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Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity

Exploring the Influence of Logics and Motivations

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Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity
Exploring the Influence of Logics and Motivations

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*« La patience est un arbre dont les racines sont amères
mais les fruits délicieux »*

Abdulaye Diop, Daha Diallo & Eddy Balemba

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« La concertation ne laboure pas le champ, mais permet de trouver des solutions. »

Maxime africaine, Tiraogo Maxime Ily.

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Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity

Exploring the Influence of Logics and Motivations

Abstract

Our societies face increasingly critical social and environmental challenges. Numerous initiatives have emerged to address these issues, including one aimed at reconciling social and environmental missions through economic activities: sustainable entrepreneurship. This hybrid entrepreneurial model relies on a delicate equilibrium.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to understanding the influences of logics and motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs, along with the management strategies they employ within their organizations to ensure a balance across different dimensions of sustainability. To achieve this, we employed various qualitative methodological approaches based on the theory of justification, motivation theories, sustainability tension theories and the theory of hybrid organizing. Our study focused on entrepreneurs in ecotourism in the South of Benin. This endeavor aims to enrich the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity.

Our findings shed light on mission lock-in, motivations and demotivations of sustainable entrepreneurs, as well as how sustainable entrepreneurs manage their hybridity, supported by local communities or spiritual approaches. Firstly, we identified three forms of mission lock-in: social, environmental, and dual, and we analyzed the guardrails and motivations limiting or preventing mission lock-in. Secondly, we developed a comprehensive framework of motivations and demotivations among sustainable entrepreneurs. Our exploration of interactions between motivations and demotivations related to the three dimensions of sustainability revealed that certain motivations can be instrumental, linked to a final motivation in another dimension. Furthermore, demotivations were primarily other-oriented, except for lower income concerns. Finally, our study on managing sustainability-related tensions reveals diverse strategies that impact organizational hybridity. In Benin, where community involvement and spirituality are pivotal, these elements provide unique solutions for managing tensions. Leveraging community-based and spiritual management practices, sustainable entrepreneurs have developed innovative organizational strategies that help maintain a balance between social and environmental objectives, thus supporting the hybrid nature of their enterprises.

These findings offer valuable insights for sustainable entrepreneurs and their stakeholders. While sustaining the hybridity balance in sustainable entrepreneurship is challenging, a deeper comprehension of the underlying mechanisms can equip them with innovative perspectives to address our society's numerous challenges.

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General Introduction

“Where rivers meet, the waters are never calm”

Ugandan proverb.

The encounter between different worlds generates hybridity, which can be a source of great complexity but also incredible richness. At the intersection of business, environmental NGOs, and/or social NGOs, sustainable entrepreneurship simultaneously combines the complexity of synergies found in environmental entrepreneurship (Vedula, Doblinger, Pacheco, York, Bacq, et al., 2022) and trade-offs present in social entrepreneurship (Vedula et al., 2022).

Sustainable entrepreneurs must navigate conflicting logics while maintaining essential entrepreneurial activities crucial for their financial sustainability. Their hybridity is threatened by both mission drift (Copestake, 2007; Cornforth, 2014; Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2019) and mission lock-in (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens, Kerstens, Bruneel, & Cherchye, 2019). Mission drift occurs when a sustainable entrepreneur tends to overlook the mission in favor of the economic dimension. Conversely, mission lock-in arises when a sustainable entrepreneur devotes all attention and efforts solely to the mission, neglecting the economic dimension. In this scenario, there is a risk of jeopardizing the continuity of their sustainable enterprise, which could lead to bankruptcy. While the first risk is well documented in literature, the latter remains relatively unknown to researchers.

To sustain hybridity and avoid the pitfalls of mission drift, sustainable entrepreneurs must be driven by significant prosocial motivation (Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezcua, 2013; Omoredede, 2014; Vedula et al., 2022). We can also presume that other motivations may play a role in maintaining hybridity. However, these motivations have yet to be extensively studied. Moreover, while literature has focused on exploring the challenges between social and economic dimensions on one hand, and between environmental and economic dimensions on the other (Vedula et al., 2022), the issues concerning the intersection between the social and environmental dimensions offer unexplored research avenues.

While some sustainable entrepreneurs persevere in maintaining balance, others may face mission drift, mission lock-in, or even abandon their activities. These phenomena cannot be solely explained by a lack of motivation; it is plausible that demotivations could influence their actions. Investigating demotivations and their interactions with motivations provides interesting and unexplored research perspectives.

Subsequently, tensions between societal and economic concerns manifest at various levels within sustainable enterprises (Battilana & Lee, 2014). Sustainable entrepreneurs must establish organizational modes that sustain hybridity. These strategies will vary depending on the organizational context. In the Beninese context, characterized by the

significance of the community and spirituality, sustainable entrepreneurs can leverage these cultural specificities to implement an African approach to managing hybridity within their organization.

This thesis aims to enhance comprehension of the impacts of logics and motivations on sustainable entrepreneurs, exploring their organizational management strategies to achieve equilibrium across diverse sustainability dimensions. The central research question is 'How do sustainable entrepreneurs manage trade-offs and synergies within the three sustainability dimensions and strive for their own equilibrium?' The three articles of this thesis aim to provide answers to this question. Before delving into the details of the three articles, we will present the general framework of the thesis. We will commence our theoretical framework by defining and differentiating sustainable entrepreneurship from other forms of entrepreneurship for the common good. Subsequently, we will present the intrinsic hybridity of sustainable entrepreneurship and its implications at individual, organizational, and institutional levels. This will lead us to delve deeper into our research design.

1. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this thesis revolves around hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship studied at various levels. Therefore, we built the theoretical framework around sustainable entrepreneurship and hybridity.

1.1. Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Our world is facing multiple crises. The loss of biodiversity has reached such a rate that, according to researchers, we are witnessing the sixth mass extinction (Ceballos, Ehrlich, et Raven 2020). Extreme events due to climate change are more and more frequent (IPPC, 2021). Air pollution is also responsible for at least 8 million deaths each year (WHO 2016). The little progress on the Sustainable Development Goals booked before 2020 has been wiped out by the COVID crisis (United Nations 2021).

Traditional solutions to those complex environmental and social issues appear ineffective (Hockerts 2017; Vuorio, Puumalainen, et Fellnhofer 2018). This has spurred the emergence of corporate social responsibilities or corporate sustainability in enterprises (Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge, 2015), but also the emergence of distinct entrepreneur types: social entrepreneurs (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011), environmental entrepreneurs (sometimes termed as ecopreneurs) (Hörisch, Kollat, & Brieger, 2017; Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002; Thompson, Kiefer, & York, 2011; York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016), and sustainable entrepreneurs (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer, & Salignac, 2021; Cohen & Winn, 2007; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Parrish & Tilley, 2010; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Vuorio, Puumalainen, & Fellnhofer, 2018). Over the past two decades, a growing body of literature has focused on these entrepreneurial categories, collectively falling under the umbrella term 'entrepreneurship for the public good' (Vedula et al., 2022). It is important to define and

differentiate these various types of entrepreneurship and delineate their scopes. In social sciences, constructing distinct definitions is crucial to demarcate one concept from another, enabling researchers to clearly identify what they are studying (Hodgson, 2019). We have outlined a framework (figure 1) that situates sustainable entrepreneurship among these different concepts.

The organization's mission plays a pivotal role as it “serves as a socio-cognitive bridge between its identity and its actions by specifying why the organization should exist and how it should act (i.e. purpose)” (Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2020, p. 235). Understanding the mission is crucial to distinguishing between different forms of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship contributes positively to society, including job creation, yet its primary mission often remains profit-focused (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2012). In contrast, within a CSR or Corporate Sustainability framework, entrepreneurs may adopt practices that exceed the minimum legal requirements from social and environmental perspectives (Bacq, Hartog, & Hoogendoorn, 2016). However, these practices typically do not alter the core business model or the fundamental profit-driven mission of the organization.

Social entrepreneurship refers to the entrepreneurial process aimed at generating social wealth for the society (Vedula et al., 2022; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). It involves a combination of a social mission and economic activities (Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

Environmental entrepreneurship, on the other hand, entails the entrepreneurial process directed at addressing environmental issues (Schaltegger, 2002; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Schaper, 2002; Thompson et al., 2011; York et al., 2016).

Sustainable entrepreneurship resides at the intersection of these two entrepreneurial forms, seeking to simultaneously address both social and environmental missions. The sustainable entrepreneur can be defined as one who holistically integrates the goals of economic, social and environmental entrepreneurship into an organization that is sustainable in its goal and sustainable in its form of wealth generation (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Parrish & Tilley, 2010). Sustainable entrepreneurship is characterized by the pursuit of ‘social, economic, and environmental objectives in a systemic fashion’ (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018).

Among these different concepts, depending on the venture's mission, we can expect to observe various logics and dynamics. Addressing simultaneously social and environmental issues differs from social entrepreneurship and environmental entrepreneurship individually (Thompson et al., 2011).

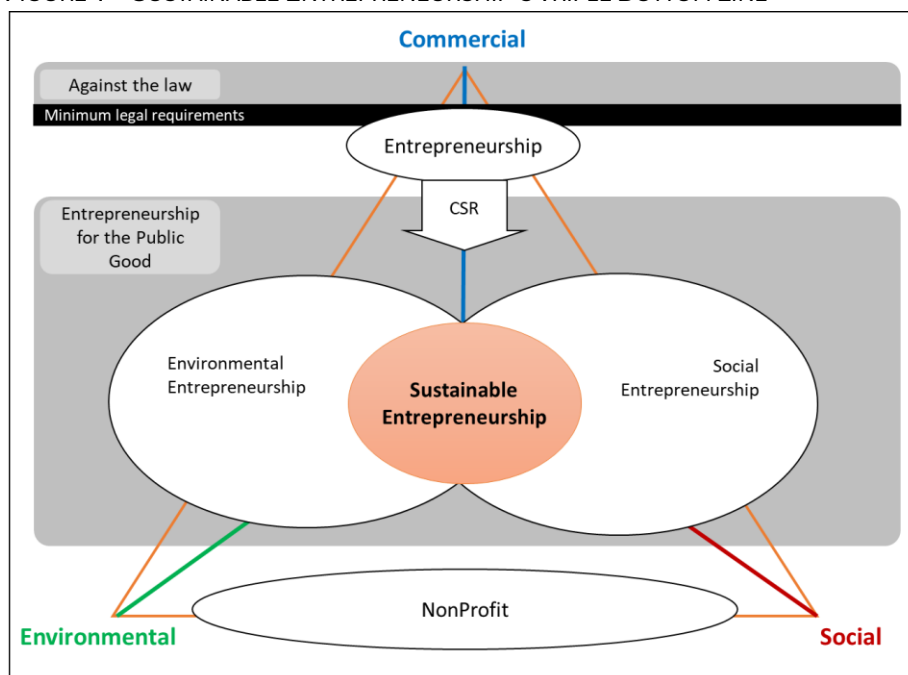
An entrepreneur might have a social mission, be identified as a social entrepreneur, and attempt to minimize the negative environmental impact without specifically making it a mission or core business. However, this does not ensure that this social entrepreneur effectively acts to preserve the environment. We could even further extend the

reasoning and envision a social entrepreneur who overlooks the environmental dimension and generates a negative impact on the environment.

On the other hand, an environmental entrepreneur who has defined an environmental mission might uphold workers' rights without taking any further action on the social aspect. Nonetheless, this does not guarantee that this environmental entrepreneur effectively contributes to supporting communities or generating social impacts for individuals (Shepherd, 2011). Here also, we could push the reasoning even further by imagining an environmental entrepreneur who meets the definition as they have an environmental mission and engage in economic activities. However, this entrepreneur might overexploit workers without ensuring decent working conditions or adhering to the local minimum wage.

While research in social entrepreneurship tends to demonstrate the presence of trade-offs between social and commercial dimensions, and synergies between economic and environmental dimensions in environmental entrepreneurship, the literature currently sheds no light on potential trade-offs or synergies between social and environmental dimensions in an entrepreneurial process. The concept of sustainable entrepreneurship is the only one that allows the study of dynamics and phenomena along this axis. The sustainable entrepreneur will have chosen a mission that targets both environmental and social issues. One of the objectives of our research is to understand what happens when these two dimensions collide.

FIGURE 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP'S TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE



The boundaries between these different concepts can be tenuous (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019). For example, a venture consistently implementing CSR-type measures may closely resemble a sustainable enterprise seemingly prioritizing economic goals at the expense of its social mission—a phenomenon known as mission drift (Cornforth, 2014; Grimes et al., 2019, 2019; Varendh-Mansson, Wry, & Szafarz, 2020). Should an

entrepreneur embed sustainability principles into the core of its venture's mission, it would qualify as in the scope of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Our research focuses on sustainable entrepreneurs and their hybrid organizations. To be included in our study, organizations must exemplify an ideal type, integrating both social and environmental objectives within their mission, and engage in commercial activities that directly support these missions. Therefore, we exclude companies primarily driven by profit, even if they adopt CSR policies. Our study also omits organizations solely dedicated to social (social entrepreneurship) or environmental (environmental entrepreneurship) missions, as well as NGOs lacking commercial activities and relying exclusively on donor funding. This selection criteria ensure that our research captures the dynamic processes entrepreneurs employ to recognize, develop, and leverage opportunities within the framework of sustainable entrepreneurship.

