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### Sustainable Coastal Destination Development: Fostering Green Practices of Restaurateurs

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#### ABSTRACT

Coastal tourism destinations are reinventing themselves, concentrating on product improvement and image enhancement. Reinventing sustainably is key and restaurants are an important factor. Research upon the processes of change in the industry seems to be fragmented and undefined in its conclusions. Knowledge is lacking on what specifically drives innovation in the hospitality industry. Since restaurants seem to be focusing more than ever on implementing green strategies, incorporating sustainability into restaurant practices is not an unexplored area.

However, the how and why it is incorporated or not, can be different per restaurant. The objective of this study is to identify possibilities of change in restaurateur practices, which can lead to interventions that will foster sustainable destination development in Vrouwenpolder; a coastal destination within the Netherlands. For the identification of interventions that could advance the sustainability enacted in restaurateur practices, a qualitative research was conducted.

Practices of restaurateurs in Vrouwenpolder are identified and compared to perceived-to-be ideal practices. Analysis of data collection draws on practice theory, and resulted into recommendations for advancing the sustainability enacted in restaurateur practices. It seems to be that primarily the meaning within a practice is decisive in whether sustainability is integrated or not.

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**Keywords:** Coastal tourism, Hospitality, Sustainability, Restaurants, Vrouwenpolder

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## Introduction

Coastal tourism destinations in Northwestern Europe have been going through a change on the organizational and operational levels following the changing number of visitors in line with Butler's life-cycle model (Derriks, 2014). Gale (2007) explains that many first generation resorts are faced with diminished volume and value of the domestic long holiday market, due to the emergence of competition from overseas 'sun, sea and sand' resorts (Knowles & Curtis, 1999; Urry, 2002).

Baidal, Sánchez and Rebollo (2013) point that Butler's life-cycle model acquired special relevance for both the management of coastal resorts, for example when hinting at the need to regenerate. In Northwestern Europe, it seems destination policy advisors are mostly concentrating on sustainable reinvention of the seaside, emphasizing product development and image enhancement (Smith, 2004). There is an increased focus on innovation within firms and destinations in order to stay competitive and thrive in the global tourism industry (Mei, Arcodia & Ruhanen, 2012).

Innovation in this particular industry is not a new phenomenon; the tourism industry has always been characterized by innovativeness, while research on tourism innovation processes is scarce (Hjalager, 2010). The focus on innovation in the tourism industry can derive from a competitive aspect as continuous changing needs and wants of specific target market segments require hospitality businesses for instance to consistently modify and update their concepts for long-term stability and profitability (Ottenbacher, 2007). Nevertheless, global environmental issues such as resource depletion, climate change and loss of biodiversity are pushing the earth's boundaries also asking for sustainable and long term solutions in the hospitality industry: as tourism is closely linked to the environment, the natural environment and climate conditions are important in determining the viability and attractiveness of a region as a tourist destination (Dwyer, Mistilis, Roman & Scott, 2009).

Destinations themselves can be considered as complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products and services (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, & Aarstad, 2011). Tourists see those destinations as a whole, but each individual actor within a destination contributes to the level of experience per tourist or visitor. One sector influencing the experience and advancement of a destination is the hospitality industry.

There seems to be a relation between commercial hospitality practices and processes of regeneration (Bell, 2007). The hospitality industry is capable of influencing place transformation. This study investigates practices of restaurateurs to unravel sustainable interventions within a tourism destination that may give a certain competitive advantage and can keep a tourism destination viable and sustainable.

### 1.Sustainable destination: Vrouwenpolder

Baidal et al. (2013) believe tourist destinations are able to adapt to circumstances and can influence their future evolution. Entrepreneurship and innovation are necessary to keep on adapting. Since the mid-1980s, as indicated by Jóhannesson (2012),

entrepreneurship and innovation are key words for regional competitiveness. Stimulating green entrepreneurship and innovation and therewith enhancing the quality and sustainability of a destination becomes more and more important as evident in tourism planning projects. One current project is 'Sustainable village Vrouwenpolder' and is focused on the creation of 'a sustainable and vivid village with an inclusive society'. Vrouwenpolder is a small seaside resort governed by the municipality of Veere and located in the province of Zeeland, the Netherlands.

