



RURAL TOURISM AS A LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY

COMPARING THE WEST WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Abstract

Many members of rural communities leave their home to move to urban centres as a livelihood strategy. This thesis explores the viability of rural tourism as a livelihood strategy to slow down the rural-urban migration. For this, it takes a comparative case study approach to explore the differences in a case of the West with a case of the Global South. The sustainable livelihoods framework is applied to them. Methodological it makes use of interviews. The research resulted in the finding that the case context matters. Here especially the institutional arrangements were identified as a key factor. Depending on their state, they can facilitate the development or in the case of Global South, hinder it. Moreover, the results showed that rural tourism as a concept of the West is transferable to the Global South. In both cases, livelihood developments have been identified, and rural communities adapted it as a livelihood strategy. The findings are limited by the low number of interviews and the scope on horizontal institutions. Nonetheless, it was concluded that rural tourism could be applied in practice to provide a livelihood strategy to rural communities if appropriate policy and management measures are being taken that take the local context into account.

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1.Introduction

The 21st century marks the first time in history when the percentage of people living in urban areas outweighs the percentage of people living in rural areas (Satterthwaite, McGranahan, & Tacoli, 2010). Moreover, data has indicated that as of 2007, more people have been living in urban centres than in rural areas (United Nations, 2014). However, there is a disparity in urbanisation between more developed regions and less developed regions (United Nations, 2009).

The expectation for 2050 is that 68% of the world population will live in urban areas and only very few countries will remain by then, that have a higher rural population than their urban counterpart. (United Nations, 2018). This so-called out-migration, which describes the migration of the rural population to urban areas, has been an ongoing process that hinders the economic and social livelihood of the remaining rural communities (Anand, Chandan, & Singh, 2012 as cited in Xue & Kerstetter, 2019). Rural areas are among the poorest regions in the world and even though since 2015 immense progress has been made to eliminate global poverty, most people who live under \$1.9 per day are in rural areas that depend on agricultural income (World Bank, 2018). Targeting these communities has become increasingly difficult, yet there are possible strategies. Tourism development can be a possibility to provide a way of income since many studies have linked tourism as a possible livelihood strategy (Iorio & Corsale, 2010; Tao & Wall, 2009). This kind of tourism, which takes place in rural areas, has been described as rural tourism (RT), which will be the focus of this thesis (Lane, 1994).

One reason for the decline of many rural areas is predominantly push factors (Hare, 1999) which describe numerous problems rural communities face and resulting in mostly younger inhabitants moving to the urban centres (Anand, Chandan & Singh, 2012 as cited in Xue & Kerstetter, 2019). The concept of RT is explored as a possible solution to eliminate some of these push factors and to potentially slow down the rate of urbanisation while increasing the livelihood of rural communities.

RT, as a concept has its roots in the romantic movement of Europe (Lane, 2009). It has further been used throughout the 20th century to increase the livelihood of the rural communities (R. Sharpley, 2002). When applying a western idea that was developed in a different context to a country of the global south, the question arises to what extent this is possible.

Especially within the field of development, this has often been done unsuccessfully. For example, Rostow's model of growth (cf. Itagaki, 1963) which has been criticised by many scholars (Escobar, 1995). This thesis attempts to understand how fruitful it is to apply 'western ideas and concepts' to countries of the global south and tries to answer the following research question:

To what extent can the European concept of rural tourism be used in the global south as a tool to increase the livelihood of rural populations?

The thesis starts with a review of the existing literature, pointing out that a case study approach to the local context of each rural area is necessary. Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature, that compares a western destination with RT with one of the Global South. This gap shows a lack of research on RT as a viable option in the Global South. In doing so, this thesis aims to explore the role RT can play as a livelihood strategy, to halt out-migration of rural areas and to diversify the local economy. After this, the research areas and methods are described. At last, a discussion of the results takes place, and the research question is answered. The thesis ends with a conclusion on the practical applications of the findings and limitations to the research.

2.Literature Review

Rural tourism, as defined by Lane (1994), is any form of tourism that takes place in rural areas, is rural in function, scale and of a traditional character. He further adds that there are many different instances of RT, based on the diverse rural landscapes, that differ in their “environment, economy, history and location” (Lane, 1994, p. 14). This literature review tries to give an overview of the existing research. The literature on RT can overall be divided into two sections. One section looks at the theoretical concepts and tries to find a more concise definition or is within the tourism management domain on how to manage this sort of tourism. The other section are several case studies around the globe, where RT is used as a development tool. There is a variety of definitions of RT that differ across countries and/or scholarly articles (e.g., Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014; Okech, Haghiri, & George, 2012). To provide an overview of the debate on the definition, it is organised historically. Afterwards, RT is further conceptualised by looking at its effects and challenges. Also, RT as a policy tool to target specific problems rural communities face is shortly discussed

2.1 The history of RT

The first wave of RT emerged during the romantic movement in the 19th century as a response to the current industrialisation. The rural was seen as a natural world, where people from the urban centres could escape to (Lane, 2009). Lane further points out, that with the end of World War II a growing interest in RT happened, especially across Europe. This second wave was a result of the diminishing role of agriculture.

Additionally, new development ideas emerged using RT as a policy tool. Such strategies were implemented before and beyond the 1990s (Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014; R. Sharpley, 2002). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also had a growing interest in this policy tool to address development challenges (Lane, 2009) and further adapted and implement it in their ‘new rural paradigm’ (OECD, 2006 as cited in Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014). While there has been extensive interest in the field, before 1994, the concept of RT remained vague and undefined. Richard Sharpley and Roberts (2004) point out that the special issue of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism was the first try to conceptualise and find a clear definition. In this issue, the publication by Lane (1994) ‘What is Rural Tourism’ was published, which remains frequently referenced in the literature. Lane there defined RT as “tourism, which takes place in the countryside” (1994, p.9).

He further adds that a simple definition is not adequate to describe this phenomenon due to problems to define rural areas in general. As a result, he describes in depth, that RT is also not only agro- or farm- tourism but can be of many other forms, such as nature-based activities like animal watching. Also, conservation and heritage holidays can be included. Lane points out that RT must be seen in regard to the continuum between the rural and urban areas. “In its ‘purest’ form [RT] should be: located in rural areas, functionally rural [...], rural in scale [...], traditional in character [...], of many different kinds” (1994, p.14).

2.2 RT as a case

Since then, numerous papers have been published on the topic, yet a clear definition remains missing. The lack of a precise definition is mainly due to the specificities of RT, which differs across countries. Gao, Huang, and Huang (2009) argue that RT can only be a case study due to the differences in rurality. This argument is in line with work by (George, Mair, & Reid, 2009), in which they point out the difficulty to define the rural, and how it differs around the world. From this follows that RT and its definition depend on the context. George et al. raise the question as to define rural just as the opposite of the urban or to use a typology from the OECD (1994 as cited in George et al., 2009). This is in line with the initial work by Lane (1994), who argues that RT can be of many different forms, depending on where in the world it is taking place. As a result, RT must be studied in the local context due to the differences in the definition of the rural. In order to understand the local context, the in-depth analysis of a case study is thus necessary.

2.3 RT as a policy tool

Recently, an emerging theme in the literature is about using RT as a development tool. As Deroi (1991) and Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) point out, RT has and is used as a response to deal with the worldwide decline in income from agricultural activities. Using the rural as an asset, commodifying it, creates natural capital. The often-small scale operations of RT are often relying on those natural assets and are on farms. Moreover, they often have a cultural background (Okech et al., 2012). In studying those, again, the local context is of high importance. The RT sector has been identified as a way to use tourism for development in rural areas (OECD, 2001 as cited in George et al., 2009). This idea is supported by Okech et al. (2012) who identify tourism as one of the few opportunities for rural areas to counter the decline of their area. Especially if it is of small scale, it might have the potential to directly benefit the local population.

Due the decline of income from agricultural activities, which used to be in many cases their primary income, rural areas are transforming. This transformation often comes with several socio-economic problems. This can be a loss of public services and a lack of job opportunities, which results in the migration of many to urban areas in the search for work. RT can, therefore, offer a possible solution, acting as a development tool.