1.2. Hybrid Nature of Sustainable Entrepreneurship

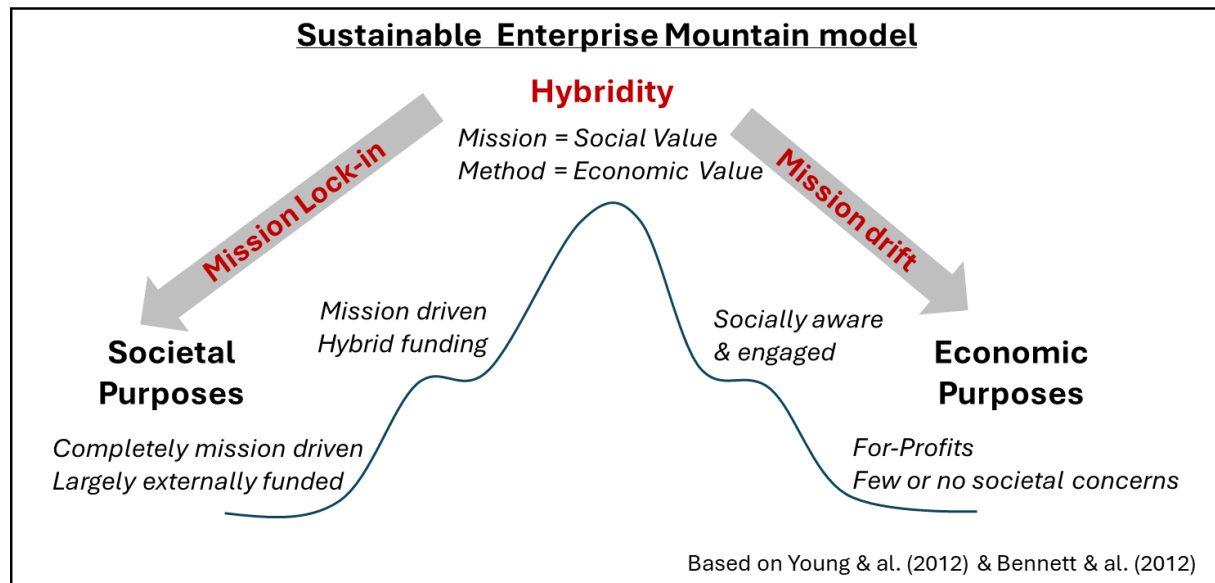
Sustainable entrepreneurs manage hybrid ventures, which are described in the literature as ventures that exploit opportunities to create multiple distinct forms of value simultaneously (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012; Moss, Short, Payne, & Lumpkin, 2011). Hybrid enterprises rely on at least “two different sectoral paradigms, logics and value systems” (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014) to make decisions. As sustainable entrepreneurs must reconcile multiple objectives related to the three dimensions of sustainability, they fit perfectly within the literature dedicated to hybrid enterprises. However, few researchers have explored hybridity in the context of sustainable entrepreneurship and its triple bottom line (Parrish & Tilley, 2010).

The literature review by Vedula et al. (2022) highlighted that environmental entrepreneurship research has predominantly focused on the synergies between environmental and economic dimensions, while social entrepreneurship literature has primarily examined trade-offs between social and economic dimensions. Nevertheless, these synergies and trade-offs might arise among each dimension, including between the social and environmental dimensions. Our thesis falls within the framework of studying the trade-offs and synergies among the three dimensions of sustainability.

Sustainable enterprises face tensions that jeopardize their equilibrium and, consequently, their hybrid nature. (Bennett, Gregory, Leaver, & Ramirez, 2012; Young, Kerlin, Teasdale, Soh, Kickul, et al., 2012) employ the metaphor of a mountain (see Figure 2 – Sustainable Enterprise Mountain Model). Hybrid sustainable enterprises are in a relatively unstable equilibrium position, where multiple influences drive them either toward the valley of societal purposes or into the valley of economic purposes. In the former case, sustainable entrepreneurs are so deeply committed to their missions that they overlook economic aspects, potentially endangering the organization's survival. This phenomenon, known as mission lock-in (Copestake, 2007; Staessens et al., 2019), remains relatively underexplored in the literature, especially regarding the potential confrontation between social and environmental missions. This thesis tackles these challenges. In the latter case, sustainable enterprises prioritize economic activities over

their societal missions, which is called mission drift (Cornforth, 2014; Grimes et al., 2019; Varendh-Mansson et al., 2020). Consequently, they risk losing sight of their *raison d'être*, namely their societal missions. While some research has focused on this phenomenon, defining the threshold at which a sustainable enterprise drifts remains challenging. By prioritizing the economic aspect, sustainable entrepreneurs may generate a greater positive impact on their society as they grow and support more societal projects, even if they are less ambitious (Staessens et al., 2019).

FIGURE 2 – SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE MOUNTAIN MODEL



The complexity of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship is compounded by gray areas and a dynamic component. On one hand, the boundaries between sustainable enterprises and conventional businesses or NGOs are not clearly defined. (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019) conducted a literature review to delineate these boundaries, yet it remains a complex exercise influenced by numerous contextual factors. On the other hand, the balance between these different realms evolves over time. De Bernardi & Arenas (2022) liken it to a pendulum swinging between societal and economic realms.

Moreover, a debate exists in the literature between mission change and strategic change. As the concept of mission is pivotal in understanding sustainable entrepreneurship, we will briefly elaborate on this debate.

Recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about the concept and the scope of 'mission' (Grimes et al., 2020; Varendh-Mansson et al., 2020). The organization's mission "serves as a socio-cognitive bridge between its identity and its actions by specifying why the organization should exist and how it should act (i.e., purpose), thereby focusing members' attention and intentions in such a way that actions proceed from identity" (Grimes et al., 2019). Varendh-Mansson et al. (2020) describe three types of organizational missions: singular, segregated (multiple missions in different operating units), and integrated (multiple missions into a coherent whole). In their debate Varendh-Mansson et al. (2020) and Grimes et al. (2020) agree on the need

to clarify the nature of organizational mission(s) and how those missions “increase alignment between organizational actions and organizational identities”.

An important distinction must be made between strategic change and mission drift, although the two concepts may be interdependent (Grimes et al., 2020; Varendh-Mansson et al., 2020). Strategic change could lead to mission drift if the resulting actions are not aligned anymore to the organization’s identity and perceived as deviating from that identity by stakeholders (Grimes et al., 2020). Authenticity could help social enterprises prevent losing balance between the societal and the financial goals (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022). Moreover, detecting mission drift is complicated as organizations prioritizing economic objectives do not necessarily show decreased social performance (Staessens et al., 2019). On the contrary, improved economic value creation can be used to reinforce social performance (Dacin et al., 2011; Staessens et al., 2019).

2. Research Design

Our research design encompasses several key components: research epistemology, research methodology, objectives and questions, research context, data collection, and selected case studies.

2.1. Research Epistemology

Defining my epistemological point of view is complicated. On the one hand, I am subject to many influences: the expectations of journals, the habits of my research community, and the recognized methods of reference articles. On the other hand, to provide maximum rigor, I have multiplied and diversified research approaches. The approach was abductive, with a lot of back-and-forth between field and theory. In all the papers, I adopted an interpretivist approach, using an ethnographic method and I grasped entrepreneurial life stories (Muñoz, Cacciotti, & Cohen, 2018; Reypens, Bacq, & Milanov, 2021; Yanow & Ybema, 2009), observations and collected additional documentation. Furthermore, specifically in the first paper on Mission Lock-In, I chose to use the same utilitarian approach to Boltanski & Thévenot’s convention theory, following what Patriotta et al. (2011) had mobilized in their research published in a good journal. The aim was to be able to quantify the orientation of sustainable entrepreneurs’ logics in terms of the shared worlds to which they appeal - without naming them. Finally, I went back to an interpretivist approach using ‘thick descriptions’ (Gavard-Perret, Gotteland, Haon, & Jolibert, 2012) to give the reader an understanding of how the data was mobilized.

Defining my epistemological standpoint is a multifaceted task. I grapple with various influences: the expectations set by academic journals, the conventions within my research community, and the methodologies adopted by prominent articles in the field. To ensure rigor, I diversified my research approaches, employing an abductive method that oscillated between empirical fieldwork and theoretical underpinnings. Across all

papers, I embraced an interpretivist lens, utilizing ethnographic methods to capture entrepreneurial narratives (Muñoz et al., 2018; Reypens et al., 2021; Yanow & Ybema, 2009), conducting observations, and gathering supplementary documentation.

Specifically, in the first paper on Mission Lock-In, I also opted for a utilitarian approach inspired by Boltanski & Thévenot's convention theory, aligning with the method utilized by Patriotta et al. (2011). This approach aimed to quantitatively gauge the alignment of sustainable entrepreneurs' logics with the shared worldviews they invoke, without explicitly labeling them. Ultimately, I reverted to an interpretivist approach employing 'thick descriptions' (Gavard-Perret et al., 2012) to provide readers with an in-depth understanding of how the data was utilized.

2.2. Research Approach, Questions, and Methods

Hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship thus presents an intriguing area of study that can be approached in various and diverse ways. From our initial interactions with the ecotourism sector in Benin, we observed that the balance between environmental, social, and economic missions offers interesting research opportunities. We quickly became interested in understanding what influences the hybridity of sustainable entrepreneurs and how they manage to maintain this hybridity within their organizations.

Understanding the entrepreneurial process can prove to be a complicated task as it is not linear (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Elfving, 2009) and evolves over time (Parrish & Tilley, 2010; Sarasvathy, 2004). Moreover, these evolutions are particularly evident in hybrid contexts (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012). Therefore, to capture this complexity, we chose a longitudinal approach for our study.

As the study of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship is an emerging research topic, it requires a tailored approach to build a robust theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Therefore, we opted for an inductive multiple-case research design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens et al., 2021). Our research began with a broad interest in hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship at various levels (individual, organizational, and institutional). As data collection progressed, we identified research opportunities. Initially, we aimed to analyze the logics of sustainable entrepreneurs by employing Boltanski and Thévenot's theory of Justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Thévenot, Moody, & Lafaye, 2000) and we identified a unique opportunity to study various forms of mission lock-in. Then, observing that some sustainable entrepreneurs persisted while others tended to abandon all or part of their sustainable entrepreneurship activities, we decided to study the motivations and demotivations of sustainable entrepreneurs. Finally, as certain organizational practices seemed underrepresented in the literature and particularly suited to the cultural context, we wanted to investigate them.

These various reflections shed light on hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship. Table 1 includes the titles of the three thesis articles along with their respective research questions.

TABLE 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP HYBRIDITY – THESIS OVERVIEW

Title	Research Questions
Thesis	
Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity - Exploring the Influence of Logics and Motivations	- How do sustainable entrepreneurs manage tensions within the three sustainability dimensions and strive for their own equilibrium?
Article 1 – Individual level	- How do sustainable entrepreneurs navigate the potentially conflicting economic, social, and environmental logics that undergird their activities?
Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity: A justification Approach to Mission Lock-In	- How do those logics potentially affect both opportunity exploration and the risk of a venture veering towards of Mission Lock-In?
Article 2 – Individual level	- What motivates sustainable entrepreneurs to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career?
Exploring Motivation and Demotivation in Sustainable Entrepreneurship	- What demotivates sustainable entrepreneurs? - How do conflicting or complementary social and/or green motivating and de-motivating factors interact?
Article 3 – Organization level	- What are the inherent tensions in hybridity that arise from the intersection of environmental, social, and commercial dimensions?
Managing the tensions of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship – African approaches	- How are these tensions managed by sustainable entrepreneurs? - What are the management modes of these tensions specific to the socio-cultural context of Southern Benin?

2.3. Research context: the ecotourism sector in Southern Benin

To achieve our research objectives, we needed a study setting where environmental and social missions intersect with economic activities (Anand 2021). We quickly identified the ecotourism sector as an ideal context, as ecotourism businesses uniquely combine social missions towards surrounding communities, environmental missions for conservation, and economic activities through hosting tourists (Swan & Morgan, 2016).

As part of my duties at ICHEC Brussels Management School, I frequently travel to Africa for intercultural exchange projects and research endeavors. The African context represents an excellent research opportunity, as most studies on sustainable entrepreneurship have so far concentrated on European and North American contexts, which should not be generalized to other settings (Anand et al. 2021). Moreover, on the African continent, the few existing studies have focused on English-speaking countries. Given that French-speaking African countries are considerably under-researched in the literature, and to facilitate our data collection (as French is my native language), I identified several potential countries where ICHEC has partnerships: Burkina Faso,

Benin, Senegal, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We had to rule out Burkina Faso as tourism in the country is primarily state-managed, and thus we were unable to engage with sustainable entrepreneurs in this sector. In Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, we found only a few initiatives related to ecotourism. In contrast, Benin offered an ideal study field as about fifteen local entrepreneurs are developing ecotourism initiatives, and most of them are part of the Beninese Federation of Responsible and Solidarity Tourism Organizations. This convinced us to focus our study on the ecotourism sector in Benin.

