is more, there is a need for long-term assessments, which are able to analyse how these relationships are maintained and evolve over time.

16.4 A Sustainable Mindset: The Socio-Cultural Conditions for Change

While the mitigation of unsustainable development can be framed by policies and regulation, it has become increasingly clear that sustainable development cannot be achieved through the use of new technology and governance alone (Ericson et al. 2014; Wamsler and Brink 2018). Tourism development is a human problem; it, therefore, has a human solution. Yet while the social dimension of sustainability has been accepted for some time, there remains little consensus as to what this means in practice. Our daily choices—and therefore consumer trends and economic spending patterns—are strongly influenced by a mixture of values, emotions, self-concepts, social norms and cultural associations (Sorin 2010); scholars from various disciplines are therefore turning their attention to understanding how these factors relate to sustainable development. Research is focusing increasingly on the socio-cultural factors which underpin long-term, stable changes to both individual and collective behaviour (Burns and Bibbings 2007; Hall et al. 2015).

16.4.1 The Awareness-Action Gap

Many studies indicate that while tourism stakeholders might value sustainability conceptually, it's currently unlikely to influence their choices and behaviour (Budeanu 2007; Timur and Getz 2009; McKercher et al. 2010; Miller et al. 2010). Clearly, awareness alone is not sufficient to catalyse change (Antimova et al. 2012; Mihalic 2016; Lehtonen et al. 2018; Mustapha et al. 2020); overcoming this disconnect between awareness and action requires three fundamental factors: knowledge, a sense of responsibility and a clear strategy.

It is widely accepted that stakeholder participation within sustainable development initiatives is highly dependent on access to knowledge (Moscardo 2005; Rivera and De Leon 2005; Cole 2006; Frisk and Larson 2011). Yet while education has been a core focus of the sustainability agenda for some time, the standard sustainability pedagogy has had limited success in translating knowledge into action (Finger 1994; Stern 2000; Frisk and Larson 2011). Indeed, it has been shown that those with the most knowledge of environmental issues are often the most reluctant to change their behaviour (Hares et al. 2010; McKercher et al. 2010).

Frisk and Larson (2011) argue that the lack of success is due to the focus on information-based knowledge which, while important, is not sufficient to address the awareness-action gap. They draw upon sustainability competency, and behavioural change theory, to outline an educational pedagogy for sustainability action, based on the following four knowledge domains (Frisk and Larson 2011, pp. 4–5):

- *Technical knowledge*: information-based knowledge is usually the central focus of education initiatives. It typically addresses ecological and environmental functions and structures; an understanding of destination-specific dynamics and the socio-economic, environmental impacts of tourism development. This form of knowledge has been shown to have limited effect on direct action, but without it stakeholders cannot make informed decisions.
- *Procedural knowledge*: the fundamental 'how-to information' that allows individuals to take advantage of opportunities, overcome barriers to action and develop strategies.
- *Effectiveness knowledge*: the knowledge that combines factual knowledge with subjective attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs to inform how likely an individual thinks a certain action is to succeed.
- *Social knowledge*: knowledge concerned with the intentions and actions of others through an understanding of social norms. Sustainable development is a particularly normative field as communal values dictate what we decide what is worth sustaining.

Together, these knowledge domains move sustainability education beyond analysis into systems thinking perspective which supports foresighted thinking, stakeholder collaboration and action agency (Frisk and Larson 2011, p. 14); as such, these forms of knowledge are critical components within the circulation of knowledge illustrated in Fig. 16.2.

Yet while the *intention* to behave sustainably is underpinned by knowledge, *actual choices* are often largely based on unconscious or semi-conscious values and beliefs (Antimova et al. 2012); these determine not only our capacity to act, but also our sense of accountability. Frisk and Larson's pedagogical framework highlights the presence of social and value-orientated factors which can be more influential than facts in determining individual choices and actions.