Since the hospitality industry is an important component of the tourism product (Smith, 1994) in Vrouwenpolder the following question is asked: 'Which deliberate interventions could advance the sustainability enacted in restaurateur practices?'. To answer this main question, first and before conducting field work, the sustainable activities in restaurant operations are identified. By studying the restaurateurs in the field, those activities that would allow integration of sustainability in practice are being determined. After comparing these with practices elsewhere, the extent to which these practices are believed to be sustainable are being discussed and contemporary practices described.

The objective of the research is to identify possibilities of change in practice of restaurateurs, which can lead to interventions that will stimulate sustainable destination development in Vrouwenpolder. Knowledge on innovation processes in tourism might give clarification on how to enhance ongoing destination development. By using social practice theory, the meanings, materials and competences of restaurateur practices become the research focus, in opposite of a so-called innovation itself. Treating innovation in practice as a process of linking new and existing elements is valuable. Taking a situational orientation towards contemporary practices and compare these to desired or believed to be ideal practices would allow to unravel sustainable innovation potential that could work in practice. Practice theory is more extensively introduced in a later paragraph.



**Figure 1.** View of Vrouwenpolder Source: vrouwenpolder.eu



**Figure 2.** View of Vrouwenpolder Source: vrouwenpolder.eu



## **2.Importance of hospitality in destination development**

Mill and Morrison (1992) note that tourist destinations are composed of attractions, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. The structure of these five elements in a tourist destination is crucial for destination choice, image and satisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998). Bell (2007) argues that particularly the commercial hospitality industry is becoming increasingly important in the branding and promoting of cities. The basic roles of hospitality spaces in general are simple: the provision of food, beverage and accommodation.

Cafés, restaurants, bars and many more hospitality spaces are making social encounters between people possible. Among the factors influencing destination image, it is evident that restaurants do play an important role in the choice of a holiday destination by tourists (Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003). Restaurants are key players in facilitating gastronomy; the main operation of a restaurant is to serve food and drinks. Travel organizations are even offering culinary trips or holidays to 'gastronomic destinations' (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). City-centre eating and drinking have become important components of regenerating neighborhoods, both in terms of attracting new residents and in terms of making them gastro-tourism destinations (Esperdy, 2002; Franck, 2005).

Local cuisines represent a core manifestation of a destination's intangible heritage, and through its consumption, tourists can gain a truly authentic cultural experience ( Okomus, Okomus & McKercher. 2007). For the inhabitants of a destination or city the hospitality industry can also be very meaningful. Selwyn (2000) sees hospitality as a means 'by which societies change, grow, renew and reproduce themselves' and Bell (2007:8) argues establishments are a vital space in which taste and lifestyle are produced and consumed through food and drink, music and décor, ambience and service style.

## **3.Forces and drivers for positive change**

Already in 1934 Schumpeter sees the entrepreneurs as a driving force in innovation; they set the standards and with their innovativeness they shift the tastes and preferences of the customers. On the contrary, the tourism- and hospitality industry are easily accessible for entrepreneurs to start off with low businesses skills and limited innovativeness.

Lifestyle entrepreneurs, who are often found in the SME-segments of tourism, may be innovative, but mostly on a small-scale (Getz & Petersen, 2005). Similarly, many small hospitality business proprietors are motivated by lifestyle rather than economic and achievement issues (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998). It does not necessarily mean that they operate to inadequate professional standards, but it does imply that they may not be motivated to attempt further improvement in a business that already generates adequate profits. Generally it is argued that the small business culture, limited capital, lack of skills, lifestyle motivations and the acceptance of suboptimal profits, constrain regional economies and create problems for firm survival (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000 ).

Hjalager (2010) points to the innovation system from Alfred Marshalls (1920) and describes it as inspiring for tourism innovation research. The research from Marshalls highlighted that 'due to social networks and their geographical proximity, novelties are rapidly disseminated and implemented' (Hjalager, 2010, p.5). Human relations and inter-organizational structures are considered particularly important in innovation processes. Peeters et al. (2006) argue that innovations are often a response to major external development trends, such as climate change, while consumers' needs and values are also affected by environmental issues; affluent consumers are turning to ethical consumption (NRIT Media, 2012).

