

1. Introduction: Innovation for tourism sustainability

Irma Booyens and Patrick Brouder

<a>Innovation Fosters Sustainability

Innovation is a way to address the grand challenges of our time, be it cutting greenhouse gas emissions, providing clean energy, ensuring food and water security, addressing health and development challenges, or protecting the environment. Innovation is essentially about adapting to, and bringing about, change. The tourism sector is one particularly vulnerable to macro-economic, geo-political, environmental, technological and social change. Innovative firms are those responding to change in ways that ensure their survival and enhance their competitiveness. In view of sustainability, however, innovation should also contribute to positive environmental and social change. This requires us to think differently about innovation.

Innovation has long been associated with growth, competitiveness and technological change (Alsos et al., 2014; Hall and Williams, 2020). The tourism sector is perhaps one of the most successful in the post-war era, evidenced by the phenomenal growth of international travel and tourism since the 1950s (Hall, 2005). Innovation has played a decisive role in driving tourism growth (Hall and Williams, 2020; Hjalager, 2015). Conversely, intensifying climate change, environmental degradation and pressure on host communities are adverse impacts associated with tourism growth. Tourism's contribution to CO₂ emissions, mainly through air transportation, remains one of the sector's greatest climate change impacts. Tourism is a victim of its own success: as the sector became more innovative, it became less sustainable (Hall and Williams, 2020). A main reason for this is the capitalist push for continued growth. Nunes and Cooke (2021) hold that innovation solely valued for boosting economic performance accelerates climate change and increases levels of unsustainability.

The growth imperative, however, remains front and centre in tourism innovation and tourism sustainability scholarship. As evident from recent reviews of the tourism innovation literature, innovation for business viability and competitiveness within market environments, along with managerial implications, continues to dominate (see Hall and Williams, 2020; Işık et al., 2019; Pikkemaat et al., 2019). The market position, as per the mainstream innovation studies perspective, holds that innovation is essential not only for tourism firms, but also for tourist destinations in a highly competitive, globalised sector. What is more, novel, techno-scientific solutions foreground much of the literature on innovation, also in the field of tourism (Köhler et al., 2019; Krlev et al., 2020; Pel et al., 2020). Main themes in the tourism innovation literature, reinforced in recent contributions, include: innovation types, firm level determinants of innovation,

entrepreneurship and small enterprise, the adoption of new technologies and products, and improving service quality and tourism marketing at both the firm and destination levels (see Bichler et al., 2020; Divisekera and Nguyen, 2018; Hollebeek and Rather, 2019; Pascual-Fernández et al., 2021; Tajeddini et al., 2020; Verreynne et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2020). At the same time, sustainability, along with policy and governance issues, does not feature strongly enough in tourism innovation studies as observed by Pikkemaat et al. (2019). With respect to the tourism sustainability literature, Moyle et al. (2020) describe the extant body of knowledge as static in content and narrowly focussed on “maintaining the industry’s vitality” (p. 109). This view corresponds with the observations of authors who highlight contradictions with respect to sustaining tourism and sustainable development (Hall, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Moscardo and Murphy, 2014).

Several authors in this volume put forward that growth perspectives and market approaches are insufficient for achieving sustainability in tourism (see Handbook Themes, below). Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic with its dramatic impact on the tourism industry has brought sustainability issues to the fore. The damage done inter alia to tourism businesses, jobs and livelihoods has been staggering. The UNWTO (2021a) estimates that the pandemic has put 100-200 million jobs at risk, many in small and medium sized enterprises that employ a large share of youth and women. The impacts are more severe in low income countries reliant on tourism, where unemployment and poverty have been on the rise since the onset of the pandemic.

Recent literature foregrounds innovation as a ‘coping’ strategy for the tourism firms to combat the challenges posed by COVID-19. Through entrepreneurial self-efficacy firms can ‘reinvent’ themselves by adapting and innovating when under pressure (see Alonso et al., 2020; Breier et al., 2021; Bressan et al., 2021; Sobaih et al., 2021). Box 1.1 shows how digital adoption has boosted the resilience of one attraction in England.

