



José-Carlos García-Rosell

A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective on Sustainable Marketing:

Promoting Sustainability through Action and Research

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable marketing research has made great efforts in exploring ways to integrate customers' social and environmental concerns into marketing strategy. Although recent developments in the field of stakeholder marketing have contributed to its shift from being customer-oriented to having a broader stakeholder orientation, sustainable marketing continues to be grounded in the basic premises of the marketing concept. In this study, I argue that this new theoretical development has not successfully addressed the two primary limitations of sustainable marketing: namely, its highly reductionist and rational nature. While the former is demonstrated by the belief that sustainability can be both studied and approached from the perspective of individual firms and consumers, the latter is evident in the excessive reliance of sustainable marketing on technical, scientific and managerial expertise to address environmental and social issues. Although several studies have drawn attention to these limitations, few studies have offered alternative approaches to sustainable marketing.

In this dissertation, I work towards a theoretical and methodological framework that uses sustainable marketing as a threshold concept to critically evaluate and question the assumptions embedded in both marketing theory and professional practice. Accordingly, I theoretically draw upon relational social constructionism, cultural marketing and critical marketing studies and methodologically on action research. In particular, the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing I outline in this dissertation emerges from a link established between the theoretical premises of stakeholder marketing, the relational perspective on stakeholder theory and the market approach to marketing. The framework is illustrated by empirical findings from two action research studies: one focussing on sustainable tourism product development in a small business context and the other focussing on the use of problem-based learning to promote sustainability learning among Masters-level business students.

This dissertation makes several contributions. It offers a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable marketing by shifting the analytical focus to (1) the market as a complex web of stakeholder relationships and interactions and (2) sustainability as a set of meanings and moral values that are socially constructed through the discourses and practices available within a particular market context. By theorising sustainability as a social construction, this dissertation contributes to considering sustainability as a cultural meaning that is continuously redefined through complex and dynamic multi-stakeholder relations and to developing a forward-looking understanding of an environmentally enlightened and socially responsible marketing approach. The latter effect is achieved by promoting awareness of the realities of a specific market and encouraging (future) business professionals to challenge those realities and the basic assumptions, discourses and practices that shape them. This dissertation is divided in two parts: Part I (Summary) and Part II (Articles). Part I discusses the theoretical and methodological premises, empirical context and research contributions of this study; Part II includes five articles that have been published in peer-reviewed academic publications.

Keywords: Sustainable marketing, social responsibility, stakeholders, action research, tourism product development, problem-based learning

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Rovaniemi, January 10, 2013

José-Carlos García-Rosell Eskenazi

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ARTICLES TITLES

The following articles comprise the main body of this dissertation

Article A:

García-Rosell J.C., Haanpää M., Kylänen M. & Markuksela V. (2007). From firms to extended markets: A cultural approach to tourism product development. *Tourism* 55(4), 445–459.

Article B:

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Article C:

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Article D:

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Article E:

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Part I

SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

1 INTRODUCTION

In 1987, the publication of the report “Our Common Future”, which defines sustainable development as “*development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”, played a critical role in establishing a bridge between business, the state and civil society (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 8). It thereby initiated a dialogue in which social, environmental and ethical concerns have become central aspects when discussing the role of business in society (Burchell & Cook 2006). Since then, the notion of sustainability has become an important principle for assessing both business activities and social development. Indeed, growing public concern over such problems as human rights abuses, child labour, ecological degradation and irresponsible marketing tactics has emphasised the need for firms to demonstrate their social responsibility in the marketplace (Collier & Wanderley 2005, 170).

This issue has developed further through business and political initiatives such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992 and the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. In a similar vein, the European Council in Lisbon made a special appeal at the start of the 21st century to companies’ sense of social responsibility with respect to the best practices for sustainable business development. It further encouraged debate by publishing several official documents on how to promote more sustainable business practices (European Commission 2001, 2002). Over the years, sustainability has thus become a part of daily business rhetoric, and an extensive body of both scholarly and practitioner-oriented literature has emerged on the topic (see Banerjee 2007; Doane 2005; Wilenius 2005). Much of this literature emphasises the role of marketing in both developing and deploying sustainable business strategies. Sustainability has thus transformed the way companies compete to such an extent that it is now considered to be one of the most influential business megatrends of recent decades, in addition to quality and information technology (Ahola & Palkamo 2009; Lubin & Esty 2010).

In this doctoral dissertation, I analyse the managerial assumptions underlying the development of both socially and environmentally responsible marketing concepts and strategies. By critically examining the way sustainability is addressed in both society and marketing, I work towards a theoretical and methodological framework that allows marketing professionals to gain a more comprehensive understanding of marketing relationships within society and the natural environment. Accordingly, the framework approaches sustainability as a social construction produced, challenged, resisted and transformed through multi-stakeholder relationships and interactions occurring in a market context. The framework is illustrated using two empirical cases: a business development case based on tourism product development and a pedagogical development case based on problem-based learning (PBL).

1.1 BACKGROUND

It has been over 40 years since Philip Kotler (1972) introduced the concept of societal marketing in an attempt to integrate both social and ecological issues into marketing strategies. Since then, similar socially and environmentally enlightened concepts have become a part of the business rhetoric, and an extensive body of both scholarly and practitioner-oriented marketing literature has emerged on the topic (for a review, see Crane 2000; García-Rosell 2009; Kilbourne & Beckmann 1998; Montoro 2003). Much of the discussion of sustainability in marketing has revolved around the notions of societal marketing, environmental marketing, green marketing and sustainable marketing – usually used as synonyms – which are regarded to be socially responsible and ethical forms of marketing that represent progress towards a market in which people are able to live and work in ways that can be maintained for generations without depleting or harming our environmental, social and economic resources (Crane 2000; Crane & Desmond 2002; Desmond & Crane 2004; Peattie & Crane 2005; van Dam & Apeldoorn 1996). For instance, Donald Fuller (1999, 1) defines sustainable marketing as *“the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) customer needs are met, (2) organizational goals are attained, and (3) the process is compatible with ecosystems”*.

The notions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate citizenship (CC) that have emerged in the management literature have also found their way into research on both marketing and sustainability. In particular, scholars have examined the potential of CSR and CC as instruments for implementing socially responsible marketing strategies (e.g., Kotler & Lee 2005; Maignan & Ferrell 2001, 2004; Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell 2005). Sustainability is thus an umbrella term for a broad set of overlapping concepts that reflect business–society relations, environmental responsibility and business ethics (Matten & Moon 2004, 324). In this doctoral dissertation, I use the term sustainable marketing to provide language that can easily be tied to marketing’s relationship with society and the natural environment. Indeed, in contrast to other labels used in the literature, such as green, environmental or societal, the label sustainable implicitly – if not explicitly – includes both social and environmental factors.

Similar to popular reporting practices and management models such as EMAS, ISO 14000/26000 and SA8000 (see Schwartz & Tilling 2009), sustainable marketing has been implemented as a set of managerial techniques for responding to growing concerns about ecological degradation and social inequity (e.g., Coddington 1993; Fuller 1999; Kotler & Lee 2005; Menon & Menon 1997; Ottman 1998). This managerial approach, as emphasised in most sustainable marketing concepts, has helped turn sustainable development into a strategic marketing resource that can be used by firms to become both more innovative and competitive and thus to enhance their market performance. For instance, the United Nations Environment Programme (2005) published a report called “Talk the Walk”, which not only acknowledges the potential of marketing in promoting greater sustainability but also offers an overview of concrete marketing techniques for fostering sustainable lifestyles

that contribute to business' bottom-line. Much of the literature on sustainability and marketing thus tends to be firm-centric and customer-oriented, encouraging marketers to consider their customers' environmental and social concerns primarily as an opportunity to promote their own organisation's success.

However, as a set of strategic goals and values, the idea of sustainability tends to remain open to multiple interpretations, taking different meanings in different political, sociocultural, economic and moral contexts, which traditional approaches to sustainable marketing have failed to capture (see Crane 2000; Crane & Matten 2007; García-Rosell 2009; Meriläinen, Moisander & Pesonen 2000; Moisander 2001). For instance, while the relationship between morality and sustainable marketing has been widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Kotler 2004, 35; Laczniak G.R. & Murphy 2006; Murphy 2005), few scholars have attempted to describe the moral basis of sustainable marketing (e.g., Crane 2000; Crane & Desmond 2002; Robin & Reidenbach 1987). As Andrew Crane (2000, 144) suggests, there has been a tendency to assume that any consideration of environmental and social concerns within the marketing domain are ethical and that, accordingly, any environmentally and socially responsible approach to marketing is intrinsically good. Hence, the role of morality in shaping the meaning of sustainability within the market has remained under-researched.

Sustainable marketing has, indeed, remained a simple managerial and microeconomic activity that relies on the generic marketing concept to address growing concerns about environmental degradation and social inequity (Crane 2000; Kilbourne 1998; van Dam & Apeldoorn 1996). As Ynte van Dam and Paul Apeldoorn (1996, 52) note, sustainable marketing is simply the attempt to convert social and ecological issues from societal challenges into marketing problems that can be easily solved through the application of the appropriate marketing tools and techniques. Hence, sustainable marketing constitutes a simple extension of the firm-centric and customer-oriented approach to marketing while neglecting the broader societal context of marketing management and the complex web of market interactions (see Kilbourne, McDonagh & Prothero 1997; Smith, Drumwright & Gentile 2010).

A recent development in marketing has brought new influences to the field of sustainable marketing. Whereas customers were previously the primary concern of marketing, the sustainability debate seems to have drawn marketers' attention towards other market actors and thus shifted marketing thinking from a "customer-" to a "stakeholder-orientation" (Bhattacharya 2010). This mind-set shift is included in the latest definition of marketing released by the American Marketing Association (AMA). According to this definition, marketing is viewed as "*the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large*" (AMA 2008). Additionally, a recent special issue of the "Journal of Public Policy and Marketing" on stakeholder marketing shows the growing interest in integrating stakeholder thinking into marketing theory (Bhattacharya 2010). Marketers who adopt the stakeholder concept seem to understand marketing as a process that extends beyond the scope of a firm and includes a broad set of stakeholders (e.g., Ferrell, Gonzalez-Padron,

Hult & Maignan 2010; Fry & Polonsky 2004; Kimery & Rinehart 1998; Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell 2005; Smith et al. 2010). The notion of customer satisfaction is thus expanded to include other market constituencies that affect or are affected by the operations of a business. The call for a multi-stakeholder perspective of sustainable marketing and marketing in general has increased with the sustainability megatrend.

This trend shows that the issues underlying sustainability are too complex – both theoretically and practically – to be viewed from a unilateral perspective (marketer or customer) as usually occurs in mainstream marketing (see Catterall, Maclaran & Stevens 2002, 186). Sustainability relies on the different meanings it has amongst different interest groups within society. While marketers may see sustainability as a new method of business development or growth, environmentalist and human rights advocates associate it with the intrinsic values of nature and global redistribution, respectively (Dryzek 1997; Hemmati 2002). In this regard, sustainability becomes a discourse on fundamental values and meanings that requires multiple stakeholder perspectives. As Andrew Crane and Dirk Matten (2007) suggest, a pluralistic application of ethical theories sheds light on the wide range of values, assumptions and moral orientations underlying multiple stakeholder perspectives on sustainability.

In keeping with Paul du Gay, Graeme Salaman and Bronwen Rees (1996, 265), the term “discourse” is used here to describe a group of statements that provide a language for talking and producing a particular type of knowledge concerning our relationship with both nature and society, as will be specified later in this summary. In fact, as a discourse in its own right, sustainability goes beyond the realm of the business community to include a broad range of stakeholders who actively shape the meaning of being and acting as a socially responsible business organisation (Burchell & Cook 2006; Death 2010). Consequently, one of the primary premises of this dissertation is that the judgment and interpretation of sustainability cannot be based solely on the wisdom of experts in judging and defining the relationship between business, society and the natural environment (see Beck 1999). To date, this type of elitist knowledge, which tends to override alternate ways of thinking and knowing, has failed to help marketers holistically realise the degree to which their daily actions are interrelated with their surrounding natural and social environment.

It is in this context that I argue that the managerial approach to sustainable marketing, which primarily relies on the basic assumptions of the marketing concept and the principles of neo-classical economics, shows considerable limitations when addressing business–society relations. Indeed, due to the reductionist managerial orientation and strong focus on rational processes inherited from industrial modernisation (Beck 1999; Kilbourne & Beckmann 1998; Kilbourne et al. 1997), many argue (e.g., Crane 1997; García-Rosell 2009; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001; Peñaloza & Mish 2011) that sustainable marketing fails to recognise, and thus to explore, the complex social and cultural context in which marketers and other members of society are continuously (re)producing, negotiating, resisting and transforming the values and meanings of sustainability. This failure could be a direct consequence of using sustainable marketing as a strategy that constantly reproduces rather than questions managerialism (see Fougère & Solitander 2009; Skålén, Fougère &

Fellessen 2008). Because the complexity of sustainability results from the vast number of discourses that shape and reshape the nature of environmental and social responsibility, I argue that progress in this field requires moving beyond managerial discourse to include and open other relevant social discourses also engaged in the (re)production of the meaning of sustainability within a market context (Burchell & Cook 2006; Dryzek 1997, 8). To that end, marketing academics, educators and practitioners should be prepared to challenge the reductionist and rational nature of sustainable marketing.

Reductionism is reflected by limiting the scope of sustainable marketing to the perspective of the marketer and customer. From this perspective, marketers are viewed as active actors who do things to environmentally and socially concerned (passive) customers, segments them, distributes and promotes to them in order to maximise the firm's economic objectives (see Araujo & Kjellberg 2009; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Vargo & Lusch 2004). Accordingly, this way of thinking implicitly, if not explicitly, assumes that the market is divisible into isolated units that can be individually studied and understood and then reassembled to give a picture of the whole. This assumption can be considered a problem from the perspective of sustainable marketing because it leads to a detachment from the social and cultural context in which market activities and interactions between humans and nature occur. Similarly, rationalism manifests itself through the strong reliance of sustainable marketing on technical, scientific and managerial expertise for addressing environmental and social issues. Accordingly, it is assumed that those at the top (e.g., managers, engineers, scientists), where the expertise is centralised, know better than those at lower levels (see Banerjee 2007; Dryzek 1997; Jamal, Everett & Dann 2003). While the stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing – and marketing in general – appears to respond to these gaps by unfolding the responsibility of marketers beyond just customers and shareholders, it simply reinforces reductionism and rationalism without challenging the underlying premises of contemporary marketing practices.

Indeed, the stakeholder approach to marketing has simply extended both the marketing mix philosophy and the popular notion of need satisfaction beyond the customer to include other parties who participate, either directly or indirectly, in the broader marketing process (e.g., Bhattacharya 2010, 2; Ferrell et al. 2010, 95). As a result, most stakeholder marketing literature emphasises the modernity-based business philosophy where stakeholder relations are observed from the perspective of a single firm as a rational manageable strategy handled by the marketer (e.g., Maignan et al. 2005; Smith et al. 2010). However, this way of thinking is a direct consequence of basic assumptions in stakeholder theory. Stakeholder management usually assumes that stakeholders are individual isolatable entities independent from one another and clearly identifiable by the firm with interests that can be accounted for during business decision-making (Buchholz & Rosenthal 2005). This view of stakeholders represents a serious limitation in the practical development and deployment of more sustainable marketing practices because it neglects not only the interconnectedness of stakeholders within the markets (Mish & Scammon 2010) but also the practices and forms of expertise beyond those implied by generic marketing principles (cf. Araujo & Kjellberg 2009, 197–198). The tendency to approach sustainability as a problem

solvable by managerial solutions contributes to not only managerialising environmental and social issues but also inhibiting other ways of thinking that may threaten the legitimacy of the managerial discourse and thus the status quo of marketing management.

These problems suggest, as argued by many critics (e.g., Banerjee 2007; Crane & Desmond 2002; Kilbourne 1998; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn 1996), that sustainable marketing is less a transformation of the basic assumptions of the generic marketing concept and more a simple, unreflective adoption of the notions of sustainability and social responsibility to fulfil the objectives of marketing strategy. While I concur that the managerial approach to sustainable marketing may help marketers become wiser and more innovative with regards to social and ecological issues, there are some pitfalls, especially if social and environmental concerns are treated as simply a means to achieve economic goals without subjecting them to critical scrutiny. Indeed, the strong focus on business efficiency can hinder marketers from identifying the real benefits and disadvantages to both the natural environment and those either directly or indirectly involved in the broader market process. This limit is mainly because the notion of efficiency legitimises and reinforces marketing managerial principles to such a degree that it overshadows the ecological, sociocultural, political and moral principles, values and meanings that contribute to making marketing sustainable in the first place (Crane 2000; Kilbourne 1995). By valuing and defining both nature and human relations in economic terms, other values such as socio-cultural and moral ones risk being omitted from the marketing process (see Jamal et al. 2003, 153–154).

After decades of sustainable marketing research and practice, the problem is not about coordinating sustainable marketing activities, satisfying green consumers' needs or even obtaining knowledge about the efficient use of natural resources. It can generally be argued that there is an urgent need to help marketers enhance the internalisation of perspectives and knowledge from multiple stakeholders into the firm's marketing strategy rather than to give them tools to respond to stakeholder demands (Fry & Polonsky 2004; Maignan et al. 2005; Polonsky & Rosenberger 2001). I agree; however, my doctoral dissertation goes further by viewing the nature of stakeholder theory beyond the scope of the firm. With this perspective in mind, I define the contemporary problem as a lack of means to make accessible the knowledge, everyday life experiences and practices of multiple stakeholders for the sake of transforming old ways of organising, managing and relating in the marketplace – a transformation that is needed to progress towards greater sustainability. However, this problem cannot be adequately addressed if sustainable marketing continues to rely on managerial techniques that subjugate environmental and social considerations to the principles of the generic marketing concept (see Banerjee 2007; Kilbourne & Beckmann 1998; Moisander 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn 1996).

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

To address the above-described research problems and gaps, this doctoral dissertation works towards a theoretical and methodological framework that allows using sustainable

marketing as a threshold concept for critically evaluating and questioning the assumptions of both marketing theory and professional practice. In line with Pertti Alasuutari (1996, 373), this framework denotes a set of ontological and epistemological premises that enable marketing educators, students, researchers and practitioners to view markets as stages on which multiple stakeholders engage in a continuous struggle over the meaning of sustainability. As Jan H. F. Meyer and Ray Land (2005, 1) suggest, a threshold concept refers to a conceptual gateway that allows access to a new way of understanding, interpreting or viewing our world. By drawing attention to the struggle over the meaning of sustainability, the framework turns sustainability marketing into a threshold concept that leads us to previously inaccessible ways of understanding the relationship between marketing, society and the natural environment and invites us to attempt new ways of doings, acting and relating in the market. By relating this imperative for change to sustainable marketing, I found it both interesting and pertinent to focus on the following research question:

What type of theoretical and methodological framework allows using sustainable marketing as a threshold concept?

Both development and teaching practices are examined within the context of this general research question because of the role they now play in promoting more sustainable practices within the business community. A special focus is given to developmental work in the field of tourism because of both its multi-stakeholder nature and the economic, socio-cultural and political role of tourism in the Finnish province of Lapland where this research was conducted (see Regional Council of Lapland 2007; Valkonen 2011; Valkonen & Veijola 2008). However, teaching practices are observed within a more general context that includes management and marketing courses beyond the realm of tourism. Following Reckwitz (2002, 249), I define “practice” in terms of a routinised behaviour consisting of several interconnected elements, such as physical or mental activities, “things” and their use, background knowledge, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. By focussing on developmental and teaching practices, the empirical portion of this dissertation responds to the following sub-questions:

How can the framework developed in this study be used by researchers and practitioners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability and thus apply it to their daily practices and actions?

How can the framework developed in this study be used by educators to create learning spaces that help students develop the critical thinking capacity needed to transform existing business practices and the way we relate to others in the market?

Theoretically, this dissertation draws on relational social constructionism (Cunliffe 2008; Gergen 2009; Gergen, McNamee & Barrett 2001), cultural marketing (Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Moisander & Valtonen 2006b; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006) and critical marketing studies (see Crane & Desmond 2002; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001; Skälén et al.

2008). Having been inspired by alternative ways to empirically study sustainable marketing, such as single case studies (Crane 1997), grounded theory (Drumwright 1994), and narrative and discourse analysis (Moisander 2001; Pesonen 2006), this dissertation methodically draws on action research (Marshall 2001, 2004; Reason & Bradbury 2008; Zuber-Skerritt 1996). As a methodological approach, action research helps marketers gain insights into the dynamics and complexities of sustainability and develop new organisational capacities to promote social welfare in close collaboration with different stakeholders (see Ozanne & Anderson 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). To this end, a range of research methods are usually combined within an action research study. While action research will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2.4, the methods used to address the previously posed sub-questions will be elaborated in relation to the action research studies in Chapter 3. It is noteworthy that data collected and analysed via the different methods used in this dissertation serve as an input for working on the ontological and epistemological premises of the framework and thereby answer the study's main question.

Consistent with Alladi Venkatesh and Lisa Peñaloza (2006, 147), I argue that action research allows marketers to view markets as places they both inhabit and (re)produce in conjunction with other market actors. By approaching sustainability knowledge as uncertain, evolving, contextual and value laden (McNiff & Whitehead 2006), action research represents an opportunity to move the scope of sustainable marketing beyond a simple prescription of actions for managing both nature and stakeholders while promoting the economic objectives of a single firm. Indeed, action research turns sustainable marketing into an opportunity to combine the understanding and expertise of multiple stakeholders and thus extend this knowledge towards new insights that can form the basis of social action to create more sustainable business practices (Somekh 2006).

By facilitating dialogue spaces that allow for multiple perspectives (Bradbury 2001), action research encourages marketers to think more critically about their own assumptions and actions, which helps them develop more collaborative, responsive and ethical ways of managing and organising (see Cunliffe 2004, 408; Reid & Frisby 2008, 100). The participatory nature of action research promotes reflective and reflexive processes that enable marketers to both assess their relationship with nature and other members of society and identify those aspects of this relationship that have been ignored or given less consideration (see Gergen & Gergen 2008; Harré, Brockmeier & Mülhäuser 1998; Meriläinen et al. 2000). In this sense, action research contributes not only to better understanding marketing's relationship to nature and society but also to launching an inquiry linking practical knowledge and everyday-life experiences to serve a more equitable and sustainable society (see Reason & Bradbury 2008, 4). Based on the above discussion, action research can be considered consistent with the theoretical orientation of the framework.

These theoretical and methodological perspectives can be observed in three main premises. First, I draw on the argument that sustainability is socially constructed through dynamic stakeholder dialogues, interactions and relationships occurring within a market context (see Moisander 2001; Peñaloza 2000; Peñaloza & Mish 2011). This social construction shifts the focus of the stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing from individual

stakeholders to the market as a unified environment in which all stakeholders are interrelated (Mish & Scammon 2010). Second, in keeping with Helen Longino (2002, 129), I argue that different understandings of sustainability are transformed into operational concepts by assuring that anything ratified as sustainability knowledge has survived criticism from multiple perspectives. Third, following Bobby Banerjee (2007) and Ann Cunliffe (2004), I claim that progress towards greater sustainability requires transforming old ways of organising, managing and relating in the marketplace. In my view, sustainable marketing should help marketing professionals become critically reflexive practitioners capable of questioning the assumptions underlying their actions, listening to alternative ways to frame market reality and establishing multi-stakeholder dialogues in pursuit of more sustainable markets (See Gergen 2009, 12). In the rest of this summary, I discuss and illustrate the theoretical and methodological framework developed in this study.

1.3 SUMMARY OF THE STRUCTURE

This doctoral dissertation consists of five independent articles published in peer-reviewed academic publications with a summary part that foregoes them. The summary part of the dissertation continues hereafter by outlining in Chapter 2 the theoretical and methodological framework that was developed and implemented in this study. This chapter is divided into four sub-chapters addressing different elements of the framework. In Sub-Chapter 2.1, I describe how stakeholders are conceptualised within the context of this research. I introduce a stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing that uses ideas from both stakeholder marketing and the market approach to marketing. In Sub-Chapter 2.2, I describe the roles that meanings and discourses play within this framework and in the social construction of sustainability. Sub-Chapter 2.3 details the relationship between morality and sustainable marketing. In doing so, I draw attention to the use of moral philosophy to expose the moral orientations entailed in the different forms of representing sustainability and the discourses available within a market context. Sub-Chapter 2.4 introduces action research and draws attention to it as a methodology offering an alternative way of studying and approaching sustainability in marketing.

In Chapter 3, I first introduce the cases and the contexts of the action research studies that comprise the empirical part of this dissertation. I present arguments for using this particular empirical setting to illustrate both the theoretical and methodological framework elaborated in Chapter 2. I then elaborate on my position as a researcher by describing the process of analysing the two action research studies conducted within this doctoral dissertation. In Chapter 4, I review the five articles and their main findings. The final chapter of this dissertation summary evaluates the theoretical, methodological, managerial and pedagogical contributions of the doctoral dissertation; discuss the limitations of the study; and provides suggestions for further research.

2 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned earlier, by building the theoretical and methodological framework to explore and develop sustainable marketing in both theory and practice, I draw on the idea that sustainability is a social construction. Following Kenneth Gergen (2009, 6), I argue that what we understand to be either sustainable or unsustainable does not emerge from images of ecological destruction or social inequalities but rather is the result of social relationships and coordination between persons embedded in a cultural context – for example, through negotiations, agreements and sharing of perspectives. In this argument, sustainable marketing is understood as a means of subjecting the basic premises of marketing to refinement, revision and transformation so that they better agree with the principles of economic, environmental and social sustainability (Gergen 2009; Gergen & Gergen 2008; Guba & Lincoln 1989). This framework draws on stakeholder concepts, the market approach to marketing, the notion of meaning, discourses and moral philosophy while methodically drawing on action research. Figure 1 illustrates this framework in relation to the design and deployment of developmental and educational tools.

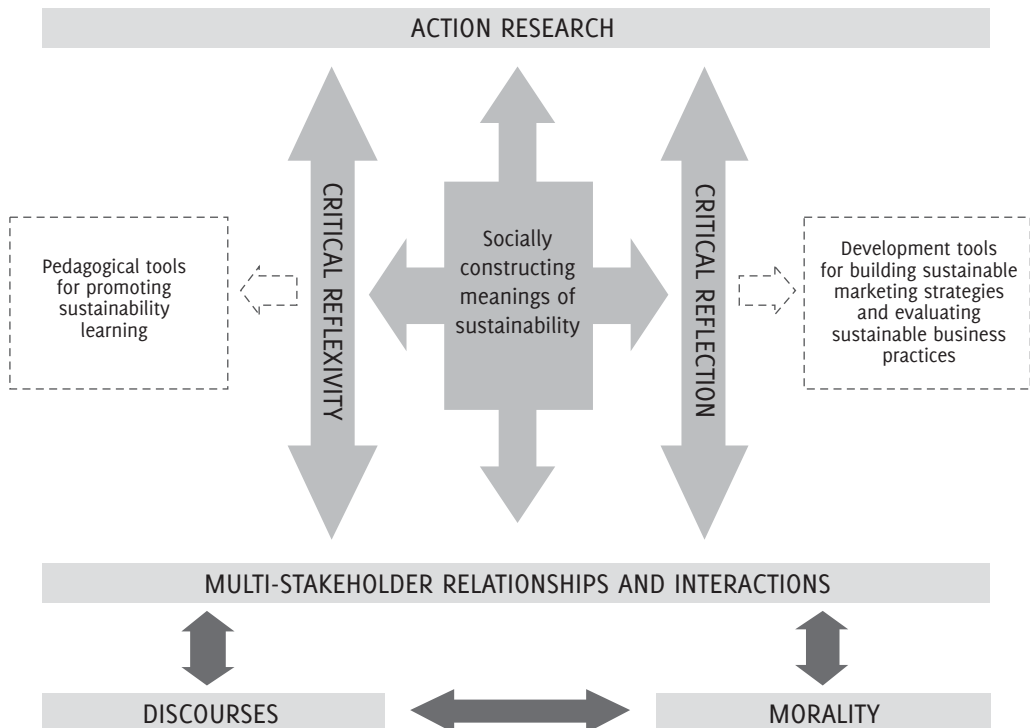


Figure 1. Theoretical and methodological framework

2.1 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER THINKING

Although largely ignored and underestimated within the marketing discipline, stakeholder orientation has become a major alternative to customer orientation that has dominated marketing strategy during the last half century (Ferrell et al. 2010; Kimery & Rinehart 1998; Smith et al. 2010). Excitement is now increasing as a growing stream of marketing literature addresses the potential implications of stakeholder thinking for marketing strategy (Bhattacharya 2010). The basic ideas of stakeholder theory and marketing have become interconnected for these scholars under the term “stakeholder marketing”. According to C.B. Bhattacharya (2010, 1), stakeholder marketing aims to (1) consider multiple stakeholder interests when designing, implementing and evaluating marketing strategy, (2) understand the full impact of marketing on all stakeholders, (3) study the relationships between stakeholders, (4) understand how marketers can effectively address commonalities and conflicts in stakeholder needs and interests and (5) help maximise shareholder value. This way of understanding stakeholder marketing has a significant affinity with stakeholder theory. Indeed, the majority of studies on stakeholder marketing follow the premise established by Edward Freeman in his landmark book *“Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach”* (1984) and his view that stakeholders are *“any groups or individuals who can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives”*.

Both stakeholder theory, which has received extensive examination in the management literature (Laplume, Sonpar & Litz 2008; Stoney & Winstanley 2001), and stakeholder marketing seem to offer a rich body of thought for the further development of sustainable marketing (Banerjee 2007, 23–40; Fry & Polonsky 2004; García-Rosell 2009; Maignan & Ferrell 2004; Maignan et al. 2005). These theories suggest that the centrepiece of sustainable marketing involves considering the rights and interests of all legitimate stakeholders rather than simply those of customers and shareholders. In adopting this approach, sustainable marketing helps firms make responsible marketing decisions that promote both their strategic goals and social welfare (see Fry & Polonsky 2004, 1304). While stakeholder marketing and stakeholder theory have been invaluable in stimulating our thinking regarding the relationship between marketing, nature and society, I believe that these theories do not sufficiently advance the theorisation of sustainable marketing. In fact, because of the prevailing firm orientation and assumption that stakeholders are isolatable entities, I argue that stakeholder marketing and stakeholder theory fail to offer insights into the dynamics and complexities of sustainable marketing. However, there are two independent developments within business studies that can fill the gap left by stakeholder marketing and stakeholder theory.

The first development refers to the emerging relational perspective on stakeholder theory that has been addressed and discussed by a host of scholars who recognised the need to shift the analytical focus from individual stakeholders to a dynamic, decentralised web of multi-stakeholder relationships (e.g., Buchholz & Rosenthal 2004, 2005; Hemmati 2002; Reynolds & Yuthas 2008; Wicks, Gilbert & Freeman 1994). For example, in her attempt to re-orient stakeholder thinking, Minu Hemmati emphasises the study of multi-stakeholder

processes and the wealth of subjective perspectives, knowledge and experiences that these processes entail. This view is further elaborated by Rogene Buchholz and Sandra Rosenthal (2005, 147), who share the view that organisations are not separable from their stakeholders but are, in fact, constituted by the multiple relationships in which they are embedded. Instead of understanding stakeholder value as comprising individual needs, priorities and judgements, as proposed by the individualist premises of traditional stakeholder theory, relational stakeholder theorists regard stakeholder value as the product of dynamic community relations (Buchholz & Rosenthal 2005, 145). This view is consistent with Adam Arvidsson's (2011, 268) suggestion that what creates stakeholder value is the ability to create significant relationships that sustain the dynamic web of multi-stakeholder relationships within which organisations are embedded.

The second development is related to the cultural approach of marketing and, more precisely, the study of markets as a social construction (e.g., Araujo 2007; Araujo & Kjellberg 2009; Firat & Dholakia 2006; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Venkatesh & Peñaloza 2006). Venkatesh and Peñaloza (2006) describe the market as a social construction in the sense that markets are constructed by subject-to-subject relationships. In this way of thinking, stakeholders are not only subjected to the marketer but also to other stakeholders who become active producers of meaning via joint and continuous interactions. Therefore, stakeholders are considered not as isolated individuals with separate roles and tasks but as community members whose roles and tasks merge and fade within the context of the market (see Firat & Venkatesh 1995). In a sense, the market approach to marketing offers a fruitful opportunity to look beyond the assumption in stakeholder marketing that a stakeholder orientation is principally about striking an appropriate balance between the interests of an organisation and its stakeholders. Viewing markets as a social construction is valuable for better understanding the complex socio-cultural relationships and interactions through which marketers, consumers and other stakeholders produce, maintain, negotiate, resist and transform values and meanings about sustainability (see Moisander 2007; Moisander & Valtonen 2006b; Peñaloza & Mish 2011; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006).

One main argument links these two developments. Both research streams converge on the idea that firms are rooted in a web of multi-stakeholder relationships where value is constantly co-created. Thus, they disapprove of the prevailing individualistic view of stakeholders and market actors that focusses on the needs and interests of single stakeholders and thus downplays the socio-cultural context. The kinship between these two research streams also raises questions regarding their primary differences. While the relational perspective on stakeholder theory continues to focus on the firm, the market approach focusses on the market as a physical and virtual space that is constructed by the multiplicity and diversity of multi-stakeholder relations. By observing individual firms as both a part of the market and subjected to other stakeholders, the market approach shifts the unit of study from the firm to the market (Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006). The work of marketing scholars using a market approach highlights the role of values and meanings to provide the subjective material that stakeholders rely on and reproduce when formulating their identities and relating to both other stakeholders and the natural environment (Araujo

& Kjellberg 2009; Peñaloza & Mish 2011). In this way, scholars draw attention to various discourses and practices as the means through which stakeholders construct and institutionalise meanings and values within a market context. While the notions of discourse and practise have made few inroads with relational stakeholder theorists, these theorists have more explicitly addressed the notions of meaning and value in relation to morality (Buchholz & Rosenthal 2005).

In this doctoral dissertation, I establish a nexus between stakeholder marketing, the relational perspective on stakeholder theory and the market approach to marketing to create a framework to explore and more comprehensively understand the dynamics and complexities of sustainable marketing. The multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing outlined and illustrated in this dissertation grows from integrating and incorporating premises from these three research fields. In this way, the framework contains three shifts from the current theorisation of sustainable marketing that has been largely shaped via managerial discourse. First, focus is shifted from individual stakeholders to the complex web of multi-stakeholder interactions and relationships. Second, emphasis is shifted from sustainability as a technical/scientific problem to sustainability as a set of meanings and values socially constructed by the discourses and practices available within a particular market context. Finally, there is a shift from “common sense” marketing to “reflexive” marketing. By forwarding these three fundamental mind-set shifts, the framework suggests, in agreement with Luis Araujo and Hans Kjellberg (2009, 198), that sustainable marketing should be actively engaged in the production and transformation of markets towards greater sustainability.

A “multi-stakeholder perspective” thus refers to an analytical perspective on the socio-cultural production of the meanings and values of sustainability through the discourses and practices available at a certain time and place. By opening access to the complex weavings of stakeholder views, understandings and experiences, this analytical perspective enables marketing professionals to construct knowledge and develop both new capabilities and practices to support sustainability. This approach makes sense if we consider that scientific knowledge is not universally valid in all local contexts; moreover, the development of more sustainable practices requires promoting fruitful and transdisciplinary dialogues between locally relevant and universalist claims (see Heiskanen 2006, 10; cf. Nowotny 2003). In this dissertation, the term “marketing practice” is not used as a catch-all for what marketers do (Araujo & Kjellberg 2009, 198). Rather, the term marketing practices refers to mental representations, both scientific and lay knowledge, emotional states, embodied skills and material devices, as well as the configuration in which they come together, when both marketers and other stakeholders address environmental and social issues within a market context. In this way, the multi-stakeholder perspective both encourages critical reflexivity and prompts marketers to question “common sense” sustainable marketing; that is, the managerial way in which marketing professionals generally think and practice sustainable marketing (Catterall et al. 2002, 186; Fougère & Solitander 2009; Jones, Parker & Ten Bos 2005, 10; Skálén et al. 2008).

2.2 MEANING AND DISCOURSE

“*Meaning*” is a complex notion that has become strongly associated with the fields of cultural studies (e.g., du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus 1997; Hall 1997; Hall, Hobson, Lowe & Willis 1986), cultural marketing and consumer research (e.g., Arnould & Thompson 2005; Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Moisander & Valtonen 2006b; Peñaloza 2000; Valtonen 2004). While general consensus exists on the central role of language in producing meanings, there are different views on how meanings are produced through language. According to Stuart Hall (1997, 24–25), three approaches can be used to explain how language represents meaning: “*the reflective approach*”, whereby language reflects the true meaning of the objects or ideas as they already exist in the world; “*the intentional approach*”, whereby words mean what the author intends them to mean; and “*the constructionist approach*”, whereby language is a medium for constructing meaning via social interactions.

In the framework of this dissertation, meaning is understood using the constructionist approach; that is, meaning refers to the human perception of social reality that arises from the way an object or idea is linguistically represented both orally and visually (du Gay et al. 1997; Hall 1997). This human perception, which is context-dependent and conceived as both flowing and drifting, is continually redefined via the signs and language of daily market interactions (see Douglas & Isherwood 1996, 43–45; du Gay et al. 1997, 24–25). Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1985, 34–35) note that language and signs are essential for understanding the reality of everyday life. Additionally, it can be contended that both language and human-made symbols play a significant role not only in producing, reproducing and communicating meanings but also in preserving their dynamic existence over time (Berger & Luckmann 1985, 36; Douglas & Isherwood 1996, 43). However, I do not view meaning as the outcome of individual experiences, as is typical among marketing scholars who draw upon the constructionist approach. My view is more in line with the “*analytics of cultural practice*” suggested by Johanna Moisander and Anu Valtonen (2006a), who view meaning as the active product of everyday social practices and interactions. Moisander (2001, 114) summarises this way of understanding meaning as follows: “*meaning is constructed in social interaction, with the help and within the limits of available discourses and representational systems, using text, talk, images and signifying practices*”. According to this reasoning, discourse both precedes and determines meaning (Alvesson & Karreman 2000, 1129–1131).

This viewpoint is useful, as it draws attention to the critical role discourses play in guiding and constraining the way a phenomenon, idea, concept or topic is meaningfully discussed, defined and put into action within a particular domain of social life (Caruana & Crane 2008; Jonker & Marberg 2007, 9; Moisander 2001, 115). Following James Ryan (1999), I argue that it is necessary to appreciate how meaning and reality are grounded in and constructed through discourse to better understand the social construction of sustainability. This concept does not imply that there is no reality out there. Sweatshops, child labour, corruption, gender inequality, climate change, ecological degradation and pollution, to name a few, are concrete facts; however, as Louise Phillips and Marianne Jorgensen

(2002, 9) suggest, they only gain meaning through discourse. In this framework, discourse can be defined as a particular way of discussing and understanding sustainability (Phillips & Jorgensen 2002, 1). From this perspective, discourses are viewed as the general and prevailing systems for forming and articulating ideas concerning our relationships to nature and other members of society in a particular space at a particular time (see Alvesson & Karreman 2000, 1126; Phillips & Jorgensen 2002).

Let us take the discussions on the future of a large area of old-growth forest in northern Lapland as an example (e.g., Hallikainen, Helle, Hyppönen, Ikonen, Jokinen, Naskali, Tuulentie & Varmola 2008; Linjakumpu & Valkonen 2006). The trees, plants, animals, rivers, lakes and people living in and around the forest exist independently of what is said in these discussions. Those working for the local logging companies and paper industry might see the forest as providing a raw material for pulp and paper. Sami reindeer herders might consider the forest as a free grazing area for their herds and relate it to their cultural heritage. Tourism entrepreneurs might see the forest as an attraction for tourists, and tourists might describe the forest in terms of their own physical and mental well-being. Environmental activists might view the forest as an ecosystem supporting a large diversity of animals and plants. As Phillips and Jorgensen note (2002, 9), whenever people begin to ascribe meaning to the old-growth forest, it becomes part of a discourse which suggests a certain course of action, such as logging, grazing or preservation.

Discourses thus play a significant role in how sustainability is represented and enacted within a particular social domain. Indeed, as an idea that intersects with the dominant discourses of a wide range of stakeholder groups (Dryzek 1997; Tennberg 2000), sustainability has different meanings and representations depending on which discourse people use when discussing both society and the environment in relation to their everyday lives. Each of these dominant discourses frames sustainability in a certain way and simultaneously limits the other ways in which the notion of sustainability can be constructed (du Gay 1997, 298). For instance, managerial discourse, which is the dominant discourse in marketing (see Skälén et al. 2008), excludes many aspects of sustainability, including morality, degrowth and spirituality, that are seen as central within other discourses.

The concepts of meaning and discourse, as discussed above, have two major implications in theorising and enacting sustainable marketing. First, they draw attention to the blinding potential of viewing sustainability as a single, fixed and universally accepted notion. Consistent with Dorothy Holland and colleagues' (2001) idea of culture as a discursive field and set of improvised practices foundational to the formation of actor subjectivities and activities, this framework represents sustainability as a contextual product of both social interactions and struggles that are highly dependent on multiple interpretations within the market and between market actors. More precisely, by illustrating the way companies, employees, consumers, local community members, activists and other stakeholders talk, think and feel about environmental and social issues in relation to their everyday life – that is, how they represent and assimilate them –, this framework shows how the meaning of sustainability is continuously produced and reproduced within a market context (see Caruna & Crane 2008; du Gay et al. 1997; Hall 1997; Moisander & Valtonen 2006b).

Second, these concepts demonstrate the drawbacks of framing sustainability within a single discourse, as has occurred in sustainable marketing. However, this assertion does not call for abandoning or replacing the managerial discourse with one more “truly” aligned with the nature of sustainability. Rather, it simply acknowledges that all marketplace knowledge is perspectival (Catterall et al. 2002, 186–187; Moisander & Valtonen 2006a, 1) and that a variety of discourses shape our relationships with the natural environment and other members of society. Such a plurality of discourses is required to further develop sustainable marketing in both theory and practice given that different discourses provide different forms of knowledge about sustainability. Sustainable marketing cannot neglect the other discourses through which sustainability acquires meaning in a marketplace context. In keeping with Gergen (2009, 12), I view the recognition of multiple sustainability constructs as an invitation to transform marketing practices and the way we relate in the marketplace. It can be argued, drawing upon John Dryzek (1997) and John Campbell (2004, 109), that change toward more environmentally friendly and socially responsible marketing can only occur if communication takes place between discourses. Discourses can provide marketers, consumers and other stakeholders with new opportunities to better understand the complexities of sustainability and to develop more sustainable market practices (see Moisander & Valtonen 2006a, 5).

