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Spiritual Capital (*Adhyatmik Shompatti)* – a Key Driver of Community Well-being and Sustainable Tourism in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine two dimensions of social interface as key contributors to spiritual capital in the coastal community of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. These include an extended set of interactional networks or meaning-making processes that serve as the base for communal spirituality and a committed sense of personal spiritual calling. Our findings reveal how spiritual capital, which is made up of both organised religious practices and individual spiritual beliefs, brings about a commitment to social responsibility and to the environment and contributes both to community well-being and to the development of sustainable tourism. The value of our work lies not only in its provision of theoretical insights, but also in its potential to inform policy-making activities aimed at the promotion of the sustainable growth of tourism in Cox's Bazar, where concerns and expectations related to the sector remain overlooked.

Key words: Spiritual capital, Cox's Bazar, community well-being, sustainable tourism

Introduction

This paper identifies community well-being as a determinant factor in bringing about the development of sustainable tourism. While the fact that such development contributes positively to local economies is well documented (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012), its influence on community well-being remains under-researched. In this paper, we postulate that community well-being is the outcome of a complex and varied set of community capitals—natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built (see Emery et al., 2006)—and of spiritual capital, which draw attention to the local inhabitants' everyday experience of place (i.e., how they draw a sense of contentment from the way they envisage its spiritual forces and energies). Our enquiry into spiritual capital as a contributing factor to community well-being and to the development of sustainable tourism is vital; this is due to a lack of research on how spiritual capital shapes the preferences and aspirations of traditional communities (where religion represents a means to the achievement of specific goals, including non-religious ones) in relation to the tourism industry. What is required is a nuanced understanding of those contexts in which the parameters of any discussion about religion, spirituality, and well-being are radically different from Western ones and determine which practical lifestyle choices individuals can or cannot make.

We regard spiritual capital as the embodiment of the local inhabitants' multiple subjectivities, aspirations, and concerns, and define it as a blend of the individual and collective capacities stemming from intrinsically cherished spiritual values (Palmer & Wong, 2013). Our contention is that religious phenomena—which are embedded in both beliefs (e.g., individual and collective opinions) and rites (established modes of action)—provide a unique framework suited to the development of an in-depth understanding of how spiritual values can be exploited, promoted, and shared to co-ordinate and stimulate the involvement of multiple actors in sustainable tourism initiatives. Thus, in unpacking the link between community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism that stems from spiritual capital in Cox's Bazar—a beachfront town on the southeast coast of Bangladesh—we consider two dimensions of spirituality: personal religiosity (*Religiosität*, after Simmel, 1997) and faith-based religious beliefs and practices. Personal religiosity is "*an innate disposition, a sensitivity, which is decoupled from a belief in the supernatural as well as from religious practice*" (Montemaggi, 2017, p. 92). Unlike the core moral and spiritual values embedded in

religious conventions, personal religiosity can be regarded to be a composite of individual cultural identities shaped by personal circumstances—such as migration, a history of discrimination, poverty, and minority ethnic, racial, and religious rankings—that provide an array of resources (e.g., financial and emotional support) suited to cope with any psychosocial stressors (Kim, 2010; Somlai & Heckman, 2000).

Indeed, research regards both the informal, individual-level beliefs and established ritual practices found in traditional societies of Africa and Asia to be crucial to the provision of a sense of meaning and purpose and of a moral compass for both the earthly and the 'after' life (Clark 2012; Joshanloo, 2014; Riaz, 2004). Reid (1988) underlined the significance of "*sacred geography*" (p. 6) in the Southeast Asian context, implying that the local peoples' vernacular understandings of their familiar landscapes assign spiritual potency to mountains, caves, forests, trees, graves, and rivers. Similarly, Allerton (2009) referred to "*people's spiritual entanglements with the landscape*" (p. 18) and referenced Durkheim and Mauss's (1963) work on space to propose how, for South East Asian communities, the physical environment is imbued with religious symbolism and values of kinship and morality.

Yet, those studies that have focussed on community well-being have been mainly conducted from perspective of developed economies (McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Pyke et al., 2016). Research conducted in the context of developing countries is scant; indeed, none had hitherto linked spiritual capital with community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism. Thus, we adopted an asset-based approach to propose how tourism can bring about a capital shift (e.g., a growth in human capital as a result of increased employment and knowledge exchange). Our analysis of community capitals illustrates how they can either appreciate or depreciate vis-à-vis the impetus provided by a sustainable tourism industry. Also, our ethnographic study—which is among the first to undertake a biographical interview-led enquiry in Cox's Bazar—was purposely designed to capture both conscious concerns and unconscious cultural, societal, and individual beliefs and processes (Froggett & Chamberlayne, 2004).

Specifically, we aimed at conceptualising and understanding the link between different community capitals and dimensions of social interface, and their role in contributing to community well-being—which, we argue, is central to the development of sustainable tourism. We seek to address two key questions: i) "What does an analysis of different community capitals and the various dimensions of social interface (e.g. *structural*, i.e., the

extent and intensity of links; and *cognitive*. i.e., the perceptions of support, reciprocity and trust that underlie resource exchange)—reveal about their role in bringing about community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism in Cox's Bazar?" and ii) "To what extent can spiritual capital—which had been hitherto under-researched and overlooked in tourism studies—contribute to sustainable tourism development?" Our enquiry is significant because, diverging from classical Durkheimian sociology—which seeks to separate the 'sacred' and 'secular' spheres—we consider the two together to depict the multi-dimensional density of ties that co-exists in a community and the expectations that local inhabitants have of the tourism industry.

We next outline the contributions of the various dimensions of community capitals—in particular, of spiritual capital, which encompasses religious beliefs and practices, as well as moral and sacred beliefs and those that fall outside of the normally defined religious sphere (see Ahmadi, 2006)—to a community's well-being and to the development of sustainable tourism. This is followed by a focus on the study's context, in which the actors' chronological accounts are examined via biographical interviews. Our findings suggest how the various dimensions of community capitals are employed as means of endowing a locality with those select meanings and identities (i.e., the experiential aspects of the tourism industry) that have an impact on people's agency and on their ability to mobilise socio-cultural and religious practices to the end of securing income from sustainable tourism initiatives. Overall, the discussion underscores those (un)sustainable practices that, on one hand, engender the 'demolition' of the various dimensions of community capitals and the 'corrosion' of the character of the place and, on the other hand, contribute to place-making by arresting any untenable behaviours and preserving/accentuating a locality's links with its past. The study concludes by underlining the spillover effect of spiritual capital (e.g., the community cohesion stemming from any mutual support networks that are inclusive of sections with low levels of personal social capital) in sustaining community well-being and bringing about the development of sustainable tourism. We now present our conceptual framework, which focusses on how community capitals—which are both multifaceted and uniquely produced and experienced—continue to shape the potency of a location as a centre of spiritual purity and contribute to its everyday sacredness.

Conceptual Framework

Below, we critically review those studies aimed at establishing a link between community well-being and sustainable tourism. Subsequently, we elaborate on how spiritual capital (embodying different dimensions of religiosity) can have a measurable impact on the well-being of individuals and communities and on the development of sustainable tourism.

Community Well-being and Sustainable Tourism

In the field of psychology, the term 'well-being' has been associated with high self-esteem, health, education, well-paid employment, marital status, optimism, modest aspirations, intelligence, and religious beliefs (Wilson, 1967; Diener & Lucas, 1999; Schueller, 2009). In modern philosophy, the categorisations of well-being include the following three approaches: i) hedonistic accounts of subjective well-being focussed on desire fulfilment (Diener et al., 2000; Diener and Lucas, 1999); ii) eudaimonia (Greek for happiness), which calls upon people to live in accordance with their *daimon* or true self (Ryan &Deci, 2001); and iii) Objective List Theories (OLTs), which are embedded in Neo-Aristotelian capabilities approaches and focus on the core values of agency, freedom, and dignity (Crisp, 2008; Nussbaum & Sen, 1993).