2.4 Benefits of RT

It is important to outline which benefits or effect RT has in order to use it as a development tool. In cases where RT has been implemented, it has been identified to address the social and economic challenges in these areas (Hall and Jenkins, 1998 as cited in R. Sharpley, 2002). Anand, Chandan, & Singh (2012) refer to effects on a macro level where RT can help to maintain the social structure by creating job opportunities and preventing out-migration and that it can provide a new livelihood strategy for households on a micro level (as cited in Xue & Kerstetter, 2019). Moreover, RT protects the resource of the natural environment as a valuable asset. (Roberts and Hall, 2001 as cited in Garrod, Wornell, & Youell, 2006; R. Sharpley, 2002). Okech et al. (2012) add that RT diversifies the economy and has the potential to revitalise the area. These effects are in line with the three livelihood strategies identified by Scoones (1998), linking RT to livelihood strategies. He proposes agricultural intensification as one of those. This strategy has been tried in the past, meaning by increasing crop production and higher yield, an increase in livelihood was expected. Scoones remarks that the results of this strategy depend highly on the specific case and should be supplemented by others. Another livelihood strategy Scoones mentions is migration. It describes, that mostly younger, sometimes highly skilled people move to urban areas to manage their livelihood. Migration can be due to a lack of opportunities for them in the rural setting, such as no adequate jobs or economic development. As this approach threatens the social structure of many rural areas, it is not on its own a viable option. The last strategy he identified is livelihood diversification. This strategy is in line with research by Okech et al. (2012) and Tao & Wall (in press, as cited in Shen, Hughey, & Simmons, 2008) in which they argue that RT acts as complementation of agricultural activities and labour migration, rather than a standalone strategy. The goal of RT policies is to aim at the diversification of the local economy.

2.5 Challenges

Nonetheless, with the list of possible positive effects being rather ambitious, the question arises why RT has not solved many of the existing problems yet, as pointed out by R. Sharpley (2002). Challenges that arise with the implementation are a possible explanation for this. A possible problem that arises is a conflict over resources, where the natural capital is then not used only for agricultural purposes, but also for tourist activities (Garrod et al., 2006). Other challenges fall within the field of tourism studies, where commercial, economic and logistical problems have to be solved, a tourism product needs to be developed, infrastructure needs to be improved, and skills need to be obtained (Okech et al., 2012).

Another problem is that rural areas are very diverse and not equally attractive to tourists (Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014; R. Sharpley, 2002). Other challenges include the need to invest in developing RT. Depending on the available financial capital, the local cannot stem necessary investments (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000 as cited in R. Sharpley, 2002). Thus, communities without the necessary assets will not be able to apply and test RT to increase their livelihood without outside sponsors.

2.6 Summary and research gap

To summarise, the concept of RT lacks a clear definition and must be studied in its local context. It has been used and promoted as a development tool, and positive effects have been attributed to it. However, for it to be successful, it cannot be the sole strategy, but rather must act to diversify the livelihood of the rural population. For it to be effective, several challenges must be overcome.

After reviewing the available literature, it became clear what is missing is a comparative approach. It has been argued, by Shen et al. (2008), that RT is a western idea, yet in many cases carried out in countries of the global south. So, comparing two cases, one from the traditional west with a case from the global south can gather information on how comparable these cases are, and how far western constructs can be applied to the global south. Watson (2004) did something similar about planning theories and found insights into the limitations of applying those in the global south. In using a concept derived from the west and comparing a case from the west with a case from the global south, the implications and the viability of the concept can be further explored; deepening the understanding if development tools can be transferred across different countries.

3. Analytical Framework

To look at the livelihood of rural populations, an approach from the development field has been chosen. The sustainable livelihoods approach which traditionally focuses on agricultural practices has been adapted for tourism research by Shen et al. (2008) and applied to different research projects within the tourism domain (e.g., Xue & Kerstetter, 2019). Rather than looking at rural development through crop production or external aid, it is a more comprehensive approach, that also has parallels to Scoones (1998) approach to livelihood strategies for rural populations. Through this approach, the background of the case can be explored, and themes related to different livelihoods can be explored in detail. Many themes found in the literature review were integrated into the framework. First off, the framework pays a dividend to the case context. In this framework, the case context is institutional arrangements, vulnerabilities and the tourism industry itself. Tourism is the type of customers and every theme that falls within the field of tourism management. The literature has shown that there are a lot of articles that focus on managerial issues and solutions for RT. It has also been pointed out that proper tourism management is necessary to overcome challenges and to develop an economically successful industry. Another hurdle was mentioned in regard to capital, such as human or financial. Human capital is part of the framework. At last, the literature has shown that the overall aim of RT policies are livelihood developments. These can be economic through providing income or social by halting out-migration.

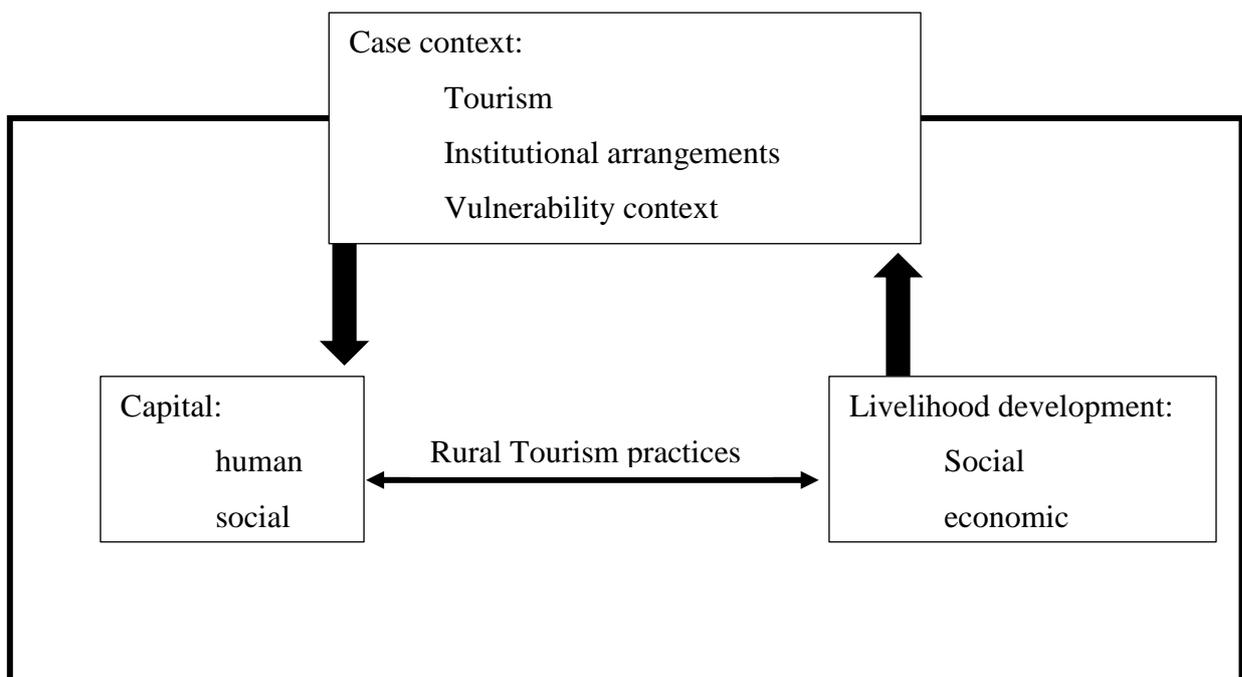


Figure 1: Analytical framework. Adapted from Shen et al. (2008).

The framework has been adapted to fit the scope of this research. It was simplified for two reasons. First, this research is carried out over a short time, where not every detail of the case can be explored. Second, as this framework was derived from prior case studies, it cannot be claimed that the cases in this research, would have a similar one. For simplification, the context has been framed existing of a description of the tourism product, its vulnerability context and the institutional arrangements. Tourism and non-tourism-related activities have been compressed to RT practices due to the scope of the research. The focus for capital is on human and social capital. So, natural, economic, and institutional capital have been left out, due to the scale of the research. With only looking at those two, the development focus was also only on economic and social developments. A short description of what each category describes follows (Shen et al., 2008):

- Tourism entails a description of the overall tourism product, its marketing, its visitor profile. Within this category the domain of tourism management is analysed.
- Institutional arrangements refer to the structure of the involved institutions. Vertical arrangements refer to government-related institutions, while horizontal arrangements refer to the tourists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders.
- The vulnerability context refers to shocks and seasonality, but also includes vulnerabilities that are created by institutional arrangements and trends in the tourism market.
- Human capital refers to the available skills of the local community. It can also include available training programs as they increase the existing human capital. Moreover, it also looks at the availability of the workforce.
- Social capital looks at the available social networks, the integration of the community with the local tourism industry and their perceptions about tourism.
- Rural tourism practices refer to the types of activities and products that are being used to create a livelihood
- Livelihood developments refer to a change in economic or social factors as a direct or indirect result of RT

3.1 Research questions

The main research question of this thesis is:

CRQ: To what extent can the European concept of rural tourism be used in the global south as a tool to increase the livelihood of rural populations?

Additionally, the following more specific research questions were formulated:

SRQ1: How do contextual factors (tourism, institutional arrangements, vulnerabilities.) influence regional rural tourism initiatives/practices?

SRQ2: How do human and social capital affect regional rural tourism practices?

