



Article

From Conventional to Alternative Tourism: Rebalancing Tourism towards a Community-Based Tourism Approach in Hanoi, Vietnam

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Abstract: This article proposes an alternative tourism development approach that we have termed ‘rebalancing’, which is based on tourism development adopting Community-based Tourism (CBT) principles and characteristics whose hallmark is to give local control of the tourism sector to disadvantaged members of society. The article is based on extant literature and uses Hanoi as a case study to articulate the role of CBT against a backdrop of the growth and presence of large international hotel chains in Hanoi following the adoption of the Doi Moi policy. The increase in international hotel chains poses a high risk of an increase in leakages. The accommodation sub-sector and food sector are essential in tourism in Hanoi, as they are elsewhere. These provide small businesses the opportunity to participate in the name of inclusivity, empowerment, and poverty alleviation. For the authenticity of Hanoi and respecting its traditions and values, we propose a model of growth for Hanoi that includes food street vendors alongside large international hotel chains, large national (privately owned) hotels (nationally/locally owned), small independent national hotels (locally owned), bed and breakfast/guesthouse (locally owned), backpackers (locally owned), homestay (locally owned), ‘Albergo Diffuso’ (locally owned), LCBT accommodation (locally owned), CBT (Independently owned structures under an umbrella organization), and CBT (community-owned structures). It also suggests the retention of traditional architecture for the diversity and uniqueness of Hanoi. It recommends that the government should not promulgate legislation and policies that attempt to limit the scope of food street vending but rather empower food street vendors to grow and prosper. This should be done alongside specific legislation that sets minimum standards related to hygiene on the streets for inclusive growth and poverty alleviation.



Citation: Giampiccoli, Andrea, and Oliver Mtapuri. 2021. From Conventional to Alternative Tourism: Rebalancing Tourism towards a Community-Based Tourism Approach in Hanoi, Vietnam. *Social Sciences* 10: 176. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10050176>

Academic Editor: Nigel Parton

Received: 24 March 2021

Accepted: 29 April 2021

Published: 18 May 2021

Keywords: tourism; community-based tourism; Vietnam; Hanoi; alternative tourism; accommodation

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

In the recent years, community-based tourism with the core of homestay has grown rapidly and attracted many domestic and international tourists (VNAT 2017, p. 23).

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the tourism sector has continued to grow to become a key development driver in countries worldwide (Rifai 2013). Tourism grows faster than other economic sectors (Uniting Travel 2018), and its growth and diversification have made it more relevant than industries such as food or automobile production by offering vast work opportunities (UN-SCTD 2013). As a global economic sector, tourism accounts “for 10.4% of global GDP and 313 million jobs, or 9.9% of total employment, in 2017” (Guevara Manzo 2018). World leaders agreed to include aspects that are directly related to tourism in Agenda 2030 in “at least 3 of the 17 universal goals: Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 12 on responsible consumption and Goal 14 on life below water” (Comerio and Strozzi 2019, p. 109). Its growth has been burgeoning in the past six decades to become one of



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the largest sectors in many world economies (Comerio and Strozzi 2019; Dłużewska and Rodzios 2018).

However, tourism also has adverse effects on habitats, the environment, and economies. The negative impacts of tourism can include, among other things, economic leakage, increased living costs, imitation of consumption patterns, and crowding out of local businesses—principally in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Comerio and Strozzi 2019; Weidenfeld 2018). This last issue is specifically relevant because, for job creation and economic growth, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are essential in tourism for inclusiveness (San Andres et al. 2016). We acknowledge the importance of the tourism sector for employing labor much easier in small enterprises than would have been possible in large manufacturing firms. Although the types of jobs can be menial, people can still earn incomes to better their lot (though the working conditions in the tourism and hospitality sectors should be improved and better remunerated).

The recognition of the adverse effects of tourism is commonplace. These negative problems were rooted in the mass tourism of the 1980s, prompting the emergence of alternative tourism (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2019) in response to ‘mass tourism’, also known as ‘conventional/commercial tourism’ or ‘traditional tourism’ (Triarchi and Karamanis 2017). Community-based tourism (CBT) is one of the alternative forms of tourism that arose within this context (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2019). Community-based tourism is taking root in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries, as a substitute for mass tourism (Nyakiba et al. 2018).

Tourism in Vietnam is growing. As noted in the Vietnam Tourism annual report 2016 (VNAT 2017), “leaving hard times behind, international visitors to Viet Nam in 2016 rocketed to 10,012,735 arrivals, representing a year-on-year increase of 26.0%. This was also the first time when international visitors to Viet Nam exceeded the 10 million arrivals mark” (p. 9). In Vietnam, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to GDP in 2016 was about 6.96% (VNAT 2017, p. 14). Importantly, in January 2017, the Vietnamese government officially recognized the importance of “developing tourism into a key economic sector,” giving new impetus to the growth of the sector in the new period (VNAT 2017, p. 18). Hanoi is known as the capital of Vietnam; however, not much is mentioned of its role as a key tourism destination of Vietnam (Viet 2014, p. 24). The presence of numerous tourist attractions and a close rural area make Hanoi a growing attraction among foreign travelers (Viet 2014, p. 24). Importantly, government officials have made calls to diversify the tourism industry in Hanoi and make it the country’s top destination for both domestic and international tourists (Vinh and Long 2013, p. 31). Therefore, the diversification of the tourism sector is seen as an essential strategy to guide Hanoi’s future tourism development.

Without engaging the debate regarding the conceptualization and strategies associated with CBT, it is recognized that the concept of CBT in Vietnam is well understood. In 2013, the European Union-funded the Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ERST), and WWF-Vietnam published the Vietnam community-based tourism handbook: *A Market-Based Approach* (Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme and WWF-Vietnam 2013). At the time of writing, the handbook notes that the “Vietnam government was in the process of developing a Community Based Tourism Policy” (Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme and WWF-Vietnam 2013, p. 9). Moreover, there is the Vietnam CBT Network in Vietnam, which has been initiated or supported by the International Labor Organization and the University of Hanoi (Vietnam CBT Network 2017).

In 2020, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic could be taken as an opportunity to re-evaluate tourism development strategies. This article was written before COVID-19 erupted. The COVID-19 crisis could have provided an opportunity to enhance inclusivity. The G20 group, in their document titled *G20 Tourism Ministers’ Statement on COVID-19*, while recognizing the tourism COVID-19 related crisis and the negative social and economic impacts of the pandemic, it also mentions the commitment to fast-tracking the move of

“the travel and tourism sector onto a more sustainable path—economically, socially and environmentally, to encourage inclusive recovery in the sector and make the sector more inclusive, robust, and resilient” (G20 2020, p. 1). Along similar lines, the UNWTO, in its document about mitigation of the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, states:

This crisis may also offer a unique opportunity to shape the sector to ensure it not only grows, but it grows better, with inclusivity, sustainability and responsibility prioritized. Furthermore, to build for the future, special attention should be placed on building resilience and on promoting sustainability at all levels (UNWTO 2020, p. 33).

The World Economic Forum (WEF) also aligns itself to the same sentiment when assessing the opportunities, challenges, and consequences of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean by indicating that “While undeniably a tragic event, COVID-19 offers an opportunity to recalibrate competitiveness to create a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient industry” (WEF 2020, p. 23). With inclusivity in mind, this article proposes an alternative tourism development approach (rebalancing) grounded in CBT principles and characteristics that prioritize local control of the tourism sector with a special focus on disadvantaged members of society. Underpinning this proposal are the rising tourism market trends, the significance of the fundamental principles of CBT, and issues related to Hanoi’s development. The article contributes to extant literature insights into the relationship between tourism and development and CBT’s possible role. As previously mentioned, CBT “is a complex and emerging field of study, and much remains to be learned” (Naik 2014, p. 46).

