

Standards-oriented Responsibility and Sustainable Tourism for Development: Towards a Framework for Social Innovation

Pauline A. Milwood, Ph.D., Penn State University, Berks
Olivene Burke, Ph.D., The University of the West Indies, Mona
Tarik Weeks, MBA, The University of the West Indies, Mona

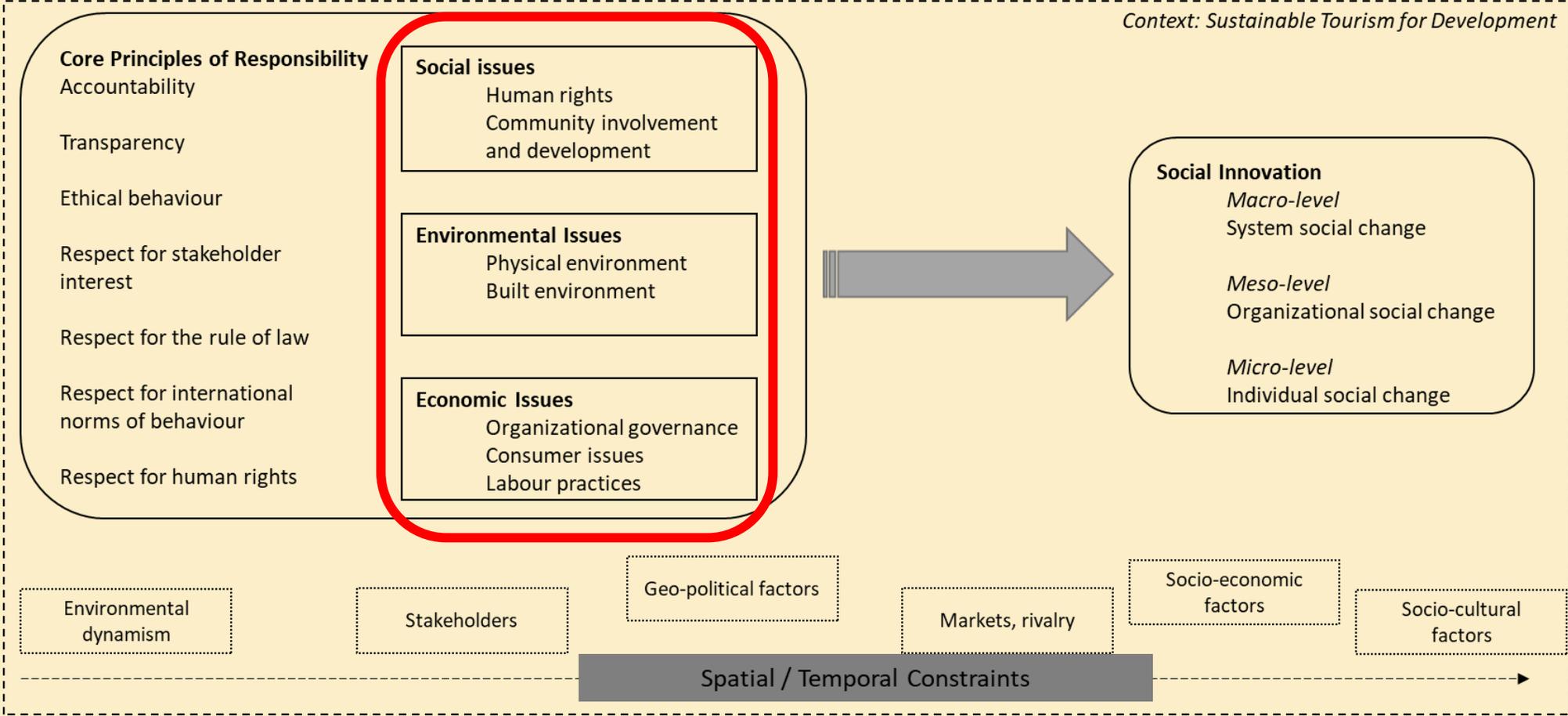


Rationale

- The social agenda has emerged as critical to the successful pursuit of entrepreneurial and development goals among micro and small business models;
- It is often the case that within developing environments, purely technological innovations must inherently provide social and sustainable solutions to complex social problems;
- In some cases services innovation can be transformed into social innovations through the very active role of empowered citizens, as happens in the cases of rural tourism or cultural services in developing economies.

(van der Haber & Rubalcaba, 2016)

Abstract causal model



Does 'responsibility
culture' drive social
innovation performance?

