ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES: TOWARDS SOCIAL INNOVATION

ABSTRACT

This research investigates exploratory environmental initiatives in tourism companies in Mallorca over five years, with special consideration to those involving partnerships and synergies with other parties (including academic ones), in an exploration of Social Innovation (SI) approaches in the industry. The paper starts with an outline of the growing importance of sustainability within the hospitality industry and its inherent relation with SI. The study draws its empirical material from ten innovative practices on sustainability from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and a big hotel chain in Mallorca. The data were collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. All cases incorporated SI features (partnerships, synergies, circular processes, systemic approach), developing, therefore, towards an integrated system of SI policy and practice. The study indicates that embracing environmental principles alongside social and economic concerns can lead to a systemic approach and these commitments can be regarded as a more solid model of sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

This research aims at analysing the role of Social Innovation (SI) philosophy and its tools in the context of environmental policy in tourism firms. The basic assumption of this paper is that environmental initiatives - any effort to promote sustainable practices regarding environmental management - are not clearly contributing enough to the implementation of collaborative natural resources management processes. Consequently, there is room for improvement by means of exploratory SI practices. Key stakeholders and external partners in tourism are acting on sustainability in numerous different ways, supporting diverse activities (forest exploitation, sustainable agriculture and tourism, ecosystem services programs). However, there is a growing perception – a premise of this paper-that global initiatives have addressed climate change in a successful way; and, as a result, *"this leaves an even heavier responsibility on firms and people"* - tourists and locals (Nilsen & Elingsen, 2015, pp 26-29). This critical vision is the starting point for the article, aiming

at providing specific practices in sustainable tourism that reflect a deeper shift in our worldview, with far-reaching implications regarding sustainability as a concept. As Blanco et al (2009, pp 239-240) suggested, *"…the environment is not only a productive factor for tourism firms but is also a part of the final tourism product being sold" i.e.* broader solutions beyond the technical dimension of environment. In fact, there is a growing and rich body of literature arguing that environmental attributes have a significant impact on destinations' competitiveness (Razumova et al., 2015), creating a link among strategic drivers, environmental initiatives and positive results: 'it pays to be green'. However, at the tourism destination level, scant research has been done on the results at the business level of integrative environmental initiatives in tourism. Blanco et al., (2009, pp 237-239) adds that "*different environmental initiatives, for different types of firms, which are undertaken with different intensities lead to different economic consequences"* and conclude that it also pays to be green. A broader, critical and integrative -SI related- perspective becomes imperative.

Firms deal with environmental issues ranging from ecotourism to not addressing the subject at all. Critical visions –and especially from critical discourse theory- on traditional environmental tools in tourism proliferate (Hillary, 2004; Melnyck et al., 2003; Zhu, et al., 2013a; Hertin et al., 2008; MacCallum et al., 2009). The weak link between the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and other systems and performance is a serious issue if EMAS's are considered as serving as a substitute for any kind of policy instruments. These voluntary self-regulatory measures and the international Environmental Management System (EMS) standard ISO 14001 –designed to provide all businesses with a systematic approach to improve and compare environmental performance- have had a very meagre impact, especially in SME's (Hillary, 2004) and in developing countries (Zhu, 2013b).

Blanco et al. (2009, pp 237-239) analysed the economic incentive resulting from voluntary environmental management and identified many examples of voluntary environmental practices in the tourism industry. Their results suggest *"the viability of alternative environmental policymaking that takes potential voluntary action under consideration"*. In fact, their results -based on case study of tourism collaborations for sustainability- reveal that *"they constitute a viable alternative for environmental management"*. Although they restrict their analysis to economic incentives, it is indicated that other non-economic incentives might be relevant and necessary since these practices are useful to create formal relations and institutions, which can prevent unsustainable development.