2.3 MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Because sustainability implies discussions about the rightness, fairness and justness of procedures that address economic, environmental and social affairs, moral philosophy is at the heart of both this global debate and the idea of more environmentally enlightened and socially responsible marketing. As Crane (2000) argues, the theoretical development of sustainable marketing represents a clear attempt to determine and frame the goals of marketing activities from a moral perspective. Sustainable marketing studies are generally based on the assumption that societal and economic goals cannot be achieved without a healthy natural environment and a just society. If we consider the idea forwarded by Edward Freeman and colleagues (2004, 364–365) that creating economic value is intrinsically connected to creating value for stakeholders, we can argue that sustainable marketing begins with the belief that value is necessarily and explicitly a part of doing business and that morality and marketing are not separate. Therefore, maximising shareholder value is not a value-neutral ideology, as it may leverage the *prima facie* rights of one group – shareholders – to excuse violating the rights of others (see Freeman, Wicks & Parmar 2004). This idea suggests that sustainable marketing is primarily a moral matter of social conscience whereby firms assume a clear sense of moral responsibility towards the natural environment and society at large (Crane 2000, 144).

The moral basis of this theoretical development, however, is seldom elaborated. The prevailing belief among sustainable marketing scholars is that morality is something singular; that there is only one suitable perspective on morality that applies. Yet, in moral philosophy, there are numerous moral perspectives that play a role in shaping the values and

belief systems of the discourses used to frame and articulate the meaning of sustainability (see Ketola 2007; Smith & Duffy 2003). Drawing upon Crane's (2000, 150) "reconstructionist perspective" of the role of moral values within the marketing–environment literature, moral philosophy denotes a fundamental force guiding how both the environment and society are understood and addressed by individuals and groups within a socio-cultural, economic and political context. Moral values condition not only the way stakeholders define, interpret and approach environmental and social issues but also the discourses they employ when discussing sustainability. Due to the clear connection between meaning, discourse and morality, it seems important to explore the role moral values play in guiding and constraining our thinking regarding our relationship with nature and other members of society. In this way, we will be able to understand how morality contributes to the rationalisation and legitimisation of the dominant discourses shaping the meaning of sustainability in the marketplace.

Accordingly, I suggest that normative ethical theories are suitable for linking the different social discourses used to discuss and grasp the social, environmental and economic responsibilities inherent within the global sustainability debate (see Burchell & Cook 2006; Death 2010; DesJardins 2001; Tennberg 2000). In keeping with Crane and Matten (2007), I use the term "normative" in reference to ethical theories that either propose or prescribe ethically correct ways of acting. The framework introduced in this dissertation is based on four prevalent approaches to normative ethics: ethical egoism, utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics. These approaches inform much of the current discussion of sustainability within the fields of management (Crane & Matten 2007) and marketing (García-Rosell 2009; Robin & Reidenbach 1987). It is worth noting that I use "ethics" and "morality" interchangeably throughout this dissertation (Copp 2006, 4). Let us elaborate further on the example discussions regarding the future of a large, old-growth forest in northern Lapland. This time, I will draw upon four approaches of normative ethics.

Those working for local logging companies and the paper industry might understand sustainability in terms of the overall welfare that use of the forest may bring to a particular community. This line of reasoning, which is rooted in the utilitarian approach to ethics, reflects the notion that forestry practices in an old-growth forest are justified as long as they produce the greatest balance of benefits (e.g., employment and tax revenues) over costs (e.g., habitat destruction, the violation of indigenous rights) for the greatest number of stakeholders (Robin & Reidenbach 1987; Sidgwick 1981). From this perspective, sustainability is judged in terms of good consequences and the maximisation of overall welfare. The utilitarian viewpoint is too broad for ethical egoism. As a moral doctrine, ethical egoism holds that the sole ethical goal in life is one's own good, defined as the greatest attainable pleasure (Sidgwick 1981). In the context of the old-growth forest, tourism entrepreneurs and tourists may contribute to the protection of the forest by promoting their self-interest in terms of business objectives and personal well-being, respectively. Their interest in protecting the forest does not mean that these two stakeholder groups have a moral obligation to do so (see Rachels & Rachels 2007). According to ethical egoism, they are acting morally not because they care for the protection of the forest but because they see it as a means for maximising their own interests (see Crane & Matten 2007).

Environmental activists seemingly approach the same situation from a deontological perspective by refusing to accept that the sustainability of the forest can be determined in terms of the economic value and social benefits of logging. For environmental activists, the logging of an old-growth forest is intrinsically wrong and cannot be justified by the beneficial consequences these practices yield (see McNaughton & Rawling 2006; Rachels & Rachels 2007). This line of thinking embraces the idea that nature has the same moral right to respectful treatment as humans; thus, we have a *prima facie* duty not to harm it (Brennan & Lo 2002). Finally, the Sami reindeer herders' relationship with the forest can be viewed through a virtue ethics perspective. This ethical theory views ethics as an internal practice that can be developed and trained through moral habituation in practical settings under the supervision of virtuous practitioners (Hursthouse 2007; MacIntyre 1998). Through this approach, virtue ethics shifts the analytical focus from acts to the actor's moral character, which includes virtues such as dignity, industriousness, prudence and equity (Rachels & Rachels 2007). It can thus be argued that Sami reindeer herders are influenced by their own community in the way they relate to the forest by making it a part of their daily life. Indeed, in keeping with Alasdair MacIntyre (1998), virtues have a communal origin based in dispositions deemed morally appropriate within the Sami reindeer herder community.

It is not my intention to use normative ethical theories to isolate and explain airtight philosophical positions. Neither do I seek to prescribe what moral sustainable marketing should be or how moral values should be included within sustainable marketing decision-making processes. Rather, I view moral philosophy as a means of elucidating the complexities and challenges of sustainability within a marketing context. As the example of the old-growth forest in Lapland shows, moral philosophy can contribute to unveiling the moral reasoning and orientation driving particular ways of representing sustainability within certain discourses. Normative ethical theories, in particular, can be used to analyse different ways of representing sustainability, determine the differences between them and work towards a consensus (see Jones et al. 2005; Stufflebeam 2008).

I argue, as do Crane and Matten (2007, 104), that the pluralistic application of ethical theories contributes to the approach of sustainability from different perspectives. Different ethical perspectives are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. I acknowledge that moral philosophy cannot help the business community develop a universally accepted understanding of sustainability. However, moral philosophy can certainly help firms interpret and communicate to their stakeholders what they think is sustainable about their actions and, more importantly, why this approach is necessary (see Smith & Duffy 2003). In fact, moral philosophy should improve the ability of marketing professionals to understand the beliefs, assumptions and principles that guide and constrain the thought and discussions on sustainability in a market context. Furthermore, as proposed by thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre (1998) and Emmanuel Levinas (1998), moral philosophy can help critically re-evaluate the basic marketing premises and thus make marketing practices more sensitive to the principles of sustainability.

2.4 ACTION RESEARCH

The proposed framework employs and expands upon action research methodology, which plays a key role both in generating and analysing sustainability knowledge and developing the capabilities needed to promote more sustainable business practices (e.g., Bradbury 2001; Nielsen 2005). In general, action research refers to a form of inquiry that seeks to improve the quality of human action in a social setting by critically reflecting on the actions and practices of research participants (Ballantyne 2004, 323; McKernan 1991; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008, 424). It is said that action research originated with the social scientist Kurt Lewin over half a century ago (Dickens & Watkins 1999; Perry & Gummesson 2004). Lewin, who wanted to formulate a method to help practitioners, is considered to be the “*father of action research*” (Ottosson 2003). However, some claim that other social reformers, such as John Collier, Ronald Lippitt and Marian Radcke, were using action research in the 1940s, similar to Lewin (see Dick 2007; Masters 2000; McKernan 1991). Furthermore, there is some evidence that this methodological approach was used for community development at the beginning of the 20th century and education by the end of the 19th century (McKernan 1991). At the same time, the Tavistock Institute in the U.K. was working to develop action research methodology parallel to Lewin and the socio-technical school (see Nielsen & Svensson 2006).

In sum, it can be concluded that Lewin and the Tavistock Institute were the two major forces promoting the development of action research throughout the world and thus its application in different fields of research, including business (Holter & Schwartz-Barcott 1993). While action research has been integral in developing the theory and practice of organisational development and organisational research in management since the 1950s (Coghland & Brannick 2001), its theoretical and methodological contributions have largely been overlooked in marketing (Perry & Gummesson 2004). However, the publication of a special issue on action research by the “European Journal of Marketing” in 2004 and Julie Ozanne and Bige Saatcioglu’s (2008) article on participatory action research in the “Journal of Consumer Research” indicates an increased interest in this methodology among marketing scholars and consumer researchers. Due to the rare application of action research in marketing, the majority of action research studies addressing sustainability and social responsibility are found in the management literature (e.g., Bradbury 2001; Lorenzo, Esqueda & Larson 2010; Meynell 2005; Nielsen 2005). Nonetheless, there have been some attempts to study sustainability within a marketing context: for example, in the fields of consumer research (e.g., Heiskanen & Timonen 2003; Ozanne & Anderson 2010) and sustainable marketing (e.g., García-Rosell 2009). During the recent EABIS (European Academy of Business in Society) Decennial event hosted by Nottingham University Business School, particular attention was directed towards the suitability of action research in the field of sustainability (EABIS 2012).

The lack of interest in action research amongst marketing scholars can be explained by the basic assumptions of conventional marketing research. Indeed, these assumptions emanate from a discourse and research tradition firmly rooted in positivism, positivist em-

piricism or logical empiricism (see Moisander 2001; Skålén et al. 2008). As such, most marketing research is based on the belief that as long as researchers do not influence the research object or any part of the research environment, the reliability and objectivity of the investigation is assured. This approach seems to be particularly unsuitable for studying sustainable marketing, which pertains to humans embedded in complex webs of social relations that significantly affect or are affected by the natural environment. Indeed, the idea of a disembodied and de-contextualised human being – the researcher and/or research object – is not only unrealistic but, more importantly, obfuscates the way the markets depend on unsustainable transfers from nature and unequal stakeholder relationships (Meriläinen et al. 2000; Reason & Bradbury 2008). This epistemological problem has prompted calls for more social constructivist, interpretive and poststructuralist approaches to theorising and conducting empirical research concerning the relationships between business, nature and society (e.g., Brand 2009; Crane 1999, 2000; García-Rosell 2009; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001). While the application of action research to this dissertation represents a response to those calls, criticisms regarding the active role of the researcher in such studies must be addressed.

In effect, the idea of a researcher whose actions aim to change the phenomena under investigation differs drastically from the paradigmatic scope of traditional marketing (Baltantyne 2004; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). As a result, it is not surprising that the validity of action research is often called into question. Nevertheless, this criticism is unjustified because it primarily refers to the inability of conventional scientific criteria to validate action research knowledge and not the inability of action research to produce acceptable theories. Indeed, this fact becomes a part of the extensive debate about what constitutes acceptable theory and what criteria should be used to validate knowledge (see Lincoln & Guba 2005). Some researchers have formulated theoretical foundations and criteria for the validity of action research. For instance, Heinz Moser (see Swantz 2008) suggests three criteria: transparency of the entire process, compatibility of the aims with the research methods and the expertise of the researcher, who should be more familiar with the research context than any outside observer might be.

These criteria are further elaborated by Julie Ozanne and Laurel Anderson (2010, 134–135). According to these researchers, the value of action research studies in marketing is guaranteed by five criteria: outcome validity (the extent to which the research problem was resolved), democratic validity (the extent to which the research participants participated in the research process), process validity (the extent to which time and opportunity existed for learning), catalytic validity (the extent to which people were encouraged to continue the work) and dialogical validity (the extent to which the research process facilitated two-way communication with the research participants). Action researchers seem to thus reject the positivists' assumption of the research participant as an object and the interpretivists' assumption of the research participant as a subject (see Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008, 425). Action researchers instead view research participants as “co-researchers” or “collaborators”. This view of research participants is based on the assumption that people who participate in and are committed to the research process are able to develop both new skills and ca-

pacities, translate research findings into practice and generate positive social change, as described by Peter Reason and Hillary Bradbury (2008).

It is the particular position of the action researcher combined with the active engagement of the research participants that contributes to the validity and authenticity of action research studies (Gergen & Gergen 2008). These practices, interactions and social contexts become the validating elements in action research and thus in the creation of knowledge about sustainability (see Longino 2002; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008; Swantz 2008). Therefore, the validity and quality of action research is strongly related to both the plurality of knowing and a deep understanding of value and purpose (Reason & Bradbury 2008). This idea has been confirmed in marketing and management by a host of scholars who argue that researchers not only discover facts, theories and representations but also play an active role in constructing them (e.g., Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Heiskanen 2005; Katila & Meriläinen 2006; Moisander 2001; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Schultz & Hatch 2005). Within the field of sustainable marketing, action research allows alternative voices to be heard and enables movement across borders between meanings, discourses and moral orientations in the pursuit of a more sustainable society (see Gergen & Gergen 2008, 168). Next, I discuss the similarities of and differences between the three main approaches to action research found in the literature.

Drawing upon the three knowledge-constitutive interests – the technical, practical and emancipatory – described by Jürgen Habermas (1972), action researchers have identified three main approaches to action research: the technical, practical and critical (e.g., Grundy 1982; Holter & Schwartz-Barcott 1993; Masters 2000). In the first approach (i.e., technical), the researcher begins the action research process with a clear notion of the problem and a predefined intervention that should improve the situation or solve the problem (see Holter & Schwartz-Barcott 1993). In this sense, practitioners are highly dependent on the researcher as both a facilitator and source of expertise who tells them how to improve their practices (see Reason & Bradbury 2008; Zuber-Skerritt 1996). The primary interest of the researcher, however, lies in increasing the effectiveness of the practices and developing the research literature (Carr & Kemmis 1986). As a result, the interactive and collaborative process becomes a means of gaining support from practitioners during the implementation of the action research project. This form of action research, which is based on positivist assumptions, was common among early action research advocates (Masters 2000; McCutcheon & Jung 1990). The main purpose of the technical approach as a whole is to discover laws underlying a reality viewed as single and measurable (Masters 2000).

In the second approach (i.e., practical), practitioners are included in decision-making throughout all phases of the action research process. They identify the problem and proceed to detail the causes and possible interventions with the action researcher (see Holter & Schwartz-Barcott 1993). This entire process occurs through a cooperative relationship based on continual dialogue and social interactions. Whereas the criteria used to judge the technical approach is usually imported into the process by the action researcher, the practical approach treats criteria as being open to development through self-reflection (Carr & Kemmis 1986). The practical deliberation and reflective communication between the

researcher and co-researchers/collaborators contribute to developing an understanding on the situation being studied. According to Grundy (1982), the practical approach seeks to improve practices using the personal wisdom of the participants. While the action researcher facilitates the process of change and understanding, the co-researchers/collaborators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to solve the problem and improve the given situation. The action researcher's role as a facilitator seems to be Socratic, as s/he becomes a sounding-board against which co-researchers/collaborators may try out ideas and learn more about self-reflection (Carr & Kemmis 1986). This form of action research is associated with the interpretivist and constructivist perspectives because it encourages participants to make sense of their respective social worlds by reflecting on the elements they take for granted (see Masters 2000). Some key constructionist traits, such as the view of knowledge as being both historically and culturally specific and sustained by social practices as well as the critical stance towards knowledge and understanding that is taken for granted, have contributed to developing this approach further into the critical approach (see Gergen & Gergen 2008).

The third approach (i.e., critical) goes beyond practical improvements and improved participant understanding to challenge any conditions that are taken for granted and either contradictory or irrational and that thus hinder the desired systemic or organisational improvements (Zuber-Skerritt 1996). The action researcher questions the underlying premises and values of powerful social discourses and thus encourages the co-researchers/collaborators to envision new social arrangements by critically reflecting on their basic assumptions (e.g., habits, customs, daily routines and attitudes) and the unwritten laws that govern their lives (see Carr & Kemmis 1986; Holter & Schwartz-Barcott 1993; Peñalosa 2006). In this sense, the critical approach is a type of emancipatory process aimed at redressing imbalances of power and restoring to ordinary people the capacity for self-reliance and the ability to self-manage their lives (Reason & Bradbury 2008). Hence, both the action researcher and all of the co-researchers/collaborators take full responsibility for the so-called Socratic role of assisting the group in its collaborative reflective (Carr & Kemmis 1986) and reflexive (Reid & Frisby 2008, 100) processes. As its name indicates, the critical approach connects critical theory and the assumptions of social reality as historically constructed (see Foley & Valenzuela 2005; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Nielsen & Svensson 2006). Like critical theorists, action researchers who take a critical approach assume that people have the potential for agency but may be unaware of the interested nature of social practices hidden in powerful social discourses (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008; Reid & Frisby 2008).

As we can see, action research is not exclusively confined to the field of qualitative or critical research. On the contrary, this methodological approach seems to be very flexible and receptive to any kind of technique and research tradition including both quantitative approaches and positivism (Masters 2000). Indeed, the underlying epistemological assumptions and world views of the action researcher and co-researchers/collaborators determine the way action research studies are designed and conducted. For example, this study is consistent with the ethnographic approach to action research (e.g., Hartmann, Fischer & Haymaker 2009; Tacchi, Slater & Hearn 2003), which is one of the many varieties

of action research discussed in the literature. I use the ethnographic approach to guide, observe, interpret and reflect the action research process (see Arnould & Wallendorf 1994). However, the characteristics of the collaboration between researcher and practitioner, the resolution of practical problems, the change in practices and the development of theory remain central to all three action research approaches discussed above, despite the differences in their various forms (Masters 2000; Reason & Bradbury 2008).

In summary, all forms of action research help to confront the traditional conceptualisation of human beings and nature that is evident in the production and use of knowledge about sustainability, which in turn reproduces the view of managers and scientists as knowing agents, thus excluding other knowers and alternative ways of knowing nature and human relations from a scientific domain (see Gergen & Gergen 2008; Meriläinen et al. 2000). As such, action research represents an opportunity to expand the scope of sustainability beyond simply prescribing actions for managing both nature and stakeholders in the pursuit of business efficiency, instead critically examining our assumptions about nature and society. In examining these assumptions, action research helps us to uncover our limitations and possibilities, to become less prone to complacency in our thoughts and actions and to explore alternative ways of managing and organising (see Cunliffe 2004; Gergen 2009).

3 ACTION RESEARCH STUDIES: CASES, CONTEXTS AND RESEARCHER'S ROLES

The purpose of this chapter is to present two action research studies that were used to develop and illustrate the framework suggested in this doctoral dissertation. I begin with the business development action research study and continue with the pedagogical development study. Using the same pattern of discussion, I begin with a description of the empirical case and then elaborate the context of the study while drawing particular attention to existing gaps in theory and practice. Both action research studies were supported and implemented by the University of Lapland. As a Nordic institution of higher education, the University of Lapland has shown particular commitment to promoting sustainable development, well-being and equality within the Finnish Province of Lapland and the Arctic region in general. This commitment is officially reflected in the university's strategy and vision for the year 2020. Containing 3.5 per cent of Finland's total population and approximately 30 per cent of the total area of Finland, Lapland is the least densely populated region in Finland by far, and it is highly dependent on the income of rural industries. Finally, in the last section I detail my position as a researcher and the roles of both business developer and educator that I assumed throughout the research process. While the business development study is discussed in Articles C and D, I describe the pedagogical development study in Article E.

3.1 SMALL ENTERPRISES WORKING TOWARD SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The first action research study is based on a cooperative service development process involving a small group of entrepreneurs that was implemented between 2006 and 2007. The study was conducted over a period of 14 months, representing two action research cycles. The group was formed in May 2006 as a small pilot-project designed for the "Equality Trail", a project co-funded through the Equal Community Initiative run by the Ministry of Labour and co-ordinated by the University of Lapland Regional Development and Innovation Services (see Ahola, Alho, Heikkilä, Kallioniemi & Merenheimo 2008, 138–139). Whereas Equality Trail's general objective was to consolidate women's leadership and entrepreneurship, this particular case focussed on identifying suitable ways to support product development amongst female enterprises situated in or near rural areas.

The pilot project was joined by eight craft microenterprises operating in different service areas, including catering, hospitality, pottery, natural health care, tours, gastronomy, photography and interior decorating. Despite the variety of services offered by members of this network, the members share a common interest in positioning their services in

the tourism sector. Moreover, the network consisted of firms engaged in a form of “silent sustainability” (Jenkins 2004; Perrini, Pogutz & Tencati 2006): that is, they were already implementing environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices without thinking of them in those terms. As such, one of the main objectives of this study became helping these entrepreneurs learn how to highlight these silent sustainable practices in their products and services. Some of the entrepreneurs operated in the same localities, while others were more geographically dispersed. The entrepreneurs participating in the project were between the ages of 35 and 65 and employed one to six people, depending on the season. In addition to these entrepreneurs, the action research study included project staff members, researchers and the direct participation of customers and regional authorities. Rather than emphasising the success of the network participating in the action research study, my intention is to use this case to illustrate how the framework helped these entrepreneurs to develop new capacities and a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability.

Using various data collection methods and analysing the data as social text, the business development study aimed to determine how the framework constructed in this study could be used by both researchers and practitioners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability and how this understanding could, in turn, be applied to practitioners’ daily activities. Answering this question required expanding the perception of individual stakeholders to view the data as social texts that are produced, shared and used in a particular socio-cultural context (Moisander & Valtonen 2006b, 68). Methods including convergent interviews, participant and non-participant observations, focus groups, narratives and documentary materials proved suitable for this purpose. The convergent interview method helped us to closely examine and represent sustainability as it was understood by this small group of entrepreneurs (see Dick 1990). Convergent interviews contributed not only to making the relationship between the businesses of the entrepreneurs and sustainability more explicit but also to establishing a point of reference for assessing any advancements made by the group during the study. The participant observations of meetings and workshops held by the entrepreneurs and the non-participant observations of the service encounters between entrepreneurs and their customers were crucial in determining the way the entrepreneurs act, talk and relate to one another and to the other stakeholders in the marketplace. By combining the interviews and observations, we were able to scrutinise what research participants said they did and actually did with respect to sustainability.

With a similar objective in mind, customers were invited to join focus groups, where they were confronted with images of actions related to the services provided by the companies involved in the study. In line with Deborah Heisley and Sidney Levy (1991, 269), the use of images – the photo-elicitation technique – in these focus groups encouraged participants to provide a perspective of sustainable action, explain what lay behind the pictures and relate how the frozen moment related to sustainability as they saw it. Additionally, the narratives (Polkinghorne 1995) written by vocational tourism students and documentary materials (brochures, newspaper articles and websites) were collected and used to gain insight into both local and political perceptions regarding sustainability in

relation to tourism. These different methods and the comparison of data from the different phases and temporal points of the action research study provided access to multiple stakeholder perspectives and different ways to understand sustainability (Phillips & Jorgensen 2002). Feeding these empirical findings into the action research process helped engage the entrepreneurs in a process of continual negotiation and redefinition of their daily practices and actions. Finally, a discourse analysis was used to circumscribe the different meanings and ways of understanding sustainability. The identification and illustration of the moral discourses helped to represent sustainability as being discursively produced through dynamic, multi-stakeholder relations. Appendix 2 offers an overview of the procedure of the business development study and the timing of the different methods used during the study.

Because this empirical case emphasised three major themes – programmes and projects, small service firms and tourism product development – related to the promotion of sustainability, it seems pertinent to discuss these topics and their relationships with one another briefly in this section. First, I discuss the role that grant programmes, projects and consultancy services have assumed in changing processes toward sustainability. Second, I draw attention to the role of small service firms in the sustainability discussion. Third, I conceptualise product development in tourist studies and the sustainable marketing literature, along with its implications for facilitating the implementation of sustainability in the small business sector in general and tourism in particular.

3.1.1 Programmes and projects for sustainable business development

The Rio Earth Summit played an important role in establishing sustainability as a guiding principle for development at the regional, national and global levels. Since Rio, government and business leaders have been actively involved in implementing sustainability initiatives intended for environmentally and socially responsible economic development. A good example of these initiatives is the World Business Council for Sustainable development, which was founded after the Rio Earth Summit and comprises some of the globe's leading corporations. At the same time, organisations such as the Global Report Initiative (GRI) and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) were either created or began offering consultancy services and management tools to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability. The work of these initiatives and organisations was further stimulated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002. Around the same time, the European Commission (2001) published the so called "Green Paper", which represented a political commitment to promoting sustainable business development within the European Union (EU). The Green Paper was among the first political documents to draw attention to the role of the small business sector in sustainable development.

Since the publication of the green paper, the European Commission has launched several grant programmes to promote the implementation of sustainable business practices among European small enterprises. These programmes, which are based on the action and development plan agreed upon in the Lisbon process and Gothenburg strategy for sustainable development, seek to make small companies more competitive by developing a

sustainable business strategy (Voudouri & Chaniotou 2007, 6). As such, these programmes have mainly provided insight into the relationship between sustainability and the financial performance of small enterprises (e.g., Kramer, Pfitzer & Lee 2005; Mandl & Dorr 2007). Therefore, the majority of projects implemented under these programmes have made significant efforts to first gather best practices to help small enterprises realise the economic benefits they gain from a sustainable business approach (e.g., Ashridge Centre for Business and Society 2005; Hilton & Smith 2001) and then to develop suitable training and tools to facilitate the practical implementation of sustainability (e.g., Kramer et al. 2005, 40–41; Voudouri & Chaniotou 2007). While these programmes and projects seem to acknowledge the complexities of sustainability and thus the need for project and consultancy services to consider the specific context within which small enterprises operate, they tend to assume that progress towards sustainability primarily relies on the transfer of knowledge from experts, such as scientists and business consultants, to small firms.

There have been some attempts to stimulate sustainable business development by relying on the expertise found within companies and their key stakeholders. While these programmes or projects recognise the relevance of everyday life knowledge for initiating and supporting process changes within firms wishing to integrate sustainability into their operations, they tend to focus on either large firms (e.g., Cramer 2005; Forsman-Hugg, Katajajuri, Paananen, Pesonen, Järvelä & Mäkelä 2009) or individual stakeholder groups, such as customers (Heiskanen, Hyvönen, Niva, Pantzar, Timonen & Varjonen 2007; Heiskanen, Kasanen & Timonen 2005; Hoffmann 2007; IDEO 2009), employees (e.g., Nielsen 2005) or nongovernmental organisations (e.g., Kourula & Halme 2008). Despite the emergence of a bottom-up approach to implementing sustainability initiatives, the European project apparatus has, in my view, failed to maximise the potential of quotidian practices and lay knowledge in progressing towards a more sustainable society. Currently, the development programmes and projects relating to sustainability place considerable emphasis on technology and expert knowledge and thus neglect the socio-cultural context of sustainability.

3.1.2 The role of small service businesses in society

As suggested in the previous section, the gap between the theoretical conceptualisation of sustainability and business practices becomes further exacerbated amongst small firms, especially those operating in the service sector (see Mandl & Dorr 2007; van der Zwan & Bhamra 2003). There is little information and knowledge about how business–society relations are shaped within such a business context. However, these firms are too relevant to society to be neglected. In fact, they are viewed as the backbone of national economies and as key to the entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, increased productivity and job creation; thus, they are crucial to ensuring national competitiveness (Bosma, Jones, Autio & Levie 2008; Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation 2006).

A brief review of the industrial statistics for Western countries clearly indicates that small firms account for more than 95 per cent of all businesses and approximately 50 per cent of private sector employment in those economies and particularly within service industries such as trade, hotels, restaurants and personal services (European Commission

2004; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005a; 2005b). These findings suggest that small service firms are the primary source of employment and economic growth and also reveal the butterfly effect the actions of these companies can have on both society and the natural environment. In effect, improvements that promote the sustained economic vitality of small service firms can advance the environmental quality and well-being of society. In this sense, small service firms represent open systems that are embedded within and that are in continuous interaction with the environment and society in which they operate; they are not isolated business units (see Håkansson & Snehota 2006; Jack & Anderson 2002; Spence, Schmidpeter & Habisch 2003).

In particular, small service firms operating in rural areas have been recognised as an integral part of the local economy and as a major source of employment; in this respect, they are a main determinant of rural economic development (Meccheri & Pelloni 2006). In Finland, where a third of the population lives in rural areas, the income of rural industries is very important to the national economy (see Niemi & Ahlstedt 2004). This income is even more relevant to the Finnish Province of Lapland, especially now, because the vitality of Lapland's rural economy greatly depends on small enterprises specialising in handicrafts, hospitality, restaurants and other services related directly or indirectly to the tourism sector (see Regional Council of Lapland 2007; Valkonen 2011). In addition, more than half of these enterprises are led by female entrepreneurs (Merenheimo 2006). Therefore, the success of small, female-run tourism enterprises not only adds value to the local economy but also improves the quality of life for the society living in this Finnish province.

As discussed earlier, there is a growing interest in promoting sustainable business practices among small enterprises. Unfortunately, the outcome of sustainability research conducted to date for large businesses cannot be directly applied to a small business context (Jenkins 2004; Spence & Rutherford 2003; Thompson & Smith 1991). Indeed, the key characteristics found amongst small businesses, such as being owner-managed and having a multi-tasking approach, limited cash-flow, personal relationships, mistrust of bureaucracy and reliance on informal control mechanisms, show that small firms differ from large companies both in size and nature (Lähdesmäki 2005; Spence 1999). While most of the key characteristics found amongst small companies are shared across the small business sector in general, tourism enterprises display a range of additional specific features (Ateljevic 2007). For instance, small tourism enterprises are lifestyle oriented, meaning that they are based on intense, direct interactions with their customers and are situated between culture and economy (Valkonen & Veijola 2008; Valtonen 2009). As Anu Valtonen (2009, 132) argues, amongst small tourism enterprises, the home might also be the workplace, and much of the knowledge leveraged at work – such as local knowledge – might be acquired simply by living and spending time in that area.

Consequently, there is a need for research that not only explores the dynamics of business–society relations within a small business context but that also actively engages small enterprises in developing and deploying the practices and capabilities needed to build dynamic and proactive sustainable business strategies (García-Rosell 2009; Perrini, Russo & Tencati 2007; Spence & Lozano 2000; Taipalinen & Toivio 2004). In particular, closely co-

operating with other small businesses and sharing practical knowledge have been identified as crucial to improving the ability of small businesses to address social and environmental concerns (Halme 2001; Halme & Fadeeva 2000; Spence & Schmidpeter 2003; Spence et al. 2003). The tourism sector, in particular, offers the opportunity to study small enterprises as economic and cultural actors embedded within the context of business imperatives and complex socio-cultural relationships, both of which shape our knowledge about sustainability (see Valtonen 2009, 134).

3.1.3 Tourism product development

Throughout much of the recent discussions on sustainable marketing, product development activities have been identified as suitable for incorporating both social and environmental goals and thus promoting more sustainable lifestyles (e.g., United Nations Environment Programme, UN Global Compact & Utopies 2005). After all, decisions made in product development have important consequences for the specific ways that goods and services are produced and distributed within a market and thus on the resources used and waste generated during production and consumption (Fuller 1999). Moreover, it has been argued that product development is crucial in helping the firm to implement its sustainability values and thus to communicate its commitment to social and environmental objectives to its customers, employees, supply networks and other stakeholders (Polonsky & Ottman 1998). With regard to the debate on sustainability, terms such as “ecodesign”, “design for the environment”, “lifecycle design”, “sustainable product development” and “sustainable product design” are used to describe a form of product development that considers both the social and environmental aspects of the development process of goods and services (see Byggeth & Hochschorner 2005; Fuller & Ottman 2004; Roy 2000).

Although there has been a growing interest in sustainability research, the majority of studies have, as mentioned above, focussed on large businesses and neglected the role of small firms in developing sustainable marketing offerings and thus in promoting more sustainable business practices (Jenkins 2004; Lähdesmäki 2005; Murillo & Lozano 2006; Spence & Lozano 2000; Perrini et al. 2007; Taipalinen & Toivio 2004). Hence, product development, which has been inspired by modern marketing and management, has not been the exception to the rule. In effect, most product development studies that address sustainability have emphasised the perspective of large manufacturing enterprises and neglected the relevance of the service sector to the sustainability discussion (van der Zwan & Bhamra 2003). The development of sustainable products and services is thus conceived as a series of rational actions, with environmental objectives viewed in terms of technical requirements (e.g., reduction of industrial emissions, water and energy efficiency and recycling practices) that must be met to create value for socially and environmentally concerned consumers (see Korhonen 2003). This trend is not surprising if we consider the prevailing tendency to think of service development using traditional approaches in the product development domain (Syson & Perks 2004).

Little attention has been paid to the relationship between sustainability and the service sector, and further study of sustainable product development from a service perspective is needed. In fact, the socio-cultural aspects of consumption and production – rather than

technology and management systems – determine whether a service can be developed in a more sustainable way (see Heiskanen & Pantzar 1997; Heiskanen et al. 2005; IDEO 2009; Jalas 2006; Schaefer & Crane 2005). Following this observation, it seems more relevant to delve into the process of (re)developing environmentally friendly and socially responsible services rather than merely looking into the driving forces behind and outcomes of a particular process. As the recent discussion on service logic suggests (e.g., Grönroos 2006; Peñalosa & Venkatesh 2006; Vargo & Lusch 2004), the analytical focus in marketing is shifting from output towards information, knowledge, interactions and relationships and, thus, towards the idea of a coproductive view on marketplace meanings and value creation. This paradigm shift has generated a stream of literature on the role of users and other stakeholders – and their knowledge – in developing more sustainable products (e.g., Heiskanen & Jalas 2011; Heiskanen et al. 2005, 2007; Hoffmann 2007). In accordance with these advancements in the marketing worldview, product development in the service sector has become a dynamic and continuous endeavour in which services are constantly (re)created by the various parties who participate in production and consumption. Considering the service-centred dominant logic of marketing (Vargo & Lusch 2004), which states that all marketing offerings are services or involved in the process of service provision, I use the terms “product development” and “service development” interchangeably throughout this study.

3.2 LEARNING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY IN A BUSINESS SCHOOL CONTEXT

The second action research study, which is part of the empirical portion of this dissertation, was based on a small educational project implemented at the Faculty of Tourism and Business – now merged with the Faculty of Social Sciences – at the University of Lapland. The primary purpose of this project was to use PBL as a pedagogical method to promote sustainability learning amongst Masters-level business students. This study, which drew upon first-person action research, was conducted from 2007–2010, thereby representing eight action research cycles. Two Masters-level courses were studied, one focussing on Business Ethics and the other on Environmental Marketing. According to Reason and Bradbury (2008, 6), first-person action research refers to a research practice that brings inquiry into our actions across a whole range of everyday activities. Thus, first-action research provides a foundational practice through which we can monitor our doings and sayings, their impact on our research and vice versa (Marshall & Mead 2005).

Before the action research study, both Masters-level courses were taught using conventional pedagogical methods, such as lectures and case studies. On average, 15 to 20 students from different business fields (e.g., management, marketing, human resource management, tourism and accounting) and nationalities (European and non-European) attended each course. The age of the students ranged from 23 to 35, and both genders were equally represented. In total, over 115 students participated in the action research study. Despite the diversity of the students’ background, they all displayed the same interest in learning about sustainability and techniques to build sustainable business strategies. Both Masters-level courses were “non-obligatory” in the curriculum.

I again relied on multiple data collection methods to determine how educators could use the framework developed in this study to create a learning space for students to develop the critical thinking capacity needed to transform existing business practices and to understand the way they relate to others in the market. A variety of research methods were used to access various learning situations where students grappled with the meaning of sustainability and also to evaluate their development as critical reflexive thinkers throughout each course. While participant observations played a crucial role in recording the sayings, doings and feelings of the students in class and on the course web platform, student narratives in the form of learning journals and wiki reports were also essential for exploring how students engaged in their own learning and critical reflexive praxis. These narratives provide insights, consistent with Cunliffe (2004), into how students think about themselves from a subjective perspective and how they go through a process of challenging their assumptions about the role of business in society. These students' narratives show not only how sensitive issues, such as unlimited growth, the amoral nature of business and profit maximisation, are critically addressed but also how their scrutiny triggered thoughts on alternatives ways of being and acting as a manager.

Surveys were used to gather additional feedback and to assess students' response to the courses' pedagogical approach. By reviewing these data, I was also able to engage in a reflexive process to question my own perception of sustainability, my assumptions about sustainability learning, my teaching practices, the way I build relationships with students and my own position as a researcher (see Hammersley & Atkinson 1996, 192). As in the business development study, the data were analysed as social texts produced, shared and used within a classroom environment (see Moisander & Valtonen 2006b, 68). The study used discourse analysis to draw attention to the role of language and the prevailing social discourses in reproducing or deconstructing a certain way of thinking, valuing and acting in the market. The data collected and analysed during this study played a critical role in shaping the ontological and epistemological premises of the proposed methodological and theoretical framework. Appendix 3 provides an overview of the process used in the pedagogical development study and the timing of the different methods used during the study.

Similar to the first empirical study, this study leans on three major themes – sustainability education, PBL and critical reflexivity – related to the promotion of sustainability learning within business schools. In this section, I will elaborate on these three themes and their relationship to one another. First, I focus on the integration of sustainability into the business school curriculum and the on-going discussion on the role of business education in promoting change towards sustainability. Second, I offer a brief introduction of PBL and reflect on how PBL can help students develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability. Third, I draw attention to critical reflexivity as a way to critically evaluate the status quo of a business and thus work towards more sustainable ways of managing and organising.

3.2.1 Education for Sustainability

Since the publication of the Brundtland report in 1987, there has been growing concern with providing content on sustainability in the business curriculum (Roome 2005; Shrivastava

1994). In fact, the sustainability imperative challenged business organisations to acquire and develop suitable organisational skills and capabilities. This fact raises the question, as Dirk Matten and Jeremy Moon (2004, 324) note, of the role played by business schools in providing students with the sustainability skills and research needed to advance the knowledge of sustainable business development. The study by Matten and Moon (2004) on the state of corporate social responsibility education in Europe shows that most European business schools seem to have taken this role seriously. The business schools are actively responding to the sustainability challenge by offering sustainability content on many levels – through courses, programmes and even entire curricula (Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman & Carrier 2007; Kearins & Springett 2003; Matten & Moon 2004; Roome 2005). Business schools and educators have understood that the most effective way to infuse a sustainability mind-set in day-to-day business is through educating the next generation of managers (Banerjee 2004, 39; Matten & Moon 2004, 329).

The acknowledged need for sustainability training has led to another topic of discussion: namely, how to teach sustainability in the classroom. After all, sustainability teaching is regarded as particularly challenging because of its abstractness, ambiguity and complexity (Collins & Kearins 2007; Loe & Ferrell 2001). In this regard, there has been an extensive stream of literature on experiential learning methods for instructing students to cope with social, environmental and ethical issues within a business context (e.g., Galea 2008; McWilliams & Nahavandi 2006). The main argument put forth in this literature is that, to successfully internalise, understand and apply sustainability knowledge, students should have the opportunity to connect theory with their particular realities by becoming actively involved in the process of dealing with environmental, social and ethical issues. Experiential learning methods, including case studies, games, simulations, field trips, Socratic dialogues and role-playing, are thus proposed to be suitable for helping students make decisions that consider and integrate the notion of sustainability.

While studies on experiential learning offer valuable educational techniques to facilitate sustainability learning, they tend to be managerially and technically orientated. By emphasising the managerial decision making, skills, competencies and techniques that can be employed to aid practitioners deal with environmental and social issues, such studies fail to locate sustainability within the wider social context shaped by a multiplicity of different and contradictory discourses (see Banerjee 2007; Catterall et al. 2002, 186–187). In accordance with critical studies on business education, I suggest that sustainability education should prepare students to cope with the dynamics and complexities of sustainability by encouraging them to develop the learning capability to question the underlying assumptions of business and thus develop new ways of thinking and acting that are fundamentally different from those embedded in present-day organisational routines (e.g., Banerjee 2004; Catterall et al. 2002; Cunliffe 2004; Kearins & Springett 2003; Shrivastava & Hart 1995). Such learning capabilities are of special importance for marketing professionals addressing issues of sustainability. As Miriam Catterall, Pauline Maclaran and Lorna Stevens (2002, 186) highlight, marketers are expected, more than other organisational managers, to make sense of the world outside the organisation by observing the market and its complex webbing of multi-stakeholder relationships.

3.2.2 *PBL and sustainability*

Since its initial introduction to medical education in the late 1960s, PBL has, in its many variations, spread to other fields of education, such as nursing, social sciences, architecture, arts, engineering and even business (Boud & Feletti 1997; Major & Palmer 2001; Smith 2005). The use of a problem as a starting point for learning is the main characteristic of PBL (Coombs & Elden 2004; Savery 2006). In PBL, the term “problem” refers to the idea of a research problem: namely, the description of a situation at a certain moment involving an option for development or improvement (Margetson 1994). PBL processes are usually organised around a “vignette” that describes the situation in an ill-defined form. The vignette, which can range from a paragraph, graphic or video clip to a 20-page case study (Hardless, Nilsson & Nuldén 2005, 186), represents the learning trigger. Appendix 1 offers an overview of some of the vignettes developed and used in this dissertation.

Closely related pedagogical methods, such as project-based learning (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial & Palincsar 1991) and case studies (Christensen & Hansen 1987), use a similar strategy to promote active learning and to engage students in critical thinking. While these methods use a difficult situation as a learning trigger and are organised around achieving a shared goal, they tend to diminish the students’ role in setting the learning parameters and outcomes of their work, which are essential features of PBL (Savery 2006). In project-based learning, as in case studies, the instructor still defines what is to be learned and how. This feature recreates Freire’s (1998, 30) idea of subject-object relations, where the teacher plays the role of an active, knowledgeable subject who informs the learner, a passive object denied agency and self-determination. PBL challenges this particular dichotomy by allowing the students to choose what they learn. Whether PBL is viewed as a teaching technique or educational philosophy depends on how it is employed within the educational context (Poikela & Poikela 2006). While the most common approach has been to convert courses and even entire curricula to a purely PBL format (Wee, Alexandria, Kek & Kelly 2003), some educators have used PBL in combination with more conventional methods, such as formal lectures, seminars and in-class exercises (Smith 2005). Peter Kahn and Karen O’Rourke (2005, 4) refer to the latter PBL approaches as “hybrid PBL”.