Box 1.1: Digital adoption by the Bishop’s Place in Wells

Bishop’s Place is a historical visitor attraction (a medieval palace set in landscaped gardens) in Wells, UK. The attraction initially suffered substantial losses during lockdown, having to close during their busiest months. Through engagement with visitors and community members via social media they learned that visitors valued the gardens and decided to post photos and videos of the gardens during the spring and summer months on their social media platforms. This included talks from their gardener. They also set up a swan camera for people to watch the hatching of cygnets online. Access to the garden via digital platforms proved very successful and they were able to grow their social media reach because of their focus on the beauty of the gardens.

Once they reopened they also implemented a marketing innovation whereby they restructured their ticketing options and introduced ‘the people’s ticket’ which includes multiple entries over a year for locals or domestic visitors at a reasonable fee. This also proved very successful and they have been able to boost their visitor numbers since opening up, contributing to their financial recovery.

Source: Visit Britain (2021)

Resourceful and innovative firms are proven to be more resilient and, therefore, are more likely to survive in times of crisis (Hemmington and Neill, 2022; Sobaih et al., 2021). Strategic innovation is a proactive, planned response to anticipated change (Alonso et al., 2020; Sobaih et al., 2021). Innovation for resilience arguments tend to emphasise the adoption and integration of new technologies, particularly digitisation. A shift to digitisation in tourism and hospitality has intensified since the onset of the pandemic, i.e. stay-at-home orders, digital consumption and use of social media, along with contactless technologies including contactless payments and digital identities with biometrics for travelling (WTTC, 2020).

The ability of firms to adapt to shocks and innovate, however, depends on their adaptive capabilities determined by their access to knowledge, skills, technology and other resources. Firms with low adaptive capabilities, usually micro firms and those in developing countries, exhibit low levels of resilience (Rivera et al., 2021). According to World Bank estimates, only about one third of the population in developing countries have access to the internet compared to 80% in developed countries. While it may be feasible to focus on technology, and digital innovation, to survive in current times, this might be largely unattainable in many developing countries, especially in poor areas or communities.

There is a call for a Post-COVID-19 tourism reset, that is: ‘building tourism back better’ with a stronger emphasis on ecological and social matters (see Brouder, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Everingham and Chassagne, 2020; Ioannides and Gyimothy, 2020). A broader or holistic view of sustainability is needed in tourism and hospitality studies, approaches and practices (Cotterell et al. 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Moyle et al., 2020; Spenceley, 2021). The understanding of innovation in tourism in the light of sustainability, therefore, needs to be directed at innovative practices aimed at actively minimising the adverse impacts of tourism on the environment and host communities while maximising the benefits of tourism.

Innovation in Tourism in the Context of Sustainability

Simply put, innovation is concerned with ‘new ways of doing things’ (Schumpeter, 1934) which in the context of sustainability means ‘doing things more sustainably’ (Gössling et al., 2009; Hall, 2009). In view of tourism sustainability, innovation is the introduction of new and improved products, services, processes, and methods to enhance economic, environmental and/or social outcomes (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016). However, much emphasis in the tourism innovation and tourism sustainability literature, as mentioned, is on firm survival and competitiveness. While firms have a role to play in tourism sustainability, they need to remain profitable in order to sustain themselves. Nonetheless, Hall (2009, p. 296) avers that: “...the conceptualisation of firm behaviour needs to be extended beyond that of being solely responsible to shareholders with respect to the provision of immediate returns”. He continues to suggest that instead: “return needs to be understood over extended periods, in a sense approximating the concept of sustained yield”.

The objective of innovation with social and/or environmental benefits, accordingly, is not to achieve commercial success per se. The market imperative might in fact be superfluous with respect to innovation centred on bringing about transformational

change. From a sustainability perspective, innovations must enhance public and environmental ‘good’. While the emphasis on providing environmental protection is vital, social outcomes which include the wellbeing of tourism workers, communities and travellers themselves should not be ignored. Sustainability means protecting the environment and also the people. Innovation, therefore, does not have to be novel, i.e. a world or industry first, to achieve this. However, an element of ‘newness’ (Hall and Williams, 2020) is indispensable: an innovation should be a newly implemented product, service, process or method, or a significant improvement of existing ones - a concept more in line with Schumpeter’s seminal view of innovation as a combination of two or more elements in a new way.