Traditionally, research into well-being in developing countries [e.g., Geertz's (1968) work on Islamic rituals in Indonesia and Morocco, Bharati's work (1970) on the Tantric Practices in India, and Ekvall's (1964) analysis of Tibetan society] has been grounded in a critique of modernity accompanied by an alternative vision of well-being that draws upon deep connections to lineages and heredities, which are considered to be absent in Western societies. In contrast, contemporary studies have expressed a paradigm shift towards holistic, person-centred, and dynamic understandings embedded in the local inhabitants' experiences and their evaluations of life—in the context of what they value and aspire to in particular socio-cultural contexts (Camfield et al., 2009; Gough & McGregor, 2007). In Bangladesh, authors consider happiness to be mainly derived from *dharma*—a term deriving from the Sanskrit *dhr*, which means 'to sustain, support, or uphold'—which communicates not only religious affiliation, but also everyday practical lifestyle choices and opportunities (Devine et al., 2019; Devine & White, 2013).

In tourism studies, community well-being has been widely examined from the perspective of the community capitals framework (CCF), which Emery and Flora (2006) considered to be central to mapping the multiple assets— cultural, social, human, political, natural, financial, and built—found in a locality. The CCF has been used as a holistic tool to engage with how tourism and/or tourists influence the various forms of capital (see Table 1) available to communities (McGehee et al., 2010; Moscardo, 2009). The framework is well-suited as it takes into account the geography, ethnicity, demography, governance, stakeholders, and various power structures that co-exist within a community (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Table 1: Different Capitals in a Community

Financial (FC)	Income, savings, access to funding for investment and opportunity to secure grants (Griffin, 2013)
Natural (NC)	Landscapes, green spaces, and conservation areas that can be consumed or extracted for immediate profit, or retained to enhance a sense of place (Flora & Flora, 2008)
Built (BC)	The physical facilities and infrastructure that are available for the use of communities, including buildings, transport systems, public spaces, technological systems, and distribution systems for water, waste, and energy (Emery & Flora, 2006)
Social (SC)	The quality and potential, held within a social network—such as trust, reciprocity, and cooperation—that needs to be established and maintained (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988)
Cultural (CC)	Shared values and symbols, including institutional (education or any specialised knowledge), embodied (those that manifest themselves in personality, speech and skills), and objectified ones (clothing and other belongings) (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010)
Human (HC)	The capabilities, skills, knowledge, and health of the people who make up a community, the successful acculturation and societal integration of whom is important for a society to thrive (Frideres, 2008)
Political (PC)	The invisible assets needed to access, mobilise, and influence political decision-making processes through trust and goodwill (Healey, 2006)
Symbolic (SYC)	The degree of accumulated prestige emanating from the dialectic interplay of knowledge and recognition (Bourdieu, 1993)

Source: Adapted from Bourdieu (1993); Emery and Flora (2006); Flora et al. (2004); Kline (2017)

Overall, the participation of multiple stakeholders in goal setting has been identified as being crucial to community well-being and to bring about the sustainable implementation and monitoring of development processes (Bramwell &Sharman, 1999; Kumar, 2017; Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016; Tosun, 2000). Largely, the focus has been on foregrounding local voices in the decision-making process and on the residents' role as experts in evaluating the "*tourism readiness*" (Zhou et al., 2017, p. 339) of a place and in shaping and planning its

desired future (Glover & Stewart, 2013; Soulard et al., 2018). Bennett et al. (2012) compiled an exhaustive list of indicators (155) in relation to the seven capitals—financial, social, built, natural, human, cultural, and political. Like McGehee et al. (2010) they advanced the conceptual thinking around the CCF by assigning subcomponents to each capital. Yet, the discussion on spiritual capital (which embodies both *personal*—prayer and meditation—and *organised* religious practices) as a contributor to a community's well-being and as a determinant of sustainable tourism remains scant. Hartwell et al.'s (2018) study is one of the few to emphasise the influence of tourism on the emotional, psychological, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions of well-being of both tourists and local communities.

More specifically, Fry's (2005) work on spiritual leadership establishes a link between well-being and spirituality. However, that study's focus is on workplace spirituality, which is regarded as crucial to employee altruism, conscientiousness, and productivity (Bodla & Ali, 2012; Smith, 2015; Tkaczynski & Arli, 2018). Similarly, in their study on Halal tourism in Indonesia, Ariyanto and Chalil (2017) regarded spiritual capital alongside intellectual capital in bringing about the achievement of optimal organisational performance. Overall, the role played by spiritual capital in contributing to the well-being of deprived communities remains overlooked and insufficient attention is given to how the local inhabitants' religious beliefs shape their life choices, including the input they require from the tourism industry. This is crucial as it is *". . . the citizen who must live with the cumulative outcome of such* [tourist] *developments and needs to have greater input into how his / her community is packaged and sold as a tourist product"* (Murphy, 2013 p. 47).

Spiritual Capital - a key driver of community well-being and sustainable tourism

This study advances the previous work that underlines the structural affinities between religion and tourism (Stausberg, 2011) to conceptualise the ways in which religiosity or spirituality is understood and practiced in rural communities and its impact on community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism.

The link between religious involvement and psychological well-being can be traced to Durkheim's (1912) seminal work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* and to his structural-functional approach, which attributed three major social functions to religion: i) *to foster social cohesion* by preserving communal solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs; ii) *to facilitate social control* by enforcing religious-based morals and norms aimed at

maintaining conformity and control in society; and iii) *to offer meaning and purpose* by addressing any existential questions. Indeed, religious symbols and beliefs offer potent means suited to constructing a sense of meaning and coherence and a compelling framework for interpreting daily experiences and major life events (Ellison, 1991; Pollner, 1989). Holt et al. (2012) distinguished the religious (organised worship) and spiritual (relationship with a higher entity) spheres.

Research regards spiritual capital to stem from a process that involves the affirmation of any intrinsic values of spirituality that impact on a community's resilience, well-being, and capacity to respond to any given circumstances (Hefner, 2010; Palmer & Wong, 2013). Thus, spirituality may—or may not—be connected to institutionalised religion (Miller and Martin, 1988). Considering Hefner's (2003) definition of spiritual capital as "*a sub-species of social capital*" (p. 206), it can be regarded as a combination of the specific religious and cultural values that are found in a community setting, are reinforced by social networks, and have an impact on other community capitals. In fact, spiritual capital can be regarded as being made up of two components: i) *structural,* as it adds a further distinct asset and shapes the way the other existing ones are used (e.g., by providing an overarching vision for a locality's development); and ii) *relational,* as it contributes incrementally to the other capitals present in the community (Smith, 2015).

Both Durkheim (1951) and Simmel (1997) considered the social dimension of religion as the *essence and substance* of subjective well-being because personal faith and organised religious activities, together, nurture friendships and social ties. These, we argue, leverage links to the sustainable development of tourism, as "*new-age spirituality*" (Cheer et al., 2017, p. 253) seekers are increasingly seeking places that provide recompense via cultural performance, religious observance, and ritualised practices. Thus, while participation in organised religious activities and/or personal religious faith practices (e.g., prayer, meditation) compensate for the lack of more sophisticated cognitive resources in marginal communities, they simultaneously provide a source of spiritual nourishment to tourists or "*new pilgrims*" (Fedele, 2012, p. 22) who visit traditional shrines and places rich in spiritual capital for reasons that differ from those of traditional religious pilgrims. Their motivations can be characterised as a quest for i) mobility (both physical and internal), ii) experiential value (e.g., a search for authentic, unique, and cathartic experiences), and iii) the inherent qualities of the place itself (Cheer et al., 2017). In a way, our theorisation of spiritual capital

as a driver for community well-being and sustainable tourism is inspired by those writings on 'reflexive spirituality' that encourage tourists to expand their spiritual horizons while travelling (Roof, 2001; Besecke, 2014). The emphasis is on spiritual capital not only offering a heightened sense of self-worth, but also enabling a form of psychological control of problematic situations and testing life events (Gorsuch & Smith 1983).