2. Materials and Methods

This article is based on extant literature. It is, therefore, a conceptual work. Conceptual research, as empirical research, has its advantage and limitations (Xin et al. 2013). A “conceptual framework draws on concepts from various theories and research findings to guide a research project” (Green 2014, p. 35). Conceptual work does not require primary data gathering because it relies on already available data and uses it to elaborate new constructs. A study by Xin et al. (2013, p. 70) mentions that “conceptual research may build upon previous concepts that are themselves generated from empirical data collection.” Based on the above, this article will use available academic literature and institutional, organizational, and government documents to gather and synthesize data and information to elaborate a tourism development proposal for Vietnam, with specific reference to Hanoi as the case study. The next section presents a review of the literature.

3. Literature Review

The growth of tourism alone is not enough—it is not a straightforward consequence and not the same thing—for poverty alleviation, the reduction of inequality, and the equitable distribution of tourism benefits (Britton 1981; Cole and Morgan 2010; Gartner and Cukier 2012; Schilcher 2007; Truong 2013). The big question still is to whom are the benefits of tourism accruing? (Britton 1981). While everyone in the tourism value chain benefits in some way, greater capital accumulation takes place up the hierarchy (Pearce 1989). The big issue is “who gets what, when, where, and how” (Sofield 2003, p. 92). Tourism growth has been associated with neoliberal economic policies that support private property rights, free trade, and free markets, which have seen communities losing the resources and land they once had (Marx 2018). In this context, tourism is understood as a strategy for the expansion and survival of capitalism (Bianchi 2009, 2010), where mass tourism ignores adopting more distributive measures (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016), making it difficult for disadvantaged communities to participate in the tourism sector (Schilcher 2007). This has led to capital accumulation in a small number of giant tourism corporations at the expense of diversified local structures (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016). This article argues that, to rebalance tourism structures, prioritizing control by local people, especially the disadvantaged, is key in a redistributive project that assigns

control and the more significant benefits. By extension, we argue that tourism control and benefits should accrue to the people who endure tourism impacts in their localities. As such, an inclusive approach to growth becomes fundamental. The need for inclusive development is also recognized by the World Economic Forum, which observes that slow improvements in living standards and widening inequality have contributed to political and social problems requiring a global consensus on an inclusive and sustainable model of growth and development that benefits all (WEF 2018, p. 1). Currently, inclusive growth and safeguarding jobs are significant concerns for many world governments (Guevara Manzo 2018). Growth is inclusive “when all segments of society can participate in and benefit from the opportunities it creates while receiving adequate protection from economic shocks and transitions” (Asian Development Bank 2015, p. 58).

From an Asian perspective, tourism has been accepted as a source and opportunity for inclusive economic growth in the APEC region (San Andres et al. 2016, p. 1). In an alternative tourism context, pro-poor tourism (PPT) has been advanced as a vehicle to enhance inclusiveness in tourism (San Andres et al. 2016). However, PPT has been seen to remain within neoliberalism and has been criticized (Harrison 2008; Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016; Schilcher 2007). Compared to PPT, CBT has been touted as a better alternative tourism approach for community development that heralds a shift towards localizing tourism’s control and benefits (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016).

A study on tourism and inclusive growth in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, concludes by saying that inclusive growth in Ha Long Bay is not yet evident because of new capital-intensive developments and the current characteristics and nature of governance in existing tourism (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 373). Within the context of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation Program, established in 1992 by Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, through the Hanoi Action Plan 2018–2022, the countries agreed to address emerging development challenges through close regional cooperation, including the strengthening of the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office in preparation of it becoming an intergovernmental organization and the facilitation of cross-border trade and investment, and tourism. Vietnam remains an interesting case study because, in the 1980s, the ruling Communist Party adopted a market-orientated economic policy (Doi Moi) but rejected the ‘liberal traditions’ of the West (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 359). Thus, it “raises the question of how inclusive growth fits comfortably” into the Vietnamese context (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 359). The World Bank notes that Vietnam needs to make growth more inclusive by supporting labor intensive industries in the formal and informal sectors (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 359).

Beyond, or together, alternative tourism approaches are proposed for counteracting conventional/mass tourism with inclusiveness. The dilemmas associated with mass tourism opened the search for alternative tourism types that have a different relationship with the environment and society and are more sustainable and ethical (Theng et al. 2015). It is understood that conventional mass tourism “reflects primarily the needs and values of capitalism, and an alternative tourism discourse has thus emerged that has sought in various ways to resist reinforcing existing patterns of power in and through a tourism industry owned and controlled by powerful interests” (Deville et al. 2016). Tourism remains within the global market economy and considering “neoliberalism as a hegemonic process of globalisation specific class(es) or group(s) can specifically benefit” (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016, p. 146). Alternative tourism represents a break from mass tourism, favoring other types of tourism with a different philosophical or ideological approach that benefits host populations (Theng et al. 2015). Various academics and tourism practitioners have supported alternative tourism; however, close inspection indicates that these labelled ‘sustainable forms’ of tourism have not yet achieved their proposed goal to change the tourism sector, with little headway recorded in obtaining narrow niche markets (Honey in Liu 2003, p. 470). Alternative tourism forms are also challenged in their functioning and objectives by the predominant neoliberal ideology.

Despite the debate, alternative tourism forms are present and relate to “a variety of approaches: ecotourism, agro-tourism, community tourism, ethical tourism ...” (Theng et al. 2015, online). Various forms of alternative tourism such as pro-poor tourism, responsible tourism, ecotourism, fair trade tourism, peace through tourism, volunteer tourism, and justice tourism have also emerged (Giampiccoli and Saayman 2014; Higgins-Desbiolles 2008). Community-based tourism “also emerged to counteract the negative impacts of conventional/mass tourism by promoting a different tourism approach” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017, p. 2). Community-based tourism has its origins “within the alternative development approach to neoliberal mass/mainstream tourism, thus working towards an alternative working system of the tourism sector. On the other hand, PPT (Pro-poor Tourism), RT (Responsible Tourism), ET (ecotourism), and FTT (Fair Trade Tourism) originated within (and remain within) the neoliberal framework that is linked to the mass/mainstream tourism system” (Giampiccoli and Saayman 2014, p. 1674). Another research (Higgins-Desbiolles 2008) mentions justice tourism as the alternative tourism form that “stands out starkly from this list in its unwavering commitment to overturning inequitable tourism and capitalist globalization” (p. 347). This article leans towards CBT as an alternative to counteract, influence, rebalance, ideally, and ultimately fully replace, the conventional/mass tourism approach.

In the fragile and risky tourism markets, firms are expected to be innovative with the capacity to diversify their goods and services as a source of competitive advantage (Weidenfeld 2018, p. 1). Marketing requires a development strategy that promotes product improvements and diversification (Cuculeski et al. 2015, p. 112).

Tourism market trends are changing, looking for specific tourism activities (Cuculeski et al. 2015, p. 111). The changing behavior of tourists has changed the opportunities available (Fiorello and Bo 2012). Thus, a factor that could contribute to tourism growth in developing countries is the necessity to diversify and offer new products, hence the growing importance and need for unique cultural and environmental experiences (Heath 2001, p. 555). Tourists are also sensitive to the values, and the cultural identities of the places visited (Fiorello and Bo 2012, p. 2).

Fundamentally, in the context of this article, it is suggested that, in new tourism projects, community choices and community welfare must be taken into account while attempting to meet the expectations of the new tourists (Fiorello and Bo 2012, p. 2). For contemporary travelers, “it is no longer enough to be in a tourist destination. They want to participate actively in the travel and experience the destination” (Kosar 2014, p. 43). For example, cultural tourism is growing very quickly globally and has become a significant phenomenon in the tourist ecosystem (Triarchi and Karamanis 2017, p. 47). From a visitor perspective, CBT entails putting together tourists’ needs and curiosity by courting them to experience and learn the traditions of local people, their culture, and everyday ways of life (Konwar and Chakraborty 2014).