This refers to the motivation to purchase that which lies beyond the stimulus of price, quality and opportunity and which invokes environmental and social concerns. The KHN, the biggest hospitality branch organization in the Netherlands, underpins this increasing awareness by appointing the trend of 'pure' as one of the major trends that affects the hospitality industry (Koninklijke Horeca Nederland, 2014). Consumption may not be detrimental to the community; it should be social on environmental responsible if possible.

There is not a clear understanding what exactly drives innovation. In general, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical evidence to document the nature of driving forces in innovation systems (Hjalager, 2010). Consumer driven innovation, and the inclusion of consumers in innovation processes, is a current topic (Von Hippel, 2005), since it is highly applicable in tourism where consumer-producer interaction is closer than for many other types of enterprises. MacBeth, Carson and Nortcote (2004) state incorporation of social and cultural capital within a triple bottom line approach to tourism development should do more than balancing the needs of the community with the needs of the tourism system; it should strive to become one and the same set of needs.

In this way, everything that is good for tourism will be good for the community, and the other way around. Restaurateurs, but their activities and their practices in particular, influences social and cultural capital, fulfills needs and has the possibility of making positive contributions to the triple line of people, planet and profit as existent within the tourism destination.

#### **4.Sustainable innovations in restaurateurs' practices**

There has been an increasing focus on the topic of innovation in tourism in general (Hjalager, 2010) and in destination context in relation to achieving competitive advantage (Mei, Arcodia & Ruhanen, 2012), since there is competition in the tourism industry not only between destinations worldwide, but also between destinations domestically and between firms within a destination (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman & Scott, 2009).

Many organizations are struggling to keep up with rapid changes in infrastructure and consumer practices. In a variety of sources discussing restaurant or hospitality sustainability, green activities are quoted, created, listed, highlighted or studied. Despite the lack of one general list, three categories could be created: 1. activities

among environmental issues, 2. activities among social issues and 3. activities among health issues:

1. Environmental related activities can mainly be seen as activities that spare resources such as the reduction of water, energy and the amount of waste in order to diminish the pollution of the environment. Recycling and composting programs are used for materials that can serve for a second purpose.

2. Activities among social concerns includes activities concerning fair trade issues, such as paying fair prices for products and services. In addition, restaurants can actively participate in the society by creating partnerships with local entrepreneurs, but also employing disabled or senior citizens.

3. Activities among health concerns are aiming at supporting healthy lifestyle as serve nutritionally foods, organic, low fat and healthy and the elimination of the use of antibiotics. The sustainability and transparency of the menu are examples on how to concern healthy lifestyles.

See consulted sources for a comprehensive overview of all green activities mentioned (Baldwin Wilberforce & Kapur, 2011; Choi & Parsa, 2007; Chou, Chen & Wang, 2012; Hu, Parsa & Self, 2010; Jeong & Jang, 2010; Langendahl, Cook & Potter, 2014; Namkung & Jang, 2013; Tzschentke, Kirk & Lynch, 2008; Wang 2012). Regardless the possible green activities, questions could be asked about what motivates entrepreneurial innovators, what knowledge they bring with them, and what strategies they apply to fulfil their ambitions. It is argued that entrepreneurs are 'shifting the taste of the consumers with their innovativeness (Hjalager, 2010, p. 4).

On the other hand it seems that entrepreneurs in tourism who are just entering the industry start off with scarce business and limiting innovation capacity and it can therefore be said that 'young' businesses are not innovating (Lerner & Haber, 2000; Morrison, Rimmington, & Williams, 1999). Since there is an incomplete understanding of how innovation processes take place in tourism enterprises and organizations, it might be a serious case to discover and reveal those processes. Knowledge on innovation processes in tourism might give clarification on how to enhance destination policies in the future, and can create ongoing destination development.

The promotion of operational and regional ability to innovate is assessed as an opportunity for long-term combination of processes of economic, technological, ecological and social renewal (Gerstlberger, 2004).

## **5.The promise of a practice theoretical approach**

Studies on tourism innovation are scattered and fragmented, while different foci can be distinguished. Some studies are analyzing economic dimensions, others emphasize on the role of entrepreneurship and others focus on the determinants of dynamic change . Research on especially the processes of innovation within the tourism industry is scarce, even more when related to sustainability. Social constructivism as philosophical approach allows innovations to be de-dramatized and understood as a process embedded in communities' everyday practices instead of an outcome.