Benin is a West African country bordered by Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Originally, its territory was occupied by several kingdoms, including the Kingdom of Dahomey situated in Abomey. Its history is marked by the slave trade and the palm oil trade. Despite the resistance led by King Béhanzin, the country fell under French protectorate. Tourist attractions have been developed around this rich history, which spans from various kingdoms, through the era of slavery, and culminating in the resistance against French colonization. Following colonization, in 1960, the country gained independence under the name Dahomey. During the Marxist period, the Republic of Dahomey was renamed the People's Republic of Bénin. Presently, the country is a democracy witnessing peaceful political alternation, although tensions persist between the ruling party and the opposition. Its current economy relies predominantly on the cotton sector and import export through the port of Cotonou, which supplies landlocked countries such as Burkina Faso and Niger.

In recent years, Benin has been endeavoring to boost its tourism sector through streamlined administrative processes (E-Visa), the expansion of its airport, and the construction of infrastructure such as roads, sea dams, and hotel facilities. However, some of these projects have faced criticism from certain sectors of Benin's civil society due to the expropriation of fishing communities or the destruction of ecosystems involved.

The strategic choice to invest in tourism is based on certain strengths of Benin. The country relies on various touristic attractions, including natural reserves (Pendjari and W parks) in the northern part of the country, as well as diverse touristic sites in the southern coastal region that showcase the history associated with the slave trade and the Vodoun culture.

However, this choice can be risky due to the sector's volatility, as recent history has demonstrated. In 2014-2015, certain West African countries were struck by the Ebola crisis, primarily affecting Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Although Benin was not affected by the disease, tourism stakeholders observed a significant decrease in the number of visitors. Additionally, security tensions emerged due to the threat of Islamist terrorist movements in neighboring countries (Boko Haram in Nigeria and other Islamist groups in Sahelian countries like Burkina Faso or Niger). Although Benin faced minimal exposure to the terrorist threat, solely in the northern region, stakeholders in the southern part of the country also witnessed a decline in tourism. Lastly, the COVID-19 crisis had a global impact on the tourism sector, affecting Benin as well.

In observance of World Responsible Tourism Day in Benin in 2008, six organizations established the Beninese Federation of Responsible and Solidarity Tourism Organizations (FBO-TRS). Over time, certain members exited the federation while others joined. FBO-TRS is tasked with advancing responsible and solidarity tourism development in Benin, advocating and lobbying for the promotion of responsible tourism, crafting criteria for the practice of such tourism, and advocating for the certification of local destinations while fostering collaborations with external stakeholders (“La Fédération Béninoise des Organisations du Tourisme Responsable et Solidaire (FBO-TRS),” 2009). Member involvement levels vary; some actively promote the federation and the activities of fellow members, while others participate only in the annual meeting. Regardless of their level of engagement within FBO-TRS, most ecotourism stakeholders in Benin maintain contact and nurture coopetition relationships marked by both competition and cooperation. On one hand, they compete to attract clients, funding, or investors. On the other hand, we have observed different forms of mutual assistance. Some projects have been jointly undertaken by different stakeholders, and they have also shared crucial information to secure funding or clients.

Thanks to privileged contacts with a former president of the FBO-TRS (Fédération Béninoise des Organisations de Tourisme Responsable et Solidaire), we were able to establish connections with most of the key players in the ecotourism sector. The remaining actors were approached through more traditional channels: email, social media, and telephone.

2.4. Case Studies

We limited the scope of our research to the southern part of Benin. This region provides a relatively uniform landscape for studying sustainable entrepreneurs in ecotourism, as it minimizes variations due to environmental factors (Reypens et al., 2021; Zott & Huy, 2007). Indeed, from cultural, geographical, and economic perspectives, including the proximity to the coast and airport, the various sustainable entrepreneurs in this region are operating within a similar context.

At the beginning of our research, we contacted all the entrepreneurs in the ecotourism sector, starting with those from the FBO-TRS and then expanding our list through interviews with tourists and other entrepreneurs in the sector. In 2017 and 2018, we interviewed 11 entrepreneurs managing ecotourism organizations. Subsequently, we narrowed our sample to sustainable entrepreneurs who were available for at least three rounds of interviews. Thus, we identified 7 active or starting entrepreneurs in ecotourism. In analyzing our data, we noticed variance in the hybrid profiles of these entrepreneurs. Some are active, and their organizations are growing. Others seem to be facing mission drift or, conversely, mission lock-in. Finally, we have one entrepreneur who wants to start but encounters significant difficulties in doing so.

TABLE 2 – OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Ecotourism entrepreneur Anonymized	Founding Year	Publicized Mission Statement	Informants	Relevant archival data sources
Emile	1999	The promotion of ecotourism and local development projects throughout Benin, for a responsible, fair and solidarity human development.	1 Founder, 2 managers, 3 European trainees, 2 employees, 1 client	Website, social media, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Charles	2005	To contribute to the emergence of a generation of "world citizens" able to propose and/or implement local and sustainable solutions for a human development respectful of Nature.	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 5 European trainees, 4 employees, 10+ clients	Website, social media, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Patrice	1995	To contribute to the regeneration, preservation and enhancement of natural ecosystems, and the whole well-being of populations in Benin.	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 1 manager, 2 employees, 3 members of the community, 10+ clients	Website, social media, reports, informational billboard, leaflet
Greg	1996	To transmit an environmental conscience to the populations through information, education, sensitization, and awareness especially in schools through environmental clubs	1 Founder, 2 managers, 2 employees, 1 social partner, 4 clients	Website, social media, online articles, informational billboard, leaflet
Nicolas	1995	To promote the conservation and rational use of biological diversity, through information, education, and sensitization of the various actors and especially of the youth.	1 Founder, 1 manager, 3 employees, 10+ clients	Website, social media, documentary film, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Simon	1996	Through its associative and cultural approach, it proposes a more equitable tourism which is closer to the population and its traditions	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 2 employees, 2 clients	Website, leaflet, Statutes
Arnaud	2004	Struggle for development through education for peace and training, production and transformation while integrating environmental factors	1 Founder	Leaflet, Social media (LinkedIn)

In the first article focusing on the logics of sustainable entrepreneurs, we concentrate on the first six entrepreneurs listed in the table. We excluded Arnaud, who did not have significant ecotourism activities (less than five tourists or tourist groups per year). In the second article, which addresses their motivations and demotivations, we included all case studies. Indeed, Arnaud's case provides insight into an entrepreneur for whom demotivating factors prevail over motivating factors. Finally, for the article on hybrid organization, we selected only those sustainable entrepreneurs who seem to partially or fully reconcile social, environmental (at least one social and environmental project conducted per year), and economic missions (at least five tourists or tourist groups per year). Therefore, we excluded Simon and Arnaud. Table 3 provides an overview of their activities and the main characteristics of their sustainable businesses.

TABLE 3 – SELECTED CASE STUDIES PROFILES

Organization of	Arnaud	Simon	Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas
Venture Goal/mission	Altruism Address ecological issues						
Mission	Agriculture and sustainable development Fight against poverty (agriculture, environment, water and local development)	Promotion of fair tourism closer to population and traditions	Promotion of Ecotourism and local development projects for a human responsible, fair and solidary development	Local and sustainable solutions for a human development respectful of nature.	Preservation of natural ecosystems and integral fulfillment of human being	Raise environmental consciousness through information, education, and awareness	Preservation of the nature through information, education and awareness
Opportunities Exploited	• Blended	• Commercial	• Blended • Green & Social • Commercial	• Blended • Green & Social	• Social & Green • Social • Blended	• Social & Green • Social	• Green • Green & Commercial • Green & Social
Activities	• Low/no level of activities : Few trainees welcomed.	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits between different ecotourism attractions and transportation between these places • Intercultural trip	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits, catering, accommodation and conference facilities • Creation of Eco touristic circuits for the community development and biodiversity preservation. • Carbon offset project: reforestation and improved stoves • Tourism trainings • Consulting	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits, catering and accommodation • Creation of ecotourism circuits to benefit a community and preserve biodiversity • Animal reserve • Sustainable agriculture • Education in citizenship and environmental awareness	• Ecotourism: accommodation, catering and organization of circuits • Farm school – Sustainable agriculture • Educational (reinforcement) and cultural center for young people • Radio broadcasts to raise environmental awareness • Raising awareness of environmental preservation • Community and/or environmental projects	• Ecotourism : organization of circuits • Community awareness of nature conservation and spirituality • Intercultural and inter-generational dialogues • Support of indigenous peoples for the conservation of their territories • Volunteer tourism	• Ecotourism : organization of circuits • Organization of whale-watching tours • Museum : environmental education center • Awareness campaigns within communities • Anti-poaching actions • Production of nature awareness TV programs • Forthcoming: Museum of waxworks of famous and historical figures
Financial Sources	• Call for projects	• Tourism (Ecotourism Circuits, tour operator) • Occasional personal donations	• Call for projects • Tourism and consulting • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Tourism (Rooms, restaurant & bar) • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Tourism (Rooms, restaurant & bar) • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Mostly local tourism to raise awareness. • Ecotourism (limited)	• Call for projects • Tourism • Ecotourism
Share of ecotourism activities	Very low	Only ecotourism	High	Medium	Only ecotourism	Low-Medium	Only ecotourism
Non-Ecotourism professional activities	• Consulting • Academics	None	• Consulting	• Fish farming • Consulting	None	• Local public administration • Support of orphanages	None

2.5. Data collection

To collect data, we conducted over 72 semi-structured interviews in French with sustainable entrepreneurs. We then triangulated the data by also collecting a maximum amount of information, including all available documentation in paper or electronic format. We also conducted numerous interviews with internal and external stakeholders: managers, employees, interns, beneficiaries, community members, tourists, and other ecotourism entrepreneurs. We finalized our data collection with on-

site observations. Table 4 provides an overview of the interviews with sustainable entrepreneurs.

TABLE 4 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS INTERVIEWS

	Round	Patrice	Charles	Emile	Greg	Nicolas	Simon	Arnaud	
Exploratory	2015 July	0 h 14 m							0 h 14 m
	2016 July	3 h 18 m							3 h 18 m
2017 Life stories Entrepreneurs	2017 February	10 h 50 m							10 h 50 m
	2017 September	4 h 41 m	2 h 30 m	2 h 34 m	2 h 54 m	3 h 04 m	5 h 34 m	2 h 21 m	21 h 18 m
	2018 February	5 h 35 m	1 h 10 m		1 h 12 m	4 h 49 m		2 h 41 m	12 h 47 m
2018-2019 Follow-up interviews	2018 March			2 h 06 m					2 h 06 m
	2018 September	3 h 28 m	1 h 57 m	2 h 12 m	2 h 21 m	2 h 50 m	4 h 35 m		17 h 25 m
	2019 February	1 h 05 m	6 h 34 m	2 h 05 m		7 h 37 m	2 h 37 m		20 h 01 m
2020-2021-2022 Follow-up interviews and Opportunities	2020 February	3 h 24 m	11 h 58 m	5 h 44 m	9 h 54 m	6 h 37 m	4 h 20 m	3 h 20 m	41 h 59 m
	2021 June	0 h 59 m	0 h 50 m	0 h 56 m	0 h 30 m	0 h 58 m	0 h 43 m		5 h 00 m
	2022 February	1 h 13 m	2 h 11 m	1 h 01 m	1 h 52 m	4 h 27 m	4 h 53 m	0 h 54 m	16 h 34 m
	Total général	34 h 51 m	27 h 13 m	16 h 41 m	18 h 45 m	30 h 25 m	22 h 44 m	9 h 17 m	159 h 58 m

3. A multilevel study of sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity

This thesis comprises three articles that explore hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship from different angles. First, we focused on entrepreneurial engagement from a sustainable perspective. This engagement depends on the actors' decision-making logics and their motivations (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). Furthermore, knowledge and motivation ‘conjointly impact the recognition of opportunities that sustain the natural or communal environment and develop gains for others’ (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

Our first article delves into the logics of sustainable entrepreneurs. Utilizing Boltanski's theory of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Thévenot et al., 2000), we identified the economic, social, and environmental logics of the sustainable entrepreneurs studied. We quantified the significance of these various logics (Patriotta et al., 2011). By also analyzing the pursued opportunities, we identified cases of hybrid sustainable entrepreneurship and a case of mission drift, as well as unique and distinct cases of mission lock-in.

The second article examines the motivational and demotivational factors of sustainable entrepreneurs. We also explored the potential interactions between various motivational factors.

Finally, based on the hybrid organizing model (Battilana & Lee, 2014) and the theory on tensions related to sustainability (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014; Hahn et al., 2015; Ozanne, Phipps, Weaver, Carrington, Luchs, et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015), we sought to understand how sustainable entrepreneurs manage tensions and synergies within their organizations. We analyzed the organizational practices they implemented to maintain the hybridity of their sustainable businesses, and how they mobilized specific community and spirituality approaches.

