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Marta Aymerich Jiménez

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Do we need or we want to share?
The Role of Non Profit Sharing platforms

Marta Aymerich Jiménez[a]

[a]*Universitat Rovira i Virgili, CREIP,*
Av.Universitat 1, 43204 Reus, Spain. (e-mail: marta.aymerich@estudiants.urv.cat)

Abstract

Tourism is an economic activity that must be rethought in order to respond to our fast society changing, as a result of its increasing mobility and interconnection needs, both of them facilitated by technological development.

The new scenario, where traditional tourism is transcended by releasing certain static structures and changing patterns of consumption, is described by the escape from an increasingly homogenised and standardised activity towards a more intimate and responsible with the environment one. This new paradigm should enhance the value of cultural exchange by thinking glocally, what involves a more flexible structure when travelling by the time new markets are opened with the final purpose of procuring an optimum level of human and social development.

In this context, the purpose of the current study is to discern which is the main reason that leads the traveller to use exchange platforms: an economic need resulting from an endemic impoverishment or, on the contrary, it's about a will resulting from a growing concern for the environment.

Keywords: environmental consciousness, non profit sharing tourism platforms, optimum social, responsible tourism, sustainability, tourism.
JEL classification: TBA.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of an economical emerging from a global crisis that only concerns developed countries, characterised by technification and an increasing access to information, sharing tourism emerges from a not only social but a personal need of being updated and thus, it can be identified as an individual growth provider.

Nevertheless, the ultimate question should be: *Is economical situation the only responsible of this no longer new movement known as peer to peer tourism?*. Maybe the emerge of new types of tourism arises as a consequence of a non sustainable scenario either economical, environmental and social.

Access-based economy, collaborative consumption, peer to peer economy and sharing economy are very similar terms coined as the solution of the old problem identified with the reason why they appeared: the tragedy of commons, which describes the situation in a shared-resource system where individual users act independently according to their own self-interest and that behaviour works contrary to the social optimum by depleting or spoiling resources through their collective action.

The preference of using a concept, dismissing the others, is due to the main characteristic of this tourism modality that is being stressed. Following the order used above, it can refers mainly to: the type of provision to certain goods or services, the role of the community when consuming, the direct relationship between the supplier and the consumer and the communist idea of sharing instead of owning.

The collaborative economy is characterised by being social and solidarity in its attempt to connect with the values responsible for its success, turning into the traditional way of sharing -exchange, lend, rent and give away-. Nevertheless, this term has been redefined through communities and technology, which never ceases to expand. In other words, platforms are committed to approach users by proposing them to become actors of a global project, and by doing so, readjusting the concept of collaboration.

It follows from the above that the emerging of new platform tourism services is based in private but collaborative consumption and facilitated by the use of digital platforms, which guarantees a socially enriched economy based on new business models.

All the foregoing illustrates that doing things differently is not only possible but more sustainable, potentially, in the sense that it represents an economic opportunity as well as the most equitable form of consumption.

Prior research in this field is done by Botsman and Rogers (2011), who defend that, although it is a slow process, this new trend is emerging as the result of the people claim for a change with a real impact in terms of sustainability with the final goal of building stronger communities.

The authors denounce the dissatisfaction that defines the affluent society supported by the pillars of hyper-consumerism, which is the responsible of the population unhappiness, as well as the useless production of disposable products and the waste, identified with the difference between the stuff bought and which is used.

Dredge and Gyimóthy (2015) highlight that sharing economy is defined by intrinsic ethical connotations which indicates a shift from the capitalist ownership towards the communist idea of temporary access. This substantial reversal of trends is facilitated by the ICTs and its negative impacts for the tourist industry and it is within this context where claims such as more equal distribution of benefits, social technologies unlock hidden wealth are compromised.

In this spirit, Martin (2016) points out to the hidden face of the sharing economy to be the nightmarish form of neo-liberal capitalism instead of being a mean to reach sustainability, by denouncing non genuine use of the sharing economy concept from some monetised platforms such ber or Airbnb in an artificial place like Syllicon Valley, the cradle of technological innovation.

Further research on sharing economy is done by Celata et al. (2017), responsible of a general reflection about how the virtual net: the community marketplace is drawn by linking reciprocity among members thanks to a two way evaluation: the sense of belonging in the sharing economy and the trust guaranteed by the self-regulation, when monitoring the users' active participation and the exchange. The article denounces as the indirect cost of sharing the fact that technologies, that enable users to join the platforms, are also the responsible of making vulnerable to loose their ethical status in that virtual infrastructure.

In the same vein, Dickinson et al. (2017b) stresses the ability of smart-phone technologies, through the social network capabilities, when identifying and anticipating future patterns of behaviour which helps to plan and update the supply. Dickinson emphasises that barriers of smart-phone mediated travel collaboration are mainly sociological and psychological, leaving the expense of technology when organising travel through an app in the background.

Couchsurfing, one of the most known websites search engine in the framework of hospitality networks, stands out as the purest peer-to-peer model with the largest community framed in the economy of sharing.

The community philosophy is based on a non-monetised exchange, which allows the traveller's storytelling behaviour enhancing through a personal immersion in an alien culture.