In this way, the network of attitudes and strategies (which might conflict), negotiations and knowledge exchanges that shape innovation processes become the research focus, in opposite of the new artifact or product itself. Research on innovation may then 'be able to trace failure and not only success, to explain diversity as well as homogeneity of practices and technical solutions for similar needs, and to empower the industry to make strategic decisions on its organizational approach to innovation' (Weiss and Domingo, 2010:1169). Reckwitz argues that theories of social practices are an attractive alternative answer to classically modern and high-modern types of social theories believed to be dissatisfying an audience. Practice theories have created this conceptual alternative after the interpretative turn of the 1970s and is concerned with an interest in 'everyday' and 'life-world' (Reckwitz, 2002).

Nicolini believes this increased interest in a more thorough and detailed understanding of real-time workplace practices as well as the relation between organizing processes and workplace activities is one of the most visible and intriguing recent developments in organization studies for example. Whittington sees the turn to practice in accounting and strategy disciplines but also in learning, information systems, marketing, human resource management, leadership and institutional theory.

The focus of a social practice theoretical approach on innovation is not on the products itself but in what people do. In the light of the social practice approach, the term 'practice' refers to a noun, and any action or behavior can be viewed as part of a practice (Kuijer, 2014). Practices consist of 'interdependencies between diverse elements including bodily forms of activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz, 2002). All those elements described are connected and interacting with each other within a practice; it can be seen as sets of interconnected elements (Kuijer, 2014). Practice research should be as open to possible when analyzing the practices out there in order to grasp people's understanding of what actions are constituting distinct practices. To make sense of practices and to understand how elements are interacting, Shove and Pantzar (2005) describe three elements that constitute a practice:

- Materials: objects, infrastructure, tools, hardware, literatures (legislation, procedures) and the body itself.
- Competence: forms of understandings and practical knowledge required to perform practices
- Meaning: an element that represents the social significance of practice and consist of related missions and visions which includes the mental activities, emotions and motivational knowledge.

Innovation can be seen as a process of change. By making or breaking the links between the elements, simply said, a practice is performed. A new combination between the materials, meanings and competences makes it that the practice have been changed (Derriks, 2014). Watson (2012) and Shove et al. (2012) suggest that innovation is integral to the performance of practices and involves the (re)configuration of constituting elements. Practice theory offers a theoretical basis that is fundamentally different from other tools to analyze innovation. It can be used as



a conceptual framework that comprises a certain way of seeing and analyzing social phenomena.

## **6. Case study Vrouwenpolder methodology**

By using practice theory, sense can be made of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the studied practices of the restaurateurs. In this way, expressed feelings, tools that are used to perform a practice and the knowledge or skills perceived to be required can be taken into account when analyzing collected data. The practice-oriented analysis of sustainable business processes may identify opportunities for desirable change. This identification may lead to rethinking business processes and may be the stimuli to create an intervention in the business processes of restaurants in Vrouwenpolder.

This study followed different steps, inspired by a model for taking practices as a unit of analysis created by Kuijer (2014). The first step taken in this research is the framing of the target practice in which the identification of activities by restaurateurs that would allow integration of sustainability in practice is central. The exploration of similar, 'desirable' practices is executed in the second step. In the final step the target practice is mapped. In order to frame the target practice, there have been made use of the knowledge of three experts in the field of tourism, hospitality and sustainability. Secondly, a visit has been paid to the Dutch hospitality fair and to symposia about sustainability in the hospitality industry. The knowledge gathered in the first step is taken as an inspiration in the search for selecting the ideal practices.

In addition, snowballing, recommendations and searching the net resulted in the visit to a believed to be pioneering green restaurant. The goal of mapping the target practice is to get detailed insight in the exact elements of the practices for which open interviews were conducted. In the process of the recruitment of the restaurateurs in Vrouwenpolder, the local village council of Vrouwenpolder and the municipality of Veere has been consulted. The contact with the chairman of the village council resulted in direct contact with the association of entrepreneurs that led to emailing of different restaurateurs to gain interest for the research. The alderman for Tourism explained more on tourism related aspects in Vrouwenpolder and their willingness to enhance the sustainability among restaurateurs in Vrouwenpolder. In total four restaurateurs in Vrouwenpolder participated in an open interview. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes.