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Chapter 1 – A Justification Approach to Mission Lock-In

Abstract

While the literature contains numerous insights into mission drift, the phenomenon in which hybrid sustainable entrepreneurs gradually prioritize their economic objectives over their social missions, to date only few studies have investigated the opposite phenomenon of mission lock-in—and none of these studies have explored hybridity in the context of sustainable entrepreneurship specifically. This paper explores how sustainable entrepreneurs navigate the potentially conflicting economic, social, and environmental logics that undergird their activities, and how those logics potentially affect both opportunity exploration and the risk of a venture veering towards of mission lock-in. We also address the lack of exploration of the African context within social and sustainable venture hybridity research by exploring this research topic through longitudinal multiple-case research on ecotourism entrepreneurs in Benin. We identify three distinct forms of mission lock-in (dual, social, and environmental) and we analyze guardrails and motivations limiting or preventing mission lock-in. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for further research and practice alike.

Keywords: Sustainable entrepreneurship, mission lock-in, hybridity, justification theory.

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Introduction

A growing number of environmental crises, such as the accelerating loss of biodiversity (Ceballos, Ehrlich, & Raven, 2020), spread of extreme weather events related to climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018), and intensity of air pollution across the globe, already contribute to millions of deaths each year (WHO, 2016) and will likely pose ever greater threats to humanity in the coming years. In order to address these and other rising social and environmental crises, for at least 15 years (Dean & McMullen, 2007), entrepreneurs have pioneered a new form of entrepreneurship (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer, & Salignac, 2021; Cohen & Winn, 2007) - **sustainable entrepreneurship** - through which they recognize, evaluate, and exploit opportunities to address issues such as environmental threats and disasters while yielding development gains for themselves and others (Muñoz, Janssen, Nicolopoulou, & Hockerts, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). We distinguish sustainable entrepreneurship, which combines a social and an environmental mission, from social entrepreneurship, which focuses mainly on the social mission (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2018), and from environmental entrepreneurship, which primarily targets an environmental mission (York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016).

Sustainable entrepreneurship is inherently associated with the concept of hybridity (Battilana & Lee, 2014a), as entrepreneurs in this field must balance their missions with the imperative to generate revenues. Scholars have studied the dynamics of hybridity in social entrepreneurship in general (Battilana & Lee, 2014a; Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013), and especially how entrepreneurs in this field risk losing sight of their social missions in their efforts to generate revenue—a phenomenon known as *mission drift* (Ebrahim et al., 2014). Conversely, they have shown how social entrepreneurs at times “systematically overemphasize social objectives and lose sight of economic aspects” (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022, p. 2; Staessens et al., 2019, p. 32), a phenomenon known as *mission lock-in*. However, the literature on mission lock-in is less expensive than that on mission drift, and primarily focuses on the interplay between social ventures’ social and economic dimensions (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019), failing to consider ventures’ environmental dimensions. The

literature also does not contain much research on sustainable entrepreneurship specifically (Anand et al., 2021; Davies & Chambers, 2018; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). Thus, we do not fully understand how sustainable entrepreneurs balance potential conflicts between their economic, social, *and* environmental goals; how that hybrid dynamic can evolve over time for ventures; or how and why sustainable enterprises may veer towards social and/or environmental mission lock-in.

This paper addresses these gaps through an in-depth qualitative study of several cases of sustainable ventures that experienced mission lock-in. Building on established approaches to multiple-case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens, Bacq, & Milanov, 2021), we examined six sustainable entrepreneurs active in the ecotourism sector in Benin. Ecotourism entrepreneurs constitute an ideal context for research on these gaps, as they constantly manage three distinct objectives: providing social support for the communities they operate within or neighbor, pursuing environmental preservation, and generating economic gain through transactions with local and international tourists. Specifically, we collected data by conducting 159 hours of semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs and their stakeholders (i.e. their employees, tourists, partners, and neighbors), taking field notes (including pictures), and referencing information on their websites and in other forms of archival materials.

To examine how these entrepreneurs deal with potential conflicts between their three bottom lines goals, we analyzed the way they described and justified their choices to focus on specific goals in given instances in light of Boltanski and Thévenot's theory of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006a). This theory describes principles that actors use to make judgments and take actions that aligns with what they value (Mair, Battilana, & Cardenas, 2012). In our case studies, we expect actors to value the attainment of their social, environmental, and/or economic goals. Thus, analyzing our sources' statements using this theory allows us to describe the underlying logic behind their choice to focus on the social, environmental, and/or economic dimension of their venture at specific moments in their histories. This allows us to investigate the effects of specific logics on sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity, and on the risk of mission lock-in.

Our analyses expand the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity by showing that such ventures don't just have to balance potential tensions between social-versus-economic (Battilana & Lee, 2014a; Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019; Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014a) or environmental-versus-economic goals (Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002), they may also have to navigate tensions between their social-versus-environmental goals. This paper also provides novel empirical information on mission lock-in as a general phenomenon, and identifies three distinct forms of mission lock-in that sustainable entrepreneurs risk moving towards social, environmental, and socio-environmental mission lock-in. We show that sustainable entrepreneurs risk social mission lock-in when they overemphasize their social goals and lose sight of their economic and/or environmental objectives. They risk environmental mission lock-in when they overemphasize their environmental goals and lose sight of their economic aspects and/or social objectives. Finally, they risk dual mission lock-in when they overemphasize their social and environmental goals and lose sight of their economic objectives. Next, we investigate the guardrails and motivations limiting or preventing mission lock-in.

1. Theoretical Background

This paper examines sustainable entrepreneurship by applying the theory of justification alongside an analysis of exploited opportunities. In this section, we synthesize key literature to construct the theoretical framework that underpins our study.

1.1. Hybridity in Sustainable Entrepreneurship

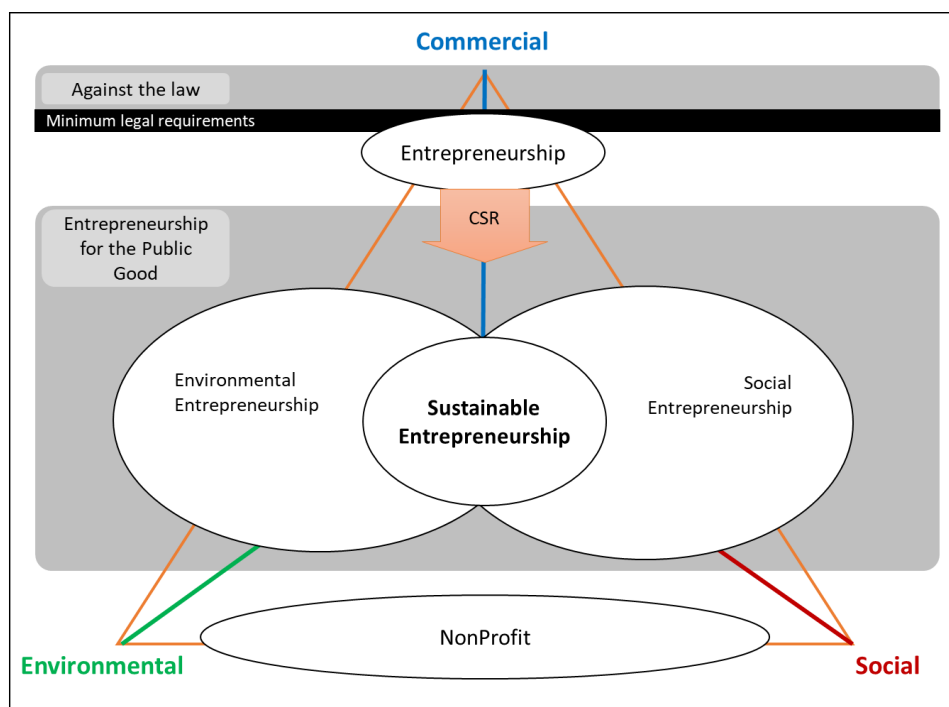
The frontiers between the nonprofit and business sectors are increasingly blurred, necessitating a clear definition of sustainable entrepreneurship and its distinction from hybridity-related concepts like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Corporate Sustainability. Sustainable entrepreneurship fundamentally differs in its core mission, which shapes the organization's purpose and objectives (Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2019, 2020). Within CSR or corporate sustainability contexts, enterprises implement practices designed primarily to avoid harm (Bacq, Hartog, & Hoogendoorn, 2016; Fisscher, Frenkel, Lurie, & Nijhof, 2005). Such practices, while beneficial, typically do not extend beyond legal requirements (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011) to proactively

promote good (Bacq et al., 2016). The overarching goal in these cases remains profit-driven (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2012).

Conversely, entrepreneurs committed to a societal mission participate in what may be termed 'entrepreneurship for the public good' (Vedula, Doblinger, Pacheco, York, Bacq, et al., 2022), which includes social, environmental, and sustainable entrepreneurship. This orientation prioritizes societal benefits over profit, marking a significant shift from traditional business motivations.

Social entrepreneurs pursue not only the general entrepreneurial goal of generating revenue but also specific social missions (e.g. Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Mair & Martí, 2006; Saebi et al., 2018). Another subtype of entrepreneurs, known as *ecopreneurs* (Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002) or environmental entrepreneurs (Thompson, Kiefer, & York, 2011; York et al., 2016) pursue revenue as well as environmental (rather than social) missions. While these ventures are unique in their pursuit of dual objectives, a third subset of entrepreneurs focuses on environmental, social, and revenue-generating goals at once: sustainable entrepreneurs (Anand et al., 2021; Muñoz, Janssen, et al., 2018). Figure 1 depicts the interplay between dimensions of sustainable entrepreneurship.

FIGURE 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP'S TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE



Sustainable entrepreneurs must balance potential conflicts among their three distinct sustainability objectives: the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1997). Those distinct objectives make sustainable entrepreneurship a prime example of hybridity, as hybrid ventures integrate at least 'two different sectoral paradigms, logics, and value systems' to inform their decision-making (Doherty et al., 2014). These ventures exploit opportunities to create multiple, distinct forms of value simultaneously (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012; Moss, Short, Payne, & Lumpkin, 2011). Moreover, sustainability challenges encompass more than isolated dimensions; they also require an understanding of the interactions, negative (“trade-offs”) and positive (“co-benefits”) (Nilsson, Chisholm, Griggs, Howden-Chapman, McCollum, et al., 2018) among social (e.g. food security), environmental (e.g. forest health), and economic factors (e.g. market prices) (Selomane, Reyers, Biggs, & Hamann, 2019). Therefore, the study of sustainable entrepreneurship should not be confined solely to the separate dimensions of the triple bottom line; instead, it requires a holistic approach that encompasses the understanding of how these dimensions interrelate (Nogueira, Gomes, & Lopes, 2023).

While scholars have extensively explored hybrid dynamics within social entrepreneurship over the last decade, focusing particularly on its dual objectives (Anand et al., 2021; Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014a; Doherty et al., 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013), research on hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship and its unique triple bottom line remains limited (Parrish, 2010). Thus, the literature’s insights on hybridity are primarily limited to explorations of how entrepreneurs manage tensions and trade-offs between social missions and revenue-generation imperatives, as well as the synergies between environmental and economic aspects (Vedula et al., 2022).

Research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate sustainability provides valuable insights into managing the various dimensions of sustainability, as well as hybridity dynamics. Four distinct approaches to managing tensions in sustainable entrepreneurship have been identified in the literature: win-win, trade-off, integration, and paradox (Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge, 2015; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). The win-win approach focuses on decisions that yield simultaneous positive impacts on both societal and financial dimensions. In contrast, the trade-off approach involves prioritizing one dimension at the expense of another, leading to a situation where one

dimension 'wins' and the other 'loses'. The integration approach seeks holistic solutions that generate overall benefits across various dimensions. Lastly, the paradoxical approach entails accepting and living with tensions without seeking resolution. This approach involves acting in opposing directions simultaneously (Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge, 2015; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015) 'Paradoxes refer to contradictory yet interrelated demands that persist over time and they require acceptance and continuous efforts at managing them' (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). A paradoxical approach involves prioritizing one dimension at the expense of others while also dynamically shifting focus to prevent stagnation on a single dimension. This strategy ensures that no single aspect of the enterprise's mission permanently dominates, thereby facilitating a balanced approach to managing competing priorities.

However, existing studies provide limited insight into how organizations balance specifically social versus environmental missions, or how they navigate the interplay among the three dimensions of the triple bottom line. In this paper, we aim to comprehensively investigate these three dimensions simultaneously, focusing particularly on their interrelationships.

1.2. Mission Drift and Mission Lock-In

The literature on social entrepreneurship provides extensive analysis of mission drift, defined as "a process of organizational change where an organization diverges from its main purpose or mission" (Cornforth, 2014, p. 4). Often, this drift involves deprioritizing social goals in favor of economic objectives, such as revenue generation (Ometto, Gegenhuber, Winter, & Greenwood, 2019). An example of this might be when a social entrepreneur prioritizes the demands of a paying business client over the needs of the intended social beneficiaries (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, & Kolk, 2015).