Responsible tourism is a growing area of research, concerned with the moral and ethical dimensions of sustainable tourism development (see Budeanu 2007; Bramwell et al. 2008; Goodwin 2011). Responsibility implies a moral obligation beyond self-interest (Bramwell et al. 2008); moral norms have been shown to have a significant influence on pro-environmental behaviour (Bamberg and Möser 2007). These moral norms are activated once stakeholders understand the impacts of tourism development, recognise how their actions contribute and can connect this with existing behaviours, practices. In lieu of ethical and moral values, a sense of responsibility can be imposed via external incentives and imperatives (i.e. Corporate Social Responsibility and government regulation), but these shallow measures are more limited than intrinsic moral values (Abson et al. 2017). This sense of responsibility then serves as a motivation for stakeholders to make use of available resources to develop strategies for sustainable tourism development (Antimova et al. 2012).

Milhalic (2016) connects sustainable development, responsible tourism and the awareness-action gap with the 'Triple-A Model', which outlines a four-stage, linear progression by which stakeholders move from a state of *Ignorance* to *Action* (Mihalic 2016). The stages can be summarised as follows (Mihalic 2016):

- *Ignorance*: this initial stage is the status of the destination before sustainability issues are first considered; when tourism stakeholders prioritise other values and incentives.
- *Awareness*: later, as stakeholders are exposed to information regarding tourism impacts or destination life-cycle progresses to the point where the negative impacts of tourism development can no longer be denied, the *Awareness* stage is reached.
- *Agenda*: then, as the conceptual understanding is developed into destination-specific knowledge and used to determine goals, sustainable development is on the destination *Agenda*.
- *Action*: this is where the strategies defined within the agenda are manifested.

Mihalic's Triple-A Model does take into account social, economic and environmental considerations (see Mihalic 2016, p. 467), but the pathway between awareness and action is not linear; presenting it as such is potentially unhelpful. While the onset of the Climate Crisis and increasing incidences of overtourism mean that there is now widespread awareness of (un)sustainable development, converting this awareness into meaningful change is a challenging, contested and, crucially, iterative process. Figure 16.4 aims to address this deficiency by acknowledging the role of knowledge, responsibility and strategies in triggering sustainable action. Neither the development of a strategy or the resulting action are endpoints in themselves: a

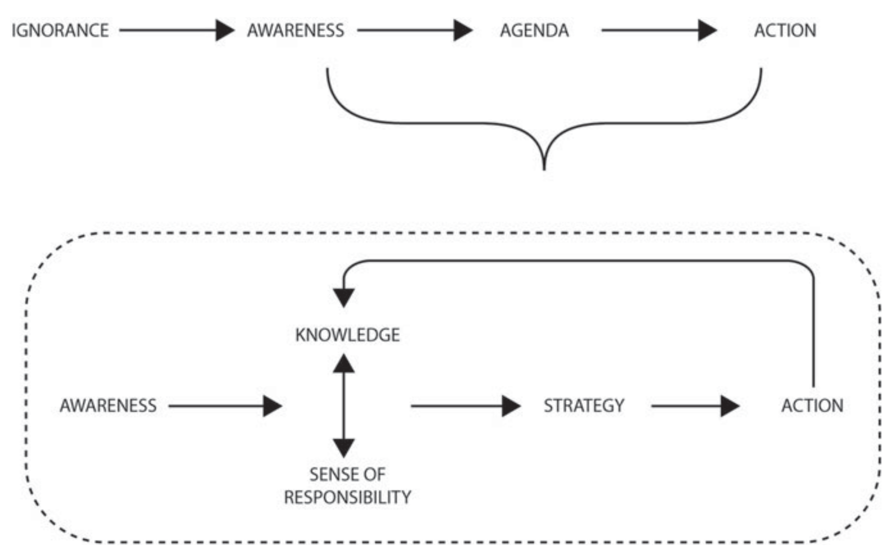

Fig. 16.4 An expansion of the Triple-A Model to better address the awareness-action gap *Source* Drawn after Mihalic (2016, pp. 466–467)

strategy provides the critical sense of self-efficacy necessary to inspire action (Doran et al. 2017), while the action and its impact are subject to evaluation which is used as the basis for the development of future actions.