The current approach provides, thanks to both qualitative and quantitative techniques, a deeper understanding of sharing tourism through the study of its main reasons to exist: a market vacuum and population impoverishment (=need) and an increasing environmental conscience (=want).

Our final purpose is to answer the following research question:*Do we need or want to share?* which will be explained through an analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data later on.

The structure of this paper is as follows: contextualisation of the responsible tourism practice, reflection about the condition of sharing as a personal decision when planning a trip, methodology description, data analysis and finally a last section describing the main study contributions.

2. Towards a Responsible Tourism Practice

From a classical point of view, specifically Aristotelian, ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals happiness as purpose. This happiness is not conceived as an individual objective but as a collective one, since the possibility of reaching a certain individual good that does not affect the good of the whole community is inconceivable.

As a consequence of the aforementioned, ethics deals with the public defined by a common interest, namely: the generation of a space of collective happiness, what is guaranteed by the practice of all members virtues. Therefore, a collective awareness and an internalisation of values trough correct education of present and future generations, responsible for ensuring that ethical values are provided for everyone becomes a need.

2.1. Sustainability

The term of sustainability was first written down worldwide in a 1971 in a document where United Nations, the World Fund and the National Union for the Conservation of Nature, agreed with mentioning the most urgent problems for the next ten years. This document makes making special attention to the excessive pressure on the natural systems that keep the planet, underlining the degradation of those that could threaten development.

We should accept that this term is an artifice as it is a human construction, being antagonistic to any other property of any non-ephemeral system of the universe: nothing natural is able to be eternal and therefore, neither the Earth and its resources.

Over and above all these considerations, sustainability is a trans-disciplinary not concept but process that refers to several disciplines: the environment, above all, the social relations or social welfare, the economy and finally the energy. Therefore, it refers to the relationship between society and its environment, being its purpose organising the society activities.

In this sense, community members will be able to meet their present needs - expressing their maximum potential while maintaining ecosystems, by the time environment damaging and future resources endangering are avoided, ensuring the needs of future generations.

Sustainability can be refereed to three different contexts: weak sustainability, strong or nearly sustainability. The first one concerns the fact that we can find substitutes for natural resources. Strong sustainability stresses which of these resources, diversity of species ... are irreplaceable. Finally nearly sustainability advises us about a need to start a slowdown, warning about the factors that pose compromise it.

Sustainability is a term that must be specified due to its intrinsic complexity: it is not a goal but a strategy, a process of transformative, creative, reflexive, intellectual and self-organisational learning that involves an education for change, with the aim of provoking a paradigm shift by developing new structures, organisation and values that must be spread in a new pedagogy.

In the view of the foregoing, the idea of the necessity of an education for change is imposed since although technology is an indispensable requirement, education is the guarantee, in the sense that it makes possible to imagine a better future thanks to: collaboration, critical thinking, empowerment, participation and reflection in decision making, systemic thinking, and determination to work together to later put in practice.

2.2. Sustainable Development

For all what exposed above, we can accept the fact that the term sustainability has been transcended into a new one: sustainable development. It is a process in which one learns through a systemic thought that, by the time it is being developed, it focuses on the contents, competences and abilities, conforming to a social self-learning.

Thus, a collective awareness and an internalisation of values become a need through education responsible of guaranteeing the correct formation of future generations in the way that ethical values are provided for everyone. This training must be, according to the United Nations, interdisciplinary and holistic, value-oriented, and based on: participatory processes, critical thinking, dialogue and collaboration and empowerment.

In that way, learning should be based on the resolution of difficult issues from a multi-methodological perspective, in which the different agents that intervene create inter-trans-disciplinary synergies. Thus, learning is conceived as practical and action-oriented process as well as it is conformed as a transformative procedure.

Sustainable development is defined as a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the orientation of investments, the direction of technological development and the change in the political and institutional frameworks are in harmony, thanks to the interdisciplinary synergy of the different agents that they are involved.

Therefore, the concept requires itself the improvement of the current potential of humanity in order to meet human needs and aspirations, understanding humanity from a perspective of symbiotic relationship with the surrounding environment: a set of communities united by equity and common interest.

The awareness of this need began with the Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit in 1992, continued with Rio, the Declaration of the Decade and Education for the sustainable development of the United Nations, the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (2009) and it was reaffirmed in 2012 with Rio +20.

Later on, in 2016 UNDP and UNDG developed a global strategy, which should be assumed before 2030, for an effective implementation of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the MAPS approach (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support).

These also known as Global Objectives make a special emphasis to current issues such discrimination, governance, place of residence, socio-economic status and vulnerability to shocks with an special aim: guaranteeing gender equality, health improvement, poverty reduction, sanitation and water access by the time climate change is being combated and an inclusive peaceful society is promoted.

On the basis of the above, and since poverty and lack of equity are endemic, we should take into account the concept of sustainability in the short and medium term:

We cannot afford delaying the objective of guaranteeing humanity the opportunity to satisfy his aspiration to a better life, in the way that our patterns of energy and resources consumption are commensurate with our values, by the time responsible consumption based on refusing, reducing, reusing, repairing, recycling and rethinking are promoted in order for the purpose of minimising our environmental impact.