Conversely, mission lock-in occurs when social entrepreneurs overly concentrate on their social objectives at the expense of economic viability (Copestake, 2007a; De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). This can lead to inadequate consideration of economic dimensions necessary for organizational survival. The concept of mission lock-in is less explored than mission drift but is recognized as a distinct form of mission change that can detrimentally affect both social and economic

performance in the long term (Copestake, 2007b; De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). Research indicates that neglecting economic goals may initially free resources for enhancing social outcomes; however, it jeopardizes the venture's long-term financial health and viability, thereby undermining the achievement of its social objectives (Battilana, Sengul, Pache, & Model, 2015; Young, Kerlin, Teasdale, Soh, Kickul, et al., 2012a).

Mission drift and mission lock-in have not yet been examined with the integration of the environmental dimension within the context of the triple bottom line. In this study, we address this by employing justification theory to elucidate the logics of sustainable entrepreneurs.

1.3. Theory of Justification

While existing literature explores the general logic behind entrepreneurial decision-making (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013), it lacks depth in explaining how sustainable entrepreneurs navigate decisions that affect their sustainability. The theory of justification offers a promising approach to decode the logics that guide these unique entrepreneurs' decisions (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Mair et al., 2012).

This theory provides “the rationales for choosing a certain course of action” (Mair et al., 2012, p. 356) detailing the principles used to justify actions to others (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006b; Patriotta, Gond, & Schultz, 2011). Boltanski & Thévenot (2006) identified seven “common worlds” – market, civic, green, industrial, domestic, inspired, and fame – each characterized by distinct logics and systematic assessment principles that operate within a shared social space (appendix II) (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006b; Patriotta et al., 2011; Thévenot, Moody, & Lafaye, 2000).

In this study, we focus specifically on three of these worlds due to their relevance to sustainable entrepreneurship. Within the market world (economic), actions are driven by market forces and economic value, where pricing of goods play a central role. The civic world (social) focuses on equality and solidarity, guiding actions towards collective welfare within groups or communities. The green world prioritizes environmental preservation (Mair et al., 2012; Patriotta et al., 2011; Thévenot et al., 2000)

Within the market world, a scarcity of goods and services generates “worth”, and prices serve to evaluate a good’s level of scarcity. Actions justified in terms of the market world thus focus opportunity research and competition. The civic world focuses on collective welfare within groups or communities. Actions justified in terms of the civic world thus focus on equality and solidarity. The green world focuses on the preservation of the environment (Mair et al., 2012; Patriotta et al., 2011; Thévenot et al., 2000).

Each 'world' operates under specific and sometimes conflicting principles. Consequently, individuals navigating multiple worlds may encounter tensions due to these differing logics. This is evident in projects where these worlds intersect and potentially conflict. A notable example discussed by Thévenot et al. (2000) is the Clavey River dam project, which illustrates a clash between the market and green worlds. In this scenario, the market logic suggests that building a dam is the most cost-effective method to meet the increasing demand for electricity. However, this approach conflicts with the environmental logic, which argues against the dam’s construction due to its potential threats to the wilderness and ecosystems of the Clavey River.

Justification theory facilitates the identification of the diverse logics that individuals reference when navigating tensions between different 'worlds.' This is particularly relevant for sustainable entrepreneurs who operate at the intersection of the market, civic, and green worlds. The theory is useful for pinpointing situations where entrepreneurs might prioritize the principles of one world over another. For example, it can reveal cases of 'mission lock-in,' where the focus on civic or green values may dominate over market-driven logics. This application of the theory helps delineate how sustainable entrepreneurs balance or favor certain values, which is crucial for understanding their decision-making processes.

This paper examines how sustainable entrepreneurs manage potential conflicts among their economic, environmental, and social objectives, with a focus on the risk of mission lock-in. Utilizing the theory of justification, this study provides a framework to understand the decision-making processes of these entrepreneurs, particularly how they navigate and reconcile multiple conflicting logics.

2. Method and Cases

2.1. Research Approach

We adopted a longitudinal approach for our study, because the entrepreneurial process is not linear (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Elfving, 2009). Rather, it evolves over time (Parrish, 2010; Sarasvathy, 2004), especially in hybrid contexts (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012).

We used an inductive multiple-case research design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens et al., 2021), as it is the most relevant approach for building robust theory around a nascent research subject (Eisenhardt, 1989), such as sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity. We started our research by exploring the concept of hybridity in sustainable ventures but, once we began our data collection process, we identified a unique opportunity to study mission lock-in as well which remains largely unexplored and poorly understood.

Furthermore, exploring the non-economic dimensions of sustainable entrepreneurship is particularly valuable. While much of the literature on hybrid forms of entrepreneurship has focused on the synergies between environmental and economic aspects, and the tensions between social and economic aspects (Vedula et al., 2022), research at the intersection of social, environmental, and economic dimensions remains nascent. Yet these are central questions when studying the hybridity of these organizations. Additionally, the potential tensions and synergies between social and environmental elements within entrepreneurial dynamics are largely unexplored. The critical interplay between environmental preservation and poverty reduction represents a significant challenge for our societies (Adams, Aveling, Brockington, Dickson, Elliott, et al., 2004; Nilsson et al., 2018; Reyers & Selig, 2020; Selomane et al., 2019; UNDP, 2020), underscoring the importance of further investigation.

2.2. Research Context

Based on previous research (Anand et al., 2021), we knew that empirically studying sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity required subjects operating in a suitable field of investigation, characterized by integrated social, environmental, and economic dimensions. The ecotourism sector fits these criteria, as ecotourism ventures blend social and environmental missions and economic goals (Swan & Morgan, 2016). Most research on sustainable entrepreneurship to date focuses on European and North American contexts and should not be generalizable to other contexts (Anand et al., 2021), especially in Africa.

Yet, the African context offers a particularly suitable setting for examining hybridity and the risks of mission lock-in. This environment is distinguished by its strong community bonds and interpersonal relationships (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul, Bruton, & Wood, 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan, Apitsa, & Adegbite, 2015), which often serve as a ‘guardrail’ (Battilana, 2018; Smith & Besharov, 2019), aiding sustainable entrepreneurs in maintaining their focus on their social mission. Additionally, the intense social and community pressures typical of this setting may contribute to mission lock-in, as entrepreneurs are compelled to adhere to their social missions due to the reciprocal expectations and the give-and-take principles prevalent in African community dynamics (Mutabazi, 2006).

Research on sustainable entrepreneurship in Africa is scarce and none focus on the context of a French-speaking African country. A West African French-speaking country, Benin, offered a unique and compelling field for research at the time we conducted our study: The nation’s ecotourism sector was composed predominately of several similar sustainable enterprises. Whereas in other countries in the region (Burkina Faso and Senegal, among others), ecotourism activities are under the control of the local State or foreign companies, the Beninese ecotourism sector is led by local entrepreneurs and united under the local ecotourism federation FBO-TRS (‘Fédération Béninoise des Organisations du Tourisme Responsable et Solidaire’). One of the authors developed privileged contacts, and established a level of trust, with the founder and former president of the FBO-TRS, thanks to previous professional trips in Benin. This contact facilitated the authors’ access to the federation’s network of ecotourism entrepreneurs.

Exploiting this unique and rare opportunity afforded the authors an idiosyncratic case research opportunity (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

2.3. Sample Selection

We started our interviews with Benin-based ecotourism sustainable entrepreneurs in 2015 and adopted a systematic approach to identify our sample.

First, we excluded ecotourism ventures supervised or directed by foreign organizations to avoid cultural and size-related biases (locally managed in Benin versus internationally managed), and entrepreneurs who were not available (e.g., were frequently traveling and seldom available) or were unwilling to participate in our study during our rounds of interviews. After applying these exclusion criteria, we identified and established contact with 11 ventures.

We restrained our selection to individuals operating ventures in the south of Benin to minimize sample variation due to environmental factors (Reypens et al., 2021; Zott & Huy, 2007), as the north and south of the nation have markedly distinct climates, face distinct environmental issues, serve distinct bodies of tourists, and target distinct issues related to distinct social stakeholders. Crises that affect the sector, affect entrepreneurs in the north and south in entirely different ways. For instance, since the emergence of tensions associated with terrorist groups operating in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, the website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly advises its citizens against visiting Northern Benin, while the Southern region requires only heightened vigilance. On a more practical level, limiting our geographical scope also helped us collect data in a relatively short time period (Reypens et al., 2021).

Then, we decided to focus our analyses on ventures that met a threshold of social, environmental, and economic activity, so we excluded ecotourism ventures that did not welcome tourists on a regular basis.

By applying these selection criteria, we narrowed this initial list of 11 ventures down to the 6 entities we believed had the greatest potential to shed light on our research topic (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). All 6 selected sustainable entrepreneurs are decision-makers within these organizations, of which they are founding members.

The goal of theoretical sampling is to select polar types of cases (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988; Eisenhardt, 1989). The aim of our study was to investigate sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity and we were able to draw on a sample of sustainable organizations with distinct hybridity profiles (hybrid, drifting or locking their mission). We validated our theoretical sampling during the analysis phase when we identified their hybridity profiles and dynamics.

2.4. Data Collection

We mainly collected primary data by transcribing 159 hours of interviews conducted with the entrepreneurs behind, and several internal and external stakeholders associated with, of the 6 ventures in our final sample, and on-site observations of the ventures and their operations. We also collected secondary data from available sources, such as ventures' websites, annual reports, social media posts, and other official documents. We used multiple data collection methods to triangulate our data, per established approaches for improving the validity and reliability of qualitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Table 1 provides an overview of the sustainable entrepreneurs who make up our case studies, including information about their ventures; ventures' founding years, their official and public mission statements, an overview of the individuals (informants) connected to ventures who we interviewed, and the secondary data we collection. Appendix X contains an expanded description of our case studies.

TABLE 1 – OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Given Name	Founding Year	(Paraphrased) Official, Public Mission Statement (translated from French)	Informants	Relevant Archival Data
Emile	1999	Promoting ecotourism and local development projects across Benin, for a "responsible, equitable, and solidarity-based human development."	Emile, 2 Managers, 3 European Trainees, 2 Employees, 1 Tourist	Website, Social Media, Official Reports, Online Articles, Promotional and Informational Billboards, One Leaflet
Charles	2005	To contribute to the emergence of a generation of "world citizens," able to propose and/or implement local, sustainable solutions to pursue human development that respects Nature.	Charles, 1 Co-Founder, 5 European Trainees, 4 Employees, 10+ Tourists	Website, Social Media, Official Reports, Online Articles, Promotional and Informational Billboards, One Leaflet
Patrice	1995	To contribute to the regeneration, preservation, and enhancement of natural ecosystems, and the full development of humanity in Benin.	Patrice, 1 Co-Founder, 1 Manager, 2 Employees, 3 Members of the Community (at the same time served, stakeholder and neighboring community), 10+ tourists	Website, Social Media, Official Reports, One Informational billboard, One Leaflet
Greg	1996	To transmit a sense of environmental conscience to the populations through information, education, and awareness, through school environmental clubs.	Greg, 2 Managers, 2 Employees, 1 Social Partner, 4 Tourists	Website, Social Media, Online Articles, One Informational Billboard, One Leaflet
Nicolas	1995	To promote the conservation and rational use of biological diversity through information sharing, education, and awareness of various actors, especially among the youth.	Nicolas, 1 Manager, 3 Employees, 1 Funder, 10+ Tourists	Website, Social Media, One Documentary Film, Official Reports, Online Articles, Promotional and Informational Billboards, One Leaflet
Simon	1996	To propose a more equitable approach to tourism through an associative and cultural approach	Simon, 1 Co-Founder, 2 Employees, 2 Tourists	Website, One Leaflet, Organizational Statutes

We conducted between 4 and 8 batches of interviews with each sustainable entrepreneur in our sample between 2017 and 2022, both on-site and online (when necessitated by COVID crisis control measures). To put the entrepreneurs at ease and

to align with their daily routines, we conducted most of our interviews while they were on the premises of their ventures. (Locational details may be found in Appendix X). We used our presence on-site to gather direct observations on ventures, and to conduct informal interviews with relevant internal and external actors (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), including managers, employees, trainees, tourists, community members (beneficiaries, neighbors, and/or stakeholders), and competitors. We conducted these additional interviews beyond the immediate presence of the sustainable entrepreneurs we interviewed, so that respondents felt free to make their own statements. We conducted these additional interviews by taking advantage of opportunities that arose during site visits, during each round of interviews (from 2017 to 2022 – see Table 2). These interviews helped us verify that entrepreneurs actually carried out their stated activities as claimed and gave us a better understanding of the relationship the entrepreneurs in our sample maintained with their stakeholders—including the nature and depth of those relationships and the type of activities (economic, environmental, and/or social) to which they were related.

Our first wave of interviews with the selected sustainable entrepreneurs, conducted in 2017, gave us a broad sense of entrepreneurs' life stories and entrepreneurial trajectories. (Muñoz, Cacciotti, & Cohen, 2018; Reypens et al., 2021), which we corroborated via additional observations and documentation gathering. We focused our investigations into how they navigated any tensions they experienced in their triple bottom line, but took care not to insert any of our own "preordained theoretical perspectives" that might "bias and limit findings" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536). We organized and prepared these interviews such that, while we used an interview guide to make sure we covered key aspects of organizations' and entrepreneurs' stories, the entrepreneurs would be able to lead our discussions in the directions they wanted to focus on, using their own vocabulary to describe the actions and justifications. (Our guide focused on general questions about organizations and their teams, activities, funding sources, and key challenges, phrased in neutral language, such as "What is your organization about?" "What are your successes?" or, "What are your future projects?" Etc.)

