



# Marketing of tourism: a paradigm shift toward sustainability

Marketing of  
tourism

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to suggest a shift in the tourism marketing paradigm away from economic profit priorities toward sustainability. The sustainability approach adopts a holistic, integrated view of marketing, considering social equity, environmental protection, and economic livability. The paper seeks to examine the evolving model for the tourism marketing environment.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paradigm shift naturally occurs by tracing the evolution of marketing approaches from production, sales, and a consumer orientation toward marketing alternatives such as societal, causal, green, responsible, and relationship marketing. Adapting a living system theory to tourism marketing, a sustainable tourism marketing model integrates tourism into a larger holistic context and focuses on marketing a quality of life for all stakeholders in the system.

**Findings** – While alternative approaches to tourism marketing include societal consideration such as tourism impacts and environmental segmentation strategies, this paper considers the triple bottom line as more sustainable objectives in tourism marketing and adopts an integrated view on tourism marketing.

**Research limitations/implications** – The model suggests a paradigm shift that needs to be explored further.

**Practical implications** – The paper illustrates how tourism marketing can be integrated into more sustainable urban marketing strategies.

**Originality/value** – Instead of viewing tourism as a separate for profit industry, the model suggests an integration of tourism into a holistic, sustainable, quality of life marketing approach of living communities.

**Keywords** Sustainable development, Tourism development, Tourism, Marketing, United States of America

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

## Introduction

Partially shunned and little understood, some people perceive sustainable tourism marketing to be an oxymoron in sustainable tourism where much of marketing is “hijacked as ‘promotion’” (Clarke, 2002). Destination marketing activities are synonymous with creating images and “selling of places” and standard tourism marketing activities are creating state tourism brochures and advertising campaigns.

Few researchers and practitioners have challenged traditional views on tourism marketing. At best, Middleton and Hawkins (1998, p. 8) provide a marketing perspective on sustainable tourism that:

... is essentially an overall management orientation reflecting corporate attitudes that, ... must balance the interests of shareholders/owners with the long-run environmental interests of a destination and at the same time meet the demands and expectations of customers.



While their approach in analyzing and communicating best practices in tourism is laudable, it stays within the boundaries of the economic marketing paradigm, “balancing” environmental and economic interests, and therefore runs the danger of compromising rather than offering profound alternatives in the discipline of tourism marketing. This paper examines the evolution of alternative approaches to marketing, suggests a framework for sustainable marketing in tourism, and suggests implications.

This conceptual paper follows the practice of analyzing relevant theories, concepts and practices in the mother discipline of marketing, relating and comparing the research to the tourism marketing domain. During the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, a small but outspoken research branch explored green and sustainable marketing theory and practices, challenging traditional economic and exchange theories. In tourism, Haywood (1990) and Walle (1998) pioneered critically analyzing the marketing concept in tourism and asked for a “broader and more balanced view of marketing.” A “broader” view refers to considering holistic approaches to tourism and developing destination marketing practices accordingly. Walle (1998) suggests examining the philosophical changes within the macro marketing literature and developing more system-based approaches. This paper adopts a living system-based view on tourism and challenges the traditional tourism marketing paradigm by creating a sustainable tourism marketing model (STMM). This model attempts to bring conceptual clarity into a confusing body of language, terminology and alternative approaches to marketing and its use in sustainable tourism. The evolving STMM signifies an elaborated fundamental paradigm shift. This new sustainable marketing paradigm requires an integration of alternative approaches and radically moving towards more sustainable tourism marketing principles and practices.

### **The evolving sustainable tourism system**

For decades, researchers have examined tourism as a larger system rather than a simple economic exchange process between businesses and consumers. Planners and economists have established tourism supply (businesses and community resources) and demand (tourist markets) sides, including linkages such as transportation and marketing communications. Marketing directs the flow of products from the producer to the consumer. Expanded models analyze the geographic flows of tourists on the demand side and management issues for destination communities on the supply side. Management issues include determining tourism effects, minimizing negative impacts and optimizing benefits of tourism. Tourism critics have questioned the environmental deterioration of natural resources and the commodification of cultural resources through growth in the tourism industry. Some recent research has examined the contributions of tourism towards sustainable development of a community, region, or country. Tourism marketers have been criticized for contributing towards growth and negative impacts and as a discipline, tourism marketing has largely avoided taking a critical look at their own activities. Instead, marketing research has focused on creating more efficient and effective exchanges and flows between the tourism industry and the tourists. The main goals of their activities are economic growth while merely considering externalities such as environmental, social, cultural, and political environments. A more advanced approach integrates those environments into a living system analysis.

