

Tourism Development through the Sustainable Development Funding Scheme within the Brecon Beacons National Park

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Abstract

This research article explores the role of public funded schemes within the Brecon, Beacons National Park that strive to encourage community driven sustainability initiatives, whilst assessing the relevance of tourism to such schemes. The National Park provide funding for community led sustainability programmes, known as the Sustainable Development Fund, the examination of this funding led to findings which challenge the common assumption that funding for community led schemes will be of net benefit at the local level. Through the examination of the theoretical rhetoric and the empirical findings via the use of focus groups it was observed that certain components reflected in most rural development programmes such as the integration of tourism and participation are still barriers to rural development and continue to hamper the effectiveness of not only the Sustainable Development Funding schemes, but the communities striving for sustainability.

Keywords: Tourism, Sustainability, National parks and public funding.

Introduction

There is little empirical work providing insight and in-depth analysis of publicly funded development programmes such as the Sustainable Development Funding scheme. The sustainable development funding scheme was established and managed by National Parks (NPs) in the UK since 2001. This scheme funds rural communities that want to undertake a sustainability initiative that helps to create a sustainable community. Strzelecka and Wicks (2010) identified that there are roles for development agencies in assisting rural regions to transform themselves, often using tourism as a tool of transformation. However, there is a gap in the academic literature as to how publicly funded schemes, such as the sustainable development funding, contribute to creating a sustainable rural community where tourism is not the primary concern of the scheme, but where tourism is required to sustain the scheme. This article using the Brecon Beacon National Park as a focus of study, will analyse how the macro issues (e.g. rural development) filter into the meta-

issues (e.g. sustainable community development). Consequently, this research will provide an insight into how public agencies, communities and individuals interpret policies and put them into practice

Theoretical Context

Rural areas support human existence both in terms of their capacity to supply the resources necessary to support life, but also in their capacity to absorb the impacts of human activity (Jackson, 2009). However, the relationship between individuals and the natural environment upon which they depend is thought to be weakening, as traditional rural industries decline and populations move to urban areas (Chambers, 2008). Therefore, the ongoing health and vitality of rural communities has been brought into question and has given rise to the rural sustainability debate.

Sustainable development is generally characterised as having a greater focus on understanding and achieving the environmental and economic aspects of sustainability rather than the social aspect (Akgun *et al*, 2015). Arguably, this stems from the fact that sustainable development has predominantly been applied within either an environmental or a business context, where there is evidence that bias exists towards either environmental or economic interests respectively (McKenzie-Mohr, 2004). However, there is now recognition of the role that social factors play in achieving sustainable development outcomes. In addition to addressing environmental concerns, sustainable development:

“...is also about the pursuit of fundamental social, economic and cultural objectives. These objectives include the need to secure basic human needs, equity, social justice and cultural diversity” (Barker, 2005 p 12).

Akgun *et al* (2015) argued that the reason for such divergent views on sustainable development is that in its attempts to reconcile the imperatives of growth and development with sustainability, 'sustainable development' is, essentially, a contradiction in terms. When applied within a business or government context, there is an inherent assumption that the notion of 'sustainable development' incorporates sustained economic growth, whilst within an academic context, human development is not necessarily considered to be coupled only to an increasing Gross Domestic Product (Robinson, 2004). The past two decades have, therefore, seen numerous attempts at establishing an improved expression of the meanings of 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' in various contexts. However, the prevailing result of these efforts has been to substantiate the view that the notion of sustainability itself – rather than the Brundtland definition *per se* – is inexplicit and pluralistic. The inherent degree of subjectivity in individuals' perceptions resulting from their own system of societal values and the cultural

contexts they inhabit (Clifton, 2010) means that sustainability is an intrinsically “*slippery concept*” (Eden, 2000 p. 111), which will unavoidably be translated differently by different people (Johnson, 2010).