SRQ3: How did RT influence socio-economic livelihood development in the region?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design

Several authors have pointed out that RT must be understood in its local context (Gao et al., 2009; George et al., 2009; Lane, 1994). Moreover, the used analytical framework considers the context. For this reason, a case study design was chosen. A case study design gives practical, context-dependent knowledge to the researcher and is not less valuable than theoretical knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). It can advance the understanding of RT. As the main research question focuses on comparing RT in a western context with a country of the global south, the design is a multiple –case study. Through this decision, the comparison of both cases is possible. The comparative case study design does not search for unique outlier cases but rather compares two typical cases. The cases are a representation of the west and global south with this approach (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). As the goal is to obtain in-depth descriptions of the cases, a qualitative approach has been chosen. The next section describes the two cases that have been chosen. The cases can be for the sake of this research be regarded as being representative of their regions of the world and not unique, outlier cases.

4.2 Case selection and description

The cases were selected on four criteria. First, they were not supposed to be very special occurrences of RT. Second, information needed to be available about the areas. Third, people were required to speak English and fourth, stakeholders needed to be available for interviews. The following sections introduce the research areas.

4.2.1 Western tourism circuit, Kenya.

The western tourism circuit lies within the former provinces of Nyanza and Western Province. The Ministry of Tourism created this circuit. The research area comprises 10 counties. They are shown in Figure X. They are Bungoma, Busia, Homa, Bay, Kakamega, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori, Nyamira, Siaya and Vihiga (Ogucha, Rigungu, Kiama, & Mukolwe, 2015). Throughout this thesis, the name western circuit, western tourism circuit and western Kenya are used interchangeably. The area contains two major natural attractions, which are Ruma national Park and Kakamega forest. Additionally, it is home to several cultural sites, such as Kit Mikaye. There are a few different community-run projects such as community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) present in the area (Kenya Tourist Board, n.a.).

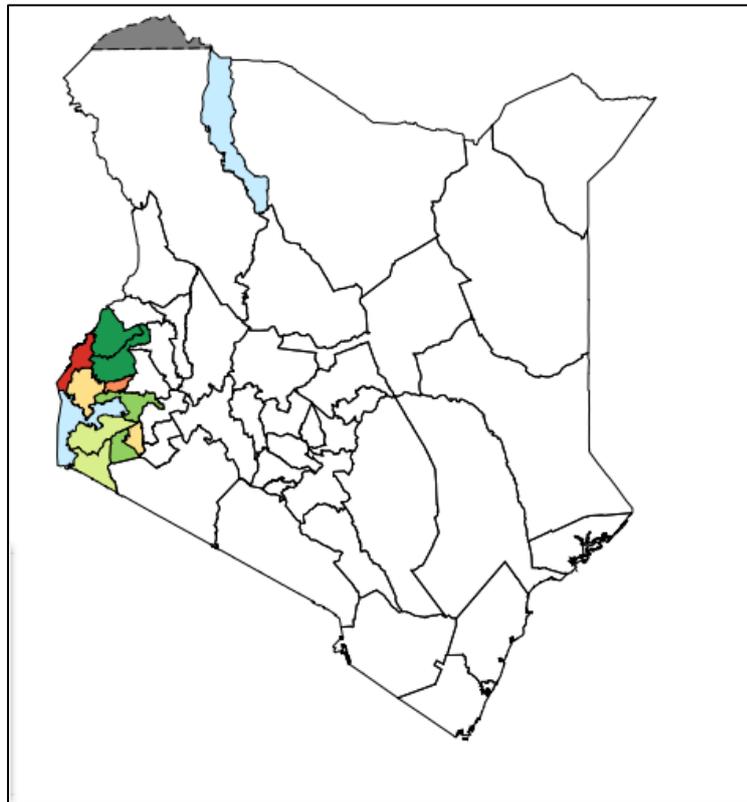


Figure 2: Western tourism circuit counties within Kenya. Coloured counties lie within the circuit. Blue areas mark water. Taken from Kenya Data Portal (2009).

4.2.2 Hoge Veluwe, Gelderland, the Netherlands.

The national park the Hoge Veluwe is an area in the centre of the Netherlands in the province of Gelderland. It is a well-known attraction that has been under protection since 1909 and receives a big number of visitors every year (Hein, 2011). The park is surrounded by the villages of Otterlo, Hoenderloo and Schaarsbergen. The area falls within the municipalities of Ede, Arnhem and Apeldoorn. The Hoge Veluwe is part of the bigger ecosystem of the Veluwe (ZKA, 2013). Figure X shows the location of the park within the province. The park is now owned and managed by a foundation. As of 2016, the economic impact on the region is €69 million and around 546.000 people have visited the park that year. (Stichting de Hoge Veluwe, 2016). The surrounding area provides accommodations, restaurants and other activities to visitors in the area.



Figure 3: Hoge Veluwe in Gelderland. The park is located at number 1. Taken from (ZKA, 2013).

4.3 Data collection

The first step of the data collection was to identify stakeholders in the RT industry for both cases. The focus here was to find government officials, NGOs, tourism organisation, destination management organisations (DMOs), tour operators and the park management of the two national parks. The stakeholders were then contacted by Email to set up interviews.

The second step involved the interviews. In total, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted. Four were conducted face to face, while the other four were conducted via Skype. The interviews followed the themes that have been identified in the literature review and were structured by following the analytical framework. The themes framed the context of the tourism market, the existing institutional arrangements and the vulnerability context. Moreover, questions explored the available human, social capital and the types of RT practices. At last, information on socio-economic developments has been obtained. The calls and in-person conversations were recorded, after gaining permission by the respondent.

4.3.1 Scope of research and limitations of data collection.

The research focuses on professional tourism actors such as destination management organisations, park management, non- government organisations that are involved in the local tourism industry and tourism researchers. While the initial plan was also to include the local tourism government, this was not possible in both cases as they were not available for an interview. Moreover, local RT businesses were also not included. For the case of Kenya, that was not possible due to the research design. The rural character of the research area makes the availability of the internet outside of bigger cities very scarce, and if there is one, the connection is very unstable. This fact ruled out the possibility to interview these actors via Skype. As this was not possible for the case of Kenya, to maintain comparability of both cases, a similar approach for the case of the Netherlands was taken. Another factor that resulted in an exclusion of these actors was that Dutch public holidays together with the start of a busier tourism season collided with the timeframe of the data collection, so businesses were unwilling to participate in interviews. At last, the reason that interviews had to be held in English was an argument for some Dutch actors to deny an interview.

4.4 Data analysis

The interviews resulted in two sets of data. Data set one consists of four Skype interviews with stakeholders from the western tourism circuit. Two respondents are from two different tourism associations. One respondent works for an NGO that focuses on the promotion of CBTEs. The last works as a tour operator in the western circuit. All interviews were transcribed before being data processed. For that, the qualitative data was coded following the analytical framework.

The second data set consists of four face to face interviews from the Hoge Veluwe. One interviewee works with the park management. One works for the local DMO. Another interview was with a tourism researcher. The last interview was with a local tourism worker that lived in the area for more than 50 years. The interviews were then processed like data set one. In the last step, the findings were combined to enable a comparison. To report the findings, the choice fell on creating a case description rather than following the emerged themes (cf. Yin, 2009). The structure followed the analytical framework. At last, a comparison of both cases took place, which describes similarities and differences of both cases.

5.Results

5.1 The case of Ruma National Park in Nyanza Province, Kenya

5.1.1 Context:

5.1.1.1 Tourism.

“If I get a guest from the coastal part of Kenya visiting Kisumu, he will not be considered a tourist because he is local. But if we get an inbound tourist, they will say this is a tourist.”- An employee of a tourism association.

Absolute arrival numbers are not available for the western circuit, but one occurrence that has been mentioned is that the local community does not perceive domestic visitors as tourists. Due to that, most tourists in their mind are international. Overall, it is more complicated than that. While there are foreign visitors to the area, it must be mentioned that not every non-Kenyan in the area is there for touristic purposes. There is a huge influx of NGOs and their many volunteers that operate in the western tourism circuit. The product for international tourists is about experiencing another form of tourism, a more community- based form of tourism. For the domestic market, the area is focused on conferences. During conferences, bigger hotels are used to host a delegation that visits the area for a couple of hours or days. During their stay, they tend to not experience any touristic activities.

At last, it is important to mention that this area is not frequently visited by tourists due to several factors such as tourism management-related problems, institutional issues and a lack of capital. A detailed description of those can be found further in the results. The focus of the analysis is mostly on international visitors, as many organisations in the area try to attract those.

“Majority of tourists who come into Kenya, 90% end up in Masai Mara.”- An employee of a tourism association.

When looking at Kenya in general, it is important to comprehend what the tourism product of the country is to understand the tourists travel behaviour. Kenya advertises itself as the land of the Masai Mara, and if someone visits Kenya, they have to visit this national park. After this, according to an employee of a tourism destination for the western circuit, tourists tend to visit *“other destinations like Amboseli, Mombasa and Samburu”*. None of these places is in western Kenya. The products that are being sold is beaches and wildlife.

A local tour operator put it this way: *“They go to visit other different parts, but nobody comes to western Kenya”*. As of this, the number of tourists is very low. In the interviews, it became clear that this is also due to a lack of marketing.

“Western Circuit of Kenya tourism sector is totally unmarketed. The government of Kenya has never invested in marketing it as a product, not locally and also not globally.” An employee of a tourism association.