In this context, the specific goals of this work are firstly, the exploration of the scope, potentialities and implications of SI for environmental management in tourism, attempting to identify newer opportunities and trends – i.e., new frontiers - such as circular relations -, and, secondly, to provide a descriptive analysis of the initiatives in the environment related to SI in a representative group of tourism companies from Mallorca, which, as a conclusion, will allow to identify practical implications for destinations and business practitioners in the environmental field.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cooperation and synergy among tourism firms to generate growth and profitability in the industry and beyond (society) have become central themes in academic discussion. Although environmental issues are present in the agenda of the majority of the firms, these do not necessarily include some type of cooperation. Nilsen & Ellingsen (2015, pp 28-29) indicate that *"the hegemonic power of neoclassical economics hampers an environmental focus in the network",* leaving environmental economics and ecological environment as neglected approaches. Critical green advocates' (Cui, 2014) challenge the tourism industry to move further to generate lower consumption and lower emissions in a low-carbon model; suggesting the creation of networks in particular. In a more ethereal way, 'Green' environmentalism calls for the restoration of the lost harmony between human beings and nature (Heshmati, 2014), which calls for cooperation and involvement with external agents and other members of the society, taking advantage of the knowledge networks (Ren et al., 2010) that tourism has ignored for decades. Pop et al. (2011) analysed the role of social capital and its importance in the creation of corporate social responsibility, claiming that the creation of bridges among knowledge communities is still a challenge.

At this stage, since some decades ago, there is a call for a more holistic approach to address development and environmental issues. Initiatives taken by local bottom-up movements of members of the (societal and business) community are claimed to be useful for creating economic restructuring dynamics, and generating benefits including special socially oriented area-based collective action and programmes (MacCallum et al., 2009). These have been led by various types of public actors (civil society and state) and have often followed an 'integrated' logic of development. A main direction to explore in this sense is the synergic cooperation: social relations of territorial development which take into account contextual socio-political factors, especially, the nature of the strategic actors (MacCallum et al., 2009).

SI is a valuable tool for environmental management (European Commission, 2014), but largely neglected in this specific area. SI requires the creation of social groups and

communities to develop and diffuse practices that address pressing social needs. SI has been gaining relevance regarding policy development, providing *"a means to stimulate new ideas that address complex issues alongside ensuring citizen participation"* (European Commission, 2014, pp 35-36). The critical issues affecting environment in tourism make locals and tourists increasingly aware and willing to explore how SI can be used to foster environment sustainability, within destinations, to ensure social and economic prosperity and environmental wellness. Participation becomes important and, accordingly, because of its emphasis as a discipline on participation and creativity, "*SI is well positioned to address environmental challenges, which are multifaceted and often require societal or behavioural shifts towards more sustainable options"* (European Commission, 2014, pp 22-23). Concepts such as resilience (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010) and, even, civic imagination (Stephenson & Fox-Lanham, 2007) are part of the conceptual framework of SI. Fennell (2004) emphasises inherent complexity in tourism and the fact that it imposes multi-scaled (local, regional, national and global) tools, and demands vertical and horizontal linkages among agents. In line with the conceptualisation of tourism as an '*academy of hope'* (Ateljevic et al., 2013; Pritchard et al, 2011), the above-mentioned exploratory practices aim at creating meaningful networks that not only create sustainability but also a more aware and conscious business perspective. 'Hopeful Tourism' attributes such as holism, oneness, syncretic co-creation, partnership, emerging perspectives and co-transformative learning are present or implicit in the SI construct, but, beyond Hopeful Tourism, SI offers a solid array of patterns, broad techniques and proven experiences.

SI has been regarded as an "innovation system paradigm shift" that is taking place (Bullinger, 2006). This is changing the relationship between technological innovation and society, taking advantage of the 'connected differences' among elements in the tourism picture, seeking synergies as key priority of the model.

SI is defined as "*innovation that is explicitly for the social and public wellness and that is inspired by the desire to meet social needs which can be neglected by traditional forms of private market provision and which have often been poorly served or unresolved by services organised by the state*" (Murray et al., 2010, p 10). Despite the fact that the concept has grown to a more mature stage and that it is achieving increased attention in the industry, its application in the tourism academic field has been limited, biased to certain types of collaborative consumer and still linked quite often to the charitable dimension of the concept. In this context, this study aims at presenting new theoretical inputs for analysing -in a more critical way- existing sustainability initiatives, and, finally, a thorough agenda of new

opportunities and observable trends in the area of SI in tourism regarding environmental protection.