During the next rounds of interviews with the sustainable entrepreneurs, in 2018, 2019 and 2020 (see table 2), we conducted follow-up interviews in order to triangulate the qualitative data we'd collected to that point, check the stories of ventures at different points in time, record new events in their narratives, and fill in any other gaps in our data (Muñoz et al., 2018). By conducting several rounds of interviews (a total of 72 interviews) over a period of 6 years, we have chosen a longitudinal approach to mitigate any bias inherent in our interviewees' momentary concerns or preoccupations, such as foci relevant to their ventures' current agenda priorities, like responding to specific calls for projects.

Interviews in 2017 through to 2020 have enabled us to identify the logics of sustainable entrepreneurs. In 2020 (2nd part of the interviews) and 2021, beyond our ongoing efforts to clarify elements of and fill gaps in our findings, we adjusted our data collection process (Eisenhardt, 1989). To go further than analyzing their actions, we aimed to better identify the hybridity profiles of sustainable entrepreneurs. To achieve this, we added the following questions to our interview guide about the sorts of opportunities entrepreneurs targeted. (e.g. "What opportunities have you currently identified?" "Which opportunities have you chosen to pursue?" "Why did you pursue these opportunities?")

After conducting our final interviews related to each venture between 2021 and 2022, we shared our findings on each with their key entrepreneurs for validation (Reypens et al., 2021). We described and explained the logics we identified undergirding their decisions and actions, and the opportunities we believed they'd pursued to that point and/or prioritized moving into the future. As all of the entrepreneurs in our sample knew each other, we shared our findings on other sustainable enterprises in our sample with each individual entrepreneur. We asked if all of our findings made sense to them, or if they could identify any errors or inconsistencies.

Table 2 shows the focus, date, and duration of each individual interview we conducted with sustainable entrepreneurs and/or their stakeholders. (We represent each date with a six-digit number: the first two indicate the year, the second two the month, and the last two the date.)

TABLE 2 – RECORDED FIELD INTERVIEWS

		Simon		Emile		Charles		Patrice		Greg		Nicolas	
2017	Entrepreneurial life stories	170911	4 h 41	170914	2 h 34	170912	2 h 11	170208	1 h 14	170914	2 h 54	170914	3 h 04
						170914	0 h 18	170210	1 h 08				
								170216	0 h 18				
								170224	2 h 49				
								170911	4 h 41				
2018	Follow-up interviews	180212	1 h 19	180323	2 h 06	180219	1 h 10	180217	3 h 15	180210	1 h 12	180220	4 h 49
		180911	3 h 15	180905	2 h 12	180910	1 h 57	180218	2 h 19	180913	2 h 21	180912	2 h 50
								180906	2 h 17				
								180907	1 h 11				
2019	Follow-up interviews	190212	0 h 02	190215	2 h 05	190216	6 h 34	190210	1 h 05			190217	7 h 37
		190216	2 h 35										
2020	Follow-up interviews & Opportunities	200204	0 h 33	200203	3 h 07	200207	7 h 46	200201	3 h 04	200212	0 h 02	200206	6 h 37
		200205	3 h 46	200204	2 h 05	200208	4 h 03	200202	0 h 01	200213	2 h 22		
				200625	0 h 31	200630	0 h 03	200623	0 h 18	200214	7 h 16		
						200702	0 h 04			200629	0 h 12		
2021	Opportunities & Validation	210623	0 h 43	210623	0 h 56	210622	0 h 50	210618	0 h 52	210630	0 h 30	210618	0 h 58
								210624	0 h 06				
2022	Validation	220205	1 h 26	220126	0 h 25	220129	0 h 59	220205	1 h 01	220209	1 h 52	220208	4 h 27
		220206	2 h 27	220130	0 h 34	220202	0 h 30	220206	0 h 11				
		220207	0 h 59	220211	0 h 02	220204	0 h 41						

As noted above, we complemented our interview data with official organizational reports (internal data) and informational flyers, posters, websites, and social media posts (public data) whenever it was available, as well as with insights from stakeholders associated with ventures in order to capture a variety of perspectives and opinions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

2.5. Data Analysis

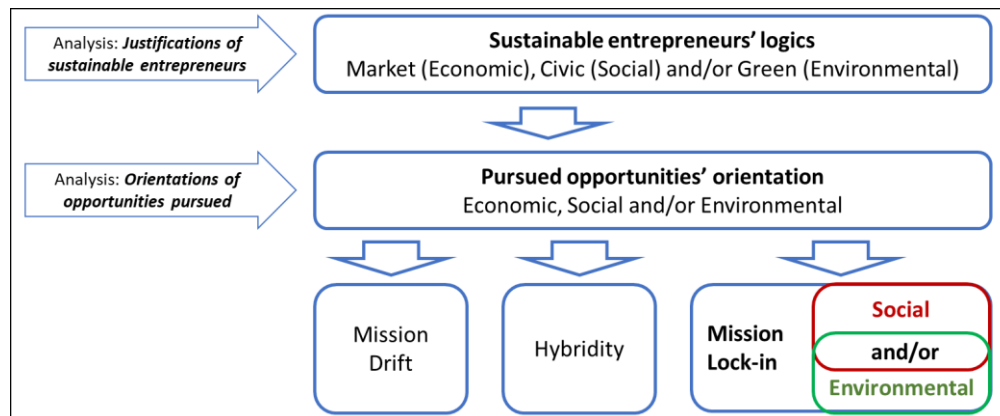
Our analysis involved several iterations between our data and the literature, refining our analytic techniques each time. However, we maintained a constant focus on our research questions: *How do sustainable entrepreneurs manage potential conflicts between the diverse goals of their triple bottom line? And what are the outcomes of distinct hybridity management approaches?*

Overall Strategy. In order to enrich our analyses of each case in our study, we engaged in cross-case comparisons (Eisenhardt, 1989). The use of this “structured and diverse lenses on the data [...] improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 541) flowing from our analysis.

Specifically, based on Boltanski and Thévenot’s (2006) theory of justification, we first analyzed each entrepreneur’s comments to discern their logics. We then assessed the opportunities they each targeted and/or prioritized, in order to discern potential links between their logics and opportunity pursuits, and thus their tendency towards

maintaining hybridity, or veering towards either mission drift or mission lock-in. Figure 1 illustrates our analysis framework.

FIGURE 1 – LOGICS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND HYBRIDITY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK



Sustainable entrepreneurs' logics. Sustainable entrepreneurs' justifications for their actions within interviews, per the theory of justifications, indicate the logics undergirding their decisions and activities (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006b; Mair et al., 2012). According, we mobilized this theory (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1999; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006a; Mair et al., 2012)—and partially applied the methodology developed by Patriotta et al. (2011) who had used Justification Theory to analyze discourses through content analysis and worlds' quantification. This enabled us to discern whether entrepreneurs employed economic, environmental, and/or social logics when making key decisions. Specifically, we adopted a closed coding procedure to measure the use of the principles corresponding to Boltanski and Thévenot's order of worth (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1999; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006a; Mair et al., 2012). This coding focused on the common worlds related to the market (economy), civic (social), and green (environmental) worlds / dimensions, and utilized N-Vivo software (Patriotta et al., 2011).

We excluded the other common worlds as they could not be linked to any specific dimension of sustainability. For instance, although some entrepreneurs employ spiritual logics (referred to as the 'Inspired world') for nature conservation and enhancing community bonds, such logics are also prevalent in market contexts (Gundolf, Saraglou, & Janssen, 2021). Whether it pertains to this 'inspired' world (valuing grace, singularity, and creativeness), or the industrial (valuing technical efficiency), the domestic (valuing esteem and reputation), or the opinion worlds (valuing

renown and fame), these elements may all be present across commercial, social, and environmental dynamics. Consequently, those “common worlds” do not provide a clear distinction between commercial and socio-environmental logics. Therefore, we limited our coding to the commonly referenced worlds of the market, civic, and green as defined by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006).

Before coding proper, we cleaned the data by removing questions to keep only the speeches of sustainable entrepreneurs. Then we divided the resultant text in “units of meaning,” each corresponding to “a phrase bound by a clear ending and that expressed at least one clear idea” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p56 cited in Patriotta et al., 2011).

To code the “common worlds” we focused on, we used the list of semantic markers initially developed (originally in French) by Boltanski & Thévenot (2006), and completed by Patriotta et al. (2011) and Cloutier & Langley (2017) (see Table I). We identified the presence of these “common worlds” in our transcripts (Cloutier & Langley, 2017; Gond et al., 2016; Patriotta et al., 2011), coding every idea expressed by sustainable entrepreneurs into a distinct “unit of meaning” and assigned each unit to none, one, or several “common worlds” (i.e., market, civic, and/or green). Below, we provide examples of units of meaning and the world codes we connected each to from the transcript of one interview (Patrice, February 2020):

Verbatim	Coding
<i>Yes, we maintain a certain loyalty among our customers.</i>	Market
<i>And when I talk about concrete actions on the ground, I mean at the community level: Continue to build latrines, above ground cisterns, whether at the community or school level: hand wash basins, urinals. By reinforcing these actions, we could improve the social impact.</i>	Civic
<i>Yes, it is always for the same objective, to circulate information everywhere to limit the human pressure on the ecosystems, and preserve the Earth.</i>	Green
<i>You can develop without denaturing. And so if the need arises to build a school on a site where nature must be infringed upon, we must ensure that we develop without denaturing.</i>	Civic & Green

Several keywords that appeared in our interviews did not feature on the semantic marker lists we consulted in our coding. As such, we referred to the Justification Theory to identify the corresponding world and logic (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1999; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006a; Mair et al., 2012). This allowed us to expand beyond our reference lists, including several additional semantic markers, each connected to its

corresponding "common world," that appeared frequently in our interviews within our coding process. We list every semantic marker in appendix.

We also adapted our coding to match specific context—i.e., using semantic markers to indicate one or another "common world" depending on how it appeared within an interview transcript. For instance, when one entrepreneur talked about 'visiting turtles'—one distinct semantic market—he could refer to them in distinct contexts and situations; at times as a touristic attraction (market), or as a tool for engaging children in the community in environmental awareness or as part of efforts to protect their babies from potential predators (green).

Once we finished our coding, we used N-Vivo to count the number of markers identified assigned to each "common world," then compared those cumulative figures. We calculated the percentage of times entrepreneurs used markers related to each world. This showed the relative importance that each sustainable entrepreneur in our sample placed on distinct logics and justifications for their decisions and actions.

Pursued opportunity orientations. We next analyzed the type of opportunities each entrepreneur in our sample pursued—i.e., whether it was an economic, environmental, and/or social opportunity—to assess their maintenance of hybridity, or level of mission drift or mission lock-in (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). Specifically, in the first stage, we assessed the objectives and strategies (Gupta, Beninger, & Ganesh, 2015; Mair et al., 2012) communicated in ventures' official mission statements (Grimes et al., 2020). These data points offer insights into the main activities a venture will pursue (Cornforth, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014), as well as the nature and extent of their focus on social beneficiaries and/or their tourists (Gupta et al., 2015; Mair et al., 2012), and thus suggest the types of opportunities a venture will discover, create, and/or exploit. At a later stage, we were able to list and describe the opportunities identified by entrepreneurs (thanks to interviews with entrepreneurs) as well as the opportunities pursued (thanks to interviews with entrepreneurs and stakeholders, as well as observation).

Based on this approach, we drew connections between sustainable entrepreneurial logics, opportunity orientations, and hybridity maintenance, mission drift, or mission lock-in.