The Oslo Manual, that outlines definitions and methods for measuring firm level innovation, considers whether innovations were new during the period under review, typically three years (OECD, 2018). The Manual allows for ‘new to firm’ innovation which is arguably useful in the context of tourism. In other words, a new or significantly improved product, process or approach is considered an innovation if newly implemented by a firm or organisation. This admittedly constitutes a low level of novelty, the minimum to be considered an innovation (Booyens, 2018); but is arguably enough for innovations in the context of sustainability, where the aim is to introduce new and improved ways of doing things to achieve certain global outcomes rather than radical innovations that drive market competitiveness. What is more, innovation in tourism is typically incremental and service-orientated rather than technological (Booyens, 2018; Panfiluk, 2021). Indeed, non-technological innovation such as organisational, management and marketing innovations are prevalent in services (Fagerberg, 2013; Hall and Williams, 2020; Hjalager, 2010). Moreover, incremental innovation that allows for improvement, adaptation and upgrading is of value in view of sustainability (Köhler et al., 2019; Panfiluk, 2021). While incremental innovation often receives less attention than high-tech breakthroughs, according to Fagerberg et alia (2009) there is no reason to believe that its cumulative impact (economic, social and/or environment in the context of sustainability) is any less significant. Additionally, Aquino et al. (2018) stress the importance of continuous innovation for tourism sustainability.

Innovation is, in essence, collaborative. Individual entrepreneurs and firms rarely innovate in isolation, and learning with a focus on innovation takes place in organised settings such as groups, firms and networks (Fagerberg, 2013). Collaboration is especially important for addressing the pressing issues associated with tourism sustainability. Learning, collaboration and adaptation require a diverse range of actors to build innovation capabilities and ensure desirable outcomes (Aquino et al., 2018; Pel et al., 2020; Siakwah et al., 2020) with the aim to bring about greater benefit, beyond advancing the (commercial) interests of a single firm or organisation.

Towards Strong Sustainability

Calls for tourism to be appraised with a more holistic view of sustainability, corresponds with the concept of ‘strong’ sustainability. Strong sustainability underlines complexity and systemic factors, cross-disciplinary understandings, eco-centric perspectives, minimising resource-use, science-based approaches, and societal ethics and values (Cotterell et al., 2019).

Nunes and Cooke (2021) urge for innovation in tourism to be more ‘virtuous’. Accordingly, McCool and Bosak (2015, p. 7) contend that: “Sustainability is as much about our values as it is about the technology and expertise needed to apply those values”. A greater focus on values emerges in contemporary tourism sustainability discourses. Human values are of importance from a tourism development perspective, of which sustainable tourism is a desirable outcome (Moyle et al., 2020). There is a growing recognition that human rights, ethics, justice, power relations in governance structures, contestations between the interests of different groups, and egalitarian participation in processes are important for inclusive tourism and inclusive innovation alike (Diekmann and McCabe, 2020; Guia, 2021; Jamal and Higham, 2021; Köhler et al., 2019; McCool and Bosak, 2015). Tourism development imperatives, furthermore, centre on enhancing human development through tourism, particularly in developing countries. This includes creating employment or livelihoods to alleviate poverty, stimulating local value chains, providing facilities, and contributing to community empowerment, health and wellbeing (Booyens, 2022). The above corresponds with the idea of innovation with ‘care’ for people, and doing innovation in a way that underscores interaction between people (different actors in the innovation process), as proposed by Fuglsang (2008).

The importance of human flourishing in the transformation towards sustainability in tourism presents a ‘deep shift’ in values because ‘old ways’ of thinking and doing are no longer sufficient (Cheer, 2020; Ehrenfeld and Hoffman, 2013). Innovation, accordingly, is an appropriate response to address societal challenges that include social issues like poverty and inequality, the climate emergency, and political and economic concerns (Krlev et al., 2020).

Moreover, collective action between government, civil society, ethical firms and third sector organisations can foster change at a broader, systemic level (see Moulart and MacCallum, 2019; Ziegler, 2017). Therefore, multi-dimensional and multi-actor processes, part of innovation systems, are particularly important in the context of sustainability (see Köhler et al., 2019). Tourism is uniquely placed to be a catalyst for change as it is a sector which interacts with many other socio-economic activities.

<a>Handbook Themes

The contributions of this handbook are organised around four core themes. It should, however, be noted that these central ideas cut across many chapters and not all chapters fit neatly into any one category. This is to be expected as the chapters themselves are innovative with some recombining existing knowledge in a novel way and others highlighting new ideas.