16.4.2 The Collective Mindset

The challenge of sustainable development concerns not only alterations to prevailing systems and behaviours, but also the wider capacity of both individuals and societies to respond to challenges to their values and beliefs (O'Brien and Hochachka 2010). These unconscious and semi-conscious factors guide our choices, shape our behaviour and define our mindset, which in turn forms the goals and standards of our lives through associations and expectations (Rokeach 1973; Pisters et al. 2019). The mindset is influenced by external factors such as culture, religion, media, social networks and those we trust (Crum and Zuckerman 2017; Blasini et al. 2018), yet changes to the mindset are relatively incremental and unpredictable; attempts to actively influence individuals' mindsets have yielded mixed results (Orosz et al. 2017; Limeri et al. 2020). We tend to avoid uncomfortable, conflicting attitudes and behaviours from challenging our mindset through the mechanism of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), which allows us to hold contrasting beliefs and values simultaneously. This is why O'Brien and Selboe (2015) define sustainability as an 'adaptive challenge' which hinges on our collective ability to reconcile with the uncomfortable reality that sustainable development is not only a pressing concern, but fundamentally our (individual and collective) responsibility.

Cognitive dissonance allows us to value sustainability conceptually without fundamentally challenging our behaviour. This has been shown to be particularly prevalent with regards to air travel (Becken 2007), and is likely to be compounded by the nature of tourism itself: long accepted as a permissive domain where 'anything goes', and prevailing attitudes and behavioural norms are suspended (Shields 1992; Wang 2000). Weaver (2007, 2009) defines the superficial adoption of sustainability as 'veneer environmentalism', emphasising the industrial appeal of the term 'sustainable *development'*—which seems to reinforce the current growth-focused agenda while making the selective use of non-invasive practices (such as recycling, and water- or energy-use reductions) highly marketable. Equally, while global tourism bodies—such as World Tourism Organisation and World Travel and Tourism Council—were quick to adopt the concept of sustainability, this could be seen largely as an attempt to 'greenwash' their growth-focused agendas (Budeanu et al. 2016, p. 289; Mihalic 2016, p. 462; Sharpley 2020, p. 1934). Weaver notes the remarkable similarity between the response of the industry and consumers, 'from strong accordance with the rhetoric of sustainability to an equally strong unwillingness to engage in personal sacrifice to attain the ends espoused by that rhetoric' (Weaver 2009, p. 36; Miller et al. 2010).

The keyword here is a *sacrifice*—and it stems from the negative definition of sustainable development. Sustainability is an ambiguous, and therefore contested, concept (Liu 2003; Hall et al. 2015; Sharpley 2020). It encompasses a variety of subjective value judgements and includes future populations within its range of stakeholders; sustainable development is, therefore, easier to define by what it is *not*, rather than what it *is*. This confusion as to what sustainability is—or should be—is consistently highlighted in tourism literature as a limitation for sustainable development (Smith and Sharicz 2011; Gibson 2012); it often leads to contradictory definitions, policies and strategies (Hall et al. 2015; Fodness 2017). But, crucially, this negative definition represents a more general and collective failure to address sustainable development as a *positive* and *attainable* goal.

Most current sustainable development initiatives rely on shallow, usually government-imposed, incentives or imperatives to prevent or remedy unsustainable practices. These initiatives are based on the fundamental assumption that development is inherently unsustainable—and that this can only be mitigated through (fiscal or legal) manipulation. Even highly effective tools which incentivise sustainable practices imply that damage to the well-being of third parties is an inherent result of tourism development. Equally, while the creation of win-win scenarios for stakeholders is possible—and initiatives such as Corporate Social Responsibility aim to give sustainability currency when it is not—without a broader socio-cultural shift these measures remain fragile and limited (Abson et al. 2017). Given the highly fragmented and dynamic nature of the tourism industry, this leaves collaborative models, such as the system proposed in Fig. 16.2, particularly vulnerable to disintegration.