3. Results

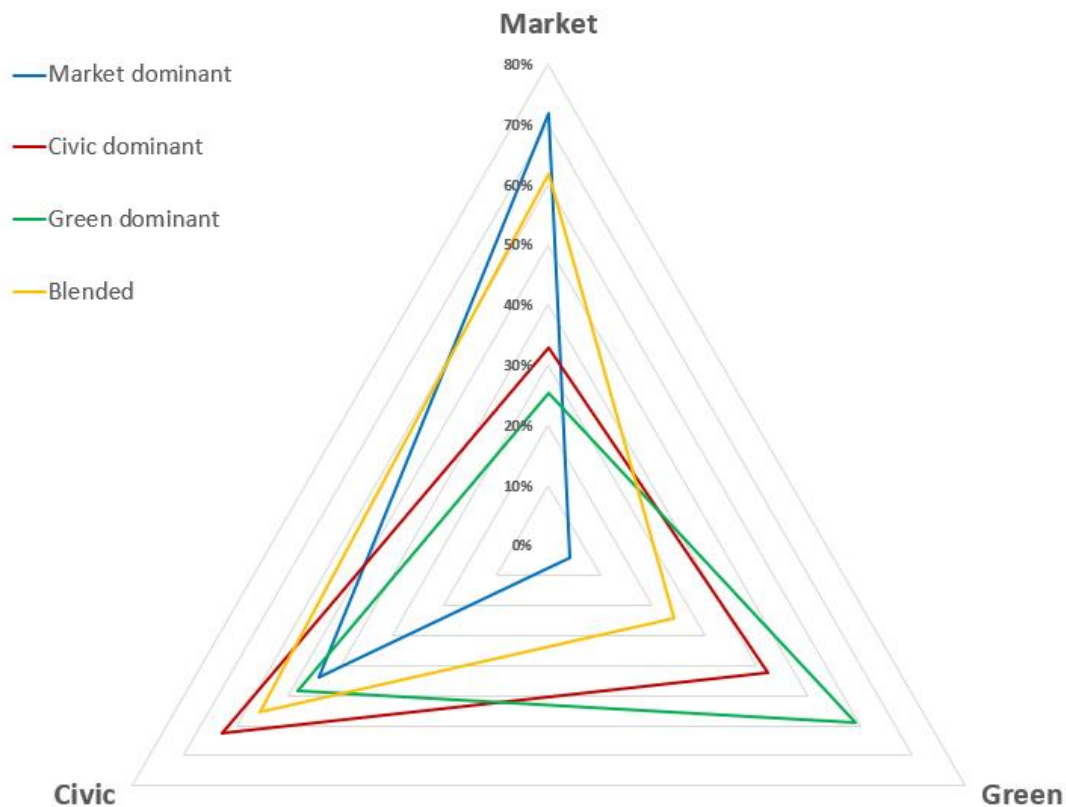
3.1. Case Hybridity

Sustainable entrepreneurs each use 'different logics of justification corresponding to their own rationales for choosing a certain course of action' (Mair et al., 2012, p. 356). Assessing their justifications reveals the underlying logics of their actions. After coding, based on the method described by Patriotta et al. (2011), we counted the markers corresponding to each 'common world' and calculated the percentage of times entrepreneurs used each type of marker. This process enabled us to assess the discourse of entrepreneurs in our sample and to identify and quantify the importance they placed on civic (social), green (environmental), and market (economic) principles within their judgments and, consequently, their logics. We calculated justification logic scores for each entrepreneur (see Table 2) and identified their dominant logic based on these scores.

From this analysis, we identified distinct justification logic patterns among specific entrepreneurs: market dominant, civic dominant, green dominant, or blended. Graph 1 depicts the distinct justification profiles we identified.

During our interviews and field observations, we evaluated the opportunities recognized and exploited by entrepreneurs, noting which were primarily economic, environmental, and/or social. Some entrepreneurs pursued all available opportunities, even those primarily offering economic benefits with limited social or environmental impact. In contrast, others selectively pursued opportunities with significant social and/or environmental benefits, even at the expense of potential economic gains. For instance, Emile and Charles aimed to attract as many international candidates as possible to their training programs, viewing these individuals as a source of free labor, a way to expand their networks, and a revenue stream through ecotourism facility room rentals and restaurant visits. Conversely, Greg focused on attracting primarily local trainees to maximize the social benefits for nearby communities, albeit at the cost of foregone revenue and other economic advantages.

GRAPH 1 – JUSTIFICATION ANALYSIS



This analysis enabled us to categorize specific entrepreneurs as being oriented toward social, environmental, and/or economic opportunities. This categorization further allowed us to assess the primary risks to the maintenance of their ventures' hybridity, such as mission drift or mission lock-in focused on social and/or environmental objectives. These findings, including each entrepreneur's dominant logic and hybridity risk, are summarized in Table 3.

These findings provide novel insights into hybridity and mission lock-in within sustainable entrepreneurship. We identified three entrepreneurs experiencing distinct forms of mission lock-in: Greg (permanent environmental and social mission lock-in), Nicolas (at risk of environmental mission lock-in), and Patrice (at risk of social mission lock-in). Details of these cases illustrate the unique challenges of hybridity and mission lock-in. Additionally, we observed two entrepreneurs who maintained hybridity and one who underwent mission drift. The latter case, offering limited new insights, will not be explored in depth.

TABLE 3 – LOGICS, OPPORTUNITIES AND HYBRIDITY OVERVIEW

			Simon	Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas
Venture Goal/Mission			Address Social (community) and Environmental issues through Economic activities – mainly Ecotourism					
Sustainable entrepreneur logics	Logics Justification Scores	Market Social Environment	72 % 44 % 4 %	74 % 57 % 18 %	50 % 54 % 31 %	44 % 71 % 30 %	22 % 54 % 54 %	29 % 42 % 64 %
	Sustainable Entrepreneur Dominant Logic		Economic	Blended	Blended	Social	Social/ Environmental	Environmental
Opportunities	Opportunities exploited		• Creation of circuits between different ecotourism attractions and transportation between these places	• Ecotourism: arrangement of tours, catering, accommodation, and conference facilities • Creation of Eco touristic circuits for the community development and biodiversity preservation. • Carbon offset project: reforestation and improved stoves • Tourism trainings • Consulting	• Ecotourism: arrangement of tours, catering, accommodation, and conference facilities • Creation of Eco touristic circuits for the community development and biodiversity preservation. • Animal sanctuary • Sustainable agriculture • Citizenship education • Tourism Resort (swimming pool, bar,...) • Fish Farm	• Ecotourism: catering, accommodation and visits to villages and nature • Sustainable agriculture promotion and farm school • Educational support and cultural center for youth • Radio broadcasts for environmental awareness • Awareness-raising for environmental preservation • Community and/or environmental projects	• Ecotourism: arrangement of tours • Community awareness for nature preservation and spirituality • Intercultural and intergenerational dialogues • Support for indigenous peoples in the conservation of their territories • Volunteer tourism	• Ecotourism: arrangement of tours (whale watching and baby turtles release) • Museum • Environmental Education Center • Awareness campaigns within communities • Anti-poaching actions • Production of awareness programs on nature • Forthcoming: Museum of waxworks of famous and historical figures
	Opportunities Main Orientation		• Economic	• Blended • Environmental & Social • Economic	• Blended • Green & Social • Economic	• Social & Environmental • Social • Blended	• Social & Environmental • Social	• Environmental • Environmental & Economic • Environmental & Social
Subject to			Mission Drift	Hybrid	Hybrid	Social Mission Lock-in	Dual Mission Lock-in	Environmental Mission Lock-in

Our analysis incorporates interview excerpts to delve into the dynamics of maintaining hybridity and the tensions leading to mission lock-in. This comprehensive model helps explain the interplay between social and environmental missions and concludes with an exploration of mission lock-in dynamics.

3.2. Hybridity Maintenance

As discussed earlier, hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship refers to ventures that balance multiple distinct objectives: economic, social, and environmental. Effective management of economic aspects, notably striving for economic self-sufficiency, is crucial for maintaining this balance (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019) and for serving as a safeguard against mission lock-in (Smith & Besharov, 2019).

Our findings indicate that besides avoiding mission drift and mission lock-in, effectively handling tensions between social and environmental goals are critical for sustaining hybridity. We also note that adopting blended logics facilitate this maintenance. These factors are elaborated further in this section.

3.2.1. Economic Self-Sufficiency : Pathway to Emancipation

Every sustainable entrepreneur in our sample told us they wanted to become less dependent on donor funders, more economically self-sufficient, and thus capable of launching more social and environmental projects with a greater degree of autonomy. They all declared their desire to develop initiatives to fund their activities, and thus improve their self-sufficiency and independence. As Emile explained: *“In fact, [in] everything we do now—and will do—there is always the idea of, how it can generate [its] own resources and how it contributes to our financing. [...]It's a bit of a win-win thing”* (February 2019). In a similar vein, Charles stated: *“We would like to go more in that direction—to create activities, businesses that will allow us to finance, to refinance our activities”* (February 2019).

Even sustainable ventures that struggled to maintain focus on their economic objectives, moving away from the maintenance of their hybridity and towards mission lock-in, like Patrice, donor funding is considered as a means of achieving economic self-sufficiency:

“But if we are helped, we will strengthen our reception infrastructure, and this will allow us to earn more and be relatively more financially independent. (...) We wrote a project application for the drilling (...) to build maybe three more bungalows [...] So this is related to the improvement of the working conditions, and the reception capacities of our organization to move towards a certain financial autonomy, to be able to carry out its social actions in all peace without being forced to go begging all the time.” (September 2018)

Sustainable entrepreneurs are increasingly subjected to pressure from funders whose demands often misalign with local contexts due to a lack of understanding of these contexts. Consequently, sustainable entrepreneurs are seeking to achieve emancipation through economic self-sufficiency. This desire reinforces guardrails that preserve the organization's economic mission and prevent mission lock-in (Smith & Besharov, 2019). However, for these mechanisms to be effective, the entrepreneurs' desire for autonomy must not only be strong but also accompanied by a deep understanding of the economic sphere's dynamics.

3.2.2. Avoiding Mission Lock-In

The entrepreneurs in our sample who effectively maintained their hybridity pursued more varied and numerous business opportunities than those who struggled with mission lock-in. Our analysis of entrepreneurs' justifications for their actions (see Figure 3) showed that the entrepreneurs in our sample who best maintained their hybridity (Emile and Charles) were more economically oriented than the others, excepted the case of Simon experiencing mission drift issues. In keeping with their apparent economic logic orientation, Emile and Charles notably seemed especially open to exploiting a wide range of economic opportunities.

Emile, for example, at one point struggled to attract European tourists to patronize his ecotourism venture, so he identified several creative alternative business opportunities: He developed new marketing strategies to attract Chinese tourists, and issued vacation vouchers to attract local tourists, instead of European tourists. He identified and launched new projects to increase his venture's income from engagement with these tourists; he specifically noted:

"We have identified three areas where we want to create resources to create wealth. In the travel department, we want to increase the fleet of vehicles (to welcome and carry more tourists). At the level of the training center, we want to have a training center that will have its own accommodation and catering facilities. And at the agriculture level, we want to work on digital tools that are going to connect service offers and requests, and we are at the interface, and we earn commissions" (February 2019).

Emile also demonstrated his ability to identify hybrid economic potential within his new or existing social and/or environmental activities, such as when he noted similarities between his environmental goal-focused reforestation projects and other entities' carbon offset projects, which often involve environmental but also social and economic dimensions, and decided to start participating in these latter projects—and thus started receiving payments for his already socially- and environmentally beneficial reforestation and stove fuel efficiency improvement efforts. This type of continual (re)evaluation of a venture's new and ongoing projects to explore their potential

alignment with multiple venture objects helps sustainable entrepreneurs maintain their hybridity. As Emile explained, while discussing social projects:

“We must be able to monetize everything financially. And it can be direct or indirect. [...] If we want to put wells somewhere, we must think about the economic model of wells [...] to always think about the economic model that works on the initiatives” (February 2020).

3.2.3. Avoiding Mission Drift

To maintain their hybrid nature, sustainable entrepreneurs must ensure that they do not risk mission lock-in by neglecting the economic mission of their organizations. Conversely, overemphasizing economic aspects at the expense of societal missions can lead to mission drift. Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurs must also maintain a social and environmental objective perspective when considering economic opportunities to maintain their triple bottom line hybridity. One of Emile’s statements is a good example of this. His venture organizes ecotourism tours in partner villages, and most of the profits are redistributed to a village committee. Emile explained that he limits the extent to which the tourism his venture generates contributes to the economy of villages. He is capping the number of tours he offers in that location, because while increasing tourism revenue would serve his economic objectives Emile believes making the village dependent on tourism income would be detrimental to the community (i.e. counterproductive to his venture’s social goals), especially during security or health crises when tourism often suddenly evaporates. He explained:

I take a village like Koussoukougou, where people receive about fifty or twenty tourists a day, all year-round—it is not good. Because, if the tourism activity develops during the working seasons, agriculture, or fishing or other [activities]—this could lead them to take care of tourism and leave agriculture. It becomes a danger for this [socio-economic] environment. This is not good. [...] So we have a strategy to deal with it. During that period, if we are organizing tours, we put more classic [non-village-centered] sites in the tours than our sites so as not to increase the number of travelers on the sites during the agricultural production period. (March 2018)

3.2.4. Managing Social-Environmental Tensions

While to this point, we have explored the tensions sustainable ventures must navigate between their economic and their social and/or environmental objectives to maintain their hybridity, these ventures may also encounter tensions between their social and environmental foci. Charles, for example, explained that poor villagers in a community his venture operates in occasionally kill rare antelopes to feed their families, but that this activity damages the area's biodiversity, as well as its attractiveness as an ecotourism site. Thus, he's had to find compromise solutions to balance villagers' social needs, which his venture aims to advance, with his enterprise's environmental and economic objectives. He described one compromise, around limiting the killing of rare animals, as such:

*The idea is to create an inter-community **[group of municipalities concerned by and managing the natural reserve]** for the management of the resources that are in the park. [...] They must meet the hunters. For us, in our approach, hunters know better than us [...] they know what is going on. They are the ones who benefit from the resources more than anyone else. And if we manage to conserve the resources for the animals, they[hunters] will be the first beneficiaries, and they know how to act so that it can happen well. So, we make them [hunters] responsible for conserving, to better enjoy it. (February 2019)*

In order to manage these tensions over the long term, sustainable entrepreneurs continually apply environmental and social logics and criteria. Emile described his efforts to evaluate his actions:

"A Cotonou site that works is one where the basic resources for ecotourism are preserved in good health. Poaching has decreased, species are increasing. There are local activities that depend on or benefit from the tourism that is developing. There are ecological practices that are developing, like ecological constructions or the use of renewable energy. All of this is becoming part of the habits of the construction of accommodation, both local and accommodation that welcomes visitors. For me, [to evaluate] the initiatives that work, these are the criteria that should be considered." (March 2018)

3.2.5. *The Blended Logics of Hybridity*

Our justification analysis highlighted the fact that Emile and Charles, the two entrepreneurs in our sample who consistently maintained their hybridity (see Figure 3), often used economic (market), environmental (green), and social (civic) semantic markers within the same sentence. This speaks to their employment of interconnected – or *blended* – logics, in line with their multifaceted triple bottom lines. Emile, for example, said of his venture’s early days:

The idea at the beginning was to show the economic value of biodiversity to local populations, because in our region the ways of consuming biodiversity that we know are either go hunting, [or] go to cut [trees,] but there was very little mechanism of sustainable consumption valuation—i.e. go study the species or look at an ecosystem and see other forms of valuation. (September 2017)

In this statement alone, Emile employed three economic world semantic markers (“economic value,” “consuming,” and “consumption valuation”), three environmental world semantic markers (“biodiversity,” “species,” and “ecosystems”), and one social world semantic marker (“local populations”), as well as hybrid-domain semantic markers, such as “sustainable,” all to conceptualize and convey core information about his venture.

