



The Development of Sustainable Tourism through Multilateralism, Cultural Cooperation and Diplomacy: The Case of Sweden and Finland

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ABSTRACT- Tourism industry in Europe is currently heavily influenced by climate change policies and the importance of environmental conservation. Countries in Europe are beginning to adopt the concept of sustainable tourism to contribute to environmental preservation. This concept allows tourists, especially those from outside Europe, to appreciate the environment more and with the hope that they will apply the same concept in their home country. This article discusses sustainable tourism as a mean of cultural diplomacy. Sweden and Finland are two European countries that have implemented the concept of sustainable tourism with good results in terms of economic impact, cultural diplomacy and in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global form of cooperation agreement to end the poverty, protect the planet and enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. This article discusses the strategies and policies adopted by Sweden and Finland regarding sustainable tourism as well as with cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, cultural diplomacy, Sweden, Finland, European Union, Multilateralism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic event that requires the mobility of people to other countries or places for personal or business purposes [1]. Tourism is related to the activities of these people, who are called visitors, who can be tourists or non-tourists and residents or non-residents. According to Eurostat, tourism is the activity of visitors who travel to a destination outside the usual environment, for less than a year, for any primary purpose, including business, leisure or other personal purposes, except to be employed in the place visited. Meanwhile, according to Yoeti, tourism is a trip made from one place to another with the intention not to work in the place being visited but solely for sightseeing and recreation [2]. From the three definitions of tourism, it can be concluded that tourism is an activity of traveling from one place to another with various purposes.

Tourism requires significant resources and involves multiple interests (shared or conflicted). Hence, it is essential to sustainably plan and manage tourism development. A well-managed tourism development can have a positive effect to the development of the state and society of the surrounding tourist destinations. By contrast, uncontrolled tourism development can have devastating impacts on natural resources, consumption patterns, pollutions and social systems.

In 2018, global tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion, two years earlier than expected. Meanwhile in 1995, global arrivals numbered only 525 million [3]. Europe has been one of the main destinations for world tourist. Famous for its natural beauty, culture, culinary, and order making it the main destination for tourists for a vacation. The global development of the tourism market has contributed to the development of the region and the formation of an attractive image among tourists. Diplomatic relations with other countries also open up opportunities as a tourist destination. Apart from positive impacts, tourism development can have negative impacts on the preservation of surrounding environment.

Specifically, climate change is currently seen as a fundamental problem that also requires the tourism industry to reduce its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changing demand patterns and the type of tourism offered. The concept of sustainable tourism is a new value that can bridge these problems in the tourism sector. Biodiversity and cultural heritage protection, empowerment of the indigenous and local communities, international cooperation, and support for capacity building are the key elements of sustainable tourism [4]. The development of sustainable tourism need to be further encouraged, particularly through the consumption of sustainable tourism products and the development of ecotourism.

Sustainable development requires significant changes in urban spaces building and management. Rapid urban growth, due to increasing population and urban migration, has led to a boom in large cities,

especially in developing countries, and slum settlements are becoming a more common feature of urban life. Making sustainable cities means creating career and business opportunities as well as appropriate housing for its residents, and also creating resilient communities and economies. These involve investing in public transport, providing green public spaces, and enhancing urban planning and management in a participatory and inclusive way [5].

As stated by UNWTO, sustainable tourism is an inter-sectoral activity that can contribute to sustainable dimensions in its three dimensions and achieve the targets of SDGs. Sustainable tourism highlights the need for responsible management in resources, environment pressures and capacities, externalities, socio-culture, and integration of sustainable consumption and production patterns. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the importance of sustainable tourism is highlighted in SDG target 8.9 (to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products) and 12.b (to develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products).

Sustainable tourism development requires inclusivity towards stakeholders [6]. For that purpose, it is imperative for political leaders to ensure broad and fair people participation. Tourism is an important method not only to improve the country's economy, but also to create a positive image of the country and its people by foreign tourists. In order to facilitate the achievement of the concept of sustainable tourism, the role of the government in carrying out diplomacy and policies issued and implemented by both government and non-government actors is very important.

The tourism industry is very important in the contemporary era therefore it is present at all levels of society. Looking at the trends in the development of global international relations, it can be seen that the changes move towards modern approaches in terms of conceptualizing the development potential of countries across the globe. In this regard, tourism can play an important role in the efforts of countries to create a better position for them in the global environment. The presentation of culture through tourism can be a key factor in achieving the goal of mutual representation of the country's values. A country must rely on the presentation of cultural heritage through tourism, which through its own development will strengthen the position of the state and contribute to the achievement of the goals set and desired by a particular country. For any country aspires to deliver the promise to meet the SDGs and leave no one behind, international cooperation is the way ahead to guard the collective values and make the world a safer and more equitable place for all [7].