Attention is therefore shifting from the design of tools to assist stakeholders in pursuing more sustainable growth, towards measures with the capacity to address the deeper socio-cultural values which underpin prevailing behaviour patterns. Scholars from various disciplines are expanding our understanding of the role that our conscience, beliefs, values, culture, social and moral norms, and spirituality take in shaping our mindset—and their ability to uncover new paths for sustainability (Schwartz 1973; Bentley 2000; Stern 2000; Jackson 2005; Thøgersen 2005; McKercher et al. 2010; Edwards 2015). These 'deep leverage points' are those on which it is most difficult to intervene, but also those that can generate the broadest and most enduring impacts (Meadows 1999).

A resilient approach to sustainable tourism development requires a shift away from reactionary strategies towards positive, long-term goals. While we can conceptually value the absence of ecological collapse or the avoidance of a destination's decline, these factors remain abstract and conceptual. The link between sustainability and competitiveness is, by now, well-known (Hassan 2000; Ritchie and Crouch 2003; Cucculelli and Goffi 2016), yet it has been insufficient to incentivise sustainable tourism development, even so, that stakeholders might protect their own long-term source of income by adopting sustainable practices to avoid the decline phase of a destination. Humans struggle to assess the value of future rewards (Bar 2010); this is compounded when these are defined negatively: i.e. 'not failing' rather than a positive gain.

Sustainable tourism development, therefore, requires tangible, measurable goals in place of growth metrics; goals which respect the limitations of planetary, ecological and social boundaries for (natural, physical and cultural) resource consumption. In the field of economics, this shift in values focuses on economic sufficiency as well as economic efficiency and aims to slow the rate and quantity of consumption through a mix of market and regulatory mechanisms. *Time* is, therefore, a fundamental variable and many scholars have begun to associate this approach with the notion of 'slow' consumption, 'de-growth' and, within tourism literature, of Slow Tourism (see, for example, Flipo and Schneider 2008; Hall 2009, 2011; Dickinson and Lumsdon 2010; Martínez-Alier et al. 2010). Hall (2009) defines an approach for 'steady-state tourism': a sustainable system that encourages qualitative tourism development rather than cumulative quantitative growth at the expense of natural capital. This approach is founded on ethical consumption and focuses on living better by consuming less and satisfying non-material needs (Hall 2010, 2015). The success, or health, of a tourism destination, is therefore not measured by only quantitative economic metrics, but these are contextualised and balanced by qualitative factors—such as production processes, wealth distribution, quality of life and social and ecological well-being. In order for this approach to be successful, specific goals must be locally defined through the participative engagement of stakeholders (as outlined in Figs. 16.2 and 16.3, and articulated through the Transition Management envisioning process).

The ability to value economic *sustainability* over economic *expediency* requires education (Frisk and Larson 2011). Education is often seen as imparting value-neutral knowledge, but this is misleading and fails to account for unconscious bias (Sipos et al. 2008, p. 70). It is precisely through acquiring new knowledge that our values change over time; these values inspire local innovation, reshape social norms and define the sustainability mindset (Spence 2012). It is, therefore, necessary to adopt a value-driven stance in education (Kelley and Nahser 2014), which develops the capacity for self-awareness, allowing individuals to situate themselves within a wider understanding of society and nature, as well as understand the complexities of self as an emotional being—and the resulting impacts this human condition has on their choices and behaviour (Rimanoczy 2014; Büchs 2017). Thus, the sustainability mindset is not just a way of thinking, but a way of 'being', which takes into account the emotional aspects of the human experience (Rimanoczy 2014; Kassel et al. 2016; Hermes and Rimanoczy 2018). Adams (2008, p. 63) and Rimanoczy (2014, p. 110) argue that it is this paradigm shift to 'being' rather than 'having' which allows us to value intangibles, qualitative growth and 'the greater good' as opposed to materialistic consumption, quantitative growth and greed. While this may sound lofty, or even idealistic, this mindset follows a much broader movement in contemporary society that places emphasis on reexamining everyday values and our collective position within global ecosystems, such as mindfulness, biocentrism and alternative economics.