For Malloch (2003), spiritual capital is the "*missing leg in the stool of economic development, which includes its better-known relatives, social and human capital*" (p. 19). Following Gregory & Helfenbein (2008), our contention is that, when classified as a capital and embedded in the vocabulary of exchange and use, spirituality can exist as a further asset capable of providing communities with "*affordances and constraints for thought and action*" (Tilley, 2007, p. 19) that need to be identified and quantified as causal factors in the development of sustainable tourism. The notion of spiritual capital then encapsulates assets (e.g., spiritual knowledge, competencies, and preferences) that are neither material nor monetary, but are nevertheless valuable in the economy of symbolic goods (after Bourdieu). In his work on the Bengal Vaisnava-Sahajiya tradition, Urban (1993) references Bourdieu's writings on symbolic goods to argue how dissident, marginalised, or oppressed individuals can manipulate and transform both spiritual and religious symbolism to challenge the status quo within a given social order.

Further, following other authors (see Geary, 2008; Jauhari & Sanjeev, 2010; Tilson, 2005), we conflate the terms *spiritual* and *religious* to indicate that, in contexts like that of Cox's Bazar, religious and spiritual leaning are inter-twined. The sacred beliefs and practices of community members contribute to their well-being, eco-consciousness, sustainable lifestyles, and, ultimately, spiritual capital—which is then drawn upon to amend or restructure those elements of everyday life that are perceived as problematic. Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence offers some explanation for this type of phenomenon, which cements the historical continuity of those religious practices and traditions that are regarded as vital both in developing a sense of meaning and for personal and collective well-being. However, it should be noted that, although the impact of religion on well-being is generally reported as being positive, it can engender negative well-being values (Devine et al., 2019). In fact, excessive religiosity can result in depression and mental disorders, and high levels of separatist tendencies fuelled by religious beliefs can depreciate community well-being (Mookerjee and Beron, 2005). Indeed, the riots that took place in 2012 in Ramu,

in Cox's Bazar district—which resulted in the torching of Buddhist shrines by fundamentalist Muslims—reveal how religion can serve as an excuse to wreak carnage (CNN, 2012). Yet, previous work offers strong evidence to suggest that the spirituality of different faiths—when informed by tenets of integration, interdependence, harmony, balance, sustainability, and compassion—contributes to not only social cohesion, but also to bring about community action for sustainable tourism (Schroeder, 2015; Stausberg, 2011).

We now present our study context, which is focussed on the community capitals—found in Cox's Bazar—that shape the local inhabitants' spiritual orientation towards life. Our analysis focusses on underlining how spiritual capital is generated and applied at the individual, group, and societal levels. Following Verter (2003), we consider spiritual capital to exist in three forms: embodied in an agent's dispositions (tastes), objectified through material and symbolic goods (theologies), and institutionalised through the qualifications given to legitimate producers of religious goods—both lay people (whose agency Bourdieu discarded) and religious specialists. We include those singular and collective capacities—generated by spiritual capital—that enhance both multiple capitals in the community and the community's capacity to serve, cooperate in, lead, and sustain projects and organisations devoted to bringing about the development of sustainable tourism.

Study Context

Case Profile

Located in south-eastern Bangladesh (see Figure 1), Cox's Bazar can be regarded as the country's tourist capital. This is due to the popularity of its sandy beach (120 km long), with mass tourism (nearly two-million visitors every year) in the peak season, which goes from November to March (Ullah & Hafiz, 2014). As a result, the area is experiencing serious adverse impacts on its society, culture, economy, and environment (Ahmed 2010). It has been declared as an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), the ecosystems of which are affected adversely by the changes brought by human activity (Islam, 2005).

Figure 1: Cox's Bazar

Myanmar

The latest official figures from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics state that the district has a population of approximately 2.3 million, with a literacy rate of 39.3% in 2011 (BBS, 2013). Despite the capacity of the coastal economy to support the community's livelihoods, Cox's Bazar remains one of the poorest districts in Bangladesh, with approximately 33% of its population living below the poverty line (BBS, 2013).

The tourism potential of the area remains underdeveloped, as the economy is mainly agriculture-dependent. Around 44% of the district's 335,825 holdings are farms that produce a variety of crops and fruits such as local and high yield varieties of rice, wheat, vegetables, spices, pulses, betel leaves, banana, jackfruit, guava, and coconut (EDIG, 2018). However, the inability of smallholders to produce crops in a sustainable manner and the lack of incentive policies has adversely impacted the performance of agriculture in the district (ibid). Moreover, the significant influx of Rohingya (a Muslim minority group) refugees from neighbouring Myanmar has stretched the region's resources and resulted in a significant

increase in population. In Teknaf, a sub-district in Cox's Bazar, an estimated 76% of the total population is made up of Rohingya refugees; these have strained the region's resources, resulting in deforestation, inflation, and competition for labour opportunities (Hassan et al., 2018). While segments of Cox's Bazar's community—such as medium size and small traders—have benefited economically from the presence of the refugees, other sectors of the local communities feel neglected in relation to the aid provided by humanitarian agencies, leading to reported tensions between the Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities, and especially a growth in gender related violence (Nordby, 2018).

According to national level statistics, 22% of married women in the country experience physical and/or sexual violence each year and 48% experience it in their lifetime (VAW, 2015). Further, our analysis of newspaper stories suggests a shocking rise in violent incidents in Cox's Bazar, with agencies like UNICEF and Oxfam reporting receiving 45-70 abused women on a daily basis (see Dhaka tribune, 2019; The Daily Star, 2019a; The Daily Star, 2019b). Moreover, the two authors from Cox's Bazar underscored how, whereas the presence of international NGOs ensures that those violent incidents against women that take place within the refugee camps are reported in the media, most of those occurring outside remain unreported due to the attached stigma and to the women's distrust of the law enforcing agencies, which that are perceived as inept and corrupt. However, over the last ten years, there have been positive developments whereby the numbers of women in places of work and learning have increased as a result of their active engagement with religion via *taleem* (education) groups (Huq & Hussain, 2014). Also, religion is proving to be a primary source of strength for both the locals and the Rohingya, with most relying on religiousness and a sense of duty to their communities and their families to help cope with the crisis (Chen, 2018). However, the exemplary compassion shown by most of the locals in Cox's Bazar appears to have reached its limit, as they attribute their growing misfortune to the lengthy stay of over 1.1 million persecuted Rohingya refugees from the neighbouring Rakhine state of Myanmar (Bhuiyan, 2019).

In practical terms, agencies like the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are working with religious and community leaders and faith groups to raise awareness of psychological well-being and coping skills with the aim of developing opportunities for social cohesion that are culturally relevant and contextually appropriate (UNHCR, 2018a). Thus, the spiritual assets inherent in Cox's Bazar are providing the

framework for non-specialised interventions aimed at high-risk groups, such as the young, and mainstreaming psychosocial considerations in the provision of basic services (UNHCR, 2018b).

In general, Cox's Bazar is a pluralistic society made up of five religious/ethnic groups: Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Rakhine (a small, ethnic community inhabiting the coastal areas of Patuakhali, Borguna, and Cox's Bazar, having migrated to Bangladesh from Myanmar before the formation of the two present-day states). Each group has its distinct cultural identity and customs, plus varying capitals (including spiritual) that contribute to their well-being and define their role in the development of sustainable tourism. For instance, the members of each community own shops selling souvenirs, locally made clothes, and household items, and actively participate in UN-led ecotourism and community projects that offer residents opportunities to act as tourist guides and contribute towards conservation activities (Hossain, 2007). The Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, a statutory board under the Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism of Bangladesh tasked with promoting tourism, has drawn up a number of master plans aimed at developing sustainable tourism in Cox's Bazar. These have resulted in the establishment of an Exclusive Tourist Zone at Sabrung, within Cox's Bazar district, and several community based eco-tourism initiatives aimed at facilitating the integration of tourists into customary events like the Chakma festival (Hosen et al., 2016). The emphasis is on inclusive and sustainable coastal tourism initiatives that protect both the natural environment and the socio-cultural fabric of the different factions that make up the community (IUCN, 2017).