2.3. Sustainable Tourism

The meaning of the concept of tourism is changing thanks to the incorporation of new technologies, mobile applications or the creation of start-ups, for instance. Travelling has been introduced to the everyday life of individuals belonging to the most culturally privileged classes of a partially globalised society.

The partially clarification is due to what is obvious: on the one hand, the fact that the effects of globalisation do not greatly affect the societies of the underdeveloped or developing countries, if euphemism is preferred, although it is undeniable that the welfare of the most economically favoured countries makes possible a better distribution of consumer goods through what we understand as a collaborative economy.

On the other hand, these developing societies will be benefited by the economic well-being of the citizens of the privileged countries, or at least supposedly, insofar as some of the effects of globalisation are outsourcing, imports and a higher frequency of travel, which theoretically favours a flow of economic resources to countries with not so mighty economies.

The use of the term *privileged* is an intentional decision after considering the PNUD IDH index included in a United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report. Thus, the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) is a wellness indicator evaluates if a certain country provides to its citizens a particular environment where they can develop their project and living conditions taking into account the hidden inequality condition.

We must take into account that this multi-factorial index that considers three dimensions: long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. It is built from simple indexes: life expectancy, education, inequality and income.

It follows from the above that, according to PNUD, High Human Development countries are those who have the IDH index upper than 0.80. Consequently and from now on, very high human development countries citizens will be considered privileged.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development recalling the potential of tourism to advance the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

World Tourism Organisation defends that sustainable tourism is an objective for every tourism practice based in a continuous process that requires impact monitoring through the introduction of preventive and corrective measures. This is why the commitment that should have the individual of the 21st century verse future generations is not other than guaranteeing the tourism activity without compromising productive and territorial logic.

To this effect, sustainable tourism programs, policies and practices are required to ensure that tourism industry impacts are not irreversible, respecting in equal significance the three pillars that the concept of sustainability encloses: environmental, social and economic issues. Only in this basis, a framework compound of a bearable natural and built environments, equitable social community and viable responsible economy, sustainability can be facilitated.

This proposal should be guaranteed by a collaborative and inclusive join effort of all stakeholders that interact in the tourism activity, specially by building partnerships between institutions and governance with other agents and, above all, encouraging population to be involved it in the project by informing citizens and making this process more participatory creating co-operatives, community gardens...

In the view of the foregoing, sustainable tourism is understood as the sum of tourist activities that respect the natural, cultural and social environment, as well as the values of a community that allows a positive exchange of experiences between residents and visitors, in which the relationship between the tourist and the community is fair, the benefits of the activity are distributed equitably and visitors have a really participating attitude in their experience of trip.

2.4. Responsible Tourism

Since tourism is a tendency, it is a requirement for every social being and that is why the system must guarantee individuals the possibility of travelling. The point is that we no longer understand the concept of 'system' reduced to a government organisation but that the connectivity between the subjects has extended the term to social organisations and platforms that ensure the maximum universalization and democratisation of this activity.

In this way we can observe that there has been a fundamental change: the decentralisation of the establishment's business environment towards the social and economic fabric of the territory.

The human being, sedentary for centuries, is regaining its nomads origins thanks to that unbeatable scenario provided by the relentless technological revolution, the improvement of the means of transport efficiency and the unprecedented easy access to information.

As a consequence of habituation to ICT technologies, consumer empowerment has emerged as it has enabled travellers to develop, plan, reserve, buy or pay online their travel experience without having to resort to traditional intermediaries.

We must, however, always bear in mind that this empowerment is subjugated to the subjects' cultural level and purchasing power, since we can not say yet that all the individuals that make up a 'developed society' have access to their privileges, neither all citizens of the countries with the highest IDH index are used to browse and buy online between the surplus of available opportunities in the network, via OTAs, flash selling platforms, search engines or meta-search engines.

The essential stages of our travel experience are only controlled by the most privileged subjects, to which Russo et al. (2013) identifies as 'experts'. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the right of travelling comes into conflict with the destination sustainability in the sense that the democratisation and universalization of the activity negatively impacts both in natural landscape and local societies.

Although the evidence that tourism is one of the main sectors of the world economy, as well as an invaluable growth opportunity for undeveloped countries, it is undeniable that we can not ignore the fact that tourism industry, is also responsible for various negative impacts on the environment, society and economy.

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Some authors, such Russo et al. (2013), defend that tourism is not sustainable at all: citizens are literally invaded by uncontrolled mass tourism that turns entire neighbourhoods and cities into leisure areas, which implies negative externalities such the increase in housing prices, as a result of the proliferation of tourist apartments, the replacement of traditional businesses are quickly replaced with others dedicated to tourism, and at social level, the proliferation of precarious contracts.

In order to fight against the tourism negative externalities, a new approach is needed: the nearly sustainability perspective that advises us to start a slowdown by warning about the factors that suppose compromising the natural landscape.

In this sense, related to the concept of sustainability and referring to Biassoulis' work, a new expression appears: responsible tourism, which emphasises the environmental livability as the junction point between both environmental and social dimensions of sustainability, laying aside the economic viability.

Briassoulis (2002)introduces one of the main goals of tourism activity by defending local population interests when designing policies in order to avoid irreparable consequences of that industry, which is incompatible with the sustainable local development according to the nature and sensitivity of some local resources.