Interest in PBL has recently grown among business educators. For instance, the “Journal of Management Education” published a special issue dedicated to PBL and its implementation in business education in 2004 (Coombs & Elden 2004). It can be deduced from the publications in this special issue that the sudden interest in PBL is a direct consequence of criticisms arguing that business education is too rigorous, analytical and irrelevant. Indeed, PBL has been seen as an opportunity to not only sensitise students to the realities of business life but also to develop their teamwork, problem-solving and leadership skills. Rather than merely helping students acquire theoretical business concepts, PBL aims to help them develop the skills necessary to adapt to a rapidly changing business environment (Wee et al. 2003). Several business schools around the world have been attracted to the promising benefits of PBL and have adopted it into their curricula (Alanko-Turunen 2005; Wee et al. 2003). While PBL has been widely discussed in relation to management and mar-

keting education, its potential as an instructional method for training business students on sustainability issues has been neglected.

There are reasons to believe that PBL can be used to help students gain a better understanding of sustainability and the complexity that such a notion entails. This pedagogical method can provide organisations with critical thinkers who are skilled in addressing ethical dilemmas and building sound relationships with key stakeholders. While this benefit may portray PBL as a clear response to the demands of a growing labour market for experts on sustainability issues, PBL also represents an opportunity to transform contemporary business practices. In line with Merja Alanko-Turunen (2005), I see the potential of PBL to create a multi-stakeholder site where students and educators not only socially construct sustainability knowledge but also explore new ways to represent business-society relations by engaging in critically reflexive and discursive practices. From this perspective, PBL responds to the call for business education to challenge the status quo, where both decision making and actions are grounded on the premises of the managerial discourse (Banerjee 2007; Cunliffe 2004; Kallio 2007; Skålen et al. 2008).

3.2.3 The role of critical reflexivity in sustainability learning

Reflection has become a key concept in the learning theories that inform management and marketing education (Catterall et al. 2002). As educators, we are supposed to create learning environments that encourage and support reflective learning (Graeff 1997). Reflection refers to thinking more critically about the learned content, learning process and personal experiences to gain deeper understanding of these so-called realities of a subject area (Eyler, Giles & Schmiede 1996; Hall & Davison 2007). The work of David Kolb (1984) and Donald Schön (1983) has been instrumental not only in drawing attention to the value of reflective practices in experiential learning but also in sustainability education and the use of PBL (Alanko-Turunen 2005; Miller 2004). Many studies have indicated that sustainability teaching should rely upon authentic contexts, personal experiences, guided reflection and feedback (Gayford 2001; McWilliams & Nahavandi 2006; Roome 2005). There is a strong belief that students must live and experience sustainability rather than simply acquire knowledge about it. However, this perspective has been criticised for its emphasis on the role of the individual as the site for experience and reflection, which neglects the social, political and cultural aspects of learning (Miettinen 2000; Ramsey 2005). Reflection as described above fails to address the central question of how to help business students rethink their world-views and to offer sustainability education as a means of opening new avenues for developing more sustainable and ethical ways of managing organisations (cf. Chia 1996a, 410).

We must consider that business schools have been an important source and key conduit of the managerial discourse that serves to produce not only knowledge but also a certain type of person deemed to be suitable for managerial work and enculturated with managerial values (Grey 2002, 499). Understood in this light, it becomes evident why sustainability teaching – as occurs in business schools – may lead to planetary sustainability being turned into corporate sustainability, and thus, the socially responsible courses of

action are only considered to be relevant when they meet the profit-maximising premise (Banerjee 2004, 2007, 144; Desjardins 1998). Research has shown how social and environmental concerns are colonised by managerial and organisational procedures (see Banerjee 2004, 37; Parker 2002, 93). For example, ecological modernisation, environmental management systems and reporting practices are examples of the managerialisation of the environmental and social aspects of sustainability (see Dryzek 1997).

Managerial language places a central emphasis upon sustainable practice as a way to promote the efficiency, profitability and competitiveness of business organisations. While this approach to sustainability may promote discussion about the social responsibility of business practices, it may also reinforce the hegemonic position of the managerial discourse without challenging the status quo (see Burchell & Cook 2006). By framing and representing sustainability within the axioms of managerialism, sustainability educators may be consciously or unconsciously silencing those sensitive issues (e.g., continuous growth, the political nature of sustainability and the amoral nature of business) that are seen as threats to the legitimacy of the managerial discourse in the classrooms of most business schools (see Banerjee 2004; Kallio 2007). However, if sustainability education begins by problematising and articulating a critique of contemporary managerial practices, as critical management scholars suggest (e.g., Banerjee 2004; Jones 2003; Kearins & Springett 2003), then there will be a need to do the opposite: namely, to question, deconstruct and reconstruct managerialism through the criteria of social and environmental responsibility. To that end, sustainability must be understood as a discourse in its own right that is shaped by multi-stakeholder processes beyond the realm of the business community.

Several scholars have thus drawn attention to the notion of critical reflexivity in business education (e.g., Chia 1996b; Cunliffe 2002, 2004; Ramsey 2005), and sustainability education, in particular (Kearins & Springett 2003), as an alternative to reflection. Whereas reflection promotes understanding of the realities of a subject area, critical reflexivity encourages students to challenge those realities and the basic assumptions, discourses and practices that shape them (Catterall et al. 2002; Pollner 1991, 370). Critical reflexivity, as Cunliffe (2004, 408) notes, allows business students to examine their assumption that there is only one rational way of managing, in which decisions and actions are justified solely based on efficiency and profit. This critical reflexivity is vitally important if we consider, as suggested earlier, that sustainability requires new modes of decision making and action completely different from the status quo (e.g., Banerjee 2007; Fougère & Solitander 2009; Kearins & Springett 2003; Skálén et al. 2008, 3). Even if reflective learning promotes awareness of ecological degradation, social inequality and unethical behaviour, the hegemonic power of the managerial discourse ensures the status quo and the legitimacy of contemporary business practices remains unchallenged (see cf. Ramsey 2005). Hence, critical reflexivity becomes a way to cross the boundaries of the managerial discourse and thus question premises (e.g., continuous economic growth, profit maximisation, efficiency and competitiveness), which are usually considered paramount in the sustainability training offered by institutions of business education (cf. Kallio 2007).

3.3 MY ROLE AS AN ACTION RESEARCHER

Explaining my role as an action researcher requires discussing the business developer and educator roles I also assumed at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Lapland during my PhD studies. It is by examining these two roles that I will be able to (1) position myself as an action researcher, (2) explain my personal motivations behind this study and (3) elaborate upon the ontological and epistemological premises that were defined, challenged and redefined throughout the inquiry process. My self-positioning within this research will also contribute to a better understanding of the positions assumed by research participants in terms of co-researchers or research collaborators.

The theoretical and methodological framework I introduce in this dissertation evolved out of my personal engagement and intensive collaboration with research participants within the two action research studies. On the one hand, there is the participative action research study of business practitioners who formed a network within the scope of an EU-funded business development project. On the other hand, there is the first-person action research study, which occurred within a pedagogical development project and involved Masters-level business students. Although these two studies were conducted independently, they were complementary. The construction of the framework began with the first action research cycle of the business development project and concluded on the last cycle of the pedagogical development project. In summary, my dissertation and the framework suggested here are the results of 10 action research cycles between the years 2006 and 2010. Next, I discuss both studies informed by the action research approaches (see section 2.4) guiding the inquiry process and the community action research stages suggested by Ozanne and Anderson (2010, 125). While the research process of the business development study is illustrated in Appendix 2, Appendix 3 offers a description of the research process that took place in the pedagogical development study.

3.3.1 Technical approach: Identifying needs and developing partnerships

The business development action research study was conceived at the Regional Development and Innovation Services unit of the University of Lapland and implemented in the Finnish province of Lapland from 2006 to 2007 (see section 3.1). As a PhD student, I was invited to participate in “Equality Trail”, an EU-funded project aimed at supporting gender equality by promoting women’s leadership and entrepreneurial skills. My role in the project was primarily to design, implement and facilitate an action research study involving a group of female entrepreneurs interested in sustainable product development. After several meetings and conversations with the project management team, it was decided that the action research study should focus on helping this group of entrepreneurs acquire sustainability knowledge so that they could apply this knowledge to the development of profitable and marketable tourism products. While the action research approach adopted in the study aimed to avoid a “top down” prescriptive attitude, the action research process started as a predefined intervention evocative of the technical approach to action research.

This way of launching the action research process was most likely influenced by my own assumptions about sustainable business development. Indeed, I believed at that time that business practitioners find it difficult to integrate sustainability because they lack the proper managerial tools and expertise. As a new doctoral student, I saw action research as a means of facilitating the development of tools and skills that would contribute to a better understanding of sustainability. This assumption influenced the way I defined the problem and designed the action research intervention in collaboration with the project management team during “Equality Trail”. As is typical of the technical approach, the action research project was initiated without any involvement or consultation of the entrepreneurs. Importantly, however, the intervention was not imposed upon them. In fact, the research participants joined the project voluntarily due to their interest in learning how to develop sustainable products and establish co-operative ties to entrepreneurs with similar interests and personal values. In this sense, “Equality Trail” played a crucial role in creating a network to promote learning about sustainability.

It should be noted that the business development study was also driven by my eagerness to explore how using action research in the product development process contributes to the understanding and integration of sustainability practices amongst a group of small entrepreneurs. Accordingly, I was seeking to generalise the results so that a similar action research study could be replicated with other business organisations. From this perspective, the involvement of a group of entrepreneurs in marketplace actions and the economic, social and environmental aspects that occurred in a particular time and space was not only intended to affect their present understanding of sustainability but also to engender new abilities to generate general knowledge about sustainability. The action research process initially produced an understanding of sustainability that was cognitivist in nature (see Kolb 1984). Indeed, I assumed that the co-researchers could improve their sustainability knowledge and skills by internally reflecting on their concrete experiences using the theoretical facts and practical information self-gathered during the action research process.

I started the first cycle of action research with several interviews. These interviews and informal discussions with the entrepreneurs were useful in familiarising myself with not only local needs, assets and constraints (Ozanne & Anderson 2010, 127) but also the discursive and cultural practices through which sustainability meaning is produced, contested and negotiated in the context of this study (see Moisander, Valtonen & Hirsto 2009, 341). I also familiarised myself with any written documents (e.g., brochures, media articles, websites) related to the participants’ businesses. All interviews and most of the documentation were in Finnish. By conducting each interview in the entrepreneur’s own location, I was able to determine their operating environment (e.g., local community, firm facilities, employees, customers) and cultural context. The visits and interviews clearly expanded my perspective of the study, its participants and how the meaning of sustainability is constructed. I realised that the group shared not only common needs but also values and interests close to the idea of sustainability. This discovery allowed me to shift the analytical focus from individual entrepreneurs to the whole group of entrepreneurs as producers of social texts within a culturally specific context (Moisander & Valtonen 2006b; Moisander

et al. 2009; Ozanne & Anderson 2010). My analysis of the interviews led me to question the initial objectives of the study. I realised that the most important issue was not acquiring sustainability knowledge but rather rendering more explicit the way that entrepreneurs relate to nature and their stakeholders.

Entering the field helped me begin creating a collaborative relationship with the entrepreneurs. Being a young, male non-native Finnish speaking immigrant did not seem to interfere with establishing a relationship with this group of Finnish female entrepreneurs. I was initially concerned that my personal characteristics could undermine any attempts to develop trusting relationships with the study participants. Although my personal background did not play an adverse role, I still faced challenges in building these relationships due to the negative feelings left by former EU-funded development projects. The cause of these feelings was not the quality of the projects but how they were implemented. As one entrepreneur stated in an initial meeting:

“They [referring to the projects] organise very good seminars and workshops. Last time, for example, we had well-known experts in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable tourism. It was an excellent seminar, and I cannot complain about the quality of the material distributed during the seminar. However, they don’t connect their knowledge to our working context. And we are not able to apply that knowledge in our own businesses. As a result, the knowledge they bring into our community leaves again with the experts as soon as the project has ended.”

There was indeed a clear need for projects that developed local expertise and capacity. However, this quote also demonstrates the passive learning attitude assumed by the entrepreneurs at the beginning of the business development study. The entrepreneurs joined the research context as passive learners expecting to be lectured and trained on sustainable product development. Indeed, they saw me as an expert who was supposed to lecture and train them on issues related to sustainability. To a certain degree, the participants’ views seemed to coincide with my initial thoughts about sustainability knowledge being objective, rational and transferable, which is the view of knowledge shared by academic liberalists (see Holman 2000, 203).

I worked as a part-time lecturer in marketing and management in parallel to the business development action research study. When I started teaching my first course in January 2006, I realised that teaching is more than lecturing and that it demands further studies in pedagogy and instructional methods. This realisation led me to join a specialisation studies course on pedagogy for higher education in September 2006. This course was offered by the Faculty of Education of the University of Lapland. The course and the business development project complemented one another and helped me to gain a better understanding of learning processes taking place in both educational and business contexts. I became especially interested in PBL – one of the main pedagogical approaches discussed in the course. Indeed, I recognised many similarities between PBL and the problem-solving and reflective nature of action research. As the course evaluation was based on the planning and implementation of a small pedagogical development project, I saw it as an opportunity

to initiate an action research study in an educational context (for a detailed description of the case, see section 3.2 and article E).

The beginning of the pedagogical development study was also technical in nature. The study design was influenced by my own assumptions and views of how students learn and what type of course was needed to help them learn about sustainability. Because the pedagogical development project started in February 2007, it was very much influenced by the action research process of the business development study. The pedagogical development study was thus clearly biased by the idea of learning as a reflective process of in action used to make sense of difficult and complex problems (Schön 1983; Weick 1995). By promoting reflection through the use of PBL in the classroom, I wanted to encourage students to become reflective practitioners who were self-directed and autonomous problem-solvers capable of dealing with the complexities of sustainability (see Boud & Feletti 1997; Holman 2000, 205–206). The initial plan of the pedagogical development study was to use PBL in an environmental marketing course to promote the students' ability to acquire knowledge about sustainability through marketing decision-making simulations that included social and environmental goals.

However, during the implementation of the first cycle of this action research, I realised that PBL not only helped students learn how to make responsible business decisions but also engaged them in constructing what sustainability means within a market context. By reflecting on these findings and becoming more familiar with the literature on PBL and sustainability education, I redefined the goal of the action research study to instead develop teaching practices that support students in the social construction of sustainability (see Rolfsen 2011) and thus enable them to think more critically about the relationships between business, nature and society. This redefinition of the study's goal led to the inclusion of a second business course focussed on business ethics. While the business development project created a context for the action research study, the pedagogical project used two existing Masters-level courses on sustainability as its research context.

My position as an action researcher and the critical aspect of the pedagogical development project intensified the emotional dynamics and power differences between the students and myself, which made establishing collaborative relationships a challenging process (see Reason 1988). Indeed, questioning the basic business assumptions and identity of these business students – things that had once seemed unquestionable – led to a sense of anger, frustration and powerlessness. As their instructor, I was the main object of the students' emotions. Being a Hispanic, non-native English speaking instructor made me the target of some discrimination disguised as accusations of a lack of professionalism on several occasions. Following the advice of Jean Ramsey and Dale Fitzgibbons (2005), I started building relationships with the students by listening to them, having out-of-class conversations with them and positioning myself as a learner also engaged in the learning process and thus experiencing similar emotions. While I initially saw these emotions as negative and disturbing, I eventually realised they were essential for promoting sustainability learning (for a more detailed discussion, see Article E).

3.3.2 Practical approach: On-going research and education

As the business development action research process continued, the entrepreneurs participating in this study became more involved in the research process. I started to realise that these entrepreneurs had their own specialised and lay knowledge that could be used to develop the understanding and capabilities needed for dealing with the complex nature of environmental and social challenges (Dredge, Hales & Jamal forthcoming; Ozanne & Anderson 2010, 131). It was then that I felt I was doing research with a group of entrepreneurs and not on them (see Heron & Reason 2001) – a key feature of the practical approach to action research. In fact, the practical approach materialised once the group of eight craft micro-entrepreneurs began working towards a common action: namely, the development of sustainable tourism products. In this way, the action research study became a process of inquiry whereby the entrepreneurs jointly developed the notion of sustainability and how it related to their own business practices by relying on their own practical experiences, skills and expertise.

In particular, the practical approach began manifesting itself in the different workshops and meetings where these entrepreneurs shared and discussed their experiences and concerns along with the stakeholder feedback regarding their actions and practices. Indeed, self-reflection and group reflection played a key role in this study and even extended to include customers testing the services provided by these entrepreneurs, developers working on the project and members of the local community. By involving different stakeholders, the firms were able to experience the value of engaging those stakeholders whose actions and perspectives may influence the definition of both the problems and solutions related to integrating sustainability into business practices (see Schultz & Hatch 2005). The reflections not only addressed services and their attributes but also facilitated participants' inquiries into the meanings and values that determine what should be sustained, for whom it should be sustained and how it should be sustained (see Jamal et al. 2003).

In terms of the practical approach, co-researchers began experiencing the network as a community rather than a simple association of business units. According to Reason and Bradbury (2008), such a shift in perception from simple objects towards subject-to-subject relationships is urgently needed to progress towards a more sustainable society. From October 2006 to June 2007, this group of entrepreneurs was able to improve their practices and networking skills and to gain insight into how to develop healthy relationships with the natural and social aspects of their business environment. In this sense, it can be argued that the business development study contributed to the building of local capacity and development of new skills to effect changes in their communities (Ozanne & Anderson 2010). The process of action and reflection seems to have contributed to developing and strengthening relationships and the authenticity of interactions between the different parties (see Balantyne 2004).

By collaborating with the entrepreneurs and project management team of "Equality Trail", I was able to develop a research plan that included multiple data collection methods. Due to a lack of time and methodological expertise among the entrepreneurs, I was mainly responsible for data collection. However, there were several opportunities for the

entrepreneurs to participate in data collection through their observations, field notes and photographs. The entrepreneurs played an active role in analysing the empirical data – a process that I facilitated. Their participation in the data analysis not only helped interpret the collected material but also offered opportunities to learn, build capacities and promote commitment to the project (see Ozanne & Anderson 2010). Furthermore, by adopting an ethnographic approach to the study, I was able to engage in a continual reflection and observation process. As an action researcher, I made observations during the different stages and cycles of the action research study. While reflection is usually left to the end of each action research cycle, I invited participants to engage in reflective practices throughout the different action research stages.

Instead of translating theoretically derived knowledge into practical solutions (e.g., tools, models and guidelines), the action research process followed the idea forwarded by Schultz and Hatch (2005) of developing theoretical insights from practical knowledge. This approach shifted my attention away from viewing learning and knowledge construction as information processing to viewing it as a collective endeavour in which learning is the product of social interactions and reflection processes play a crucial role. Thus, the action research process became a way to make sense of sustainability and negotiate some sort of collective meaning of sustainability. Although reflection is regarded as a social endeavour, it is still a cognitive process whereby co-researchers support one another in their own learning (Ramsey 2005, 222); this is how I understood learning at the time I initiated the pedagogical development project. However, after implementing the first sustainability course, I realised that PBL not only helped students to become socially responsible managers but also engaged them in the critical construction of what it means to be and act like a sustainable business organisation (for a detailed description of the courses, see article E).

Due to the power differences between teachers and students (Reason 1988), students could not be involved as co-researchers as in the business development project. Instead, they were involved as research collaborators. Co-researcher status was not possible because student participation would have been constrained to a single action-research cycle – the duration of one course. As research collaborators, the students were not directly involved in the planning, implementation and observation phases of the action research process. However, they played an important role in generating empirical data and during the reflection process of the study. Similar to the business development project, the use of ethnography expanded the observational and reflection practices beyond the limits of a specific action research phase. Additionally, multiple methods were used to collect the data. Students played an important role in analysing the doings and sayings that transpired during the course by writing learning journals, Wikis and blog posts, which became an essential source of empirical data. The presentation of the research results to audiences other than the students (e.g., colleagues, seminars, conferences) promoted my own reflections on the study. As an example of first-person action research, this study also took a practical approach in that it aimed to improve business practice by encouraging students to use their practical knowledge, even if this knowledge was the product of social discourses other than the managerial discourse.

3.3.3 *Critical approach: Action and evaluation*

The critical approach to action research was implicit in the topic of the study. Indeed, while it is true that the debate over sustainability and social responsibility aims to improve and understand the dynamics of business–society relations, its final objective is to transform the dominant economic system away from promoting ecological degradation and social inequity. From this perspective, it can be argued that these action research studies aimed to make the group of entrepreneurs and business students aware of the nature, consequences and context of their marketplace actions and to encourage them to use this awareness as a trigger to work towards more sustainable business practices (see Carr & Kemmis 1986). In the long-run, the process of action and reflection should lead both co-researchers and research collaborators towards alternative ways to conceptualise business–society relations and to relate to nature and society as a whole.

Treating reflection as a continuous process helped me realise how my understanding of the notions of development, sustainability, learning and research were challenged and transformed by moral values, discursive practices and multi-stakeholder relations. Indeed, as the action researcher, I was exposed to the forces described in Figure 1 alongside the research participants. The business development study changed not only my view of the relationship between theory and practice but also my conceptualisation of marketing and management. In particular, my reflections on the actions that occurred within the pedagogical development project drew my attention to the notion of critical reflexivity and allowed me to approach the business development project and my research, teaching and developmental practices from a completely new perspective. I not only became a more reflexive professional but, inspired by Cunliffe's (2004) thoughts, I also wished to encourage my students to question their own practices and assumptions as a basis for more critical and ethical actions. Towards the end of both the pedagogical development project and my dissertation, I was able to count myself among critical marketing and social constructionist scholars who view learning as a social process through which interpersonal and intrapersonal relations become the means to construct our way of being in the market and relate to other market actors (see Cunliffe 2004; Dredge et al. forthcoming).

While the reflective analysis conducted during the business development project helped the group of entrepreneurs grasp the notion of sustainability within their local context, this reflection failed to help them break away from neoclassical principles (e.g., growth, competition and efficiency) that shaped their business environment. Reflection only enabled them to learn to accommodate their business approach and sustainability understanding within a market economy. It seemed that these entrepreneurs, despite their high motivation to depart from business as usual, were trapped within the field of power of the managerial discourse in which they took up a particular subject position (see Laine & Vaara 2007). However, the critical approach to action research in the pedagogical development project allowed students to examine sustainability in terms of a set of reflexive processes and discursive practices. Compared to the entrepreneurs, the students were able to free themselves from managerialism – at least for a while – to explore new ways of organising, managing and relating in the market.

There were ethical dilemmas that came with these action research studies and their critical perspective. By involving entrepreneurs in the development of more sustainable products, I assumed the responsibility of ensuring that these products stood a chance of being offered on the market (see Heiskanen 2005). I assumed the same responsibility with the students by encouraging them to become reflexive practitioners. How could I ensure that they could apply these reflexive practices in their future professions? To what degree was I responsible for their frustrations, powerlessness and disappointment in failing to change the way business is practiced? Indeed, as an action researcher, I had a moral responsibility to facilitate the change I was encouraging and in which I was involving the entrepreneurs and students, who trusted me. For instance, the action research study with the entrepreneurs created high expectations that a successful business network would be created. These expectations obliged me, as Heiskanen (2005) argues, to continue the pilot-project longer than was planned by “Equality Trail”. As the action researcher, I felt a sense of duty to continue working with these companies and did so for some time after the pilot-project concluded. However, I eventually had to exit the field and needed to consider the best and most ethically correct way to do so. Finally, I agreed with Heiskanen (2005, 196) that it is difficult for action research studies to achieve large-scale social change, which can be very frustrating for the action researcher. Nevertheless, I saw that the two action research studies I was involved in led to some concrete actions among both the entrepreneurs and the business curriculum of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Lapland.

Before joining the network, the entrepreneurs operated individually within the market, selling their services directly to the final customer or through resellers and other intermediaries. By the end of the action research process, the entrepreneurs had begun to move toward more collective practices that strengthened their business relationships and added value to their market offerings. In fact, the action research study played a key role in developing these trusting relationships between the participating entrepreneurs (see Balantyne 2004). By the end of the project, the network members had decided to continue their collaboration as different groups, a decision that was most likely based on geography. Though the initial network created by “Equality Trail” dispersed when intervention ended, the entrepreneurs had learned to value and be confident in their knowledge and ability to conduct business in a socially responsible way in collaboration with other market actors. Through the project, it was possible to learn about the opportunities and challenges of (1) involving project participants in the design, implementation and evaluation of project activities and (2) combining research with development objectives. As a result of these lessons learned and my personal engagement in the project planning at the University of Lapland and the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences, there was a higher approval rate for research and development projects in which all participants would play a crucial role in the production of knowledge.

Additionally, the pedagogical development project had some direct consequences for the business curriculum at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The Business Ethics course moved from the master’s curriculum to the bachelor’s curriculum. This decision was based on the students’ comments in their learning journals and feedback questionnaires. Most

students considered it to be important to learn about sustainability and ethics at the beginning of their studies and not towards the end, when their professional identity had already been shaped. Sustainability was also integrated into other bachelor's-level courses. The Environmental Marketing course was changed to a CSR course and continued to be taught to Masters-level students. However, the teaching methodologies and content have continually been enhanced as a consequence of the different action research cycles. My development as a critical reflexive educator has had a particular influence on the articles and books used in both courses.

4 SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLES

This doctoral dissertation consists of five peer reviewed academic articles, which are included in Part II of the manuscript. Throughout the five following articles, I elaborate and illustrate the theoretical and methodological framework discussed in Part I. By approaching tourism product development from a cultural perspective, Article A draws attention to product development as an appropriate business process for exploring sustainability as a social construction and thus actively engaging in the development of sustainable business practices. Article B examines sustainable marketing from a moral perspective by elaborating on the prevalent ethical theories that inform the development of sustainable marketing in both theory and practice. Article C offers a detailed overview of how this framework was integrated into product development to launch a learning process for developing and deploying the organisational practices and capabilities needed to create proactive sustainable marketing strategies. Article D further elaborates upon the implementation of the framework within the development business case by directing attention to its role in evaluating the process of product development from a sustainability perspective. Finally, article E discusses the application of the framework in relation to pedagogical development. This article illustrates how the framework offers theoretical and methodological insights into developing sustainability teaching practices and thus promoting sustainability learning among business students.

4.1 ARTICLE A: FROM FIRMS TO EXTENDED MARKETS: A CULTURAL APPROACH TO TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Article A was co-authored by my fellow doctoral researchers Minni Haanpää, Mika Kylänen and Vesa Markuksela (University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Sciences) and was the result of an intensive writing process based on close collaboration, dynamic participation and mutual peer support. The authors are presented in the article in alphabetical order and contributed equally to the writing of the text, with each author taking responsibility for a particular chapter in the article. I was responsible for the chapter “business as unusual in action” and shared responsibility with Mika Kylänen for the paper’s conclusions. Mika Kylänen was also responsible for the introduction of the article. Minni Haanpää assumed responsibility for the chapter “Developing products in tourism”, while Vesa Markuksela was responsible for the chapter “From managerial standpoints to cultural constructions of markets”. The article, which was initially prepared for the 2nd International Critical Tourism Studies Conference held in Split, Croatia, in June 2007, was later published in “Tourism” (García-Rosell, Haanpää, Kylänen & Markuksela 2007).

In the article, we specifically challenge the basic premises of managerial marketing in terms of the inclination to separate production from consumption and thus represent

stakeholders (e.g., customers, firms and local community members) as independent and isolated market actors with clearly defined tasks and roles within the market context. First, we discuss how tourism products and tourism product development have been conceptualised in the literature. We then elaborate on the market approach to marketing. By problematising the production–consumption dichotomy that tends to dominate marketing and tourism studies, we critically evaluate the prevailing ideologies and principles guiding product development in tourism. To that end, we utilise the emerging market approach to marketing as an opportunity to theorise and reconceptualise tourism product development as an on-going multi-stakeholder process through which tourism products and the meaning of sustainability are socially constructed and reconstructed.

From this perspective, stakeholders are viewed as active producers and consumers of meaning whose tasks and roles fuse, blur and fade within the market dynamics. Although we discuss tourism product development broadly, we direct special attention to the role of product development in progressing towards sustainability in tourism. Indeed, as a multi-stakeholder process, tourism product development offers a space for producing, maintaining, negotiating, resisting and transforming values and meanings of sustainability. In the article, we respond to calls for promoting sustainability through the introduction of more participative practices in tourism development and planning. At the same time, the article provides justification for the selection of product development and tourism for developing and illustrating the framework suggested in my doctoral dissertation.

4.2 ARTICLE B: ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING: A CONSUMER POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Article B was co-authored with Professor of Corporate Communication Johanna Moisander (Aalto University, School of Economics). Both authors participated equally in writing the article, which was originally written for the European Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, held in Milan, Italy, in 2007 and then published as a full paper in the book of conference proceedings, “European Advances in Consumer Research” (García-Rosell & Moisander 2008).

In this article, we analyse sustainable marketing from a moral perspective. More specifically, the overall purpose of the paper is to emphasise the role morality plays in research on sustainable marketing. First, we discuss how sustainability and social responsibility have been conceptualised in the marketing literature. Then, we elaborate upon the different approaches to environmental ethics that inform both this literature and the public discussions of sustainable marketing with a particular focus on the roles and responsibilities each approach ascribes to different market actors. Environmental ethics is identified as suitable for that goal because it is based on both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives. In this regard, it is possible to gain a broader overview of the ethical dilemmas that arise between businesses and members of society regarding environmental concerns. By more closely examining the different conceptualisations of sustainable marketing, we elucidate the role morality has played in addressing environmental and social concerns within a marketing context.

While most sustainable marketing concepts assume that it is morally wrong to pollute and destroy the natural environment, the ethical principles and values upon which such morality is based have remained implicit. Moral philosophy cannot be overlooked because it provides justification for the different beliefs, values and norms that shape business–society relations. Hence, this analysis is premised upon the idea that firms must view themselves as ethical subjects and corporate citizens to develop and implement effective sustainable and socially responsible marketing strategies. As a process that occurs within a social and cultural context, sustainable marketing entails complex ethical issues and requires companies make ethical judgments about what is right and fair for their stakeholders. To make justified ethical judgments, marketers need to become aware of the principles, norms and values to which they appeal when defining and defending their philosophies and normative claims about sustainable marketing. In this sense, our paper contributes to the discussion about the role of morality in sustainable marketing and how moral philosophy influences the diversity of stakeholder perspectives concerning what sustainability is or ought to be.

4.3 ARTICLE C: A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE ON CREATING AND MANAGING STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

Article C was co-authored by Professor of Corporate Communication Johanna Moisander (Aalto University, School of Economics) and Lecturer in Strategic Management Dr. Kathryn Fahy (Lancaster University Management School). I was responsible for conducting the empirical research and drafting and writing the essay based upon it. Professor Moisander played a central role in formulating the conceptual framework and editing the final version of the paper. Dr. Fahy was responsible for writing the sub-chapter “Resource-based view of proactive environmental strategy” and commenting on the paper. Professor Moisander and I contributed equally to the introduction and conclusions of the paper. The article was published as a book chapter in *“Readings and Cases in Sustainable Marketing: A Strategic Approach to Social Responsibility”*, which was co-edited by Clare D’Souza, Mehdi Taghian & Michael Polonsky (García-Rosell, Moisander & Fahy 2011).

In this article, we illustrate the practical application of the theoretical and methodological framework developed in this dissertation using the empirical case of a product development project in the tourism sector. After a brief introduction, we elaborate upon the relationship between multi-stakeholder thinking, action research and a resource-based view of proactive environmental strategies. We then discuss the empirical case and illustrate how the framework was used to develop proactive strategies for sustainable marketing. The main argument presented in our paper is that sustainable marketing represents strategic goals and values that can only be achieved through complex socio-cultural processes and collaborative practices whereby stakeholders, including marketers, consumers and locals, make sense of, negotiate and transform the meaning of sustainability in business practices. We draw attention to the roles of multi-stakeholder engagement and critical reflection in increasing organisational capabilities and competencies that are needed for developing and deploying proactive, environmentally enlightened and socially responsible marketing strategies.

Our article offers a systematic description of how the framework was used to promote organisational capabilities, learning and innovation for sustainability. By describing the planning, implementation, observation and reflection phases of two action research cycles, the article offers insights into the types of active, collective learning that can occur in real-life problem-solving when business practitioners engage in reflective processes of inquiry and action in collaboration with multiple external stakeholders. While we present the process described in the article as a strategic tool for sustainable marketing, we do not intend to replace standard managerial tools with similar technical procedures. Rather, our intention is to show how critical reflection and multi-stakeholder engagement can be used to facilitate and promote progress towards more sustainable business practices. Indeed, exposure to others' interpretations and experimentation with alternative practices can generate novel perspectives and initiatives that lead to the higher-order learning that characterises firms with proactive environmental strategies.

4.4 ARTICLE D: AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION IN TOURISM: THE CASE OF TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Article D was co-authored with Acting Professor in Philosophy of Management Jukka Mäkinen (Aalto University, School of Economics). I assumed the main responsibility for drafting and writing the manuscript as well as for conducting the empirical research described in the article. Professor Mäkinen participated in the writing of the "Ethics" subchapter and the chapters "The Evaluation process" and "Conclusions". He offered invaluable support and guidance for developing the moral philosophical perspective of the paper and thus refining the empirical analysis of the data. This article further elaborates an early paper written for the EASY-ECO Conference "Stakeholder Perspectives in Evaluating Sustainable Development", held in Budapest, Hungary, in 2009, and it was published in the "Journal of Sustainable Tourism" (García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2012 online first).

In the article, we draw attention to the growing interest in society to both monitoring performance and assessing progress towards sustainability and the strong emphasis on measuring the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. More precisely, we note the need to use evaluation as a means of revealing and studying the underlying values, beliefs and attitudes that (re)shape the multiple meanings of sustainability within a particular context. To that end, we suggest and employ the theoretical and methodological framework developed in this dissertation. First, we elaborate on the different elements of the framework (multi-stakeholder thinking, ethics and action research) and their relationship to the internationally recognised Bellagio Principles for designing and implementing sustainability evaluations. We then describe the tourism product development case and research process. Finally, we illustrate the evaluation process and the social construction of sustainability with reference to four moral discourses.

In general, our article illustrates how the framework contributes to developing an evaluation tool for tourism organisations to use in collaboration with their stakeholders when assessing and deploying more sustainable tourism practices. However, our intention is not

to offer another tool for measuring sustainability; rather, it is primarily to help business practitioners develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability and the reflective and reflexive practices necessary to address environmental and social challenges in a tourism context. By evaluating sustainability as one or more dynamic social constructions, we aimed to expand the scope of sustainability evaluation beyond the prediction, measurement and control of outcomes. To date, sustainability evaluation in tourism and business in general has focussed on producing assessment tools that rely on external expertise and scientific knowledge. While these tools have proven to be useful for monitoring and managing the impact of tourism on the environment, they have failed to reflect the complex and dynamic nature of sustainability and the market. Our article aims to fill this research gap.

4.5 ARTICLE E: STRUGGLES OVER CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MEANINGS IN TEACHING PRACTICES: THE CASE OF HYBRID PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Article E is a single-author paper. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 22nd EBEN (European Business Ethics Network) Annual Conference, held in Athens, Greece, in 2009 and then at the 10th International Problem-Based Learning Conference in Tampere, Finland, in 2010. The article was published in “Management Learning” (García-Rosell, 2012 online first).

In this article, I draw attention to the role of sustainability education in encouraging and promoting more sustainable business practices. The framework developed in this dissertation is portrayed in this article as a means to develop teaching and learning practices that critically examine the basic assumptions of business and thus redefine the way of managing, organising and relating in the marketplace. Throughout the first three chapters, a theoretical discussion unfolds regarding the limits of sustainability learning within the axioms of managerialism and the role of experiential learning – PBL in particular – in helping students construct sustainability knowledge through active participation and both critical reflective and reflexive practices. By outlining the research process, I focus on how the framework is used within the context of this study. Finally, I illustrate the social construction of sustainability and the reflexive practices of students considering two discursive patterns characterising the struggles over the meaning of sustainability that occurred in a series of business ethics and environmental marketing courses implemented by the Faculty of Business and Tourism – now merged with the Faculty of Social Sciences – at the University of Lapland between the years 2007 and 2010.

By providing a detailed overview of the research process, this article shows how the framework helped me to challenge my own assumptions and biases about the role of sustainability instructors in promoting sustainability learning. While I initially thought that multi-stakeholder relationships occurred outside the realm of business schools, I soon realised that these relationships are also present within the classroom. As employees, employers, politicians, consumers, activists and parents, both students and instructors tend to bring traces of discursive structures, ideologies and power relations to the learning process. While there is a tendency in sustainability education to neglect – or even silence – this

pluralism of discourses, I soon began to see this pluralism as an opportunity for sustainability learning. Indeed, the wide array of voices and the emotional and political dynamics they include contribute to creating a fertile ground for establishing learning relations that shake the pillars of managerial discourse. By questioning sensitive issues such as unlimited growth, the amoral nature of business, efficiency and profit maximisation, students not only questioned the status quo of business but also their own identities as management students. In sum, the article represents a response to the call for training critical reflexive practitioners capable of transforming old ways of managing, organising and building stakeholder relations. Such transformation is urgently needed to develop and deploy innovative marketing strategies that contribute to making progress towards greater sustainability.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this dissertation have several implications for the development of sustainable marketing in both theory and practice. In addition to theoretical and managerial contributions, this dissertation offers practical insights for sustainability education within the realm of business curricula. Finally, the study not only offers a concrete example of action research within a marketing context – including the field of sustainability evaluation – but also contributes to the further development of action research as a methodological approach. In this section, I will offer some concluding remarks on my doctoral dissertation by discussing the theoretical, methodological, managerial and pedagogical contributions of this research. Finally, I will draw attention to certain limitations of the study and potential avenues for future research on the theoretical perspectives developed in this research.

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretically, this dissertation contributes to the discussion of new ways to theorise sustainable marketing (e.g., Crane 2000; Crane & Desmond 2002; García-Rosell 2009; Kilbourne 1998; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn 1996) and social responsibility in marketing (e.g., Maignan & Ferrell 2004; Maignan et al. 2005). Alternative approaches to theorising sustainable marketing are needed to reassess the basic premises of the generic marketing concept and thus to develop a wider and more holistic approach to sustainability within a market context (see Moisander 2001). The theoretical contributions of this doctoral dissertation reflect three basic shifts away from the traditional approach to theorising sustainable marketing. These shifts are discussed below.

The first theoretical contribution shifts the analytical focus from individual customers/stakeholders to the market as a complex web of multi-stakeholder interactions and relationships. Although stakeholder thinking has been invaluable in stimulating the ideas behind this dissertation, I argue that it has serious limitations in exploring marketing's relationships with the natural environment and society at large. Indeed, the stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing represents a minor adjustment to the managerial techniques of the marketing concept. The philosophy of the marketing mix and the popular notion of satisfaction are extended beyond the customer to include other parties who take part directly or indirectly in the broader marketing process. As such, stakeholder thinking is seen as an opportunity to transform resistance and opposition to marketing power into a source of economic value by opening beneficial dialogues with key stakeholders. This approach undoubtedly suggests that despite a broader and more inclusive stakeholder orientation, sustainable marketing continues to uncritically respond to environmental and social concerns (Banerjee 2007). It is one thing to say that stakeholders' concerns and knowledge are considered in marketing decision-making, but it is quite another to suggest

that this means their concerns and knowledge are viewed as input for re-evaluating basic marketing assumptions and that this input would prompt reflections on how to transform old ways of organising, managing and relating in the marketplace (see Cunliffe 2004). This critical questioning of the managerial way in which marketing professionals usually think and practice sustainable marketing leads us to the second theoretical contribution: namely, a fundamental shift from “common sense” to “reflexive” sustainable marketing.

These two shifts are colourfully illustrated in the empirical studies that comprise this dissertation. The business development study represents how the adoption of a stakeholder orientation contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between marketing activities, society and the environment. While this study acknowledges the legitimacy of stakeholder marketing and research calling for a stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing, it draws attention to the limitations of viewing stakeholders as rational individuals who expect firms to satisfy their needs and address their most urgent concerns. Instead of responding to the demands of single stakeholders, the group of entrepreneurs in the business development study showed how multiple stakeholder views and perceptions can be used to develop knowledge, capabilities and practices that support sustainability. Although the business development study offers insights into the complex and dynamic nature of stakeholder relations, it is through the pedagogical development study that we understand that stakeholders are not intertwined boxes but rather that they shift positions that only exist in relation to one another. Within the classroom context, it became evident that multiple voices and subject positions are embodied in an individual stakeholder, thereby calling into question the fixed positionality of stakeholders in the market.

Moreover, as the pedagogical development study indicated, the process of shifting positions, as (future) business practitioners move back and forth between a managerial and non-managerial worldview, can be used as a stepping stone to questioning the managerial principles of sustainable marketing in search of more sustainable marketing practices. Although the same degree of reflexivity was not achieved in the business development case, such reflexive thinking was reflected in the way the group of entrepreneurs challenged – as women, single mothers, grandparents, artists and environmental activists, amongst other stakeholder roles – gender inequality, growth orientation, profit maximisation, the standardisation of services and other forms of market-driven tourism development. This hegemony of managerialism in the market inhibited the entrepreneurs’ reflexive thinking and, thus, any possible actions to change the status quo. The classroom, however, seemed to offer students the safety and time needed to develop reflexive thinking and venture towards redefining contemporary business practices, something that the entrepreneurs could only dream about.