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In general, tourism research is advancing in examining tourism from a non-linear, adaptive, network, and integrated system approach (Farrel and Twinning-Ward, 2004; Hunter, 1997; Russel and Faulkner, 2004). Farrel and Twinning-Ward (2004, p. 278) argue that researchers need to venture outside the “core system:”

... to explore the other connections and interactions that extend as far as tourism significantly affects the ways of life, the economic wellbeing of the system, the people involved, either directly or indirectly. This comprehensive tourism system encompasses multiple system levels from the core, to the global or Earth system, all interrelated, open and hierarchical.

Here, the authors realize that tourism is a more open and complex rather than a simple supply and demand exchange system. In tourism, the way of life, the economy, all people and the earth are interrelated in complex ways, and therefore influence each other. Fritj of Capra (2002, p. 230) argues that:

... we do not need to invent sustainable human communities from scratch but can model them after nature’s ecosystems, which are sustainable communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms ... a sustainable human community is one designed in such manner that its ways of life, businesses, economy, physical structures, and technologies do not interfere with nature’s inherent ability to sustain life.

Based on Capra’s *Web of Life*, we can position tourism as integrated into a living system, and design marketing in such a manner that does not interfere with nature’s inherent ability to sustain life. The current view of marketing is different.

Hunter (1997, p. 858) argues that the current perception of sustainable tourism still favors a weaker growth-oriented (marketing?) vision, and adds:

... given that tourism has always involved the commodification of nature and other aspects of a destination area’s environment as a product which is sold to the tourist (Lanfand and Graburn, 1992), this bias towards a weaker stance is not surprising.

Russel and Faulkner (2004, p. 575) elaborate on an entrepreneurship framework based on principles of sustainable development and a “whole of destination” approach. “This shifts the planning from a destination marketing to a destination management perspective.” The question arises if marketing is completely unsustainable by definition (“sustainable consumption?”), weak on sustainability goals, or could contribute towards building more sustainable communities and living systems.

Van Dam and Apeldoorn (1996) explain that “in order for marketing to play a role in sustainable economic development, a critical reassessment of marketing theory is required.” Kilbourne *et al.* (1997, p. 4) add:

... micromarketing cannot examine the relationship between sustainable consumption and the quality of life critically because the essence of the relationship lies in the dominant social paradigm ... It is within the intellectual purview of macromarketing to expand the domain of inquiry to include technological, political, and economic benefits and costs of consumption, thus challenging the paradigm itself.

While tourism management acknowledges all positive and negative impacts, tourism marketing focuses on micromarketing issues. Haywood (1990, p. 205) predicts, “in revising the marketing concept as a guiding philosophy, fundamental changes will have to be made in how we think and act.” Walle (1998) argues for examining the macomarketing structure, including functionality (goals of marketing), institutions

(who is involved) and commodities (what are we marketing) in the marketing of tourism.

This analysis examines the evolution and structure of marketing and alternatives to the marketing concept. The following dissects definitions and approaches, philosophies and functions of marketing. Although re-defined and addressing multiple stakeholders, the standard marketing definition still focuses on micromarketing activities, while a more sustainable approach to marketing first explores the role of marketing in the larger (macro) living system, where a simple exchange process between company and customer is replaced with interdependent interactions and functions of a larger tourism system. Then, role of marketing is connecting stakeholders in a complex system rather than merely creating advertising strategies.

### **The historical evolution of marketing**

Many introductory marketing textbooks outline the historical evolution of marketing from a production and sales orientation towards a more consumer-oriented marketing approach. The production orientation represented the philosophy, that if production was increased, consumption will increase. Once consumption growth had leveled off, sales efforts needed improvement. Both orientations mirrored the industrialization of society. When sales efforts to sell just any product to any market became less successful, the consumer orientation evolved. This marketing orientation still dominates much of today's marketing activities. Marketers determine customers' needs and wants, and develop products and segmentation strategies accordingly. For years, the definition of marketing was "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (American Marketing Organization, official definition before summer 2004), focusing on the exchange process between customer and organization, and designing the marketing mix. Throughout the last 30 years, attempts for a more social or societal approach emerged. While previous definitions, philosophies, and applications have been vague and confusing, the need to recognize society at large, customer relationships, and extended marketing activities resulted in last year's revised definition of marketing:

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Keefe, 2004).

