DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Title of the dissertation

Development, Equality, and Participation: Socially Responsible Tourism through Capacity Building

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Statement of the problem

The dissertation addresses a paradox: tourism was introduced in the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast in the Sub-Saharan African country of Ghana more than 15 years ago as a tool for economic development, poverty reduction and the preservation of three World Heritage Sites - the Elmina or St Georges' Castle, Fort St Jago (Elmina), and the Cape Coast or Carolsburg Castle (Cape Coast). These sites were created by foreign conquerors during the 400 year transatlantic slave trade. However, its benefits are distributed unequally and the sites are not properly preserved. One of the reasons is that the emphasis is placed on higher gross returns of foreign exchange earnings, and a greater visitor numbers, with little attention given to maximising net benefits to poor communities, and without a clear strategy of how tourism growth should contribute to poverty reduction. Ironically, in the field of development, many people argue that tourism has the potential to bring more equitable, sustainable, and even net benefits to

local people (Ashley *et al.* 2000; 2001a, b; 2002; Burns 1999a; 2004a; de Kadt 1979a, b). This argument forms the basis of the present study.

Goal and objectives of the dissertation

Goals

- ✓ To investigate the reasons behind tourism's seeming inability to deliver development that contributes to poverty reduction at the grass-roots level in the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast.
- ✓ To generate knowledge about the inhibitors to sustainable tourism development that can be applied to other geographical areas with similar characteristics.

Objectives

- ✓ To investigate the relationship between the local communities, the national institutions (Ministry of Tourism, Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, Ghana Tourism Board, the local University and Polytechnic), the tourism intermediaries (Tour Operators), external state development institutions (Donor Agencies), and the slave Fortification Castles of Elmina, St Jago and Cape Coast, and thus establishing the nature of the controlling interests in the projects carried out in the locales of Cape Coast and Elmina.
- ✓ To discover any forms of practice of [(Corporate) Social Responsibility] [C (SR)]¹, and to understand how its application or absence affects tourism development at a grass-roots level.
- ✓ To explore the extent to which the locales of Elmina and Cape Coast fulfil the conditions needed to become competitive destinations, thus contributing to poverty reduction.

Methodology

A qualitative, epistemological, interpretive approach was followed since knowledge is considered to be socially constructed, and many views exist on a single subject. Interpretations of reality are not fixed, unlike the positivist paradigm of a 'fixed reality' that corresponds to 'truth'. The gathering of data was based on participatory approaches and it was mainly derived from indigenous knowledge because it was felt that this was the most effective way to reflect the views of local people and especially those at the grass-roots level. This specific targeting and evaluation of the on-the-ground situation allowed for a more realistic and factual understanding of the conditions.

Therefore to accommodate the needs of the project a hybrid research method, called Rapid Situation Analysis (RSA), was developed by combining elements of two other participatory research methods: Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural

Appraisal (PRA) (Pretty *et al.* 1995). Given that this specific research is inductive in nature, a qualitative approach, and especially the employment of participatory methods were considered imperative, because they enabled the collection of data through interviews (both one-one and, focus group) and through observations, either direct or as a participant (Jennings 2001), engagement in conversations with local people or attending venues such as weddings, funerals or festivals. Additional elements were also incorporated into RSA such as participant observation; unstructured interviewing (emphasis on interviewing illiterate, semi-literate, poor and unskilled local people); video recording and photographs (thus providing some visual evidence and data for further analysis); and consultation with the local University of Cape Coast.

Grounded theory was also used but mainly to analyse the data because of its inductive nature and its ability to build theoretical propositions and a core theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Additionally, it can be incorporated with other research methods, when handling and interpreting data. However, it was adjusted to suit the needs of the dissertation, and improvisations had to be made (see also below under structure of the dissertation: chapter 4, 5, and concluding).

Theoretical conclusions and practical application of the dissertation

The dissertation contributes to knowledge in three ways:

1. Capacity Building: Existing definitions of capacity building are complex and 'elusive' (UNDP, 2007), and so far have not been used as a development objective but as a measurement to realise short-term results (Alemny *et al.*, 2005). In addition, existing definitions 'can reflect different perspectives' (UNDP 2007). For example they can refer to the very narrow concept "...of staff development through formal education and training programmes to meet the deficit of qualified personnel in the short term" (Enemark, 2003:1) or to "...the process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and countries develop their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives" (UNDP, 2007:2), among others. The present research indicates that the most important ingredient for sustainability and poverty reduction is capacity building. Hence, a new clear-cut definition of capacity building is provided based on the employment of four components of Capital (Social, Human, Physical and Financial), which will enable researchers to conceptualise it as a development tool, rather than a measurement instrument.