Part I: Systems Change and Technology for Tourism Sustainability

Systems change, with system-wide effects, is needed to bring about structural change and sustainability transitions (Gössling et al., 2009; Hall, 2009; Hall and Williams 2020). The role of innovation in modifying systems to adopt improved mitigation measures towards sustainability is pertinent (Castro-Arce and Vanclay, 2020; Pel et al., 2020). Moreover, the role of agents along with the need for greater collaboration and improved governance are key for systems change (Gössling et al., 2009; Hall, 2009).

In Chapter 2, Saarinen draws attention to ‘deep’, and deepening, conflict between the key principles, and with the very idea of, sustainable tourism in favour of not only economic, but also environmental and human wellbeing considerations. The aim of this chapter is, indeed, to rethink the role of tourism in sustainable development while stressing the need for radical change. Saarinen puts forward that radical change is required at the destination (local) and system levels to address global-scale challenges.

One pressing grand challenge is cutting greenhouse gas emissions contributed by the air transportation of visitors and goods to long haul or remote destinations as stressed by the recent Glasgow Declaration calling for climate action in tourism (see Box 1.2). The aim is for tourism to become a carbon-neutral industry in the foreseeable future.

Box 1.2: The Glasgow Declaration: a decade of climate action in tourism

The Glasgow Declaration, prepared for the United Nations Climate Change Summit (COP26) held in Glasgow in November 2021, calls for all stakeholders to commit to climate action in tourism. The aim is to accelerate collective action to reduce global CO₂ emissions, contributed by the tourism sector, by at least half over the next decade towards reaching Net Zero emissions by 2050.

The call emphasises collaboration and urges stakeholders to present a clear and consistent, sector-wide message with respect to cutting tourism emissions. This is required to drive the structural change required to scale up the sector’s response to the climate emergency.

Source: UNWTO, 2021b

It is unlikely that we can have a sustainable tourism sector without a more sustainable aviation sector. Debbage and Debbage (Chapter 3) call for the urgent flattening of the climate change carbon curve, arguing that the long-term survival of the airline industry depends on innovation to become more sustainable and environmentally efficient. In this chapter, they outline spheres of innovation in the airline industry by building on known innovation typologies. They also consider the industry’s legacy of innovation and unpack both its incremental and radical innovation while reflecting on future opportunities and challenges it faces.

Technology is a driving force of innovation, as per mainstream understandings of innovation. Indeed, in relation to innovation needed in the airline industry, technology has an important role in the development of green energy and transport options. Innovative examples include Norwegian hybrid and increasingly fully-electric ferries and cruise liners, and Dutch trains running on wind energy. Chapter 4 by Dyhr Ulrich, Reino and Hjalager focus on technological opportunities and remedies to ensure the development of tourism in more sustainable directions while interrogating the role of the Internet of Things (IoT). They argue that initially the internet was mainly a marketing tool for tourism, but that its role has shifted to include a myriad of ways in which tourism actors can communicate with customers and customers can in turn engage online (see also Chapter 12 on social media influencers in Part III of this volume). This changing behaviour by firms and customers alike has evolved alongside the progression of the internet itself, from Web 1.0 to the era of IoT or Web 4.0. Types of IoT for sustainable tourism are outlined along with a model for interaction with tourists. Dyhr Ulrich, Reino and Hjalager argue that, for technological innovations to be effective, socio-cultural

innovations are needed simultaneously. They also say that a greater emphasis on governance innovations are required to address data security and privacy issues, critical to any implementation of IoT.

In Chapter 5, Niewiadomski and Brouder draw together the state-of-the-art literature on sustainable tourism, tourism evolution, and sustainability transitions before focussing them through a geographical lens in order to elucidate the spaces and places where system change may occur. There is reason for optimism if new combinations can be found in theory and brought to bear on the plural spaces of 21st century tourism.

Part II: Innovation for Destination and Regional Sustainability

The contributions in Part II of this volume draw attention to space and scale. While Part I includes debates on global-level innovation for tourism sustainability, Part II takes destination and regional level sustainability into account. A pertinent consideration is that learning and networking for innovation has a spatial character. Contemporary understandings of innovation describe its nature as a: “uncertain, collective, systemic, localized process, supported by interaction dynamics, cumulative (path dependent) and with a strong territorial dimension” (Nunes and Cooke, 2021, p. 7). This leads to innovation systems (also eco-systems) perspectives. Indeed, Hall (2009) proposes a focus on innovation systems for a more sophisticated approach to destination sustainability.