This new definition was the outcome of e-mail discussions (led by Robert Lusch, marketing professor), exchanges, re-writings, and final thoughts by the AMA Board of Directors:

There was discussion about marketing being about 'collaborating with customers and partners,' but that (language) did not survive. Many argued it was . . . What marketing should do, but many firms were not yet practicing that kind of collaborative marketing he says (Lusch) (Marketing News, 2004).

They also pointed out that "Europeans and Australians, . . . were more likely to argue that marketing is a societal process (although some Americans thought so, too)." The final definition focuses on more broad beneficiaries of marketing, and an extension of marketing activities from designing the marketing mix towards more relationship

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management and the focus on values. However, if “collaboration with customers and partners” is what marketing should do, but is not yet practicing, then the search for alternative models needs to continue. Following analysis attempts to understand and structurally differentiate alternative views on marketing, and, based on an integrated macro-marketing perspective, suggests a STMM.

### **Alternatives to consumer-oriented marketing**

Some alternatives to the traditional forms of marketing emerged as societal, causal, environmental, green, relationship, quality of life, and sustainable marketing approaches. Marketing and tourism academia do not agree on conceptual definitions for each of these terms (“green marketing” has three very distinguishable definitions in the AMA dictionary), therefore it is not surprising, that research and practice use terminology at will. This paper suggests similarities and boundaries of each of these approaches, and offers an integrated model for sustainable marketing in tourism. The model becomes an imperative for sustainable tourism marketing as it considers tourism as a phenomenon contributing to the quality of life of tourists, tourism communities and all interdependent stakeholders. As such, tourism is integrated in living sustainable systems.

#### *Societal marketing*

Societal marketing evolved as an extension of the production, selling, and consumer orientation, considering not only consumer satisfaction but also expanding it towards “society’s well being” (Kotler and Armstrong, 1990). Related, the AMA (ama.org) defines social responsibility as:

... the obligation of marketing organizations to do no harm to the social environment and, wherever possible, to use their skills and resources to enhance that environment. Comment: Social responsibility of marketing also is called societal marketing.

The term societal marketing has often been confused with social or cause marketing, referring to:

... the branch of marketing that is concerned with the use of marketing knowledge, concepts, and techniques to enhance social ends, as well as the social consequences of marketing strategies, decisions, and actions ... and benefits the society in general and not to the marketer (ama.org).

Comparing the two definitions, both claim that it is the social responsibility of the marketer to do no harm, and “wherever possible” to enhance the social environment. They also indicate that this activity is carried out by all, for-profit, public, and private non-profit organizations or by individuals. In practice, many feel that socially beneficial activities are the responsibility of public and non-profit agencies. On the other side, the business paradigm offers freedom to act in the most profitable way, albeit within ethical boundaries. However, more recently, research and practice in management emphasize the social responsibilities of businesses. Also, the more recent definition of marketing acknowledges that not only organizations and consumers, but also all other stakeholders are involved in the process. In terms of Walle’s institutions, multiple stakeholders have responsibilities in the marketing process.

In tourism, several research studies explore the societal marketing approach. Bright (2000) examines the role of social marketing in leisure and recreation, questioning if social marketing primarily “influences the acceptance of a social idea” or if it is

an application of commercial marketing techniques in a public environment, arguing that individual and social well being should be the driver for marketing activities. Dinan and Sargeant (2000) point out how a promotional campaign (cause marketing?) provides behavioral codes for tourism and therefore encourages behavior that benefits society at large. The author draws the relationship to sustainable tourism, while specific segments can be targeted, behavioral change accomplished, and the environment is more likely to stay protected. Wearing and Archer (2000) and King *et al.* (2000) examine marketing planning frameworks for sensitive areas. Beyond environmental protection, they argue for integrated planning and marketing control by the park and community, emphasizing the network of actors in the tourism system. Wheeler (1993) examined the potential conflict of accountability and social responsibility of tourism marketers in local government. Her case study stressed the ethical dilemmas among organizational goals, individual goals and marketing professional goals, should the marketer engage in environmental, traditional or social marketing? Even though most destination or state tourism agencies work as non-profit agencies, their accountability is measured in economic impact, employment, and visitor statistics. Should not it be measured in how well they advocate a social cause? All these studies address the importance of social responsibility, and the interaction of environmental and economic accountability for all social groups. Beyond the “no harm” approach, societal tourism marketing can actively “communicate” tourism’s benefits to society and “promote understanding” of social equity and issues through tourism. Based on Walle’s (1998) functions, institutions, and commodities, this paper argues, that all tourism institutions have the responsibilities to do no harm and enhance the social environment through all types of products and experiences.