The third theoretical contribution is a shift from sustainability as a technical/scientific problem to sustainability as a set of meanings and moral values socially constructed through the discourses and practices available within a particular market context. By emphasising the role of cultural meaning, the multi-stakeholder perspective introduced in this study opens an alternative way of approaching sustainability within a marketing context. Indeed, this perspective suggests that shared understanding – an amalgam of fundamental mean-

ings and moral values – that results from on-going interactions and relationships between different stakeholders is a key determinant in shaping business–society relations. The dissertation emphasises that only through the critical examination of this shared understanding is it possible to gain insights into the complexities and challenges of sustainability in relation to marketing. This finding notwithstanding, the idea of a multi-stakeholder perspective of sustainable marketing should not be mistaken as an attempt to introduce a quieter form of dominance, whereby stakeholders including consumers, local community members and NGOs are asked to voluntarily turn over valuable knowledge and creativity to allow firms to more efficiently respond to the environmental and social concerns troubling their markets. Rather, the principal purpose of the multi-stakeholder perspective is to open new ways of co-producing practical knowledge, understanding and reflexive practices that contribute to forming more sustainable markets (see Dredge et al. forthcoming).

Drawing on insights gained from these two empirical studies, this dissertation offers concrete examples of how sustainability is socially constructed and continuously (re)produced, resisted, negotiated and transformed through daily market interactions and relationships. As the business development study shows, perspectives on sustainability differ between stakeholders based on the moral discourses from which they emerge. The moral discourses identified in this study represent a medium through which entrepreneurs and their stakeholders determine what should be sustained and why it should be sustained. Through stakeholder interactions and relationships at the intersection of these multiple and overlapping moral discourses, the group of entrepreneurs produced the meanings, knowledge and understanding of sustainability applicable to their specific market context. Similarly, the pedagogical development study illustrates how the success of sustainability learning lies not in knowledge transfer but in engaging students in the co-production of knowledge. By positioning business students at the intersection between managerial and sustainability discourses, the multi-stakeholder perspective of sustainable marketing not only provides an opportunity to understand the limitations of managerial and technical approaches to environmental and social challenges but also uses the complex layering of discursive practices to socially construct sustainability meanings.

The shifts from individual to market, common sense to reflexivity and technical aspects to meanings discussed above represent a significant contribution to the literature on the stakeholder approach to sustainable marketing (e.g., Maignan & Ferrell 2004; Maignan et al. 2005; Peñaloza & Mish 2011; Polonsky & Ottman 1998) and stakeholder marketing in general (e.g., Bhattacharya 2010; Fry & Polonsky 2004; Kimery & Rinehart 1998; Mish & Scammon 2010; Smith et al. 2010). In addition, the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing creates an interesting link between stakeholder marketing and two closely related areas of research: the relational perspective on stakeholder theory (e.g., Buchholz & Rosenthal 2004, 2005; Hemmati 2002; Reynolds & Yuthas 2008; Wicks et al. 1994) and the market approach to marketing (e.g., Araujo 2007; Araujo & Kjellberg 2009; Firat & Dholakia 2006; Peñaloza & Venkatesh 2006; Venkatesh & Peñaloza 2006). This dissertation draws attention not only to the ways these research areas are complementary but also how they can further the theoretical development of sustainable marketing.

The cases explored in this dissertation contribute to the theoretical development of three additional areas of research: product development, sustainability evaluation and PBL. By shifting the analytical focus from technical properties to the process of product development, this dissertation contributes to the body of literature seeking to gain a more nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics and complexities of sustainable consumption and production in general (e.g., Heiskanen & Pantzar 1997; Heiskanen et al. 2005; Jalas 2006; Schaefer & Crane 2005). In fact, rather than portraying product development as a tool for solving ecological and social problems, product development is described as a multi-stakeholder learning process that not only contributes to raising people's awareness of their relationship to nature and other member of society but also transforms their everyday life and practices (see Heiskanen 2002, 434).

Furthermore, using product development as a suitable business process for assessing sustainability practices within a small business context, this dissertation contributes to the field of sustainability evaluation (e.g., Becker 2004; Hardi & Zdan 1997). While the assessment of sustainability in business has tended to focus on the physical flows of matter and energy within and between nature and firms (see Korhonen 2003; Heiskanen 2002), this study focusses on the role of cultural meanings, morality and discourses when evaluating sustainability. With regard to PBL, this dissertation extends the literature on using this pedagogical approach in business schools by exploring its application in a CSR context (Coombs & Elden 2004; Hallinger & Lu 2011) and also represents a response to calls to use PBL to promote critical reflexivity among business students and instructors (Drinan 1997; Lindén & Alanko-Turunen 2006). Indeed, the pedagogical case provides a concrete example of how PBL and other forms of experiential learning can create learning spaces that support critical reflexive practices in business education.

5.2 MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This doctoral dissertation provides numerous valuable insights for business practitioners and policy makers. Its key managerial contribution is to explicitly show that the issues underlying sustainability and social responsibility are too complex – in both theory and practice – to be viewed from the position of a single firm or its customers. Therefore, this study suggests a need to consider other market participants that may affect or be affected by the marketing process. In this way, the study is consistent with calls for a fundamental shift from a customer-oriented to a stakeholder-oriented sustainable marketing strategy. However, while the dissertation recognises the value of managing relationships and addressing the concerns of key stakeholders, it emphasises that such an approach is insufficient to develop proactive environmentally and socially responsible marketing strategies. Accordingly, it exhorts business practitioners to focus on the subjective understanding of sustainability, as it is continuously co-constructed through collaborative reflections on daily marketplace interactions and relationships. It is this type of understanding, not the isolated consideration of stakeholders' interests and concerns, that can lead to radical change that may contribute to improving the sustainability of products and services (micro-effect),

thus fostering long-term benefits for society at large (macro-effect) (Shultz 2007). Indeed, rather than searching for guidance on how to behave in a socially responsible manner, firms and other stakeholder groups should concentrate more on understanding and critically evaluating how they manage, organise and relate to people in the marketplace and what implications these actions might have for them, the environment and society (Banerjee 2007; Crane 2000; Cunliffe 2004).

At the same time, this study makes an important managerial recommendation for small service companies, especially those operating in the tourism sector. It suggests that the way to foster a more sustainable form of tourism is to foster multi-stakeholder cooperation in the context of product development. This study shows that action research-based product development processes promote interpersonal communication, collective learning, reflexivity, responsibility and a shared, holistic understanding of the human-nature relationship amongst the different stakeholders involved in a particular marketplace by facilitating dialogue spaces that permit a variety of perspectives (see Bradbury 2001). This finding is consistent with the work of a host of scholars (e.g., Heiskanen & Timonen 2003; Heiskanen et al. 2007; Hoffmann 2007) who view product development as an arena where customers, business partners and local community members can, with other stakeholders, learn about and reflect on a specific sustainable service concept and how it is likely to affect their own lives. By allowing a multiplicity of voices, practitioners are able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the different discourses and values shaping their market context and, thus, the meaning of sustainability. Therefore, the central message from this study to practitioners is that sustainability is not a technical element that can be integrated into a service or product and be later communicated as a value-added attribute without a critical scrutiny. Rather, the successful implementation of sustainability in business practices demands the involvement of a firm's stakeholders in a continuous collaborative learning process through which they reflect upon how a particular service concept might contribute to their economic, social and environmental objectives.

This dissertation also offers a concrete example of how research and development objectives can be efficiently combined within a single project. Indeed, this study challenges the dichotomy between research and development that tends to prevail in EU-funded projects. By describing the business development project, I was able to show how a researcher can also play the role of a business developer working with practitioners and thus contribute to the development of theory and practice. Finally, it is also important for practitioners – entrepreneurs and policymakers in particular – to consider the methodological potential of action research as an approach that, despite its flexibility and accessibility, provides a systematic structure for promoting reflection on and process changes towards sustainability. Furthermore, the action research approach to product development adopted by this study offers an alternative way to evaluate sustainability in a small business context. Action research, as applied in this study, illustrates the relevance of the practical knowledge of firms and their stakeholders for developing more innovative concepts and sustainable ways of managing and organising business processes. These implications are discussed in further detail in the sections that follow.

5.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Methodologically, this study contributes to the current discussion and debate concerning the need to introduce new theories and ways of doing research in the context of sustainable marketing and social responsibility as a whole (e.g., Brand 2009; Crane 1999; Kilbourne et al. 1997; Meriläinen et al. 2000; Moisander 2001). This debate focusses not only on the limitations of traditional research methods for gathering relevant information or of these methods' unsuitability for considering tacit knowledge, as Michael Polanyi (1967) would argue. Rather, methodological development is seen as vital for re-evaluating the assumptions about environmental and social problems and for critically analysing the role of business in society (see Moisander 2001). There is a need for methodological approaches that allow researchers to study the relationship between marketing and the phenomenon of sustainability in a real-life socio-cultural context and to subsequently build theories out of these empirical data (see Schultz & Hatch 2005). This type of theoretical development is considered to be necessary for constructing a more holistic understanding of sustainability in marketing and thus overcoming the difficulties found in its practical application.

Most studies that take a critical view of sustainable marketing rely primarily on discourse analysis (e.g., Moisander 2001), narrative analysis (e.g., Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Starkey & Crane 2003) and case studies (e.g., Crane 1997; 2000) as empirical methods. This dissertation expands upon this methodological diversity by discussing how action research may be used as a methodological approach to build capacity for and in the study of marketing's relationships to the natural environment and society. The suitability of action research for studying business–society relations stems from its highly participative, reflective and change-oriented nature (see Ozanne & Anderson 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). As this study argues, action research creates a more equitable relationship between marketing processes, the environment and society by promoting dialogue that allows for multiple perspectives. As Hemmati (2002, 265) notes, one of the main challenges for sustainability is providing stakeholders with a forum to share their wisdom and practical knowledge effectively and equitably. It should be noted that this study contributes to a better understanding of the use of action research not only within the field of sustainable marketing but also within a marketing context in general. Despite the emergence of several action research studies in marketing, the potential benefits of applying action research methodologies to marketing research continue to be overlooked by most marketing scholars.

Furthermore, the methodological perspectives in this dissertation complement existing action research studies within marketing. While a host of marketing scholars have approached action research as a practice-oriented methodology for improving managerial practice (e.g., Ballantyne 2004; Perry & Gummesson 2004), critical consumer researchers view it as a methodological approach for solving pressing health and social problems faced by vulnerable consumer groups (e.g., Ozanne & Anderson 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). The action research approach used in this study fills the gap between these two extremes because it challenges managerial practice but does not focus on particular at-risk consumer groups. Indeed, this study uses action research as an innovative approach to

promote more sustainable practices by encouraging market actors to critically reflect on the status quo and also to redefine their relationship to nature and other human beings. From this perspective, action research is not viewed as a way to promote managerial objectives or to emancipate consumers. Rather, it is seen as a means to create arenas where participants – researchers and co-researchers – interact, establish relationships and reflect on sustainability. In these arenas, marketing researchers and practitioners have the opportunity to examine business–society relations dynamically and interactively to generate theory from practice that may help us to better understand the complexities and challenges of sustainable development (see Schultz & Hatch 2005). Moreover, by enabling marketing researchers to engage in the dynamics of the market and to become agents of change, action research helps close the gap between research and practice, promote personal and professional growth via reflexive engagement, explore alternative ways of knowing and increase the capacity for knowledge co-production (Dredge et al. forthcoming).

Methodologically, this study has implications for the field of sustainability evaluation. Evaluation is a key element of action research methodology and played an important role in its development (Dickens & Watkins 1999). In practice, this finding is confirmed by the activities of the Tavistock Institute – a major actor in the theoretical development of action research – which has used this methodology in evaluation assignments and hosted “Evaluation – The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice”. There is an extensive body of literature discussing the application of action research as an evaluation methodology in different fields, such as education (e.g., Iversen, Ellertsen, Joacobsen, Råheim & Knivsberg 2006), health services (e.g., Swantz 2008), community development (e.g., Folkman & Rai 1997) and organisational development (e.g., Meynell 2005). Nevertheless, with the exception of a few studies (e.g., Dodd, Wedderburn, Parminter, Thorrold & Quinn 2008; Lennie 2005), little attention has been paid to action research in evaluating sustainability. Therefore, this dissertation (see Article D) contributes to an improved understanding of how such studies can be used to assess the sustainability of programmes, projects and daily business practices in close collaboration with different stakeholders.

5.4 PEDAGOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

My understanding of sustainability education adheres to the ideas that progress towards more sustainable markets is not possible if business schools continue to address environmental and social challenges as business problems that can be solved via the application of certain managerial skills and techniques. In keeping with critical management and marketing educators (Banerjee 2004; Catterall et al. 2002; Cunliffe 2004), I have argued that sustainability education plays a crucial role in creating critical reflexive practitioners and researchers capable of challenging the status quo in business. Thus, sustainability education engenders an opportunity to develop more sustainable markets. The mission of sustainability education should thus be to train managers who are capable of implementing changes towards greater sustainability. However, to achieve this transformation, business students and instructors need to look beyond the boundaries of the managerial discourse

that prevent them from approaching environmental and social concerns from a different perspective than the one dominated by the principles of neo-classical economics.

The idea of a threshold concept used in this dissertation provides a new perspective on the role that sustainable marketing and other sustainable business concepts play within marketing education and business education in general. The pedagogical case discussed here shows how courses such as business ethics and environmental marketing can serve as gateways that lead students to previously inaccessible ways of understanding and thinking about what managers do and how their actions relate to other market actors. Such gateways offer students the possibility to evaluate and even redefine their identities as business professionals. From this perspective, concepts such as sustainable marketing can be seen as a means to challenge the assumptions business practitioners have relied on for decades – namely, that capital, unlimited growth and the amorality of business are unquestionable natural laws (see Kallio 2007) – and, in so doing, to develop more sustainable organisational capacities. This line of thinking takes instructors beyond the idea of sustainability as merely a pedagogical subject to a relational activity where knowledge from different stakeholder groups is shared, interpreted and used to collectively construct meanings and values about sustainable development in relation to business practice. In fact, this approach encourages instructors to include stakeholder perspectives that are usually silenced or neglected within business classrooms and to use them to establish dialogues and relationships that foster sustainability learning.

The business development case also has implications for the pedagogical approaches used in programmes and projects to train business practitioners and those working in a small business context, in particular, with respect to issues related to sustainability and social responsibility. The study suggests that the effectiveness of such sustainability initiatives can be enhanced by promoting mutual knowledge-building rather than maintaining a separation between professional trainers and practitioners. As the development study shows, sustainability training in which trainers and practitioners assume the respective roles of experts and unknowledgeable subjects might miss opportunities to promote more sustainable business practices in the marketplace. When the practical knowledge of both practitioners and their stakeholders, rather than just expert knowledge, is at the centre of sustainability programmes and projects, the political, economic, socio-cultural and moral aspects of the market become more explicit and provide valuable input into the objectives of such initiatives. The study thus proposes an analytical perspective that helps policymakers and developers gain insights into the complex web of stakeholder relations and co-create knowledge relevant to the stakeholders involved in a given sustainability initiative.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The change process inherent in both action research studies not only allowed me to become an active participant influencing change at the research site but also the reverse. In fact, my involvement in this study and the actions of the research participants contributed to both challenging and changing my views in many ways. Furthermore, these activities prompted

my own self-reflexive process that continuous to shape me as a researcher, educator and business developer (Dredge et al. forthcoming). This process allowed me to become aware of five main limitations of this doctoral research that should be discussed. First, as the theoretical and methodological framework was developed and used within a particular socio-cultural context (small Finnish tourism companies and two Masters-level sustainability courses), the results and experiences from the study are unique and cannot offer a general representation of the social construction of sustainability through market interactions. While this was not the intention of my research, I agree that further insight into how sustainability is constructed in other markets could be gained by applying this framework to different organisational (e.g., a non-European country, different business sector or large global company) and educational contexts (e.g., bachelor's/executive MBA-level courses, larger university or non-European university).

Second, it should be noted that the practical implementation of this framework is not without challenges because it requires certain organisational skills and capacities. Indeed, the business development study illustrated here relied highly on the organisational, human and financial resources provided by an EU-funded project. Indeed, this dissertation does not directly answer how this framework could be implemented in a business organisation without external advice or support. However, this study indicates what types of processes, resources, commitments and employees a practical implementation of this framework may require. Also, the pedagogical development study draws attention to some of the professional qualities and human capacities that firms interested in sustainability should consider developing amongst their staff and when recruiting new employees. For example, the ability to examine a situation from different stakeholder perspectives and easily move across different social discourses are two relevant professional skills needed to successfully implement this framework within an organisational context and thus to develop more sustainable business practices.

Third, because this research focusses on fewer than five stakeholder groups (firms, customers, students, university staff and regional authorities), further development of the multi-stakeholder perspective may require research involving more stakeholder groups. Nevertheless, I believe that these five stakeholder groups contributed to delivering satisfactory results regarding the social construction of sustainability. We should consider, as argued in Article E, that stakeholders bring traces of broader discursive structures, ideologies and power relations into the market, which allow them to adopt shifting positions that exist in relation to one another rather than isolated fixed categories. Fourth, the fact that the framework only includes the four most popular streams of ethical thinking (utilitarianism, ethical egoism, deontology and virtue ethics) may be viewed as a research limitation. There is a need to further explore the role of morality within sustainability marketing and marketing in general by drawing on less-dominant ethical perspectives. For instance, feminist ethics, discourse ethics, existentialism and Foucault's ethics, among other contemporary ethical theories, may be relevant when considering sustainability within a market context (see Crane, Knights & Starkey 2008; Crane & Matten 2007; Jones et al. 2005). The inclusion of alternative ethical theories in the framework can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of moral positions that shape both sustainability and managerial discourses.

Fifth, although the idea of approaching sustainability as a social construction advances the field of sustainable marketing, it presents limitations that must be acknowledged. This doctoral research does not intend to underrate the role of scientific and expert knowledge in the sustainability debate by emphasising the importance of lay knowledge to make progress towards a more sustainable society. In fact, scientific knowledge has always played a crucial role in identifying and examining imminent ecological and social phenomena that have remained outside the boundaries of everyday life and stakeholder discourses. For example, despite scientific research on climate change beginning in the late 19th century, climate change did not become part of the social discourses until the end of the 20th century. From this perspective, it seems necessary for a multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing to also examine how invisible but impending ecological and social concerns that remain the sole interest of scientists can be brought into stakeholder discourses before they materialise or become a global threat to society. Rather than being weaknesses, these research limitations represent stepping stones for future research. Drawing upon these limitations, I provide some specific recommendations for further research into the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The set of ontological and epistemological premises forming this framework can be used to study sustainability as a social construction in different empirical contexts and may even serve as an inspiration for further theoretical and methodological developments within the framework itself. In this sense, I would like to propose specific recommendations for future research, three of which seem to be of particular merit. First, it is necessary to continue exploring the implications of shifting from individual stakeholders to markets as the analytical focus of sustainable marketing. To that end, I suggest applying the framework within a different organisational and market context. The following question could, for instance, be answered by future research: how can this framework be used within a large international (tourism) organisation to promote understanding of sustainability and more sustainable business practices? A large international organisation can provide insight into how the multi-stakeholder perspective developed in this dissertation functions within a global context where values and legal norms are in conflict and the shifting positions of stakeholders extend beyond the boundaries of a welfare state. Research in a service sector other than tourism is also welcome because it can provide new theoretical insights that further develop the framework.

Second, I suggest further examining the shift from common sense to reflexive sustainable marketing. In this respect, I find it worthwhile to explore how sustainable marketing, as a threshold concept, can be used in core marketing courses to develop more socially responsible ways of being and acting in the marketplace. Such an exploration is especially relevant when considering how sustainability, like democracy, is a discourse that has been widely recognised by the majority of policymakers and business practitioners, even more by civic society, around the world. The confluence of sustainability, globalisation and tech-

nological development, which are redefining the political, economic and socio-cultural parameters of contemporary society, call into question the relevance of sustainable marketing as an extraordinary marketing approach for addressing social and environmental issues within a market context. As shown by critical marketing scholars (Catterall et al. 2002; Skálén et al. 2008), sustainable marketing can be used as a means to re-evaluate the basic premises of marketing theory in general and, as argued in this dissertation, such a re-evaluation may begin in the classrooms of business schools. In particular, investigations conducted within an executive MBA programme or Masters-level course at a business school situated in a non-welfare state can offer new pedagogical and theoretical insights that further develop the reflexive perspective of the framework.

Third, the shift in sustainable marketing from a technical to a meaning perspective merits further investigation. Although a better understanding of the cultural meanings related to environmental and social responsibility helps firms integrate sustainability into their business practices, there is still a need to explore how the negotiation, redefinition and transformation of these cultural meanings may introduce and institutionalise more sustainable practices within a market context. Thus, I suggest using theories of practice and institutional theory to further elaborate the multi-stakeholder perspective developed in this dissertation. While theories of practice can provide a better understanding of how the sustainability meanings (re)produced in an dynamic and complex marketplace contribute to the development of sustainable marketing practices (see Järvensivu 2010; Warde 2005), institutional theory can provide valuable insight into the impact that these sustainable marketing practices have on societal change (see Matten & Moon 2008). Because this dissertation focusses on existing markets with well-established practices, I suggest conducting these studies within the context of an emergent market. By an emergent market, I mean a market in which practices are not yet institutionalised but are being defined, negotiated and transformed. The market emerging around the notions of rest and sleep (Valtonen & Veijola 2011) can be suitable for studying how the stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing helps develop and institutionalise sustainable marketing practices within a market context.

Finally, I would like to call for studies that examine the long-term impact that reflexive sustainable marketing has on business students and managers. How many students/managers using sustainable marketing as a threshold concept remain largely anchored in managerialism, and how many develop the critical reflexive skills needed to transform prevailing marketing practices? To what degree are critical reflexive practitioners and researchers capable of promoting change towards more sustainable markets? Although these studies can be difficult to organise and implement in practice, they are valuable in understanding the relationship between reflexive sustainable marketing and the development of more sustainable business practices, as well as the role of the framework presented in this dissertation, in forming critical reflexive business practitioners.

APPENDIX 1

PBL VIGNETTE A

You work in the marketing department of a European retailing company that is in the process of revamping its line of own-label clothing. This clothing line is important to your business, and as your company has expanded, your clothing label has gradually occupied an increasingly prominent role in the product mix in stores. Your existing European supplier of own-label products, Berger & Söhne, has supplied your company for ten years, and over half of their business is accounted for by your company's orders. During that time, both companies have developed excellent business relationships. Berger & Söhne has expressed many times its commitment to keep their factories in Europe closer to their customers.

As you are considering how to proceed with the revamp, a competing supplier, Global Fabrics, also contacts you, offering virtually identical products to Berger & Söhne with what appears to be equivalent supply arrangements but at a considerably lower price per unit. Over a year, this savings would work out to approximately €400,000— not a substantial sum for your company but a considerable savings of about 25 percent of your costs. Global Fabrics was founded a couple of years ago by a former manager of your company. In fact, the owner is an old friend of yours. You are aware that Global Fabrics' competitive advantage is possible because the products are manufactured in factories situated in developing countries. Moreover, there have been talks in the industry that Global Fabrics produces lower cost products thanks to its sweatshop strategy. (Adapted from Crane & Matten 2007, 362).

PBL VIGNETTE B

You are the CEO of a medium-sized pharmaceutical company that operates in a West African country. Still, having successfully expanded the company's market share during the last six years, and you feel that the market is stagnating and that the turnover of the company will decline in the coming years. While the company has licenses for producing most pharmaceutical products, it has discarded the idea of manufacturing HIV drugs. Indeed, despite the high demand for HIV medication, you have always considered this particular market segment to be too risky (because of expensive licenses and low return on investment).

As you are thinking about seeking new potential markets for your products in other African countries, the Health Minister of this West African nation approaches you with a business proposal. She wants your company to produce generic HIV drugs. To that end, she offers to provide your company with financial aid for launching the production process, a ten-year exclusive procurement contract with the local government and unconditional political support against possible litigations. The proposal needs to be considered. After all,

AIDS is the main epidemic in this West African country, killing thousands of people every year. Your company would not only have the possibility of supplying the local population with cheaper HIV drugs but would also be able to get a high return on investment.

PBL VIGNETTE C

You work in the marketing department of an automotive company that is on the brink of launching a brand-new wagon. Because your company has been losing market shares to its competitors, much hope is put on this particularly stylish but low-priced model. Indeed, this new model, which is targeted at families in developing countries, promises to be a market success and should thus bring the company back on its feet.

However, as your company is about to bring the first cars on the market, your tire supplier, Ruedas S.A., calls and informs you that some recent tests have showed that the tires are not suitable for the road conditions existing in most developing countries. According to Ruedas S.A., frequent impacts from potholes and road debris at high speed (> 100 km/h) can lead to loss of tire pressure and thus tire failure. It seems that the replacement of tires is imminent if accidents are to be avoided. Nevertheless, replacing the tires will delay the launching of the model and thus increase total costs by 10 percent. As a result, the initial price competitiveness of the model may be lost. (Adapted from Gioia 1992)

PBL VIGNETTE D

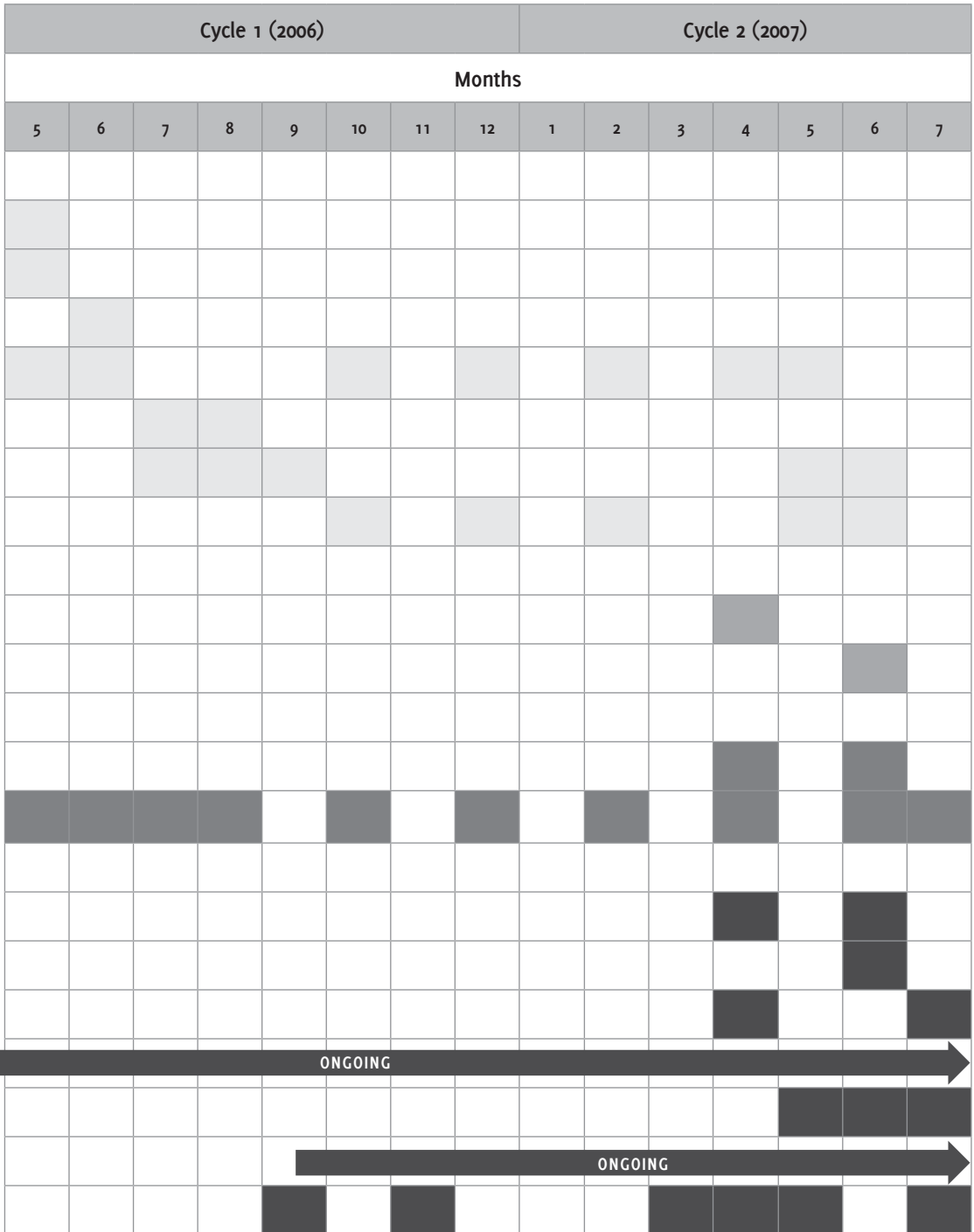
You are the CEO of a European retailing company that is in the process of renovating its line of own-label cosmetics. This line is important to your business, and as your company has expanded, own-label cosmetics have gradually occupied an increasingly outstanding role in the product mix in stores. Your existing supplier of own-label products, Bella Donna, has supplied your company for more than 20 years, and over half of their business is accounted for by your company's orders. Most of the managers working in the company have a good relationship with the owner and CEO of Bella Donna. They even consider her as a good and reliable friend.

As you are considering how to proceed with the renovation, a competing supplier, True Beauty, also contacts you, offering virtually identical products to Bella Donna, with what appears to be equivalent supply arrangements, but at a slightly lower price per unit. Over a year, this savings would work out to approximately €300,000 – not a substantial sum for your company, but a considerable saving of about two percent on your costs. True Beauty also points out in its sales pitch that they go well beyond the industry standard for non-animal testing of their products' ingredients – again, a significant improvement over what Bella Donna has been offering you. Indeed, Bella Donna has already been the target of animal-rights activists because of its product testing on animals. (Adapted from Crane & Matten 2007, 362)

APPENDIX 2

TIMELINE OF THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STUDY

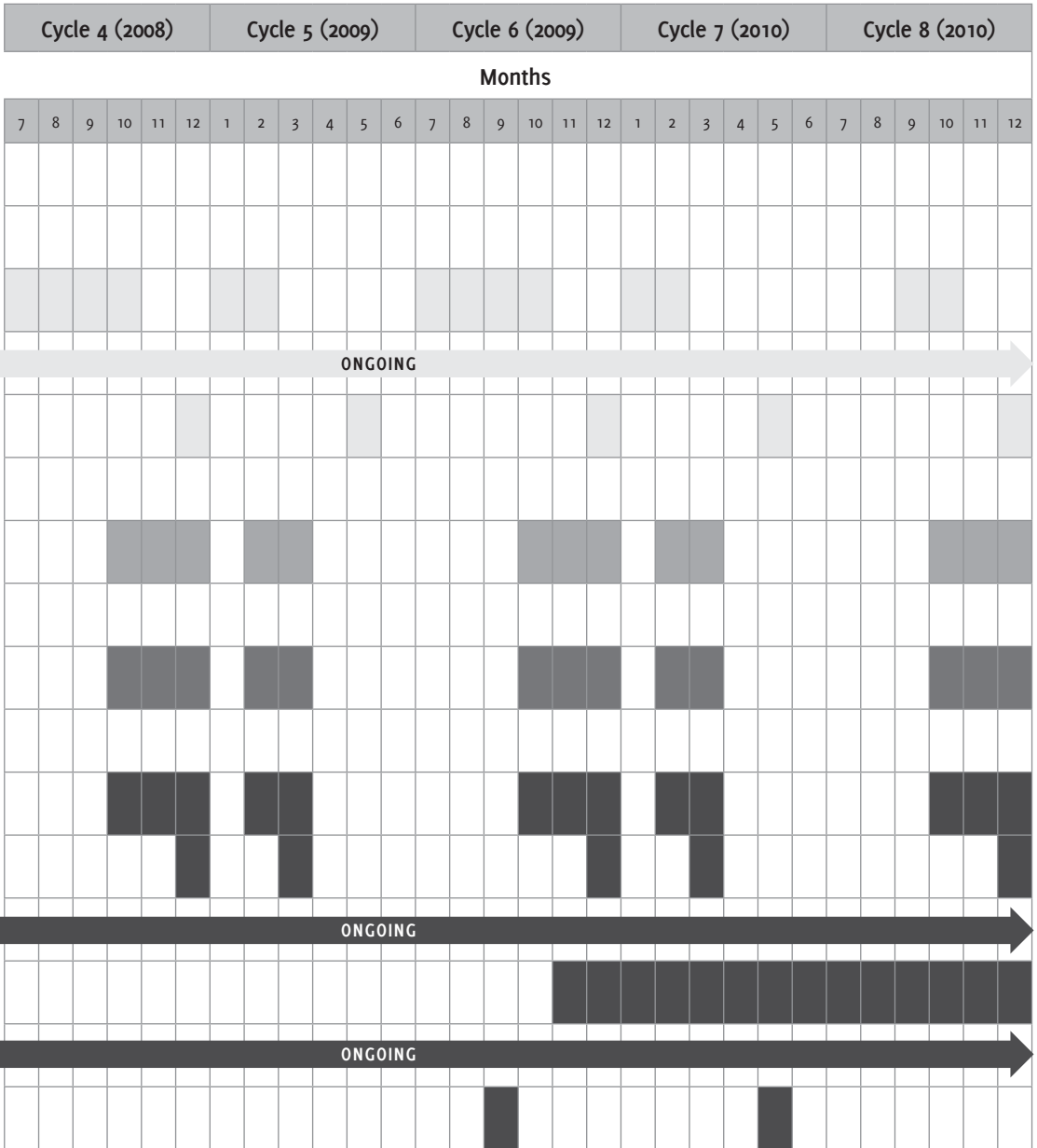
Action research phases
Planning
Establishing contact with “Equality Trail” project
Open invitation to entrepreneurs to join the action research study
Forming the group of entrepreneurs
Meetings with the project management team of “Equality Trail” for defining the scope of the intervention, (re)designing the action research study and planning project activities
Conducting convergent interviews
Collection of secondary data related to the entrepreneurs and tourism strategies
Planning meetings with the group of entrepreneurs (these meetings were also reflective in nature)
Acting
First test of the tourism programme (outcome of the planning process)
Second test of the tourism programme (outcome of the planning process)
Observing
Participant and non-participant observations conducted by the entrepreneurs
Participant and non-participant observations conducted by the action researcher and in some occasions by members of “Equality Trail” project management team
Reflecting
Conducting focus groups with customers
Workshop with customers, developers and local community members
Reflection meetings with the group of entrepreneurs / review of empirical data
Action researcher’s reflecting process / review of empirical data
Conducting discourse analysis
Writting process (seminar and conference papers)
Presentation of the study in seminars and conferences



APPENDIX 3

TIMELINE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Action research phases	Cycle 1 (2007)						Cycle 2 (2007)						Cycle 3 (2008)					
	Months																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Planning																		
Defining the scope of the study																		
(Re)designing the Masters-level course structure																		
Literature review on PBL, learning theories and CSR teaching																		
Meetings with supervisor																		
Acting																		
Implementation of the Masters-level courses																		
Observing																		
Participant and non-participant observation conducted by the action researcher																		
Reflecting																		
Students' learning journals, blogs, wiki, presentations, etc.																		
Students feedback (survey)																		
Action researchers reflecting process																		
Conducting discourse analysis																		
Action researcher's writing process (blog posts, conference papers and peer-reviewed articles)																		
Presentation of the study in seminars and conferences																		



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Part II

ARTICLES

ARTICLE A:

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ARTICLE B:

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ARTICLE C:

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ARTICLE D:

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ARTICLE E:

García-Rosell J.C. (2012 online first). Struggles over corporate social responsibility meanings in teaching practices: The case of hybrid problem-based learning. *Management Learning*.

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From firms to extended markets: A cultural approach to tourism product development

Abstract

The tourism industry is a rapidly growing economic and cultural domain with remarkable societal effects. Critical tourism studies have discussed these effects from different theoretical perspectives. However, they have mostly concentrated on existing tourism products - on their consumption and consequences - and left tourism product development without critical attention. We take up the task of filling this gap. By leaning on the cultural approach of marketing and critical tourism studies we suggest that tourism product development has - as originating from modern marketing and management disciplines - taken the viewpoint of large manufacturing enterprises, and separated service providers from consumers. In this article we discuss a more comprehensive way of understanding product development in tourism. We highlight the complexity and contextualised nature of tourism products and their development by approaching tourism product development from a cultural perspective. We argue that product development should be regarded not only as a managerial process but as a multi-actor cultural construction that allows us to translate cultural market knowledge into products and to keep up with cultural and ideological changes. Instead of renewing the traditional dualism of production-consumption, we theorize and reconceptualize markets to break off from dichotomies separating customers, firms, employees, locals, and regional economic development - production and consumption - from each other. Different market actors are embedded in the markets where several market activities are represented and negotiated to develop competitive and sustainable tourism products. It is time to do business as unusual.

Keywords:

tourism; product development; postmodern marketing; cultural approach; critical tourism studies

Introduction: Product in tourism

"I think this is the main element here, that we have a human being 'living' the nature presentation with the customers, together. And it is the local person. The customers have been truly pleased when they can ask the guide, like: 'Do you really live here?' 'Yes, I do, I live here all year round, and this is not just a place where I come to work for the winter.' And such, it is like the tourist would get a bit deeper and a bit more inside into the nature where we live, when we

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have the local human as a link. - - - It is a shared experience, a collective situation. I think this is the most important thing in the product." A Tourism-based micro-entrepreneur in Lapland, Finland, Interview 3 (Kylänen, 2005, p. 112-113.)

As illustrated in the example above, a tourism product entails several specialities. Tourism goes beyond the usual system of trade and production and dynamic consumption, but is also connected to broader cultural and societal phenomena. Tourism products are almost simultaneously produced and consumed in an experiential setting. The production/consumption of tourism more interestingly relates to space and place (see Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen & Urry, 2004; Rojek & Urry, 1997; Urry, 1990), and hence, culminates to destinations (Ateljević, 2000; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Tourism places are anything but closed, stable and passive elements in the globalized tourism business. They are complex mixtures of the tangible and the non-tangible, tourism and non-tourism, hosts and guests, and authorities at different levels. Thus, places do not exist as such but are active socio-cultural constructions that change over time due to internal and external processes (see also Ringer, 1998; Saarinen, 2001). (See Larsen, Urry & Axhausen, 2007; Shaw & Williams, 2004, pp. 2, 21-2, 186-187.)

Critical tourism studies have presented a major contribution in identifying, theorizing and critiquing the effects of institutionalized tourism from different theoretical perspectives (e.g. Ateljević, Pritchard & Morgan, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2006; Ringer, 1998). Interest has been shown towards such issues as gender and body (e.g. Veijola & Jokinen, 1994), employees' perspective (e.g. Ateljević & Doorne, 2003; Cukier, 1998), the interaction between local community and industry and/or local community involvement (e.g. Jamal & Getz, 1995; Shaw & Williams, 1994; 2004), sustainability (e.g. Fadeeva, 2003; Saarinen, 2001) as well as authenticity in reproduction of culture (e.g. MacCannell, 1976/1999; Rojek & Urry, 1997). However, the tourism product and especially its product development have gained fairly little attention to date. The focus has mostly been on existing tourism products – on their consumption and consequences – and the development of tourism products has been left without enough critical attention. Moreover, the regional range of tourism products has not been thoroughly understood (Grefe, 1994; Murphy, Pritchard & Smith, 2000). We propose that product development is the key process in production and reproduction of values and meanings. Possible sustainability of tourism thus lies in the products and their effects on the social and natural environment. So it is in product development where the principles of sustainability are constantly being renewed and renegotiated.

This article is written from a cultural perspective. We thus concentrate on the meanings, processes, practices, power relations, and values that become emphasized in the analysis of tourism production and consumption. Particularly informed by the cultural approach of marketing (see Brown, 1993; Firat, Dholakia & Venkatesh, 1995; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006) and critical tourism studies (see e.g. Ateljević, 2000; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001; Shaw & Williams, 2004; Urry, 1990), our aim is to observe tourism product development as a cultural construction. This enables us to fill the gap with a more holistic framework that takes the distinctiveness of the tourism product into account. We therefore ask how the theorization of the markets (e.g. Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006) contributes to the understanding of tourism product development.

We understand markets as a cultural multi-actor construction. This highlights the constantly on-going negotiations and struggles for meanings occurring in the market-places between different actors in an emerging global context. (Ahola, 2007; du Gay,

Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus, 1997; Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006.) Our perspective goes beyond the traditional "Supply meets Demand" -setting by suggesting that the touristic production process is a social and cultural practice (see Edensor, 2001; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Thus, tourism places are not produced only by the industry or the gazing tourists, but by something beyond designable and foreseeable processes. These places receive their meanings only through concrete production processes that connect people to the world by contextualising one's experiences. Production of spatiality is a face-to-face and face-to-place process of practice and performance. (Bærenholdt et al., 2004.)

Tourism is in the niche of production/consumption dialectics as it lies at the heart of (re)production of space and (re)construction of place (see Ateljević, 2000). Consequently, tourism is an example of the sign economy, as the economic is connected with the socio-cultural and the symbolic meanings (see Firat & Schultz, 1997; Venkatesh, 1999). Tourism destinations are produced through complex processes and practices of co-located actors that create the regionally extended product (see Greffe, 1994; Michael, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001; Urry, 1990). The complexity of the tourism product and its development process require more in-depth study of the tourism industry from a socio-cultural perspective and, therefore, rethinking the modern approach (e.g. Edvardsson, Gustafsson, Johnson & Sandén, 2000; Johnes & Storey, 1998), which has been mainly based on traditional management and marketing theories with an emphasis on economic transactions and exchange (e.g. Hunt, 1991) and/or customer satisfaction (Kotler, 2003).

We by no means try to capture the whole phenomenon of production/consumption connectedness. Rather, our aim is to bring together two surprisingly distant camps of understanding, one of critical tourism studies (see e.g. Ateljević, 2000; Ateljević et al., 2007; Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Shaw & Williams, 2004) and one of the cultural approach of marketing (see e.g. Firat et al., 1995; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Venkatesh, 1999). The key goal in the contribution is to suggest an approach to better understand product development in tourism as an interchanging relationship between tourism studies, marketing and organization studies.

We approach tourism product development from three interrelated topics and conceptualizations. The first one, discussed in this introduction, gives special regard to unique characteristics of the regional nature of the tourism product, followed by some leading ideas and principles on product development in tourism. And, thirdly we offer an alternative approach to understand product development in tourism regions: the theorization of the markets originating from cultural consumer research. Also, some similarities will be brought out from services marketing and geography of tourism emphasising the same transitions in breaking the dichotomies of production and consumption. Consequently, an operationalization for the somewhat abstract thoughts of postmodern marketing and the theorization of the markets will be presented. Finally, we will consider some future directions for debate.