Box 1.3: Diffusion of regional tourism innovation in rural British Columbia

The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) represents a major tourism region in the interior of British Columbia, Canada. A diverse region known for its wineries and Indigenous tourism, amongst many other attractions, it is also known as a beacon of sustainable tourism development. In 2016, TOTA began the process of sustainable tourism certification and a year later became the first destination in the Americas to achieve ‘Biosphere Tourism Destination Certification’ - a system aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and awarded by the Responsible Tourism Institute.

The certification of a regional tourism organization, such as TOTA, is innovative because it is a governance-led approach to infusing innovation in a region. While TOTA’s early consultations with regional stakeholders who were calling for sustainable action started the organization on the road to sustainability, the certification has created the conditions to bring many more regional stakeholders on board. What is more, the success of TOTA has led to a diffusion of regional tourism innovation across rural British Columbia with the other four non-metropolitan regional tourism organizations taking their first steps towards joining TOTA in its certification program. This marks a big step forward for tourism development in rural British Columbia as the levers of governance are now all working towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

Source: TOTA (2021)

In Chapter 6, Eide and Hoarau-Heemstra look into sustainability at a destination level by interrogating the role of partnerships in a sustainability certification initiative involving four destinations in Norway. The importance of partnerships, cooperation, networks and local democracy for achieving and scaling sustainability are underscored.

They maintain that partnerships are enacted in practices, and build on approaches that address interactions across Communities of Practice (COP). Core teams working on certification and innovation for sustainability facilitate partnerships and participation across stakeholder types and COP. Such teams are embedded in non-local networks and there is evidence of inter-regional collaboration between Norwegian and Swedish municipalities. This is an example of regional collaboration which drives the inter-regional diffusion of innovation and sustainability practices towards effecting systemic change. Indeed, strong partnerships open up boundary-crossing activities and connections that enable learning and innovation. Moreover, the authors signpost the importance of involving public governance (municipalities), local World Heritage organisations, conservation (protected area) bodies and also local residents.

In their contribution (Chapter 7), Høegh-Guldberg, Eide and Yati argue that labs have potential as mechanisms to enhance innovation for sustainable tourism within open innovation paradigms with a focus on co-creation among a broader set of stakeholders and users. As in Chapter 6, networking, partnerships, and local democracy and governance are put forward as principles. The authors stress that research on lab-driven innovation in tourism-related sectors has not yet quantitatively or qualitatively matured in practical, lab-driven innovation experiences and, thus, there is a lot to learn from other economic sectors. They outline the experience of five tourism lab-driven innovation initiatives in Norway. The findings show that the more open labs are, the higher the possibility of transdisciplinary and boundary-crossing interactions, knowledge vital for facing grand challenges, and more radical learning and innovation. Multi-stakeholder engagement in co-creation is critical for participative approaches towards a more robust sustainability in tourism. Furthermore, lab-driven innovation can contribute to more mature ecosystems for sustainability involving inter- and intra-regional collaboration.

In Chapter 8 by Baird, Hall, Castka and Ramkissoon, the attention turns to tourism innovation in the wine regions of New Zealand, Western Australia and Tasmania. A sector-specific innovation survey shows that while winegrowers approach innovation with a degree of caution, they are most innovative in terms of introducing new practices to improve operational processes. There is also evidence of innovations to improve organisational and managerial processes, and sales and market methods. Knowledge sharing, collaboration and networking stand out as important enablers of innovation. Cooperation, however, varies between regions. Winegrowers cite reducing environmental impact as a key driver for innovation. They, however, have different ideas as to what constitutes innovation and underpins sustainability in a winery and vineyard context. As part of its focus on sustainability, this study stresses the rights and treatment of migrant workers in the wine industry, reporting that there are wineries that fail to pay minimum wage and breach employment legislation in other respects. The study also found that winegrowers are often ambivalent about the treatment of migrant workers. This chapter calls for a greater uptake of sustainable practices in the wine industry particularly with respect to social justice issues including improving work conditions for migrant workers.