In response to these criticisms of the vagueness of sustainability, it can be argued that it is, in fact, this flexibility of meaning that makes sustainability such a powerful and popular concept. As Parris and Kates (2003) stated, “*the oxymoron-like character of sustainable development can be so inclusive must surely lie in its inherent ambiguity...*” (p.560). Being open to a degree of interpretation, the fundamental notion of 'sustainability' is accessible to all actors at all levels in society, from individuals and communities, to businesses and governments. Sustainable development is a global-level concept (Adamson and Bromiley, 2013). It cannot be, nor does it profess to be, a 'one-size-fits-all' or 'silver bullet' solution to all global problems. Instead, the fundamental basis of sustainable development – that future development needs to integrate long-term environmental, social, and economic concerns – can provide flexible guiding principles within which action can be tailored to the parameters of specific context in which it occurs (Kemp and Martens, 2007; Robinson, 2004). Therefore, embedded within the overarching global concept of sustainable development, increasingly bespoke interpretations can be made as the scale of operation reduces, for example, from global to national, to regional to local and to individual. As such, sustainable development has been embraced by policymakers across the world, arguably pioneered by successive UK governments (Carson *et al*, 2014). However, the vagueness of the definition also means that it is a highly contested and political concept as opposing parties (e.g. business versus environmental groups) seek to argue for their favoured balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability.

The Brecon Beacons National Park

The Brecon Beacon National Park located in Wales, was established in 1957 (Morgan, 2015). With its designation as a UK National Park, the Brecon Beacons joined a growing international family of protected areas. Protected areas fall into two general categories: those designated for the strict protection of the natural world and those designated for the purposes of maintaining sustainable relationships between humans and nature. NPs of the UK belong to the latter category and also differ from NPs in other parts of the world because they are largely privately owned whilst many parks in other nations are owned primarily by the State. (Morgan, 2015).

The Brecon Beacons was the tenth NP in Wales and England to be designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. This action

confirmed its importance nationally, conferring the UK's highest status for conservation of landscape and natural beauty. The Welsh Assembly has further emphasised the Park's importance in the national context through its Vision for the Welsh National Parks in the 21st century:

“The Welsh National Parks are protected landscapes of international importance which capture much of what is distinct and special about rural Wales.... They are places that experiment with new approaches in sustainable development and environmental conservation, providing exemplars of best practice for wider Wales, and helping to shape and lead future rural policy and practice.” Welsh Assembly Government (2008).

In 2016 the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Tourism Partnership approved a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the park. The strategy was based on the sustainable management of the destination as a whole - not just the development of tourism as such but the management of that tourism and the impacts it has so as to protect the environment on which it is based and equally important the communities that live within it.

Tourism within the Brecon Beacons National Park

In the 1960s the tourism industry was largely viewed as an economic panacea and with little impacts deriving from it (Butler, 1993). It was often termed a “smokeless” industry distancing itself from the polluting factories of the time (Dicks, 2000). However, as Stankovic (1979, p.25) noted:

“It is a characteristic of tourism that it can, more than many other activities, use and valorise such parts and elements of nature as are of almost no value for other economic branches and activities”.

The entwining of sustainable development and sustainable tourism literature seemed inevitable given that both concepts came to the academic arena at the same time and this has created confusion in the various definitions of sustainable tourism. It was Garrod & Fyall (1998, p. 199) who stated that *“defining sustainable development in the context of tourism has become something of a cottage industry in the academic literature”* and they had a desire to move arguments of sustainable tourism away from sustainable development ideology. Butler (1993, p.29) defined sustainable tourism as *“tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time”*. Baker (2001) goes on to suggest that sustainable development in this context is *“tourism which is developed and maintained in an area in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful*

development and well-being of other activities and processes” (Baker, 2001, p.29). The World Tourism Organisation (1995, p.30) used a similar definition which refers to sustainable tourism development as tourism that:

“meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.