Three practices-as-performances (Kuijer, 2014) were identified during analysis: estate management, the procurement process and communication. They were analyzed in terms of existent meanings, materials and competences. It is important to take note of the limitation that the three identified practice-as-performances are not the only practices that are performed within a restaurant concerning sustainability in general, but that these were identified and discussed within this specific research. Another limitation is that taking a situational orientation and only a few weeks for field work, insights in innovation processes themselves are not unraveled. However, by contrasting existing practices versus desired or idealized practices in terms of actively

integrating meanings, materials and competences, innovation potential in practice is identified and does offer interesting insights. The practical use and value of this potential is the assumption that processes of greening activities in restaurants could benefit from these insights.

## **7. Insights in restaurateurs' practices in relation to sustainability**

### *Desirable estate management practices*

Water- and energy saving practices are accepted and maintained as normative in the practice on estate management. Through knowledge and skills gathered within the practice over the years the implementation of small and larger energy- and water saving measurements is seen in the materials that are used. Materials that are observed in this practice are for example the use of flow restrictors on faucets, low-flow toilets, and water-less urinals, only serve customers water upon request, replace incandescent light bulbs with longer lasting CFL light bulbs or LED, use motion detectors for lights in the restroom, a system which monitors and controls comfortable temperatures efficiently with the HVAC (Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning) system or keep the entrance door closed or use a double entrance door.

Certifications for sustainable companies in the hospitality industry as 'Greenkey' are seen as tools to control consumption on water and energy and to create a win-win situation: cost reduction and minimize environmental impact. The certificate forces the practitioners to continuously monitor the consumption and to create an in-depth insight in these processes on the hand of the provided guidelines and rules. Waste management consist of reducing, recycling or composting waste. Since waste management does not necessarily reduce the use of resources, it perhaps limits the pollution of the environment. Materials that are used to support the practice are for example recycled paper (napkins and paper cups), reducing the use of fluorocarbons and plastic tubs or jars, conduct food waste composting programs or reusable menus.

## **8. Targeted estate management practices**

In the target practice of estate management most attention is paid to water and energy saving measurements and waste management. It seems there is a shared meaning of the willingness to invest in small water- and energy saving measurements. The overall meaning related to the introduction of small water- and energy saving measurements is associated with the economic benefits of lowering estate management costs. Multiple materials are involved within the practice as in the use of LED light bulbs, automatic on- and off systems for lights, water- and energy saving systems as Aquafox or Swycs or aerators for water taps and showers.

Knowledge is updated within the practice on the hand of magazines, internet websites or knowledge which is shared during annual 'sustainable' fairs. Still, the willingness to invest in those measurements is not only driven by an economic vision. The practice is partly inspired by the mission to protect the nature and environment against depletion of resources and pollution. Nevertheless, this meaning is not superior to the economic reasons. The assumption can be made that reduction of water and energy for environmental reasons is not the ultimate goal in practices of estate management.

The state of the physical building is of influence on the willingness to invest money in water- and energy saving measurements, especially on more expensive investments as placing solar panels or double glazing. The shared assumption on investing in the building to save water and energy is that adaptations within a new-built restaurant will be more rewarding than the adaptation of an existing building. This idea is stimulated by the physical features of the building and by the uncertainty on the time of the return on the investment.

The payback time of an investment, because of the state of the building, may exceed the years of the expected time the business processes will prolong at that particular building. Another given argument is that it might be questionable whether the adaptation of an aged building will be as rewarding in the future on energy and water saving as building a new building. Both arguments seem not to be grounded by experience or other competences. Actual knowledge on the investment of a new building in comparison with an investment in an existing building is therefore inferior to the leading meaning that is shared within the practice.

The amount and the use of several materials are affecting the willingness to invest in estate-management as well. Investing in a new building can also positively contribute to the image of a restaurant. One particular interviewed restaurateur is actually investing in a new building, which will be completely self-efficient in water and energy. The mental activity in this case, inspired by the practitioner, entails the idea that a sustainable building is consistent with the demand for visual sustainability of the guest. The former building lacked possibilities for sustainable adaptations. The needed 'hardware' in the practice of estate management is an isolating sedum-roof, solar-collectors and a system to retain the so-called 'grey' water for flushing toilets and cleaning.