The changing market trends linked to post-modernism favor alternative tourism forms as represented by many small companies involved in special interest tours (Awang et al. 2009). The accommodation sector itself is also rapidly changing into various segments where various types of lodgings came out due to changing market demands that are rejecting homogeneous accommodation types found in conventional hotels (Rogerson 2010, p. 425; see also Khosravi et al. 2014). The specific luxury tourism market has also changed due to the demographic group becoming environmentally conscious, socially responsible, and thinking about a healthy planet (Poinelli 2015, p. 3). As the luxury tourism market evolves, so should the tourism industry (ILTM Leaders Forum 2011). While comforts and high standards are still important in the luxury travel market, authenticity is essential in places, people, and experiences coupled with participation (Morgan-Grenville in Poinelli 2015, p. 52). Urban planning relates to local context and, in Vietnam, the eco-social conditions and impacts of local customs, lifestyles, and habits in every city are taken into account during planning (Van Phuc and Tran 2018, p. 9). According to the World Bank (n.d.), in 2020 there were 18 million tourists to Vietnam, mostly from China,

the highest number among all countries, followed by South Korea, with 840 thousand arrivals to bring the total arrivals to 3.8 million international tourist arrivals in 2020 ([World Bank n.d.](#)). In 2019, there were about 144 million domestic tourist arrivals recorded in Vietnam, with the number poised to increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting international travel ([Statista n.d.](#)). The next section looks briefly at community based tourism and its relevance to this article.

3.1. Community-Based Tourism

Community-based tourism is also growing as a part of the new tourism market trends. A new generation of travelers is looking for meaningful experiences during their vacations linked to not only sun, sea, and sand, but also a burning desire for immersion in nature, heritage, and cultural experiences in destinations ([The Gleaner 2015](#), online).

From a tourist perspective, CBT can be related to the new (post-modernist) tourist types characterized by such features as discerning tourists looking for ‘authenticity, exoticism, and desire to learn and educate themselves about the places they visit’ ([Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2017](#)). For example, European travelers are looking for unique experiences, and “community-based tourism offers many opportunities when letting travellers experience everyday life in your village” ([CBI 2020](#), p. 1). Tourists are willing to pay more for such an experience, particularly if it assists in local community development ([CBI 2020](#), p. 3).

It is not easy to give a precise CBT tourist profile. However, it is proposed that the CBT market usually includes well-educated, high-income, and relatively experienced travelers ([CBI 2016](#)). Various CBT typologies are recognized, namely Soft CBT travelers, the older generation, and high income, little time ([CBI 2016](#)). However, all these CBT market typologies seem, at varying degrees, linked to CBT and luxury tourism ([Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017](#)). Importantly, these CBT market typologies “show how CBT can be directed towards a more luxury context if grounded in CBT principles and include luxury and comfort to accommodate and serve these discerning tourists. Boutique hotels provide that luxury” ([Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017](#), p. 6).

The Vietnam community-based tourism handbook ([Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme and WWF-Vietnam 2013](#)) proposes various market segments as being likely to undertake CBT trips in Vietnam, namely: international freely independent travelers, international package (“Classic”) travelers, city worker weekend breaks, and Phuot (Vietnamese students and young workers). International freely independent travelers and international package (“Classic”) travelers can both be interested in CBT, though international freely independent travelers are possibly more oriented to CBT compared to international package (“Classic”) travelers ([Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme and WWF-Vietnam 2013](#)). The domestic market is also very relevant in CBT and can be very important in locally originated—bottom-up—CBT ventures ([Zapata et al. 2011](#)).

A number of principles, characteristics, preconditions, and challenges have been associated with CBT ([Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2017](#); [Jugmohan et al. 2016](#); [Jugmohan and Steyn 2015](#); [Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016](#)). Issues related to CBT development capacity are, for example, a well-recognized challenge ([Hamzah 2014](#); [Moscardo 2008](#)). In this context, it has been proposed that capacity building in CBT should be a precondition on the premise that it is necessary to build the capacity of the community so that they are able to run the facilities themselves. The long-term success of CBT is very much based on the capacity of the involved actors. Therefore, capacity building should begin at the earliest stages of the CBT project itself ([Giampiccoli et al. 2014](#)). Capacity building in the CBT context should go beyond mere CBT technical issues and include issues that improve the community members’ general livelihoods and be implemented to nurture holistic community development ([Giampiccoli et al. 2014](#)).

Thus, [Giampiccoli and Mtapuri \(2017\)](#) show a list of CBT principles intended for the proposition of a CBT classification system. These principles that CBT should take into account are: endogenous, environment (especially about community-based ecotourism—

CBET), education, empowerment, equity, evolving, enduring, entrepreneurship, ethical, externalities, exclusive, experience, enjoyment, and ethnic. These ‘endogenous’ principles include matters of control/ownership, thus indicating the relevance of endogenous control/ownership in CBT. A fundamental issue in CBT is “related to control issues” (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016, p. 153). Who controls the CBT and its benefits is a fundamental consideration in CBT and helps us to understand if control and profit remain in the local community or go to local elite or external entities (Telfer and Sharpley 2008).

Government facilitation is essential in tourism (Acheampong 2010, p. 17) and should act as a strong protagonist facilitating CBT development. The role of government in tourism in Vietnam is important and necessary (Truong 2013). The government’s role is to facilitate CBT processes (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013, p. 5). The Vietnam Community Based Tourism Handbook (Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme and WWF-Vietnam 2013) indicates that “CBT ventures are more likely to succeed where there are institutional structures that provide enabling policies and linkages between organisations, skills or technical assistance” (p. 18).

Various CBT models have been advanced and are present in the literature (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2016). Ndlovu and Rogerson (2003) reflect on issues of the ownership and management of the CBT ventures, and Zapata et al. (2011) and Häusler and Strasdas (2003) all present CBT models related to the level of involvement and intensity of participation of community members in the CBT ventures. This article considers two specific CBT models and two related, but not intrinsically specific, CBT models. The choice of these models is based on the need to focus on CBT and open and diversify the tourism sector while remaining within CBT parameters. These models will form the cornerstone for the various tourist accommodation types proposed for Vietnam’s tourism trajectory. The models are:

1. CBT community-owned;
2. CBT individually owned;
3. Luxury CBT;
4. ‘Albergo Diffuso’ (scattered hotel).

Models 1 and 2 are specific CBT models. The two specific CBT models are ‘a single, community-owned structure’, such as a community lodge, and ‘multiple micro and small enterprises that are organized under a communal umbrella organization’ (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013, p. 6). While Model 1 can be seen to be more “effective at communitywide level,” CBT Model 2 “widens the direct income base of community members as they become directly involved in the accommodation and food (serving meals) sectors, which are generally considered to be lucrative” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013, p. 6). In both CBT models, linkages with local contexts are possible. It is recognized that when “local communities become suppliers of tourist products (accommodation, food, and beverage, transport, guiding services), backward and forward linkages are generated” (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 362).

Models 3 and 4 are related to CBT. Model 3 is the luxury CBT (LCBT). “The LCBT model of tourism makes nascent links and represents a shift of the tourism industry towards a locally controlled and locally beneficial industry. This does not mean that external investors cannot participate in LCBT. However, specific requirements related to the ownership structure and management approaches need to be put in place in order to retain local control and CBT principles” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017, p. 9). The LCBT model “entails embracing the principles and approaches associated with CBT being implemented in BHs (Boutique Hotels) as a luxury-oriented form of tourism. Due to its characteristics, it can also be postulated that BHs can be seen to be possessing the appropriate orientation which adopts CBT principles by creating a specific LCBT subsector of BHs, possibly named Community-Based Boutique Hotels” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017, p. 7). The LCBT model can assist in the transformation of the tourism sector to become more “redistributive, equity directed, locally controlled and contextualised and holistically sustainable tourism sector” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017, p. 11). Thus, the LCBT should adhere to the following principles (from Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017):

to be locally and independently owned; to implement redistributive measures, to work cooperatively, to be based on local resources, to be small scale but aiming to become the mainstream tourism approach, to be ethical and sustainable, and to promote education and empowerment.