Part III: Social Dimensions of Innovation vis-à-vis Tourism Sustainability

Social dimensions with respect to innovation in tourism for sustainability are complex, as shown by the contributions in Part III. Notions of sustainable tourism are underpinned by

sustainable development imperatives, particularly when viewed from a global South perspective as illustrated in Chapter 9 (by Booyens). This chapter unpacks the notion of social innovation (SI) in the context of tourism and sets the scene for Part IV. SI notions depart from traditional understandings of innovation preoccupied with competitiveness and growth. Instead, SI is concerned with fostering inclusion and human development, enhancing social wellbeing and the public good, and bringing about social change through collective action. Booyens highlights the need for structural innovation to catalyse social change and stimulate greater collaboration to promote SI in tourism.

In Chapter 10, Guia, Mahato, Ahmadi and van de Velde contemplate grassroots innovation in justice tourism, drawing on the experience of the Sahrawi refugee camps in Western Sahara. By justice tourism they refer to explicitly political forms of travel that involve visiting destinations facing some type of injustice or abuse in order to develop and promote solidarity with communities, becoming advocates of justice for these communities, and engaging in social activism. Their chapter describes the potential value of grassroots innovations to keep commodification and depoliticization at bay in travel experiences associated with atrocity. They argue that grassroots innovations epitomize posthumanist approaches to travel as an alternative to dominant modes of tourism that perpetuate ecological destruction and socio-economic inequalities.

Tourism employment and workplace issues remain of concern from a tourism sustainability perspective (see Baum, 2020; Bianchi and de Man, 2021; Ioannides and Zampoukos, 2018; Johnson, 2020). Addressing tourism workplace issues is an area needing SI, and also collective and policy action. Issues under the spotlight include increased labour shortages, on the one hand, and precarity of tourism and hospitality workers, on the other hand, not least because of the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. Abuse and sexual harassment of tourism and hospitality workers, along with a lack of decent work and limited protection for migrant workers in the sector, needs to be addressed. Collective bargaining for better work conditions remains low in the sector owing, inter alia, to limited trade union representation (Bianchi and de Man, 2021). An example of collective action for fair hospitality employment follows in Box 1.4.

Box 1.4: Collective action for fair hospitality employment: the Unite Fair Hospitality Charter

In recent years, Unite, the UK's largest trade union, has launched a Fair Hospitality Campaign to promote fair employment in the sector. Their research shows that the median income of hotel workers is below the minimum wage, about a quarter of hospitality workers are on zero-hour contracts and up to two-thirds of workers experience sexual harassment at work. Unite Hospitality, the union's arm for tourism and hospitality workers, is collectively organising for respect at work (against sexual harassment and gender-based violence) and bargaining for a living wage in the hospitality sector. The Unite Fair Hospitality Charter, calls on employers to pay the real living wage and implement anti-sexual harassment policies at work. This move is significant in view of the typical under-representation of hospitality workers by unions and the prevalence of sexual harassment in the sector. The charter is gaining traction with more employers coming on board. In 2021, the Atholl Arms Hotel Dunkeld became the first hotel in Perthshire to adopt the full charter as a Fair Hospitality employer, committing to:

- Pay the real living wage of £9.50 per hour.

- Offer secure contracts with guaranteed hours.
- Implement sexual harassment policies protecting and supporting workers.
- Ensure 100% of tips go to workers.
- Ensure paid rest breaks.
- Offer transport after 12 am.
- Provide sufficient notice for rota changes.
- Pay workers for trial shifts.
- Provide access to unions to collectively represent workers.

Source: Information from Unite the Union and Unite Hospitality

Giddy (Chapter 11) looks into innovative strategies to foster sustainable adventure tourism employment based on the case of Stormsriver Adventures (SRA), South Africa. SRA has implemented innovative employment practices to both grow a successful business while also maintaining the values of sustainability. While this best practice example can provide a platform for increasing sustainable employment practices in tourism in the future, SRA is also a leading ethical operator driving both social and environmental innovation in the Tsitsikamma area. This aligns with arguments about the importance of collective action and structural organisation to promote sustainability on a larger scale.