### **Economical marketing**

“Economical marketing” sounds redundant as most marketing pursues economic objectives. “Sustainable marketing” is viewed as an oxymoron, as marketing is perceived as inherently unsustainable. Both views recognize “marketing” as an activity to promote consumption and economic growth. Most people support this approach as most people think and act within the dominant social paradigm (DSP). Kilbourne *et al.* (1997) explore this position in “Sustainable consumption and the quality of life: a macromarketing challenge to the dominant social paradigm”. They explain that the DSP is defined as “the society’s belief structure that organizes the way people perceive and interpret the functioning of the world around them” (Milbrath, 1989, p. 116) and through its justification and legitimization, it functions as an ideology for society. Within the belief structure of the western DSP, “quality of life” often is measured as “standard of living” which in turn depends on increased economic activity, income and growth. Therefore, marketing promotes exchange processes that lead to a higher standard of living; the industry produces more products for a heavily consuming society. The quality of life of individuals and of society appears dependent on consumption. The marketing definition, previous to last summer’s revision, focuses on the micromarketing activities of optimizing those exchanges. The revised definition includes stakeholders, customer relationships and values, as its agents. Despite its improvements, if marketing continually is defined through the DSP, the economic dominance remains. The economic-marketing approach considers natural, social, and cultural environments as mere externalities, influencing, but not guiding marketing strategies. Therefore, the search for solutions to environmental and

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social problems occurs within the DSP. Examples for such approaches are the economic valuation of natural resources and the attitude, “if it makes money, it makes sense to protect the environment.” Most of the planning, development and implementation strategies in tourism marketing follow the economic paradigm. Tourism is perceived as an economic activity rather than a living system. Examples include finding effective segmentation strategies, measuring accountability for advertising expenses and maximizing satisfaction and tourists’ expenditures. The more recent, relationship marketing strategy creates closer and more personal company/consumer relationships, but also strives for more loyal and therefore more consuming customers. While economically vibrant communities can certainly be a goal in tourism, this study suggests a shift in paradigm to integrate social and environmental goals to at least the same, if not higher importance.

### **Environmental marketing**

The American Marketing Association ([www.ama.org](http://www.ama.org), [www.marketingpower.com](http://www.marketingpower.com)) does not specifically define environmental marketing, but the AMA establishes that an “Environmental Impact Analysis is the assessment of the impact of a strategy or the decision on the environment, especially the ecological consequences of the strategy or decision” ([ama.org](http://ama.org)). This statement emphasizes the responsibility of the marketer to do no harm environmentally. However, environmental, green, ecological, and sustainable marketing (the terms are used interchangeably) efforts go beyond a resource protection approach and additionally focus on environmentally safe products and production, recycling and reuse. Specifically, Fuller’s (1999) book *Sustainable Marketing. Managerial-Ecological Issues* presents a valuable guidebook for sustainable marketing and production of goods. Middleton and Hawkins (1998) offer a similar text book with *Sustainable Tourism: A Marketing Perspective*. While providing an extensive overview of industry practices moving towards more sustainable tourism practices, the authors only hint on explaining philosophy, concepts, and principles of a more sustainable marketing approach. In tourism, environmental marketing relates to product development and protection, when the local tourism industry is dependent on its natural resources for developing experiences and activities. Environmental marketing is also practiced when the hospitality and attraction industries favor recycling, energy savings, and other environmentally conscious activities. Environmental marketing can go a step further when creating a new environmental consciousness that promotes preservation and conservation in the future.