Methodology

To explore the various capitals in the host community, this study is guided by a constructivist approach that highlights how different cultures and contexts can form reality. As this is a qualitative study, it is compatible with an interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Epistemologically, the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm—which encourages the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and participant—enabled us to generate rich and detailed descriptions of the social phenomena by encouraging our participants to

speak freely and thus uncover the ways in which they interpret, experience, and understand reality (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, ontologically, in order to facilitate meaning-making by enabling our participants to construct their social realities, we employed biographical interviews that provided insights into how different capitals are perceived by the different factions within the community. This method is seldom used in studies on sustainable tourism and has never been applied to Cox's Bazar, where there has been a tendency towards the "*…silencing of local subaltern stakeholders*" (Varman & Saha, 2009, p. 811). We found this to be of immense value in engaging with our participants' narratives (i.e., the stories of their lives), which illustrated the significance of specific events and actors in their biographies (Table 2).

As a methodology, King (2003) observed that "*. . . a storytelling focuses on narrative is particularly welcome`e in indigenous communities, where storytelling has played a central role in the transmission of culture and is widely respected as a source of knowledge, wisdom, and affirmation of identity*" (p. 40-42). However, we did not constrain the residents' accounts to a chronological, linear plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end. In fact, our biographical interviews (each lasting between 2-3 hours and completed between the months of October 2016 and March 2017)—which were conducted in an in depth, open-ended manner that allowed minimal interruption—encouraged our participants (see Table 2) to present detailed accounts that often extended to monologues on their personal/professional backgrounds and to their individual and family experiences of living in Cox's Bazar. This enabled us to follow the actors' local allegiances in multiple capacities to throw light on how the region's profile had changed over time.

Each interview was translated from Bangladeshi into English, coded using the NVivo software, and analysed taking into account those key actors whose well-being is either dependent on or results from their involvement in the tourism industry. In order to become familiar with the community's cultural settings, the second author participated in various religious and cultural programmes organised by members from different religious communities and ascertained their historic contributions to tourism in Cox's Bazar. In line with the ethnographic approach (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000), local dialect was used for communication. However, it should be noted that our sample was predominantly made up of male respondents. The efforts made to recruit female respondents achieved limited success as, historically, women have tended not to participate in ethnographic studies in the

region despite encouragement to share their accounts. Also, culturally, Cox's bazar is a male dominated patriarchal society, which accounts for the women's reticence and their uncommunicativeness. This is further accentuated, as Sultana (2010) explained, by the practice of *purdah*, which requires women to cover themselves fully and constrains both their voice and mobility.

Primarily, this research applied purposeful sampling to select "*. . . information rich cases, including individuals, groups and organisations that provide . . . the greatest insight into the research question*" (Devers et al. 2000, p. 264). The criterion for inclusion in the sample was having lived and worked a minimum of three years. This ensured that our participants had spent enough time locally to engage in and understand the tourism issues affecting Cox's Bazar, and to formulate affinity with each other and the area.

Table 2: Profile of Participants

Participants' Profile	Religious and Ethnic Background	Gender	Age
Owner of a family business and community leader	Muslim	Male	51
Business owner	Muslim	Male	75
Political leader—ruling party	Muslim	Male	55
Social group leader—worked with the 'Green City' environmental group	Muslim	Female	49
Social group leader—worked with 'Green Cox's Bazar', an environmental initiative	Muslim	Male	61
Member of the Shop owners' Association	Muslim	Male	55
Member of the Cottage Owners Association	Muslim	Male	70
Retired political leader	Muslim	Male	69
Retired government officer—affiliated with the *Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation*	Muslim	Male	66
Community leader- worked with the Pharmacy Owners' Association	Hindu	Male	65
Social group leader—worked with the Save the Children NGO	Hindu	Male	75
Community resident—worked with a primary school management committee	Hindu	Male	70
Retired political leader	Hindu	Male	69
Salesperson in an outlet	Hindu	Male	56
Hotel Manager	Hindu	Male	59
Restaurant worker	Hindu	Male	61
Monk	Buddhist	Male	65
Resident from a social group—worked at a tea stall	Buddhist	Male	69
Resident of Saint Martin Island—owned a water transportation business	Buddhist	Male	70
Private school employee	Buddhist	Male	62
Owner of a seafood business	Buddhist	Male	69
Affiliated with a financial institution	Buddhist	Male	59
Journalist employed by a local daily	Buddhist	Male	35
Environmental journalist and a group leader	Christian	Male	30
Community resident—worked at a hatchery	Christian	Male	65
Community resident—worked in a fishing project	Christian	Male	56
Member of the Tour Operators Association	Christian	Male	45
Retired lawyer	Christian	Male	62
NGO worker	Christian	Male	49
Community leader—worked for Cox's Bazar City Corporation	Rakhine	Male	59
Retired School Teacher	Rakhine	Male	75
Fresh graduate and small firm owner	Rakhine	Male	26
Small firm owner	Rakhine	Female	56
Salesperson for a small outlet	Rakhine	Female	45
Retired political leader	Rakhine	Female	65
Involved with the deep-sea fishing industry	Rakhine	Female	57

Furthermore, in order to ensure accuracy in reporting our findings, we conducted a "*participatory analysis*" (Vindrola-Padros and Johnson, 2014, p. 1609), which meant that, during the data collection and preliminary analysis, care was taken to obtain the participants' input regarding the interpretation of their narratives. We achieved this by informally feeding our thoughts on the themes that were emerging back to our respondents, thereby involving them in the academic analysis in an ongoing manner during the interview process itself. More overt analysis, as a discrete activity, was conducted when the team jointly finalised the themes emerging from the initial data analysis. All interviews were conducted and transcribed by the second author who, in line with Cunliffe's (2009) approach towards ethnographic studies, closely observed the respondents' cultural and social contexts and belief systems by becoming a part of their daily lives over an extended period of 12 months (see Table 2). The fact that two authors have grown up in similar social contexts and are familiar with the local language further provide the perspective of an insider on the social phenomena occurring in Cox's Bazar. In particular, they note gender norms that have established women's docility and domesticity and reinforce social decree in regards to whose voices are heard. Their observations tie in with Sultana's (2009) study on women's participation within community initiatives in Bangladesh that is characterised by (in)visibility due to gendered positions of subordination.

However, it should be noted that those two authors, who have more than thirty years of personal understanding of the culture and subcultures within this community, are only able to provide a male and mainly Muslim perspective. Although, in our analysis, we took care to also reflect female worldviews, we acknowledge the need to extend this research to female participants. The data were analysed jointly by the team and assessed for accuracy. The data—which were chosen to reflect the participants' views based on their age, gender, religion, ethnicity and their involvement with communal and tourism activities, government and non-government bodies—were analysed using the NVivo software. Importantly, we undertook an extensive analysis of newspaper stories, which provided nuanced insights into the communal interface.

We now present our analysis of the various facets of spiritual capital and of how they contribute to community well-being. We hope that this study will lend weight to the significance of considering what Schorch (2014) termed "*internal understanding*" (p. 29) or the physicality of lived experiences in informing place promotion and branding.

Findings

The Community Capitals in Cox's Bazar

Durkheim (1913) developed the notion of "*the pluralistic conception of reality*" (p. 25-27) as the synthesis of an extended set of interactional networks or smaller life-worlds in the community, and the basis for more extended ties and relational interfaces. We have used this framework to map the community capitals found in Cox's Bazar (Table 3). Our data underscore how different groups exist in varying relations with one another and with the larger community, and how their access to diverse community capitals is fast reducing the legitimacy of particular groups as the 'rightful' residents of Cox's Bazar.