SI theory emphasizes three key dimensions that are already explored in the tourism field, but that can be developed further and deeper, especially in relation to environmental initiatives. These features are "a) *new combinations or hybrids of existing elements, rather than completely new; b) cutting across organisational or disciplinary boundaries and, lastly, c) leaving behind compelling new relationships between previously separate individuals and groups"* (Mulgan et al., 2007, p 5). These traits aim at contributing to the diffusion and also to the embedding of the practices as a result of cooperation among parties that previously did not interact.

These directions relate with concepts such as P2P ("peer to peer"), authenticity, meaning, reticular solidarity, liquid tourism, omni-channel experiences and others that are arising around Internet and other information technologies. In the environmental terrain, circular economy (and Gunther Pauli's Blue Economy applied to tourism), synergy and Design Thinking are increasingly important. These SI derivations are not fully addressed from the academic tourism literature so far and many additional potentialities (e. g. transformational, educational meetups by companies or client co-creation on ecological issues) are still terra incognita.

Specific trends and patterns in SI -suggested by different authors (e.g. Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010 or Huddart, 2010) in their attempt to define an integral framework and an agenda for the discipline- may be regarded at present as important gaps in the industry, if not new frontiers, still unreached and undefined. For example, new mechanisms to create meaningful and richer dialogue between locals and tourists and the opportunity to integrate P2P and meaning in company-clients' relations are explored as they are emerging as a necessary and logical derivation of SI principles.

Other relevant fields from SI to explore, that are still undetermined in their shape and actual development in tourism, are: intersectoral collaboration, social process/deliberative dialogue tools, SI entrepreneurship, civic engagement and Tourism Circular Economy (Zhang & Tian, 2014), which is closely related to ecological tourism and sustainable development of tourism. Tourism Circular Economy –and its tools- has been argued to be *"the best model to realise the sustainable development of tourism"* (Zhang & Tian, 2014), based on a Tourism Cycle Economy model. The research on Tourism Circular Economy has been mainly applied in the context of China; and has mostly addressed aspects related to agricultural development. Zhu et al. (2013a) proposes a new model of eco-agricultural tourism of three combinations in eco-

agriculture chain, eco-energy chain and eco-landscape chain based on the practice of eco-agricultural tourism.

In order to finish the analysis of SI and environmental management in tourism, it is necessary to highlight the systemic approach that SI entails. The research from Zhou et al (2012) underlines the importance of a broader and more social-oriented support system in the interest of promoting a sound SI system in a region. That should include, as a novelty regarding other authors, publicity and education, professional training and social networking aspects. These elements aim at achieving ultimately sustainable development. Policy implications for SI are extremely relevant for regions on that account.

A systemic approach calls for hotels and other tourism companies to embrace additional requirements and responsibilities if they want to remain attractive to investors and also profitable, going beyond EMS, indicators, codes of conduct or eco-labels. "*Systemic sustainability cannot be planned, it must be invented"*, as one practitioner /innovator asserted in the research interviews. SI provides an appropriate framework to broaden the perspective.

In summary, environmental-based SI in tourism is an opportunity for addressing sustainability with a broader perspective, incorporating tools and approaches such as circularity, and synergy design. In the next section we address the specific tools and practices that the selected companies in Mallorca have explored.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In order to investigate voluntary and exploratory environmental initiatives beyond traditional actions, mostly present in EMS and other certified systems of environmental management, different tourism companies -especially small rural tourism- operating in Mallorca were addressed. In line with Blanco et al. (2009) and Razumova et al. (2015), Mallorca is a privileged tourism lab (top destination island with a university dedicated to sustainable tourism research) to examine the SI potential in the environmental context.

The research explored the general extent of environmental care and awareness practices in ten cases that represent innovative and different practices, with special consideration to those involving partnerships and synergies with other interested parties (including academics).

The study draws its empirical material from ten socially innovative cases in environmental management from small, medium and big companies, as well as start-ups providing service to hotels, in Mallorca. Table 1 shows the 10 selected companies.