A variation of environmental marketing is the “green” marketing concept, however, “green” marketing also presents a consumer-oriented strategy. In this case, “it makes economic sense” to target the “green” consumer who has a need for “green” products. Often, ecotourism marketing is adopting this approach, specifically when marketing to the “exclusive ecotourist.” Ecolabeling then establishes the branding practice within the economic marketing paradigm. In numerous cases, managers use ecotourism and sustainable tourism interchangeably due to their emphases on environmental protection. However, while the focus of ecotourism lies within natural resource protection, experiences, and education in the natural environment (including cultural resources), sustainability refers to more inclusive issues (social equity, economic viability, and environmental protection) as well as diversified resources. This paper argues for adopting a sustainability approach for all tourism for all resources. Several authors pointed out the

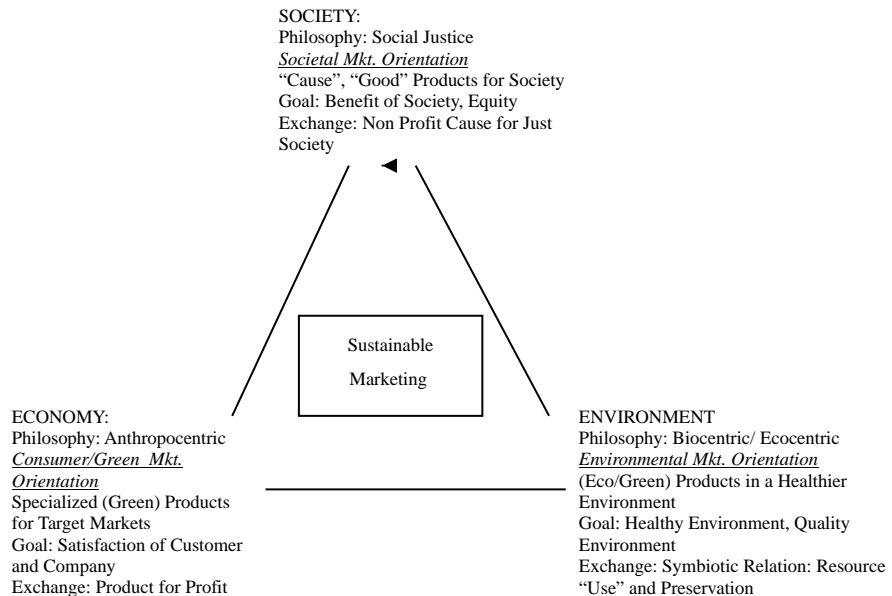
challenge of sustainable marketing to be accepted, because “it involves a different way of looking at marketing, its objectives, and its strategies that goes beyond *societal* marketing” (Kilbourne, 1998; Peattie, 1999).

### The sustainable tourism marketing model

The proposed framework places above discussed approaches into a STMM. The model reflects the sustainable development principles based on the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) declares the mission of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The key to achieving moral implications are environmental health, economic viability, and social equity. While tourism management has adopted the concept of sustainability, the traditional consumer marketing perspective is still based on a classic economic paradigm, in which maximizing profits is the goal of most means. However, a sustainable marketing philosophy needs to incorporate societal, consumer and environmental perspectives. A paradigm shift is needed:

If the solution to the crisis cannot be found within the DSP (social dominant paradigm), a new paradigm is required in order for truly sustainable consumption to become a reality (Kilbourne *et al.*, 1997).

The triangular model (Figure 1) represents the three dimensions of sustainability, economic viability, social equity and environmental protection. The traditional consumer-oriented marketing focus under the economic paradigm is inherently non-sustainable as it is solely focused on economic profit. A focus on just one dimension of the model, even with either societal or environmental objectives, limits the potential of tourism marketing. The sustainable marketing approach integrates environmental,



**Figure 1.**  
Sustainable marketing model

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societal, and economic objectives. The model does not require a complete balance of objectives, but relies on the ecological living system theory, and the imperative that we do not destroy the system's potential for change, adaptability, and creativity. The traditional economic marketing approach is limited to the traditional consumption philosophy. While moving towards an awareness of nature, the marketing of "green" products (such as nature-based and some forms of eco-tourism), still follows the economic paradigm, by focusing on the traditional economic exchange process and profit as the ultimate goal. It does not recognize tourism as an interrelated system within the larger ecological living system. Representing the social equity principle, the societal marketing approach often considers impacts of tourism on the host community and favors socially responsible actions. Often non-profit agencies would promote societal goal, for example, to provide benefits to all residents in a destination community. Tourism marketing obscures the good cause when state and non-profit DMOs promote tourism within the economic paradigm.