The fourth model, 'Albergo Diffuso' (AD), which originated in Italy, implies a hotel (Albergo) that is (Diffuso) scattered, spread, or diffused on a territory. Several conditions are proposed for establishing an AD, such as that the AD should be based on local effort (on AD see [Dichter and Dall'Ara n.d.](#)). Again, AD "can be either a single entrepreneur, a cooperative, or any other most suitable form of productive association" ([Dichter and Dall'Ara n.d.](#), p. 6). Various possible models of linkages between CBT and AD have been proposed, such as the external collaboration model, the service collaboration model, the partial association model, and the full association model ([Giampiccoli et al. 2016](#)). A coalescence of CBT and AD can also be proposed, thus advancing the community-based diffused tourism (CBDT) model (see [Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2020a](#)). Independently, from the CBT and AD relationship model, AD can also be seen as a possible strategy to revitalize the territory while involving local populations in the control and benefits of tourism.

A shift from conventional/mass tourism to alternative tourism, such as CBT, is happening in the market. This can be seen as a transitional period, where conventional/mass tourism shifts to alternative tourism. Thus, alternative tourism is still dependent on conventional/mass mainstream tourism. The aim is to shift the tourism sector towards alternative forms of tourism to have a tourism sector-based (or at least leaning towards) CBT principles.

3.2. Hanoi, Vietnam

The socio-economic context in Vietnam has positively changed in recent decades. However, difficulties and a mixture of conditions related to inequality are still present. After the introduction of the Doi Moi (Renovation), which liberalized the economy and integrated the country into the global economy, Vietnam "has been one of the most successful countries in reducing absolute poverty along with promoting higher and more stable economic growth" ([Yamada 2018](#), p. 1). However, although "inequality in Vietnam as measured by Gini index is in the lowest category [. . .] the Gini index in Vietnam has shown upward trajectory from 35.65 in 1992 to 42.68 in 2010," raising some concern regarding the country's inclusive growth prospects ([Yamada 2018](#), p. 1).

In the context of Doi Moi, the understanding of Hanoi informal economy suggest that such reforms have impressively increased national economic growth, but gaps between classes have widened, leading to a highly stratified society ([Lincoln 2008](#), p. 262; for relationship/contradictions between Doi Moi and informal food traders, see [Lincoln 2008](#)).

Tourism in Vietnam is growing, and international arrivals to Hanoi reached 2.7 million in 2017, representing a 19% growth year on year ([JLL 2017](#), p. 6). Tourism in Hanoi is decisively growing; the city "has received increasing numbers of tourists, from 12.3 million in 2010 to 19.7 million in 2015 and the city aims to host 30 million tourists by 2020" ([Truong 2018](#), p. 56). One of the major leading global travel websites reported: "Tripadvisor named Ha Noi in the list of top 25 destinations of the world in 2016" ([VNAT 2017](#), p. 57). However, the role of tourism in poverty alleviation is challenging because poverty alleviation needs to be put at the center of the tourism agenda concerning policies on the role of poor people and the distribution of its benefits ([Truong 2013](#), p. 42).

The inclusion of poor people seems not to be happening, and it cannot happen without stakeholders' support, particularly the government. Barriers are hampering the pro-poor potential of tourism in Vietnam in terms of doing business and have led to a disproportionate sharing of benefits in which the poor are excluded from decision-making project initiation and implementation. While the sector has created jobs and income for local people, its potential remains constrained ([Truong et al. 2014](#), p. 1085).

Under the circumstances, the advancement of restructured or new tourism strategies that move towards a type of tourism development that is more controlled, owned, and

managed by disadvantaged members of society becomes fundamental. These strategies should break with the conventional system of tourism development towards a new strategy with new priorities. Various steps need to be taken to accomplish these changes that restructure the tourism sector based on CBT principles—thus, in general terms, there is a need to localize tourism using redistributive approaches that prioritize the disadvantaged members of society.

3.2.1. Accommodation and Community-Based Tourism

The accommodation sector is a key tourism subsector. In 1987, a new foreign investment law was promulgated, and it gave foreign investors several incentives for establishing joint enterprises and foreign-owned corporations in Vietnam. The Law on Foreign Investment guaranteed investors rights of ownership, freedom from nationalization and expropriation of their investments, and fair treatment (Suntikul et al. 2010). By 2001, large international hotel chains flooded the Vietnamese market by opening hotels in the major cities in Vietnamese/foreign joint ventures, with European SMEs participating in investments in Vietnam's hospitality industry (EU-Vietnam Business Network 2018, p. 16). However, new dynamics are at play in the large accommodation sector.

In 2000, 182 of the 194 foreign-invested hotel and tourism projects were joint ventures (Suntikul et al. 2010, p. 269). The Master Plan indicated the investment required in tourism by suggesting that 90–92% should come from the private sector (The Prime Minister 2013). This direction was meant to improve the service quality of tourists' accommodation facilities (The Prime Minister 2013, p. 68). This approach seems to prioritize conventional/mass tourism based on the high level of investments by international and large national companies. Haley and Haley 1997 (p. 602) questioned whether Vietnam's indigenous people and government were benefiting from massive tourism investments.

Ha Long Bay's area in Vietnam shows the transition and shift of tourism control to foreign ventures; however, ownership across various tourism services was dominated by national businesses because there were not enough high-paying visitors (Hampton et al. 2018). As modern retail and entertainment areas were built, there was an increase in global hotel and resort chains such as Hilton as new highways were being completed (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 368).

The increase in international hotel chains poses a high risk of an increase in leakages. Usually, international businesses manage their supply chains centrally (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 368). Outside ownership "means that the tourist expenditure is likely to show a high level of economic leakage" (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 370).

The Hanoi accommodation context is changing. Strong growth in the accommodations sector was recorded in 2017 (Horwath HTL 2017, p. 6). From the high-end spectrum of accommodation in 2016, in Hanoi, there were two hotels with five stars (with 501 rooms), two hotels were four stars (with 291 rooms), and one hotel was three stars (with 50 rooms) (VNAT 2017). By 2016, there were 69 hotels with 3 and 5 stars, with a total of 10,123 rooms (VNAT 2017).

Luxury large hotels are increasing, and the first half of 2017 witnessed the soft opening of the Intercontinental Landmark 72 (170 out of 350 rooms) with about 2500 rooms, which were expected to enter the market beyond 2020, with Novotel Hanoi Thai Ha, Park Hyatt Hanoi, and Four Seasons also earmarked for Hanoi (JLL 2017, p. 6). Hanoi's luxury hotel context is dynamic, with various well-known international hospitality players involved, with numerous upcoming projects and about four million international visitors to the city, driving the high-end segment (EU-Vietnam Business Network 2018, p. 25).

High-end and luxury tourism is expected to grow in the coming years (EU-Vietnam Business Network 2018, p. 16). About 3100 rooms are expected to be available over the next five years, including the InterContinental Hanoi Landmark 72 (with 359 rooms) and the Somerset West Central Hanoi (with 252 rooms) (Horwath HTL 2017, p. 6). There is the risk of oversupply in luxury categories if a short-term approach is adopted instead; there is a need for a holistic and long-term approach to accommodation supply strategy.

In 2016, amongst 14,453 classified tourist accommodation establishments, 6523 were hotels (45.1%) and 6442 were guesthouses (44.6%), while homestay type accounted for 8.6% with 1242 establishments and other types such as tourist boats, tourist villages, tourist villas, apartments, and camping sites accounting for 1.7%, with 246 establishments (VNAT 2017, p. 20). It is also important to note that while, before Doi Moi, it was not possible for ordinary Vietnamese to rent their rooms directly to foreigners, it is now permissible by law (Suntikul et al. 2010, p. 272). Thus, again, in 2017, it is noted that, in recent years, CBT “with the core of homestay has grown rapidly and attracted many domestic and international tourists” (VNAT 2017, p. 23). It is recognized that CBT “with a focus on homestay services has given international visitors an impressive experience of the daily life of local people and an understanding of local cultural values” (VNAT 2015, p. 38). Figure 1 shows the context of CBT/homestay in Vietnam.