The vision that circulates within this practice overrules the amount of costs needed for the new building and has a strong position. Waste separation is recognized within the practice on estate management and is executed, but the emphasize on waste separation is actually smaller than on saving water and energy. The actual practice is therefore not driven by a passionate vision, but the separation of waste is done because of the availability of infrastructures. Materials as existing infrastructures, for example the availability to drop off separated waste at the local collection point, are stimulating the separation of waste. Specific competences to separate waste seem not to be required in order to separate waste.

## **9.Desirable procurement practices**

The practice of procurement in the first place is about the source of ingredients and whether they have been produced and procured sustainably. Therefore transparency in the origin of foods seem to be believed as normative in the procurement process. Examples of objects that are present in the procurement process are biological meat, MSC or ASC certified fish or fair trade coffee by Max Havelaar. Desired basic knowledge for the procurement process is to understand what sustainability concerning food entails. The information on the procurement of sustainable products can be found on, for example, packaging of foods, on the internet and is provided in magazines.

What particularly is seen as important about continuously pursuing a passionate driven vision, is that knowledge should be regenerated and regained over time, also called life-long learning. In specific terms, critical thinking is required. Pioneers in sustainable procurement are afraid that blindly believing the food industry on what is sustainable in procurement overrules the ability to keep thinking logically. A biological label ensures the transparency in the origin of foods for instance, but only focuses on the growth of the food. The transportation with the including environmental pollution is not taken into account. Often wholesalers play a dominant role in the procurement of restaurants since they play in on the lack of time available in the practice as orders can be placed online and are delivered accordingly.

Whereas the amount of time for procurement is limited, it seems that the assortment of the supplier is of influence on what choices are made in sustainable procurement. Still, alternative ways for procurement seem to become rule rather than exception. To start with local procurement which is not only practiced since the origin of the food is then clear, it gives an additional dimension to the story on the origin of the food. Although the meaning as an element in the practice of procurement is most leading, the needed financial resources cannot be underestimated.

The balance between procurement price and menu prices has to be maintained in order to be financial healthy. In general the feeling is that costs for sustainable procurement are higher, but that should not be noticed by guests. To accomplish this, menus are for example composed on the basis of the 80-20 rule; 80 percent vegetables and 20 percent meat or fish. Other examples are seasonal buying.

## **10.Targeted procurement practices**

The first topic that was associated with sustainability in restaurants was the procurement of foods. The procurement of food is in the first place mostly done through orders at a wholesale specialized in the hospitality industry. The ease of ordering online and the delivery service are both helpful in reducing the time of the procurement, and is the main reason why ordering at the wholesale is most frequently done. It is obvious that time is very limited within the practice of procurement, and the wholesale can provide in reducing the time needed in the procurement process.

Time is a tool that is strongly related to costs and with that financial resources; the attention that is reserved for the process of procurement has to be used in the most efficient way as is possible in order to pay more attention to other business processes. In this way it seems that local procurement is not important within the practice of

sustainability, however the lack of time to find alternative ways for the procurement process in relation with local procurement might be the real underlying cause. The shared meaning around local procurement is strongly related with stimulating the local economy. Tools to enhance the local economy are therefore building relationships with local entrepreneurs.

Looking specifically at food groups, the reasons for buying sustainably or not may differ in relation to the practitioner. A specific example might be the procurement of fish which can be driven by emotions, motivations and engagement. The reason why fish is MSC bought can be inspired by experience within the practice; the knowledge on how fish usually is caught and how unfriendly that might be perceived, is gained from actual experience with fishing. This experience brings emotions that influences the engagement for buying sustainable fish. Another clear example is the procurement of meat. Sustainable perceived meat might be procured because there is need for background knowledge of where the animal has been living, as well for emotional reasons of the practitioners as for educating the guest of the restaurant. This meaning can be encouraged by knowledge that is circulating within the practice, for example the knowledge on chickens that extremely have been overfed until their dead in order get more meat from one chicken. Furthermore, the fact that guests particularly want to know where their meat comes from during diner stimulates the overall knowledge of a practitioner around meat and the quality of life an animal have had.