The third dimension, environment, closely resembles an ecological biocentric view of living systems. It integrates human and other than human systems into a network of symbiotic relationships. The objectives are promoting healthy connected environments, based on protecting the natural and cultural resources. Marketing would not promote the "use" of resources, but preservation and pro-environmental behaviors. The ultimate goal would be to promote an understanding that as human beings we are part of this interrelated living system. Shifting marketing completely to either of these corners has problems. For example, marketing for establishing a park in a certain area can be criticized if the land is used for economic viability of a certain group in the population. Leaving each function to different marketing organizations causes further disconnection. If we leave environmental protection to environmentalists, marketing products to marketers and social equity to activists groups, the system will be separated, and common objectives are hard to achieve. Sustainable marketing has sustainability as its underlying objective. This includes a quality of life instead of standard of living. A sustainable approach provides a macro-holistic view of marketing and integrates economic viability, social equity and environmental responsibilities towards the desire to achieve livable and living communities. According to Capra's (2002) *Web of Life* view, we can model a new marketing paradigm after an ecosystem network model with the overall goal to sustain life-systems. Many principles are similar to the quality of life marketing paradigm advanced by Sirgy (2001), however, it also integrates tourism as a phenomenon in living systems. This includes, identifying and perhaps prioritizing, other than economic benefits of tourism. This includes aiming for the positive social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism as discussed in the tourism management literature. Why does it seem odd to have environmental protection as an objective for a tourism marketing campaign? Even major environmental organization have adopted the economic marketing paradigm, promoting "that is makes economic sense" to protect the environment. Why are we not promoting tourism as an activity for social understanding and peace? Why are socially responsible and environmental priorities by businesses perceived as abnormalities? This model does not argue for a complete balance among social equity, economic viability, and environmental protection but acknowledges that different situations require different emphases. However, consider all for the ultimate goal of sustainability of living system. The following principles

connect to a shift of the social dominant paradigm from an economic towards a sustainability perspective in tourism marketing:

- Tourism is a phenomenon integrated into sustainable living systems.
- “Marketing” connects stakeholders in the tourism system.
- Goals and objectives of marketing are social equity, economic viability, and environmental protection.
- Unique destination characteristics and needs require different emphases and applications.
- Tourism itself is “sustainable” if it does no harm and enhances sustainable living systems.
- Tourism itself is a living interrelated system of stakeholders.
- All institutions can engage in sustainable tourism marketing (non-and for-profit).
- Marketing is integrated into planning, development, and management.
- Marketing planning, strategies, mixes have to be redefined according to those principles.

The sustainable marketing orientation then does not satisfy the needs and wants of individuals but strives to sustain living systems, the exchange does not take place between individuals and organizations but links self-generating networks of agents, the benefits are not profits but civic energy and diversity, and competition is replaced by dynamic balance. This study explored the necessary paradigm shift in tourism marketing towards sustainability from the macro-marketing perspective. Further research is needed to expand on micromarketing issues and issues in marketing planning, strategies, and marketing mix strategies. Researchers are challenged to examine concepts such as products and segmentation based on a paradigm shift. Following case of Austin, TX illustrates some of the challenges.

### **Sustainable marketing of the Austin, TX experiences**

The paradigm shift suggests moving the objectives of tourism marketing from offering satisfying and profitable tourism experiences towards sustaining living systems. The community is a living system for residents and visitors, tourism experiences enhance the quality of life for the residents, communicate diversity and differences in life style and environment, and contribute to understanding and appreciation between visitors and hosts. The fundamental shift is to market tourism not as a leisure product but as an experience that enhances quality of life, not just for the individual participants, but for living systems at large; the human and non-human, the guests and the hosts. Such an integrated view perceives tourism as a social psychological activity, where the benefits are not or not only economic profits, but also (ex) changes of ones own belief system, an appreciation and a sense of need for diversity. The tourism system is not limited to demand and supply but a system of synergetic agents. Tourism experiences do not “add” to the quality of life but are part of living system communities.

### **The Austin case**

Austin is the state capital of Texas, a midsize city with a large population growth. The industry of the city is dominated by computer and software industry, the quality

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of life of the people is enhanced by an active live music scene, rich outdoor recreation resources and a socially active community. Florida (2005), in his book on *Cities and the Creative Class*, ranks Austin highly among other cities such as San Francisco, Boston, Seattle, etc. in terms of creativity, talent, high tech, and diversity scores. Many polls rank Austin near the top because of its quality of life and young and active, growing population. While many perceive Austin as an up-and-coming city, it also deals with urban development issues such as quick growth, real estate explosion, traffic, gentrification, and urban sprawl. Recently, issues came up on how to deal with the large population of “poor artists” (music, film, and art) and racial tensions (a diverse community with a relatively low integration of African-American and Hispanic populations). Urban development focuses on planning for downtown revitalization through retail and arts development.

