

2011 International Conference on Green Buildings and Sustainable Cities

Sustainable development strategy of tourism resources offered by regional advantage: Exploring the feasibility of developing an ‘exotic culture’ resource for Weihai City of China

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Abstract

Tourism resources are the prerequisite and basis for urban tourism development. Unlike mineral products and oil, tourism resources are renewable. How to find, create, manage, and maintain urban tourism resources will determine if they can be used sustainably. As the traditional coastal tourist city of China, Weihai does not have obvious advantages compared with other areas, so Weihai should develop a new tourism resource, an ‘exotic culture’ resource, offered by regional advantage. The paper will explore the feasibility of developing an ‘exotic culture’ resource for Weihai tourism in order to fulfil the sustainable utilization and development of tourism resources.

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Keywords: sustainable development; urban tourism; tourism resources; resource utilization; exotic culture; weihai

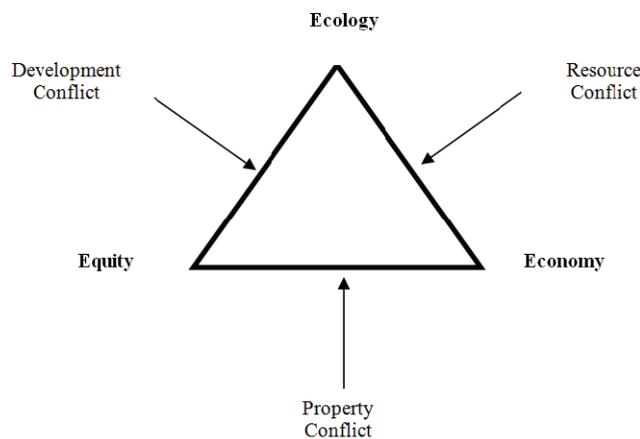
1. Introduction

With the development of society and the progress of technology, the competition among cities and regions grows more and more fierce. In this process, resources can play an important role. Thus, against the globalization background, a city needs to size up the situation from the angle of globalization, utilize new resources; meanwhile, it also needs to develop and create local resource for improving competitiveness[1]. As illustrated in the definition from the report ‘Our Common Future’[2]: “Sustainable

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development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs". Krized and Power[3] argue that sustainable development was a global vision although it had been taken up by planners in the U.S. and other developed countries. According to Hopwood[4], the concept of sustainable development is seen to be the result of the growing awareness of the global links between mounting environmental problems, socioeconomic issues dealing with poverty and inequality, and concerns about a healthy future for humanity. It does not mean having less economic development, on the contrary, a healthy economy better able to generate the resources to meet people's needs, and new investment and environmental improvement often go hand in hand[5]. In the view of Couch and Dennemann[6], while economic development may be a legitimate policy goal, to be sustainable it must be achieved within the context of reducing the ecological footprint. The central value of sustainable development can be boiled down to a balance among the three 'E's: environment, economy, and equity[7]. As illustrated in Godschalk[8], sustainable development seeks to reconcile the conflicts among economic development, ecological preservation, and intergenerational equity; three conflicts exist among sustainable development value. The 'property conflict' between economic growth and equitable sharing of opportunities arises from competing claims on uses of property as both a private resource and a public good; the 'resource conflict' between economic and ecological utility arises from competing claims on the consumption of natural resources and the preservation of their ability to reproduce; the 'development conflict' between social equity and environmental preservation arises from competing needs to improve a lot of poor people through economic growth while protecting the environment through growth management. (See Fig.1)



Source: Godschalk (2004)

Fig.1. Conflicts among sustainable development values (slightly adapted)

It is clear that resources are a strategic factor in the process of sustainable development and the resource conflict exists between ecology and economy. Some resources, such as mineral products and oil, are non-renewable; they will be used up one day, so it is necessary to find new resources to replace them. By contrast, tourism resources, including natural landscape as well as historical and cultural resources, are renewable and can be redeveloped and utilized if they are well managed, maintained, and developed. As a tertiary industry, the sustainable development of the tourism industry is thought to be of paramount importance for urban development; its development relies mainly upon the sustainable utilization of tourism resources.

Weihai is one of the traditional coastal tourist cities of China, and it does not have obvious advantages compared with other coastal cities. Increasingly, cities and towns behave in logic of competition in a

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