### **11.Desirable communication practices**

Integrity is highly valued when communication on sustainability is involved in the practices of restaurateurs. The shared meaning within the practice of communication is that it should never serve primarily as a marketing tool, but that it is integrated as part of operational management. The main purpose of communicating sustainability is to create the impression that sustainability in restaurants is observed as common, or even the leading norm. Although communication on sustainability should not be excessively done, it is still a part of the communication practice of the restaurant since it is observed as positive for the image of a restaurant. Moreover, it seems to be that the transparency of the restaurant because of the communication among sustainability is more convincing.

Materials that are used within the practice are therefore more directed to the creation of a transparent dining experience. An example can be the provision of information on the sustainability of the menu by using signs and symbols. Other tools to communicate sustainability might be the website of a restaurant or the provision of information verbally at the table. The balance between securing the integrity of the restaurant and communication on sustainability has a relation with experience in the practice. Whether the communication is overdone or not can only be observed by actually communicating on sustainability. However, it is believed to be difficult to estimate what initiatives are most appreciated by guests of the restaurant. The lack of knowledge in this area makes it that there is a certain reticent attitude concerning using sustainability as a communication tool.

## **12.Targeted communication practices**

The envisioned communication of integrated sustainability is that it should not be overdone; it should be gentle and appropriate which will not harm the image and credibility of a restaurant. There is a feeling that overdoing the communication upon sustainability can be seen as 'greenwashing' which is certainly not the intended vision. Communicating about sustainability is mostly limited to the explanation of the origin and preparation of food. For example, information on the origin of ingredients and preparation methods of dishes could take place verbally at the table on guest demand or in written account in menus. Communication on sustainability is closely associated with certifications and labels, as well as with the health of both human and animals.

The overall meaning on labels and certifications is that it is used as a reference point for guests. Certifications and labels can imply that human and animal welfare has been taken into account. Sometimes the intended goal for communicating with labels is double sided: it provides information, but can also serve as a marketing tool if the label is connected with a campaign emphasizing sustainability to enhance company image. Although there is a feeling that certifications and labels can be used in promotional ways, there is a reserved meaning about actually committing to certifications. Rules and regulations among certifications seems to be intimidating and time consuming.

## **13.Sustainable innovation potential in practice**

Although it seems that desired sustainable practices on estate management, procurement and communication should be driven by normativity, the motivations behind the performance of the practices in a sustainable way are much more driven by emotions and the related commitment. Sustainable practices are performed in order to create a perfect balance between people, planet and profit. Economic achievements should not be the main drivers in entrepreneurship, but are helpful to sustain as an entrepreneur. While performing sustainable practices as being a pioneer may now create a competitive advantage, it seems to be more important that the way of doing business as exemplified by pioneers should be fully incorporated in the business processes of the future. The overall meanings on sustainable practices in restaurants in Vrouwenpolder are influenced by a vision that does emphasize the urge of sustainability. It seems that there is a shared understanding that practices in restaurants directed towards sustainability can be incorporated to secure the environment and social concerns.

In comparison with ideal practices, the (none) presence of materials in Vrouwenpolder has a great influence whether a passionate vision will be pursued or not. Specific materials as time, financial tools or space are affecting the motivation and engagement towards implementing sustainable practices in the business processes. Informed by ideal practices, the lack of tools should nevertheless not be a constraint, moreover, it even might stimulate the search for different materials that entail certain skills and mental activities. A straightforward example might be the lack of financial resources to



procure biological foods, but due to implementing an 80/20 rule less expensive foods as vegetables and fruits play a more dominant role in the menu of a restaurant (80%) rather than the meat or fish (20%).

Another example might be the existence of materials that are affecting the vision upon implementing sustainable practices such as the infrastructures of the suppliers from wholesalers. The availability of the infrastructure makes the choice easy to prevent loss of time by ordering at the wholesale. While pioneers in ideal practices are also sometimes dependent on the wholesale, they do not use products from the wholesale as the basis for their procurement process, but more in terms of additional procurement if there is lack of time to go to the local farmer. In practices in Vrouwenpolder it is observed as the other way around: if there is enough time to buy locally then it will be done.