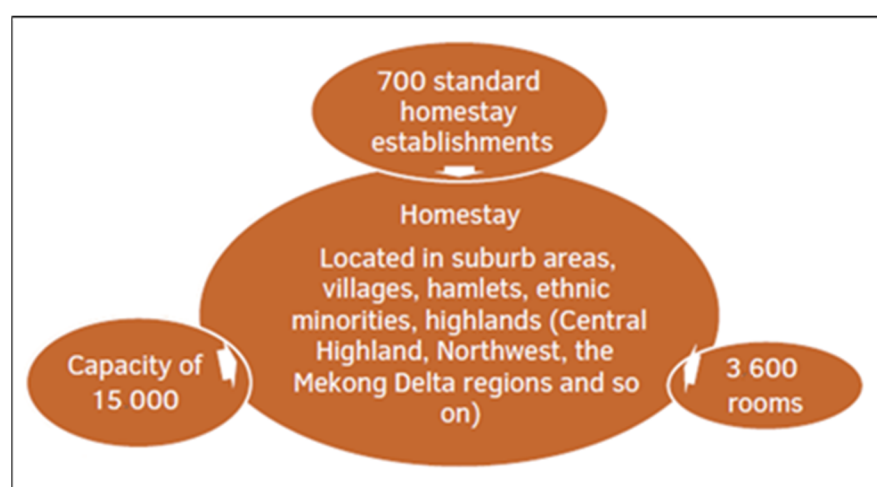


Figure 1. CBT/homestay in Vietnam. Source: (VNAT 2015, p. 38).

The Master Plan on development of Vietnam’s tourism through 2020, with a vision toward 2030, does not include CBT but merely mentions marine tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) tourism, urban tourism, educational tourism, sports tourism, convalescence tourism cruise tourism, and aesthetic tourism (The Prime Minister 2013). This does not necessarily imply the exclusion of CBT from the master plan; it may suggest that the CBT approach is not the priority or it is not recognized or valued as a type of tourism on its own. However, the same document mentions that “communities shall actively participate in tourist activities such as the provision of community tourism services, conservation and sustainable exploitation of natural resources and protection of the tourist environment under tourism development master plans” (The Prime Minister 2013, p. 73). This last proposition seems to be more in line with the recognition that in recent years, CBT, with the core of homestay, has proliferated and attracted many domestic and international tourists (VNAT 2017, p. 23). A 2017 document from the International Labour Organization, regarding Vietnam, acknowledges that CBT is so far a niche market “but with increased visibility and interest of both domestic and international tourists” (ILO 2017, p. 2). In Vietnam, numerous tourist centers have been developed around the country, showing that cooperation between stakeholders is essential (ILO 2017, p. 2).

3.2.2. Hanoi Food Street Vendors and Architecture

The context and relationship between food and tourism are multiple, and sustainability should enter the equation.

Local people and lifestyles are an essential resource in cultural and heritage tourism products, and their success is usually dependent on their active engagement. Indeed, communities may be empowered by the proper use of local foods as leverage for tourism

through job creation, the encouragement of entrepreneurship, and enhanced pride through branding of the destination's identity, based on local food and food experiences. Accordingly, to ensure the sustainability of the destination, food tourism should not be conceived only as an economic activity but also as something that can enhance culture. The focus should be on coherently promoting both the tangible and intangible qualities of food products. Therefore, the relationship between the economic and cultural aspects of food tourism is essential for sustainability (Rinaldi 2017, p. 12; see also Jiménez-Beltrán et al. 2016). Figure 2 below is an illustration of the ancient architecture of Vietnam.



Figure 2. Ancient architecture of Vietnam. Source: <https://www.bestpricetravel.com/travel-guide/vietnamese-architecture-reflecting-one-part-of-vietnamese-culture-157.html>. Accessed 14 April 2021.

In this context, it is important to maintain a location's authenticity while respecting its traditions and values (Jiménez-Beltrán et al. 2016, p. 10). Each locality has its own food. There are foods and wines often eaten in a given area, and these can be better 'understood' if prepared in that area by the local people using local ingredients to enable full enjoyment (Meladze 2015, p. 224). The consequence of this is that each place can showcase and market its specific food. Thus, the destinations can advertise their gastronomy, reflecting their culinary resources and distinct cuisines that travelers can identify and have available in many establishments for their enjoyment (Jiménez-Beltrán et al. 2016, p. 2). However, while the relevance of food is growing, many destinations do not capitalize on their foods in their marketing efforts (Okumus et al. 2007, p. 253). It should be noted that "Ha Noi with Pho (noodles), banh mi (baguette), and ca the trung (egg coffee) was introduced by the Telegraph (UK) in the list of the world's 17 greatest cities for food" (VNAT 2017, p. 57).

Food street vendors are essential. In Vietnam, food is a key commodities sold on the streets (Truong 208, p. 55). Street vendors are a prominent aspect of Hanoi's economy, and census data from 2006 indicate that some 5600 mobile fruit and vegetable vendors work

on Hanoi's streets, of whom 90% travel from neighboring rural provinces to sell in Hanoi (Lincoln 2008, p. 262).

Small businesses in both the formal and informal sectors can contribute to inclusive growth through sustainable livelihoods of communities that do not show in government policies, namely the poor, marginalized, and rural communities (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 367). Evidently, in Vietnam and Hanoi, contradictions arise in street food vending, which is understood and recognized as a potential source of tourism attraction. To achieve its tourism objectives, Hanoi envisages hosting 30 million tourists by 2020, but the city "has banned street vendors to 'make sidewalks available for pedestrians and improve the city's face.' The city's ban is in line with the GOV's plan to (re) organize the urban space in major cities. However, virtually no alternative livelihood or social support has been offered to those who are affected by the ban" (Truong 2018, p. 56). A very similar conclusion came from an earlier ten-year study (Lloyd 2003) indicating that the Vietnamese government's effort to limit street vendors conflicted with the entrepreneurial energies of street vendors, with a desire by the city to appear 'modern' and attract foreign visitors (p. 256). Again "Hanoi's city government announced a partial ban on street vendors and sidewalk-based commerce. Authorities generated a list of 62 streets—commercial arteries and streets bordering tourist destinations where street vending and the operation of sidewalk-based businesses would be forbidden" (Lincoln 2008, p. 262). At that time (2008), it was mentioned that "Nguyen The Thao, the mayor of Hanoi, qualified street vending as "a characteristic of underdevelopment," and made no effort to conceal the legislation's intended beneficiaries when he started to press that "foreign tourists will be happier and appreciate our management" (Lloyd 2003, p. 263). While not entering into this debate, it is recognized that it is necessary to keep in mind that 'underdevelopment' (as 'development' and 'poverty') are concepts based on western capitalist thought (Giampiccoli and Saayman 2017, p. 11). Thus, the standardizing values and understandings of what development and underdevelopment mean based on a single homogenous western thought without recognizing alternative concepts and approaches—based on different values and thoughts—to development, especially of the global South, can be inadequate.

The Vietnamese state's effort to limit the number of street vendors without offering any alternatives is exclusionary and precisely the opposite of what tourism trends expect. The street vendors are an essential characteristic of the place; they represent the 'authenticity' and the new tourists' 'experiences.' As written already in 2008, "the recent ban on street trading is at cross purposes with the desires of many tourists themselves, who worry that the picturesque quality of Hanoi's streets will be lost if vendors are excluded" (Lloyd 2003, p. 263; see also Lincoln 2008). It is, therefore, "quite biased that the Vietnamese administration [...] says they are harmful to the beauty of the city'. Foreign visitors appreciate street vending because it appears 'traditional' and nostalgic, incorrectly imagining it has always thrived in Hanoi" (Lloyd 2003, p. 263; see also Lincoln 2008). In the context ban of street vendors, "international 'foodies' are worrying online that Vietnamese street food will become denatured" (Lincoln 2008, p. 264).