According to the definition of UNTWO, responsible tourism is focused in: reducing the environmental impact by becoming a guardian of natural resources, respecting wildlife and their natural habitats by avoiding to buy those products that are made using endangered plants or animals- at the same time water and energy consumption is the minimum possible, leaving the smallest footprint in the environment.

This perspective is defended in several tourism studies such the ones from Goodwin (2016) who remarks the need of adopting a multidimensional perspective as a requirement for handling with several responsible tourism practices, according to the huge heterogeneity of the tourism offerings and consumption practices, which can only be achieved through the creation of localised agendas responsible of taking care of ethical values such respecting the diversity.

Lee et al. (2017) emphasises the fact that consumers' ethical decisions do not tend to be correlated with economic issues but with destination perception. The author recalls the three dimensions of sustainability linking them to the still minority segment of responsible tourists, which is actually experimenting and increasing trend that highlights the consumers intentions according their ethical travel issues including environmental, socio-cultural and economical purposes. The author

Mathew and Sreejesh (2017) brings a refreshing outlook to what's above considered by checking the relationship between the destination sustainability and responsible tourism in terms of measuring the improvements that resident population experiment in their quality of life, as a consequence of the impact of tourism in their landscape, as well as their perception of the activity. This social welfare enhancement is attributed to the conjunction of the enrichment of: community engagement, employment opportunities, skill development programs and public awareness.

Therefore, responsible, sustainable and collaborative tourism is a space of cooperation between all the agents that participate in one way or another in the correct development of a slow, non-invasive and quality activity, in which activities that respect and improve the environment, the landscape and the community made up of residents are carried out.

In short: John Lennon's dream-like vision of making a better, more sustainable world, begins with both formation and information of all the individuals that make up society to improve it.

3. IS SHARING A NECESSITY OR A WILL?

The World Tourism Organisation estimates an increase of 20 per cent in new tourism typologies focused on sustainability, identifying collaborative tourism as the cause of such increase. According to World Travel Monitor, collaborative tourism manages more than the 40 per cent of the international travel.

Thus, sharing tourism supposes a threat for the traditional industry whilst offering private accommodation through digital networks, which connect users directly. On line platforms enables the activity democratisation and universalization by approaching the new reality and genuineness of new

places from the perspective of their inhabitants and, as a result of this interaction, a more equitable wealth distribution is performed.

Regarding the foregoing, we must emphasise that collaborative tourism products give authenticity to the experience, either by sharing the space in a car with strangers, staying in a house where to taste traditional food or visiting a new place from the perspective of an autochthonous.

It follows that what makes this typology of travelling unique is the fact that it allows the traveller participating in a community where he does not belong through sharing all kinds of activities normally restricted to the inhabitants of the destination.

3.1. Sharing: Need or Will?

The lack of non-renewable resources such as fossil and mineral fuels and their inevitable consequence: the rising cost of both resources and energy. Its subsequently impact on our lives that will be manifested, on one hand, as an increment of taxes and costs and, on the other hand, as a decrease of returns and the amount and diversity of resources.

Technological development can improve the resources load capacity and it can help us to improve the efficiency in the production of energy by taking into account the rate of controlled exhaustion of resources so as not to allow the depletion of a resource before the availability of their substitutes.

The trip has been unconsciously incorporated to our lives and it has come to stay not longer as a way to interrupt a routine, but an habit inclusion that will define our lifestyles and lives.

Thus, and thanks to the ICTs universal use, only in the developed countries, travelling is not a contemplative practice anymore: it is a proactive intimate experience, in which the expert cultured and technologically connected traveller seeks to be immersed in the host society, by the hand of an indigenous or local that will provide him a multidimensional perspective of a new reality.

The increasing awareness of the social and environmental limits of the development of a territory as a tourist destination, the lack of resources and in special the fossil combustibles, leds to a rethinking of this economic activity, manifested in the elaboration of proposals for alternative models that promote responsible tourism, in a consistent manner with this new demand.

In this vein, Markandya (2000) stresses the fact that in order to transcend the theory, the problem should be solved by designing tools and instruments taking into account not only the existing market structures but the activity external costs as well.

Ryan (2002) highlights that these organisations underestimate the principles and recommendations of the Global Code of Ethics for tourism to the WTO members that must be applied for each tourism activity stakeholder. In this sense,Briassoulis (2002)introduces one of the main goals of tourism activity: defending local population interests when designing policies in order to avoid irreparable consequences of that industry, which is incompatible with the sustainable local development according to the nature and sensitivity of some local resources.

Along the same lines, Johnston and Tyrrell (2005) emphasises, the lack of tourism policies, tools and indicators as a result of an ambiguous definition of the same concept of sustainable tourism and its potential goals. Additionally, the author denounces that thinking about one single solution to guarantee an universal optimal maximisation of the industry profits as well as the community ones is a chimera, since what is rational is looking for the least worst of the possible scenarios.

Russo et al. (2013) write further adding another issue: the intrinsic change of both society and destinations that defines the tourism industry, which is the motor of the touristic offer re-generation that forces destinations to work towards sustainability in order to provide added value.

Choi et al. (2017) insist on the need of adapting destination planning initiatives, through all the stakeholders implied, to invigorate responsible tourism praising the virtues of eco-tourism such its ability to enhance the promotion of cultural heritage and natural assets by establishing conduct ethic codes to encourage responsible behaviour with the final goal of minimising external costs such exceeding the area's tourist carrying capacity.