This definition of sustainable tourism development perceives it as a force that contributes to sustainable development rather than as a standalone process that is responsible for all development in an area. The tourism industry has been seen as a “soft option” that delivers much at the expense of little (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). The decline of traditional industries and agriculture has forced many rural areas to turn to tourism given the wealth of opportunities leading to economic growth and diversification promised by such a strategy (Hall, 2005). Blackstock (2005) suggested that as a result, tourism is now one of the target industries for communities of all sizes wishing to integrate into their overall comprehensive planning strategy. Although rural tourism development is not a panacea to all the ailments of a rural destination, it has great potential when integrated into broader community development efforts. Hanna (2008, p.150) suggested that sustainable tourism could be interpreted as *“an emerging form of ethical consumption as it adopts social, environmental and economic concerns which are also expressed through the form of consumption”*. Consequently, the diversification of such an economic base provides opportunities for social, economic, environmental and cultural development whilst also ensuring greater security for the community (Murphy 1985).

It is generally admitted that sustainable tourism owes many of its concepts and principles to sustainable development, so these two concepts may have similar historical backgrounds. Although, as Wight (1998) noted, tourism cannot be blamed for the environmental degradation caused by inconsiderate decisions rather than real visitor impacts, the tourism sector not only has interests in sustainable development but also needs to share some responsibilities for it. Wight (1998) suggested four reasons why tourism should be incorporated in to sustainable development:

- Tourism is a growing industry and has great economic importance;
- Tourism influences a wide range of other industries;
- Tourism also depends on the unique environment, heritage, culture

and diversity of landscape; and

- Tourism brings about wide impacts (negative and positive) on natural environment and host society.

With regard to the linkage between sustainable development and tourism, there have been various arguments about the implications of sustainability in terms of tourism. McCool & Moisey (2001) illustrated three types of views on sustainable tourism development. A review of the three approaches suggested by Turner *et al* (1994), McCool *et al* (2001) and Hunter (1997) regarding sustainability and sustainable tourism allows the relationships between those approaches to be shown in Figure 1.

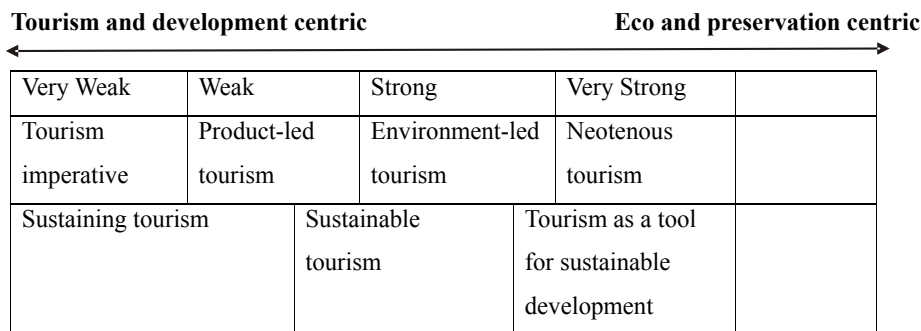


Figure 1: Relationships between conceptual frameworks regarding sustainable tourism development, *Source: Adapted from Turner et al (1994), Hunter (1997) and McCool and Molsey (2000)*

The first view is sustaining tourism, which mainly concerns the constant increase of tourist numbers and their expenditure. The second one is sustainable tourism, which prefers a 'kinder' form of tourism, designed to benefit local people and protect the resources upon which the tourism and recreation industry is built. The third view is to regard tourism as a method to enhance sustainable development. This view allows tourism to be considered as one of several alternatives that can help a community overcome its weaknesses and preserve its strengths. It views tourism as a tool for development and not as an end. Based on the third view, tourism development can be abandoned if it is seen to be incompatible with the overall sustainability of the society.