To achieve sustainable tourism development, the education of all tourism stakeholders (managers, developers, practitioners, tourists, the general public and local communities) is necessary (Pigram 1990; Spence 2012), as the values, priorities and behaviours of all stakeholders ultimately dictate economic trends, development patterns and participation within collaborative models such as those outlined earlier in this chapter. It was originally hoped that consumer demand would incentivise sustainable tourism practices within the industry, but 'arguably nowhere is the volume of academic research and changed practice so extreme as here' (Budeanu et al. 2016, p. 289). Rather than a failing, this represents a significant opportunity for future improvement. National culture has been shown to influence sustainable decisions (Filimonau et al. 2018); similarly, Spence (2012) underlines the important progress that has been made among Asian populations and developing countries by increasing awareness that sustainability is fundamental for the achievement of long-term goals.

The critical importance of leadership is not a topic which has been addressed in this chapter, but various authors highlight the significance of education at management level for corporate participation in sustainable development initiatives and 'beyond-compliance' performance (Amoah and Baum 1997; Rivera and De Leon 2005), given their weight in the decision-making within the economic system (Shrivastava 1995). This leadership, and the mindset of these key figures, will be crucial in determining the timely success of sustainable development initiatives.

In summary, if we cannot address the values and beliefs which underpin the mindset and dictate our individual and collective choices, the system of incentives and policies designed by economists to address sustainable development is destined to fail in the democratic decision-making process (Pigram 1990; Spence 2012). Furthermore, any intervention which aims to address these socio-cultural 'levers' must aim to align all stakeholder groups towards a new collective mindset for sustainability, so the progress made by some is not undermined by the non-compliance of others. This consideration takes on particular significance, given the intense fragmentation of the tourism sector. This is a critical area for future research, with the potential to garner momentous change.

16.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has addressed the flaws in the prevailing, growth-focused approach to tourism development strategies. Many destinations rely on traditional, 'top-down' policy tools to address the unsustainable impacts associated with this business model, but these measures are too limited in scope and scale to result in the necessary paradigm shift for long-term, resilient, sustainable tourism development. The chapter has drawn from various research disciplines to outline some of the key challenges that we face in the pursuit of sustainable tourism.

Sustainability is ambitious, but not an unattainable goal. Overall, the chapter has highlighted the need to treat sustainable tourism development as an iterative, reflexive process, embedded within its locality and directed by its wide range of stakeholders. It requires an innovative, inclusive approach to sustainable development, based on a more holistic understanding of the metabolisms which underpin contemporary tourism. It is critical that the future research agenda addresses the challenges posed by prolonged stakeholder engagement, and that participative governance and management models are used to define positive, shared goals for sustainable development and support a value-driven approach to sustainability education. It will be necessary to investigate these themes on a case study basis due to the variety of local inflexions, dynamic interdependencies and global interrelationships which characterise contemporary tourism. It is perhaps even more important that these observations and conclusions are disseminated beyond the academic sphere. The challenge of sustainable tourism development involves all stakeholders; each group has a role to play and significant potential for intervention.

The final section of the chapter addressed the socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable development; a growing area of interdisciplinary investigation. Breaking down the awareness-action gap hinges on a combination of various forms of knowledge, the sense of responsibility devised from moral/ethical imperatives and clear strategies. The section also highlighted the need to reframe the collective mindset both in reference to our perceptions of what sustainability really means and our worldview and value systems more generally. These 'deep leverage points' are notoriously difficult to influence and progress in this area has lagged behind political and economic developments— but this means that there is significant scope for radical change. The role of education and knowledge building is critical to these processes, and the advancement of sustainable development pedagogies is a significant area for future research.

This chapter has addressed the collective approach to sustainable tourism development as if all involved are inherently good-natured, assuming that if sufficiently enlightened with knowledge and instilled with an understanding of their responsibility stakeholders will be compelled to make sustainable choices. At best, this could be described as optimistic, at worst, naïve. Often the economic returns for a few stakeholders today are seen to be worth more than the decline of an entire destination which will fall on the following generation. In time, as sustainable choices become the social norm; policymakers will be required to maintain the threshold of what is acceptable and reflect the values of the majority. In other words, social change can pre-empt policy; in democratic nations, governance is a reflection of the collective mindset.

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