Developing products in tourism

In tourism studies, product development has been discussed from different angles, but rather narrowly. The phenomenon has been explained with models and views originating from marketing and management perspectives (Komppula, 2001). The understanding and implementation of product development models are grounded on the view of the tourism product. Different models for the tourism product have been suggested (e.g. Middleton, 1994; Murphy et al., 2000; Smith, 1994). One of the much cited

tourism product definitions is formulated by Smith (1994). Smith discusses product development in tourism and to further understand the process, he proposes a five-element model of the tourism product. He states that some of the elements, physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice and involvement, can be empirically measured for the industry's economic sake. He also claims that the model acknowledges the role of human experience (Smith, 1994). From the supply side the model seems to view the product with the eyes of management. According to Smith it fits into the needs of one firm in contrast to many recent studies in which the focus is on a destination level (e.g. Murphy et al., 2000). This model has been critiqued as being production oriented and emphasizing outputs and phases, leaving out the customer (Komppula 2001). Smith's Generic Tourism Product has clearly been inspired by Kotler's (1988); see also Grönroos (1993); Middleton (1994) circle model, three levels of the product, which include the core product, the tangible product and the augmented product.

Heath and Wall (1992) suggest that the tourism product development process includes phases like Opportunity Identification, Design, Testing, and Introduction. Pender (1999) lists four main steps in the product development process: Genesis and Evaluation, Early Development, Introduction, and In-market evaluation and advanced development. These product planning steps take place inside the tourism companies. By identifying steps and phases the models illustrate the process as a straight forward action inside the firms, starting from one point and ending at another. We argue that this might not be the case when a regional tourism product is formed, and this listing of phases fails to capture some essentials of the process.

The tourism product development models have also been criticized for their focus on the technical properties of the product rather than the customer experience (Haahti & Komppula, 2006). Building on this critique, models acknowledging the customer experience and benefits have been proposed (Haahti & Komppula, 2006; Komppula, 2001; Lumsdon, 1997). Some of these models presented recognize the customer value as the core of the products (e.g. Murphy et al., 2000). However, they end up identifying a service (delivery) process that combines all possible activities, facilities, resources and services of a destination. Although these circle models help to frame the width and scope of touristic offerings and help to identify some key elements relating to the production and consumption of tourism services, they fail to emphasise their dynamics. They prefer a traditional exchange-based approach, either leaning strictly towards a supply-orientation or a demand-orientation. In addition, they build on the dualist producer-consumer view, where the service provider is the subject and the customer is the object.

The product development models presented raise some questions of applicability. As they are based on rather traditional managerial perspectives, they tend to neglect the social aspect in both consumption and production. The models concentrate on the value creation and experiences of the individual customer and focus on his/her cognitive process (e.g. Murphy et al., 2000). They represent the customer as an individual consuming places according to his/her needs and wants. In doing so, they fail to capture the social nature of the place. The models also fail to emphasize that the value for the consuming tourist does not build only on using the product i.e. visiting the tourist destination but on more experiential elements and active doings (see e.g. Perkins & Thorns, 2001; Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

Although most of the models acknowledge that a tourism product can be an entire region, they fail to understand the complexity of the process. When the product com-

bines both the industrial and the consumer markets, the process cannot be viewed only as a manageable process (Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006). Product development is a socio-cultural practice and, unfortunately, it is being neglected when it is dealt with and modelled into "boxes" and circles that represent the different phases of the process. The recognition of the social nature of tourism products is also important on behalf of the local community, since it could play an important role in helping to build tourism products that are socially and culturally sustainable (Fadeeva, 2003; Jamal & Jamrozy, 2006; Stronza & Jamal, 2007). The product development process in tourism raises questions on knowledge and power. How the knowledge possessed by locals and workers could be taken into account in the process, since they are often holders of relevant market knowledge (see Jamal & Jamrozy, 2006). When the product is an entire region, as in the case of destinations, one should reflect on how these different voices could be heard.

In the case of small enterprises the main weakness of these models lies in the lack of the socio-cultural values. Often in small enterprises entrepreneurship is rather a way of life than a business-wise choice. Yet these entrepreneurs are frequently able to create innovative products because of their ability to articulate the sense of place and community. The cultural context plays an important role in small business environments, as the growth and development of businesses happen via local culture and shared values. (Ateljević & Doorne, 2000; see also Massey, Harris & Lewis, 2004.) The traditional product development models tend to leave these kinds of innovations out since they focus merely on the companies and their managers. Hence, the actual process and the values veiling the choices are simply dismissed. In order to highlight the deeper socio-cultural issues of product development a new perspective is needed, an approach that keeps from separating the providers and the consumers from each other.

Although New Product Development and New Service Development are probably the most used concepts in discussing product development (e.g. Alam & Perry, 2002; Edvardsson et al., 2000; Johnes & Storey, 1998; Kelly & Storey, 2000), we take up the product development practice more holistically. We wish to analyze the process and principles, not the actual type of product development. When discussing product development we refer not only to the developing new products but also to the existing products being redesigned. The socio-cultural nature of the tourism product questions the notion of the product ever being completed but rather it should be seen as a constantly evolving and on-going process. In the case of tourism products, the discussion should be extended from only new product or service development to product or service development in general. The tourism product is constantly being created by the different parties participating in its production and consumption. Instead of only talking about the product, one should analyze the tourism product as a process that creates potentials in a multicultural, communal and globalized setting. This gives better possibility to understand the nature of the tourism product and overall experience, and its connection to customer reproduction of self-images, one's social relations, and one's everyday life (see Cova, 1997; Larsen et al., 2007). The traditional view of the product as a fixed, "ready-made" entity with managers and their employees as the producers, as the conventional models put it, does not give a lifelike picture on the matter. It is hard to define, where the tourism product starts and where it ends. It is also hard to outline in some cases as to who is the consumer and who is the producer. This is why we feel that process definition gives a more comprehensive understanding. Tourism region is a process into which tourists immerse themselves. (Firat et al. 1995; Firat & Schultz 1997; Firat & Dholakia 2006; Venkatesh, 1999).

From managerial standpoints to cultural construction of markets

The new understanding of the tourism product also calls for a different definition of tourism product development. Due to the nature of the product, we argue that product development should be regarded not only as a managerial process but as a cultural construction that allows us to translate cultural market knowledge into products and to keep up with the cultural and ideological changes.

The thought of modern marketing is wide-spread (e.g. Shaw & Jones, 2005). Management oriented modern marketing has gained its central position through the popularity of the marketing concept. The core of the marketing concept, to know and serve customer wants at a profit, has been extended not just to an ever-growing range of institutions but to modern culture as a whole (see Firat & Dholakia, 2006). Modern marketing has also affected the tourism line of business. Its effects can be seen for example in consumer conceptions, stakeholder relationships, value creation perceptions and processes, tourism product definitions and product development models of the tourism business.

Recently, the winds of change have been blowing through the marketing thought. Especially, the vast body of services marketing literature (e.g. Grönroos, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2004) has contributed to deeper understanding by emphasizing a shift from traditional goods dominant logic to service-dominant logic and to the idea of a more co-productive stance on marketplace behavior and value creation. Also, the school of relationship marketing has contributed to the shift from the "traditional way" of modern marketing to a broader perspective – from dyadic relationships to many-to-many marketing (Grönroos, 1993; Gummesson, 2004). These developments have challenged modern management viewpoints. Despite this clear progress of marketing worldview, critics have emerged. Especially, the academics that have ushered interpretive, poststructuralist and postmodern approaches to marketing (e.g. Brown, 1993; Firat, 1990; McCracken, 1988; Venkatesh, 1999) have implied that the advancement drift from goods to services does not go far enough.

Accordingly, marketing is still considered as a separate business activity. It is a tool that seeks the best solutions to meet the consumers' needs in order to create value in an exchange event between two distinct parties. (Bagozzi, 1986; Firat & Schultz, 1997; cf. Kotler & Armstrong, 1991.) This resembles John Deighton's (1992) argument, that markets are theatrical "stages", in which exchanges and competition take place (see also Buzell, 1999). In addition, on the stages market "actors", the professionals, present themselves and their actions before an "audience", the customers, in a satisfying manner (cf. Firat & Dholakia, 2006). Although the customer is seen more and more as a participant, the fundamental dichotomy – the subject-object scheme of the firm and its customer – has remained. In a nature-based-tourism context this dichotomous production-consumption viewpoint is actualized when service professionals, the tour guides, "herd" tourists safely around. Simultaneously they are staging unique experiences to them. Doing so, they are ensuring that the tourists return contented, with fine memories of their leisure time (e.g. Ang, 1990; Arnould, Price & Tierny, 1998). This modern managerial marketing approach and its clear distinctions do not completely fit to the present-day conditions.

For, the contemporary world is in state of flux. It is a world of motion and complex inner connections. A myriad of processes operating on a global scale constantly cuts across national boundaries integrating different cultures. It is also a world of mixtures of cultural flows – respectively, of capital, people, commodities, images, and ideologies.

(Inda & Rosaldo, 2002.) Then again, in the global society, economy and the world of business play a significant role in the production of culture (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Yet, the modern managerial marketing approach tends to downplay the cultural dynamics and social complexity. Therefore, a change in the marketing thought is not an option but a necessity.

We suggest that the layer of insulation between the professional "actors" and "the audience" should be eroded. It is myopic in the contemporary complex marketing environment to focus *either* on the marketer *or* on the consumer or even on customer-firm relationships (Greenley & Foxall, 1998; Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar, 1993; Slater & Narver, 1995). We urge that, business and consumption contexts should be viewed more broadly, the emphasis should be on the "stages" – on the markets. However, the stage is inspected as an enlarged ensemble of doers and doings.

In the theorization of the markets, a market is a set of institutions and actors – marketers and consumers – located in a physical or virtual space where marketing-related transactions and activities take place (Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006). We consider the markets in the spirit of Venkatesh and Peñaloza (2006) as a construction of subjects-to-subjects relationships. There the customer subject is an active producer of meanings, who is in constant interaction with the surrounding social, cultural and consumption structures (see Peñaloza, 2001). The customer is often *subjected* not just to the marketer, but to other consumers as well. As Firat and Dholakia (2006) suggest the notion of community opens up a fruitful societal conceptual territory that enables us to encompass the complex and reciprocal 'play' of various subjects in contemporary marketplaces. Accordingly, marketplace actors are not considered as individuals with separate and inscribed tasks and roles, but as community members whose tasks and roles are merging, blurring, and dissolving during the course of the marketplace (see also Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Together with Venkatesh and Peñaloza (2006), we see that marketing is something that takes place within the markets and the marketplaces. We allege that it is important to emphasize more cultural and social tenets to marketing and to apply these ideas to marketplace thinking. This cultural approach of marketing provides firms and marketers as well as consumers, consumer organizations and consumer policy-makers with new conceptual tools and methods for gaining a better understanding of the cultural complexity of the marketplace and helps them to reflect on their roles in the markets (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

Along with marketing, the cultural geographical studies of tourism have identified the importance of stepping beyond the production/consumption division. On the footsteps of tourism geographers (Britton, 1991; Ioannides & Debbage, 1998; Ringer, 1998), Ateljević (2000) sums up the emerging consensus by suggesting the transcendence of boundaries between production and consumption, or in cultural geographical terms, economy, and culture. As both production and consumption are interconnected in tourism through reproduction of spatiality, places and even redevelopment of products, the value of the dichotomous approach can be questioned (Jamal & Kim, 2005; see also Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Their postulate is therefore to illustrate the connectedness of tourism with the fabrics of everyday lives and identities, and wider social and natural systems, and more importantly to identify the political economy of tourism, and the power structures of capitalist production. Thus, this breaking of the production/consumption dichotomy has not been taken into product development context but has been used in order to identify the political economy of tourism, and the power structures of capitalist production. As a conclusion, we are claiming that not only is cultural geographical studies of tourism in the nexus of production/consumption (see Ateljević

2000) but also marketing (Firat et al., 1995; Firat & Venkatesh, 1993). It is time to do "Business as unusual".

Business as unusual in action

Increasing complexity of the marketing environment and general changes in society are particularly demanding for marketers to become more conscious of daily business processes. For instance, sustainability, which has been a current topic of debate, represents one of the challenges faced by today's marketers and consumers. This relates to the request for marketers to become more stakeholder-oriented presented in marketing (see e.g. Fry & Polonsky, 2004; Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell, 2005) and tourism studies (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Jamal & Getz, 1995). In both marketing and tourism studies, most authors follow Freeman's (1984) definition of stakeholder: "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives." In this regard, value creation is not only restricted to customers, since a stakeholder involvement may create (or even decrease) value for the different market actors involved.

Nowadays, it is very important that firms recognize their relationships with the diverse stakeholders and then ensure the inclusion of these stakeholders in strategic development (Buhalis, 2000; Fry & Polonsky, 2004). This connectedness becomes more and more evident in the tourism sector – a highly fragmented industry – where products affect or are affected by the different actors which have a stake in the destination (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005; Hall, 1994; 1999; Murphy, 1988; Roberts & Simpson, 1999). Since sustainability has become a relevant topic of discussion in tourism (e.g. Saarinen, 2006), there is a need for making the marketing planning process more participative and inclusive by considering the different stakeholder interactions. Actually, the need for coordination and collaboration in the tourism planning process has been recognized in several contributions (see e.g. Aas et al., 2005; Hall, 1994; Jamal & Jamroz, 2006; Roberts & Simpson, 1999).

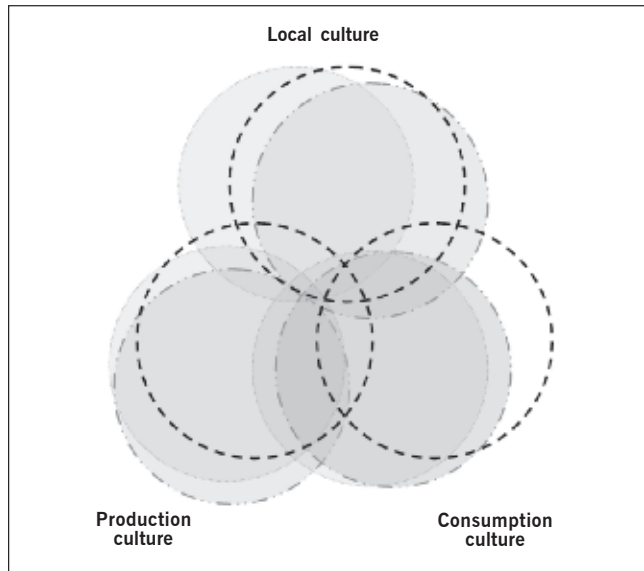
In fact, whereas tourism has been recognized as an industry capable of generating growth in regional economies, it has also been criticized for its negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impact on host destinations (Holden, 2003; Ladkin & Martinez Bertramini, 2002; Saarinen, 2006). This calls for more participative and integrative practices in business development and planning in which different stakeholders may not only be considered but also have the opportunity to interact, negotiate, resist and reflect their actions and impacts on the production and consumption of the destination. Tourism studies literature in particular has drawn attention to stakeholder theory as an engagement strategy, which focuses on mutual responsibilities and the need for dialogue among the members of a particular community or region (see Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Hall, 1999; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Murphy, 1988; Roberts & Simpson, 1999). At the same time, there are also several contributions that discuss stakeholders from a management perspective (Buhalis, 2000; Robson & Robson, 1996; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). That is, rather than dealing with community planning, managerial contributions emphasise the modernity-based business thinking, where the stakeholder relations are observed, firstly, from the perspective of the single company, and secondly, as a rational, totally manageable strategy handled by the manager.

Nevertheless, when markets, and in this case tourism regions, are considered as cultural constructions in constant development, there is a need to comprehend the interactions existing between the different stakeholders rather than to merely manage them. Moreo-

ver, stakeholders begin to be seen as marketplace actors who help to construct the destination. We therefore suggest moving beyond the traditional stakeholder approaches – engagement and management – by combining the essence of stakeholder theory and the theorization of the markets. Such a theoretical combination provides a more comprehensive market orientation that goes beyond studying customers and firms to include other marketplace actors (e.g. local people, local authorities, interest groups, etc.). Particularly, in the tourism sector – where the boundaries between production and consumption fade away – an extended market approach may forge new understanding on the social processes embedded in production and consumption activities. By an extended market approach we mean a constitution of various marketplaces or marketspaces, in which doers, a set of institutions and actors are located. It is a space where, not only marketing-related transactions and activities take place but also social reality is produced. Thus, the notion of extended markets refers to a joint cultural production process in which marketers, consumers and other marketplace actors produce, maintain, negotiate, resist, and transform values and meanings (see Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; cf. Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006).

Among the different services industries, it is in the tourism sector where extended markets manifest themselves through the prevailing overlap between consumption, production and living conditions. Indeed, in tourism the local culture, consumption culture and production culture are not only intertwined but almost inseparable (see Figure 1). Figure 1 emphasizes the fading borderlines between production culture, consumption culture and local culture, and the changing roles of the actors. It is important to note that the cultures are constantly on the move and thus, living ones. As a specific characteristic of the global multicultural world, local culture fuses with non-local and global. The figure also provides an illustration of the particularity of region-wide, extended products, the multi-actor cultural construction of the markets, and the conditions for product development found in the tourism context.

Figure 1
THE INTERTWINED NATURE OF TOURISM PRODUCTS



While a multi-actor marketing approach seems to be crucial for the sound development of a tourism region, there is an urgent need to recognize that tourism products entail inconsistent on-going processes rather than rational finite ones as it is assumed in traditional product development models. Indeed, it is difficult to capture the fluidity entailed in tourism products and thus in product development with fixed dualism, and static conceptions of culture. Therefore, firms need to move away from trying to exercise control over stakeholders towards understanding the socio-cultural processes in which different marketplace actors become involved.

Taking an extended market approach to tourism regions may improve not only the ability of tourism firms to conceptualize what they actually do but also to position themselves within the marketplace they help to produce (see Venkatesh & Peñaloza, 2006). These insights are valuable in defining what knowledge and information should be considered for the development of tourism products. At the same time, the product development process becomes the best suitable context for studying the interplay between production, consumption, and local cultures. It gives an opportunity for reflecting on the contribution of the product to the creation of value and meaning within a particular marketplace. Product development becomes a lively process that allows marketers to (re)construct the marketplace they inhabit through conjoint interactions with other marketplace actors.

It should, however, be pointed out that the different marketplace cultures cannot be studied in isolation. For instance, various marketplace actors (e.g. several providers and even the customer themselves) may not only take part in the creation of a tourism product but they also may participate in it by taking different cultural perspectives. In point of fact, marketplace actors are used to play different roles rather than a predefined one. Moreover, as the spatial dimension forms a unique setting for producing and consuming tourism, the key unit of analysis in tourism is therefore the region. It is where tourism takes place and where different business and non-business actors finally meet each other. Although the tourists are directly connected to firms and to different cultural institutions, and even governmental organizations, they experience the region in its wholeness, as a unified product which is based on the amalgam of consumption, production and local cultures.

Discussion and directions for future debate: From firms to extended markets

This interdisciplinary work builds upon cultural approach to marketing and critical tourism studies. Especially social constructionist and poststructuralist stances create a framework to understanding tourism markets as multi-actor cultural construction. Tourism products are comprised of the seamless combination of local culture, consumption culture, and production culture that are inseparably connected.

Our aim has been to illustrate the dilemmas encountered in traditional way of thinking product development and, thus, to weigh the value of theorization and reconceptualization of markets in understanding tourism regions and the regional range of tourism products. We have not only applied the theorization of the markets to tourism as such, as it has been introduced in cultural consumer research, but tried to fine-tune it in the light of tourism context. The article presents an extended market approach that considers tourism regions as the constitution of various marketplaces or marketspaces, in which doers, a set of institutions and actors are located. Marketers, consumers and other marketplace actors take part into a joint cultural production process in which they constantly produce, maintain, negotiate, resist, and transform values and meanings. A tourism region is a space where, not only marketing-related

transactions and activities take place but also social reality is produced. This gives a whole new socio-cultural light to tourism dynamics, and especially to tourism product development.

Instead of a strictly company-centered, managerial perspective, tourism regions should find ways to develop more participative and integrative practices in business and destination development and planning in which different stakeholders may not only be considered but also have the opportunity to negotiate, resist and reflect their actions and impacts on the production and consumption of the destination. Hence, it is not only about engaging and managing the stakeholders but about going beyond the predominant study of customers and firms to include other market actors (e.g. local people, local authorities, interest groups, etc.). Particularly, in global, multicultural marketplaces the blurring roles of the producers and consumers and the fading dualism of production and consumption stress the request to move away from trying to exercise control over stakeholders towards understanding the socio-cultural processes in and through which different communal beings become involved. From a marketing perspective, tourism regions offer a suitable context for the study of markets as theatrical stages and, thus, for additional groundwork to understanding of the markets. In fact, tourism regions are stages on which socio-cultural meaning is shaped as marketplace actors engage not only in consumption but also in socio-cultural and political agendas.

When taken to a company-level, especially to micro-sized enterprises, the extended market approach probably meets some questions of romanticism vs. realism. If not the whole idea of the holistic multi-actor involvement in tourism product development, small business managers may find the article helpful in creating a new mindset in terms of region-based product. A single product of a specific company should be considered as a part of a bigger picture. Furthermore, the regional range of the product is a result of complex production and consumption of meanings between various actors, but still, not more than a process into which the customers, locals and workers immerse into. This change of setting creates potentials in a multicultural, communal and globalized environment as it allows the market actors to transfer knowledge into products and to keep up with cultural and ideological changes.

This article is intended to encourage further research in these directions rather than provide definitive conclusions. Future studies of complex, culturally constructed marketplaces, like tourism regions, may offer new insights in a number of areas of inquiry. For example, they may contribute to a broadened conceptualization of tourism products that offers a more macro-view of the firm relationships and the interactions between the production, consumption and local culture that prevail in the tourism marketplace. In addition, there is a need for empirical work that contributes to portraying not only the role of the firm but also other marketplace actors as producers and reproducers of meaning. In studying the complex intersections between the three marketplace cultures, we may develop a richer understanding of the nature of tourism products and the process in which they are (re)created. Tourism may help to uncover the black box of market dynamics, and to create new insights to the interplay of market actors and market activities. By adopting the extended market approach the status of local communities can be upgraded. Since, the community is understood as a solid part of the marketplace. Tourism as a phenomenon and tourism studies as an interdisciplinary field of science helps to understand diverse phenomena that go beyond tourism. Traditionally modern models and theories based on manufacturing industries and large hierarchical enterprises have been imported to the field of tourism. It is important to find ways to transform the relationship to a more reciprocal one between tourism and other studies.

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Note:

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Ethical Dimensions of Sustainable Marketing: A Consumer Policy Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper works towards a better understanding of sustainability and social responsibility in business practice by elaborating on the prevalent approaches to environmental ethics and social responsibility that inform the discussion on sustainable marketing in the literature. Three different approaches to normative environmental ethics are identified (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics), and the roles and responsibilities that different market actors have in each approach are analyzed. Conclusions are drawn particularly for environmental and consumer policy.

INTRODUCTION

Social responsibility and sustainability can be regarded as the watchwords of the 21st century. Among academics and practitioners alike, there has been a growing interest in business ethics and the responsibility of business communities towards society. In business research, much of this discussion has revolved around corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate citizenship and the role of business activity in sustainable development (Carroll 1999; Collier 1995; Collier and Wanderley 2005; Crane 1999; Crane and Matten 2004; Doane 2005; Maignan and Ferrell 2004; Rondinelli and Berry 2000). Sustainability, in these discussions, usually refers to the long-term maintenance of systems according to environmental, economic and social considerations (Crane and Matten 2004).

Also in business practice, the topics of social responsibility, business ethics and sustainable business development have emerged in the corporate agenda (Collier and Wanderley 2005; Rainey 2006). In specifying and communicating their corporate values, for example, many contemporary business organizations currently express their commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development and thus also publish environmental and social reports as part of their investor relations programs (Doane 2005; Hummels and Diederik 2004).

In much of the recent discussion on these topics, marketing has been identified as a way to integrate social responsibility into business organizations, promote more sustainable lifestyles as well as developed and diffuse sustainability innovations (Maignan and Ferrell 2004; Maignan et al. 2005; UNEP 2005). Marketing decisions have important consequences for the specific ways in which goods and services are produced and distributed in the markets, and thus on the resource use and waste generation patterns that can be attributed to the products and services of a company. Moreover, through internal marketing and marketing communication companies implement their strategic values and communicate their commitment to sustainability to their customers, employees, supply networks and other business partners (Polonsky and Ottman 1998).

Unfortunately, however, in the existing literature the concept of sustainability and the responsibilities that it entails are not at all clear. Both in theory and practice, sustainability and social responsibility mean very different things to different people (Cairncross 1993; Crane 2000; Crane and Matten 2004), and 'corporate social responsibility' continues to be a contested concept (Doane 2005; McWilliams et al. 2006). As a result, both researchers and business practitioners still seem to be struggling to understand how the principles of sustainability can be integrated successfully into business practice (Greenfield 2004).

In this paper, our aim is to work towards a better understanding of sustainability and social responsibility in business practices by

elaborating on the prevalent approaches to environmental ethics and social responsibility that inform the discussion on sustainable marketing in the existing literature. We also analyze how the roles and responsibilities of different market actors are depicted in these different approaches to sustainable marketing, drawing conclusions particularly for consumer policy.

Our analysis is premised upon the idea that to develop and implement effective strategies for sustainable and socially responsible marketing, companies need to view themselves as ethical subjects and corporate citizens. Sustainable marketing entails complex ethical issues and requires that the company makes informed and justified ethical judgments about what is right and fair for all members of society—also from a consumer policy perspective. And to be able to make well informed and carefully justified ethical judgments they need carefully analyze and evaluate the concepts, principles, and theories that they appeal to in defining and defending their philosophies and normative claims about sustainable marketing.

In the sections that follow, we first discuss how sustainability and social responsibility is conceptualized in marketing literature. Then we discuss the different approaches to environmental ethics that inform this literature and the public discussion on sustainable marketing, focusing particularly on the roles and responsibilities that each of the approaches ascribe to different market actors. Finally, we draw conclusions from this analysis for consumer and environmental policy.

SUSTAINABILITY IN MARKETING LITERATURE

Over the last twenty years, ever since the term 'sustainable development' was introduced by the Brundtland Commission and defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), 'sustainability' has been a significant conceptual tool for assessing not only economic and social development, but also business activity more generally (Crane & Matten 2004). The Rio Declaration in 1992 and the follow-up World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 further fostered the discussion on these topics and opened up new directions for the debate on the roles and responsibilities of business organizations in society. Hence, from the early 1990s onwards the discussion on sustainability has been extended into the field of business activity, and the terms 'sustainable' and 'sustainability' have been integrated into the standard business jargon. The beginning of "sustainable marketing", however, can be dated back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the appropriate scope and the societal role of marketing was discussed and debated among marketing scholars (Dawson 1971; Feldman 1971; Kelley 1971; Kotler and Levy 1969, 1971; Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Lavidge 1970; Lazer 1969). In the following sections we discuss the emergence of sustainable marketing in its different theoretical forms in the history of marketing thought.

In the marketing literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a critical self-reflection and debate on the role of marketing in the processes of social and environmental change (Anderson and Cunningham 1972; Fisk 1974; Kelley 1971; Lavidge 1970). In some accounts, this self-reflection also involved an ethical and societal problematization of marketing as an institution as well as

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calls for business organizations to accept more responsibility in society as corporate-citizens (Dawson 1971; Lazer 1969; Lazer and Kelley 1973). Kelley (1971: 2), for example, called for a shifting of the emphasis of marketers from "individual want satisfaction to societal considerations". Dawson (1971: 67), for his part, argued that

"It is important to recognize that this thrust of interest in consumer welfare extends well beyond simple dissatisfactions of customers with allegedly inferior products. It covers the entire question of the nations poor, the minority groups, the elderly, and other disadvantaged citizens in terms of their ability to receive fair treatment in the marketplace."

Along these lines, Kotler (1972) made an endeavour to broaden the traditional marketing concept by introducing the *societal marketing concept*, which called for a customer orientation backed by integrated marketing and aimed at generating customer satisfaction and long-run consumer welfare as the key to attaining long-run profitability. While societal marketing responded primarily to the concerns of consumerism, the demands of environmentalism were taken up by other marketing scholars, who realized that the ecological challenge would call for deep changes in the marketing discipline, including the education of both consumers and marketers regarding the relationship between their daily decision-making and the natural environment (Feldman 1971; Fisk 1973, 1974). Feldman (1971), for example, stressed the importance of marketing for understanding and influencing life styles, as well as for determining the extent to which our society may be channelled into sounder consumption practices.

In this regard, Fisk (1973, 1974) made an important contribution by proposing the *theory of responsible consumption and the ecological imperative*, which stress the responsibility of marketers to work towards limiting individual consumption. From this perspective, a major social goal of marketing is to encourage responsible rather than frivolous consumption by involving the consumer as an informed responsible market actor. In another effort to provide further solutions to environmental problems Henion and Kinnear (1976) introduced *ecological marketing*, which is concerned with all marketing activities: (1) activities that have served to help cause environmental problems, and (2) activities that may serve to provide a remedy for environmental problems. The objective of introducing these concepts was to help marketers respond to social and environmental problems to maintain corporate legitimacy in the face of shifting social values and burgeoning civil movements (Crane 2000).

While research and academic discussion on social responsibility continued uninterrupted in the field of management during the 1980s, further efforts by marketing scholars were not channelled in that direction. Despite the initial boom of contributions in the 1970s, the discussion on the responsibilities of marketing toward the environment and society somewhat faded away, relegating the new marketing field to the annals of marketing history (Mintu and Lozada 1993; Sheth et al. 1988). It has been suggested that the recessions that originated from the oil crises of 1973 and 1980, together with a strong faith in the ability of the market mechanism to correct environmental imbalances, and the lack of committed interest among marketing practitioners in environmental and social issues made it difficult, at the time, for marketing scholars to engage themselves in further research in this area (Peattie 1995; Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995; Sheth et al. 1988). It was not until the late 1980s—when environmental and social problems were again in the focus of public attention—that the discussion on the role of marketing in

society re-emerged and new concepts, such as green marketing, environmental marketing and enviropreneurial marketing, were introduced (Charter 1992; Coddington 1993; Menon and Menon 1997; Mintu and Lozada 1993; Peattie 1992, 1995; Peattie and Crane 2005; Varadarajan and Menon 1988).

The 1990s represented a new era for the further development of sustainable marketing (Mintu and Lozada 1993). Mintu and Lozada (1993), for example, proposed a definition of *green marketing* as the application of the marketing concept and tools to facilitate exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual goals in such a way that the preservation, protection, and conservation of the physical environment is upheld. In contrast to the concept of ecological marketing, this approach prescribed a more proactive role for marketers, not only in monitoring the negative impacts of marketing activities on the natural environment but also in actively engaging in practices that reduce or minimize these impacts.

At that time, also the need to turn the environmental imperative into profitable business opportunities was discussed. Walter Coddington (1993), a communications consultant, introduced the concept of *environmental marketing*, emphasizing the significance of environmental stewardship not only as a business development responsibility but also as an opportunity for business growth. According to this line of thinking, the success of such a sound business strategy lies mainly on the attitude of the management team regarding the role of the firm in relation to the environment.

It was not until 1995, however, that the term *sustainable marketing* was coined by Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) who discussed marketing efforts that are both competitively and ecologically sustainable. Taking a macro-marketing perspective, they recognized the link between marketing and sustainable development and as a result, also the urgent need to move from the current consumption marketing to a more sustainable marketing. According to them, sustainability can only be achieved by combining active government intervention with proactive marketing targeting at sounder consumption and production patterns. Taking a more managerial perspective, Menon and Menon (1997) also proposed the concept of *enviropreneurial marketing*, referring to the process of formulating and implementing entrepreneurial and environmentally beneficial marketing activities with the goal of creating revenue by providing exchanges that satisfy a firm's economic and social performance objectives (see also Varadarajan 1992).

In much of the discussion on the topic, however, sustainable marketing has been discussed in terms of a mere logical extension of the mainstream, managerial, marketing concept (Crane and Desmond 2002; Kilbourne 1998). Fuller (1999: 4), for example, re-defines the concept as the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) customer needs are met, (2) organizational goals are attained, and (3) the process is compatible with ecosystems. This stream of research tends to be based on a distinctively managerial, micro-marketing approach as opposed to more societal, macromarketing perspective to sustainable marketing. In this literature, sustainable marketing, in its different forms, is primarily represented as a managerial technique, and the moral values and principles on which it is based have tended to remain implicit.

It is the thesis of this paper, however, that sustainable marketing is fundamentally an ethical issue, and should therefore be discussed as a philosophical and political question of environmental ethics. Next we shall discuss the prevalent approaches to environmental ethics that inform and structure the discussion on sustainable marketing

PREVALENT APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

In general, discussions on sustainable marketing are based on a tacit understanding that it is morally wrong for individuals and firms to pollute and destroy the natural environment or use it in a way that poses threats to the ecological stability of the planet. It is acknowledged that neither social nor economic goals can be achieved without a healthy ecological system and therefore it is the moral responsibility of individuals and firms to refrain from destroying it. The theoretical development of sustainable marketing thus clearly involves an attempt to determine and frame the goals of business activities from an ethical perspective (Crane and Matten 2004).

The moral basis of this theoretical development, however, is very seldom elaborated. Accordingly with the managerial approach to marketing, it is implicitly assumed that morality is something singular; that there is only one appropriate perspective on morality that applies. Yet, in moral theory there are a number of different approaches to ethics, and firms and individuals have multiple perspectives to choose from when making their ethical judgments. Therefore, it would seem important to identify the values and implicit understandings about ethics that guide and constrain thinking and talking about sustainability and sustainable marketing in organizations and which also provide a rationale and legitimization for managerial practices. Here we discuss three major approaches to normative environmental ethics (Brennan 2002): consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics, discussing also the roles that these approaches prescribe to consumers in sustainable development.

Consequentialist approaches

The reasoning found in consequentialist ethical theories suggests that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by its consequences (bad/good). From a consequentialist perspective the environment has only instrumental value, since it is regarded as a means to satisfy human needs and interests. Therefore, intrinsic value is not attributed to the natural environment itself but to the pleasure and satisfaction it provides for human-beings. Within environmental ethics utilitarianism has arguably been the most prominent consequentialist theory.¹

From the utilitarian perspective, the ethical status of behavior is evaluated based on its consequences (e.g. Smart and Williams 1973). Moral subjects are thus to judge their acts and decisions in terms of their utility or their usefulness in producing good consequences. The morally responsible green consumer, for example, “takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption” (Webster 1975: 188). Since utilitarianism is social in character and focuses on the welfare of society as a unit (Robin and Reidenbach 1987), a given decision is usually considered ‘right’ if

it brings about positive consequences for all people involved, preferably producing the greatest good for the greatest number of people. From this perspective, the protection of the environment is morally right as long as it implies a greater balance of pleasure over pain for the greatest number of human beings.

While utilitarianism comes in different varieties (see Curd 1992), in the public discussion on environmentalism and sustainable marketing, it often takes the form of *act utilitarianism*, according to which the rightness of each individual act is evaluated based on its consequences (the unit of moral analysis is an individual act). In the context of eco-labels, it also takes the form of *rule utilitarianism*, according to which the rightness of individual acts is evaluated based on specific moral rules to which the principle of utility is applied. The ethical status of a consumer’s product choice, for example, is evaluated by testing whether or not it falls under a certain moral rule, such as “buy eco-labeled products when available”. And this rule is crafted and evaluated based on considerations of the consequences that result from consumers adopting that rule (the unit of analysis is the moral rule). Either way, the ethical status of marketplace behavior is based on complex and controversial analyses of the environmental consequences of different choices and practices—which ideally would need to be quantified and measured for comparison.

From a critical consumer policy perspective, however, utilitarian ethics may be problematic for a number of reasons (Moisander 2007). In particular, it holds consumers responsible also for things that they cannot control. Consumers and their actions are judged by the consequences of their acts even when they have no way of anticipating or controlling all the consequences that their actions have (Des Jardins 1997). Moreover, utilitarian approaches to environmental ethics and sustainable marketing often de-politicize sustainable development by downplaying the importance of the social and political dimensions of environmental problems. When representing sustainable development primarily as an economic problem, utilitarian ethical positions tend to represent sustainable development merely as a question of utility, satisfaction and individual responsibilities. As Des Jardins (1997: 30) has convincingly argued

In doing this, we can easily overlook how much our choices, attitudes, and values are influenced and limited by what is outside. Human beings not only create and shape their social institutions; these institutions in turn create and shape humans’ attitudes, beliefs and values. Ethics must also challenge us to look at our social institutions and ask what are they doing to us and for us? Are our social institutions just? Are burdens and benefits distributed fairly? Do our social and political arrangements encourage cooperation and community or competition and domination? How is power distributed, ho is it limited? How should we—as a group, not individuals—live?

Deontological approaches

Deontological approaches to environmental ethics are based on the idea that there are distinct moral rules or duties, and the violation of these rules and duties is intrinsically wrong, while observance is intrinsically right (Brennan 2002). In the context of deontological approaches to environmental ethics, these rules and duties are based on the intrinsic value of the environment. It is taken that the environment has a moral right to respectful treatment, and this generates a moral duty to humans to protect it. In other words, we have a prima facie duty not to harm it. Hence, while consequentialist theories requires us to only protect the environment as long as doing so maximizes the overall good consequences,

¹In the context of sustainable marketing, however, also ethical egoism has been discussed as consequentialist ethical position (Crane and Matten 2004). The philosophical idea of egoism has a long tradition and it has been very influential in modern economics. Adam Smith, in particular, argued that an economic system based on free competition and individual self-interest was the key to attaining a fair and productive society (Smith, Adam 1999 [1776]). *The Wealth of Nations Books I-III*, London: Penguin Classics.). Normative egoism suggests that a person’s action is morally right if it maximizes his or her self-interest (Shaver, Robert (2002), “Egoism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philophy* (URL=<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egoism/>>).

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deontology argues that fulfilling duties and respecting rights lead automatically to something good.

Deontological approaches to environmental ethics can take different forms depending on how intrinsic value is ascribed to different elements of the natural environment. Some approaches are *anthropocentric* or human-centered in the sense that they assign intrinsic value only to human beings (anthropocentric in an absolute sense) or they assign significantly more intrinsic value to human beings than to non-human things (Brennan 2002). *Nonanthropocentric* approaches, for their part, grant a moral standing to natural objects and thus recognize intrinsic value in the environment. *Biocentric* approaches are based on giving intrinsic value to all the organisms of the biosphere and *ecocentrism* grant intrinsic value to ecosphere as a whole. In marketing literature, however, it usually is some form of anthropocentric thinking that provides the basis for deontological approaches to environmental ethics, considering the rights of consumers (human-beings) rather than the natural environment (see e.g. Robin and Reidenbach 1987).

In the literature on sustainable marketing, deontological approaches to environmental ethics are hard to find. There seem to be grounds for assuming, however, that being a deeply concerned and dedicated environmentalist often involves a commitment to some sort of a *prima facie* duty, i.e., a duty that is obvious or evident without proof or reasoning (Moisander 2007). Harré et al. (1999), for example, have found that the moral discourse that many environmentalist organizations such as the Sierra Club rely on is deontological in flavor, placing an emphasis on doing something right in itself rather than for some practical end.

Moreover, while firms are usually expected to prescribe to some sort of *anthropocentric* approaches to environmental ethics, they might as well base their moral deliberations on some sort of *biocentric* or *ecocentric* accounts. They might well argue that sustainable development would downright require that consumers ascribe some kind of objective value to nature and adopt a moral obligation to protect all living things. They might well believe that the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value and that the value and rights of non-human life forms are independent of the usefulness they have for narrow human purposes. It may well be that some 'environmentally responsible' firms consider a given environmentally sensitive moral decision 'right' primarily because of some religious moral beliefs or moral obligations based on deontological and/or ecocentric ethical considerations, such as the respect for 'mother earth' or 'healthy planet' (see e.g. Patagonia, <http://www.patagonia.com> and Stonyfield, <http://www.stonyfield.com>).

From a consumer policy perspective, de-ontological approaches to environmental ethics would seem to pay more attention to the socio-political aspects of sustainable development. The wide scope of the different positions would also seem to encourage discussion and debate on the values on which sustainable development should be based on. From this perspective, deontological approaches to sustainable marketing might well foster transformative criticism and dialogue between different market actors and members of society.

Virtue ethics

Virtue ethics shifts the focus from rules, rights and utility to the moral character of the decision maker. It implies viewing both the environment and ourselves in a different way (Des Jardins 1997). Virtue ethics contends that morally correct actions are those undertaken by actors with a virtuous character and who pursue virtues such as wisdom, honesty, friendship, mercy, etc.

Central to ethics of virtue is the notion of "good life". From a business perspective "good life" means more than profit generation and market share (Crane and Matten 2004). Indeed, virtue ethics involves a much more holistic approach to business, since not only profits but also employees' satisfaction, good relationships with internal as well as external stakeholders are considered as important aspects of good business life (Collier 1995). Overall, considering virtues in environmental ethics helps us to determine not only what we want but also what we are (Sagoff 1990).

Virtue ethics has played an important role in the adoption of sustainable marketing by business organizations. For example, firms such as Ben and Jerry's, Tom's of Maine and the Body Shop have followed the instincts and personal values (virtuousness) of their leaders in determining their moral stance rather than taking a customer-led approach (Crane 2005). This reflects the extent to which the motivation and justification of actions are intertwined with the character traits of the acting agent (market actor). The moral character of the company's leader can, as a result, be spread through the whole organization and its stakeholders. According to Collier and Esteban (1999), the notion of virtue gains meaning in practice where it contributes to developing excellence based on human capabilities. Although virtue ethics can be found in the practical application of sustainable marketing, this ethical approach has not been yet discussed within the literature related to sustainable marketing.

DISCUSSION AND CONSUMER POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The brief analysis above shows that the prevalent utilitarian approaches to environmental ethics are only one alternative way of deliberating on the ethical issues that sustainable marketing involves. Other possibilities include to act on principle, independently of its anticipated consequences, based on duties and rights (deontology) or to base one's deliberations on some sort of religious teleological reasoning and to pursue some virtues related to environmental protection. In pursuing sustainability, firms, consumers and policy-makers thus have a number of different options in framing and determining their goals, decisions and strategies.