Hunter (1997) also tries to establish a theoretical framework for the relationship between tourism and sustainable development by suggesting the following four sustainable tourism approaches. The first approach is "sustainable development through tourism imperative", which is primarily

concerned with satisfying the needs and desires of tourists and tourism operators. In this approach, therefore, a certain degree of loss of natural resources can be compromised to develop tourism as in the case of "very weak sustainability". The second one is "sustainable development through product-led tourism". This approach is, in many ways, compatible with a weak interpretation of sustainable development. According to this approach, a wide range of environmental and social concerns may be seen as important within the destination area, but only in so far as these acts contribute to developing and sustaining tourism products. The third one is "sustainable development through environmental-led tourism". The main concern of this approach is maintaining the status of the environment by promoting certain types of tourism, which specifically and overtly rely on the sustaining of a high quality natural environment and cultural experiences. Although there is still a very strong product focus with this approach, it differs from product-led tourism in prioritising environmental concerns over marketing opportunities. The fourth approach is "sustainable development through neotenus tourism". According to this approach, which strongly skews towards environmental concern, tourism can be sacrificed or discouraged for environmental protection and the functional integrity of natural ecosystems at the destination area.

With regard to the above sustainable tourism spectrum, it is generally argued that the tourism (or development) centric approach needs to be avoided if sustainability is to be achieved. As Butler noted, "*While some destinations may be considered sustainable in terms of their ability to maintain their tourist industry, they may not always be thought of as sustainable in an environmental or socio-cultural sense*" (1999, p.23). Many authors also criticized the pitfalls of a tourism-centric approach, which is mainly concerned with protecting the immediate resource base that will allow tourism development to be sustained (Wall, 1993; Sofield and Li, 1998; Ioannides, 2001).

Hunter (1995) argued that the predominant sustainable tourism development paradigm, which is an overly tourism centric approach, fails to address many of the issues essential to the more general concept of sustainable development and may even actually work against the general requirements of sustainable development. Therefore, in order to safeguard the requirement of future generations, tourism within a context of sustainability should recognise the need for comprehensive and holistic approaches that balance tourism development with that of other activities. Within the context of tourism as a tool for sustainable rural development, the tourism industry needs to compete against other sectors to ensure sufficient resources on which the tourism industry is built. Therefore, presumably sustainable tourism can be affected by

even more complicated and intensive political factors than other sectors, because tourism is not only a highly fragmented industry, where diverse stakeholders have their own interests and compete for the limited resources, but it also has to compete against other sectors to acquire proper tourism resources, information and infrastructure.

Sustainable Development Funding

The sustainable development funding is a grant scheme that supports new ways of living and working within NPs in a sustainable manner. The funding is provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and is managed by the National Park Authorities. Sustainable development encompasses projects that can demonstrate social, economic and environmental development.

The aim of the programme is to provide a flexible and non-bureaucratic means of funding projects to *“aid the achievement of National Park purposes by encouraging individuals, community groups and businesses to develop practical sustainable solutions to the management of their activities”*. (Brecon Beacon National Park Management Plan, 2009, p.18). Innovation and originality are as much features of sustainable development funding delivery mechanisms as are the local initiatives that the funding is intended to foster.

The past seventeen years has seen a variety of activities in the Brecon Beacons National Park for the sustainable development funding schemes. Recent initiatives in 2016 include:

- The Black Mountain Centre in Brynaman was given £5,000 of grant funding award to create a Tourist Information point and arts and crafts selling area.
- The Canal and River Trust was awarded £15,000 to support the 'Waterway Trail' interpretation along the Brecknock and Monmouth Canal between Goytre Wharf and the Brecon Basin.
- St Mary's Church, Brecon was awarded £15,000 to fund elements of a wider heritage restoration project, including increased accessibility and safety via the south door of the church and also a braille table top trail map and audio commentary as part of the Heritage Timeline and Discovery Trail.
- The Inspironment Project was awarded funding to help develop a number of mapped walks in the Brecon Beacon National Park. The project aimed to inspire those who are unsure how to access the park or what is available for them to become regular visitors, more active and to enjoy its special

environment.

- Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre operating from the Tithe Barn in Abergavenny received £7,500 towards the operation of tourist services from this new location.

This paper has highlighted the central themes connected to the sustainable development funding scheme, namely, the issue of development, sustainability and tourism for rural areas. The sustainable development funding is one tactic employed to engage communities in addressing rural sustainability and their development. The sustainable development funding seeks to encourage communities to obtain funding to further community initiatives that sustain and enhance their existence. The changing nature of the economics and demographics of the NP indicate that the growth of tourism as a regeneration tool is being utilised by the Brecon Beacon National Park Authority. Having established the practices and elements of the dynamics of rural sustainability within the Brecon Beacon National Park, attention must turn to how the residents of the park stimulate the rhetoric into reality.