Researching the travel product of western Kenya, it became clear that there is a lack of online resources available. Many tour operators did not include any destinations of that area. For organisations that operated there; in many cases, the website did not work or contact with the operator was impossible. In general, a lack of information on possibilities emerged. This experience is in line with what an employee of the regional tourism association that markets the western circuit mentioned. He stated that overall, the area is not very well known and because of that, it is not on the radar of people. In addition, many people are not searching for it specifically. Tourists who are planning a holiday to Kenya go to the beaches or Masai Mara. A second reason he mentioned is that there is a lack of developed tourism products. While there are activities available in the region, finding information about those can be tricky. Moreover, as many tour operators do not contain the area, tourists will have to book more individualistic rather than joining an organised tour. The last problem he pointed out is access to the area. While the first reason has already been discussed a bit, the other two reasons will now be analysed in detail.

“To make the area successful [...], to make it saleable they would have to include Masai Mara.”-A local tour operator.

During the interviews and prior research, it became clear that many operators do not include attractions of the western circuit. Even in Kisumu, a bigger city with the local airport for this area, many tour operators offer the Masai Mara as their core product. However, there are exceptions to tour operators who are specialised in western Kenya. They cater to tourists with more time or repeat visitors that can visit areas in western Kenya solely or combine it with another attraction. They also cater to tourists who prefer to experience local communities in an area without much visitors rather than the main tourist sights. Nonetheless, for most tour operators, this area remains blank or is solely used as a transit route into the neighbouring countries.

An initiative to change the exclusion of western circuit has been started by one of the tourism associations. Through collaboration with local businesses, they have been able to invite tour operators from Nairobi to visit the area and experience the available products, such as nature and heritage-based activities. As a direct result, two of those have implemented operations to the region, according to the association. For the future, more of these events are planned to integrate the products of the western circuit into the packages.

“Accessing western Kenya is not quite, it’s not easy.”- A local tour operator.

Access to Kenya for international tourists takes place via Nairobi. Direct flights from Europe, for example, go either directly to Nairobi or in some cases Mombasa. Kisumu, the airport of the western circuit is not directly accessible via international flights. Due to this, visitors must make a layover. The frequency of flights to the west has also been mentioned extensively by a local tour operator. Depending on the time of the day, longer waiting times might be necessary. As many tourists have a very limited amount of days, they often go for more time efficient options. Even flights from neighbouring countries arrive via Nairobi, also not opening the area for tourists that visit multiple countries in eastern Africa. As a possible solution, a local tour operator mentioned implementing direct flights to Kisumu.

5.1.1.2 Institutional arrangements.

“For the purpose of marketing the region was clustered as western tourist circuit by the Ministry of Tourism.” An employee of a tourism association.

As of 2009, the government of Kenya decided to abolish its provincial government structure and transformed the provinces into smaller counties. Due to this transition, the former Nyanza province does not exist anymore in an institutional context but is still often referred to. Many counties of former Nyanza and Western province are now referred to as the western tourist circuit Kenya or shortly western circuit. It consists of 10 counties, and the information of this case study refers to the complete circuit as it is marketed as one product. During the interviews, it became clearer that this structural change made government officials more approachable for the tourism associations.

The Ministry of Tourism regulates tourism-related matters in the regions. They are responsible for the regulatory frameworks and aim to promote tourism development. Moreover, two tourism associations market the region, which can be classified as DMOs. They try to lobby the interests of their stakeholders to the government and act as a middle-man between the private and the public.

Moreover, there are also community-based organisations active in the area that promote and develop CBTEs. As of this, a CBTE framework came into place and recently, the development of a homestay framework was achieved. Before these frameworks, none of those existed: a further elaboration on those frameworks is available in in the vulnerability section.

5.1.1.3 Vulnerability context

5.1.1.3.1 Institutional.

“For the longest time, the government doesn’t play an active role in the development of rural tourism. [...]. The government has trimmed their focus on the bigger tourism, the bigger hotels, the big tour operators.” An employee of a CBTE NGO.

Tourism is vulnerable to numerous factors. One such factor that can hinder tourism development is political instability. Historically western Kenya has been the stronghold of the opposition party. One interviewee, who now works for a tourism association, has mentioned an account of post-election violence that erupted in 2009 and also destroyed his tour operator office. However, more recently, this political instability has calmed down, and western Kenya is considered a safe area. Still, governmental institutions hindered tourism development according to employees of NGOs and tourism associations. An NGO worker described the tourism government as ***“having no clue what they are doing”***. Another mentioned ***“[...] they will be lost. They are supposed to be the professionals.”*** They refer to the regulatory frameworks that have been in place or are missing. For the longest time, there was no awareness from the government’s side. A framework was only implemented through lobbying efforts. Regarding homestays, existing policies hindered the development. There was a blanket of regulatory requirements that did not differ between a professionally ran hotel and a homestay. To meet these regulations was nearly impossible for operators of homestays. The guidelines changed recently through lobbying efforts. The government developed a framework for those kinds of businesses. Now they can legally operate and host tourists at a fee. Through the lobbying efforts of various organisations, they try to change the regulatory institutions and policies in a matter that helps RT development. Notwithstanding, these changes depend on governmental actors and the political parties in power. Long-term collaborations between the public and private actors for this matter can thus not be guaranteed for the future, according to an association employee.

“The two associations don’t have the blessings of the stakeholders.”- An employee of a tourism association.

There is an interesting dynamic as the region is home to two associations or DMOs, one of which has been around for more than 15 years. Nonetheless, as tourism continued to struggle with problems regarding marketing, a new one emerged around five years ago. During the interviews, it was figured out that a split of members from the first DMO resulted in the creation of a new organisation. By today, both bodies try to market the area and have a similar mandate. However, the marketing of the region remains a huge problem, even with having two associations that are active in this area. From an outside account, it was discovered, that partly responsible for this is a lack of involvement by stakeholders. These stakeholders can be local tour operators, accommodations or other forms of businesses. Many local businesses are not part of either of the associations. Others who are or have been, question the benefits of their membership. While lobbying efforts and collaboration with county governments seem to be happening, the marketing problems remain; partly also due to this rivalry among the two.

5.1.1.3.2 Seasonality.

“For the tourists, they flock into Kenya between July and October”. An employee of a tourism association.

Seasonality is a major problem for the region but also affects Kenya in general. The main travel season is between July and October for international tourists. Domestic tourists travel during the national holidays around April, when schools are closed and in the Christmas holidays. A local tour operator described that ***“you have maybe two busy months, July and August. The rest of the year it is just dead”***. While this seasonality affects the region, efforts to change this situation are currently not in place. The western circuit seems to be focusing on attracting more tourists, not looking into these sorts of vulnerabilities.

5.1.2 Rural Tourism practices.

“In my rural home, for instance, you find people who are being hosted, [...] to cultivate maize, to see how it’s done. Farming, farming cassava, the whole process of farming cassava. So, we see people trying to partake in this.”- An employee of a CBTE NGO.

The character of the local tourism activities can be explained as being very rural. There are not many tourists visiting the area, and while efforts are being made to attract more tourists, the goal is to maintain the rural character of the tourism experience.

“We don’t want to see huge traffic happen down here” was mentioned by a worker of an NGO that works with local communities. There is a mix of different activities offered in the area: heritage sites, outdoor activities, national parks such as Ruma and community interactions. They are promoted in the area, where visitors can spend a day or more with a local community, interact with them and learn about their way of life. The community also hosts them, and traditional food is being served. Visitors can stay on some farms to experience the lifestyle and participate in activities related to agricultural practices. Nonetheless, this is a niche occurrence for the area, and many of those do not offer much more than a homestay. The overall product is often not well developed. The region offers several homestays, but usually volunteers working close by make use of them. In other instances, for homestays to attract visitors, they must adjust to them to be an attractive accommodation. These adjustments may alter the way people live, such as, if they offer western food rather than what the family traditionally eats. Other homestays offer Wi-Fi to their guests and can be described as *“too posh to give an experience”* (an employee of a tourism association). Fake experiences as of that have emerged, where people have turned their home into a business, catering to the tourist but losing the authentic experience. There are not many of these cases, but they do exist in western Kenya.

5.1.3 Capital.

5.1.3.1 Human.

“Most of these people who are converting their homes into homestays do not have the required capacity to run homestays.” An employee of a CBTE NGO.

During every interview, it was revealed that many people in the tourism sector lack education. Even bigger hotels have been run quite unprofessional for most of the time. The local communities lack education on how to start CBTEs and homestay operators also lack this education. While some homestay operators used to work in the tourism industry and use this concept to create an additional income, this is not the case for many others. The level of education, especially in rural Kenya, is not comparable with Europe and while some people lack more basic skills and languages, most people have no education in tourism operations. This lack can affect the hospitality, the overall product design, the marketing, bookkeeping and planning. Local initiatives that focus on CBTEs have professionals who can teach the local community the necessary basics while taking over the duties of product design and marketing. There are private initiatives to educate people who run small businesses such as homestays. ***“[The] majority of the trainers come from Utalli college. They have a pool of trainers; they train on tour guiding techniques, customer care, front office, housekeeping and many others”*** an employee of a tourism association mentioned in the interview. Other organisations run their workshop to educate people. Also, special workshops that target specific groups, such as women, are being conducted by local NGOs. Also, the government is invested in training by financially supporting such initiatives.