In this sense, Bushell and Bricker (2017) add a new player to that discourse: the role of effective partnerships between certified conservation and tourism entities, which are said to be the responsible of improving the tourists' attitudes in favour of the biodiversity conservation. The authors affirm that these alliances make a genuine labour to improve not only social but ecological outcomes as well, which improves the destination image.

Hardeman et al. (2017) tackles a new topic: the sustainability economic dimension through a consumer focused approach. The author remarks how tourism industry could be positively affected by consumers ethical behaviour towards sustainable decisions. In this context, copying competition successful decisions and implementing recommendations as well as persuasive communication are pointed as the guarantees of the industry self benefit.

In the same perspective, Epuran et al. (2017) introduces the concept of corporate social responsibility, identified with the company ideological motivation, as the crucial tool to procure the tourist safety through the risk monitoring. Thus, this article denounce the fact that nowadays sustainability seams to be increasingly connected with the company competitiveness at the expense of the contemporary society welfare.

To sum it up, the rising cost of both resources and energy, the increment of taxes and costs, the growing number of necessary utility bills such rentals, internet, insurances, bank accounts, the precarious annual salary increase, negative externalities such touriscification, gentrification, local population exodus... lead us to think that this not so new tourism modality identified as sharing tourism is a need due to the endemic impoverishment of our developed society.

Nevertheless, some relevant facts that prompt us to consider that peer to peer tourism is a will:

The technological capability to find substitutes to non-renewable resources, the efficiency improvement in production of energy, the growing awareness about resources scarcity, the emergence of new eco-consumption patterns.

The personal interest in defending local population interests as a consequence of the increasing awareness that technology access is within the reach of a few in a semi-globalised world where undeveloped countries citizens are in a disadvantage.

The knowledge that mass tourism experiences tends to be less expensive than alternative options, due to that the service is provided by large corporations where tour operators ensured that all the expenses are included in a fixed unitary price.

3.2. Network Hospitality

The advantages of the renowned as a para-hotelier segment, made up of these new operators or platforms, are obvious: the legal responsibility of the activity is transferred to private providers, allowing them to operate at very low costs or even free, which forces the traditional industry to innovate by differentiating itself by means of providing more added value to its products.

According to Molz (2014) definition, network hospitality is the result of using on-line technology to create a global travellers net based on some features such dealing with strangers and feeling like a guest. The author defends that, as a consequence of the ICTs universalisation, a new model of society has emerged: the networked one, distinguished by the daily use of the social and networking technologies which are enabling the emerge of new forms of hospitality based in random searches.

The random operations that are being produced within this ethereal network organise not only our way of travelling but travellers' lives as well, what's evidenced considering the addition of new connotations to ancient concepts such authenticity, friendship, indebtedness, intimacy or trust.

On the basis of the examination of Airbnb platform, Ikkala and Lampinen (2015) go deeper in the network hospitality networks, by introducing a differentiation between the ones that are monetised from those which non economic interchange is accepted. The authors stress that the presence of money is the responsible of endowing a helpful framework to establish the rules of the interchange by imposing an obligation.

Thus, we are able to make a classification by typologies of collaborative tourism platforms depending on their purpose: temporary accommodation P2P with or without money exchange and house exchange.

Since money is a crucial aspect, we notice a great change of the paradigm: what is really valued in the new ways of travelling -identified by its intrinsic search of the authenticity of the experience- is no longer the cost of travel, neither the services that one has benefited from, but the time of quality obtained and shared. Consequently, what is truly valuable for the traveller is the greater appreciation of time.

As a consequence of the foregoing, it follows that time is the main concept which is redefined by the collaborative movement and, consequently, the order of the activity equation factors has been mixed up: time is not money anymore: money is time. The time dimension is a value that we can not buy but it does share, making it a currency of change.

That's why Couchsurfing and Bewelcome are said to be genuine sharing platforms as they are non profit: alien to the economic system, they offer more than a lodging a vital experience, since cultural and time exchange displace the economic value of the trip.

Among the several reasons that non profit sharing platforms members take into account while travelling, feeling the unknown authenticity, living in new environments mixing up with the locals and enjoying the local tangible and intangible resources stands out.

In this way, a new model appears: the time banks, an exchange system that proposes the exchange of services or favours by others, so that unity of exchange is not the usual money but alternatives, local or social currencies whose appearance not backed by the government and that are destined to the internal trade of a delimited region. These currencies are born from the will of the participants by a simple agreement between the community members of a community that will use them, which implies trust and reciprocity while encouraging cooperation based on mutualism, solidarity and community self-management.

Those who offer also receive a certain profitability in temporal terms, so that this system fosters cooperation between the participants by standing out as a very effective tool for revitalising the life of a particular community, being flexible, working just as well between small communities of developed countries like others characterised by being shaped by ethnic minorities which supposes a better wealth distribution.

According to Molz (2016) platforms such as Couchsurfing and Airbnb point towards a much more mobile social paradigm that has its cements in a network that promotes hospitality among strangers, the engine of a new tourist practice outside of the network of traditional tourist accommodations. In this framework, online providers allow users to access goods and services without the need for a change in the ownership of them.