Research Methods

Focus groups were conducted in the summer of 2015 in three different locations within the Brecon Beacon National Park. The focus group participants were either involved with a sustainable development funding scheme or had knowledge of the development of such a scheme in their geographic area. The themes and topics of the questions employed in the focus groups were originally derived from a comprehensive review of existing research literature (Putnam, 1993; McKenzie-Mohr, 2004; Ledwith, 2005; Jackson, 2008; Clark, 2010; Key and Kerr, 2011). A short introduction explained the focus of the questions in order to make the respondents feel at ease. Respondents were informed of the objectives of the research, and why the respondent was chosen to participate, and for what purposes the results would be used. It was stressed that the answers would remain confidential and anonymous. The focus groups were designed to study involvement or participation in the community. In other words, these research methods were to analyse and evaluate the characteristics of, and attitudes towards, sustainability, tourism, participation, and the sustainable development funding by the members of the local community. The analysis considers whether there is anything distinctive about those who take a relatively active role in community life (Howe *et al*, 2004).

Empirical Findings

The main outcomes of the 3 focus groups have been summarised under the key

themes derived from this research which were: *Sustainability, Participation, Tourism and Sustainable Tourism*.

Sustainability. Focus group members put forward various definitions as to what they believe sustainability referred to. Most of these definitions focused around the economy indicating a link between economy and sustainability. Responses included:

This is about thinking about tomorrow making sure that we're all able to survive and prosper in the future" (Respondent FG 28)

Is this making sure we all have jobs tomorrow?" (Respondent FG 8)

Making sure we all have jobs in the future" (Respondent FG 15)

This is ensuring that the land of today is fit for use in the future" (Respondent FG 6)

I know that sustainability is really important thing for the National Park. I never really considered the idea that our community or tourism can be linked to sustainability and at the moment I am struggling to make ends meet so thinking about the future in terms of a community based sustainability project or creating links to tourism projects is a little far-fetched (Respondent FG 2)

I thought this is all about being green. Recycling, waste reduction, it was that programme on TV called Hugh's War on waste that really made me think about this he kept mentioning sustainability all the time. It had not really crossed my mind that sustainability was to do with community survival or tourism these are separate things that require separate approaches. (Respondent FG 12)

It's a process where members of the community come together to take some form of collective action and try and sort out problems that have some sort of outcome such as economic or environmental(Respondent FG 14)

It's a grassroots process where people try to organise themselves and try and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Communities then try to develop plans or options that try to benefit the community. (Respondent FG 21)

Participation. Focus group respondents outlined various examples of their involvement within the community with regards to sustainable development funding projects and activities within community associations such as the Women's Institute. Several of the respondents voiced their concern over the level of involvement that was expected from them. These respondents believed that it was the responsibility of the local council or National Park Authority to establish and deliver various community projects absolving them

from any form of participation.

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Barriers to participation. Table 1 identifies the main barriers to participation in sustainable development funding schemes that the focus group respondents noted. These ideas were generated through a focused discussion within the focus groups as to how community members not only viewed these barriers but suggested ideas as to how these barriers could be overcome.

Barriers to involvement

Focus groups ideas for overcoming the barriers

Not wanting to be involved	This is down to personal motivation so perhaps the National Park Authority could create some stimulus that would create a desire for people to become involved
Not knowing you could be involved	There needs to be a more expansive marketing program that lets local people know what is going on and how they could become involved
Lack of time/resources/expertise to get involved	Providing knowledge and resources (not necessarily financial but technical and expert knowledge would be beneficial).
Lack of understanding what is required when being involved	Clear guidelines could be provided on the roles and responsibilities of the people getting involved
Not approving of the proposed development	Providing a persuasive argument for the proposed development
Lack of mobility	Providing transportation
Lack of interest/effort	This is down to personal motivation so perhaps the National Park Authority could create some stimulus that would create a desire for people to become involved
Not understanding what personal gain can be obtained from getting involved	Providing a clear and identifiable benefit that people can understand they will get from becoming involved