“If I knew we had a boat tour at 6, I had to wake up at 4 and by 4:30, I started calling people to make sure that they have woken up. It’s like me waking them up so they can make money.”- A tour operator.

Another point that was brought up by a tour operator is about reliability and punctual of local workers. She recalled her experience when conducting tours on how she had to make sure that people would arrive at all, but also stick to a fixed schedule. In the end, she mentioned that this behaviour is a result of a lack of a reference and can be fixed with training and education.

5.1.3.2 Social.

“if you talk about tourism in western Kenya, the first thing that clicks to the mind of the locals is the mzungu factor”. An employee of a tourism association.

Mzungu is used in Kenya as a term to describe people of European descent. It has quite a negative connotation. Consequently, there is quite some apathy in rural areas directed at international visitors. Socially, the development towards more tourism is not accepted by every member of the communities. While they traditionally do not see domestic visitors as tourists, the Kenyan Tourism Board also tries to develop domestic tourism. Having more people embark on those sorts of experiences and more interactions with each other, the apathy against tourism that exists in some communities can be overcome.

There is also a challenge that needs to be surmounted when developing CBTEs. It has been described as an initiative that is being spearheaded by some members of the community. However, many parts of the community are either against it or do not understand the idea behind such an initiative. Implementing such a project is thus a long-term process that needs initiative by some members and negotiations with the wider community. An employee of the local CBTE NGO pointed out that when working with Masai people on community-led projects, the community there embraced the projects heavily as they noticed the benefits it can bring to them. The benefits are still quite limited in the western circuit, as can be seen in the next section, which makes it more difficult to point to those.

5.1.4 Livelihood development.

5.1.4.1 economic development.

“[...] you can’t say that someone is making a living out of it.” A local tour operator.

The economic benefits of RT have been described as quite small. It was mentioned that the bigger hotels in the area do not make use of local products but buy their products from bigger supermarkets, thus not boosting the local economy. Moreover, these hotels, while they might employ some locals, tend to be paying very poorly. As a result, there is little to no trickle-down effect, and the number of job opportunities is small due to the small nature of tourism development in the area. The tour operators stated that money is earned outside the western circuit, even when tours take place in the area. However, a growing number of local businesses are founded. These are, in many cases, homestays and CBTEs.

For those, ***“they source most of their products from the local neighbours”*** (an employee of a CBTE NGO). Additionally, this supply chain keeps the value creation within the local community. Moreover, for the year 2021, the conference AfriCity is coming to Kisumu. As there will be a lack of accommodation, the local tourism organisations are working on sourcing homestays to accommodate the guests. This event has been described during the interviews as potentially bringing the western circuit on the tourism map.

“So, in a way, it cushions them, in a way it cushions some of these families from the serious impacts of this drought.” An employee of the CBTE NGO.

The income that is generated from RT practices was mainly described as a small supplementary income. While it has been made clear that no one is making a living out of it, it can still have an impact. It empowers communities that normally depend on one source of income, such as agriculture. This empowerment leads to increased resilience. Having that supplementary income has and can help communities deal with a loss of income due to climate events. As agriculture is very receptive to climate change, measures that increase the locals’ resilience have important economic effects.

RT as a supplementary income, fulfils this aspect. On the topic of resilience, it was mentioned that not much awareness had been created in the western circuit. With the imminent consequences of climate change becoming more and more severe, various NGOs and UN projects have started to look into this matter. Homestays can offer one of the possible solutions.

5.1.4.2 Social development.

“So, such people [...] are more settled in the rural area because of the opportunity that CBTEs bring to them.” – An employee of a CBTE NGO.

The social development has been similarly described as being only a very minor change. What is especially the case for CBTEs is that they provide a way of living, thus giving the locals a reason to stay with their community rather than moving to a city to find work. Similar effects have been attributed to homestays. However, this is a new concept, and people still have to adjust to it. Tourism professionals who have spearheaded this idea often in their own home, have brought tourists into their local community. A local tour operator admitted that many disagreements exist over this practice in some communities. Some people fear it will disrupt their way of life, but as of now, this has not happened. Generally, the tourism businesses seem to be isolated occurrences, with a lack of interaction with the surrounding communities. Due to this, neither can benefit from each other, and an NGO worker argued that for future developments, the wider community needs to be involved in the tourism business to prevent apathy against foreign visitors. As tourism development is still very small, the effects on the social remain insignificant.

5.2 The case of the Hoge Veluwe, Gelderland, the Netherlands

5.2.1 Context.

5.2.1.1 Tourism.

“We are in for the domestic customers. We are in the, yeah actually the number one position in Holland.”- An employee of the park management.

The focus of the region is on the domestic customer. Statistically, the province of Gelderland is the number one destination of the Netherlands for domestic customers. This entails day visitors from the surrounding provinces who visit the region on a sunny day of the weekend or people from farther away in the Netherlands who spend their public holidays on one of the surrounding campings. During the interview, it became evident that the region wants to maintain this position. That is why they are running advertising campaigns that appeal to the domestic customer. One such initiative is ‘Gelderse Streken’. An employee of the regional DMO mentioned that this campaign started with using the radio and television but has recently shifted their focus to online advertisements. The initiative’s goal is to maintain a strong position for the domestic market. However, as the main season around the Dutch holidays is already in many cases fully booked, off-season travel is now promoted to the customers, especially during spring and autumn. This is due to the strong seasonality of the region, which is further elaborated in the section on vulnerability.

“Especially from Germany, they come sometimes three times a year to Holland. And then it is easier to introduce new places in Holland, for example, Gelderland.”- An employee of the DMO.

While the domestic market is the target, there is a recent development towards different markets. For international arrivals, Gelderland holds the number 6 position. The focus with international arrivals is on the two surrounding countries; Belgium and Germany. The DMO worker mentioned that with these countries having slightly different holidays than the Netherlands, people travel at different times. This has been utilised to make the less busy seasons more visited. With international visitors, it is important to understand that the focus is on repeat customers. People who visit the Netherlands once in their life tend to visit Amsterdam, making it the number one choice for international visitors. With Germany and Belgium being geographically close, they can visit the Netherlands multiple times, making regions like the Veluwe an option.

Nonetheless, even with increasing numbers of tourists from these two countries, a problem that has been pointed out during the research by both the interviewee from the park management and the DMO is a lack of quality accommodations. They mentioned that when people travel further, they might not want to stay on a basic camping, but rather something more upscale. They argue that more collaboration with local businesses is necessary to provide this sort of accommodation.

While international visitors come from countries of proximity, there is also a group that comes from farther away. The region works together with the national tourism board to attract Chinese visitors. The focus here is not on the big bus groups, but rather on individual Chinese tourists. The reason they can attract those visitors is not about the nature the park provides, but rather the collection of paintings the museum owns. After the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Kröller- Müller Museum has the second largest collection of paintings by Vincent van Gogh, according to the employee. The role the museum plays in attracting different market groups is further elaborated on in the section about seasonality.

5.2.1.2 Institutional arrangements.

“We have twenty-one national parks in Holland, and we’re the only privately owned one. We are a foundation, so we don’t make profit. Everything we earn is invested, reinvested in the park and we are investing a lot these years.”- An employee of the park management.

Two organisations were interviewed that are part of the overall institutional arrangements that define and manage the regional tourism of the Hoge Veluwe: the independent park management and the DMO, which is a public-private partnership. The park management collaborates with the province of Gelderland on matters of tourism and marketing but also complies with national and European laws such as Natura 2000. As the Hoge Veluwe falls within the borders of three municipalities, it collaborates with those depending on which part of the park the project involves. These three municipalities are Arnhem, Apeldoorn and Ede, in which the biggest part of the park is located. During the interview with the park management, it was mentioned that a collaboration exists with all three municipalities and that papers that declare an intent to collaborate are signed. There are no fixed contracts that define policies, but a constructive collaboration exists between the different actors.

While depending on the political party in power, the government of these municipalities’ changes, it does not affect the park.

The employee heavily promoted the concept of the park being privately owned. This way, political shifts do not change the strategies of the park on the short-term, but projects and management focus on long periods. He pointed out that the park highly profits from not having fluctuating policies implemented, but rather thinking long-term. It also becomes clear through understanding that financial independence makes the park not rely on public funds. A shifting focus away from nature conservation can decrease the funds of public parks, while a privately-run park does not | depend on those. Unlike the park, the DMO of the region is around 50% public funded. While it collaborates with the province and multiple municipalities, it also has collaborations with local business owners. There, the focus is on bigger businesses, which is according to an employee due to the fact smaller businesses **“don’t think in the region, they think very local”**. There appears to exist a mismatch due to the DMO having a mandate for a bigger area than solely the park.