Our analysis also indicates that each of these ethical approaches to sustainable marketing tends to ascribe somewhat different roles, rights and responsibilities for different market actors. It is therefore important, we argue, to analyze the assumptions and beliefs about morality and sustainability that different environmental policy measures are based on, as well as to critically evaluate the complex implications of these assumptions for consumer agency. It would seem particularly important to acknowledge that sustainability is a complex issue, which entails complex political, socioeconomic, and moral questions.

Finally, our analysis suggests that environmental ethics may offer valuable perspective and a set of useful conceptual tools to the further theoretical development of sustainable marketing. Ethical discussion and debate on the roles, rights and responsibilities of different market actors arguably contributes to better understanding of not only the theoretical assumptions but also the social values, norms and beliefs that guide and constrain thinking and talking about sustainability in organizations, be they private, public, or NGOs, as well as among consumers and policy-makers. It is important to know these values and beliefs because they provide a rationale and legitimization for managerial practices.

To conclude, we therefore argue that from a consumer policy perspective, the major challenge for sustainable marketing is to foster moral reflection and constructive dialogues about the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of different market actors in

society. There is a need to view sustainable marketing as a social process which involves multiple moral actors. Not only firms, but also consumers and other stakeholders play a key role in moving the global economy towards sustainability. This discussion and debate may not diminish the complexity of sustainable development but it may serve to make the phenomenon more transparent for all parties involved.

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A multi-stakeholder perspective on creating and managing strategies for sustainable marketing

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ABSTRACT

Ever since the introduction of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, both business and public organisations have been expressing their interest in and commitment to environmental and social causes – issues usually thought to be counter to profit maximisation – in new ways. In organisational practice, however, the very notion of sustainable development has remained ambiguous. As a strategic goal and set of values, sustainable development seems to take varied meanings in different political, socioeconomic and moral contexts. In this paper, we take a multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable development and propose an action-research-based process model for developing dynamic, proactive strategies for managing the business-natural environment interface in the context of marketing and service development. We offer this model as a *strategic tool* for engaging stakeholders in the development and deployment of the organisational practices and capabilities needed for building dynamic and proactive environmental strategies. Using an empirical case, we illustrate the use of this tool in the context of sustainable tourism service design, in which a network of female, rural, small entrepreneurs were engaged in service development to clarify the notion of sustainability in business practice. Overall, it is argued that the development of marketing and business activity towards more sustainable policies and practices requires the deployment of bottom-up, multi-stakeholder approaches to strategising, which helps the organisation to integrate the perspectives and concerns of its key stakeholders into its strategy and day-to-day business practices.

Introduction

The introduction of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 brought a new perspective to the role of business in society (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Since then, business and public organisations have been expressing their interest in and commitment to environmental and social causes – issues usually thought to be counter to the idea of profit maximisation – in new ways. In organisational practice, however, the very notion of sustainable development has remained ambiguous (Doane 2005; Gladwin, Kennelly & Krause 1995; Greenfield 2004). As a strategic goal and set of values, sustainable development seems to take varied meanings in different political, socioeconomic and moral contexts. In this chapter, our aim is to propose a process model for clarifying the notion of sustainability in business practice. We offer this model as a tool for developing dynamic, proactive strategies for managing the business-natural environment interface in the context of marketing and service development.

In the existing literature, a myriad of concepts have been used to theorise and discuss sustainable development in relation to organisational practice (Carroll 1998, 1999; Collier & Esteban 1999; Collier & Wanderley 2005; Doane 2005; Maignan & Ferrell 2004; Matten & Crane 2005; Matten, Crane, & Chapple 2003; Rondinelli & Berry 2000). Much of the discussion is framed around marketing concepts such as green marketing (Mintu & Lozada 1993), environmental marketing (Coddington 1993) and sustainable marketing (Fuller 1999), which are portrayed somewhat unreflectively as simple management tools. The starting point of this chapter, however, is that these marketing concepts represent strategic goals and values that can be achieved only through complex socio-cultural processes and collaborative practices by which marketers, consumers and other stakeholders, as different ‘knowledge communities’, make sense of, negotiate and transform the meaning of sustainable development in business practice. The ambiguous and potentially contested nature of sustainability and sustainable development arises mainly from the idea that different knowledge communities, or stakeholders, will each enter the fray with their own specialised and lay knowledge and potentially divergent objectives. This variation in objectives presents challenges in interpreting, sharing and integrating knowledge from other communities (Bechky 2003; Boland & Tenkasi 1995; Brown & Duguid 1991; Carlile 2004; Dougherty 1992; Lervik *et al.* 2007; Lervik, Fahy & Easterby-Smith 2010). Therefore, the development of marketing and business activity towards more sustainable policies and practices requires the deployment of bottom-up multi-stakeholder approaches to strategising, which helps the organisation integrate the perspectives and concerns of its key stakeholders into marketing strategy and day-to-day business practice.

In this chapter, we discuss a multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing (Fry & Polonsky 2004; Hemmati 2001; Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell 2005; Polonsky 1995; Polonsky & Ottman 1998) and propose an action-research-based process model for creating and managing environmental strategies in interaction

with the internal and external stakeholders of the organisation. We offer this model as a strategic tool (Clark 1997; Moisander & Stenfors 2009) for engaging stakeholders in the development and deployment of the organisational practices and capabilities needed for building dynamic and proactive environmental marketing strategies. Using an empirical case, we illustrate the use of this model in the context of sustainable service design and development.

A multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing

In building the process model for creating and managing proactive strategies for sustainable marketing proposed in this chapter, we start with an extended concept of marketing as 'the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large' (American Marketing Association 2007). From this perspective, marketing is understood not so much as a function but as a process that expands beyond the boundaries of the firm to include different stakeholders (Fry & Polonsky 2004; Maignan, Ferrell & Ferrell 2005; Polonsky 1995). Theoretically, we draw primarily from the literature on multi-stakeholder perspectives on sustainable development (Hemmati 2001), resource-based views of proactive environmental strategies (Rueda-Manzanares, Aragón-Correa & Sharma 2007; Sharma & Vredenburg 1998) and action research (Zuber-Skerritt 1996).

Multi-stakeholder thinking

The term 'multi-stakeholder' is used here in reference to the equitable representation of three or more stakeholder groups and their views in processes that encompass dynamic relationships and social interactions. According to Hemmati (2001), multi-stakeholder processes are based on the democratic principles of transparency and participation and aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks among stakeholders. In relation to sustainability, multi-stakeholder processes offer a wealth of subjective perspectives and experiences that allow stakeholders to construct the knowledge and capabilities needed to deal with environmental and social challenges.

In the context of sustainable marketing, the multi-stakeholder perspective draws attention to the limitations of simply expanding the marketing mix beyond the customer and extends the analytical scope to broader networks of secondary stakeholders that take part in the marketing process. Multi-stakeholder thinking problematises the assumption that stakeholders are isolatable, clearly identifiable, individual entities that are independent from each other (Buchholz & Rosenthal 2005). Instead, it views stakeholders as social actors, embedded in webs of relationships, who actively engage with each other and with the organisation in culturally and politically complex marketplace environments. The complex and contested nature of environmental and social sustainability issues also means that conceptualisation of issues and appropriate solutions are far from straightforward (Howard-Grenville 2007; Purvis *et al.* 2000). Thus, multi-stakeholder thinking opens up an analytical perspective that helps organisations to clarify the many

different and often-conflicting interests and expectations they face in the market and to develop proactive environmental strategies in terms that are relevant to the diverse stakeholders.

Resource-based view of proactive environmental strategy

The resource-based view emphasises the strategic importance of particular resources, capabilities and competences in enabling organisations to conceive of, choose and implement their competitive strategies (Barney & Zajac 1994, p. 6). It is assumed that an organisation's competitive advantage, performance and survival in the market depend significantly upon its ability to develop and deploy particular organisational resources and capabilities that help the organisation function more efficiently than its competitors. Organisational resources include both the tangible and intangible assets of the firm. In contrast to resources, capabilities have been defined as 'a firm's capacity to deploy [*r*]esources, usually in combination, using organisational processes, to effect a desired end' (Amit & Schoemaker 1993, p. 35) and in terms of 'the socially complex routines that determine the efficiency with which firms physically transform inputs into outputs' (Collis 1994, p. 145).

Previous empirical research has suggested that proactive environmental strategies are associated with a number of organisational capabilities, including those of organisational learning, continuous innovation and stakeholder integration (Rueda-Manzanares, Aragón-Correa & Sharma 2007; Sharma & Vredenburg 1998). This literature also tells us that the development of these organisational capabilities is enhanced through engaging with a broad range of external stakeholders. From this perspective, sustainable marketing may be viewed as a proactive environmental and societal strategy, which is based on continuous organisational learning and innovation through cross-stakeholder management (Rueda-Manzanares, Aragón-Correa & Sharma 2007; Sharma & Vredenburg 1998). Through the processes and practices embedded in these capabilities, an organisation is able to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources that may help promote environmental and social objectives (Eisenhardt & Martin 2000, p. 107).

In the strategy field, organisational learning is often understood in terms of the successful alignment of the organisation with a changing external environment (Easterby-Smith 1997; Fiol & Lyles 1985). This literature distinguishes between adaptations made by organisations in response to a changing business environment, which should not assume that much reflection and learning has taken place, and that of organisational learning, defined as 'the development of insights, knowledge, and associations between past actions, the effectiveness of those actions, and future actions' (Fiol & Lyles 1985, p. 811).

In this line of research, organisational learning has also been understood as operating at different levels characterised in terms of lower- or higher-order learning (Fiol & Lyles 1985) or as single- or double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön 1978). These different levels of learning denote a distinction between incremental

and transformational change in organisational practices or between routine versus more radical organisational learning respectively (Easterby-Smith, Crossan & Nicolini 2000). Lower-order learning is assumed to take place within established organisational rules and routines and seeks to maintain current orders; whereas higher-order learning aims to change organisational rules and norms and often occurs in contexts characterised by ambiguity and complexity (Fiol & Lyles 1985), such as those presented by environmental and social sustainability pressures (Sharma & Vredenburg 1998).

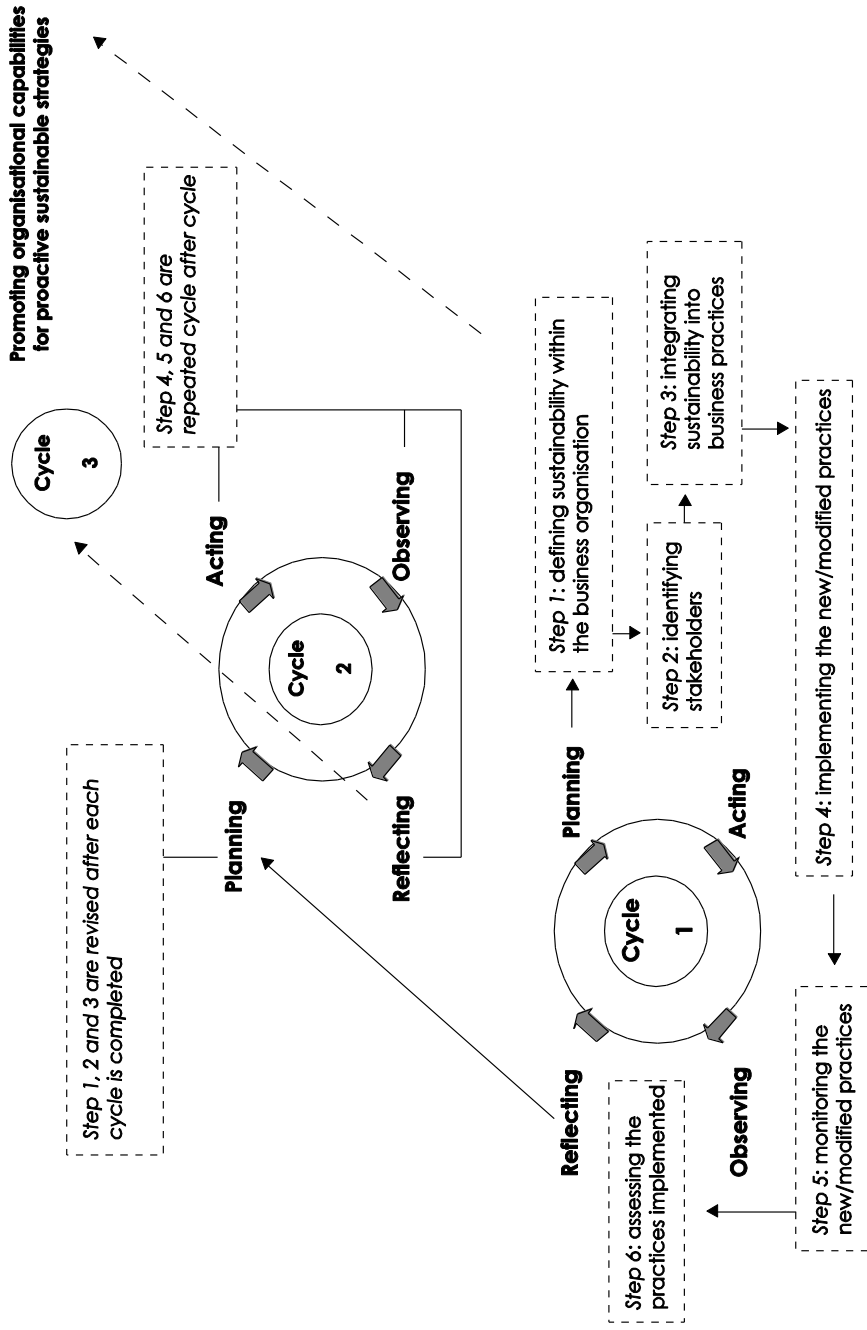
Research suggests that a capability for such higher-order learning may be developed through engaging in proactive relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders in ways that facilitate experimentation with new ideas (Sharma & Vredenburg 1998). More social constructivist approaches to learning in organisations also point to the importance of the social aspects of learning, which moves away from an information processing view of learning in favour of a view of learning and knowledge construction as a collective endeavour, where learning takes place as people do things together (Blackler 1995; Brown & Duguid 1991; Engeström 1989; Lave & Wenger 1991; Orr 1996; Star 1992; Wenger 1999). Research suggests that through the 'socially complex' (Sharma & Vredenburg 1998, p. 740) practices of engaging directly with stakeholders (employees, customers, local community members, NGOs, legislators, suppliers and other members of society) in joint negotiation and problem solving activities around sustainability issues, organisations can develop novel perspectives and new knowledge in relation to environmental and socially responsible practices (Rueda-Manzanares, Aragón-Correa & Sharma 2007; Sharma & Vredenburg 1998).

Action research methodology

In this chapter, action research refers to a systematic mode of inquiry that is based on a reflective process of progressive problem solving and action in collaboration with the participants of the study. In building our model, we use the principles of action research primarily as a methodological tool for developing professional practice, based on the diagnosis of a particular real-life situation (Levin 1948). From this perspective, the aim is thus to generate practical knowledge (Reason & Torbert 2001) and build theory from practice (Schultz & Hatch 2005) by studying attempts of the practitioner-participants to improve the quality of their own practice (Whitehead 1994).

Our model, which is illustrated in Figure 6.1, is based specifically on the action research cycle proposed by Zuber-Skerritt (1996) and the stakeholder-marketing model introduced by Maignan, Ferrell and Ferrell (2005). We propose this process model as a tool for business practitioners to use when engaging with stakeholders to develop and manage proactive strategies for sustainable marketing.

Figure 6.1 A process model for integrating stakeholder perspectives into sustainable business strategy



The model depicts a systematic and cyclical process of simultaneous inquiry and action, which is geared to creating practical knowledge and shared understandings of sustainability in collaboration with the multiple stakeholders of the organisation.

In Cycle 1, the process is made up of four phases: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The planning phase consists of three steps: definition of sustainability, identification of stakeholders and integration of sustainability. Whereas the first two steps help define a more comprehensive path for building environmentally enlightened marketing strategies, the third step involves incorporating sustainability within business practices. The modified practices are then implemented in the acting phase and are monitored during the observing phase. Steps four and five open up an opportunity to explore stakeholder interactions in relation to the organisation. In the reflecting phase, step six invites members of the organisation and stakeholders to assess critically their business processes and practices in relation to sustainability. After these four phases, a new cycle begins (Cycle 2), and the process is repeated until a satisfactory solution is achieved.

Next, we will illustrate how the model can be used for launching multi-stakeholder processes and for engaging stakeholders in the development and deployment of the organisational practices and capabilities needed to build dynamic and proactive strategies for sustainable marketing.

Empirical case: Sustainable service design in tourism

To elaborate on the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable marketing proposed in this chapter, we discuss an empirical case of sustainable tourism service design. In this design, a network of female, rural, small entrepreneurs from the northern Finnish province of Lapland were engaged in service development to clarify the notion of sustainability in business practice.

The case discussed here is drawn from a development project carried out by the Regional Development and Innovation Services (RDIS) unit of the University of Lapland, which is committed to promoting sustainable development, wellbeing and equality among its local stakeholders and in society more generally. The aim of the development project was to engage a network of entrepreneurs in the development of proactive strategies for sustainable marketing and service development in the field of tourism. A small team from the RDIS unit conducted the development project. José-Carlos García-Rosell worked as the principal researcher in the team.

The network consisted of eight female craft entrepreneurs operating in different service areas such as catering, hospitality, pottery, natural health care, tourist tours, gastronomy, artistic photography, twig crafting and interior decoration. Despite the variety of services that they offered, all the network participants represented themselves as small business owners in the tourism sector who maintained close relationships with their local communities. As their main motivations for joining the network, the participants articulated a desire to learn techniques of sustainable service design and an opportunity to network with the other entrepreneurs of the region who were interested in conducting their business in sustainable ways. The

ages of the network participants ranged from 35 to 65, and the number of employees they employed ranged from one to six, depending on the season.

The development project consisted of two action research cycles that took place over a period of 14 months. The empirical materials used in the project were fieldwork data obtained by means of participant and non-participant observation, convergent interviews, focus groups and documentary materials. Participant observation of the meetings and workshops of the network and non-participant observation of the service encounters between entrepreneurs and their customers constitute the main source of data for the project. In addition, eight convergent interviews (Dick 1990) with the network participants and two customer focus groups (Moisander & Valtonen 2006) were conducted. The objective of the interviews and focus groups was to map out and clarify the multiple meanings of sustainability among the network participants as well as to identify the patterns of convergence and divergence in these meanings. The topics discussed in the interviews and focus groups revolved around sustainable development in relation to tourism and the services that the network members offered. Finally, documentary materials (brochures, newspaper articles, and websites) were collected and used as supplementary, secondary data.

Service development in the context of the tourism business was the chosen research setting because it offers a good opportunity for exploring multi-stakeholder processes. It also illustrates the ways in which particular capabilities such as organisational learning, continuous innovation and cross-stakeholder management can be collaboratively developed and deployed in interactions with the stakeholders of an organisation. People who participate in the service development process are in continuous interaction with the internal and external stakeholders of the organisation. Thus, it may be argued that they would, therefore, have enhanced possibilities for understanding the multiplicity and complexity of the stakeholder views, needs and expectations that may be involved in the implementation of sustainable marketing strategies (Polonsky & Ottman 1998). These individuals are the first to detect changes in the environment and help the organisation adapt its services to emerging market trends and developments. Moreover, tourism offers a particularly good empirical context for exploring the practices and processes of multi-stakeholder service development. In the everyday practice of the tourism business, the activities of service design, production and consumption characteristically overlap to a considerable degree, and the interaction between the organisation and its stakeholders – particularly the customers – is remarkably intense (Valtonen 2010).

Sustainable service development: Developing capabilities for organisational learning and innovation through cross-stakeholder management

In this section, we illustrate how the approach and the model that we propose can be used for creating and managing sustainable strategies for marketing and service design. We describe how the model was employed in the development project in

our empirical case, discussing how particular organisational capabilities associated with organisational learning and innovation were developed and deployed during the two cycles of the process.

Cycle 1: Planning – definition of sustainability, identification of stakeholders and integrating sustainability into business practices

In the *planning phase* (steps 1 to 3) of the development project, the two first steps – the definition of sustainability and the identification of key stakeholders – were intertwined. To start off the planning phase, eight convergent interviews (Dick 1990) were conducted to map out the network members' views and ideas on sustainability and to identify emerging areas of convergence and divergence to be discussed and further elaborated on in subsequent network meetings. The interviews were open-ended and revolved around participants' views and conceptions of sustainable development in business practice. Secondary sources (e.g. brochures, newspaper articles and websites) were also collected and analysed to supplement the interview data.

After the convergent interviews, a memo of the emerging themes and ideas was given to the members of the network. The memo was later used in a meeting where the network members were instructed to work on a shared understanding of sustainability and the project task, based on the themes and topics that had emerged in the interviews. The meeting was held in a bed-and-breakfast establishment owned by one of the entrepreneurs; it lasted four hours.

Interviews and the secondary data were instrumental in sparking a collaborative learning process within the network. The meeting in which these data were discussed oriented the members of the network to their task and helped them to focus on the concerns and expectations of different stakeholder groups. By collaborating on analysing the data, the network members were able to create a tentative template for a shared vision of sustainability and set preliminary goals for the service design task at hand.

Discussions in the meeting led the entrepreneurs automatically to step 3, which was to establish a set of collectively agreed-upon sustainability objectives for the service design process and to identify the means of achieving these objectives. These discussions also enabled them to map out the key issues in integrating sustainability into everyday business practice. The process proceeded through brainstorming and design sessions in which members of the network collaborated to design a two-day program of tourist activities based on the services that they offered. In these sessions, the scope of the program and the sustainability attributes to be accentuated were defined in a dialogue with the local community. The establishment and consolidation of trust-based relationships within the network and the local community was viewed as important for building up the knowledge base and capabilities that were necessary for the development of sustainable services in the tourism sector. Particularly, the engagement of local community members in the process helped the network members identify aspects and

dimensions of environmental concern that were not explicit in the initial understandings of sustainability and how to integrate these into service development.

Cycle 1: Acting – implementation of the modified business processes

In the *acting phase* (step 4), the two-day program of tourist activities designed in step 3, was delivered to a group of tourists by the network members under the supervision of José-Carlos García-Rosell and two other members of the project team. The program included a range of activities, such as a pottery workshop, snowshoeing tour, twig crafting, Vedic Art workshop and a visit to a local gallery. The aim of this implementation initiative was to test the service design developed by the network members in a controlled and monitored environment.

For the participants of the network, the initiative offered an opportunity to systematically analyse and improve their capabilities to establish trust-based collaborative relationships with their stakeholders and to learn about their customers' and other stakeholders' views of sustainability. Above all, participation in the program test provided the network members with a creative environment for identifying and experimenting with new opportunities for service design development at the interface of firm–customer interactions.

Cycle 1: Observing – observing stakeholder interaction and monitoring the delivery of the modified service

The *observing phase* (step 5), which in this case overlaps with the implementation phase, was conducted by monitoring the delivery of the services included in the program of tourist activities, and by observing the interaction between the network members and their stakeholders during the program.

Observation was based on techniques of participant and non-participant observation. While the observation was made mainly by the RDSI project team, the participating network members were also encouraged to observe and take notes about their interactions with their customers and other stakeholders.

The resulting data were documented in 15 pages of field notes, 150 photographs and a 60-minute video recording of the implementation activity, including interactions of the participating entrepreneurs with their employees, customers and the local community. The data were analysed and summarised according to emergent themes and were subsequently used as a basis for discussions in the meetings in the following phase.

Cycle 1: Reflecting – assessing the modified business practices

The *reflecting phase* (step 6) of the development project was conducted using a customer focus group, which was moderated by the principal researcher of the

project, and a network workshop, which subjected the sustainable service design developed for the tourism program to internal and external assessment.

The focus group was organised immediately after the implementation of the two-day tourist program. Focus groups were considered appropriate for this type of evaluation task because they help to generate cultural talk (Moisander & Valtonen 2006) and elicit multiple perspectives on a particular social issue. The focus group session included a visual exercise (Heisley & Levy 1991) in which the customers were asked to respond to five photographs, which featured the customers themselves participating in the different activities of the program.

Parallel to the focus group, the entrepreneurs of the network gathered in a workshop in which they reflected upon their experiences with the customers and the program of tourist activities as a whole. Notes taken during this particular session were later brought to a subsequent reflection meeting, which was held three weeks later for the purpose of refining and improving the program by considering the perspectives of their customers and other stakeholders.

A two-page summary of themes and perspectives that emerged in the customer focus group and data collected by the principal researcher in the different meetings and informal discussions that took place during the planning phase were also used in the reflection meeting. This particular data set included the views of local community members and representatives of the RDSI unit.

The entrepreneurs participating in the project saw the reflection process as useful for opening up the channels of communication with their stakeholders and identifying new aspects of sustainability in their services and the program as a whole. As representatives of small firms, they also emphasised the value of collaboration as an important resource for the development of sustainable service designs.

Cycle 2: Planning

The first cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting brought new insights and useful ideas for redesigning the program, but a number of issues emerged that called for further investigation. Most importantly, the members of the network learned that they needed to know more about the perspectives of potential new customers as well as the local community members and public organisations on sustainable development as a social issue. Therefore, a second cycle of action research was conducted.

The *planning phase* of the second action research cycle was based on three initiatives. First, another focus group was organised to learn about the perspectives of potential customers on sustainability and tourism. The group consisted of five Spanish citizens, who had booked but not yet experienced the tourism services of the network. The aim of this initiative was to grasp potential consumers' assumptions about the different elements, aspects and attributes that make tourism services sustainable. The focus group discussion, which was conducted in Spain by a local researcher, was transcribed, analysed and summarised in emergent themes.

Second, a group of vocational tourism students from a small village in the Finnish province of Lapland (aged 25–56), who were not involved in the development project, were asked to write short essays about their perceptions of sustainable development in relation to tourism. These essays provided important insights into the local interpretations of sustainable tourism and thus complemented the observational data obtained during the first cycle of the development project. Third, additional documentary materials (mainly policy documents and reports) were analysed for further insights into the ways in which regional development agencies address the idea of sustainable development.

Summaries of the insights gained through these three initiatives, combined with the reflections from the first cycle, were then discussed in several subsequent network meetings and workshops, which focused on redesigning the tourism program. By integrating the perspectives of additional stakeholders into the development project, the network was able to recognise important trends and business opportunities for the entrepreneurs participating in the development project.

Cycle 2: Acting, observing and reflecting

In the *acting phase* of the second cycle, the redesigned program of tourist activities was delivered to a Spanish delegation that was visiting the university involved in the development project. The delegation was accompanied by an interpreter, who was travelling with the group. Over a period of three days, the members of the delegation participated in a variety of leisure activities that the tourism program offered in a small northern town situated in Finnish Lapland, using the services of the network members. Again, this was a good opportunity for the entrepreneurs to learn and integrate stakeholder concerns into their service designs, this time in a new context with different, foreign customers.

The *observing phase* of cycle two was, again, based on participative and non-participative observation, which was made by one of the members of the research team. Altogether, 100 photographs were taken during this particular step. The participating entrepreneurs were also encouraged to make notes on the delivery of their services and to document their experiences of the program in general as the basis for discussion and reflection in subsequent meetings. On this occasion, they were better prepared and more experienced in deploying the implementation of observation techniques.

In the *reflecting phase*, the redesigned program was assessed by organising a stakeholder workshop on sustainable tourism. The aim of the workshop was to test the revised program of tourist activities, to further elaborate on the variability of perspectives among the multiple stakeholders of the network members and to confront the stakeholders' views with those of the network members. The stakeholder participants of this workshop included local activists and policy makers, customers and employees of the network members, as well as a Spanish delegation representing the potential customers of the network.

The workshop was facilitated by the project team, and simultaneous interpretation in Spanish was offered by the interpreter accompanying the Spanish delegation.

The workshop was audio recorded, transcribed, analysed and used as a basis for identifying themes and topics for further discussion and reflection. While the workshop was organised to collect empirical material for reflection by the participants of the development project, it became itself a reflective multi-stakeholder process.

Data collected in different stages of the second cycle were used as the basis for discussions in the meetings in the last step of the project. A total number of three reflection meetings were held with members of the network. A local expert on EU funds was invited to one of the meetings because the entrepreneurs realised that a better understanding of the sustainability rhetoric of development organisations could open up new opportunities for EU-funding.

Overall, the network members were satisfied with the process and expressed their willingness to continue cooperating with each other after the end of the project. By creating positive collaborative relationships with their business partners, local communities and local policy makers, and by integrating the perspectives of these stakeholders into their learning processes, the network members were able to develop and deploy the type of capabilities that are needed for building sustainable service designs and proactive environmental strategies. The following comment of one of the entrepreneurs in the workshop validates this point:

The opportunity to develop a tourism program in cooperation with these colleagues [network members] and in continuous interaction with members of the community, the university [RDSI] and our clients has opened up our minds to totally different ways of approaching sustainability [...] Now we are better able to address these concerns with our services.

Conclusions

The need for organisations to engage with multiple stakeholders to develop knowledge about environmental practices is increasingly being acknowledged. The practice of engaging with multiple stakeholders, however, is a potentially challenging social endeavour. This chapter offers a strategic tool in the form of a process model for creating and managing, in collaboration with organisational stakeholders, proactive strategies for sustainable marketing and service development. We provide an illustration of the model in practice by way of an empirical case of a multi-stakeholder sustainability development project in the tourism sector.

We also draw attention to the nature of organisational learning that can be generated through engagement with multiple stakeholders on sustainable marketing and service development. We outlined the differences between adaption in response to changes in the organisational context and the kinds of learning that might be required for business practitioners to more fully make sense of, and incorporate issues of, environmental and social sustainability in their service development practices. Exposure to others' interpretations and experimentation with alternative practices can generate novel perspectives and initiatives that lead

to the type of higher-order learning that characterises firms with proactive environmental strategies.

Our empirical illustration of the process model shows the kinds of active, collective learning in real-life problem-solving situations that can take place when business practitioners engage in reflective processes of inquiry and action in collaboration with multiple external stakeholders. The entrepreneurs participating in the project emphasised the valuable insight it allowed into dimensions of environmental and social concern that had not previously been explicitly articulated. Perhaps even more importantly for the entrepreneurs, the process also facilitated the integration of such dimensions into service development and the monitoring of stakeholders' engagement with modified service offerings. The development of capabilities for establishing trust-based collaborative relationships with key stakeholders was also important in the experience of project participants.

We admit that the scope of this chapter is limited to a description of the action research-based process model. The outcomes of this study are more complex than we are able to present in this section of the book. Indeed, our aim here is to suggest a model that provides a foundation for building and managing environmental strategies in collaboration with different stakeholders, rather than to present conclusive evidence. While our chapter has drawn attention to the potentialities of integrating multi-stakeholder thinking, a resource-based perspective and action research methodology, there is a need for future research that examines the implementation of the model under different circumstances and new variants. First, it would be worthwhile to apply the model to a different organisational and business context. Second, future studies could examine the implementation of the model with a larger number of stakeholder groups. Third, from the perspective of service development, it would be interesting to explore the model in relation to more commercial models of user-driven innovation and stakeholder involvement in service development.

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An integrative framework for sustainability evaluation in tourism: applying the framework to tourism product development in Finnish Lapland

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The adoption of sustainable practices has become widespread in tourism and has led to the proliferation of sustainability evaluation tools. They focus mainly on measuring outcomes, making scientific expertise an essential part of evaluations. This study argues that involving stakeholders throughout the evaluation process is essential if evaluation is to play a role in promoting the necessary understanding of sustainability to address the ecological and social concerns within a tourism setting. Drawing upon multi-stakeholder thinking, ethics, the Bellagio Principles and action research, this paper introduces a theoretical and methodological framework for engaging tourism organisations in collaboration with stakeholders in planning and implementing sustainability evaluations. The application of the framework is illustrated using a study of tourism product development, involving a group of eight craft-based entrepreneurs and their stakeholders in Finnish Lapland. A focus is placed on using ethical theories to promote dialogue and critical reflection and to expose the plurality of moral orientations behind the multiple views of sustainable tourism. Through discourse analysis, four moral discourses, ethical egoism, utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics, are constructed and examined. The paper shows how each influences the various ways in which stakeholders perceive sustainable tourism and the practical outcomes of the process.

Keywords: sustainability; evaluation; stakeholders; tourism product development; ethics; action research

Introduction

Since the introduction of the concept of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) and the ratification of Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1993), several techniques for monitoring performance and assessing progress towards sustainable tourism have been suggested (see Schianetz, Kavanagh, & Lockington, 2007). Much of the discussion focuses on assessment tools such as sustainability indicators (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Twining-Ward & Butler, 2002), environmental impact assessment (Warnken & Buckley, 1998), life cycle assessment (Johnson, 2002), environmental footprint measurements (Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr, & Hoque, 2010; Gössling, Borgström Hansson, Hörstmeier, & Saggel, 2002), multi-criteria analysis (Zografos & Ogilthorpe, 2004) and environmental

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management standards (Chan & Wong, 2006). These are seen as methodologies based on external expertise, scientific knowledge and effective communication strategies.

However, assessment procedures for sustainable tourism practices should also reflect the complex and dynamic nature of both sustainability and tourism, which entails a web of relationships and interactions among multiple stakeholders each with unique sets of specialised knowledge and diverse and divergent views and values (Fennell, 2006; Hughes, 1995; Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Saarinen, 2006). The challenge of the assessment process is thus compounded by the subjective and dynamic meaning of sustainability, which varies among the different stakeholders. As a result, the assessment of sustainability in the context of tourism cannot only be viewed as a destination-level, top-down effort. It also requires the implementation of bottom-up, multi-stakeholder approaches to evaluation that enable tourism organisations to actively engage – in close collaboration with their stakeholders – in the sustainability assessments of their day-to-day practices. The latter helps tourism organisations not only to deal constructively with their differences but also to contribute to the sustainability of their own destinations by defining sustainability goals that are attuned to the interests and perceptions of their stakeholders (see Smith & Duffy, 2003, p. 165).

In this paper, we discuss one such multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainability evaluation (Hemmati, 2002; Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005) and propose a theoretical and methodological framework for planning and carrying out assessments of sustainable tourism practices together with different stakeholders. We report on initial work towards an evaluation model for tourism organisations to use in collaboration with their internal and external stakeholders in assessing and deploying more sustainable tourism practices. The term “practice” used here is a routinised type of behaviour consisting of several interconnected elements: physical activities, mental activities, “things” and their use, background knowledge, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). While the framework can also be applied to measure sustainability, our primary objective here is to show how it can be used to develop an understanding of sustainability within the context of tourism. The technical plausibility with which sustainability evaluations are formulated has tended, thus far, to divert attention away from the sociocultural context in which they occur towards more instrumental considerations of measuring environmental impact and performance (see Hughes, 1995).

An empirical case study of sustainable tourism product development in Finnish Lapland, involving small craft-based companies and their stakeholders, illustrates the practical application of the framework. By identifying and discussing four moral discourses, the paper draws attention to the role of multi-stakeholder dynamics and ethics in evaluating sustainable tourism practices. The authors draw from four main approaches to normative ethics: ethical egoism, utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics. These approaches are not used to isolate and describe airtight moral philosophical positions (Jamal & Menzel, 2009). Rather, the moral discourses reveal particular ways of representing sustainability that can be positioned so that they refer to these moral philosophies (see Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 108). From this perspective, ethics can be used within an evaluation to study and contrast sustainability constructions, reason out the differences among the constructions and achieve a degree of consensus among them (see Stufflebeam, 2008).

Framework for sustainability evaluation

In building the framework used to assess the sustainability of tourism practices, this paper begins with the concept of constructivist evaluation. According to Stufflebeam (2008, p. 1394), constructivist evaluation entails the meaningful involvement of stakeholders in the design and implementation of interactive evaluation activities through which people

make sense of their world and those of others. From this perspective, sustainability evaluation is understood as a means of subjecting the principles of sustainable development to continuous refinement, revision and, if necessary, replacement (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 104). Theoretically, the framework draws primarily on the literature detailing multi-stakeholder perspectives on sustainable development (Hemmati, 2002), ethics (Rachels & Rachels, 2007) and the Bellagio Principles governing sustainability evaluation (Hardi & Zdan, 1997), while methodologically, it draws on action research (AR) (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996).

Multi-stakeholder thinking

The term “multi-stakeholder” refers here to the equitable representation of three or more stakeholder groups and their views on processes that encompass dynamic relationships and social interactions. Multi-stakeholder processes are based on the democratic principles of transparency and participation and aim to promote collaboration and strong networks among stakeholders (Hemmati, 2002). Collaboration is understood as a flexible and dynamic process that enables multiple stakeholders to jointly address sustainability issues (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). In sustainable tourism, multi-stakeholder processes offer a wealth of multiple perspectives and experiences that allow tourism stakeholders to construct the knowledge and develop the learning capabilities necessary to reach economic, social and environmental objectives.

In sustainability evaluation, the multi-stakeholder perspective indicates the drawbacks of simply observing stakeholders as passive informants and the benefits of including them in the evaluation process as collaborators. It calls for a less hierarchical, more fluid and iterative approach to evaluation (Jamal, Stein, & Harper, 2002). Multi-stakeholder thinking challenges the well-established assumption that the objectivity and reliability of an evaluation depends on the evaluator’s ability to detach himself/herself from the object and context of the evaluation. It also questions the idea that the client – the one commissioning the evaluation – and the evaluator are the main actors responsible for defining the design of the assessment and its objectives, the manner of data collection and interpretation and the person/s to whom the findings will be disseminated. The use of a decontextualised evaluator and the exclusion of stakeholders from the evaluation process may occlude the ways in which the latter relates to others and the tourism practices under assessment, the ways by which they make sense of sustainability and the extent of their dependence on unsustainable transfers from nature and society (see Meriläinen, Moisander, & Pesonen, 2000, p. 154; Smith & Duffy, 2003).

Multi-stakeholder thinking helps redefine the role of the evaluator as a facilitator, an actor who allows himself/herself and encourages each stakeholder to become an active participant in sustainability evaluation (see Hemmati, 2002). This approach is supported by research advocating more constructivist approaches to evaluation where evaluators move beyond the simple discovery, description and evaluation of facts to actively assume a dynamic role in co-creating findings with stakeholders (Folkman & Rai, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Van der Knaap, 1995). Central to this type of evaluation is the idea that key stakeholders assume the role of co-evaluators and are thus included in decision-making processes during all phases of the evaluation process. Together with the evaluator, these stakeholders generate data and draw conclusions based on the outcomes produced (Folkman & Rai, 1997). All of this occurs within the context of a collaborative relationship based on on-going dialogue and interaction.

Practical deliberation and reflective communication between evaluator and stakeholders helps cultivate an understanding of the tourism practices being assessed. Consistent with

Grundy (1982), it can be argued that the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainability evaluation improves practices using the experiences and specialised knowledge of the participants. In this respect, stakeholders are essential. Although the evaluator plays a key role in facilitating the evaluation process, stakeholders have the knowledge and expertise necessary to assess the different aspects of sustainability in relationship to their everyday lives. Following Carr and Kemmis (1986), the evaluator's role as a participant-facilitator becomes Socratic, a sounding board against which stakeholders try out ideas and learn more about the process of self-reflection. Multi-stakeholder thinking opens up an analytical perspective that helps evaluators not only gain insights into the diverse and often conflicting interests of different stakeholder groups but also build knowledge that is relevant for the stakeholders in the evaluation process. Here, we argue that ethics helps grasp the myriad of stakeholder positions found in sustainability evaluations, thus contributing to critical reflection on knowledge, authority, responsibility and the dynamic contexts of evaluations (cf. Fennell, 2006, p. 355).

Ethics

Much of the discussion on sustainability and tourism is based on the tacit understanding that it is wrong for tourists and tourism organisations to pollute and destroy the natural environment or use it in a way that poses a threat to the ecological stability of the tourism destination. It is acknowledged that as neither the societal nor the economic goals of any destination can be achieved without a healthy ecological and social environment, tourism organisations have responsibility to refrain from spoiling that environment. In calling for appropriate, just procedures to address economic, ecological and social affairs at tourism destinations, researchers have given an increasing amount of attention to the ethical dimensions of sustainable tourism development (see Fennell, 2006, 2008; Holden, 2003; Macbeth, 2005; Saarinen, 2006; Smith & Duffy, 2003, pp. 135–159). In practice, the global code of ethics for tourism published by the World Tourism Organisation (2001) acknowledges the relationship between ethics, tourism and sustainability.

In particular, ethics can contribute to examining the assumptions underlying the planning, implementation and interpretation of sustainability evaluations. To comprehend stakeholder perceptions of sustainable tourism development, it is necessary to gain insight into how different stakeholders understand and relate to nature and society within a particular sociocultural, economic and political context and to explore the moral orientations (beliefs, assumptions, principles, ideals, etc.) that guide their actions (Holden, 2003). The framework suggested in this paper is based on four prevalent approaches to normative ethics: ethical egoism, utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics (Rachels & Rachels, 2007). These approaches inform much of the current discussion on sustainability (Crane & Matten, 2004) and tourism ethics (Fennell, 2006; Jamal & Menzel, 2009; Smith & Duffy, 2003). The term “normative” refers to ethical theories that propose or prescribe ethically correct ways of acting.

Ethical egoism is a doctrine holding that the sole ethical end of life is one's own good, understood as the greatest attainable pleasure (Sidgwick, 1981). For sustainable tourism businesses, this approach proposes that morally behaving tourism stakeholders contribute to the sustainability of destinations by promoting their self-interests (see Fennell, 2006, p. 71). However, while ethical egoists may further the interests of others in the destination, as Rachels and Rachels (2007, p. 75) note, this does not mean that an agent has a moral obligation to do so. On the contrary, ethical egoism suggests that it is the right thing to

do only if the agent (e.g. entrepreneur, customers) freely decides to do so in an attempt to maximise his/her own interests (Crane & Matten, 2004; Fennell, 2006).