At the global level, multilateralism is the key to combat the climate change and nature loss. United Nations Environment Program is one of the organizations that have a global role in tackling the unsustainable consumption and production to address the three planetary crises which are the climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution [8]. Nordic countries include Sweden and Finland, prioritized the environment and climate at the highest political level. They also plan a new vision to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030, cooperating to promote a green, competitive and socially sustainable Nordic region.

This research formulates the problem as arranged in the following research questions. How are the tourism problems in the world today causing the emergence of the concept sustainable tourism? How are Sweden and Finland doing in overcoming the imbalance caused by tourism problems? How are Sweden and Finland implementing their efforts in sustainable tourism management? How can the concept of sustainable tourism have a positive impact on the cultural diplomacy and image of Sweden and Finland? The benefit from this article is to show how cultural diplomacy can contribute to better diplomatic practice. In this article, the concept of tourism will be examined as an instrument for cultural diplomacy. As Carbone (2017) explained, one of the most important key resources of the tourism sector is culture. That is, the tourism sector allows tourists to have access to a wide variety of cultures that they had never known. Contribution to cultural diplomacy, therefore, can be represented by both the promotion of foreign tourist destinations and the impression of tourists. These thoughts have placed the tourism sector in relation to various sectors and development agents around the world, causing the tourism sector to have a bigger and more complex role in the context of world peace development context than before.

To date, no study has focused on the use of the concept sustainable tourism for the cultural diplomacy in Nordics Countries such as Sweden and Finland from the multilateralism perspective, despite the fact that the concept is getting popular since the announcement of SDGs. The results are expected to be useful theoretically in developing the concept of sustainable tourism as a solution in managing tourism and reducing the negative impact on the tourism development in countries that have not adopted this concept optimally. Diplomacy practice is the starting point to contribute widely, especially on how Sweden and Finland have demonstrated themselves to be astute users of public opinion, and how they have managed to earn the respect of other countries.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The enhancement of culture is one of the central themes in debates regarding sustainability and global mutual understanding. In this context, tourism is one of the activities that can promote encounter of cultures and the fruition of cultural heritage at the individual and societal level [9]. These considerations have put tourism as one of the fields for cross-sectoral activities and the intersection for development agents worldwide, which puts tourism at a more complex role in the context of global development, including world peace development.

Numerous studies have focused on cultural diplomacy and tourism as separate topics. However, only few studies focused on the use of the sustainable tourism concept for the cultural diplomacy, and even fewer studies drew the reference to Nordic Countries such as Sweden and Finland, despite the fact that the concept has been gaining popularity since the announcement of SDGs.

2.1 Multilateralism

Multilateralism can be broadly perceived as “international cooperation among more than two states, designed to solve international problems and to deal with conflicts resulting from perceived or actual anarchy in international relations” [10]. Both Sweden and Finland are members of European Union (EU) as well as United Nations (UN). The EU and the UN have several international agreements (e.g. SDGs and Paris Agreement) which unite them under a shared vision and ambition. Europe’s commitment to multilateralism is derived shared values and belief that it takes collective efforts to overcome the modern global challenges. In the SDGs agreement, member states showed unprecedented unity in eliminating extreme poverty, reducing inequality, and protecting the planet. Within four years into this agenda, the SDGs have been embraced in a clear way. The SDGs became a central part of their sustainable development plans and aligned policies and institutions with it [11], which include the aims of sustainable tourism.

Supranational institutions like EU provide guidelines that every tourist destination should apply a multilateral partnership bringing together public sector, private sector and civil society. The promotion of the destination in other countries should be in line with the country's cultural diplomacy policy [12]. As a result, visiting a tourist attraction will become a cultural diplomacy practice that would be regarded as a quality benchmark of cultural heritage management [9].

2.2 Sustainable Tourism

Tourism within destination areas is viewed as a triangular partnership between host areas and their landscapes and peoples, vacationers, and the tourism industry, according to sustainable tourism concept. It is a way of striking a balance between tourism's capacity for development and the environment's conservation needs. Various facets of rural tourism sustainability include preserving the culture and character of host communities, preserving the environment and ecosystems, preserving the rural economy, and preserving the tourism industry. Hence, sustainable tourism development is described as the wise use of resources, the reduction of waste and overconsumption, the preservation of cultural, social, and natural diversity, and the integration of tourism development into national development policy [13].