5.2.1.3 Vulnerability context.

5.2.1.3.1 Seasonality.

“We have about 155 people working for the park of which I think 50 of them are seasonal.”- An employee of the park management.

Seasonality was identified as an important theme within the vulnerability context since it was mentioned in every interview. For the park itself and its adjoining hospitality industry seasonality comes through the shift in season. The park opens and closes with the sun, meaning opening hours are longer during summer than in winter. With longer opening hours, more people are needed, as multiple shifts run throughout the day, whereas in winter, the hours are shorter. As has been mentioned by local park management, employment costs are one of the biggest cost factors for local businesses. While there is a difference in opening hours between the seasons, there is also a shift in demand, which will be discussed in the next paragraph. For now, the costs of employment and demand lead the companies to maintain a flexible workforce. That is why most businesses have core employees with fixed contracts that run throughout the year, and flexible contracts are used during busier seasons. The flexible contracts allow the businesses to save costs and to reply to shifts in demand on a day to day basis. However, flexible contracts also impact the local workforce, such as when during a rainy-day, hospitality workers are sent home early and only make one hour instead of eight.

“The high season was often already busy, but now the whole season is busy. Even offseason has gotten more busy” – A local tourism worker from Otterlo village.

Due to the seasonality, the tourist demand shifts throughout the season. As the core business of the park is the nature, the winter months ***“is actually no season”***, according to a worker from the park management. There are measures in place to decrease the seasonality. As elaborated earlier, targeting markets with different holidays such as Germany and Belgium can extend the season. In addition to that, more commercial businesses have invested in the region, such as Europarcs and Droomparken. According to a local worker in the tourism industry who has also been living in the region for a long time, now not only the high season is busy, but a bigger part of the year has high tourism numbers, being different from many years ago. Marketing efforts to decrease seasonality have also started to target the winter season. As the Kröller- Müller Museum is open year round and can also be visited with less favourable weather, it has been used as an event venue. Events or special displays are intentionally set in winter to attract customers during these months. Another aspect of seasonality is about overcrowding. On public holidays and long weekends, when overnight tourists, locals and day visitors visit the area, this can lead to overcrowding. Overcrowding may not only be harmful to the natural environment but can also result in a bad tourism experience for the visitors. As the focus is on repeat visitors, this bad experience might lead them to rethink future visits. Especially as the tourism product has been described by an employee of the DMO as ***“the quietness, [...] the nature, the landscapes”***.

“Can you imagine five and a half hundred hectares. It was a big fire on the east.” – An employee of the park management.

Another potential vulnerability to the Hoge Veluwe is the chance of forest fires. When a fire breaks out, big parts of nature can be destroyed, and people need to be evacuated. One such occurrence took place approximately four years ago on Easter weekend. The employee of the park management recalled this event as being during one of the busiest days of the season, while the ground and woods were already very dry due to little rain the last weeks. When the fire broke out, and the wind helped to spread it, it destroyed a large area, and all the visitors had to be evacuated. Moreover, even the museum brought its paintings into a safe space. There is a chance that similar events will more frequently take place due to climate change, and the park management has measures in place to prevent them.

They removed the open- fire barbecue spaces and while smoking is not prohibited the terms of service clearly state the responsibility of the smoker to prevent a fire from happening. Naturally, a fire during the busy season in this seasonal environment presents a danger and creates a vulnerability for the area.

5.2.2 Rural Tourism practices.

“[...] here we also want to protect our heritage and nature.” – An employee of the DMO.

The main attraction of the area is the Hoge Veluwe National Park. Three villages surround it, and the adjacent areas offer different kinds of RT activities. While the park is one of them, many accommodations fall within the RT practices. An emphasis of the local destination management is on protecting the local nature and heritage. A local scholar studying the area pointed out that many of the accommodations follow the same recipe. They are often based on former farms and are either built structures for tourist purposes or provide a camping space. While some farms offer additional activities on the farm next to the camping, many tourists mainly use them as accommodation to visit the park. These additional activities can be on the farm in the form of visiting the animals and the fields. Unique products exist for some businesses such as making *“goat cheese, [and] tourists can join this activity”* (local researcher). Others offer cultural or heritage-based activities, such as watching the process of making wooden shoes in a local museum. These are exceptions.

In most cases, the owners separate between providing accommodation to the tourist and the farm life. Visitors do not stay on the farm building itself but in designated areas. In many cases, there are no farming activities left, as tourism has moved into the centre of their livelihood. The local scholar referred to a case she studied as *“being fake. The farm animals they owned were not used for production, but they were there to enhance the farm experience”*. This shows that in some cases, RT now provides the main income for many of these businesses and does not supplement the income from farming activities.

5.2.3 Capital.

5.2.3.1 Human.

“Search for workers, especially younger, can be hard as the local population is quite small. So, there is a bit of competition between, for example, the national park recruiting young people, that are also needed in the local businesses.”- A local employee of the tourism industry.

The surrounding villages, in addition to the overall area, provides many young people often between 15 to 25. For example, they can work in the park as a side job. Employment can be with the park management, such as checking and selling tickets to visitors, in the accommodation sector or the hospitality industry. They are often still in school or are students and provide an excellent flexible workforce for the area. However, as the region is less populated, during high season, there is some competition for young workers. Consequently, local businesses compete with the park management over workers. As these are temporary jobs, the companies conduct their own training and rely on the public education system for these workers.

“There is a training platform for tourism employees who work [...] in the parks.”- An employee of the DMO.

There is also a core workforce that works fixed in the industry. As the customer base is being expanded, local employees now need to interact with international tourists from Germany or Belgium. Moreover, an employee of the DMO pointed out, that ***“[...] the customer’s or visitor’s behaviour is changing; they find a lot of information online.”*** To prepare the local workforce to this change, an online training platform was developed, which aims to provide education about the information tourists obtain online. Additionally, it provides more training opportunities to adjust to new customers and a changing tourism environment. The platform is also utilised by businesses to provide training to trainees.

The platform is not a standalone, but it also complemented by ***“a training day in an attraction, and then they get information about the place. There we always provide a workshop on how to approach the German customers or that kind of topic”*** as mentioned by an employee of the DMO. If there is a need for researchers or scholarly advice, the park management pointed out that there is a strong collaboration with the local university.

Research projects are being conducted in the park, and local students are involved in projects throughout the park. This also enables the region to make use of these publicly available resources.

5.2.3.2 Social.

“They grew up in with the park; they work in the park; their whole family life is next to the park.” – An employee of the park management.

The park and its tourism industry are well accepted by the local community. The acceptance has been attributed in many cases to the long history of the park and the region over the years more and more adjusting to it. The local community is heavily involved in the local tourism industry as of that. A local employee, who also grew up in one of the surrounding villages, pointed out that this collaboration is a result of people living all their life with the park.

People ***“also realised we [the tourism industry and park] will not go anywhere, they will not go anywhere, so we do it together”***, she mentioned.

Moreover, with the local economic structure being so dependent on the park in many cases, multiple generations of families are involved in the industry. Naturally, with the community being that involved, every decision creates opinions and feedback. That is why the local park management and the DMO are very sensitive on how to communicate decisions. While some decisions are well received, there are also instances of conflict. For example, a local pointed out the reaction by many inhabitants of the village of Otterlo when the park management also decided to put a fence around the Otterlose Bos. It has always been an open- access part of the Hoge Veluwe. A local pointed out that in her 50 years living in Otterlo, she could not recall it being fenced off. When the decision was made, many of the local community responded quite critical as it affected their daily life. They were accustomed to using that space for walking, and other recreational purposes and the fence prevented them from it for the future. The decision was made by the park management to protect nature as the habitat was environmentally in a bad state. This is one example of how the strong involvement of the local community can create a negative response to a decision. The decisions being made in this area must be seen in the social context.

5.2.4 Livelihood development.

5.2.4.1 Economic development.

“The effect for the close region is huge every year again.” – An employee of the park management.

The park and its surrounding area are heavily relying on the local tourism industry and the revenue it creates. While the park counts as the pull factor to attract tourists, the local economy has reacted to this and found ways to generate income from that. The area is full of small campings, small restaurants and other establishments that cater to tourists. As of that, the park and local community depend and live off each other. With an area that is structurally so adjusted to the park and its tourists, it becomes clear that many jobs in the area depend on tourism. Moreover, it does not only create employment directly, but it also has multiplying economic effects on the nearby region. To measure the multiplying effects is very difficult, but according to an employee of the park management up to ***“1000 FTE [full-time equivalent] or so on a yearly basis.”***

5.2.4.2 Social development.

“They have family working here, as many people working in the park or Kröller- Müller Museum live in the town of Otterlo or Honderloo. “- An employee of the local park management.