Company	Activity	Website
Pedruxella	Agrotourism	Small (5 rooms) lodging, restaurant and events http://www.pedruxella.com/
Son Rullan	Agrotourism	Small (6 rooms, including 3 communal ones) lodging and events http://sonrullan.es/
Son Maiol	Agrotourism	Small (4 rooms) lodging, restaurant and events http://www.sonmaiol.com/
Son Brull	Agrotourism	Medium (23 rooms) lodging, restaurant and events http://sonbrull.com/
Son Barrina	Agrotourism	Small (5 rooms) lodging, shop and events http://www.sonbarrina.com/
Toureco	Experience provider	Craft and cultural experiences e.g. permaculture, beekeeping, cosmetics, etc. http://www.toureco.en/
Deborah Cuisine Island	Experience provider	Culinary experiences e.g. culinary retreats and events, etc. http://deborahsculinaryisland.com/
Ca na Toneta	Restaurant	Restaurant and events http://www.canatoneta.com/
Sa Teulera	Farm & Shop	Shop and events http://www.mallorcasostenible.org/products/sa-teulera2/
Riu	Hotel chain	Big, international and family owned and managed hotel chain (44.883 rooms in 18 countries) http://www.riu.com/es/home.jsp

Table 1. Description of firms in the research

The data were collected by means of questionnaires and structured interviews -sense-making methodology. The starting point of interviews with the company founders was the discussion of changes in perceptions and expectations from tourists that can be regarded as drivers for the SI practices they eventually deployed. It was undertaken to understand the motivation of these ten companies to follow innovative SI-based strategies that meet both basic objectives of social and environmental responsibility in a singular, unique way.

All these cases incorporate several SI features (partnerships, synergies, circular processes, systemic approach), developing, therefore, an integrated system of policy and practice that involves not only their own human resources, but also external parties implicated in environmental protection and sustainability. Their managers are applying the instruments and the SI approach prompted and fuelled by an intuitive understanding of the concept of systematic sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the practical application of different voluntary and synergic environmental practices is regarded by the firms' managers as a way to create stronger links with the community.

The identification of best-practices was made through informal consultations to experts and subsequently, through selective networking, both personal and institutional, in particular, through technical and administrative top officers from institutions whose object and goal relates to environmental protection and SI. Concretely, the following Mallorca-based organizations were addressed: Slow Food Movement, Educació per la Vida (association for the promotion of a more holistic education), Namaste Community (Magazine and online community related to Soul, Earth and Society), GOB (the main ecologist group in The Balearic Islands), Ministry of Innovation at the Government of the Balearic Islands, Cuarto Sector (Fourth Sector/For-Benefit Sector) and Eticentre (association created by Balearic companies to share and promote Corporate Social Responsibility). A preliminary list of 32 firms –mostly SMEs- was drafted. Then, taking as a criteria the SI features we wanted to address in this paper, the list of participants was reduced to the ten firms in Table 1 –the most singular and ambitious ones in terms of circularity, synergy-based approach, dialogue search, crossing boundaries and knowledge-based actions.

The empirical analysis process consisted in two sequential tasks: a) presentation of the environmental-related SI practices deployed by the ten selected companies and b) qualitative analysis -following a phenomenological approach- of the drivers and motivations fuelling the practices implementation.

'Sense making' has been defined as the "*process of creating situational awareness and understanding in contexts of high complexity or uncertainty in order to make decisions*" (Klein et al., 2006 pp 90-91). It is "*a motivated, continuous effort to understand connections (which*

can be among people, places, and events) in order to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively" (Klein et al., 2006 pp 91-92). In fact, sense making has been used for analysing experiential tourism in different contexts: educational tourism experiences (Huang, 2008), blog storytelling (Tussyadiah & Fesenmayer, 2008; Volo, 2010), student placement experiences (Walmsley et al., 2006) and experiential tourism in relation to image destination understanding (Guthrie, 2007).

Sense making is a useful methodology for disciplining the cacophony of diversity and complexity without homogenizing it (Weick, 1995), which is surely necessary when dealing with new concepts such as SI for environmental management. In other words, its relevance for this study stems from the fact that pioneer social innovation, is basically a complex experiment, exploring especially the role and meaning of actions, attitudes, and values. The goal is to create shared awareness among people, which in many cases are not necessarily convergent regarding their perspectives. Addressing such case-based views of SI for environmental management through the sense making analysis can provide a deeper and singular understanding of their causes and consequences. Weick (1995) dealt with sense making in organizations, but equally uncertain or ambiguous situations happen in the present context so that the model is adaptable to this case.