2.3 Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy programs in Europe are linked to a wide range of topics, including economics and business management, as well as arts and culture. Among the available tools, strategic communication, public relations, and nation branding are crucial for cultural management and cultural relations [14]. Since cultural diplomacy is seen as a cornerstone of public diplomacy, or at the very least a complementary activity, the most suitable institutional structure for implementing and coordinating cultural diplomacy activities is a country's foreign ministry, in collaboration with the ministry of culture. Meanwhile, the key player is a state that is supposed to be engaged in cultural diplomacy. As a result of the increasing democratization of global communications, it sees states as only one of the players in the region, but it no longer hold a monopoly. Other players involved in cultural diplomacy, according to the same research, include ‘sub-state’ actors such as provinces, counties, towns, ethnic groups, and diaspora communities [15].

The aim of cultural diplomacy is for foreign countries’ citizens to gain a better understanding of the country's values and institutions in order to gain widespread support for economic and political goals [16]. Cultural diplomacy is all about mutual understanding that leads to trust as a foundation for cooperation,

business, and peace, among other things. Cultural diplomacy, therefore, is founded on principles and ideals such as reverence for cultural heritage and diversity, worldwide intercultural dialogue, fairness, equality, interdependence, human rights, security, and global peace and stability. However, cultural diplomacy's mode of operation has evolved over time, shifting from a bipolar to a multipolar international framework. Gienow-Hecht and Donfried [17] argued that it is important to have a thorough understanding of all key characteristics of cultural diplomacy in order to analyze all phenomena in international relations and cultural diplomacy. Further, the inclusion of the public, private, and civil society as agents in each tourist destination's activities became a vehicle for cultural diplomacy.

III. METHODOLOGY

The employed research method in this article is a qualitative method that aims to explore and understand the meaning coming from social or humanitarian problems [18] as well as literature study. The data obtained and processed were retrieved through literature, booklets, leaflets, books, periodicals, and internet sites and sources relevant to the problem, as well as other sources that support and are relevant to the subject matter in research.

Secondary data collected from the literature were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The purpose of a qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data, namely what is stated by the research objectives concerned in writing or orally, and real behavior. There was a breakdown of data on tourism policies in Sweden and Finland to build sustainable tourism and foreign policies in promoting sustainable tourism adopted by both countries.

The data on sustainable tourism were retrieved from the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) to describe the profile and details of each destination of the chosen countries. The GDS-Index was created with the aim of promoting the long-term growth of international meeting destinations by highlighting best practices and responsible business tourism. This Index is important in this research for highlighting the good output of Sweden and Finland as the best practicing countries for adopting sustainable tourism and making great at their name due to their policies.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A multilateral and multilevel involvement of tourism stakeholders in well-defined processes that go beyond tourism and become part of host countries' cultural diplomacy serves as an effective way to achieve global mutual understanding [9]. Tourism is an arena for a country to promote its cultural values. In addition to the positive value that can be obtained from tourism, the side effect for a country caused by the urban planning will cause very detrimental problems, especially for local residents, if it is not properly controlled. One of the problems that arise due to the imbalance of tourism city management is over-tourism. The phenomenon of over-tourism is a new problem that arises from a large number of tourist arrivals. Over-tourism differs from overcrowding as this is a far bigger and more complex problem. Over-tourism is described as a situation in which the impact of tourism, at a specific time and in a specific place, exceeds a physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political ability threshold. Psychological capability refers to people's ability to emotionally cope with the swarming effect (residents and/or other visitors). This term encompasses all types of stress resulting from increased height and visitor numbers.

The fact that tourism development has some drawbacks is a well-known problem. Some of the sector's troublesome consequences include increased resource use, increased noise, air and water pollution, and a greater prominence of tourism as a cause of climate change [19]. In overcoming problems such as over-tourism, the policies taken by a country are very important in regulating the imbalance that occurs. Sweden and Finland are two of the countries in Northern Europe that have implemented the concept of sustainable tourism since before 2015 and are countries that are considered successful in the absorption of this concept. The policies taken by Sweden and Finland can become a benchmark for other countries.

Tourism has positive results for economic development. Tourism, on the other hand, is a highly dynamic industry that involves many parties with diverse interests and necessitates considerable resources. Tourism growth that is well-managed can have a positive impact on the country's social, cultural, economic, environmental, and political development, as well as the communities surrounding tourist

destinations. Uncontrolled tourism growth, on the other hand, can have disastrous consequences for natural resources, consumption habits, pollution, and social structures [20].