It is difficult to identify a social development directly, as the park and the tourism industry is already very established. Of course, with the growing acceptance of the park, the structure has developed to a state, where multiple generations of the family are working in the local industry. Another development that can be seen here is that people have the perspective to stay in the villages they grew up in. They can take over the family business, in the case of family-owned enterprises. In other cases, they can stay in the area, as jobs are available. The shift of young people moving away to cities does not seem to be of the same magnitude, as in areas with fewer opportunities for the new generations.

5.3 Cross-case synthesis

The following section describes a comparison of both cases. Table 1 shows an overview of the themes that emerged during the interviews in both cases. The themes have been sorted within the sustainable livelihoods framework by Shen to make a cross-case comparison possible.

*Table 1:
Case comparison within the analytical framework*

Framework	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>
Tourism	For International tourists, not on the list due to being unmarketed, unpackaged, inaccessible Domestic as conferences	Strong focus on domestic tourists, yet also internationals to limit seasonality effects Repeat customers
Institutional arrangements	Clustered as western circuit Ten county governments, two DMOs	Three municipalities, one DMO, one private park management
Vulnerability	Institutional instabilities seasonality	Wildfire as a danger seasonality
RT activities	Rural character Heritage, nature, community tourism CBTEs, farm stays, homestays	Rural character Heritage and nature tourism Farm stays, camping's
Human capital	Lack of skills - training reliability	Lack of young people Lack of specific skills - training
Social capital	Apathy towards tourism	Community integrated within the tourism industry
Economic development	Small impact on income and employment RT as a supplement increases resilience	Huge impact on income and employment RT can provide a living
Social development	Halts out-migration in some cases	Halts out-migration

Source: Interviews.

5.3.1 Context.

5.3.1.1 Tourism.

Both cases have in common that they have national and international visitors. For the western circuit, the focus lies on attracting international tourists, while the Veluwe has a focus on the domestic market. The domestic market in Kenya relies on conferences and not on touristic activities. International tourists are mainly targeted for the offseason to provide an additional income during less busy times. Also, they made clear that they market to repeat customers, meaning people who visit the Netherlands repeatedly.

For one-time visitors, their choice normally falls on Amsterdam. Similar behaviour was described for Kenya. Visitors have their must-sees on their first visit, which does not include the western part, but they rather visit Masai Mara before travelling to the coast. Due to that, it became clear that marketing is problematic. Looking at the example of the Veluwe and the focus on repeat visitors, they could also provide a market segment that is more easily approachable to visit the western circuit.

Another big difference between the two cases is the overall state of the tourism product. The Hoge Veluwe provides a well marketed, packaged and developed product, while the case of the western circuit remains unknown, there is no clear marketing strategy, and it is not part of many package tours. Part of this problem can also be attributed to the accessibility issues that have been identified.

5.3.1.2 Institutional arrangements.

The western circuit comprises 10 different counties, different tourism associations and various NGOs. Each of them has their own agenda. Different collaborations do occur, but strategies seem to not be in line with each other. There is no clear line or strategy, as the various stakeholders have different ideas, experiences and motivations. It is a big difference to the institutional arrangements of the Hoge Veluwe. There are only three municipalities, and while they do collaborate with the park management, the management of the park is still independent of public money. The DMO active in the region is also for a bigger part financially independent and seems to be backed by various stakeholders in the industry. The general marketing strategy seems to be following a clear line. Especially the independence makes long-term strategies possible, as public funds and political changes, do not impact the park management nor the DMO. These differences in institutional arrangements are very complex; that is why they are elaborated on, in the vulnerability context.

5.3.1.3 Vulnerability context.

5.3.1.3.1 Institutional.

Institutional arrangements that cause vulnerability have only been identified for the case of the western circuit. From a government perspective, the west used to be an unstable political region as it was described as the stronghold of the political opposition. With the end of the provincial government and the move to county governments, the area became politically more stable. However, it has been described throughout the interviews, that government officials lack knowledge in terms of tourism and that frameworks and regulations are in place, which is unfavourable for tourism development. Efforts by various stakeholders, have made small progress and changed the regulations to be more favourable for the tourism industry.

Nonetheless, there is also an institutional problem for non- governmental actors. Two tourism associations share their mandate to promote the area, but they lack trust and support by the stakeholders, as their efforts and success have been limited. Moreover, they seem to be competing and are failing to create a clear marketing strategy to develop tourism in the western circuit. None of these vulnerabilities exists or has been identified for the case of the Hoge Veluwe, making this the potential biggest difference between the two.

5.3.1.3.2 Seasonality

Both destinations have seasonal arrivals of visitors. As both products are heavily nature-based, the favourable climate of summer attracts the highest visitor numbers. There are also busier times around public holidays. A big difference between the two is that the Hoge Veluwe has measures in place to extend their season and have been quite successful already in doing so. They market to different customers and take advantage of their heritage to also attract tourists in the offseason. For Kenya, no such measures have been put in place, and the focus as of yet seems to be on gaining visitors, as the overall numbers are still very low. The offseason has been described to be empty.

5.3.2 Rural Tourism practices.

Both destinations have been characterized as being of rural character in their tourism product. The focus is on activities, such as the national parks of Hoge Veluwe in the Netherlands, and Ruma in Kenya. Heritage plays a role in both cases as part of the product. A difference in Kenya is that tourism is also very community-based, so-called CBTEs are developed in the region. This sort of tourism is non-existent in the Netherlands, in many cases due to the less rural character of the area, and other ways for inhabitants to make a living. Accommodations around the Hoge Veluwe are farm stays and campings. The western circuit has a growing number of homestays, additionally. A theme that came up during the interviews, which both have in common is a lack of authentic experiences in accommodations such as farm stays and home stays. Rather than being immersed in the local context, they are more professionally run and cater to the guest's needs like a hotel. In some cases, even fake experiences like farm animals as a visitor attraction in the Netherlands have been identified. This sort of experience does not exist in western Kenya, mainly because profits from RT are limited and do not provide a living.

5.3.3 Capital.

5.3.3.1 Human Capital.

There are quite some differences regarding the available human capital. In Kenya, many tourism businesses lack basic skills and knowledge to run a professional operation. This is not the case for the Hoge Veluwe. These skills are available, but there is often a need for learning how to interact with specific customer segments (e.g. visitors from Germany) or for knowledge about new attractions and information from online resources. Both cases have training measures in place, which are in the case of Kenya organised workshops. While this is also done in the form of training days in the Netherlands, there is also the availability of an eLearning platform. Some of the basic skills that have been described for the western circuit are also a lack of a point of reference, leaving people often unreliable and unpunctual; as it is the norm for this area. This sort of behaviour can result in bad tourism experiences for international visitors, that have a different point of reference on that matter.

5.3.3.2 Social capital.

The surrounding social context differs between the two cases. In the western circuit, apathy has been described towards tourism development and foreign visitors. During the interviews, it also was mentioned that in many cases, this is due to the lack of positive developments and change to the region until now and that cases from other parts of the country show more acceptance once some positive benefits become visible to the community. This also seems to be the case for the Hoge Veluwe. The local communities are involved and integrated with the tourism industry, in the form of being employed by it or having their own business. As the benefits are visible to them, they seem to embrace the opportunities and are open to the developments. Nonetheless, there are also disagreements with managing decision, and negative community responses do happen on specific manners. Still, there is a strong collaboration between the tourism industry and the local communities for each other's benefits.

5.3.4 Livelihood development.

5.3.4.1 Economic development.

In terms of economic development, there is an immense difference. Of course, tourism plays for longer a role in the Hoge Veluwe than the western circuit. So, it must be mentioned that both destinations are in different stages of the tourism cycle. The economy around the Hoge Veluwe is adjusted to the tourism industry that has a high impact on revenue and employment for the region. For Kenya, the impact has been described as small. CBTEs and homestays have been attributed to boosting the local economy slightly by sourcing their needed products from the surrounding community. RT was described as creating a supplementary income that can and has increased resilience. Especially when people rely heavily on agricultural income, climate events make them increasingly vulnerable. Having a second stream of income through tourism increases their situation. It is also a big difference to the case of the Netherlands, as many former agricultural businesses in the region now mainly make their living from tourism, rather than using it as a supplement.

5.3.4.2 Social development.

For both cases, the additional income, that either act as a supplement or as a way of living, has been attributed to giving young people perspectives and future within the local economy. As jobs are available, young people often do not move to the bigger urban centres and stay with their community, enabling the rural construct to exist further. In summary, the out-migration of the rural workforce can be prevented when business opportunities are available, such as RT practices. While this effect is still limited in western circuit, due to the small scale of tourism, it is to a bigger extent the case for the Hoge Veluwe. For this area, often multiple generations of families work in the local tourism industry.

6. Discussion

The ongoing process of rural-urban migration threatens the social construct of the rural communities. Through a mix of push and pull factors, many, often young people, leave their rural homes to move to bigger cities in the hope of a better future. To halt out-migration, innovation and socioeconomic developments are necessary to provide a perspective for people to stay. This research identified several themes that are now used to answer the research questions, and the contribution to the literature on the topic of RT is discussed.