The account of narratives and reflections are planned in Weick's sense making framework by taking into consideration seven properties: identity and identification; retrospection; enaction; social activity; ongoing process; extraction of clues and plausibility over accuracy (Weick, 1995). The underlying narratives from the creators of the SI practices analysed in the present research convey the sense and meaning (Currie & Brown, 2003) that SI can provide to environmental practices in tourism, which is a central point of the conclusions of this paper.

In this innovative context that SI created, the present research explored three areas: expectations, needs/drivers and social innovation techniques. In particular:

-the extent to which changes in expectations and attitudes from clients and in the same operators/companies have been identified and the extent to which they have been affecting environmental management;

-the extent to which this critical perspective and expectations has had an influence on their decisions regarding product design: perception of clients' expectations, new needs, comments received from customers regarding selection of destination and activities to perform;

-the extent to which the product design incorporates social innovation elements. How? Why?

The data collection took place in April-May-June 2015 through half structured interviews. All respondents received a document, explaining the purpose of the research.

At the beginning of the interview, the aim of the study was explained to them in clear terms. They were told that the interview was designed to evaluate the meaning of their SI experience. All respondents gave permission to record the interview on tablet and all interviews took place in a quiet environment. The interview process, in line with the sense making methodology, began with several questions based on the Critical Incident Technique. The critical incident technique is a qualitative research method conceived to analyse "*significant experiences in order to better understand resulting behaviour*" (Flanagan, 1954, pp 327-329). The author indicates that it is especially useful for developing broad psychological principles, so it can give insight into sense making processes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Seven of the ten respondents were female, 9 had a bachelor's degree and their former occupations were largely managerial (6) or professional (4) and both in 3 cases. The specific practices that made these companies singular and appropriate for this research are the ones shown in Table 2, which were known by the research team before the interviews and that were explored in more depth during the interview:

Practice of SI for environmental management	Pedruixella	Son Rullán	Son Brull	Son Maiol	Son Barrina	Toureco	Deborah Cuisine	Ca na Toneta	Sa Teulera	Riu
Experimental agricultural programme	X	X	X	X	X				X	
Alternative agricultural methods	X				X	X			X	
Social and community venues on ecological issues	X	X			X		X	X		X
Km. 0 adherence	X		X		X	X				
Collaboration with ecological and slow food associations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative recovery of traditional harvesting and hunting methods		X	X		X					
Symbiotic relations with local farms and other providers	X	X		X			X	X	X	
Alternative energy saving systems	X	X			X					X
Co-creation regarding ecological problems	X	X					X			X
Circular approach	X	X	X		X			X	X	

Table 2. Practices of SI for environmental management by firm.

The first question referred to drivers for change regarding environmental management in their companies, taking also into account feedback from their own clients. At this point it was critical to identify possible relations to their personal situation and past environmental management in their business. Most of them (6), admitted dissatisfaction both with past and traditional environmental initiatives. Some more questions were asked in order to explore in more detail clients' expectations and demands regarding environmental care, since it would provide relevant clues for the study.

Most of the respondents (8) recognized in themselves certain recent (3-5 years) symptoms of insatisfaction -ecological *weltschmerz*- regarding environmental issues (3 medium, 3 high, 2 very high). The lack of a systemic approach and personal coherence were in general the triggers, but, interestingly, economic/business-based factors (loss of clients, bad online reputation) served in some of the cases as the catalyst and background for a growing awareness and willingness to experiment in environmental-related SI.

After this, the interview was steered towards the initiatives/practices themselves and their motivational and inspirational roots for the individual, dealing with the meaning respondents derived from them. The exact question was: "How *does your initiative relate to your vision of the world, of society and specifically regarding environmental care?"*. The intention was to learn more about whether these incidents influenced the interpretations of respondents about their critical views on the world. A critical vision arose in almost all the interviews (9), both in the founders (9) and in their clients (8), and, as a result, deeper connection and team (environmental) projects with other companies and parties was a recurrent topic, mentioned by interviewees, together with the attempt to create/invent loops of some kind of circularity.