A passionate vision about the urge and possibilities of sustainability, as a part of the element called 'meaning', seem to be the most influential element when sustainability is integrated in the restaurateurs' practice. Emotions, engagement and motivations act as foundation within ideal practices. While the target practices are pointing at materials that do not provide sustainability per se in the pursuit for sustainability in practices, it seems that ideal practices face the same lack of materials such as time or financial resources. Still, the amount of knowledge and perhaps even creativity on how to find alternative materials seem to be decisive. It can be argued that vision is of most importance when integrating sustainability in business processes.

Discussed earlier, entrepreneurs in tourism are often found to start off with scarce business skills, and their innovativeness is mostly limited. Looking back at the described results in this research on ideal practices, sustainable driven change in restaurants in fact often goes along with high entrepreneurial skills. Procurement practices are for example strengthened by meanings that incorporate for example critical thinking and knowledge on the origin of foods. Because of the critical thinking processes, a life-long learning experience is conducted.

Entrepreneurs in the SME-segments of tourism, may be innovative, but mostly on a small-scale and are less focused upon economic achievement issues. Already the first part of this statement can be countered; lifestyle entrepreneurs, who often base their practices on their own values, seem to be very innovative within this study, supported by the fact that even though materials are missing in the practice to achieve sustainability, the meaning to pursue sustainability is so important that alternative ways will be found. An example illustrated in the results is the fact that one restaurateur was not able to order sustainable foods at the supplier but because of the collaboration of the local restaurateurs, the supplier was able to supply biological food for a fair and reasonable price. The fact that lifestyle entrepreneurs are less focused on economic achievements can be underlined but nevertheless there is a balance needed between a lifestyle meaning and economic achievements in order to support the performance of practices aligned with that particular meaning.

#### **14. Fostering green restaurateurs' practices**

Recommendations can be given on what kind of interventions could advance the sustainability enacted in restaurateur practices on the hand of the three elements constituting a practice. Three general situations could be imagined, all allowing for different emphasis in recommendations. A first situation could be that the existing vision, or symbolic meaning, is passionate, materials are existing and allow for more sustainable integration (financial resources to invest, for example) but competence in terms of knowledge is low. When this is the case, chances of integrating sustainability more into existing practices is little but possible.

The recommendation for this situation is to evaluate which specific competences are existing within the practice. Competences consists of two parts: knowledge through education, life-long learning or magazines, and skills that are acquired by training and experience. In practices of restaurateurs in Vrouwenpolder, it seems that knowledge is acquired. Nevertheless, experience with implementing sustainable activities seem to lack. A possible intervention might be the provision of a training in how sustainable activities could be implemented in business processes.

A second possible situation is when the meaning is not that passionately engaged with sustainability. Because of this, materials hardly foster sustainability and competences are moderate. Chances of more sustainable integration within the elements is very little. Still, drawing on this research's results, it could be possible when the supplier takes a more responsible role. As is suggested by the presented results, the supplier seems to be very influential in the procurement process if 'time' is very scarce in the practice. One restaurateur clearly presented a solution: when a supplier actively informs on their possible sustainable assortment, the consideration to commit to sustainable products seem to be higher. It seem to be that a sort of 'knowledge' transmission takes places, but not between restaurateurs, but between suppliers and their restaurant customers, therewith possibly stimulating the creation of a more sustainable symbolic meaning as well.

A last situation that could be imagined resulting from this study is when restaurateurs' contemporary practices are closed as desired: meanings, materials and competences are actively integrating sustainability, therewith contributing positively to a destination's triple bottom line. Even when materials or competences are lower, meanings guarantee alternatives are found to ensure green practice. Having these kind of restaurateur practices existent, it is recommended to facilitate continuous sharing of knowledge with fellow entrepreneurs so to inspire other restaurateurs and confirm appreciation towards 'favored' green restaurateurs. In addition, it could also empower these restaurateurs, resulting in pride and stewardship by acting as ambassadors of sustainable destination development.

While the social practice theoretical approach is focusing on understanding change in processes, time limitation made it impossible to use observation and shadowing as additional methods to interviewing. This limitation calls for further research that could welcome not only situational orientations but also genealogical or configurational ones. Although possible with practice based studies but never the less remarkable;

social sustainability or the people of the triple p notion has hardly become evident. Further research could search more purposefully on the social aspects of sustainability in restaurant practices. One last recommendation is to move from practices that are characterized by restaurateur practitioners to dining practices that include the consumer themselves as well to overcome a demand and supply side approach.

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