From the view of complexity, it should also be appreciated that innovations can be socially unsustainable and/or undesirable (see Baedeker et al., 2020). This is illustrated in the chapters by Tomazos and Rogerson (Chapters 12 and 13, respectively). In the first instance, while influencer marketing is an *in vogue* and often very effective marketing method, Tomazos draws attention to the questionable behaviour of influencers, Instagrammers in particular, an under-investigated topic in the tourism literature. He identifies the ‘good’, ‘desperate’ and ‘irritating’ and proposes that Instagramming along with chasing the perfect ‘selfie’ can have far-reaching consequences for destination sustainability. Ostensibly, influencers often treat tourism settings as disposable, replaceable backdrops. This is associated with an apparent disrespect for heritage sites and natural environments alike, with physical damage done and cultural offence caused by the most troublesome of influencers. It is inevitable that followers will follow suit by travelling to the same destinations, thus contributing to over tourism in some destinations and copying certain undesirable behaviours from influencers. At the same time, influencers can enhance transparency and accountability when confronted with ‘greenwashing’ practices by tourism businesses. Tomazos offers a construct of ‘deep’ and ‘shallow’ influencing to synthesise travel influencers’ effect on tourism sustainability. In the second instance, Rogerson interrogates the rise and fall of South Africa’s unwanted innovation of the ‘international hotel’ as a politically motivated policy innovation in apartheid South Africa. He observes that research on innovation is linked only rarely to tourism history. From a historical perspective, this chapter analyses the conditions that precipitated the evolution of the ‘international hotel’ with separate facilities for ‘non-White’ visitors. This was required because the mainstream hotel economy could only legally accommodate ‘White’ patrons in the racialized landscape of tourism under apartheid. Each of these two chapters highlight that activities or approaches that may be

deemed acceptable, or even ‘innovative’, in some quarters may be seen as highly undesirable, or even abhorrent, in the fullness of time.

Part IV: Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism

Part IV delineates innovative approaches to advance sustainable outcomes in tourism development. Contributions feature social inclusion as a core principle in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The meaningful involvement of locals, and ensuring that they benefit from tourism, is central to inclusive tourism (Fennel and Cooper, 2020; Malek and Costa, 2015; Rogerson, 2019; Siakwah et al., 2020; Snyman and Bricker, 2019). Inclusion, therefore, is pertinent for sustainable tourism since communities have often been ‘left out’ of development processes (Rogerson, 2019; Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018). Issues of power and agency are coming to the fore in sustainable tourism scholarship with authors drawing attention to the limitations of capitalist growth models and the need for political economy/ecology perspectives to critically appraise who benefits from tourism (Bianchi and de Man, 2021; Siakwah et al., 2020) – see Box 1.5.

Box 1.5: A focus on the local: reshaping conservation in Africa

Protecting and restoring ecosystems are central to climate change mitigation and local adaptation in vulnerable areas where people’s livelihoods are dependent on nature. There is growing mainstream support for local solutions to conservation – indigenous and/or community-based. This is in line with the push to reshape conservation from new social movements concerned with social (and racial) justice and equity.

In Africa, there are longstanding concerns about racial diversity, leadership and power relations in conservation efforts not least owing to the legacies of colonialism. Greater support is needed for enhancing local capacity, agency and leadership (including the leadership of local organisation and civil society groups). Moreover, there is a need to shift funding to local actors.

One recognised conservation and rural development success story is Namibia’s pioneering community conservancy initiative which grew from four conservancies in 1998 to 86 in 2018. The system of community conservancies, overseen by a national body, consists of communal land where locals (mainly subsistence farmers and hunters) manage the local wildlife and govern their own affairs. Communities elect their own leaders and have regular meetings where decisions are made collectively, ensuring local agency in, and control of, conservation, absent in most contexts since colonial times. Growing black rhino and elephant populations in northern Namibia, and active anti-poaching initiatives, are among the conservation successes of the conservancies. Not least, however, are significant social impacts from community conservation which include: sustaining traditional livelihoods; fostering local entrepreneurship; employing local people through tourism; training youth; and distributing revenue to residents and to support community projects in conservancies. What is more, community conservation strengthens collective identities and local democracy giving communities a collective voice, and encourages the empowerment of women.

Sources: Jones (2021); NACSO (2018); and Nelson (2021)

In accordance with a focus on issues of power and agency, Leonard (Chapter 14) offers a political ecology inquiry into the impacts of mining on natural environments and community micro-politics in a tourism context in South Africa. Political ecology perspectives have largely been absent from tourism studies exploring tourism-environment and tourism-community relations. He argues that there is need for tourism studies using political economy approaches to recognise the influence of the wider socio-political, geographical and historical contexts. This chapter contributes by arguing that combining critical reflexivity with political ecology constitutes an innovative approach for a place-based examination of social practices to empirically unpack community dynamics and power relations in localities. This provides for a more robust and richer contextual analysis for understanding tourism impacts and intra-social group dynamics towards enhancing ecological justice and sustainability.