Tourism's detrimental effect on the environment threatens to deplete the natural resources on which it is based. Tourism growth can have negative environmental consequences such as soil erosion, deforestation, and discharge into the sea, loss of natural resources, increased pressure on endangered species, and increased vulnerability to forest fires [21]. This will result in a crisis in water resources, and can force local people to compete for the use of natural resources. Tourism, on the other hand, has the potential to have a positive impact on the environment by contributing to environmental conservation and preservation. As a result, there will be a greater understanding of environmental values, which can be used to fund the conservation of natural areas and boost the tourist destination country's economy.

Sustainable tourism has many positive goals, but in its management there must be a concrete system to measure results and progress. Benchmarking is a benchmark commonly used in the tourism sector. Examples of benchmarks used include limiting the consumption of fresh water in liters per guest per night [22]. With this benchmark, the potential for saving natural resources as an effort in the sustainable tourism industry can be real and achieved.

4.1 Finland and Its Success in Sustainable Tourism

Finland is one of the world's first countries to develop a national policy to address sustainable consumption and development [23]. This program was designed by a committee consisting of various elements of society with different interests with the aim of making Finland one of the most efficient and environmentally friendly societies in the world by 2025. Finland strives to continue to carry out sustainable programs for all their tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism aims to have a positive effect on the environment, community, and economy while minimizing environmental impact and preserving local culture. This right of all states that everyone living in or visiting Finland has the right to wander the countryside, forage, fish on the line, and enjoy recreational use of natural areas, including on private land. As a result of their interaction with nature, Finland instinctively embraces the idea of sustainability. Finland is a pioneer in the environmental field thanks to a belief framework based on reverence for nature.

In 2019, the GDS-index [24], which rates cities around the world on environmental and social sustainability, places Helsinki, Finland's capital, at number five, and Espoo, Finland's largest city, at number ten. The index was first released in 2018, with the aim of demonstrating how cities can continue to attract business and visitors without compromising environmental health and social stability. Leading scholars and policymakers in the sustainability area assembled this Index. The GDS-index reported in their overview of Helsinki that the city is committed to supporting green values in all of its activities, continuing to improve environmental conservation and sustainable development while keeping global challenges in mind. Finland has been named the greenest country by this index due to the special attention it paid to the number and accessibility of green spaces for all residents.

European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) [25] is the largest European destination network approved by Europe for the quality of their travel offerings and their respect for the environment. EDEN makes competitions every year and three tourist destinations in Finland have become the winners. The three destinations are Wild Taiga which won in 2009, Saimaa Holiday in 2010, and Fiskars Village in 2017. This proves that the Finnish government and its people are serious and committed to sustainable tourism. Fiskars Village is the winner of a competition organized by EDEN in the category of cultural tourism. Located 100 kilometers west of Helsinki, it is surrounded by beautiful river valleys, surrounded by lakes, forests and cultural landscapes. Nature trails can be enjoyed on foot or on mountain bikes which can be rented from the center of the Fiskars Village Trail. This place was one of Finland's first iron factories and the forerunner of the industry. The village is known for not only producing iron, but also quality cutlery, knives and scissors. Fiskars Village is a unique destination because design, arts and crafts meet nature, history and architecture. The region has attracted artisans and artistically minded individuals for centuries, and Fiskars is now recognized as a center for Finnish art and design. The Onoma cooperative was founded in Fiskars in 1996 and its 113 members all live or work in the area. There are more than 30 boutiques and workshops where visitors can find local craft products and various unique design items. Apart from cultural tours, tourists can also taste local beers and apple cider made from natural ingredients and seasoned with local plantations in every restaurant as a Finnish culinary tradition.

As the paragraph before stressed, Finland has achieved the goal of sustainable tourism thanks to the cooperative way between the government as the policy makers as well as the private sectors and civil society. To encourage local culture and the tourism industry to follow sustainable practices, the government decided to create the Sustainable Travel Finland program, which allows potential tourists easier access to Visit Finland's official tourism website. The initiative aims to help Finnish tourism businesses and destinations adopt more environmentally friendly practices.