The issue is that street vendors should not be removed from the sidewalks. New strategies should be found to incorporate them more officially in the local context (see Truong 2018), thus facilitating their socio-economic status and, at the same time, maintaining and enhancing the tourism attractiveness and uniqueness of the place. While specific regulatory limits and laws should be put in place, for example, not to harass potential customers and observe cleanness/hygiene standards, street vendors should not be excluded, but instead be facilitated and assisted in their operations. Street vending can improve people's lives (for issues of street vendors in Hanoi, see Truong 2018). As Truong (2018, p. 65) concludes, this is necessary to foreground these 'invisible' economic actors, contributing to the economy and, by extension, poverty alleviation. Diversity and uniqueness of destination are important as tourists' attractions. The consumption of unauthentic and staged objects that drive mass tourism is counterproductive because destinations lose their uniqueness as cultures become diluted such that tourists obtain the wrong impression (Nicolaidis 2014,

p. 5). Visitors are after authenticity, uniqueness, and distinct products that destinations can offer, along with competitiveness (Nicolaidis 2014, p. 5).

Street vendors and the landscape's heterogeneity can serve both local and international tourism and contribute to maintaining the local life culture and identity for local and international appreciation (Geertman 2010, p. 7). At the same time, the diversity of the informal sector is reflected in the landscape; reflecting a way of life-supporting a livable Hanoi diversity variation, uniqueness, and excitement; supporting innovation, participation, cohesion, and healthy social life while encouraging household production and reproduction (Geertman 2010, p. 7). Diversity (and not superiority/inferiority dichotomy) is fundamental for tourism as it is important for the richness of a place and its people.

What is valid for food is also valid for other local characteristics such as landscape and architecture. A study on the influence of the tourism business on the facades of townhouses in Hanoi's Ancient Quarter concludes that the architectural renovations accompanying the change to tourism businesses caused the loss of traditional design themes and adoption of modern design features (traditional facades are also inauthentic designs), causing a loss in authenticity (Utsumi 2017, p. 578). Instead, citizens and officials need to wake to the fact that traditional townhouses are a tourism resource and that 'modern' townhouses may lower the area's value, making the area less attractive to tourists (Utsumi 2017, p. 578). Western food habits coexist with more local traditional food habits, which shapes and reshapes the space's usage (Leducq and Scarwell 2018, p. 79; for an example of debate on cultural imperialism and tourism in Vietnam, see also Marx 2018).

It is also important to note that a study (Vinh and Long 2013) reveals that "the survey revealed that the education level of tourists to Hanoi, Vietnam was relatively high, with 41% having earned bachelor degrees and 25% graduate or doctoral degrees" (p. 36). Indeed this fact can enhance the need to enhance alternative tourism such as CBT. Educated tourism citizens are more inclined to embrace and appreciate alternative tourism over 'normal' conventional/mass tourism. It is, therefore, not surprising that the same study (Vinh and Long 2013) indicates that 'diversity of cultural/historical' and 'the offer of local cuisine' are respectively the two top "most important attributes for tourist expectation about Hanoi" (p. 37). The issues are not directed to avoid or impede new ('modern') food or architecture landscapes; every culture changes, and cultures mix with each epoch, updating and rebooting themselves independently or through contact with others' culture. Thus, it should be understood that 'traditional' food and architecture are reshaped by new food and new architecture but should remain within the local culture's context to avoid merely recognizing the 'outsider western' culture as superior, thereby vilifying the local one.

4. A Proposal of Tourism Development Approach for Hanoi, Vietnam

From the outset, it is here acknowledged that this proposal is very much linked to a conclusion of a recent study that observed that growth in Vietnam's Ha Long Bay would follow a capital intensive trajectory characterized by the construction of resorts and infrastructure at a heightened pace (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 372). This context suggests abandonment of inclusive growth to the disadvantage of middle-income households and those in the margins and high leakages by foreign-owned firms (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 372). The possibility of inclusivity still exists but, beyond rhetoric, political will is required for more locally inclusive tourism (Hampton et al. 2018, p. 372). This article articulates a tourism development trajectory that is more inclusive, locally controlled, and redistributive.

Based on the above, and Hanoi's specificities, including hotel development trends (increasing trends in 'homogeneous' high-end international hotel chain development), the visual development of the landscape (there is a risk of homogenization of the landscape to global trends and supposed tourist tastes), and street vendors (there is a need for including street vendors—specifically food street vendors—in the tourism development process), a possible alternative approach to tourism development is here proposed. The international hotel chains that are foreign-owned or controlled are expanding (and the government is

searching for investment) and do not need any facilitation assistance (such as capacity, marketing, and technology); therefore, the proposed model is not about investment incentives and legislation clarity, but focuses on locally owned accommodation establishments. This is because the need to localize tourism harnesses its inclusive potential and supports the greater control and benefits of tourism for local people, especially the disadvantaged sections of society. Inclusivity, control, and tourism benefits are paramount if tourism aims to reduce poverty and inequality and foster holistic community development. Thus, this model proposes the following ten types of accommodation:

1. Large international hotel chains;
2. Large national (privately owned) hotels—(nationally/locally owned);
3. Small independent national hotels—(locally owned);
4. Bed and Breakfast/guesthouse—(locally owned);
5. Backpackers—(locally owned);
6. Homestay—(locally owned);
7. 'Albergo Diffuso'—(locally owned);
8. LCBT accommodation—(locally owned);
9. CBT—(independently owned structures under umbrella organization);
10. CBT—(community-owned structures).

It is an important starting point to consider the model concerning each type of accommodation establishment in terms of CBT principles and characteristics. Figure 3 shows the outlook of various accommodation typologies that lean towards transformation and inclusion of (or belonging to) CBT principles and characteristics. As shown in Figure 3, international hotel chains are the top end—the farthest—from CBT tourism, whereas CBT with a community-owned structure is the closest possible typology associated with CBT. Between the two extremes, various typologies are present. It is important to mention that, while this model focuses on national and, especially, local control and ownership of tourism, specific attention needs to be given to prioritizing the disadvantaged community members to avoid elite capture of the tourism benefits. As such, specific limits and regulations are necessary.

The model suggests that any accommodation could fall under CBT principles and characteristics. Therefore, Figure 3 is only indicative because other accommodation types, such as backpackers or any hotel categories, could decide to 'apply' and become CBT structures. It is recognized that, while this is relevant for some accommodation categories, they become unlikely for others. The white/black gradient arrow shows an increased chance of association (to transform and fall under) with CBT principles and characteristics of the various accommodation types; international hotel chains being the most unlikely to transform themselves towards CBT principle characteristics. Moreover, the brackets related to the group of accommodation under CBT principles intersect 'Albergo diffuso' halfway to indicate that 'Albergo diffuso' possesses some but not all CBT principles; the similarity is partial. Therefore, the 'Albergo diffuso' type of accommodation can become a CBT fully if all CBT principles are met.

The risk of oversupply of large international hotel chains and large national (privately owned) hotels (nationally/locally owned) poses the risk of homogenization of tourism accommodation products. Homogenization of tourism products conflicts with recent market trends, such as luxury tourism affecting especially educated travelers (the same categories linked to the Vietnam tourism market), who are often inclined to prefer less homogenization in pursuit of authenticity, experiences, and services customization, and have a greater awareness of social and environmental issues linked to tourism. There is a need to prioritize the development of accommodation establishments that favor heterogeneity, catering for visitors looking for authentic experiences without compromising their need for security and comfort.