Social Capital deals with weak institutions and networks/partnerships, the importance of community participation and the extent of the social responsibility exercised by institutions towards local communities. Human Capital refers not only to the education and training but also the awareness needed of the tourism industry, the way of thinking

and culture of local people (which have been affected by the colonial past), and the involvement of women in tourism activities. Physical Capital refers to capacity through infrastructure, safety and security and Financial Capital is defined as the capacity created through investments and availability of micro finance/credit mechanisms, financial linkages and partnerships. Analysis of the findings indicates that investing in CB will contribute towards restructuring institutional mechanisms at both national, and external state developmental level and that this, in time, will lead towards sustainable development in tourism. However, for this to be realised, the institutions mentioned above need to exercise their share of responsibility towards the local communities, otherwise any effort to develop and sustain a project will be doomed and with that goes any chance of poverty reduction.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility: An innovative approach, applying the theories of CSR, in the form of [C (SR)], to national and external state development institutions and not only to the narrow field of corporations. Based on this concept, a relation has been developed which clearly illustrates the interdependency between sustainability and poverty reduction, which in turn depends on the exercise of [C (SR)] and CB. It can also be applied to describe the situation, in any other poverty-stricken country, which strives for the development of sustainable tourism development.

3. Research Methods: The third contribution is methodological, the RSA described above which would suit the needs of tourism research.

Content of the dissertation

Abstract of chapter one

The first chapter presents a chronological account relating to the evolution of development over the course of time, followed by an analysis of various theories and applications of them; issues of poverty, inequality, and pro-poor growth; sustainability in relation to poverty reduction/alleviation in the light of community driven and human resource development; the colonial relations that shaped the present circumstances in developing countries (African countries included); and finally, the chapter concludes with the examination of issues of CSR. In this section the researcher assumes that the principles of CSR apply also to governments, SMEs, and any other national or external state development institutions (donor agencies) in the form of [C (SR)] since developmental projects are implemented with the assistance of the above establishments.

Abstract of chapter two

The second chapter presents a political economic account of tourism development in developing countries (African countries included); the donors' initiatives for

sustainable tourism development and poverty reduction/alleviation; arguments regarding inequalities and social exclusion that tourism brought to the host communities and the challenges faced by sustainable tourism and poverty reduction/alleviation. The concepts of community-based and pro-poor tourism (PPT) are brought forward and are critically analysed, and propositions are made for appropriate tourism development through application of sustainable and socially responsible competitive policies and destination management. The concept of CSR in tourism is also discussed at length as well as the challenges that are faced in its implementation. In this chapter, the concept of CSR is discussed again, as in chapter one, with reference not only to corporations but also to national and external state development institutions and micro- SMEs in the form of [C (SR)].

Abstract of chapter three

The third chapter presents a generic account of Ghana, the Central Region, the two towns and the Castles and Fort; an overview of poverty in the country; the political economic events that influenced development; Ghana's current status as a poor, developing country; policy implications for development; and an overview of the region in question. Then, an initial account of the development of tourism in Ghana is given followed by tourism development in the two towns, under the heading 'Tourism development in the Central Region'. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting the challenges that have to be overcome in order to develop tourism in the locales.

Abstract of chapter four

The fourth chapter discusses the methodological approach to collecting and analysing the data. A hybrid research method was designed, named RSA, which is based on two other participatory methods, the RRA and PRA, with other elements incorporated to facilitate the researcher's needs. Grounded Theory was also employed but mainly to analyse the data rather than to collect them. However, improvisations had to be made to the Grounded Theory in order to accommodate the richness of the data. The data were pre-analysed twice via 'open coding', thus introducing an extra sub-step, again to facilitate the researcher's needs. Some additional relevant literature was also introduced in this chapter to throw light on the methods employed, to provide clarification and to aid justification of the choices made.

Abstract of chapter five

The fifth chapter presents the data analysis using Grounded Theory. In the first sub-step of the 'open coding' the data are reported and a preliminary interpretation is given. At this stage, the codes, concepts and categories are identified. For the second sub-step the data are further merged, compared and contrasted and further commented upon, using academic knowledge and limited use of the literature. Then 'axial coding'

is applied and certain propositions are put forward. Literature and accumulated knowledge are used to consider the data, and the various notions of Capital are employed and discussed under the theme of CB. Additional relevant literature had to be introduced in order to support and compliment the analyses further. Finally, a theory arose, with regards to the importance of [C (SR)] in CB for tourism, which would lead to poverty reduction. The theory is discussed as part of the 'selective coding' of analysis.

Abstract of chapter six

In the concluding chapter, the literature review and new knowledge, which emerged from the analysis, are drawn together. Since Grounded Theory was used to analyse the data, this meant that a final theory emerged, and the research's aims and objectives were discussed concomitantly because there was a cohesion and clarity in the discussion of the main issues arising. To avoid repetition in the conclusion, the main ideas were discussed in a more general form avoiding over-generalisation and statements that were not backed up by valid arguments. The chapter includes a reference to the study's contribution to knowledge which is identified at three levels: Firstly, the development of a definition of CB which is based on the employment of the four notions of Capital (Social, Human, Physical and Financial). Secondly, the summing up of the analysis with an equation, which clearly states the interdependency between sustainability and poverty reduction, and which in turn depends on the exercise of [C (SR)] and CB, and can be applied to describe the situation in any other poverty stricken country which strives for the development of sustainable tourism development. Thirdly the contribution is based, as stated above, on the improvisation of the RSA Method. Finally suggestions are made for further research on the practice of [C (SR)] as a pre-requisite for tourism development and its role/connection with poverty reduction in the designated locales.

Endnote

¹ The format [C (SR)] is used because the theories of CSR are applied more in the context of Social Responsibility (SR) than of corporations per se. The terms [C (SR)] and SR are used interchangeably.

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