4.2 Sweden's Policy for Sustainable Tourism

Tillväxtverket, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth [26], is in charge of national tourism development, while Visit Sweden promotes Sweden as a tourist destination internationally. Visit Sweden is a government-owned organization that promotes Sweden as a tourist destination around the world. The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation oversees both organizations. As regards to regional and local arrangements, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has recently increased its tourism partnership work providing a helpful network to share knowledge and connect various interests.

The UN SDGs guide's for Swedish policy has been successfully applied. The major challenges for Swedish tourism are connectivity and transportation, small enterprise profitability, destination and product development, digitalization, seasonality and sustainability [27]. Transportation is crucial and at the same time challenging because of Sweden's geography and location, combined with a relatively small population and sparsely populated areas. These circumstances also make rural tourism development and the installation of high speed internet access challenging. The policy priority is to develop a long-term strategy to run until 2030 that promotes sustainable tourism development and provides a platform to implement actions that meets both national and global challenges [27].

Collaboration between national agencies has been strengthened in Sweden in recent years. Through dialogue and a structured working process, led by Tillväxtverket, a common agenda and activity plan has been developed. Every activity or project should include at least two active agencies, address a national challenge and contribute to increased knowledge and a long-term solution to a concrete problem. As an example, the Miranda project - micro-based decision support for sustainable tourism travelling and infrastructure planning was developed in close co-operation with the Swedish Transport Administration, Tillväxtverket and Dalarna University. This has the aim to increase knowledge and improve methods and decision-making for infrastructure and traffic planning to better meet the specific needs of tourism. The approach is to increase the understanding of the scope of tourism at the local and regional level by analyzing relevant transport flows and indicators, which in turn provides better opportunities to evaluate and plan for national infrastructure investments[28].

Meanwhile, the Swedish government agreed in June 1995 that one of the four goals of Swedish consumer policy should be to establish consumption and production practices that are less harmful to the environment and contribute to long-term sustainable growth [29].All of this demonstrates that for the tourism industry, sustainability has become an essential policy framework tool. In Sweden, all sectors share a shared responsibility for achieving long-term sustainability within their policy areas.

At the GDS-index 2019, Gothenburg, a city in Sweden holds the position of a winner for the best sustainable city destination for four times in a row[24]. That was followed by the city of Malmo in the seventh place, The city of Uppsala in the ninth place, and the capital of Sweden, Stockholm takes the rank in number twelve. From this index ranking, it shows that Sweden has been successful in their sustainable tourism development.

Table 1: The Elements of Sustainable Tourism and Their Adoption by Sweden and Finland

Elements	Sweden	Finland
Protecting biodiversity	YES	YES
Protecting cultural heritage	YES	YES
Empowering and promoting children	YES	YES
Empowering and promoting women	YES	YES
Empowering and promoting the elderly	NO	NO
Empowering and promoting people with disabilities	NO	YES
Empowering and promoting indigenous and local communities	YES	YES

Source: The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2020 of Sweden, presented by Ann Linde of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The tourism sector is one of the largest sources of income in Europe. The management of a tourist destination is similar to the management of natural resources. Local people and government must find the right solution in dealing with the problem of excessive tourist arrivals and protect the environment. Europe is already aware of the importance of sustainable tourism for the environment. Countries in Europe compete to continue to create the best tourism destinations that not only develop the economic sector, but also help build the environment. Among the European countries that have successfully implemented sustainable tourism are Sweden and Finland. Local people and government participate in protecting the natural resources they inherit while building and promoting their country through sustainable tourism. Finland's success in this sector can be measured by the twelve main goals of sustainable tourism that have been achieved since the implementation of this system. Sweden and Finland have topped the World Economic Forum's Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI) since 2000 and topped the GDS-index as well. Other international indices that represent environmental sustainability, productivity, clean water, and creative solutions place Sweden and Finland high. This demonstrates that these two countries have a strong capacity to deal with environmental issues, as well as their progress in implementing the sustainable tourism concept.

Sustainable tourism aims to have a positive effect on nature, society, and the economy while also minimizing environmental impact and respecting local cultures. Tourism planning and destination creation that is sustainable needs the ability and structural capacity to incorporate multiple policy areas while taking into account a range of natural, cultural, and human properties. Without the proper laws and regulations in effect, a destination would be unable to effectively enforce the principles of sustainable tourism strategy. It is important to remember that a sustainable tourism strategy must include the management of all tourism resources such that it meets social-economic and aesthetic needs while preserving cultural heritage. In other words, sustainable tourism's activities serve as a tool for cultural diplomacy under the auspices of multilateralism. Under the umbrella of multilateralism, sustainable tourism practices become a tool for cultural diplomacy.

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