Some other questions were asked specifically in order to identify meaning ascriptions about their unbelief/dissatisfaction with traditional environmental management following a description of each initiative. This was done to expose the sense making process that respondents go through between the event they describe and the specific external problem they connect to the event. This served to pinpoint critical factors that could make sense in the environment and *social innovation context* i.e. growing disbelief and institutional disaffection (5 respondents); increased general pessimism in relation to results of traditional systems (4, all of them familiar with EMS); renewed objections to ideology, values and confidence in the system (4); and an increased distrust of environmental authorities (2). These can be regarded as the major drivers that encouraged the selected companies to move into alternatives ways to promote sustainability and, by doing so, achieving a closer bond with the community, promoting new, sustainable practices (e.g. local agriculture, slow food, traditional cultivation systems).

The next questions - the most relevant ones in the study - addressed the social architecture - deliberate social design to foster desired behaviours resulting in certain explicit goals- of their practices. By doing so, different aspects of the practices were explored: degree of satisfaction, expectations, new needs, selection of partners and activities to perform, travellers' attitude regarding desire to establish personal engagement in environmental activities and education. The scores of the social architecture meaning ascriptions were calculated by creating categories. Most of the answers pointed to an increased need for "new social exploration" (8); shared and meaningful passions to *believe in* (7 cases); a desire for flow and controlled risk (5), and; interestingly, *creation of community* (3). New attitudes towards life and new values in clients (and in themselves) were regarded as implicit elements in 8 cases' including all those that admitted some degree of *weltschmerz/*general dissatisfaction with traditional environmental policies. Environmental engagement is not only an ecological issue: it is consubstantial with a more aware and richer life. Meaning is a desirable output that SI brings about in tourism both among companies and clients.

Finally, the interview focused on the critical assessment of the initiatives. Seven respondents concluded that the activities resulted, as expected, in renewed energy and strategic positioning as a business. In relation to this (and also to ascriptions and categories underlying them), they alluded to many different internal processes and, to a lesser extent, specific moments, and, situations which basically, had in common that they provided for themselves and for the clients psychological risk (7 cases), new expressions of meaning for the individual (6), group creation with "alternative" vital angles and beliefs (6), actual development of new values - in many cases socially related ones - (5), clear identification of role models in organisers/ group leader/ lecturers and companions (4) and, finally, trust in the group (7). These elements are the ones indicating that SI environmental practices can create additional and far-reaching value beyond traditional practices, in line with several tourism drivers and trends (search for meaning, holistic perspective, transformative expectations during vacation). These categories relate and adhere to SI features (circularity, synergies, new knowledge and company boundaries, vision design).

As can be seen in Table 3, all SI elements were mentioned and regarded as relevant, identifying regenerative effects (for environment, for the community, for the business and for clients ultimately) by means of different practices that combine SI features (horizontal axis) and meaning (vertical) to the clients.

	Circularity	Synergies	Crossing boundaries and new knowledge	Objectives and visions
Value challenge	Son Rullán Son Barrina Son Brull Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Deborah Cuisine Ca Na Toneta Riu	Son Rullán Son Barrina Ca Na Toneta Riu	Son Barrina Son Brull Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera
Psychological risk	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Son Brull Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Ca Na Toneta	Son Rullán Deborah Cuisine Ca Na Toneta
Meaning in clients experiences	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Son Brull Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruxeilla Son Brull Ca Na Toneta Riu	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina	Deborah Cuisine Ca Na Toneta Riu
Social structures supporting meaning	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Deborah Cuisine Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella	Pedruixella Son Rullán Deborah Culinary Ca Na Toneta
New approaches	Son Rullán Son Barrina Ca Na Toneta	Son Rullán Toureco Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Son Rullán Toureco Deborah Culinary Ca Na Toneta
Sense-making	Pedruixella Son Rullán Ca Na Toneta	Son Rullán Son Barrina Ca Na Toneta Sa Teulera	Pedruixella Son Rullán Son Barrina Son Brull	Son Rullán Toureco Ca Na Toneta