From the utilitarian viewpoint, the perspective of ethical egoism is much too narrow. The utilitarian doctrine holds that the end of our actions should be no less than the greatest net sum of the happiness of all sentient beings in the world (Sidgwick, 1981). By offering a single principle of utility that applies systematically to judging the rightness of all actions and practices, utilitarianism has a strong position, especially in tourism planning and development (Jamal & Menzel, 2009). From this perspective, the sustainability of tourism is judged in terms of its capacity to produce good consequences and maximise overall welfare. A tourism stakeholder is considered to contribute to sustainability if his/her actions produce the greatest overall good in a destination. In real life, tourism practice is often observed as sustainable in the utilitarian sense as long as it implies a greater balance of benefits (e.g. employment, investments and tax revenues) over costs (e.g. habitat destruction, the violation of indigenous rights) for the majority of stakeholders (see Fennell, 2006, p. 70).

Conversely, deontological approaches to sustainability do not accept the idea that the sustainability of tourism practices is primarily assessed by the value of their consequences. From a deontological perspective, the background rules and motives of actions and practices are morally significant. Furthermore, for those holding deontological ethics, there are tourism practices that are intrinsically right and intrinsically wrong (see Fennell, 2006, pp. 74–75). For example, price fixing, bribery, misleading claims and violating the rights of local communities are all observed as intrinsically wrong, and they cannot be justified by the beneficial consequences that these practices may yield (Jamal & Menzel, 2009; McNaughton & Rawling, 2006). In the context of environmental ethics, deontological approaches are taken a step further by embracing the idea that the environment has a moral right to respectful treatment; humans have a *prima facie* duty not to harm it (Brennan & Lo, 2002). In other words, deontologically oriented tourism stakeholders may acknowledge the duty to respect the rights of nature even though the good or overall welfare of a society may not be maximised in this way.

Finally, virtue ethics shifts the focus of attention and analysis from acts to actors' virtues (the moral traits of character) that contribute to the good or flourishing life (Rachels & Rachels, 2007). From the perspective of virtue theory, ethics is observed as a practical action that can be developed by training and good education (e.g. via supervision of virtuous practitioners). In the setting of tourism, virtue ethics suggests that the morally correct actions are those performed by tourism actors who have cultivated their moral characters properly and who pursue virtues, such as moderation, wisdom, mercy, industriousness, honesty, integrity and courage. According to MacIntyre (1998), virtues have a social character or a communal origin, and they are the dispositions of agents to act in a way that is viewed as morally appropriate in the agents' social setting. In this sense, virtues are internal to practices. Thus, a virtue ethical approach to sustainability makes us sensitive to the various aspects of the culture and the history of the destination the agent is a member of (Mantere, Pajunen, & Lamberg, 2009). Furthermore, as Fennell (2006, p. 74) notes, the virtue, observed as the golden mean between excess and deficit, has salience to sustainable development, which purportedly represents the middle path of extremes in regard to community and the natural world.

These four approaches offer a fruitful starting point for elucidating the complexity and challenges of sustainability evaluation within a tourism context. By framing and explaining the moral orientations that guide and constrain thought and dialogue about sustainability at a destination, the approaches in question contribute to better understanding the multifarious concerns for other individuals, traditions and culture; the natural environment and the

future generations that emerge within the scope of an evaluation (see Smith & Duffy, 2003, p. 159). Thus, our way of approaching the challenges of sustainability from the perspective of various ethical approaches takes seriously the idea that different theoretical perspectives throw light from different angles on the same phenomenon and, therefore, may work in a complementary fashion (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 104).

Bellagio Principles

The complexity and contested nature of sustainable development has led some evaluation researchers to deliberate on the many dimensions of sustainability evaluation and the basic premises that should guide this type of assessment (Becker, 2004; Hardi & Zdan, 1997). The Bellagio Principles, a set of guidelines for designing and implementing sustainability assessments and disseminating their results, represent one of the most important outcomes of these deliberations. These guidelines were developed by an international panel of evaluation experts at the end of the 1990s and offer guidance for evaluators assessing any type of sustainability initiative (Hardi & Zdan, 1997).

The Bellagio Principles include five key processes: (1) public participation, to promote openness and broad stakeholder involvement; (2) the development of a sustainability vision and related goals; (3) content assessments intended to determine the most suitable measurement criteria and indicators; (4) the presentation of relevant results to inspire public awareness and action; and (5) the development of learning capacity to promote collaborative assessment and adaptability to change (Becker, 2004). The Bellagio Principles represent a cohesive framework for evaluation rather than single isolated assessment processes (Hardi & Zdan, 1997, p. 8).

Sustainability evaluations are portrayed in the Bellagio Principles as continuous, systematic processes that rely strongly on stakeholder participation, collective learning and change. The measurement and the dissemination of results have been widely addressed in the sustainability evaluation literature, indicating how the Bellagio Principles have focused the attention of evaluators on the importance of establishing a sustainability vision and the goals necessary to achieve it. Due to the dynamic and discursive nature of sustainability, such a vision and such goals are regarded not as objective and static but rather as subjective, value-laden and immersed in an on-going process of cultural evolution (Becker, 2004; Hardi & Zdan, 1997). The evaluator should, therefore, encourage participants not only to define their own sustainability vision but also to create an arena where that vision can continuously be challenged and reconstructed through stakeholder interactions during the evaluation process.

Hence, the methodological approach used in sustainability evaluations should allow the participants (with the help of the evaluator) to learn from the different values, assumptions and interpretations of different stakeholders (Folkman & Rai, 1997). This idea is supported by the social constructivist approach to learning, where learning and knowledge construction are a collective endeavour that occurs as people do things together (Wenger, 1999). The direct engagement with stakeholders during negotiation processes and problem-solving activities related to sustainability issues helps organisations develop knowledge and awareness about environmental and socially responsible practices (Rueda-Manzanares, Aragón-Correa, & Sharma, 2008).

Action research (AR)

Here, AR refers to a systematic mode of evaluation based on a reflective process of continuous assessment and action conducted in collaboration with the study's participants.

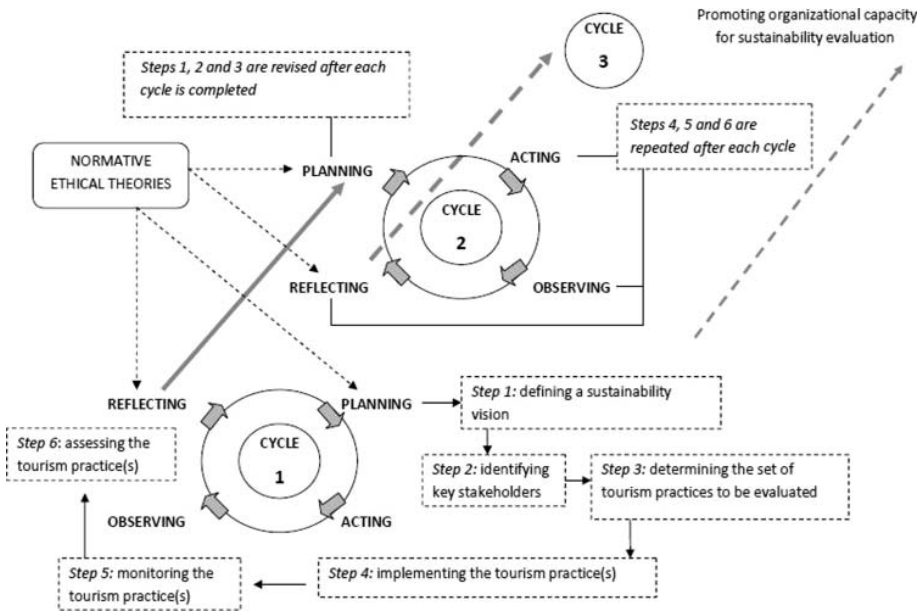


Figure 1. An integrative framework for sustainability evaluation (adapted from García-Rosell, Moisaner, & Fahy, 2011).

The principles of AR are primarily used as a methodological tool for evaluating a particular real-life situation to develop professional practices (Lewin, 1946). The aim is to generate practical knowledge and enhance stakeholder relationships by reflectively assessing attempts by the practitioner–participants to improve the quality of their own practices (Reason & Torbert, 2001; Whitehead, 1994).

The framework (illustrated in Figure 1) is based specifically on the AR cycle proposed by Zuber-Skerritt (1996) and the stakeholder model introduced by Maignan et al. (2005). This framework is suggested as an instrument for tourism practitioners working with stakeholders to assess and develop sustainable tourism practices. It depicts a systematic, cyclical process of simultaneous evaluation and action geared towards creating practical knowledge and shared understanding regarding sustainability through collaboration and dialogue with the multiple stakeholders of a tourism organisation.

AR should not be confused with participatory evaluation, a well-known form of evaluation intended to promote collaboration with stakeholders. Whereas participatory evaluation aims mainly to support decision-making by involving stakeholders in certain aspects of the evaluation process (Brisolara, 1998), AR involves stakeholders in the entire research process, from the definition of the evaluation objectives, the design and the data collection to the analysis and application of the evaluation findings. Unlike participatory evaluation, AR assumes that actively involving stakeholders as co-evaluators allows the stakeholders to participate in the process of knowledge construction, thus contributing to the development of new skills and learning capacities (Fals-Borda & Anisur-Rahman, 1991).

Cycle 1 involves six steps and four phases, which include the planning, acting, observing and reflecting phases. The planning phase has three steps: defining a sustainability vision, identifying key stakeholders and determining the tourism practices to be evaluated.

Whereas the first two steps help frame the evaluation context, the third step involves determining the practices to be evaluated during subsequent steps. These practices are implemented during the acting phase and monitored during the observing phase. Steps 4 and 5 make it possible to explore stakeholder interactions in relationship to tourism organisations. In the reflecting phase, Step 6 invites members of the organisation and their stakeholders to critically assess tourism practices in relationship to sustainability. Normative ethical theories are particularly used in meetings held during the planning and reflecting phases to discuss and analyse the data collected during the different AR phases. Ethics helps evaluating participants approach their practices from a different perspective and thus develop a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability (cf. Smith & Duffy, 2003, p. 166). After Cycle 1, a new cycle begins that involves the same evaluation process. However, each new AR cycle offers an opportunity to redefine the initial evaluation plan.

The study

The framework proposed here is explored using an empirical study of sustainable tourism product development, carried out between 2006 and 2007. The study illustrates how the framework was used to conduct a sustainability evaluation of the tourism practices of a group of small enterprises engaged in product development. The evaluation primarily focused on assessing the development of a sustainability vision and the learning capabilities necessary to address environmental and social challenges within a tourism destination.

Product development was chosen as the research setting because it offers a fruitful empirical context in which to explore multi-stakeholder processes and to illustrate the ways in which sustainability evaluations can be collaboratively planned and performed in interactions among various stakeholders. In the everyday practice of tourism product development, production and consumption activities tend to overlap considerably, with remarkably intense interactions between the tourism organisation and multiple stakeholders (García-Rosell, Haanpää, Kylänen, & Markuksela, 2007; Valtonen, 2010). Thus, product development is a suitable area to focus on if the aim is to monitor the market changes and emerging trends in the industry as well as to examine synergies and conflicts between potential stakeholders. As several authors have noted (Joutsenvirta & Uusitalo, 2010; Puhakka, Sarkki, Cottrell, & Siikamäki, 2009), both convergent and divergent stakeholder views – when negotiated constructively – can become crucial drivers of sustainability innovation. It can, therefore, be argued that product development can be strategically used to perform sustainability evaluations of tourism practices in close interaction with key stakeholders, thereby enhancing the firm's ability to understand the multiplicity and complexity of stakeholder views, needs and expectations related to the sustainability of the tourism practices under evaluation (see Polonsky & Ottman, 1998). Product development also contributes to promoting the sustainability of an entire destination by creating spaces where different stakeholders meet to negotiate, reflect upon and challenge the practices and discourses employed by a tourism company, which constantly reshapes the destination.

The case

The case discussed here is taken from a development project carried out by the Regional Development and Innovation Services (RDIS) Department at the University of Lapland, Finland, an institution committed to promoting sustainable development, wellbeing and equality in the Finnish province of Lapland and among Arctic societies in general.

Lapland is the northernmost province of Finland and the European Union. With 3.5% of Finland's population and about 30% of Finland's total area, Lapland is by far the least densely populated region in Finland and highly dependent on income from rural industries. In particular, small companies specialising in handicrafts, accommodation, catering, activity programmes and other services related directly or indirectly to tourism are an integral part of the local economy, a major employment source and a major driver of economic and social development in the province (Regional Council of Lapland, 2007). The majority of these companies are not only led by female entrepreneurs, but they also employ many young, female employees. While there is a close relationship between the nature and the operations of these companies, the natural areas of Lapland have become vulnerable to the continuous expansion of the tourism industry (Rantala, 2011).

A small team from the RDIS unit performed the project, which aimed to engage a group of small tourism companies in the development of strategies for sustainable product development. The first author worked as the team's principal researcher and evaluator. The participants consisted of the members of eight female-run, small craft-based companies operating in service areas, including catering, hospitality, pottery, natural health care, tours, gastronomy, artistic photography, twig crafting and interior design. Despite the variety of services offered, all the project participants represented themselves as tourism entrepreneurs who maintained close relationships with their local communities and their natural environment. While most of these companies were highly dependent on tourism for their income, some of them had access to other relevant sources of income beyond the realm of tourism.

The participants expressed that one of their main motivations for participating in the project was their desire to learn techniques related to sustainable product development and to network with other entrepreneurs in the region who were interested in conducting their businesses in sustainable ways. The entrepreneurs participating in the project were aged between 35 and 65 and employed between one and six people, depending on the season. The sustainability evaluation was conducted parallel to product development activities under the facilitation of the first author over a period of 14 months, and it included two AR cycles. While the planning and reflecting phases were carried out in different locations, the acting and observing phases of both cycles took place in the Lappish village of Äkäslompolo. Though the village is situated closed to Levi – a large Nordic ski resort – its inhabitants tend to resist following the market-driven tourism development of its neighbour (Jokinen, Mettäinen, Sippola, & Tuulentie, 2009). Most of the village inhabitants have expressed a commitment towards a “small-is-beautiful” tourism development ideology where local culture and traditions play a key role.

Gathering the data

The empirical material used in the evaluation consists of fieldwork data obtained via participant and non-participant observations, convergent interviews, focus groups, narratives and documentary materials. The participant observations of the meetings and workshops held with the participating entrepreneurs and the non-participant observations of the service encounters between entrepreneurs and their customers constitute the main source of data used in the sustainability evaluation. By writing notes in a fieldwork journal, the evaluator not only kept records of his observations, but also reflected on his personal experiences and on the evaluation process as a whole (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996). The evaluator's fieldwork journal was complemented with field notes written by the entrepreneurs themselves. Furthermore, 150 photographs and a 60-minute video recording of stakeholder interactions occurring within the evaluation setting formed a part of the observational data.

In addition, eight convergent interviews (Dick, 1990) with the participating entrepreneurs, two customer focus groups (five participants each) (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, pp. 72–79) and panel discussions comprising customers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders were conducted. The interviews, focus groups and panel discussions were recorded on audiotape and then transcribed. The objective of the interviews and focus groups was to isolate and clarify the multiple meanings of sustainability as understood by the entrepreneurs and their customers, to identify the patterns of convergence and divergence in these meanings and to track the evolution of these meanings during the product development process. The interviews, focus groups and panel discussions revolved around values, assumptions and interpretations related to sustainability and to the companies participating in the project.

Additionally, eight narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995) written by vocational tourism students (age 25–56) living in Äkäslompolo and the nearby surroundings were used. These narratives offered insight into local perceptions regarding sustainability in relationship to tourism. Finally, documentary materials (brochures, newspaper articles and websites) were collected and used for supplementary, secondary data. The use of multiple methods and the comparison of data from the different phases and temporal points of the evaluation gave access to multiple stakeholder perspectives and different forms of knowledge (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002) as necessary to assess the sustainability of the tourism practices of the participating companies.

Analysing the data

Discourse analysis was used to analyse how the participants' sustainability vision evolved in the context of tourism product development (Fairclough, 2003; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002). Consistent with Fairclough (2003, p. 124), the term "discourse" is used in relationship to a group of statements that provides a way of representing and talking about sustainability, thus constructing a particular perspective on it. Thus, language is not just a channel through which societal and environmental concerns are communicated, but a system that constitutes our social world, social identities and social relationships (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002). It is through language that evaluators and tourism stakeholders frame their thought processes and conceptions of sustainability and determine what should be sustained and why it should be sustained (see Chia, 1996).

Discourse analysis has been proven to be suitable for understanding how the meaning of sustainable tourism is created discursively via dialogue, text and images (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Gössling & Peeters, 2007; Puhakka et al., 2009). Here the analysis involved the careful examination of the fieldwork journal, documents, narratives and transcripts from the product development setting, interviews and focus groups. By analysing how the entrepreneurs and their stakeholders talk about sustainable development, what they take for granted, what meanings they contest and what they do not think about (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 108), discourse analysis helps identify repertoires and discursive patterns that characterise the notion of sustainability within the evaluation setting.

Reading and rereading the data made it possible to identify textual elements, such as recurrences, regularities, contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities that could be associated with the social, environmental, economic, moral and political aspects of sustainability. Discourses were, thus, differentiated and characterised in terms of semantic relationships (Fairclough, 2003, p. 129). To enhance the process of analysis, observational data were organised around spatial dimensions (meetings, workshops, testing, etc.) and episodic units according to the AR phases (planning, implementing, observing and reflecting) (see

Rantala, 2011, p. 158). The categories were reflected in the normative ethical theories included in the framework. The analysis of the data began with the first AR cycle and was on-going. During the two AR cycles, four moral discourses related to sustainable tourism were identified.

The evaluation process

The framework used to implement and evaluate this project allowed the author to move beyond the traditional evaluator role as a manager and a controller and, instead, work with the practitioners as an equal collaborator. He was able to work with the participating entrepreneurs and their stakeholders to more deeply explore their understanding of sustainability and how they relate it to the tourism practices under evaluation. Identifying and documenting these viewpoints became a particularly important aspect of this evaluation, as these perspectives have significantly influenced decisions concerning the product development process.

The initial aim of the project was to facilitate the learning process for entrepreneurs wishing to create a link between their product development activities and the emerging environmental and social issues. All participating entrepreneurs were interested in practically implementing the notion of sustainability. In fact, they considered themselves to lack knowledge of and confidence about sustainability issues. However, in reviewing the secondary data collected from websites, brochures and newspaper articles related to the companies, the evaluator recognised a form of “silent sustainability” present among the group. The term “silent sustainability” refers to companies that are already involved in environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices without explicitly thinking of and articulating them in those terms (cf. Perrini, Russo, & Tencati, 2007).

As a result, one of the first steps in the evaluation process was to help these entrepreneurs become aware of their silent sustainability efforts and to help them define a sustainability vision that could guide their product development processes. Towards that end, the evaluator relied not only on the secondary data but also on the data collected through the convergent interviews. These data played a key role in helping the evaluator gain preliminary insight into the evaluation context and identify the main concerns and expectations shaping the entrepreneurs’ perspectives regarding sustainability.

Emerging themes and ideas were summarised in a memo given to the entrepreneurs. This memo was later used in a meeting where the entrepreneurs discussed and reflected on those themes and ideas to develop a shared sustainability vision. The 4-hour meeting was held at a bed and breakfast establishment owned by one of the entrepreneurs. All of this occurred during the planning stage of Cycle 1. As a result of the meeting, the entrepreneurs agreed that the project and its evaluation should be guided by a desire to develop and offer services that represent and support their local traditions, culture and personal way of life. To move towards this vision, they placed emphasis on strengthening quality, networking, cost-effectiveness, customer relations and safety. This sustainability vision was not static; it was challenged and transformed by a range of perspectives coloured by a number of different situations, realities and political positions.

This section illustrates the on-going social construction of a sustainability vision with reference to four moral discourses and draws attention to how the participants developed a broader view to assess sustainability in tourism. To that end, excerpts taken from the empirical data are used. With the exception of Excerpt 9, which was translated from Spanish into English, all the excerpts used were originally in Finnish.

Virtuous discourse

In a final meeting organised within Step 1, the evaluator led the task of helping participants elucidate their sustainability vision by reviewing the interviews and the documentary material collected during the planning phase of Cycle 1. Virtue ethics seemed the most suitable perspective for understanding the moral orientation reflected in the data, thus driving the sustainability vision of the entrepreneurs. Indeed, the vision, which was grounded in the conceptions of the good and in the identities of the entrepreneurs, draws clearly upon the idea of “good life” as reflected in virtue ethics (Kakkuri-Knuuttila, 1993; Kraut, 2006). The entrepreneurs’ view of sustainability was driven by a strong affinity for the arts, history, culture, nature and local traditions and an interest of sharing related experiences with people who share their ideas and values. If their activities were carried out in an environmentally friendly way, it was because of their internalised ideas of good life and related character traits rather than because of following any calculus of interests or mechanical rule or model (Annas, 2006, p. 518).

Entrepreneur D: [In nature] we can start to see natural beauty, small bugs, worms, etc. Nature makes the most beautiful pieces of art. . . As a kid, I learned to move in the forest. I remember once in the forest with my father as it was raining cats and dogs, we went under the cover of a fir tree and made a small fire and the tree kept us dry. . . Of course, nature is central to my business. It is just from the idea of how a human being and her life become so small in the middle of the immensity of nature that the story [of my products] is born. This certainly has to do with me being born in Lapland and the fact that I’ve spent a lot of time with my father in nature and this way of seeing and experiencing nature has followed me through my life. . . . (Excerpt 1, interview)

Entrepreneur B: I have spent the best summers of my youth working with (timber) floating crews, and the memories from these years are very dear to me. This is why the theme of the product is so important and close to my heart. I will be always fond of floating. I wanted to explore what floating involves today. Though it has been mechanised a lot, the basic elements are still the same: water, timber, human labour and nature. I wanted to convey these feelings to the visitors. (Excerpt 2, marketing material)

Excerpt 1 shows that there are dispositions that are inculcated from childhood in the moral training of character (Hursthouse, 2007). The entrepreneur was clearly influenced in practical settings by her father (as a competent supervisor of virtues) in the way that she relates to the natural environment, making it a crucial part of her entrepreneurial endeavours. Consistent with Hursthouse (2007, p. 164), the group of entrepreneurs demonstrate that an environmental virtuous character is acquired not only through lectures or reading but also through moral habituation in practical settings, beginning in childhood and continuing through self-improvement. Similarly, Excerpt 2 makes reference to the strong connection of one of the entrepreneurs to a local rural industry that ceased to exist decades ago. Her products, which embody the story of floating crews, expose the virtuous relationship between nature, history, human-beings as social creatures and the paper industry – one of the most important Finnish business sectors.

Furthermore, consistent with Annas (2006, pp. 521–522), the entrepreneurs regard money-making as one of the things they must do to live their lives; similar to Annas, they see wealth as a means rather than as the ultimate purpose of human life. Their character tempers the desire to maximise profits with concern for the wellbeing of the local community and the customers (Jamal & Menzel, 2009, p. 235). As the excerpts suggest, the virtue of moderation is relevant among this group of entrepreneurs. For them, profits are important to the extent that economic gains facilitate business performance and the existence of the company. Nevertheless, the entrepreneurs clearly distance themselves from the idea of

being driven by profits and economic growth. For them, moderation concerning growth and profits is a key precondition for any enterprise to be called sustainable.

Entrepreneur C: Profits are not relevant. However, I've been able to make a living with my income. By offering massages, I could make more money, but for me massages are kind of mass production. It is a standardised service. I want to really focus on the customer and give her time, not the feeling of being another name on the list. I want to give my customers the chance to find themselves, I want to offer them a peaceful environment in which she experience being important. The work I do happens to be my hobby. Now, it's my work. It's simple my way of life. (Excerpt 3, interview)

In the sustainability vision of these entrepreneurs, quality and customer relationships are intimately related with their reputation in the marketplace and in the relevant (e.g. professional and local) communities. As Excerpt 4 indicates, these vision elements are, for them, more than simple ways of promoting competitive advantage as these customer relationships become emotional interactions where quality is not only a duty but a matter of honour, honesty and trust. As Excerpt 5 shows, quality is also connected to the virtues of accuracy and self-discipline shared among the communities of film producers and photographers. Excerpt 5 draws attention to the social character or communal origin of the conception of quality as understood by the entrepreneurs (Annas, 2006).

Entrepreneur D: The product should be according to the quality principles I set to my work. The pieces I produced are intimately attached to my name, reputation, what kind of work I do . . . I've decorated cottages, second-homes which didn't coincide with my worldview. However, I have to be sincere and just get involved in a long-term process with the customer to reach an outcome that satisfies both of us. (Excerpt 4, interview)

Entrepreneur B: It certainly is quality. If I don't know enough about something, I mean, if I don't go deep enough into the topic I'm working on, I'm not able to create high quality products. I have to do thorough research before I'm able to produce a high quality film. (Excerpt 5, interview)

These entrepreneurs espouse a sustainability vision that includes a holistic approach to business. The entrepreneurs are not primarily after profits, but rather, they pay close attention to employee wellbeing, customer satisfaction, good relationships with the local community and respect for local traditions and the natural environment; all of which are considered important aspects of a good business life and of the professional ethics of lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs. By making these moral considerations explicit, the entrepreneurs were better able to define the tourism practices to be evaluated. Moreover, such clarity of their moral considerations encouraged the entrepreneurs to commit themselves to the development and evaluation of a joint tourism programme that could implement their sustainability vision and moral orientation. The evaluator not only assessed the design and testing of the tourism programme but also encouraged the entrepreneurs to take part in this endeavour, especially during the implementation phase. As a result, the entrepreneurs conducted observations and took notes about their interactions with their customers and other stakeholders. The action and observation phases of Cycle 1 offered them an opportunity to systematically analyse and improve their ability to establish trust-based relationships with their stakeholders and to learn about their perspectives on sustainability.

Self-interest discourse

In Step 2 of Cycle 1, the entrepreneurs recognised the relevance of involving customers in the evaluation. Later, particular attention was given to how customers related the

programme to sustainability and whether this understanding was consistent with the moral orientation guiding the sustainability vision defined by the entrepreneurs in Step 1. In Step 6 of Cycle 1, a customer focus group was moderated by the evaluator. The focus group, which was organised immediately after the first test of the programme, included a visual exercise (Heisley & Levy, 1991) where customers were asked to respond to five photographs that featured the customers themselves participating in the different activities of the programme. Later, during a Step 6 meeting, the evaluator helped the entrepreneurs assess their sustainability vision by examining the results of the focus group.

The findings culled from this customer focus group indicated that customers associated the sustainability of the tourism programme with the eccentric character of the entrepreneurs. However, they also revealed some aspects of the programme that appear to be rooted in ethical egoism. In the context of this evaluation, ethical egoism is visible in the customers' claims regarding how benefits for themselves are created by caring for other human beings and for the natural environment (see Fennell, 2006, pp. 71–72). Thus, customers related sustainability with the promotion of their own personal wellbeing. As the excerpts below indicate, the sustainability of the programme was discussed in relationship to the pleasures the customers experienced (see Sidgwick, 1981), such as freedom, sharing, healthiness and self-realisation along with having a clear conscience and being pampered.

Customer F3: I was truly touched by the sensation that you are able to break free, to forget about time and release yourself from any kind of stress, you simply let everything go by itself. (Excerpt 6, focus group 1)

Customer F2: You get a good feeling, you are able to relax when you see that the hosts are not overwhelmed. . . in some tourism establishments you feel like you have to apologise for stepping in. (Excerpt 7, focus group 1)

Customers also commented on the link between sustainability and the use of different natural objects (local food, clay, wool, twigs, etc.) However, these objects were again discussed in terms of customer benefits. For instance, in Excerpt 8, the customer comments not only on the environmental friendliness of some materials but also on their non-toxicity. The customers perceived them as safe.

Customer F4: Then, in the Vedic Art session, we of course used non-toxic colours [everybody agreed] and also all the materials used in Vedic Art and the other activities were ecologically and environmentally friendly and safe. (Excerpt 8, focus group 1)

On the other hand, all customers who tested the programme were delighted with their degree of participation and inclusion. According to them, a tourism programme that involves customers in crafting activities contributes to personal wellbeing by promoting human relationships, cooperation and mutual understanding.

The entrepreneurs believed that the meeting helped them assess their sustainability vision. By reflecting upon their experiences with the customers and the programme as a whole, the entrepreneurs began to realise that their customers had a different perception of sustainability and issues such as quality, safety, and customer relations. They understood the value of the programme as a holistic process rather than as a set of single crafting sessions performed by unusual entrepreneurs. After the first AR cycle, some entrepreneurs started to refer to their programme as “participative tourism”, meaning tourism in which visitors work together with their hosts to create the tourism experience (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The network understood that although their character traits and ideas of good life are central to the programme, their customers are mainly interested in the benefits that a sustainable product can offer them. The entrepreneurs considered the reflection phase and the entire first

AR cycle as useful in opening up access to a different discourse surrounding sustainability, one that creates opportunities for better communication between the entrepreneurs and their customers. They became familiar with a different way of representing sustainability and new criteria for assessing sustainability. Most of the changes made in the programme were related to the rhetoric used, the programme features emphasised in the marketing material (brochures, website, etc.) and the timing of the activities. The latter was essential in making the programme more participative, flexible and relaxing.

The deontological discourse

Although the first AR cycle helped the entrepreneurs assess the sustainability of the programme, numerous issues called for further evaluation. In particular, the entrepreneurs understood that they needed insight into the perspectives of potential customers, local community members and public organisations about sustainability. A second AR cycle was, therefore, conducted. To learn about the perspectives of potential customers regarding sustainability and tourism, another focus group session was organised before the start of Cycle 2. Five Spanish citizens who had booked but not yet participated in the programme were invited to participate in the focus group. The session (conducted in Spain by a local researcher) aimed to determine customers' assumptions about what makes certain tourism services sustainable. As with the previous focus group, a visual exercise was included (a video presenting the activities in the first test of the programme), and they were then asked to assess its possible relationship to sustainability. These data were complemented by a review of the Lapland Tourism Strategy for 2003–2006 and the narratives written by a group of local vocational tourism students not involved in the project.

These data were used for revisiting the sustainability vision in a meeting held in Step 1 of Cycle 2. More than the group of customers who participated in the programme previous to the focus group, the Spanish participants observed the sustainability of the programme to be strongly related to the protection of and respect for the natural environment.

Customer E4: If we consider the numerous images that draw attention to nature, it is clear that sustainability becomes evident in the way they take care and protect their environment or natural surroundings. They [the entrepreneurs] seem to respect and value their environment, relying on means, techniques and measures that do not damage or harm it. (Excerpt 9, focus group 2)

This way of thinking seemed to prevail among local community members who perceived sustainability in tourism as the preservation of local livelihoods and natural environments. From this perspective, the local residents and nature are understood to be valuable ends in themselves (Jamal & Menzel, 2009). This aspect of sustainability was visible in the interactions between locals and entrepreneurs and in the narratives of the vocational students (see Excerpt 10). These narratives revealed local perspectives on sustainability within a tourism context. Unlike the virtuous and self-interested modes of discourse previously identified, this particular discourse is grounded in a deontological approach to ethics that emphasises the actors' respect for nature (Regan, 1988; Taylor, 1986) and for the dignity of humanity (Kant, 1997).

Student VL2: The first thing that comes to my mind when I hear "sustainable development" is environmental conservation or protection. It means that living and producing services and goods in such a way that our descendants can be born in a safe world. It means that we assume responsibility for our choices and actions. (Excerpt 10, narrative)

Additionally, the review of the 2003–2006 regional tourism strategy also revealed this particular discourse on sustainability. In effect, by referring to sustainable development as safeguarding the *rights of future generations* (both local inhabitants and tourists) to a viable, healthy and safe tourism destination environment, this report seems to support the view of the local community members.

Sustainable development means development in which future generations have at least equal living conditions and same amount of natural resources as the present generation. (Excerpt 11, Regional Council of Lapland, 2003, p. 31).

Within the deontological discourse, some stakeholders seem to agree that tourism organisations should have a requisite duty to respect the rights of current and future stakeholders and the rights of nature itself (see Fennell, 2009, p. 222). By virtue of these commitments, tourism organisations also have special duties not overridden by the consequential considerations of self-interest or the general welfare of society (McNaughton & Rawling, 2006). Thus, it can be argued that while a tourism company may have the financial capacity to invest in a lucrative, massive ski and residential complex, its special commitments to the local community (among other stakeholders) may restrict its freedom to do so. The meeting helped the entrepreneurs relate their sustainability to stakeholder concerns about the rights of indigenous people, future citizens and nature. The entrepreneurs understood that their business initiatives can gain social support if they are more explicit about how their products help protect the rights of local inhabitants and nature.

The utilitarian discourse

As there was an interest among the entrepreneurs to continue their collaboration by applying for project funding, the evaluator gathered more documentary material from the Finnish Tourist Board and the Regional Council of Lapland, the organisations responsible for providing guidelines for tourism planning and development. The material was reviewed in a meeting held in Step 6 of Cycle 2. While the review helped entrepreneurs become familiar with the Finnish tourism strategy and, in particular, with the new 2007–2010 tourism strategy of Lapland, it also helped them examine sustainability from a political perspective.

It seems that these reports endorse and promote a fourth moral discourse. Consistent with Jamal and Menzel (2009), the moral orientation guiding the notion of sustainability in the strategies of these organisations focuses on the aggregate level consequences of tourism practices. Thus, these practices are considered in tourism planning and development due to the overall welfare value they may have for a particular tourism destination. This way of thinking, rooted in the utilitarian approach to ethics, is consistent with the notion that a tourism practice is justified if it is able to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of stakeholders involved in it and affected by it (see Fennell, 2009). Consistent with Jamal and Menzel (2009, p. 229), in this discourse, it is assumed that tourism companies and other stakeholders see their own aims, interests and preferences as integral parts of the common interests of an entire tourism destination. As Excerpts 12 and 13 indicate, this future-oriented, aggregative and welfarist discourse is the dominant political way to approach sustainability in the establishing of tourism practices.

Sustainable development emphasises the shift from endless economic growth to development, which takes into consideration today's needs without putting at risk the opportunities of future generations. Tourism, which is planned in close cooperation with different interest groups, generates employment and promotes economic development. Tourism can also contribute to

maintain cultural heritage and protect the natural environment. (Excerpt 12, Köppä, Hauta-Heikkilä, & Hiltunen, 2005, p. 12)

Social and cultural sustainable tourism considers the well-being of the local community and culture in tourism development. There are already signals that point to the negative consequences of a rapidly growing tourism industry. For example, there have been discussions about the disturbances caused by snowmobiles, the long queues in the health centres during the high season or the fatigue suffered by most tourism employees. (Excerpt 13, Regional Council of Lapland, 2007, p. 58)

From a utilitarian perspective, the environment and local culture have only instrumental value, as they are regarded as a means to satisfy the needs of tourists and the interest of the tourism industry. As Excerpt 14 shows, intrinsic value is not attributed to the natural environment itself but to the pleasure and satisfaction that the environment provides to a great number of tourism stakeholders.

Sustainable tourism refers to tourism that considers the needs of tourists and the destinations and that secures future possibilities. . . A well-maintained and attractive environment, landscape and milieu, be natural or cultural, contribute to promoting local residents' comfort as well as the touristic appeal of the region. (Excerpt 14, Rovaniemi Tourism and Marketing, 2006, p. 66)

Interestingly, it seems that the entrepreneurs did not need to make major changes in their programme to address the view of sustainability stated by the national and regional tourism authorities. Their businesses and the tourism programme under evaluation did, indeed, allude to promoting the welfare of their tourism destination. For instance, the entrepreneurs' concern for the wellbeing of the employees and their respect for local traditions and nature are clearly consistent with regional and national sustainability objectives. The entrepreneurs realised that they must, therefore, communicate their sustainability vision by adapting it to the political sustainability discourse. They were able to broaden their sustainability vision by becoming aware of the utilitarian modes of discourse and the language used in those modes of discourse. In collaboration with the evaluator, they worked to develop a plan to make their beliefs and values more explicit as part of their communication strategy, thus recommending themselves to the local authorities as the champions of sustainability. This was a skill needed for obtaining political support for funding to promote sustainable tourism development.

Conclusions

In this study, we have argued that effectiveness of sustainability evaluations can be improved by promoting mutual knowledge-building rather than maintaining separation between professional evaluators and practitioners. When multi-stakeholder analysis, rather than expert analysis, is at the centre of the evaluation process, the political, economic, sociocultural and moral aspects of the evaluation context become more explicit and valuable inputs in the evaluation process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This is relevant when we consider the nature of sustainable tourism. Because of its complexity and contested nature, the evaluation of sustainable tourism practices must be conducted dynamically through on-going stakeholder interactions and relationships that go beyond the boundaries of a single moral discourse.

As this study shows, perspectives on sustainability in relationship to the same tourism practices differ among stakeholders based partially on the moral discourses from which they emanate. Cutting across tourism practices, each discourse represents a medium through which the interpretations of sustainability are constructed and expressed, and actions are initiated and acknowledged (Hendry, 2000). Awareness of the different ways of representing

the sustainability and the origins and consequences of tourism practices helps develop the capacity for sustainability evaluation in tourism because it draws attention to particular considerations and relationships that must be considered as part of the holistic assessment process. Thus, our study supports the pluralistic use of ethical theories and the idea that different theoretical perspectives throw light from different angles on the same phenomenon and thus “work in a complementary rather than a mutually excluding fashion” (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 104).

Furthermore, consistent with Folkman and Rai (1997), we argue that the proposed framework offers an opportunity to expand the scope of sustainability evaluation in tourism beyond the prediction, measurement and control of outcomes. By including ethics to promote dialogue and critical reflection, the framework helps expose the plurality of underlying values, assumptions and moral orientations behind the multiple views of sustainable tourism development and planning. The framework improves our understanding of the evaluation results and helps us work upon ourselves to cultivate openness to others (Smith & Duffy, 2003, p. 166). From this perspective, establishing a clear sustainability vision as suggested in the Bellagio Principles is not sufficient to provide a meaningful and useful evaluation for the stakeholders involved. Attention must be given to the pluralistic use of ethical theories and the acknowledgement of the diversity of moral discourses that can help critically re-evaluate basic premises of tourism management and development, thus keeping any sustainability vision in constant flux and aligned with the principles of sustainable development.

Future research, focusing on new variants, is needed to develop the proposed framework into a comprehensive evaluation model. Firstly, it would be worthwhile to apply the framework to different tourist, organisational and even business contexts. Secondly, it would be useful to consider the role of the framework in (re-)defining the measurement criteria and indicators. Although assessment content plays an important role in the Bellagio Principles, it is not addressed in this study. Thirdly, whereas only project staff members, researchers and the group of entrepreneurs were actively involved in this evaluation process, future studies could involve a greater number of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Research is also needed to study the sustainable tourism practices and moral discourses from the “not so dominant” ethical perspectives. For example, the perspectives of feminist ethics revolving around the issues of care for others and the existentialist perspectives addressing the issues of authenticity may be relevant for the sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, there is still a need to study the virtue ethical perspectives on sustainable tourism and, in this way, complement the consequentialist and deontological approaches dominating the field.

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Struggles over corporate social responsibility meanings in teaching practices: The case of hybrid problem-based learning

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Abstract

Although experiential learning has been widely discussed in relation to the teaching of corporate social responsibility, the socially mediated and discursive nature of experiential learning approaches to corporate social responsibility has been either neglected or given only cursory coverage in the literature. Considering this gap, I problematise corporate social responsibility education within the axioms of managerialism, arguing that it should also allow business students to critically evaluate, analyse and question the basic premises underlying contemporary business practices. Using an action research approach, I explore the possibilities and challenges of using hybrid problem-based learning to help business students engage in critically reflexive processes and, thus, the social construction of corporate social responsibility meanings. Drawing on discourse analysis, I illustrate two central discursive patterns that characterise the struggle over corporate social responsibility meanings in a series of courses implemented in the business curriculum of a Nordic university between the years 2007 and 2010. The findings offer empirical support for several key arguments in the debate over corporate social responsibility education.

Keywords

Corporate social responsibility, critical reflexivity, discourse, experiential learning, problem-based learning, social constructionism

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)¹ education is regarded as particularly challenging because of the abstractness, ambiguity and complexity of the subject. As research suggests, students find CSR difficult to understand and apply unless they are able to connect theory with their particular realities by becoming actively involved in the process of dealing with environmental, social and ethical issues (DesJardins and Diedrich, 2003; McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006). Given these considerations, there has been much academic debate over the use of experiential learning approaches that

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can be used to help students gain a better understanding of business–society relations and the moral complexity of those relations (Galea, 2007; McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006; Sims, 2002). While these scholars recognise the social nature of learning, they tend to rely upon subjective cognitive approaches (Cunliffe, 2008; Holman et al., 1997). These approaches assume that CSR learning is primarily rooted in a student's own experience, perception and context and that the student strengthens this learning by engaging in interpersonal interactions within an educational setting.

In this article, I suggest that experiential learning approaches to CSR should also recognise the socially situated and discursive nature of learning as well as the collaborative practices that students might use in building interpersonal and intrapersonal relations (see Cunliffe, 2002: 36–37; Holman, 2000: 206). Drawing upon the postmodern perspective on experiential learning (Holman et al., 1997; Usher, 1992) and a relational social-constructionist orientation to management learning (Cunliffe, 2002, 2008; Ramsey, 2005; Watson, 2001), I discuss one such experiential learning approach by presenting hybrid problem-based learning (PBL) as an alternative pedagogical tool to promote critical reflexivity and the construction of CSR knowledge. Although 'critical thinking' is a term commonly used in PBL and CSR literature to mean the ability to adopt a disciplined approach to problem solving, 'critical reflexivity' alludes to the social process of questioning assumptions embodied in both theory and professional practice (see Cunliffe, 2002, 2004: 412; Reynolds, 1999: 538).

In accordance with Skålén et al. (2008: 3), I suggest that to better understand the relationship between business and society, business students should have the opportunity to fundamentally evaluate, critically analyse and reflect upon the premises underlying contemporary business practices. As language provides students with the means to frame their thought processes and conceptions of reality (Chia, 1996), its role in contributing to critical reflexivity must be recognised. Indeed, language is not merely a communication channel but a system through which students and instructors (re)define their social identities, social worlds and social relations (see Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 9).