SRQ1: How do contextual factors (tourism, institutional arrangements, vulnerabilities.) influence regional rural tourism initiatives/practices?

The context within the framework consists of a description of the overall tourism product, the existing institutional arrangements and the present vulnerabilities. Regarding tourism, there is a strong difference between the two cases. The Netherlands has a strong focus on domestic tourists or repeat international tourists. For Kenya, the domestic market is, as of now, not a focus, but they are struggling to attract international visitors. A lot of the literature about RT focuses on themes of tourism management (Royo-Vela, 2009; R. Sharpley, 2002). This literature points out that marketing, management and product development influence if RT yields results. Here is also a point for future research with a high practical application. Within the tourism domain, it would be very interesting to research the feasibility on focusing the RT in the western circuit on repeat international and national tourists to increase the economic and social benefits.

While no major results were found within the context of institutional arrangements, in both cases, multiple regional governments are involved. The differences there mainly manifest in the institutional vulnerability context. Vertical institutions and imposed frameworks seemed to hinder RT developments in the western circuit and lobbying was necessary to change those policies. For horizontal institutions, a surprising theme emerged, that showed that two DMOs with limited backing by tourism stakeholders seemed to compete for dominance on the region, rather than to collaborate. No similar results identifying institutional vulnerabilities were found to be the case for the Hoge Veluwe. No identified research on this topic discussed similar results within the RT context. While institutions are identified as a potential vulnerability in the sustainable livelihood framework by Shen et al. (2008), they are not further discussed or to be a focus of the framework.

Further research could investigate more details of how and what kind of institutional arrangements lead to vulnerabilities of the RT. It is especially true, as there is a lack of knowledge within the tourism literature on this topic.

SRQ2: How do human and social capital affect regional rural tourism practices?

Regarding human capital, a lack of skills has been reported in both cases. However, the extent differs. While for the Netherlands, there is often a lack of specific skills, there is a lack of more basic ones for Kenya. Nonetheless, both cases provide training to improve human capital. The need in the Netherlands stems from a recent trend to focus more on international tourists, and the workers are adjusting to the different clients. As RT is still a relatively new occurrence, the lack of skills and the new training workshops put the case of Kenya in a comparable situation. Moreover, the level of public education differs vastly amongst the two areas (Roser & Esteban- Ortiz, 2019).

Regarding the literature, it is unsurprising that in Kenya, there is a lack of skills. The literature clearly identified that in many cases, education is necessary for the locals to become involved in the tourism product and for it to be successful (Okech et al., 2012). The results here further confirm the existing understanding and knowledge of human capital.

In terms of social capital, the two cases differ as that in Kenya, there is apathy often to be found against tourism and foreign visitors. It differs in the Hoge Veluwe as the community is strongly integrated into the tourism, clearly profits from it socioeconomically. As a result, international tourists should be met more welcoming in this case. The literature on the topic has researched in many cases, locals' perceptions of tourism (Long, Perdue, & Allen, 1990; McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Their research has shown that the perception of rural residents depends on the scale of tourism development, in both positive and negative attitudes towards tourism. They also pointed out a high dependency of perception on benefits for the community. The results of those two cases seem to be strengthening this theory. Additional research could apply a longitudinal case study, looking both at human and social capital in Kenya and measure how those change throughout RT development.

The available capital has implications and influences on the RT practices. Both cases have practices that are rural in character. A reason for this is mainly due to population density and the rural surroundings they are happening within. It clearly comes back to the definition by Lane (1994) and shows in fact that the tourism studied in both cases must be classified as RT. The practices in Kenya are, in fact, in many cases, homestays or CBTEs. Both are very simple projects, that can be achieved with limited human and social capital.

Nonetheless, research has shown for CBTEs to be effective policies regarding sustainable development (Qian, Sasaki, Jourdain, Kim, & Shivakoti, 2017). To make up for the lack of capital, they are in many cases facilitated by NGOs or tourism associations, that provide training, marketing and guidance.

SRQ3: How did RT influence socio-economic livelihood development in the region?

RT practices have led in both cases to economic and social developments. Regarding social changes, for both cases it has been reported that they halt out-migration to some extent. While for the Veluwe, there are multiple generations involved with the tourism industry, the effect is sparser for the western circuit. The effect can also, in many parts, be attributed to economic developments. As the impact of RT is vastly greater for the Netherlands than for Kenya, the benefits of tourism development differ. Part of this is that the homestays and CBTEs in Kenya generate very little income, which must be regarded as a supplementary income. Surprisingly for the Netherlands, RT in many cases is not regarded as a supplementary income but provides a way to make a living. The purpose of diversifying the rural economy and increasing the resilience is defeated through this occurrence and can have potential socioeconomic consequences if the tourism industry of the region declines. On a theoretical level, RT to prevent out-migration was to be expected and is one of the premises this research is based on (Anand, Chandan, & Singh (2012) as cited in Xue & Kerstetter, 2019). The findings confirm this proposition, yet the extent varies greatly. RT as a supplementary income has been pointed out in the literature and the positive effects this can have on increasing the resilience of the community. RT, as a standalone livelihood strategy, was an unexpected finding. Nonetheless, when reviewing the literature, this sort of phenomenon was not discussed. RT was described as a supplementary livelihood strategy (Okech et al., 2012; Scoones, 1998). It must be noted that this use of RT might only be possible due to income from other sources that have not been disclosed in the research.

There was no actual economic review of the income. Further research on cases where RT is applied as a single livelihood strategy is necessary to explore its feasibility.

CRQ: To what extent can the European concept of rural tourism be used in the global south as a tool to increase the livelihood of rural populations?

With the specific research questions answered and discussed in detail, it is now appropriate to review the central research question. While it became clear when comparing both cases that the context in which RT was developed differed, and the kind of RT practices also were different, both cases yielded results. Especially in the European context, RT is in a different, more developed stage than in Kenya. That is why there were huge impacts on the local economy and social benefits from this development could be observed. Here, RT surprisingly did not only supplement other forms of income but became the centre of the local economy. The case for the western circuit is different. The RT development is there in a much earlier stage, yielding limited results. Nonetheless, positive effects on the livelihood of the rural populations were identified. They differ in the extent they are present. RT in this area created a supplementary income, which increased the resilience of the population. This premise by the literature has been confirmed through the research. Also, the literature clearly stated that depending on the development of tourism; benefits differ (cf. Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

As a result, it can be argued that RT can be used in the global south to increase livelihood. When using it as a policy tool, attention must be paid to the context. Many issues of tourism management need to be handled accordingly to yield positive results. Moreover, attention needs to be paid to institutional arrangements that might conflict with tourism development. Additionally, the point of focus should be the available capital, and measures such as training need to be put in place to ensure that the capital is adequate for the project. The support of local communities is especially important because it ensures that visitors are not met with apathy. Here CBTEs can be used as a strategy as they strongly involve the local community. The increase of the livelihood depends on successfully managing the above factors. In a frontier stage of tourism development, results are limited, and further developments are necessary to yield results for the bigger part of the population.

7. Conclusion

This research explored a way to address the imminent challenge of the out-migration in rural areas and to identify if RT can offer a practical solution. While it does not make a claim that this is the only solution, it can offer one possibility. The thesis looked in a wider sense at how feasible western concepts are to address challenges in the global south. It addresses the gap in the literature that explores the feasibility of RT in the global south. For this gap, it showed that RT offers a possible solution indeed, but also concluded that managerial issues need to be overcome, and the context and available capital need to be managed accordingly for it to be successful. The implementation of a successful RT industry depends highly on how to overcome these challenges.

As a recommendation for praxis, it is important to note that, when looking at problems in the global south, searching for solutions that worked in other countries and experimenting on whether those are a feasible solution to the problem can be a strategy. Applying existing solutions to a new context can potentially work in many cases and offer a good response. Nonetheless, there is also a need to develop new innovative solutions for complex problems. The concept of RT can be applied in practice to countries of the global south when it is adequately managed.

7.1 Limitations

The research and its findings are, of course, subject to a few limitations of the research design. One limitation that comes with doing a case study is the of lack the external validity. This means the findings cannot be generalised as they are regarded as unique. However, the design was adjusted to compare two cases, allowing for a cross-case synthesis that increases the external validity of the research. Especially the chosen cases are representative and not unique occurrences (Flyvbjerg, 2006, Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). Nonetheless, due to differences across countries, choosing other cases with a dissimilar context might have resulted in a different outcome.

Moreover, the analytical framework by Shen has been simplified, especially leaving out another kind of capital, such as financial or environmental. Leaving out these factors might ignore specific variables that change the outcome. It was done due to the lack of resources and time for the research.

Another limitation is that the research has been carried out from the perspective of horizontal institutions, as governmental institutions rejected interviews. Private businesses owners have also not been interviewed in both cases. Their perspective is thus completely ignored. Moreover, the overall number of interviews is quite small due to the focus decision. It can be that important themes thus were not included.

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