Thus, peer-to-peer exchange platforms have made this change in the way of travelling possible, filling a market vacuum in which the exchange of own resources is possible, regardless of the traditional economic system in which a user pays to the industry.

Dickinson et al. (2017a) add a new perspective by analysing how a mobile connectivity gives a new opportunity that allows the emerge of innovative and creative sustainable tourism platforms thanks to the creation of a new virtual space.

Therefore, a new definition of the sense of community emerges as a result of the fact that technology enhances sociability and that contributes to a social capital gain, the social phenomenon described as the situation procured by groups of individuals who are joined with a certain level of trust and cohesion with a unique aim: making collective decisions towards the optimum common resources management.

To conclude, we will once again underline that the meaning of the term tourism has been called into question as a consequence of the incorporation of these platforms into the tourism activity, in the sense that it includes practices considered alegal, focused on sharing a private space, personal time, attention and exchange of experiences that nowadays coexist with the tourist activity regulated.

3.3. Couchsurfing

According to Bialski (2012) the historical moment in which we live differs from the previous ones in which individuals have a greater need to move to develop their life projects, what implies getting rid of certain static structures and changing certain patterns of consumption and relational, such as adhering to social networks, a booming trend that enables, while promoting collaboration between different individuals, becoming the basis of the concept of sharing economy.

The reason for the trip is not the improvement of health conditions through thalassotherapy treatments in spas or rest anymore, but the search for authenticity as it was the beginning.

In this sense, Dr Bialski stresses the fact that a destination is perceived as genuine by a traveller if it has an opportunity to establish new ties with the local population based on" intimacy, sense and intensity.

According to Molz (2012), platforms like CouchSurfing point to a new much more mobile social paradigm, supported by a network that promotes hospitality among strangers and it is the driving force behind a new tourist practice outside the network of traditional tourist accommodation.

Peer-to-peer exchange platforms enable a change in the way of travelling by filling a market gap in which the exchange of own resources is possible, remaining apart from the traditional economic system in which a user pays to the industry.

In this framework, online providers allow users to access goods and services without the need for a change in the ownership of them.

In this vein, Decrop et al. (2018) maintains that Couchsurfing collaborative tourism experiences have a transformative power consisting in changing people behaviour through travel experiences and subsequently the world itself.

In addition, Pera (2017) stresses the fact that this platform enables the production of co-creative Storytelling, which culminates in customer delight helping travellers to achieve deep satisfying levels of sense-making.

Taking into account the Human Rights Declaration, and in particular its 13th article which defends that "everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country", travelling free is a fundamental right guaranteed partially by non profit sharing platforms such Couchsurfing, the most genuine collaborative tourism one in which accommodation exchanges as well as objects, skills, knowledge among other services are free of charge through to exchange networks access.

Notwithstanding the above, how to get a certain place for free is a missing issue due to although reaching a foreign country is a right, it is also a pending matter subjugated to international law and agreements.

The existence of online platforms give response to individual personal needs such human closeness, staying curious and improving languages among many other features.

It is nonetheless also true that this global network concentrates most of its users in countries with more healthy economies being its members privileged middle-age individuals who share certain characteristics: they are extroverted, curious in the sense of intellectually restless as well as non-conformist. Thus, this travel expert community could be described by its familiarity with new technologies, social networks and mobile applications.

To conclude, let's stress the fact that couchsurfers are mostly upper-middle class citizens of developed countries who are mobile and polyglots and therefore, they hold a certain cultural baggage that drive them to cooperate with strangers for a collective social good.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Qualitative Approach

This study adopts an approach to analyse online travel Couchsurfing users in order to compile data enough that enables us confirm or refute our initial hypothesis: *When planning trips, travellers prefer using sharing tourism platforms due to economic reasons instead of ethical ones?.*

We decided to use qualitative methods according to the later want of planning a quantitative study. At this effect, we needed at first qualitative data to validate and to clarify which ones would enabled us to analyse the quantitative results at a second stage.

Targeted interviews is the methodology chosen for the study of the sample, which corresponds to the entire population of the currently active worldwide ambassadors on the Couchsurfing platform. Thus, the current study observation unit is individual people, being the intentional sampling chosen the extreme case one that represents the most ancient and experienced members.

We focus on this small group members because of the huge dimensions of the universe studied: Couchsurfing is, according to the official web, a global community of more than 14 million people in more than 200,000 cities.

In short, the semi-structured interview is designed through a battery of 27 open-ended questions structured in five sections: demographic, content queries, questions concerning values and beliefs, knowledge questions and finally attitudes and behaviours inquiries. The final aim is no other than having an objective support that allowed us answering our first research question: *"Do we need or want share?".*

Initially, we sent these interviews using the platform through personal messages and after being banned because of spamming, we decided to get in touch with ambassadors through other media such Facebook groups.

As a consequence of this first approach to the community members, we get 25 answers, 17 of which are men and the sharing common characteristics are having university studies as well as skilled employment.

4.2. Quantitative Approach

Relying on the empirical base obtained fruit of the application of qualitative methods, primary data was collected through the Couchsurfing hospitality network website, which would allow us to built a database containing several areas of information.