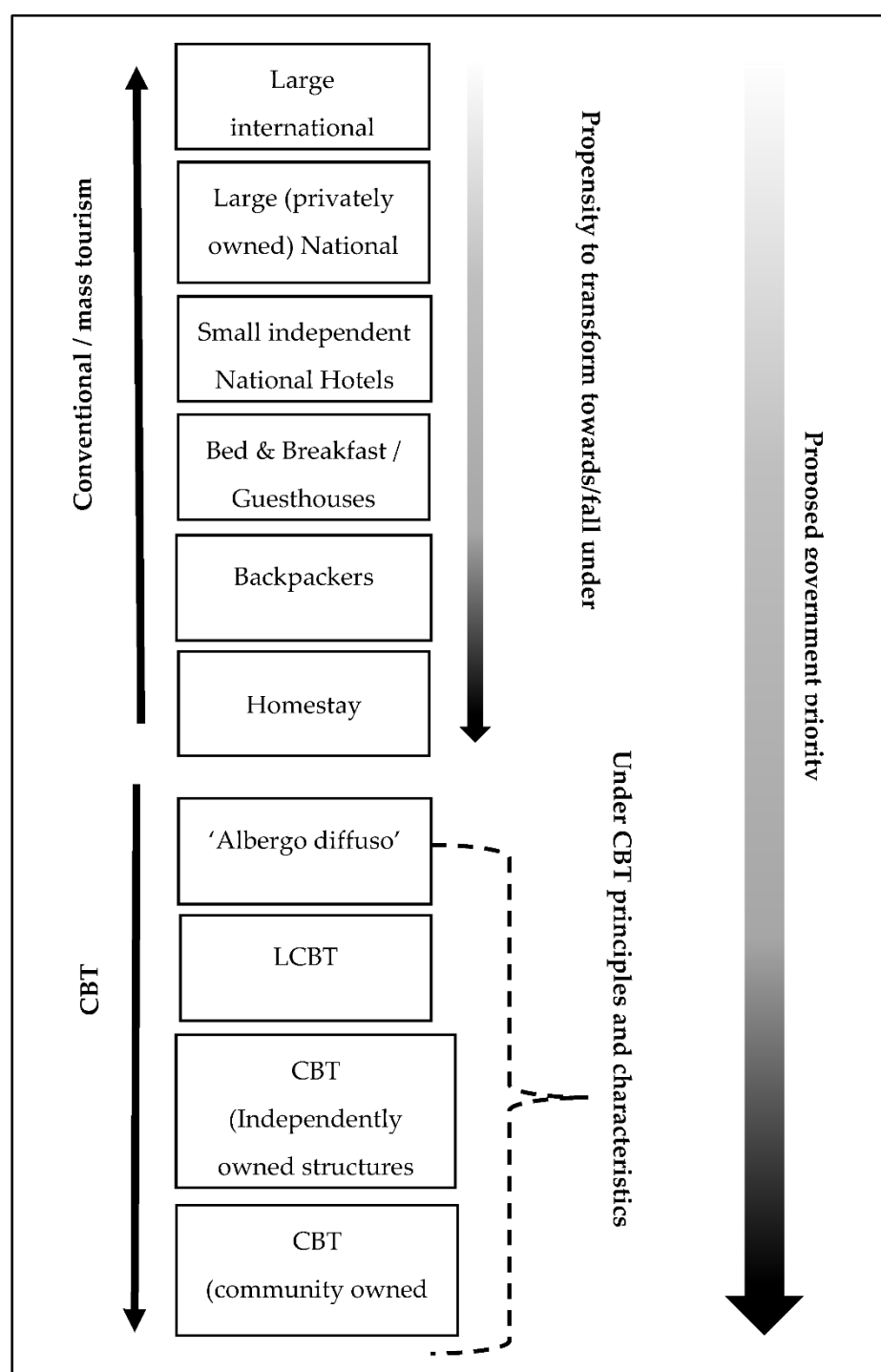


Figure 3. Accommodation typologies for transformation and/or inclusion of (or belonging to) CBT principles and characteristics. Source: authors' elaboration.

Thus, Figure 4 presents a possible model for Hanoi tourism development using the accommodation subsector. Each line represents the level of importance—from small dots to continuous lines—that the various accommodation types should have (less important with small dotted lines to most important with heavy continuous lines). Beyond accommodation, Figure 4 also includes linkages with food street vendors and includes the Hanoi CBT organization's presence, specifically aimed at facilitating and coordinating CBT in the city. Examples for Hanoi CBT organization activities could be (see Giampiccoli et al. 2014) activities such as:

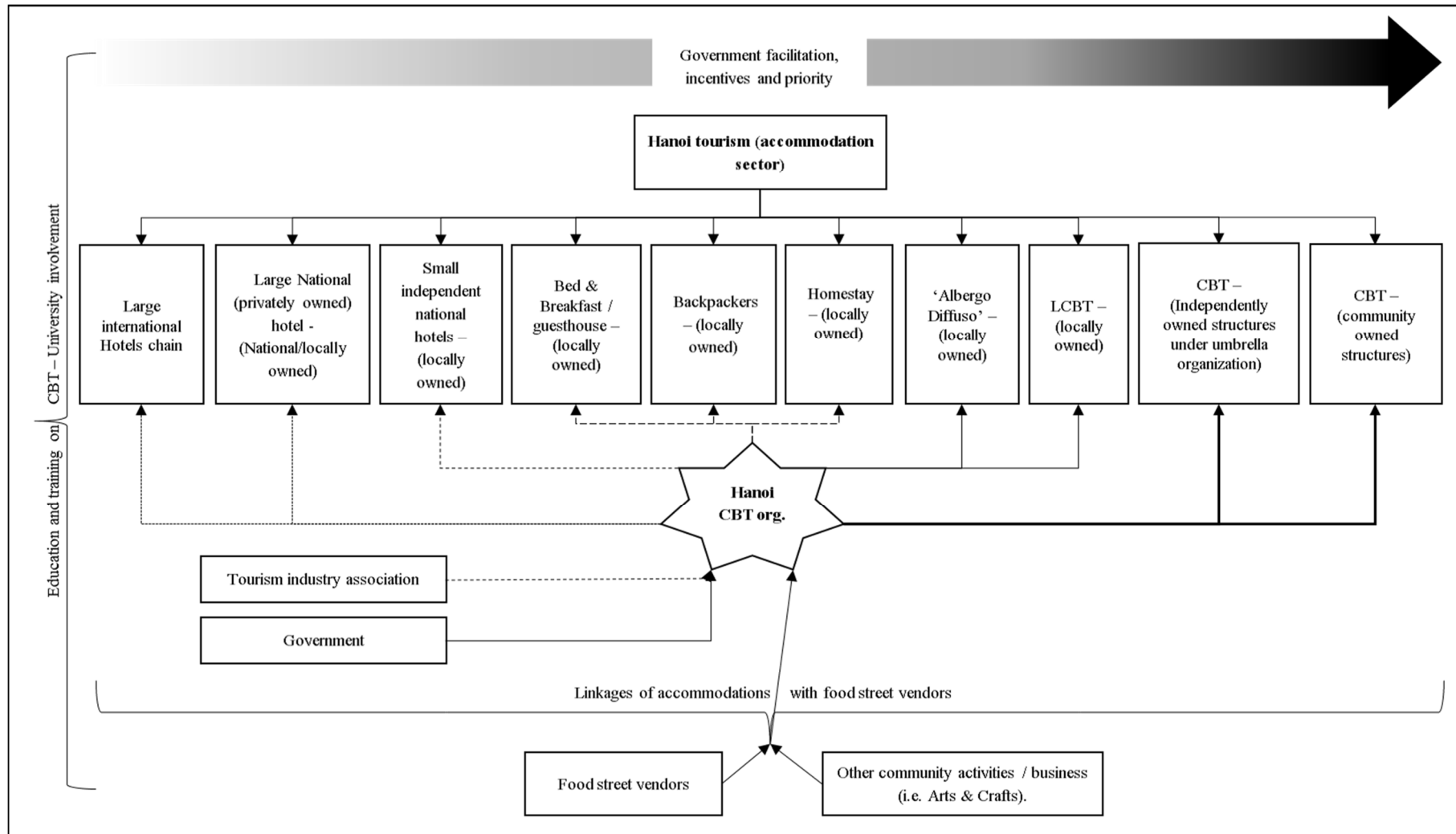


Figure 4. Representation of the proposed Hanoi tourism development approach (focused on the accommodation sector). Source: author's elaboration (partly from Giampiccoli et al. 2020).