Table 3. SI elements in relation to Meaning in clients

The results from table 3 show that most of the selected companies are deploying different innovative practices, which, according to the interviewees, are naturally related and mutually reinforcing (typically, experimental farming and external collaborations or circularity and km.0 adherence). Some of the above-mentioned companies (Son Rullán, Ca Na Toneta) attempt to explore a wide range of innovative practices. Although the scope and impact of the practices is limited, the results indicate that the perceived effect in clients by creating more meaningful experiences for them is a topic to explore further, especially regarding value challenge and tribe/community creation. SI is not only a set of techniques, it is also a philosophy and its conversion in tourism experiences (far more co-created) has an impact on clients beyond the mere lodging/service experience since it brings new values and the identification of social structures/communities/tribes that live according to that.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This attempt to apply SI tools to environmental management in tourism operators reveals that they increasingly recognise the need for environmental protection in a more systemic way, beyond EMS's indicators and incentives promoted by authorities. The suggested framework has been tested with a phenomenological approach in a relevant sample of companies in the tourism industry of Mallorca. The extent to which the replication of such an approach brings an overall change in their attitudes and actions remains to be seen, but the survey indicated innovative directions that need to be explored in the conjunction of environmental sustainability and SI into the tourism industry. The research provides a theoretical framework -with a collection of indicators regarding SI and its impact on clients and organisations- that brings about a more holistic (and social and co-creative) approach to environmental management. Embracing environmental principles alongside social and economic concerns can lead to a systemic approach and, arguably, these commitments -not driven solely by the search for short-term efficiency gains- can be regarded as a "stronger" -more holistic - model of sustainability, which was the ultimate logos of this research. Drivers and motivations have been examined (Table 2), stemming basically from a critical perspective on the way tourism is traditionally managed.

The survey results (Table 3) indicate that there is a growing common feeling that SI as a construct can be related to environmental care and, beyond that, it can make a fair contribution by adding a new perspective which focuses both on learning/development and, ultimately, meaning and holistic action, in order to provide a distinctive, new approach to tourism environmental care. The creative challenge in service-design to incorporate attributes conducive to SI is substantial but practicable. Dimensions such as synergy,

community, knowledge and assimilation can be deployed in service design of tourism companies to have a more significant and sustainable impact on environment. Each of these topics and their instrumentality in sustainability require further research in the tourism area. Although highly exploratory in nature, the framework aims at propitiating further explorations into the utility of a SI approach in tourism. What can be regarded as niche practices a few years back might now start being viewed as average best-practice. There are an increasing number of inspiring cases of SI pioneers in many sectors in the wave of regenerative and circular economy. This rapid rise may be indicative of a broad positive change conducive to design processes, and eventually add value and incorporate empathy in services. Is the tourism industry ready to create circular loops? Is it ready and set for seeking new, unexplored synergies with associations, universities or activists in relation to environmental care? Are tourist agents creative enough to find ways to address social problems and make a profit at the same time? Is there a clear and common perspective on what to regenerate and how to do it (loops, synergies, knowledge networks)? Are there enough linkages among alternative, critical researchers and practitioners and companies? Beyond the Pritchard et al (2011) model of Hopeful Tourism, SI addresses a more transformative dimension of business activity: meaning and community regeneration. Synergies, circularity, knowledge development, and learning aim at a meaningful impact on the industry. Furthermore, the tourism members, which, ultimately, may lead to the creation of a different pattern of linkages among agents, and to a different conceptualisation of the tourism experience, are moving away from the transactional one to the transformative (both at a personal level and at an organisational and societal one). In this direction, Tribe (2009, pp 3-4) argues that *"tourism philosophical foundations have remained stubbornly underdeveloped in a world rooted in neo-liberal market ideologies and values where the tourism industry has become a 'runaway' phenomenon, ill-managed and barely controlled"*. SI control -one prompted and designed by means of broad, synergic aspirations- might be a new governance approach for the industry. The consideration of life largely as a collaborative rather than competitive process (Sahtouris, 2014) leads to emphasis and focussing of attention on the different degrees of inter-relatedness of each element. This is a basic assumption in SI and its tools and techniques fit in and may be helpful for companies accordingly. Purpose-driven organisations may perform better due to the intrinsic values and motivations these organisations -and external agents at the same time- embrace, creating new synergies. SI is a discipline that allows the necessary re-arrangement of elements that such an approach entails, enabling a deeper ecology of business (versus businesses aiming merely to include it in their agenda).

In this context, the creation of opportunities for enhanced and focused links among agents, in order to face environmental and social challenges simultaneously, is a clear and central

opportunity derived from the construct, together with the explicit creation of intelligent contexts within the average routines of tourism activity (discussion, storytelling, educational pills, co-creation and many other options). The desirability and workability of a proactive approach by all the agents in the industry to provide environment awareness - in every activity - is the corollary.

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