Our aim was to develop an appropriate approach to sampling and analyse the available data.

After ruling out the inactive profiles, we got a sample of 328 individuals from which we took the following information: nick name, citizenship, city of residence, age, gender, employment, education, spoken languages, membership antiquity, last visit to the platform web page, old badges, countries where lived, countries visited and the role played.

Subsequently, the gathered information was imported to a spreadsheet what enabled us to identify patterns, terms and biases. The compiled data corresponding to the whole ambassadors group worldwide, should allow us to solve the question by widen the data with a statistically representative sample.

5. Data Analysis and Results

Decrop et al. (2018) classify the more than 10 millions of members of the travel website search engine into three categories: opportunists, communitarians and idealists and that qualification can be extended to almost all non profit sharing tourism platforms.

Thanks to the results obtained with the data gathering, we prove that most of this community members belongs to the idealist group, given their both social and economical appeals.

Data collected states that mostly all the platform users prefer using the sharing platform when planning trips, on account of personal behaviour patterns instead of economical reasons.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS		
	N	%
Gender		
Female	73	22,25%
Male	**255**	**77,75%**
Age		
<25	1	0,30%
25<45	**254**	**77,44%**
45<65	66	20,12%
65 years or older	7	2,13%
Education		
Compulsory Studies	5	2,29%
College or Similar	23	10,55%
Graduate	**153**	**70,18%**
Master's Degree	24	11,01%
Doctoral Degree	13	5,96%
n/a	117	35,67%
Employment		
Skilled	**167**	**88,36%**
Unskilled	22	11,64%
n/a	139	42,38%
Country of residence		
1	79	24,08%
2 or 3	**146**	**45,51%**
4 or more	97	29,57%
n/a	6	1,83%
Profile		
Sedentary	**282**	**85,96%**
Nomadic	46	14,02%
Non Verified	26	19,20%
Verified	**302**	**92,07%**
Verified by payment	63	19,20%
Antiquity		
new membership	44	13,42%
old membership*	**284**	**86,58%**
old badges	318	96,95%
pioneer	235	71,64%

Table 1: **Findings description: socio-economic characteristics.** The first column shows gender, age, education, employment, country of residence, profile and antiquity features appearing in the network. The second and the third columns provide the number of observations of each range in total and percentage terms, respectively.

From Table 1, we can summarise the data by concluding that this community is mainly comprised of male members (77,75%) who are in the age group of 25 to 45 years old (77,44%), mostly of them are university graduate (70,18%) what allowed them to have an skilled employment (88,36%), who are mostly sedentary (85,96%) despite they have lived in more than two countries (76,89%) and whose membership is mainly before the platform changed from org to com (86,58%).

TRAVELLER BEHAVIOUR		
	N	%
Role		
Host	**247**	**75,30%**
guest	81	24,70%
hosts accepting guests	185	56,40%
Countries visited		
0	**0**	**0%**
1	4	1,27%
2<5	7	2,13%
5<10	30	9,15%
10<15	31	9,45%
15<20	37	11,28%
20 or more	**214**	**65,24%**
In detail *Germany*	257	78,35%
France	254	77,43%
Italy	232	70,73%
Netherlands	230	70,12%
Spain	229	69,81%
United States	219	66,76%
Austria	209	63,71%
Belgium	203	61,89%
Czech Republic	198	60,36%
United Kingdom	197	60,06%
Switzerland	184	56,09%
Poland	161	49,08%
Hungary	160	48,78%
Languages profile *Monolingual*	13	3,96%
Bilingual	48	14,63%
Trilingual	**82**	**25**%
Quadrilingual	54	16,46%
5 languages	54	16,46%
6 languages	24	7,31%
7 languages	20	6,09%
8 languages or more	30	9,14%
In detail *English*	327	99,69%
Spanish	189	57,62%
French	157	47,86%
German	113	34,45%
Italian	66	20,12%
Portuguese	57	17,37%
Russian	57	17,37%
Arabian	29	8,84%
Chinese	27	8,23%
Turkish	26	7,92%

Table 2: **Findings description: Traveller Behaviour** The first column shows the way that the features role, countries visited and language profile are measured. The second and the third columns provide the number of observations of each range in total and percentage terms, respectively.

Furthermore, from Table 2, we can add that the common Couchsurfing feature regarding its members is not other than being a virtuous people, what might be deduced from the study of the roles which are described in

their profiles: the 75,30 % are hosts who have visited 20 or more countries (65,24%) and speak three or more languages (80,46%).

Thus, the study verifies that the community values described in the website, namely: sharing life, creating connection, offering kindness, staying curious, leaving the destination better than it was found, are not just the fruit of a good corporate social responsibility prepared by the marketing department but real.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

SUMMARY INSIGHTS		
HYPOTHESES	CONCLUSIONS	EVIDENCES
1. "The emergence of P2P platforms are a consequence of a market vacuum and economic impoverishment."	No. It's a consequence of an increasing environmental conscience and ICTs, among other travellers' behaviour reasons.	Literature points the resurgence of cooperativism as well as technology improvement as the main responsible.
2. "Couchsurfing responds to a consumerism necessity."	No. On the contrary, it responds to a personal growth will.	Qualitative data showing community members profiles statements.
3. "Do we need or want to share?"	Want. Since the socio-demographic characteristics of the most members of a community show that they belong to upper class.	Quantitative data proves.
4. "P2P tourism improves the local community business."	For sure. There is a more equitable wealth distribution as a result of abolish foreign intermediaries.	Literature shows several study cases of that statement.