Table 3: Mapping the various capitals of the five religious and ethnic groups found in Cox's Bazar

Capitals	Religious and Ethnic Group Perceptions			
	Muslim	**Hindu**	**Buddhist**	**Christi**
Financial Capital	Ancestral property. However, with the increase in land prices, some have sold their land to wealthy outsiders	Historical and continuing land appropriation continues to deplete their financial capital	Minimal financial capital due to their inability to benefit from the tourism industry	The government discriminate aga property disputes adequately prote attacks
Natural Capital	Leading local efforts to combat climate change impacts	Gradual loss of access to natural resources	Livelihoods largely dependent on natural resources	Both socio-ec cultural rights on overlooked
Built Capital	They are unhappy with tourism development because of unsustainable infrastructure development	Their lack of decision-making power in policymaking translates into their inability to either stall or implement change to the local landscape	The top-down model of planning and infrastructure development leaves little room for their concerns to be addressed in any (re)development plans for the area	Like other mino they face substant contributing to development for t
Social Capital	Inter-generational connections in the community	Violence and discrimination against the Hindus on religious grounds depletes their social capital	Like the Hindus, the Buddhists have faced sectarian violence, which has resulted in the depletion of their social capital	Mostly of tribal backgrounds, th also face variou because of their fa
Cultural Capital	High levels of cultural capital in the local context and a sense of belonging through kinship ties and friendship networks	Families provide emotional support and are the key source of emotional well-being and cultural capital	Gradually acquiring cultural capital through charity work that has gained local acceptance and recognition	Their cultural realised throug expression—a rig current context, is under threat
Human capital	A group of Muslims are conservative about female education and jobs. They have separate schooling in childhood. They are mostly literate. They are happy with the existing tourism skill training facilities	They are very much concerned about education. They prefer jobs to business. They are happy with the existing tourism skill training facilities	Men are more advanced than women. They are happy with the existing tourism skill training facilities	Education is priority to them happy with t tourism skill train
Political capital	Insignificant political capital due to a lack of consultation and participation in the political process	Have suffered at the hands of politically influential property appropriators	Likewise, Buddhists lack political capital and have had to move from their ancestral lands	Official polic diminished the capital
Symbolic Capital	Muslims derive their symbolic capital via their relational ties in the community, individual prestige and personal qualities such as authority and the ability to attain and maintain valued material and social resources	The Hindus' diminished symbolic capital undermines their efforts to accumulate financial capital	The Buddhists' religiosity, which is centred on the ethos of devotion, generosity, and solidarity, contributes to their symbolic capital	Like the Bud Christians' symb tightly interwove religious beliefs
Spiritual Capital	For the Muslims, the Quranic framework incorporates spiritual consciousness into a system of belief, worship, morality and social responsibility. Thus, the predominance of Islamic banking in the region suggests that the community is guided by putting	Most important religious sites in Bangladesh are related to Islam, but significant Hindu religious sites—such as the Adinath Temple on Moheshkhali Island, near Cox's Bazar—have undoubtedly enabled the Hindus to assemble spiritual capital,	The Buddhist monks uphold the spirit of religious harmony through philanthropic practices like serving *iftar*—the evening meal with which Muslims break their fast during Ramadan—to underprivileged Muslims.	Today, Banglades form a tiny gr Muslim-majority face various because of t However, society appreciates the community, for

| | ethics before economics, and introducing shared risk/reward plus lower debt | albeit within the limitations of the Islamic belief system, which excludes those who hold other religious beliefs and those who hold none | | values of love an community is pe bearer of a high se and spiritual valu manifest in its co areas like healthcare, an development. |

In addition to the groups listed in Table 3, the second author visited the houses of ethnic communities such as the Rohingya and the Jele, and homeless migrants to observe their dependence on tourism. They are the least privileged sections of the community and are generally illiterate daily workers. Their livelihood depends on the ingenuity and labour of women, who are economically active and instrumental in forging ties with other societal groups. Their warmth and individual well-being, despite their difficult circumstances, can be attributed to the private and subjective dimensions of religiosity. This is in contrast to the diminished nature of community capitals (Table 3) in Cox's Bazar, which indicates a breakdown in the social fabric.

The othering of Non-Muslims

Some sections of the populace (mostly the non-Muslims) are increasingly being regarded as 'burdens' on the state and unworthy of support. In growing instances, the Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are frequently labelled as 'problems' (interpreted through cultural practices that are incompatible with Islamic norms) to be managed effectively through state policies (Feldman, 2016). The erosion of community capitals, polarisation along caste and religious lines, the growing crisis of the Rohingya refugees, and the loss of cultural identity among minorities have cumulatively resulted in an incremental rise in ethno-religious conflicts (Jain, 2001). Indeed, in the multi-faith society of Cox's Bazar, visible psychological conflicts can be observed between the various factions; this, in turn, has an impact on the community's well-being and on its tourism potential. It manifests itself in state policies that construct difference and justify differential state action that is discriminatory. This leads agents, acting on behalf of government institutions, to disregard any illegal practices, including violence against particular groups. This includes dereliction of duty when requests for fairness or recompense are made (Feldman, 2016; Ruud, 1996). Undeniably, these "*patterns of othering*" (Feldman, 2016, p. 13) are concomitant with what locals perceive as a lack of:

> "*proper knowledge about politics . . . when Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan (before 1971), most of our politicians were educated . . . no one got a chance to do politics at random as is the case now . . . muscle power and money are now the main qualifications . . . no wonder knowledgeable people or those with half a sense keep away from the present politics*" (retired Muslim leader, 69, male)

In fact, political indifference translates into the exclusive nature of policy making, resulting in a failure to integrate communities into:

> ". . . *different development projects . . . when project work commences, it is then we come to know that something is on . . . sometimes we will get an invitation from local administrators to participate in meetings, but it is all an eye-wash*" (community leader, age-65, female, Rakhine)

Bashar (2017) further noted the growing traction of violent ideology in Bangladesh, which poses a serious security challenge, with extremists exploiting religious spaces to recruit and spread their radical ideas.

Religion, spirituality and the development of sustainable tourism in Cox's Bazar

Indeed, militants are increasing their grip on the Rohingya settlements in the region, which are no longer officially recognised by the government due to the growing influx of migrants that are viewed as unregistered refugees and are left to set up their own makeshift camps (Rahman, 2010; The Daily Star, 2019c). Further, the loss of forests and biodiversity associated with the growing numbers of Rohingya camps and with the collection of firewood by the refugees has deepened the environmental crisis in Cox's Bazar. According to the UNHCR's estimate, the equivalent of three to five football fields of forest are felled every day in the area, limiting the opportunities of those local communities that depend on forestry and community tourism projects to supplement their livelihoods (Dekrout, 2018).

In contrast, the members of the small Rakhine community of Cox's Bazar, who also migrated to Bangladesh from Myanmar—but before the formation of the two modern countries—are recognised as residents and are predominantly Theravada Buddhists. The Rakhinese culture is similar to the dominant Burmese one, but with more of an Indian influence due to the community's proximity to India. Thus, akin to the Hindus, forested landscapes have a strong cultural value for the Rakhine and are regarded as sacred. Further, for the Rakhine, religion inspired and organised social welfare activities, referred to as *parahita* (derived from the Sanskrit and meaning '*for the well-being of others')*, guide both their moral self-improvement and their involvement in biodiversity conservation and social protection projects (McKay, 2019). The Rakhine consider Cox's Bazar home:

> "*Where would we go?* [Amra kothai jabo?] *I have been living here for the last 50 years. This is my birthplace and I have seen my children grow up here. Generation to generation we have been living here. We are mostly involved with fishing, which*

derives its direct income from tourism . . . I want to live here until my death and hopefully my children will too. With God's grace, we have done fine until now and will continue to do so . . . whose life is free from troubles? But God has been kind . . ." (Rakhine community leader, age-59, male).

Religion—and subjective religiosity and spirituality in particular—contributed to the resilience of those respondents who, like him, were from ethnic and minority groups that had faced historic marginalisation at the hands of the dominant factions in the community. In fact, in their role as community elders, the older and more experienced members of the community provide both personal and collective efficacy as part of *"the active and willing engagement of citizens within a participative community"* (Onyz &Bullen, 2000, p. 25).