Tourism in Austin is either to be neglected or in its “baby shoes.” As any major city, Austin tourism hopes to gain economic benefits through a recently built new Convention Center, and accommodates the leisure travelers through a new visitor center. The Austin CVB is the sole independent entity of the city, dealing officially with tourism. The main tourism attractions are the capitol buildings, historical downtown buildings, live music events and a few museums and city tours. Residents do not perceive Austin as a tourism destination, but would take visitors to the capitol, to Barton Creek, 6th Street and music performance. Marketing brochures and ads promote Austin as the “music capital of the world.” While some cities claim the same fame, Austin is now trying to promote that the city is “so much more” than just live music. Many residents will agree and add Town Lake, Barton Creek, film and arts, and “Austinites” as the reasons why they live in the city. The slogan “Keep Austin Weird” has now been adopted by other cities and refers to its uniqueness, individual personalities, artists, and entrepreneurship. Some refer to it as the efforts to “Keep Austin Local” and resist corporate pressures. However, grown from a sleepy town into an active, creative community, many feel the pressures of urban growth. Metropolitan downtown luxury condos contradict East Austin urban revitalization projects.

How does tourism fit into urban development? Currently, not fit exists. Some downtown revitalization plans consider heritage tourism in their planning efforts, the CVB assumes all marketing responsibilities. Research, planning and development plans are limited due to financial constraints. Does Austin have potential for tourism development and sustainable marketing? Based on the economic paradigm, Austin probably has limited potential. Tourism income plays a minor role in the economy of Austin compared to the dollars of the computer and software industry. Environmentally, Austin has a lively outdoor recreation environment and attractive resources but as “eco-tourism” only limited green marketing potential. Socially, Austin deals with urban growth issues, increasing traffic, and challenging diversity issues. Tourism “highlights” and potentials are two large annual festivals, the South by Southwest (SXSW) Music and Film Festival, and the fairly new Austin City Limits Music Festival. These events provide a large economic impact to Austin, but cannot “sustain a tourism industry.”

Based on the above STMM, let us explore and analyze tourism in Austin in an alternative way. Economically, Austin has “weird” resources, it has many locally unique shops and enterprises, including grassroots arts, music, and film. It lacks common metropolitan tourism resources such as extensive fine arts and theatres, or

professional sports. Socially, it is in general, a politically active, creative, and concerned community, challenged by diversity issues. Environmentally, it is a (relatively) large city with small town charm. It has tremendous natural resources (Town Lake, Barton Creek, and other urban parks), close to downtown but threatened by development and urban sprawl. It has a politically and environmentally active community trying to protect those resources. Other signs of sustainable urban planning include a planned public rail transit system, clean water and an open attitude towards alternative energies.

Sustainable tourism development would integrate tourism into urban planning. Tourism in Austin could play an integrated economic role in Austin. Product development could focus on “alternative city tours” based on the German “Statt Reisen” model. These, mostly walking tours, are themed tours presenting socially and culturally relevant issues of the city. Beyond historical interpretive tours, they may focus on architecture, diverse cultures and other interesting “unique” aspects of the city, such as East Austin, the “Keep Austin Weird” idea and the alternative Austin resident population. Environmentally, Austin is an outdoor-oriented and environmentally conscious city. Outdoor recreation activities and dialogue about the issues facing Austin, will bring the point across. A tourist would experience a “living city” and a unique “quality of life” rather than tourism attractions while visiting Austin. The visitor experiences an alternative urban environment. This potentially promotes a positive image which could, long term, attract other industries to Austin, diversifying the economically risky high tech industry. Tourism may not be a primary source of income for Austin but could contribute towards sustainable urban development.

While many of above thoughts are based on individual observations, research and communications with city stakeholders, the ideas are exploratory in nature and perhaps, present an “idealistic” view of tourism and urban sustainable development. However, a shift in paradigm requires brave ideas and a fresh look at tourism resources.

### **Conclusions**

This paper is to encourage dialogue and examine the new paradigm of sustainable marketing in tourism. While many product development implications have already been discussed in sustainable tourism management, unique marketing missions such as the facilitation of synergies between a network of agents and the communication of triple bottom benefits of sustainable tourism experiences need to be addressed. The paper shows the evolution towards a more STMM; concepts, planning, and strategies are still left up to our ingenuity.

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