Table 1: Ideas from focus group participants to overcome barriers to community participation, *Source:* Author

Tourism. Focus group members were able to provide numerous examples of how tourism impacted their community. Only a minority of participants illustrated an understanding that there was a relationship between the tourism industry, the National Park Authority and the local community. This question was intended to determine the level of understanding that local people have about the tourism industry and led to the following probing questions:

- Who are the tourists visiting the area?
- Where do you see tourists?
- Who (in the focus group) is involved in tourism?
- What local businesses are involved in tourism?

Responses included

I can see the development of new recreational facilities aimed at local people but I am not sure how these developments are trying to improve community sustainability..... After all the community is what you make of it which in my case involves me embedding myself with my neighbours? (Respondent FG 28)

I always see notices and read in the local paper about initiatives and consultation processes taking place in the area with regard to tourism and using local resources and local people. My wife has got involved with one such collaboration and I can see how it brings people together working towards a common goal, but this was not something that I wanted to get involved in. (Respondent FG 19)

We all know it can be busy during the summer for a couple months irrespective of what the weather is doing. We know that the Dutch will migrate and fill out all the campsites. We know that the arts, music and literature community will descend upon us in August for all their festivals. These tourists know that there will be things for them to do even if it's raining. They all assume that there will be enough accommodation and transportation and food to look after them which means that all our services come under a great deal of pressure for a few weeks of the year. (Respondent FG 16)

We seem to know what we're talking about, as far as tourism is concerned. What the concerning thing is that we do not seem to understand what 'sustainable tourism' is, and this is very worrying. Is there some trendy lefty trying to invent an expression we, Joe Public, are meant to understand, or is this academic jargon? It is nonsense. It ought to be so that the likes of us, Joe Public, can actually understand what people are talking about. (Respondent FG 17)

If we did more environmental stuff..... a lot of people will come out of season. I really do push to try and get out of season trade (Respondent FG 22)

These are all beautiful things we have. It is our environment, and in a sense it is the environment we should be promoting" (Respondent FG 4)

We cannot afford to reduce the number of people coming into the area. The number of people who are coming into the area is less than it was twenty years ago, and they need people. It is no good talking about environmental issues if you haven't got the people coming down, because the area would just... (Bwlch) just wouldn't exist, because it relies so much on tourism. (Respondent FG 7)

Sustainable tourism. Focus group respondents illustrated an understanding that sustainable tourism was related to the environment (natural, built or cultural) there was a general inability to be able to articulate how sustainable tourism was demonstrated within the NP. Issues around seasonality and how the region could reduce the number of people coming during the summer dominated the focus group discussions with regards to this issue. The concept of sustainable tourism development was seen by a minority of focus group members as a way of strengthening societies by helping them to take action to progress their own social, economic and environmental agendas.

It's a grassroots process where people try to organise themselves and try and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Communities then try to develop plans or options that try to benefit the community. (Respondent FG 21)

When you live in an area like Wales terms like sustainability and community development been bandied around for many years now by local councils, reading about it in the local newspapers and magazines and of course the National Park Authority has been pushing issues around community development for at least the last 20 years. (Respondent FG 1)

The hotel industry in the area has been trying to get community involvement for quite some time now and I don't just mean employing local people and referring to the idea of getting the community behind the benefits of what our business can bring to the area and of course how they can take advantage of an increase in the number of visitors to the area" (Respondent FG 18)

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings indicate that the use of tourism as part of a rural development strategy is not sufficiently substituted or integrated into the sustainable development funding schemes. If one considers that it is communities that

should be sustained to support tourism rather than the creation of “sustainable tourism” then local change requires that stakeholders participate in local development and pursue social capital in different social areas. According to this study, sustainable development funding schemes are not sustainability for the wider geographic community. The impact of sustainable development funding initiatives often do little to increase the economic vitality of an overall community in which the project has developed. Members of the wider community might feel alienated from the sustainable development funding development process resulting in the perception that the opportunities in the area are somewhat limited. Therefore, arguably there is no incentive for inspiring local people to work collaboratively in the benefit of their community or encouraging them to take and engage in positive action connected to tourism development.