Overall, the residents' pride in Cox's Bazar's healthy ambience (*Shaisthakar Sthan)* contributes to the existence of networks of mutual support within and between households who regarded the *"seaside as a precious gift from the God"* (Buddhist Monk, male, 65 years old). Indeed, the prayer culture prevalent in Cox's Bazar brings about social cohesion and contributes incrementally to various community capitals. Besides, most families, irrespective of their religion, have historically set aside in their homes a separate and well-furnished room for tourists and treat visitors as a godsend (*Isbara pathano).* Thus, within the tourism context, spirituality ties in with aspects of religiosity focussed on the experiential, the interior, and the subjective dimensions of the residents' personal identities. In practice, the Rakhine are more involved in tourist activities than the other groups in the community. Culturally, their family structure is female-dominated, and women manage the tourism activities. In fact, it is the growing permanence of tourism as a key contributor to the region's economy that has caused the 'spiritual' replacing the religious as a more meaningful expression of identity. Such a finding coincides with James Beckford's observations on how religion has undergone a change in form; ceasing to function primarily as a social institution and becoming more of a 'cultural resource'; *"Religion has come adrift from its former points of anchorage but is no less potentially powerful as a result. It remains a potent cultural resource or form which may act as the vehicle of change, challenge or conservation"* (Beckford, 1989, p. 170)

Further, the ethnic variations in the meaning and conceptual significance of constructs—*both religious and spiritual* and *more spiritual than religious* (also see Grim and Grim, 2019)—reveal the intricate aspects of the spiritual capital experienced by the community of Cox's Bazar and how they translate into the particular roles adopted by the

residents in promoting sustainable tourism. For example, the Muslims, more than the other religious and ethnic groups, indicated that they were both religious and spiritual. For them, praying together was strongly related to their life satisfaction and further cemented their bonds with the other members of their community. This ties in with Krueger et al.'s (2009) findings, which correlate individuals' sense of well-being with their routine practices. Thus, the Muslims' territorial affinity (and their perceived legitimate stake in Cox's Bazar future) gives rise to their very clear involvement in the tourism industry and the role they attribute to it within their community:

> "... my grandfather first came to live here probably nearly 100 years ago ... my father owns my business, which was started by my grandfather ... we change based on the needs and demands of the market (not too much, let me add that) ... my children do not like this old business ... but we will always be here. For visitors, we have become Shabdkosh, a reference point ... they always come in, either to buy knick knacks or ask us where to find things, petrol station, good places to eat, etc. or to generally talk ... nothing important, just talk" (Business owner of a family firm and a community leader, male, 51).

In contrast, the Hindus and Christians, while also being religious and spiritual, drew attention to the depletion of their multiple capitals (see Table 2), which divested them of their power and influence, making them incapable of contributing to sustainable tourism development initiatives in the community, as was made evident by these accounts: "*We have been living here for 15 years, but still local people treat us as strangers*" (Hotel Manager, Hindu, male, 59), "*We are doing business here and contributing to the development activities, but they don't trust us ... an implicit conflict is going on always*" (Member of the Tour Operators Association, male, Christian, 45), and "*... I tried to talk and negotiate with other community leaders, but they don't care about my proposal ...*" (Social Group Leader, worked with the Save the Children NGO, Hindu, Male, 75)

These accounts, coupled with recently growing incidents of violence against the non-Muslim members of the community—which have been detrimental to the community's cohesion—indicate the growing isolation of certain groups who are consciously relegated to the margins (Ethirajan, 2013). Further, their tenuous involvement in the tourism economy contributes to their "*involuntary social marginality*" (Leonard, 1984, p.181).

Similarly, both the Buddhists and the Rakhine still remain on the margins, but use their spiritual and cultural practices to create stronger ties with other communities and promote the moral virtues of filial piety, charity, and kindness. Thus, the Basabi religious festival of the Rakhine (see Figure 2)—which sees groups of unmarried men and women standing on opposite sides as they soak each other with water in the process of choosing their life partner—has become an open event. Irrespective of race, religion, and culture, both community members and tourists participate in this symbolic performance, which enables the Rakhine to maintain and renew the value of their sacred space in Cox's Bazar. Also, such festivities are viewed officially as helpful in the construction of an image of Bangladesh as a secular society (*Dharmanirapeksa samaja*). Festival organisers actually actively seek, via their personal connections with government officials and experts, official recognition of such cultural practices. Thus, Basabi has become a means to obtain social as well as economic capitals and, while the religious meanings of the festival continue to persist among the local inhabitants, new secular, social, and political meanings are also becoming fast embedded in how it is conceived each year.

Figure 2: The Basabi (water throwing) Festival of the Rakhine

Source: Courtesy of the Rakhine Welfare Group, Facebook Post, 2019, used with permission.

The inclusion of Rakhine women in decision-making differentiates them from Muslim women who are undermined by kinship ties, marriage and patriarchal household dynamics founded on notions of *ijjat* (honour) and *lajja/sharam* (shame) deployed to regulate their bodies in public space (Routledge, 2015). Besides, the ideology of purdah (seclusion) restricts Muslim women's ability to achieve economic independence unlike Rakhine women who possess both physical and social mobility, access to basic education as a result of which they are able to own and manage small and medium enterprises. Thus, discrimination is experienced unequally by Muslim and Rakhine women.

In contesting hegemonic societal relations, the counter-hegemonic presence of subordinate groups like the Rakhine and Buddhists provides the space to aggregate the community's concerns for the environment. This is manifest in the traditional Kite flying festival (Figure 3), that in its symbolic capacity, has created a sacred sense of togetherness as organisers use it as a means to raise awareness about cleaning the beach and to promote sustainable tourism. The event has created the potential for what Inayatullah (1995) termed "*cultural pluralism . . . where one culture understands the categories of the other culture—time, language, relationship to history, family, transcendental and land.*" (p. 413). This is in line with the thinking of Durkheim, who conceived a community based on a shared sense of the sacred—or indeed of any form of incorporeal association—to constitute a spiritual nucleus that promotes a social sentiment (Falasca-Zamponi, 2011). Here, it is worth mentioning Charles Taylor, who, in his seminal work A Secular Age (2007), pointed out that the secularisation of religious and spiritual beliefs and cultural festivities for the common good spawns moments of collective effervescence. What emerges from Durkheim's theorising of society as sacred is then a cultural approach centred around the affectivity embodied in shared cultural practices.

Figure 3: The Kite Festival

Source: Festival Flyer posted on Facebook page, 2019, used with permission

It was interesting to note that both the Buddhists and the Rakhine identified themselves as "*more spiritual than religious*" and invoked their spirituality to articulate their dissatisfaction with any malpractices effected in the name of religion and to signal an attempt to move beyond them. Thus, for them, their religious celebrations were for "*one and all . . . people coming from different religions and enjoying our events . . . Shangskritik Oitijjo—our very rich cultural tradition*" (Member of the community, 65 years old, male, Buddhist). Their emphasis is on making space to accommodate people from different faiths in their religious festivities to offer "*small steps to everyone to reminiscence childhood memories*" (Small firm owner, Rakhine, female, 56). This ties in with Bourdieu's (1991) theorising, akin to that of Durkheim (1912), which underlines how religion and tradition serve as the epistemological foundations of a 'logic of practice' by providing a symbolic medium that makes social life possible.

Thus, despite experiencing exclusion from the tourism industry, Cox's Bazar's non-Muslim factions are re-embodying themselves as a spiritually constructed people, independent of their social identity, through their distinctive ceremonies and practices. The social reality of Cox's Bazar is such that most of its people are directly or indirectly connected with the prevailing institutionalised religious structure assembled around the key

tenets of Islam. Religion has a strong cultural foundation in the social fabric of Cox's Bazar; one that begets an ethos of mutual trust and reciprocity and camaraderie (*mil-muhabbot*) that is central to community well-being and sustainable tourism initiatives. Overall, the community of Cox's Bazar provides a fascinating story of how spirituality, implicit in the social structure, becomes a tool by which different sections not only (re)construct their identity against strife, but also gain an opportunity to continue with their personal 'spiritual quest' through community tourism projects.