Table 3: **Hypotheses.** The first column shows the hypothesis analysed in the current paper. The second and the third columns state the main conclusions and evidences of the hypothesis, respectively.

The last table depicts the main formulated hypotheses that has been contrasted along the current study through a falsifiability-oriented methodology. Data analysis and literature review enabled us to refute the following initial hypotheses:

The first one assumed that 'The emergence of sharing accommodation platforms are a consequence of a market vacuum and an economic impoverishment.' On the contrary, the literature review, and specifically Martin (2016) points that technology improvement as well as resurgence of cooperativism as the key drivers.

The second one held that 'Couchsurfing responds to a consumerism necessity.' Qualitative data collected from a detailed profile analysis proved the proposition only partially by stressing as the main reason that leads travellers to use the platform when planning a trip is procuring a personal growth.

The following one concerned to the research question 'Do we need or want to share?' and in order to discern the answer, we had to analyse the quantitative data collected, which proved that most of users belong to an upper-medium class. By doing so, we could refute the initial hypothesis that defended that preferring sharing platforms is due to their an economic necessity rather than a will.

The final hypothesis regarded to the positive externalities of this tourism modality and specifically its capacity to improve the local economy. Further research through a qualitative study of profiles based in the ethnography method is need to prove scientifically the verifiability of this assumption.

6. FINAL REMARKS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Conclusion

The current study contributes to the debate surrounding the sustainable travelling by stressing that sustainability is a difficult pathway in the field of tourism because there's a real confrontation between the human right of travelling, with the purpose of personal growth, with the citizens right to live in a non turiscified environment where the local industry shifts to a service sector with the sole objective of satisfying tourists needs and expectations, which often results in a massive locals exodus.

This appears to be a classic catch-22 situation, but really it is not: a sustainable tourism activity is only another equation for what industry hasn't found the formula to solve yet.

No economic-political perspective that focuses on the development of capitalism in society does favour the achievement of the social ideal: centralised economies are driving the degradation of the environment, climate change and increasing inequality and therefore demands of capital accumulation and the changing nature of power relations are determined by the complex pressures on the state and public policy.

This paper defends that the market vacuum conformed by conscious people about sustainability, authenticity, genuineness, eco-consumption... can be filled with a sharing activity based on a non monetary exchange, between particulars, eluding the industry lobbies what would guarantee the environmental livability as the junction point between both environmental and social dimensions; but we should notice that this tourism modality lays aside the economic viability.

Critics of peer to peer accommodation argue that although sharing platforms, with the exceptions of Couchsurfing, Bewelcome and Home Exchange, appear to be sustainable, all the others seems to enhance a web business which are far from procuring economical sustainability.

Along these lines, we have defended that just non-monetary sharing economy platforms provide a social optimum through their intrinsic ethical connotations, which points to a desired shift from the capitalist ownership towards the communist idea of temporary access enabling the activity democratisation and universalization, facilitated by the ICTs and procuring a more equitable distribution of wealth as a result of interaction between members.

In other to guarantee that the three pillars of sustainable development are respected, we should think in another modality that represents an economic solution towards the economic and social optimum by the time maximum universalization and democratisation of the activity is ensured: Cooperative tourism.

The hidden face of what's exposed above is that collaborative tourism seeks the ideal setting to guarantee an authentic, genuine and intimate experience by meeting the smart traveller needs.

In this sense, the expert tourist, who is defined by being intrinsically interested in a cultural immersion by the hand of local people, and subsequently the alternative tourism modality itself, consolidates as a clear evidence of the possibility of transcending the traditional, obsolete tourist model only if there's a democratisation and universalization of culture and technology, which has not yet taken place.

Although the concept of exchange has political connotations with the ideologies of socialism, and its communist cooperative movement known as associationism, as well as certain brushstrokes of anarchism with the free culture movement and digital common goods, it is impossible to overlook

that the term is redefined through technology and common digital assets by the time free culture is claimed, floating as the guarantee of social welfare in the current context of the information society.

Thus, we can conclude that although responsible tourism is the will of an increasing number of travellers who are conscious about eco-consumption, the jump towards a more sustainable tourism model will only occur if there is a change towards a society conformed by members who prefer to pay to access to a specific service instead of owning a certain good.

6.2. Limitations and Ongoing Issues

The main limitation of the current study is that the intentional sample corresponds to the ambassadors group and that label itself can be considered a bias, in the sense that an experienced member who deserve this category must be verified by more antique ambassadors as well as by the organisation itself to become a referent for the whole community and we didn't have direct access to the requirements that Couchsurfing requires.

Further research is need in order to collect qualitative data to discern the particular implications of this tourism modality and specifically, how the practice of sharing tourism affects the sustainability of a neighbourhood.

More data is needed to undertake a comparative analysis between the countries that responsible tourists prefer to visit in relation to the OMT worldwide tourism barometer data.

Finally, and regarding to methodology, a detailed study of the correlation between the different variables is an ongoing issue.

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