- Capacity building in CBT;
- Fundraising;
- Serving as a coordinator (and building a database) of the CBT ventures/projects in Hanoi;
- Monitoring and evaluation of CBT entities;
- Marketing the CBT initiatives and its member ventures, nationally and internationally;
- Possibly funding CBT projects;
- Dealing with the bookings of holidays (acting as a ‘travel agency’) with CBT members.

The Hanoi CBT organization is important in facilitating and coordinating tourism activities to gain more relevance to accommodation types associated with CBT. However, the CBT organization’s relevance is more acute and will be more equally distributed when working in partnership—linking accommodation establishments with CBT entities and street food vendors. The tourism industry associations present in Hanoi should also become links with the Hanoi CBT organization but not become the main contributor and merely provide assistance to the organization. The government should be involved in the Hanoi CBT organization. The involvement of the tourism industry associations and government in the Hanoi CBT organization should be facilitative and not lead to the ownership/control of the CBT organization. A bottom-up approach is necessary. The government’s role is paramount to facilitate and advance CBT, for example, by formulating specific CBT policies and strategies; favoring incentives for the development of, and partnerships with, CBT entities; assisting with funding; and building CBT awareness. While it is necessary to keep the CBT organization’s independence, the close collaboration of government with the Hanoi CBT organization is necessary.

It is necessary to maintain the diversity and uniqueness of Hanoi concerning local architecture and landscape. In this context, specific legislation and incentives to renovate or maintain traditional designs, architecture, and landscaping should be formulated. This will serve to maintain the diversity and the uniqueness of the place. Again, “for a country to be competitive in the global tourism arena, it is important to have products that are distinctive, uniquely authentic and distinguishable from others” (Nicolaidis 2014, p. 5).

Capacity building is important in such circumstances of growth and transformation. It is imperative to ensure that all stakeholders, or anyone involved in CBT, are properly equipped with CBT’s proper knowledge and capacity. There is a need to facilitate capacity building related to CBT in all entities whenever required. In this context, the government must “ensure that local people are empowered with appropriate knowledge and skills and access to networks, so they are not side-lined from active involvement in tourism” (Scheyvens 2007, p. 138). Universities and colleges with a wide range of expertise and long-term presence in Vietnam can help (see Giampiccoli et al. 2014). It is also necessary to establish a CBT qualification at higher education institutions such as universities and technical colleges. This will educate a new generation of tourism personnel at various levels in CBT, thus enhancing its chances to professionalize and enhance its visibility and professional recognition.

There is a significant role for tourism industry associations to play as they understand CBT. Thus, the private sector, governments, and NGOs “can all provide information, networking opportunities and capacity building by providing skills training” (Giampiccoli et al. 2014, p. 1142). As such, external organisations can assist in setting up CBT projects, however, the government has a very vital role to play in CBT development. The government should also be a promoter of developing CBT standards and guidelines specific to CBT in Hanoi urban areas. In this context it is argued that “governments should formulate official definitions of forms of tourism in order to inform legislation and policy. This would also prevent stakeholders from formulating their definitions in pursuit of their particular interests” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2019, p. 33).

The government should not promulgate legislation and policies that attempt to eliminate food street vendors and should instead facilitate and empower them to grow and prosper. Thus, specific legislation and policies should support the food street vendors

sector with specific regulations for food street vendors to maintain the local street vendors' context and enhance their visibility and socio-economic development. Food street vendors should be managed in their relation to tourists. In this context, food street vendors (singularly or, better still, in organized groups/cooperative—based, for example, on roads or neighborhood) should be assisted to allow them to partner with accommodation establishments in a more formal sector (as much of the image as possible of an informal sector should remain to visitors). Thus, three types of partnership are envisaged, based on the entities involved.

1. Private sector and CBT entities;
2. Private sector and food street vendors;
3. CBT entities and food street vendors.

A partnership involving CBT entities, and, by extension, of food street vendors, should be temporary. However, “partnerships, whether informal or formal, should have two specific characteristics: first, the partnership should be ‘temporary’ but long term in cases where it is deliberately directed towards capacitating and empowering the community to gain greater independence and bargaining power about external entities; and second, the CBT venture itself should not be part of a partnership” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2016, p. 163). Alternatively, private companies could, as a new strategy, support local redistribution of control (ownership and management) as well as the benefits, as shown in the Investment Redistributive Incentive Model (IRIM) (see Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2020b). The IRIM postulates using various types of investment incentives to facilitate redistribution when companies decide to restructure their ownership and management structures to include the company’s workers and local community members (see Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2020a).

Regulation and specific attention to the private sector’s role and aims involved in a partnership with CBT and food street vendors need to be carefully monitored by the state. This is necessary because “if the private sector actors have more power, then they will be likely to negotiate an agreement which prioritises their interest.” Furthermore, it is recognized that a “stake in the ownership of a tourism venture by local people does not necessarily equate with control over the venture’s operations” (Sinclair 1992 in Scheyvens 2002, p. 191). Thus, “without adequate support, communities can end up receiving only token economic benefits (e.g., employment in menial positions) from joint tourism development rather than broader benefits, such as equity in the venture or training for skill development” (Scheyvens 2002, p. 191).

5. Conclusions

Tourism in Vietnam is growing. Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, has also recorded positive trends concerning visitor influx. The role of tourism in improving local people’s conditions is not linear, but tourism is not delivering benefits to the wider population. Disadvantaged people often remain excluded. Based on these observations, this article proposed a possible strategy for tourism development in Hanoi. The article also considered food street vendors as part of Hanoi’s tourist attractions and the need to improve their socio-economic status. Thus, a model was proposed where several accommodation types exist together but with priority being given to accommodation types associated with CBT principles and characteristics. In this article, we argued that we should draw lessons from other experiences and as such, depending on the context, some conditions may apply to Hanoi while others will not. It is up to the Vietnamese people to consider these suggestions.

This article supports strategies that enhance local control of the tourism sector with specific attention being given to prioritizing the inclusion of disadvantaged community members in the ownership, management, and benefits of the accommodation sub-sector and to enhance the inclusion of the informal sector (in this case specifically, food street vendors) in the tourism milieu and allow them to draw from its benefits. In this context, while international hotel chains and possibly other foreign-owned accommodation establishments should not be excluded, their presence and influence should be progressively

decreased or transformed towards including CBT principles in ownership, management, and distribution of benefits and management structures. By extension, it is proposed that all types of accommodation establishments should be redirected towards aligning to the CBT principles and characteristics proposed in the case of boutique hotels/LCBT. As such, the new concept of LCBT is not against the original CBT, but is serve to expand the CBT principles to the luxury market, thus enlarging the influences, roles, and values of CBT (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2017, p. 8).

This article contributes to the literature on CBT and specifically CBT's role in other forms of tourism, mainly conventional/mass tourism. The proposed strategy is not exhaustive. Therefore, more research is welcome to explicitly analyze CBT entities in Hanoi to understand their specific challenges, needs, and prospects. In general, regarding Hanoi or any other location in the world, more research is needed to support a shift from conventional/mass tourism to alternative tourism approaches, such as CBT, that, especially regarding disadvantaged community members, will enhance local tourism control and management and, ultimately, tourism benefits.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.G.; methodology, O.M.; formal analysis, A.G. and O.M.; writing—review and editing, O.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: We thank Nosipho Maphanga for administrative support.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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