Discussion

Leveraging spiritual capital (*adhyatmik shompatti)* for the development of sustainable tourism

Based on our findings, it would not be unfair to state that both religious and personal spiritual beliefs are being eclipsed by a rise in fundamentalism in Cox's Bazar; this, combined with the refugee crisis, is depleting community capitals. Yet, on the whole, the intimate relationship or connection with God or a higher power (Wong-McDonald & Gorsuch, 2000) and a belief in the supremacy of divine intervention in Cox's Bazar represent a spiritual resource for coping with life on the margins and eking out a living from the tourism industry.

Predominantly, Cox's Bazar's spiritual landscape consists of traditional, conservative, Muslim segments of population, for whom prayer, fasts, and visits to shrines are a part of the daily routine and determine their spiritual orientation. Following other authors (see Agilkaya, 2012; Rehman, 2016) and based on our analysis of the participants' accounts, the community of Cox's Bazar can be divided into four categories: *modern*—liberal, intellectual or semi intellectual individuals who are tolerant of other sections and whose religiosity represents both a spiritual and a pragmatic response to materialistic world views and is marked by their emphasis on parahita; *traditionalist*—who are represented by large swathes of the population in the rural and coastal areas; *opportunist*—who use their religious competencies (i.e., a mastery of specific practices and knowledge) and community goodwill as an opportunity to gain social status; and the *militant*—who demonstrate animosity towards other religious and ethnic groups and are characterised by extremist tendencies (Clévenot 1987). Table 4 illustrates how each faction either contributes to or jolts community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism.
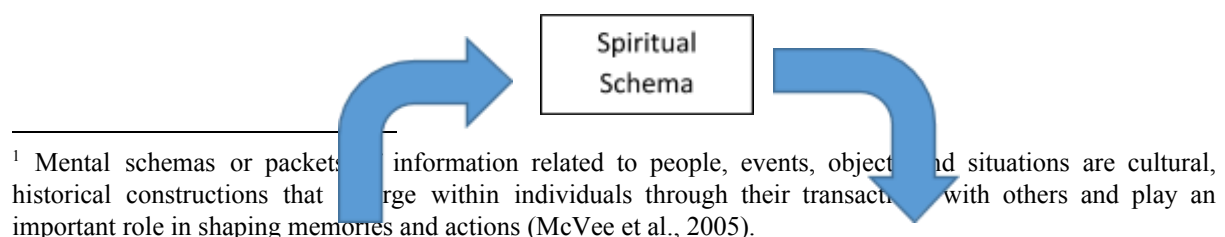
Table 4: Community categories and their role in sustainable tourism and community well-being
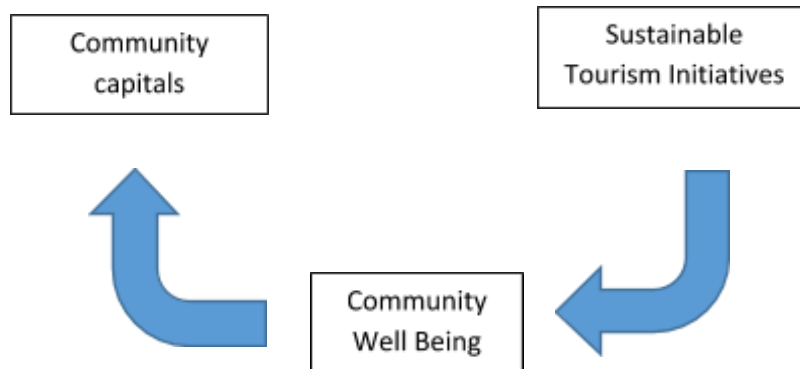
Profile	Role in Sustainable tourism and community well-being
Modern	This faction within the community ties in with Connor and Davidson's (1967) category of 'contented residents' whose views are progressive and who make use of their personal and informal ties for the betterment of the community Their role can be described as proactive: "*The mountains by the beautiful beach of Cox`s Bazar sea offer a great option for trekking and rock climbing and the small island of Saint Martin is a haven for adventure-seekers. While I am not directly involved in adventure tourism, I can see the potential for us to use these resources for the greater good—both tourists and the community are winners*" (Hotel Manager, Hindu, Male, 59) Indeed, proactive individuals like him are engaged in conservation efforts like Dulahazra, a wild life protection initiative launched in 2007 to offer protection to iconic animals like Bengal tigers, elephants, and salt water crocodiles (Ahammed, 2015).
Traditionalist	The traditional inhabitants have used their wisdom in contributing to controlling the erosion and restoring the habitat by choosing multipurpose trees and shrubby plants that especially offer wind protection and a sustainable supply of food (Rahman &Rahman, 2015). Typically, their homesteads are arranged around a courtyard—an open space—and provide recycling of biomass (ibid). Their way of life contributes to the sense of place. They can be described as "ecological sustainers" (Sirakaya-Turk et al., 2008, p. 540) who are longer term residents, satisfied with quality of life and attached to their community and are more likely to accept overall commercial and community contributions of tourism. They are sensitive to social costs and environmental sustainability issues associated with tourism development.
Opportunist	Based on our observations, we categorise these individuals as informal healthcare providers, especially the Village Doctors who, without any suitable qualifications, resort to inappropriate and even harmful practices (Mahmood et al., 2010). We not only regard them as a hindrance in providing culturally based mental health and psychosocial support, but also note a disturbing nexus between them and the Rohingyas engaged in drug trafficking. The Dhaka Tribune (2020) reports that the security forces have seized more than 10 million yaba pills (also known as madness drug, a derivative of synthetic amphetamines such as speed that can be manufactured far more quickly and easily) from Rohingyas and local drug peddlers, who have been smuggling them into the country via Cox's Bazar's Teknaf and Ukhia border crossings since the beginning of the latest refugee influx.
Militant	In the absence of an adequate provision of schools, radical groups such as Hefazat-e-Islam have taken root in the area, claiming to fill the educational gap, but without any critical study of the religion or environmental and social causes. The *madrassas* (Muslim schools) run by them have become a breeding ground for militants (Corraya, 2019). Indeed, untreated trauma and the limbo of exile is creating a potentially fertile ground for militant views to take hold amongst ethnic Rohingya as our analysis of newspaper stories suggests (MacDiarmid, 2018). Ganguly (2016) underlines the link between Islamist militancy in Bangladesh and its direct and negative impact on the environment and community-led tourism initiatives.

Source: the authors' interpretation of the secondary data and information from Interviews.

These values and the knowledge embedded within these groups' worldviews, which we regard as spiritual schema (a figure derived from the schema theory[1]) of individual ethnic and religious factions in the community, translate into how they impact community well-being and how the role of tourism is conceived and informs both traditional (i.e., mass) and niche community-based eco-tourism projects in Cox's Bazar. Thus, initiatives like the regional coastal ecosystem programme *Mangroves for the Future (MFF)*—which offer support to small-scale, sustainable enterprises—have gained local acceptance as they tie in with the community's spiritual schema, embodying an ethos of care for the environment. At the grassroots level, spirituality has informed the creation of community-oriented eco-tourism resorts that showcase traditional culture, archaeological sites, and ethnicity. For instance, the Mermaid Eco-Resort supports local communities with free healthcare clinics held on Fridays, while handicrafts made by local women are sold in the resort's craft shop. Nearly 80% of the staff members live in nearby villages and have benefited from a much-needed career change from labour-intensive jobs, fishing, and illegal deforestation, often to the detriment of the environment (www.bangladesh.com/blog/enjoy-an-eco-tourism-experience-in-coxs-bazar). Thus, the spiritual schema has become more of a cultural resource in Cox's Bazar and encourages sustainable tourism initiatives that contribute to community well-being and augment community capitals (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The Spiritual Schema and Sustainable Tourism Development

[1] Mental schemas or packets of information related to people, events, objects and situations are cultural, historical constructions that emerge within individuals through their transactions with others and play an important role in shaping memories and actions (McVee et al., 2005).