Chapter 15 by Sambajee, Ndiuini, Masila, Kieti, Baum, Nthiga, Ng'oriarita and Kiage details an ethnographic study intended to pilot innovative methodologies to engage the rural poor in Kenya in tourism development. The study considers whether the sector's development imperatives are compatible with local lives; what forms tourism development might take; how communities are represented; and the roles they play in development. The approach was driven by the need for social inclusion that is core to sustainability and inclusive tourism whereby those typically marginalized by, or excluded from, tourism can be brought into the conversation and gain more control over tourism in their areas. The latter also relates to issues of power underscored by political economy approaches.

To conclude this volume, Chapter 16 by Ayiine-Etigo and Chapter 17 by Shahzeidi et alia both focus on the role of innovation to enhance protection of the core tourism assets. In Ayiine-Etigo's case it is heritage tourism development at the Cape Coast Castle, Ghana. He uses the notion of path dependence to consider path creation through innovation towards sustainable heritage tourism development. The emphasis is on deploying technologies to drive innovation diffusion, foster path creation, and enhance visitor experiences; improving the management of the heritage site and the conservation of heritage resources; and stimulating meaningful local involvement and wider social benefits from tourism development. Likewise, Shahzeidi et alia examine innovative visitor management tools for precious natural sites. They highlight that both product (technology based) and process (management based) innovation can be deployed in the service of natural area protection while also improving visitor experiences while on site. These two closing chapters are a reminder that in order to be sustainable we must first do no harm.

<a>Concluding Remarks

This volume considers critical concepts and aspects of innovation in tourism, along with a broad range of innovation and approaches to enhance sustainability. In the context of sustainability, innovation is concerned with 'doing things more sustainably' over and above an emphasis on technology and the competitive behaviour of tourism firms. The contributions in the volume extend attention to innovative practices focused on minimising the adverse impacts of tourism on the environment and host communities while maximising the benefits of tourism. This is at odds with neoliberal attitudes that

dominate innovation studies and also the tourism innovation literature. However, since the tourism innovation landscape for sustainability is characterised by public goods, this volume calls for a reorientation in tourism innovation and sustainability research, and also practice (also see Spenceley, 2021), towards a greater consideration of human or social dimensions (also see Diekmann and McCabe, 2020).

The role of government/public organisations in promoting innovation and governance for sustainability is a crucial aspect as argued by authors in this volume. Indeed, Kohler et al. (2019, p.3) have previously argued:

“Since sustainability is a public good, private actors (e.g. firms, consumers) have limited incentives to address it owing to free-rider problems and prisoner’s dilemmas. This means that public policy must play a central role in shaping the directionality of transitions through environmental regulations, standards, taxes, subsidies, and innovation policies”.

The scaling of innovation practices is central to achieving a meaningful impact vis-à-vis tourism sustainability and sustainability overall. The focus needs to be extended beyond the activities of a single firm, tourism initiative or destination to efforts directed at bringing about systemic change to tackle the grand challenges associated with tourism. Achieving sustainability is undeniably a delicate balancing act characterised by complexity. Authors in this volume underscore the need for collective action to drive change including collaboration, participation and networking among multi-stakeholder groups including local residents and communities in a meaningful way. This multi-stakeholder emphasis corresponds with the notion of network governance underscoring stronger relationships to enhance tourism sustainability (Booyens, 2022; Siakwah et al., 2020). Tourism governance occurs at multiple scales (Hall, 2009) and governance takes place within networks of public and non-public actors characterized by complexity and fostered by dedicated public sector involvement (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2016).

Contributions in this volume further highlight the value of inter- and intra-regional diffusion of innovation towards effecting systemic change. This said, it needs to be recognised that the adaptive capacity and stakeholder capabilities for innovation need to be strengthened at the destination, regional and national levels. As Hall (2009, p.295) stressed: “A lack of innovation with respect to sustainable development within a destination or region can be explained by reference to an innovation system that highlights the importance of the ‘soft’ characteristics of innovation with respect to culture, institutional and firm networks and knowledge transfer”. This is a slow, path dependent process. Public policy, as indicated, has a central role in facilitating collaboration and fostering innovation for sustainability and sustainable tourism.

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