This article considers my experience during the development and implementation of two CSR courses based on hybrid PBL at the Faculty of Tourism and Business² of the University of Lapland, Finland, between the years 2007 and 2010. The study builds upon first-person action research (AR), and the data were collected using participant and non-participant observation (both in physical and virtual spaces), students' learning journals and questionnaires. The data were analysed using discourse analysis. The combination of AR with a discursive perspective provides an opportunity to examine critical questions in CSR teaching that are not easily approached using more traditional methodological approaches. By drawing attention to two particular discursive patterns, the empirical analysis shows how business students (1) tend to frame environmental and social issues within the managerial discourse; (2) distance themselves from the CSR discourse to maintain their professional identity; and (3) use both discourses to talk about and be critically reflexive of issues that have been either legitimised or silenced during their business education.

This study makes two main contributions. First, a social-constructionist perspective on CSR education means reworking CSR teaching from instructing students to make responsible business decisions to enabling them to think more critically about the nature of business. In doing so, the study approaches social responsibility not only as a teaching subject (Matten and Moon, 2004; McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006) but also as a relational activity in which knowledge from different stakeholder groups is shared, interpreted and used to collectively construct CSR meanings (see Burchell and Cook, 2006; Dryzek, 1997; Ramsey, 2003). This study shows how traces of wider discursive structures, ideologies and power relations brought by students and instructors into the learning process (Cunliffe, 2002: 46) can be used as an opportunity to promote learning

dialogues and relationships that include stakeholder voices usually silenced or neglected within a CSR teaching context.

Second, the study not only extends the literature on the use of PBL in business schools by examining its application in a CSR context (Coombs and Elden, 2004; Hallinger and Lu, 2011) but it also represents a response to calls to use PBL as a means to help students become reflexive thinkers who are able to challenge, rework and appreciate their most cherished fundamental assumptions (Drinan, 1997; Lindén and Alanko-Turunen, 2006). Indeed, by illustrating the implementation of hybrid PBL within a CSR educational context, the study provides a concrete example of how PBL can contribute to creating learning spaces that support critical reflexive practice in business education. The term ‘hybrid’ refers to a form of PBL that is supported by parallel learning activities, such as lectures and in-class exercises (Kahn and O’Rourke, 2005: 4).

A discursive perspective on corporate social responsibility teaching

In line with Du Gay et al. (1996), ‘discursive perspective’ refers here to an analytical perspective on the production of CSR knowledge through language and representation and the way that this knowledge is legitimated within an educational context. It reproduces existing and introduces new practices and technologies that promote certain ways of perceiving and acting as a (responsible) business practitioner. As discourses play a role in producing not only knowledge but also identities and social relations (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 5), a discursive perspective seems to be very well suited for looking at CSR teaching as a set of critically reflexive processes and collaborative practices through which CSR meanings are socially constructed.

Managerialism, which is based on the principles of neoclassical economics, has gained a hegemonic position within the context of business education, shaping the belief systems, ways of thinking and statements that provide students with a language for conceptualising and preparing themselves for the role of managers (see Du Gay et al., 1996). From this point of view, managerialism as a discourse represents a field of power in which students and instructors take up particular subject positions to understand and discuss business (see Laine and Vaara, 2007). Their subjectivities – the way they act and perceive themselves – are centrally defined by the premises of continuous economic growth, profit maximisation, efficiency, competitiveness, individualism, autonomy and control, among others (Banerjee, 2007; Du Gay et al., 1996; Skålén et al., 2008). As argued by Alanko-Turunen (2005: 230), all of these factors influence the reading material preferred by instructors and suggested to students, the pedagogical approaches used and the way successful business is represented in the classroom.

If business students are taught to conduct business based on the premises listed above, they will not only be inclined to act according to the principles of neoclassical economics, but they will also be inclined to think like a profit- and growth-oriented manager because they lack the ability (and language) to think in a different way (cf. Skålén et al., 2008: 93). This view is contrary to the idea suggested by most pedagogical approaches to CSR teaching, namely that CSR courses should start by problematising and articulating a critique towards existing business practices and, based on these critiques, develop more responsible business approaches. The question then remains: how can contemporary business practices be criticised without critically evaluating the premises and beliefs that legitimate and justify these business practices in the first place? A critical evaluation of these premises and beliefs is challenging not only because managerial discourse has already defined the way students make sense of business and see themselves as managers, but also because its hegemonic position diminishes the multiple meanings of language and, thus, the possibility of

students approaching business from a different perspective (see Alanko-Turunen, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Jonker and Marberg, 2007).

By promoting critical reflexivity, the hybrid PBL approach described in this study attempts to open up opportunities to use CSR as a means to shake up the dominant managerial discourse. In doing so, CSR is seen as a discourse in its own right, based upon the premise that social, ethical and environmental concerns are central to the role of business in society and that multi-stakeholder learning processes and dialogues are needed to address those concerns (Burchell and Cook, 2006; Jonker and Marberg, 2007). I argue that, as a discourse, CSR offers business students the language needed to question and redefine the logic of contemporary business practices. However, to that end, CSR needs to be seen as a discourse that goes beyond the realm of the business community and includes other stakeholders who actively take part in shaping the discourse through the continuous scrutiny and criticism of what it means to be and to act as a socially responsible business organisation (see Burchell and Cook, 2006).

Problem-based learning

PBL is a pedagogical approach that was developed during the 1960s at McMaster University for the purpose of medical education (Barrows, 1996). Several educational fields have since witnessed the adoption of PBL, including education, engineering, health services and management (Boud and Feletti, 1997; Savery, 2006). The use of a problem as a starting point for learning represents the main characteristic of PBL (Savery, 2006). In PBL, the term 'problem' refers to the idea of a research problem, namely a description of a situation involving an option for development or improvement (Margetson, 1994). While some studies portray PBL as a teaching technique, others go further and outline it as a philosophy able to transform education through its strong focus on learning processes and its atypical approach of viewing teachers as learning facilitators (Margetson, 1994). This study will focus on discussing PBL as a pedagogical approach to support CSR learning at the course level.

Even though the development of PBL was not inspired by any particular educational model, as Barrows (2000) argues, its understanding and further development demanded that PBL be positioned within theories of learning. In particular, Dewey's pragmatism, Kolb's learning cycle, Lewin's equation of behaviour and Piaget's model of intellectual development have dominated the theorisation of PBL (Portimojärvi, 2006). PBL's attempts to encourage students to be autonomous learners in managing information, collaborating with others, and developing their own perception, meanings and ways of making sense of reality are thus grounded in cognitive psychology and experiential learning.

This epistemological premise has, however, been criticised for its strong emphasis on the individual as a knowledge acquirer and problem solver. In line with Reed and Anthony (1992: 601), it can be argued that the overriding emphasis given to cognitive, functional and technical skills in PBL literature might have crowded out any concern with the social, economic, political and moral context of learners' lives and future working environments. This omission has probably led some scholars to turn their attention toward a more social-constructivist approach to PBL that focuses on studying both internal cognitive processes and the role of students' interactions in knowledge construction (Ryan, 1997; Savery and Duffy, 1995). According to the epistemological stances taken in these studies, a distinction can be made between a modern and a postmodern social-constructivist orientation. While the modern view takes into consideration the role of social interactions in promoting learning, it continues to view learning as a rational process that only occurs in the mind. The postmodern view, on the other hand, rejects the idea of an individual-centred locus of

knowledge by approaching learning as a social process in which an amalgam of interpersonal and intrapersonal means are used in conversation with one's self and in joint action with others (Holman, 2000: 206).

The adoption of PBL in business education, which has been growing since the early 1990s, has tended to rely extensively on a modern social-constructivist orientation (Alanko-Turunen, 2005: 65–71; Hardless et al., 2005). Most business educators view PBL as an instruction method used to support students in acquiring and applying a rationality (knowledge and personal competencies) for managing organisations in a rapidly changing global economy (Hallinger and Lu, 2011; Wee et al., 2003). Furthermore, due to its role in promoting teamwork, creativity and leadership, among other skills, PBL has been regarded as a practical way to respond to the criticism that business education lacks rigour and relevance (Smith, 2005). This view of PBL is in line with the idea of transforming educational processes into a matter of economic efficiency at the service of potential employers, rather than a matter of building societies (see Lindén and Alanko-Turunen, 2006; Skålen et al., 2008: 157).

This way of thinking about PBL has been criticised by business educators who take a postmodern social-constructivist perspective (e.g. Alanko-Turunen, 2005; Lindén and Alanko-Turunen, 2006). According to this view, PBL should go beyond the idea of producing human capital for the labour market to create spaces where students are encouraged to critically challenge the underlying assumptions of business practice and to think more reflexively about how these assumptions affect other people's lives (Lindén and Alanko-Turunen, 2006). Reflexivity goes deeper than reflecting on either an event or a situation; it involves recognising ourselves and our actions in relation to others (Cunliffe, 2008: 135). This view of PBL seems to be particularly relevant for incorporating reflexive practice in CSR learning. By drawing on the postmodern social-constructivist perspective within the context of this study, PBL allows business students to explore the notion of CSR by engaging in critical and dialogical processes with instructors and fellow students (see Cunliffe, 2008).

Research process

I draw on first-person action research (AR) to explore reflexive processes, discursive practices and the social construction of CSR meanings in two CSR courses over four years. First-person AR refers to an inquiry in which the researcher seeks to improve practice and contribute to scientific understanding (Lewin, 1948). However, in contrast to Lewin's cycle, which views students' feedback as information for evaluating the success and failure of a given course format, I see feedback as an essential part of the on-going co-construction of the hybrid PBL approach to CSR teaching (see Ramsey, 2003). Marshall (2001, 2004) devised this form of AR as cycles of inquiry that incorporate appropriate and repeated movements between what she calls the 'inner and outer arcs of attention'. While the inner arcs focus on how the researcher perceives, makes sense of and frames issues, the outer arcs invite the researcher to look beyond his or her own perceptions to question issues collaboratively with students and to seek ways to test out new pedagogical ideas.

I discuss here a case that draws from a pedagogical development project conducted at the Faculty of Tourism and Business of the University of Lapland, Finland. By following Smith's (2005: 358) recommendations, the initial aim of the project was to use PBL as a pedagogical tool for promoting students' ability to define CSR dilemmas, identify related gaps in their knowledge regarding business–society relations, collect relevant information about CSR-related issues and simulate business decision making that considers economic, social and environmental objectives.

However, the context and purpose of this study emerged from my first experiences with the implementation and facilitation of PBL within a CSR teaching context. It was through those experiences and the careful reading of the preliminary data that I realised that the students were not simply learning how to make responsible business decisions, but were engaged in the co-construction of what it means to act as a socially responsible organisation. By reflecting on these experiences and gaining further theoretical insights into CSR and PBL teaching practices, I began to think about possible changes in the PBL application that could support students even more in their attempts to construct CSR meanings.

Because of these reflections, I redefined the aim of the project to develop a hybrid PBL approach that both actively engages students in the construction of CSR and enables them to think more critically about the role of business in society. To that end, two Masters-level CSR courses – one focusing on business ethics and one on environmental marketing – were included in the project. Before the adoption of PBL, both courses were taught with a conventional pedagogy consisting of formal lectures and the use of case studies. On average, 15 to 20 students representing different business fields (e.g. management, marketing, human resource management, accounting and tourism) and nationalities (both European and non-European) attended each CSR course. Furthermore, as employees, employers, consumers, activists, politicians and above all, citizens, these students brought traces of wide discursive structures, ideologies and power relations into the learning process (see Cunliffe, 2002: 46). This wide array of voices offered a fertile ground for establishing dialogues that went beyond the realm of business. Despite the diversity of the students' backgrounds, they all showed a desire to learn about CSR-related issues and techniques for managing organisations in a socially responsible way. It should be noted that both courses had a 'non-obligatory' status in the curriculum. The ages of the students were between 23 and 35, and both genders were equally represented. I was the instructor for both courses and the tutor facilitating all of the PBL meetings.

I began implementing PBL in these courses in 2007, and eight AR cycles took place from 2007 to 2010. These cycles, which describe the (re-)planning, implementation and evaluation of the hybrid PBL approach, can be illustrated according to the model suggested by Coghlan and Brannick (see Figure 1). The development of the hybrid PBL approach was further promoted by my effort to familiarise myself with the theoretical foundations of PBL, social-constructionist learning theories and social-constructionist approaches to CSR and my practice of establishing dialogues with peers and students. My role as an action researcher in developing the PBL approach is worthy of special attention; after all, students were only involved as collaborators and not as co-researchers, as is typically done in most AR studies. However, due to the power differences between teacher and students, a more collaborative form of AR might have been difficult (Reason, 1988). Furthermore, the participation of students would have been limited to only one AR cycle (the duration of a course).

The project did not require ethics approval from the University's Advisory Board on Research Ethics. It was enough that the Faculty of Tourism and Business gave consent for the project and that the study was performed in accordance with general principles of research ethics and good scientific practice. At the start of each course, I informed students briefly about the study and thus made them aware of the collection of empirical data during the course, assuring them that the data would only be used for research purposes. Anonymity was also guaranteed to students by omitting any information that could reveal their identity when using the material in any form of scientific publication. Students were asked for consent again before the video recording of PBL meetings, which took place during the last AR cycle.

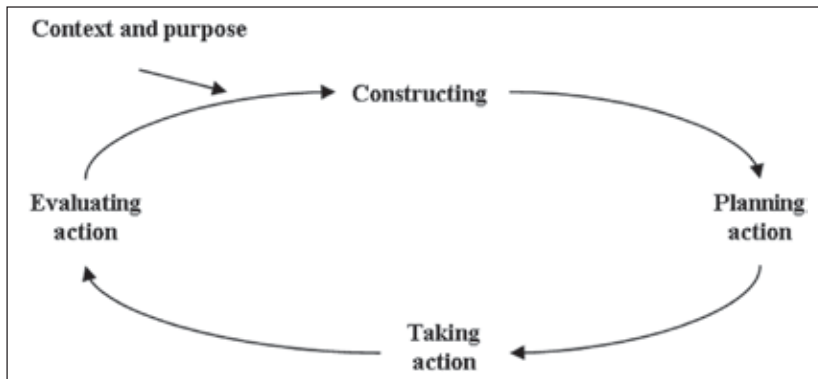


Figure 1. Action research cycle.

Source: Coghlan and Brannick (2009: 8).

Collecting the data

The data set was organised according to Marshall's inner and outer arcs of attention. Keeping a fieldwork journal of my personal experiences, reflections and the research process as a whole was essential for engaging in the inner arcs of attention. By writing analytical notes in the fieldwork journal, I was able to engage in a reflexive process of questioning my understanding of CSR, my assumptions about learning, my relationship with the students, my teaching practices and my own position throughout the AR process (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996: 192).

I attended to the outer arcs of attention by taking notes on students' comments and actions performed during the courses. Notes were made after each learning session to avoid disruption of class activities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996: 176). The main sources of data for this study included participants' observations of the lectures; class assignments; PBL meetings (videotaped in 2010); presentations; and students' interactions in a virtual learning environment. In addition to records of speech and action, the notes also include a description of the context, including actors, space, time, feelings and setting (Spradley, 1980: 78). The visual material consisted of six videos with a length of about 120 minutes each. The visual data helped reconstruct the PBL meetings that took place during the last AR cycle (see Collier, 2001). The videos were particularly useful in bringing to my attention such attributes as embodied positions, body movements, gestures, emotions, eye contact and other non-verbal elements I had possibly neglected when involved in the meetings as a tutor (see Probyn, 2004). Following Hammersley and Atkinson's (1996: 185) advice, I also relied on my memory to fill in and re-contextualise recorded events and utterances.

The outer arcs of attention were further addressed by gathering feedback on the hybrid PBL approach. I asked students to fill out an evaluation form at the end of each course and to record their PBL experiences in their learning journals. Over 90% of the students fulfilled both requests. Learning journals were a powerful tool not only for receiving feedback on PBL but also for exploring how students engage in their own learning and develop critically reflexive capabilities (see Bickford and Van Vleck, 1997). As suggested by Cunliffe (2004), journals may encourage students to think about themselves from a subjective perspective, requiring them to be attentive to their assumptions, ways of being and acting and ways of relating. Verbal and written guidelines were provided to the students on how to write the learning journal. Special emphasis was placed on

encouraging students to link personal experiences to the topics covered in the course, to question their assumptions, to explore their learning and to identify possibilities for self-development (see Cunliffe, 2004: 418–424).

Reflexivity was further promoted by giving each group the task to co-write a report in wiki format that described the hybrid PBL process and its results. The co-creation of such a narrative provides an opportunity to challenge hidden assumptions and thus influence the thinking of one's colleagues in a more interactive way (Gabriel and Connell, 2010). In addition to students' input, I received feedback on the study through the process of writing drafts of this report and presenting them in seminars and conferences. It was actually through feedback that students and other peers took part in constructing both the hybrid PBL approach and my facilitation practices as a teacher. All four steps of constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating were repeated in course after course such that each course represents an AR cycle.

The use of multiple methods and sources of data in this study makes it possible to gain access to different types of knowledge and perspectives (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 4) as well as a variety of situations where students exercise critical reflexivity and socially construct CSR meanings (see Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 53). The dynamic nature of learning and the complex and ambiguous nature of CSR require that greater diversity and imagination be used in the application of research methodologies (Crane, 1999: 245). The compatibility of research methods with the aims of the study, the transparency of the whole research process and my involvement in a joint process of inquiry and learning linked to action in context were key criteria for judging the quality of this action research study (see Swantz, 2008: 43).

Analysing the data

The analysis of the data began with the first AR cycle and continued throughout the remaining AR cycles. The fieldwork journal was an essential tool for reflecting on the significance of the data and the implications for the research design and further data collection (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996: 205–206). Indeed, the fieldwork journal helped me not only start with the analytical reading of the data but also develop the theoretical framework of the study (Rantala, 2011). As this study does not seek to explain individual learning experiences, the empirical material is analysed as social texts that are produced, shared and used in culturally specific and socially organised ways (see Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 68).

To interpret the social texts produced in the AR process and to understand the logic of their production, I draw upon discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002; Phillips and Hardy, 2002). By analysing how students talk about business and its relation to society, what they take for granted, what sort of meanings they contest and what they do not think about (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006: 108), discourse analysis helps to identify repertoires and discursive patterns that characterise the struggle over CSR that take place at the intersection of the dominant managerial discourse and the emerging CSR discourse. More specifically, this analytical framework highlights the way students used these discourses to question their assumptions about the role of business in society, giving them the opportunity to redefine or reaffirm their identity as business students. From this perspective, the analysis does not focus on determining what students say about social responsibility but rather how they socially construct knowledge about it.

The analysis involved the careful examination of observation notes, transcripts from the hybrid PBL setting, questionnaires and student-learning journals. The use of different data sources as well as the comparison of data collected from different phases and temporal points of the fieldwork gives

added depth to the struggles over CSR meanings involved in the study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996: 230–231). To enhance the process of analysis, the observational data were organised around spatial dimensions (e.g. classroom, first meeting, blog, breaks) and episodic units (e.g. class exercises, watching movies, class discussions, presentations) (see Rantala, 2011: 158). This helped me link my field notes with the data available in the learning journals, transcripts and other documents.

Reading and re-reading the data made it possible to identify textual elements, such as recurrences, regularities, contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities that could be associated with the social, environmental, economic, ethical and political aspects of CSR. In the analysis, particular attention was given to moments that students found puzzling or controversial or that generated emotions (see Fairclough, 1992; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002). From the numerous examples examined, typical illustrations of discourse used in the social construction of CSR knowledge were singled out. Two discursive patterns that offer a good illustration of the struggles over CSR meanings that took place within the context of hybrid PBL were chosen for presentation in the next section.

Empirical analysis

This section illustrates how hybrid PBL allows room for engaging in critical reflexivity, discursive practices and the social construction of CSR meanings. Figure 2 illustrates the hybrid PBL

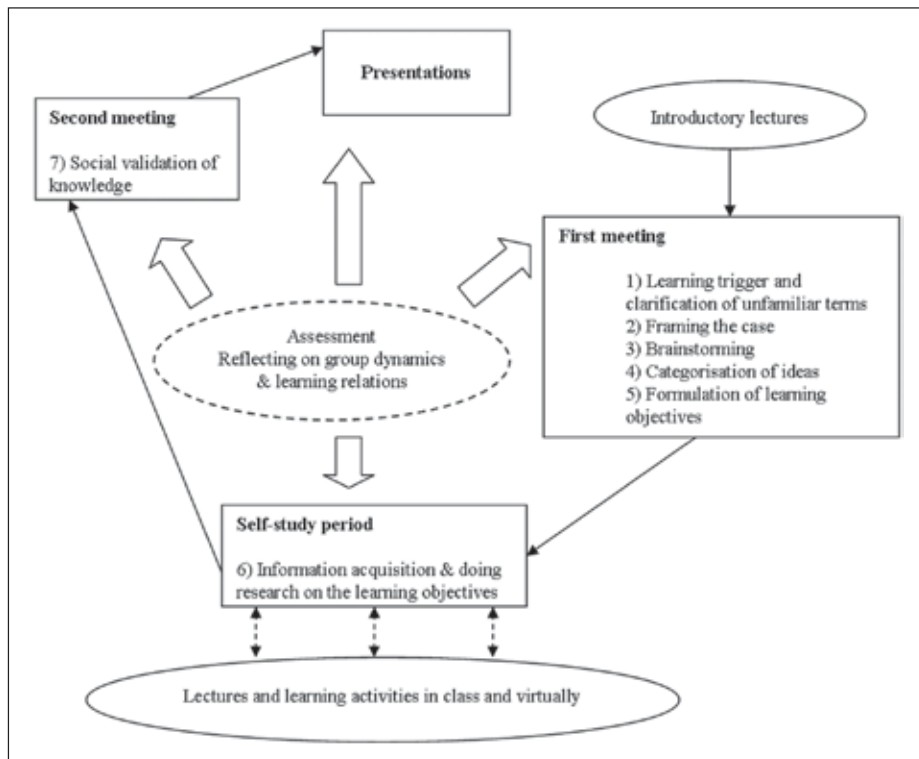


Figure 2. Hybrid problem-based learning.
Source: Adapted from Alanko-Turunen (2005: 73).

approach developed and used in this study. After two introductory lectures, the class was divided into three groups of five to eight students. Each group was invited to attend the first meeting under my facilitation. As a tutor, I dedicated most of my efforts to smoothing out the PBL process by asking thought-provoking questions dealing with substance and by encouraging students to be attentive to their own assumptions, their sayings and doings and their ways of relating.

What is the problem?

The whole hybrid PBL process was organised around the so-called 'vignette', which describes a situation in an unstructured form. The vignette represented the trigger for CSR learning. In this case, the vignettes were memos describing a business situation in which values were in conflict (see Treviño and Nelson, 2007: 3). Students were asked to set the research strategy and learning objectives that were needed to deal with the situation. From the point of view of CSR education, improving the situation was not the goal; the goal was to trigger moral deliberation and critically reflexive engagement over unsettling assumptions about business practices and their impact on society and the natural environment. However, the term 'problem' in PBL tended to lead some students to approach the social and ecological challenges included in the vignettes as business problems that could be solved through the application of the right management tools (cf. Van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996: 52).

I think that the problem-based exercise [PBL] was useful for learning about business ethics. It was a totally new way of solving problems for me. It helped me understand how ethical theories and CSR can be used to solve business problem. If I ever were a team leader of some sort, I could definitely see myself using this method for problem solving at my workplace. (Excerpt 1, journal)

We gathered information by doing research on real-life examples from the pharmacy industry, attitudes and ethical theories that may help us rationalise and justify our decision. At the end of the PBL-process, we decided to start producing the generic drugs, even if the market segment was considered risky and legal actions by patent holders were imminent. This however should not be a problem. According to the PBL case the government of the African country where our company happens to operate offered us unconditional political support against possible litigations related to the production of HIV-generic drugs. We saw that starting the production of generic HIV-drugs was the most ethical option available. (Excerpt 2, blog)

Excerpts 1 and 2 show how social concerns and CSR concepts were moulded in a direction that serves business objectives, despite the situation having more far-reaching connotations. Thus, the problem-solving aspect of PBL may indeed present CSR as a management tool for solving conflicts between business and society, downplaying its discursive power in shaping the society in which we want to live and work (see Burchell and Cook, 2006). As Masters-level students, course participants were already familiar with the business jargon. However, in the 'learning trigger' step, there was a need to clarify terms such as generics, sweatshops, stakeholders, greenwash, whistle-blower and non-governmental organisation (NGO). With a few exceptions, none of the students participating in both courses had attended a CSR course before. Theoretical concepts such as business ethics, sustainability and stakeholder theory were completely new to them. If, as Chia (1996: 418) argues, language plays a key role in representing and communicating our thoughts of reality, the students faced limitations in framing the situation in the vignette from a CSR perspective. Furthermore, students' perceptions of responsible business and being a responsible manager could only be expressed and understood through the categories

and meanings available to them inside the managerial discourse (cf. Katila and Meriläinen, 1999; Moisander, 2001). These factors had direct consequences on how students framed the situations in the vignettes.

Student 1: Well, I think that we need to think about the savings that we can obtain by switching to the new supplier [company implementing a sweatshop strategy].

Student 2: But it's not only about costs ... products have to be of high quality.

Student 1: Yeah, changing suppliers is a tricky thing. It's like getting divorced and married again [smile]. I mean, we need to start working on the relationship, and we don't know whether it'll work. (Excerpt 3, conversation first meeting)

As the excerpts above indicate, there was a tendency to examine the vignettes in terms of profit and efficiency. The students seemed to have assimilated a rational way of managing (Skålén et al., 2008) that made them immune to the social and environmental implications of business practices. Human beings and nature were seen as problems to be solved and objects to be framed within an organisational language in terms of competitive advantages and sales figures (Jones et al., 2005: 91). As I encouraged students to see beyond the financial, legal, marketing and managerial aspects of the case, some even resisted the idea of framing the case from a perspective other than that of business, as they have been taught during their studies.

We received a case on animal testing. The case itself was quite interesting, but it disregarded several important factors related to economy and running a company. Actually, this problem could have been solved very quickly even without engaging any ethical theories and the chosen option would still be ethical. (Excerpt 4, journal)

The PBL experience was terrible. We found a good solution for the problem right after we read the case, but we were not allowed to say that because we had to invent all kind of confusing problems [referring to animal rights, friendship, loyalty, etc.]. PBL made a simple business decision very complex. That doesn't work in business. Everyone has their own ways to solve problems, and there was no opportunity for that. Business is about efficiency and profitability, and neither friendship nor emotions should play a role in it. (Excerpt 5, journal)

The students mentioned above resisted the idea of giving up the managerial attributes and dispositions that they acquired during their business studies and that made them business students in the first place (Du Gay et al., 1996). In doing so, they support and even defend the amoral nature of business (see Kallio, 2007). After three weeks of attending lectures and conducting research on the learning objectives set in the first meeting, each group met with me again to discuss and reflect upon their findings in relation to the situations presented in the vignettes. As I encouraged students to assess their findings from the perspective of group dynamics and learning relations, they were able to break down the assumptions that led them to frame the cases in the first meeting.

I don't really understand how we were not able to see the bigger picture. It was in front of us. I remember that we were too focused on the reduction of costs, legal liability and whether our decision may fit our customer segment [referring to discussions in the first meeting]. How was it possible that we didn't think of human life at first? [The vignette was built upon the 'Ford Pinto' case (see Gioia, 1992)]. The problem was much broader and complex than we initially thought; it went beyond a simple business decision. I think that in our conversations [referring to group discussions] we were able to question our initial thoughts. (Excerpt 6, conversation second meeting)

The role of discourse as a way of apprehending and reconstituting worldviews is central in Excerpt 6. As the example above indicates, discourse is not simply a matter of what is being said in the vignettes used in this study but also of how bits of information are ultimately interpreted and assembled into coherent stories or accounts (see Dryzek, 1997; Jonker and Marberg, 2007). The vignettes used in this study could thus be conceived differently depending on the discourse that is drawn upon.

The analysis of this discursive pattern first illustrated how the managerial discourse and the problem-solving nature of PBL influenced the way that business students framed and tackled the social and environmental challenges presented in the vignettes. The analysis then turned to a demonstration of how the CSR discourse offered students a new way of talking and understanding the PBL cases; thus, it enabled them to openly recognise critical issues that were not visible when relying only on the managerial discourse. At the same time, some examples showed how certain students distanced themselves from the CSR discourse in an attempt to maintain their professional identity (see Laine and Vaara, 2007: 145). They saw the social responsibility approach to business as problematic because they felt that it threatened and limited their ability to act as managers.

Puzzling with the managerial and corporate social responsibility discourse

The lectures, in-class exercises, documentaries, self-study and other learning activities that took place after the first meeting helped position students within the CSR discourse. In line with Fairclough (2003: 208), hybrid PBL became a process in which students were encouraged to act, think, talk and see themselves in terms of the CSR discourse. Hence, the hybrid PBL process served as a means to promote critical reflexivity and the social construction of CSR.

The CSR documentary showed during the lecture made me think many things about business. I felt that those Chinese workers were underpaid and working in poor conditions. I was surprised and embarrassed because many scenes we saw had been our reality in our country [...] Only 20 years ago, the video was our own story. My mother worked in a small factory that made car seats. The factory was owned by a US-American. It was not easy for me to see mother's face. She usually had to work 12–15 hours a day. It was a murderous work load. But she could not stop working. Otherwise, our family would not have lived together. Once I went to the factory to see her when I was eight years old. I was shocked. There was too much dust inside the factory and only one window to ventilate. My mother was covered in dust. I remembered that I cried in front of her [...] Some classmates [European origin] laughed many times during the film. I thought they didn't experience it indirectly or directly. But I couldn't laugh because the reality in the video was very sorrowful [...] China tries to attract many foreign companies to boost the economy, and I certainly understand that. Although economic development is important, nothing is more important than human life and dignity (Excerpt 7, journal).

The excerpt above illustrates how connecting the audio-visual material with personal experiences and a series of social relations from the past and the present stimulates critical reflexivity. Indeed, the documentary seemed to trigger a dialogue between the student and relatives, colleagues and the tutor himself, shaping his understanding of CSR and his notion of being and acting as a socially responsible company (see Cunliffe 2008: 130). Rather than simply connecting CSR theory with practice (Clemens and Hamakawa, 2010; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2001), films play a crucial role in highlighting and legitimising voices that are usually excluded or silenced within a managerial context. While he accepts the importance of economic development, by drawing upon the CSR discourse he challenges the assumption that growth and profit maximisation are unquestionable. In line with Du Gay et al. (1996: 265), it can be argued that the CSR discourse provided

a new language for talking about business and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about responsible business. After showing the documentary, European students – including some of the students who laughed – exchanged some thoughts on the film.

Student 3: This is not so bad. I'm sure there are worse places in China.

Student 4: Yeah, we have to accept that living conditions in those countries are lower. We cannot expect companies to pay the same salary as here in Europe. Anyway, we [Europeans] have experienced similar working conditions [referring to long working hours, low wages, etc.]. Industrial towns in England and Tampere [Finland] are examples of poor working conditions. It is how national economies develop. Countries like China will have a better quality of life in the future. Without this competitive advantage no one would invest in China.

Student 3: It is ridiculous that they are concerned about the worker's cantina and about storing chemicals together with the tea cups [issues that arose in the film]. I would be rather concerned about the company having three different accounting systems. This is not legal and could be the source of problems [another issue that became evident in the film].

Student 4: Yeah ... and the British manager who must have lost his job after the documentary was released [smiling]. He was so cynical ... not good for the image of the supplier. (Excerpt 8, in-class conversation)

In contrast to Excerpt 7, the comments above sustain the contemporary managerial discourse. The students' thoughts about both the role of business in society and their social world as business students are framed by the managerial discourse (see Skålén et al., 2008: 39). By comparing the company's case to worse cases, student 3 seems to justify major managerial principles: competitiveness, growth, efficiency, flexibility and market orientation (see Du Gay et al., 1996). As the instructor, I was especially concerned about the lack of attention given to other social gaps presented in the film, such as gender differences (women workers and male managers), ethnic differences (Chinese workers and European managers), rural migration, the violation of individual rights and the role of western consumption patterns in driving the cost-efficiency of the production sites (see Banerjee, 2007). However, these aspects of the documentary were later addressed by some students in their learning journals, as shown in Excerpt 7.

While lectures, in-class exercises and the self-study period offered an opportunity for students to become familiar with CSR literature, they also served as the basis for students to question their own practices and assumptions as business students. CSR theory was thus used provocatively to encourage students to explore and evaluate ideas that could improve their professional practices (Ramsey, 2011). In particular, between the self-study period and the presentations (see Figure 2), students had the opportunity to experiment with those ideas and take actions that they had not previously considered.

I learned a lot from the picture which illustrated the connection between law and ethics and the idea of a grey area [referring to Matten and Crane, 2007: 7]. This is something that I have been thinking a lot about, but I haven't been successful in drawing such a clear picture in my mind. When I see this picture, I start to ask myself as a management student: How many students – future managers – are aware of the difference between acting legally and ethically? How many are willing to do more than what is required by the law? [...] The more I get into this CSR topic, the more I start to analyse my own behaviour and thoughts, my previous actions and experiences. (Excerpt 9, journal)

Students challenged but also sustained the managerial discourse in other situations. Although they were critical of mainstream business approaches, they were not willing to let them go. Furthermore, there were doubts about the CSR discourse when approached as a business case.

I disapprove of shareholder orientation as the exclusive approach. If managers' single goal is profit maximisation, they have to ask themselves who are the people affected by their actions. Otherwise, there could be conflicts that damage the company's image, and therefore decrease profits [...] The stakeholder approach also includes an occult aspect I did not think about before: if a company is able to manage its influences on its stakeholders it can also try to manipulate and use customers as a means of reaching its goals. Of course, this is no longer ethically 'right' behaviour, as it can lead the company to exploit its stakeholders. (Excerpt 10, journal)

While the student in Excerpt 10 questions the idea of shareholder power, she saw image and profit maximisation as important, which is the case in the managerial discourse. This critical reflexive questioning is not limited to the shareholder approach but also includes the stakeholder approach. By drawing attention to the instrumental justification of stakeholder theory, the example reveals the potential contradictions and dilemmas present in the notion of CSR. The danger that stakeholder theory may reinforce the power and managerial structures in business organisations instead of changing and challenging them is clearly identified (see Banerjee, 2007: 40). Overall, the excerpt shows how assumptions about theoretical and practical features of the managerial and CSR discourse are unveiled as a basis for working toward more critical and ethical action (Cunliffe, 2004: 415).

This discursive pattern illustrated how the managerial and CSR discourses created room for talking about and critically reflecting upon issues that have been silenced or neglected during the business studies of the course participants. The analysis drew attention to the emotional side effects of using hybrid PBL to position students within the CSR discourse. Intimate experiences were called from memory, and discomfort and a sense of powerlessness became visible among students as their beliefs – once seeming unquestionable – were challenged (see Reynolds 1999: 549).

Negotiating tensions within hybrid problem-based learning

Discussions of social responsibility and ethics, especially in a business course, are bound to generate tensions, which the instructor should be prepared to ease. With this in mind, I started the hybrid PBL process with lectures discussing the relationships between business and society. Providing students with conceptual ideas and practical examples helped them realise that society, nature and ethical values are necessarily and explicitly a part of doing business, rather than being non-business oriented. This allowed me to reduce students' anxiety and resistance at the beginning of the courses. However, resistance was inevitable during the first meeting and self-study period, in which students demanded 'right' answers from me, were preoccupied with familiar managerial practices or even bemoaned the fact that the issues discussed in the course may be irrelevant to their work in the 'real world' (Simpson et al., 2000: 462). As the tutor, I did not take any responsibility for addressing the situation in the vignette or helping to manage it in a socially responsible way. Rather than giving answers, I focused on carefully following group discussions and when appropriate, reframing questions for the students in a way that allowed them to find a common ground to work on the task (see Simpson et al., 2000: 466).

During the research process and courses, I was not always prepared to deal with emotions. My position as a researcher intensified the power difference between the students and myself (see Reason, 1988). While some students saw me as an expert whose knowledge was unquestionable,

other students resisted my teaching and the PBL approach, even claiming in some cases that they were the victims of brainwashing. Questioning the managerial discourse resulted in disruptive emotional consequences. As this study shows, the disconfirmation of assumptions about business as well as the challenging of one's own identity as a business student (something that once seemed to be unquestionable) led to a sense of anger, frustration and powerlessness. The resistance posed by students was associated with feelings of defensiveness in face of a perceived attack on their subjectivities. As Excerpt 5 reveals, sometimes I might have failed to deal adequately with these feelings, causing students to feel that I was silencing their voices and forcing them to give up their managerial rationality.

One way to work through these emotional dynamics was to establish relationships with students through listening to them and having out-of-class conversations (see Ramsey and Fitzgibbons, 2005). This helped me to step beyond my instructor role to position myself as a learner who was not only dealing with similar emotions but was also engaging with students in reflexive dialogues and collaborative learning practices (Cunliffe, 2002). Rather than indicating failure, emotions such as discomfort, powerlessness and suspicion with conceptual ideas became potential points of leverage for CSR learning. In some cases, the relationships and the learning process with students continued long after the conclusion of a course. As Vince (2011) points out, it can be argued that hybrid PBL offered an opportunity to exploit the learning space of the courses in their emotional complexity in the service of CSR learning. Students' feelings, doings and sayings were a reliable mirror of the emotional and political dynamics that managers deal with when entering the CSR debate. As such, the tensions discussed above provided opportunities for understanding the complexities of CSR theory and practice.

After eight AR cycles, it is difficult to determine with precision how many students remain anchored in managerialism and how many attained a more sophisticated perspective on CSR issues. According to the PBL feedback gathered from 115 students using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=very weak; 5=excellent), the hybrid PBL format was seen as suitable for promoting CSR learning (mean=4.42, standard deviation=0.691). However, a deeper assessment of the impact of hybrid PBL on students' learning is possible through an analytical review of the learning journals, blog posts, wiki contributions and my field notes on PBL meetings, in-class and out-of-class discussions. These documents clearly indicate that the hybrid PBL approach created opportunities for questioning aspects of managerial practice that are typically taken for granted and thus experimenting with new ways of talking, acting and relating in the marketplace (see Cunliffe, 2004). For example, 76% of the learning journals include critically reflexive questioning of the way students act or are supposed to act as business practitioners. Furthermore, in discussions following the final presentations, students seemed to show signs of resistance to the dominant managerial discourse by addressing their concerns about the probabilities of being able to transform contemporary business practices. Indeed, while the skills and knowledge developed in the course were viewed as important and needed for the improvement of management practice, most students expressed a certain degree of disappointment with the fact that business does not value these skills and knowledge.

Conclusions

I have explored the use of hybrid PBL as a pedagogical tool for promoting critical reflexivity and the construction of social-responsibility meanings within CSR courses based on the interplay of managerial and CSR discourses. Within the PBL context, these discourses allowed for different voices and ways to produce, reproduce and transform meanings about being and acting as a socially

responsible organisation (see Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). While hybrid PBL is presented as a useful tool for CSR teaching, the particular contribution of this study is that it draws attention to an often-neglected aspect of CSR education: the role of language in offering a certain way of thinking, valuing and acting in the world.

In this sense, the hybrid PBL approach outlined in this study creates a learning space that allows students to draw on the CSR discourse to critically question contemporary business practices and thus recognise themselves – their assumptions, doings and sayings – in relation to other members of society (see Cunliffe, 2002: 39–40). By reworking CSR learning from a reflective cognitive to a reflexive relational process, this study adds to our understanding of CSR education in theory and practice. Moreover, by illustrating the struggles over CSR meanings that take place within an educational context, the study improves the understanding of the complexities that are involved when business organisations assess their roles and responsibilities in society.

Although hybrid PBL seems to be a useful tool for CSR courses, there are some challenges that need to be considered. First, the strong emphasis of PBL on problem solving may lead students to frame environmental and social issues as simple business problems and thus perceive CSR as a strategic tool for solving them. By highlighting the business cases for CSR, problem solving may not only reproduce the managerial approach to CSR but also downplay the role of CSR as a multi-stakeholder process of moral deliberation, negotiation, transformation and learning with regard to how our society should be built. Second, hybrid PBL may result in considerable discomfort and distress for students who are used to traditional ways of learning and are new to the CSR discourse. Therefore, hybrid PBL requires a high degree of commitment from the instructor, who takes the primary responsibility for leading students beyond the problem-solving spectrum and for using the emotional dynamics generated in the course as a means for promoting CSR learning.

Third, it is crucial for CSR educators to become critically reflexive about their teaching practices and assumptions regarding the role of business in society. Progress towards greater social responsibility in business requires that critical aspects connected to business–society relations that are silenced by the managerial discourse become not only visible but the focus of class discussions. If business students are trained to maintain current managerial practices without questioning sensitive issues such as unlimited growth, the amoral nature of business and profit maximisation, they will be unable to develop new ways of thinking as future managers and thus be unable to transform old ways of organising, managing and relating to stakeholders (Cunliffe, 2002, 2004: 408; Kallio 2007: 173).

Based on the above, it can be concluded that struggles over CSR meanings in teaching practices surpass trying to help business students make sense of CSR. It is an attempt to help them become critical thinkers and moral practitioners able to transform existing business practices. Hybrid PBL has been demonstrated to be a suitable pedagogical tool to shake up the order of the managerial discourse by inviting business students to position themselves within the CSR discourse even if they do not feel a personal commitment to it (cf. Alanko-Turunen, 2005: 230). While the use of hybrid PBL in CSR courses will not necessarily change the prevailing business philosophy, it represents an important step on the way to reshaping our perceptions of the role of business in society.

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Notes

1. In line with Matten and Moon (2004: 324), CSR is used here as an umbrella term for a broad set of overlapping concepts reflecting business-society relations, environmental responsibility and business ethics.
2. As a consequence of a structural development of higher education systems in Finland, the Faculty of Tourism and Business was merged with the Faculty of Social Sciences in 2010.

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This dissertation presents a framework that allows using sustainable marketing as a threshold concept to critically evaluate and question the assumptions embedded in both marketing theory and professional practice. Theoretically, the framework draws on stakeholder thinking, the notions of meaning and discourse and moral philosophy and methodically on action research. The framework is illustrated using two action research studies: one focusing on sustainable tourism product development in a small business context and the other focusing on the use of problem-based learning to promote sustainability learning in an educational context. This research offers a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable marketing by shifting the analytical focus to the market as a complex web of stakeholder relationships and sustainability as a set of meanings and values that are socially constructed through the discourses and practices available within a particular market context.

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