At the same time, there are negative trends that imperil the growth of sustainable tourism. These include the resurgence of extreme fundamentalist religious expressions, coupled with the depletion of community capitals in Cox's Bazar resulting from the growing pressure on resources due to the deepening of the Rohingya crisis (Table 4). Largely, this can be attributed to an improvement in the local economy due to the ready-made garments sector, which has spawned a growth in illegal income. This was invested in Cox's Bazar as infrastructure development, offering an opportunity to launder money (Mowla, 2017). Now, there are more than 200 hotels (many unregulated) and the growing mass tourism market has resulted both in the weakening of the region's natural capital and in a negative impact on other capitals. For instance, the increase in land prices as a result of tourism development has negatively impacted the locals' financial capitals, as they can no longer afford housing in the region. The rise in unregulated real estate development and the associated growth in traffic and pollution has accentuated the weakening of the political capital of the community, who have been largely marginalised from the decision-making process. These developments have engendered what Yosso (2005) termed 'resistant capital', through which a community seeks to challenge any iniquities by enacting oppositional behaviours and/or taking transformative action, as is evident here:

> "*Recently, many community people have sold their land to wealthy individuals from different parts of the country . . .* [who] *have now become community leaders as they have got the ownership of land . . . these new owners of the community Sampradayera natuan malika are now controlling tourism businesses . . . we are trying to accommodate them, but these newcomers are now holding us to ransom . . . owning our lands and thinking they can own us too . . . I am not going to let that happen*" (Christian, male, 49, NGO worker)

These voices of dissent are engendering an evaluation of notions of identity and belonging and resurface in other accounts where residents drew attention to: *"these people* [the newcomers] *who have recently started to live in our society are snatching political privileges"* (Retired Political Leader, Rakhine, 65, female), "they [non- Muslims] are creating an uncomfortable environment in our community, which is harmful to every one" (Business Owner of a family firm and a Community Leader, Muslim, 51, male), and

> *"they* [in this instance, Rohingya refugees] *are involved in stealing, thuggery and many other antisocial activities . . . above all, they are destroying the natural beauty of our community as well as Cox's Bazar as a whole . . . we will never accept them as our own, The government should accommodate them in a separate place, not in Cox's Bazar"* (Member of the Shop Owners' Association, Muslim, 55, male)

These expressions of othering vary considerably and are deeply contextual, but they do clearly indicate how tourism has acted as a divisive force in the community; some have gained economically while others feel dispossessed as a result of the influx of newcomers. In fact, biodiversity in the Ecologically Critical Areas of Cox's Bazar—the Teknaf Peninsula and Sonadia Island—which was already very vulnerable to climate change, is under severe threat as a result of rapid, unplanned commercialisation and tourism development (www.iucn.org/es/node/19119).

Overall, our work provides the groundwork for asset mapping through a performative and creative process, whereby the data originates from below and is co-created through interaction among individuals and within and by the various factions in the community (Alevizou et al., 2016). Yet, the process of creative civic engagement is not without its challenges, as no specific assumptions concerning community can be made and any asset mapping approaches need to take cognizance of the *"dialectical connections between collaborative forces and self-serving interests in communities"* (ibid, p. 4). Moreover, the demographic shift that the community is experiencing due to the influx of Rohingya refugees requires a systemic analysis of the spiritual capital that may be facilitating their assimilation in the community. On a positive note, both public sector agencies and residents (as evidenced by the secularisation of traditional kite festival) are actively creating and promoting socio-political dimensions of spiritual capital and religiosity to engender community cohesion.

Conclusions

On the whole, this study has underlined the connection between spiritual capital, community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism. While the impact of religion on life satisfaction is well documented, little research had hitherto been conducted on how the private and subjective dimensions of religiosity inform the development of sustainable tourism. While locals have very limited space to participate in the decision-making process, which corresponds to a decline in community capitals, our respondents did convey a sense of well-being that emanated from their religious affiliations and enabled them to forge intimate social ties in their community. Spiritually motivated social networks further enhanced their sense of belonging.

As a destination, Cox's Bazar has an ecological and touristic significance, but is also perceived as a place of pilgrimage for domestic visitors, who consider the region's natural capital as a means to deepen their spiritual awareness and development. Similarly, for locals, the place offers a site for personal reflection and prayer. To summarise, this study's contribution to the literature on religion and subjective well-being is not just limited to providing stronger evidence for the influence of religion on life satisfaction; our findings also shed new light on the role played by spiritual capital in the development of sustainable tourism. More importantly, we found that the faith-based friendship networks built by people as part of organised religious activities not only result in their well-being, but also have the potential to innovatively inform sustainable tourism initiatives in the region.

The findings of this study have two management implications: i) the need to acknowledge the voices of dissent and deeply personal, emotive responses, and identify any overlapping expectations from tourism and the constellation of meanings and associations linked to community well-being; and ii) rather than sequencing them in an orderly fashion, the emphasis needs to be on working out ways that are inclusive of 'rights', multiple identities, and narratives that dissuade the demonisation of the 'other' while improving the well-being of everyone.

Religion and its associated beliefs emerge as an easily observed and salient trait that has become a marker of Cox's Bazar's society, one imbued with meanings pertaining to the restorative measures required against any perceived criminal and/or disorderly acts with the use of righteous violence. Thus, growing instances of individual acts of discrimination (e.g.,

violence against non-Muslims) have become the most common mechanism for the institutionalisation of bigotry through the enactment of policies and laws that restrict access to resources for communities perceived as out-groups. An example of such an approach is represented by exclusionary land use laws designed to prevent particular social groups (mostly non-Muslims) from gaining access to community capitals and assets (DFAT, 2018). In parallel to this discourse, individual and community spirituality—linked to social change and taking the shape of a 'spirituality of resistance' and 'spirituality as responsibility' (see Baskin, 2002)—is gaining strength. This discourse is finding an expression in policymaking, as Cox's Bazar is being developed consciously as a destination for community-based tourism and through agro-forestry initiatives that are being implemented as an alternative livelihood strategy (Ali et al., 2016).

However, it should be noted that the intent of this study is not to advance a view of spiritual capital that is without critique, but rather to showcase its potential to contribute to community well-being and the development of sustainable tourism. Additionally, while research rightfully celebrates the role played by spiritual capital in contributing to the resilience of communities in the face of adversities, we do acknowledge how structural inequality and/or discrimination may inhibit the ability of the spiritual and other community capitals to sustain community well-being and sustainable tourism initiatives. Unfortunately, the presence of spiritual capital does not negate the persistence of entrenched and systemic inequality, which continues to deeply permeate the social fabric of Cox's Bazar.

The community capitals framework itself is subject to critique and further development, which is an emerging area of research. For instance, in their study on the operationalisation of various forms of community capitals, Jones et al. (2014) underlined the risk of misinterpretation and of community involvement becoming no more than a "*totemic issue in policy rhetoric*" (p. 323-4). The unequal distribution of wealth—as well as other political and economic circumstances (e.g., the persecution and suppression of certain sections)—can play a crucial role in preventing an accurate mapping and the implementation of the required policies and change in practice. A key limitation of our work remains our omission of those who are not affiliated with any religion. Thus, the ramifications of their experiences on community building and capital formation is an area for further research. Also, it should be noted that our analysis mainly reflects a male understanding of spiritual capital and cannot be equated to the whole community. Moreover, future studies would need

to focus closely on the key contributing factors that enable some groups to thrive despite diminished community capitals, while others who may have access to the same capitals—including spiritual capital—experience adversity. The redefinition of the spiritual capital for secular purposes also calls for a new space of inquiry. To conclude, we contend that our work, which is embedded in the everyday experiences of local residents, offers insights into how spiritual capital can both cultivate relational capacities and resilience and offer alternative conceptualisations of localities experiencing the depletion of their community capitals.

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