Focal Research Question



Methodological approach

- Presented today are findings from preliminary primary research
 - *Interviews with tour, excursion, and attractions-based tour providers*
 - which sought to explore their thoughts and perceptions as it relates to responsibility, sustainability, and social innovation.
- Preliminary data will help us to identifying 'intersecting' areas of theory
 - *inform design of the study.*
- Transformative mixed methods design?
 - *Survey → Interview → Collation, Mixing & Interpretation*

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Pre-study data analysis



Pre-study Findings

- Six (6) semi-structured interviews
 - *Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia*
- Owners / proprietors
 - *Why tours, excursion, and attractions-based businesses?*
- Approximately 400 minutes of interview data.
 - *Select data elements on 5 questionnaire items:*
 - innovation activities; community involvement and development activities; environmental activities; daily operating; and social innovation performance.

Please describe
any new or
significantly
improved
products or
services
introduced
and / or
implemented.

- High-tech device in attraction
- “DIY / MIM” tourist souvenir
- Cycle share experience
- Tour guide app for destinations
- Location-based application
- AR tourist experience
- Voucher/Coupon for attractions

How does your organization practice social responsibility in community involvement and development?

- *“When we decided on the walking tour, we got published historians to conduct the tours. These are also community members so you hear local vendors calling out to the persons conducting the tours—a local community and emeritus historian from our local university!”*
- *“We are embarking on creating a permanent school feeding program. In addition to supervising and managing the attraction, we identify projects e.g. development of a community football team...”*

-- Anton, Tour Operator

How does your organization practice social responsibility in its environmental activities?

- *“We have a full-time employee whose job description is designated to maintain and clean the river. We are very mindful of the environment and practice sound garbage disposal. [It] is enshrined in our policy..”*

-- James, Attractions Operator

- *“I would say the area that we now operate from used to be considered a garbage dump, basically; and now it is a beautiful stretch of beach.”*
- *“On our boat tour, we now use paper straws rather than plastic; and we implemented [this change] because we want to preserve the environment.”*

-- Anton, Tour Operator

How does your organization practice social responsibility in its daily operating activities?

- *“The places that I go vendors sell local craft. I suggest (tourists) buy if they want to, so the local vendors craft may benefit.”*
- *“Local cassava bread from local ovens that heat wood and sticks not gas; Local fruits people stand by road side and sell. I purchase for clients and have them taste it. I would take tangerine they have never seen tangerine maybe on only supermarket shelves. Grapefruits. Cashew nuts. Local cassava bread. Local plantain and banana chips. Local bananas... I let them sample it.”*

-- James, Transport Operator

Overall, how would you describe your organization's social innovation performance?

- *“We are so small that our overall foot print would be smaller than a baby’s; but you know one of the things we’re really looking at in this first stage [is to] really establish credibility and legitimacy; having the right reputation which we’ve done.”*

—Andy, Culinary Tour Operator

- *“Well I would say that we have done everything that we could do... we are always open to suggestion if there is something that we’ve overlooked, we would be very keen to look at improving.”*

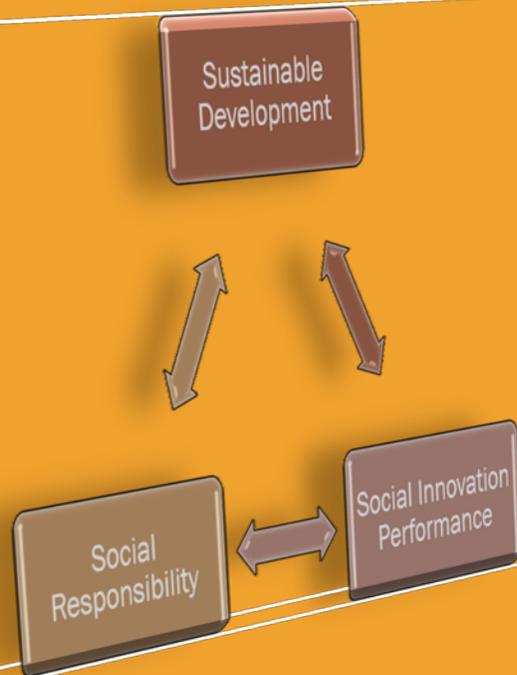
-- Anton, Tour Operator

IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Understanding Social Innovation Performance in Tourism Contexts



Implications and Next Steps



- THEORETICAL
 - *Which responsibility factors more strongly influence social innovation performance?*
- PRACTICAL
 - *Subjects first think of economic agenda; then the social dimension*
- NEXT STEPS
 - *Survey sample tour, excursion, and attractions-based MSMEs*
 - The Caribbean, North and South America
 - Establishing causation



THANK YOU.

pam325@psu.edu