Since the years of the New Labour government, partnership arrangements and shared responsibilities have been increasingly popular mechanism for policy delivery. The research findings illustrate there is little evidence to suggest that these new arrangements have actually led to a transfer of power to rural communities. The competition for top down grants for isolated community led projects that have been observed in this research are unlikely to be conducive to effective rural development. If local development is a genuine National Park Authority objective, policy-making needs to address and support localism. Instead of treating the community as another delivery partner, community led action should be appreciated for and enabled to perform, the unique role it can play in society, namely, as the arena in which highly localised, experimental and innovative approaches to sustainable community development can be pursued.

The research findings illustrate that there are obstacles to overcome in involving communities with sustainable development funding schemes. One of the main problems discovered is with initiating and sustaining participation. Given that participation is key to the development of the community and of their social capital, the National Park Authority must address this issue to bring about meaningful community development.

The research here, suggests that, the National Park Authority illustrate only limited insight into both understanding how a community operates and the processes that help it to do so. This is in line with criticism made by Jewson (2007) about the lack of analytical capabilities of public authorities in developing participation within community initiatives. Although it may be practical and easy to provide a checklist of achievements or policy outcomes, this does not help address the issue of participation. However, developing a

framework of “common interest” may be of assistance, as “commonality” is associated with community development and this can act as a catalyst for participation where community development initiatives operate.

The interplay between National Park Authority policy outputs and the reality of community development within the NP is the key finding of this research because understanding reasons for participation can provide a structure that offers a reason for communities to take part in community development schemes. This is not only important for securing initial participation from the wider geographic community but in sustaining that participation. Therefore, using techniques to ignite people's feelings to their rural surroundings may be a sound starting point for the potential of sustainable development funding schemes.

The findings of this research paper indicate that the use of tourism as part of a rural development strategy is not sufficiently substituted or integrated into the sustainable development funding schemes. If one considers that it is communities that should be sustained to support tourism rather than the creation of “sustainable tourism” the local change requires that stakeholders participate in local development and pursue social capital in different social areas. According to this study, sustainable development funding schemes are not creating participation in the wider geographic community. The findings indicated that some people do not participate in community affairs. Such participation, inevitably, leaves out many community residents. Arguably, nonparticipation could signify resistance, or a form of protest. The impact of sustainable development funding initiatives often do little to increase the economic vitality of an overall community in which the project has developed. Members of the wider community might feel alienated from the sustainable development funding development process resulting in the perception that the opportunities in the area are somewhat limited. Therefore, arguably, there is no incentive for inspiring local people to work collaboratively in the benefit of their community or encouraging them to take and engage in positive action connected to tourism development.

Murphy (1985) indicated that resident involvement early in tourism planning processes before key and often irreversible decisions are made is required. Furthermore, Joppe (1996) argued that for sustainable tourism development to occur within a community setting, a clear strategy involving the roles and responsibilities of the actors and outlining the objectives and players is necessary. Consequently, local people should be consulted and accordingly tourism policies should be reconsidered. The implementation of tourism cannot succeed without community members being involved and consultation taking place with such people. If communities can share responsibilities for

finding solutions to local development problems these would probably be more effective than imposed solutions. Tourism development by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is, as Dargan and Shucksmith (2008) noted, a top-down approach utilising public funds. Sustainable development funding participants demonstrated that their programmes generated participation, but only by a few key members of the community who managed to organise themselves with many of the schemes involving visitors and consequently tourism. Arguably, residents expect the National Park Authority to attract tourists to the area, what the tourists should be doing in the area also seems to rely heavily on what the National Park Authority can offer them. This thought process requires rethinking by local communities so that they can build their local assets into more viable and accessible products for consumption.

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