These demonstrations of seamlessly blended logics, which incorporate simultaneously social, environmental, and economic awareness, by the entrepreneurs in our sample who best maintained their hybridity speaks to the importance of thinking or acting in terms of each of these dimensions in concert or in sequence to maintain the hybrid nature of the sustainable venture.

3.3. *Mission Lock-In*

Our research identified three cases of mission lock-in: One what we might call *dual* case, that of Greg, whose enterprise lost sight of economic goals in favor of its dual noneconomic (social and environmental) goals. One case (Patrice) was at risk of social mission lock-in, in which an entrepreneur temporarily focused increasingly on social goals while neglecting economic *and* environmental objectives. And one case (Nicolas)

at risk of environmental lock-in, in which an entrepreneur occasionally focused on environmental goals while neglecting economic *and* social objectives.

3.3.1. Dual Mission Lock-In

3.3.1.1. Over-focus on Social and Environmental Objectives

Greg describes his venture's mission as a sacred duty that ought to dedicate itself fully to parallel social (i.e., community support) and environmental goals. His "Future Seeds" program, an environmental education program centered on elderly locals' experiences with their environment, embodies this mindset. It involves the creation of youth camps where elderly people interact with younger individuals and invite them to connect with nature and their community's traditions. It aims to connect young people with nature (an environmental goal) while also (re)building intergenerational bridges between youth and elders in the community he operates within (a social goal). Within the framework of this program, and others Greg operates, social and environmental goals are inseparable elements of a singular overarching socio-environmental mission. This may explain why, in interviews, he never identified tensions between the social and environmental dimensions of his work. Greg mainly focused on co-benefits between these dimensions (Nilsson et al., 2018).

Greg does incorporate economic activities into his work, for example operating tourism circuits like "In the Footsteps of the Sacred," which introduce ecotourists to the local communities and biomes in which they operate. However, these economic aspects of his work do not occupy the same place within Greg's conception of his venture's overarching mission.

3.3.1.2. Neglect of Economic Dimensions

Focusing on the social and environmental objectives is inherent to sustainable entrepreneurship. However, neglecting economic aspects is a symptom of mission lock-in. Apart from the above-mentioned tourism circuits, Greg expressed a lack of interest to exploit economic opportunities compared to social/environmental opportunities. He focused instead on donor fundraising (as a non-profit venture) and building relationships with past donors or members of a nature club he operates, to finance the dual social-environmental projects upon which he centers his focus. This

fundraising constitutes the bulk of his venture's financial intake. Greg's reliance on this highly contingent source of funding means that he must regularly fund his venture with his own money.

Greg explained that he knows he could place a greater emphasis on his venture's tours, or other economic opportunities, but he chooses not to divert his focus towards this aspect of his sustainable entrepreneurship. Even when developing tours, Greg openly focuses more on how they will raise awareness of communities and their issues, and/or how they will help connect young people in these communities with nature and their elders, than he does on how to build circuits that will attract tourists or optimize them as revenue-earning activities. He rarely mentioned economic aspects of his venture in interviews conducted for this study, or during discussions with the various stakeholders we observed. In interactions with international visitors specifically, Greg rarely identified them as "customers" (i.e., used a market logic), instead of conceptualizing them as potential donors to support his social-environmental projects, or an orphanage he operates. According to our discourse analysis, he primarily uses civic/green world logics. For example, he described the financial-logistical aspects of one project as follows:

We will start building the kindergarten. [...] We wonder if we [will] find a funder who will build us a building. [...] We are discussing about building a classroom there to start. [...] We will start the first year, and then the second year, maybe after that we will find people to help construct the building. If we want to wait, it will take a long time." (February 2020)

This statement does not identify economic opportunities to finance this social project. Rather than an outlier, this explanation aligns with Greg's repeated reluctance to considering economic opportunities to support the social-environmental goals he focuses on. He even struggles to fully exploit the economic opportunities he has pursued, such as tourism; he did not expand his tourist offerings between our first interview in 2017 and the end of our study in 2022, and describes his approach to tourism as revenue-neutral to -negative versus revenue generating, insomuch as he does not seem interested in optimizing his touristic offerings' earning potential:

There is no profitability in tourism, because on each site, we must pay the people on the site and others. [...] after all the expenses, there is practically nothing left. Sometimes when it ends, I am paying the difference. It's not interesting at all. Now if we organize better, including accommodation and catering, maybe we can earn on the chain. (February 2020)

While most of the ecotourism entrepreneurs of our panel consider welcoming even a small number of tourists as an opportunity to promote their ecotourism offer, and most of them achieve to generate revenues from this opportunity, Greg does not. Because he does not identify ways to exploit them in a cost-revenues effective manner, he sees little of the potential of economic opportunities for his venture while most of his counterparts achieve to generate revenues from this opportunity.

Greg's mission lock-in indicates a lack of guardrails around the economic mission (Smith & Besharov, 2019). His venture's formal structures—including leadership roles, goals, and metrics—as well as leadership expertise and stakeholder relationships, were predominantly socially- and environmentally oriented. Notably, Greg's strategic focus and external engagements lacked commercial orientation to avoid mission lock-in, as no commercially oriented external stakeholders were identified.

Unsurprisingly, he scored the lowest on economic justification of everyone in our sample. All these findings suggest that Greg may not just choose to eschew but actively miss economic opportunities that present themselves to him because of his over-focus on his dual social-environmental mission above all else. As a result of his failure to identify and/or fully pursue economic opportunities, he struggles to finance and fully realize his social-economic projects.

Greg's case echoes with the findings of Staessens et al. (2019), which suggest that “social enterprises with a stronger social orientation fail to achieve high social efficiency, compared with social enterprises that are more commercially oriented, while at the same time jeopardizing firm sustainability due to their low economic efficiency” (p. 20). For example, in our hybrid case studies, Emile and Charles implemented a strategy that consistently leverages new economic opportunities with an integrated focus on environmental, social, and economic aspects. This approach was particularly

evident in their efforts to diversify and expand tourism services as a means to increase revenue. This strategy has proven to be an effective model for advancing their sustainable venture's social and environmental missions.

3.3.2. Social – Environmental Mission Synergies and Tensions

As illustrated by Greg's case, sustainable entrepreneurs typically view social and environmental goals as interdependent components of a broader socio-environmental mission. This approach is characterized by co-benefits (Nilsson et al., 2018) or synergies where social projects benefit the local biome and environmental initiatives positively impact local communities. All the sustainable entrepreneurs in our study recognize that achieving environmental protection goals requires the development of fundamental education and well-being within human communities in or near the targeted biomes. For instance, Charles explained:

It's often a bit difficult to tell someone who has nothing to eat to stop exploiting wood to protect the environment. They don't understand. The hunter who has not eaten since yesterday and who finds an animal that passes in front of him—he must kill it. So it's a little difficult to get them to understand. That's why we train hunters on animal protection. (February 2020)

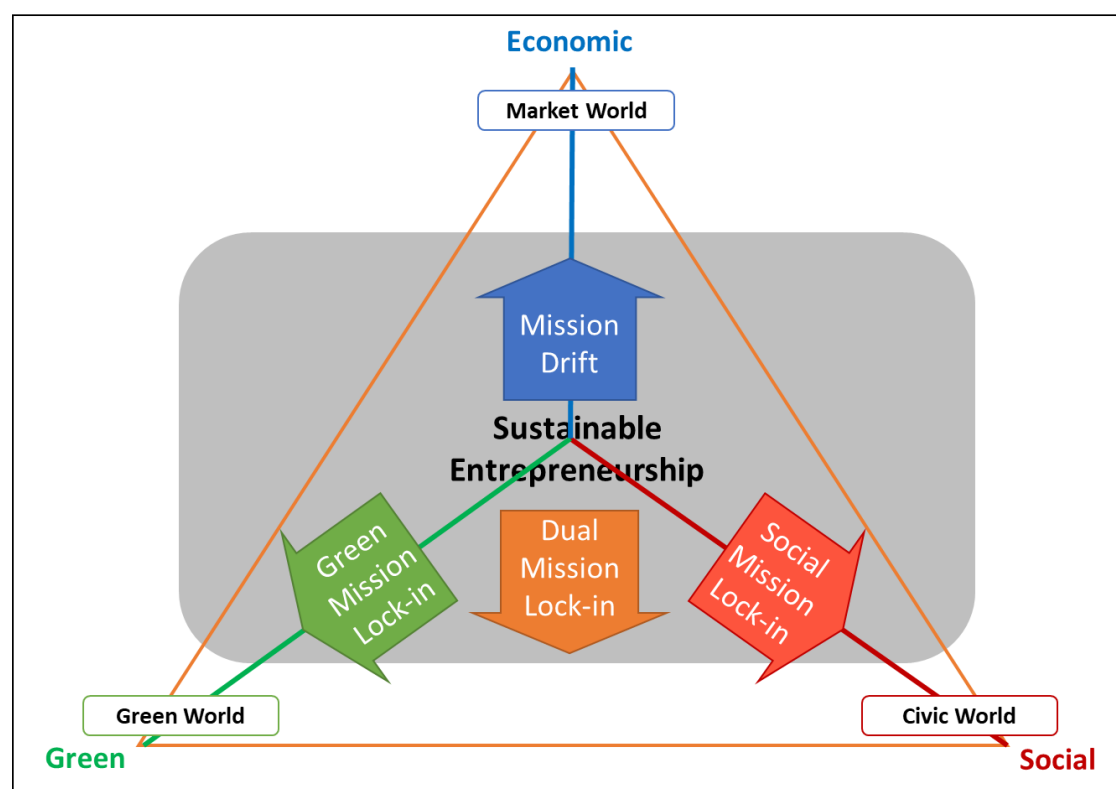
Conversely, sustainable entrepreneurs acknowledge that they cannot aim at the improvement of the wellbeing of local communities without protecting the environments on which these communities' wellbeing typically depends. Patrice, for example, explained:

"For populations to thrive, it is essential, first and foremost, that the environment is healthy." (June 2021)

Despite this belief in or recognition of social-environmental interdependence, our analysis shows that sustainable entrepreneurs may still ultimately sideline one of these missions in favor of the other (as well as economic goals), resulting in either distinctly social mission lock-in experiences, or distinct environmental mission lock-in experiences (See Fig. 3). While extant research in entrepreneurship has explored tensions between the social and economic aspects of social ventures (Battilana & Lee,

2014a; Doherty et al., 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013), and between the environmental and economic aspects for environmental ventures (Schaltegger, 2002), our identification of these unique forms of mission lock-in suggests the existence of to-date unresearched tensions between social and environmental aspects of sustainable ventures' work, which may result in an entrepreneur's failure to balance both of these missions, instead favoring one over the other. The scientific literature highlights the macro-level tensions between the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (Adams et al., 2004; Motesharrei, Rivas, Kalnay, Asrar, Busalacchi, et al., 2016; Nilsson et al., 2018; Reyers & Selig, 2020; Selomane et al., 2019). Our field study provided the opportunity to examine these tensions more closely.

FIG. 2 – TENSIONS LEADING TO SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MISSION DRIFT AND SOCIAL AND/OR ENVIRONMENTAL MISSION LOCK-INS.



Our study sheds light on the socio-environmental tensions and associated risks that sustainable entrepreneurs must navigate. Literature indicates that focusing excessively on societal objectives at the expense of economic viability can lead to mission lock-in (Copestake, 2007; De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). In our research, two entrepreneurs encountered specific types of mission lock-in risks due to conflicts between social (community) and environmental missions. Specifically, environmental

mission lock-in occurs when a sustainable entrepreneur focuses excessively on environmental objectives and loses sight of the social and/or economic objectives. Conversely, social mission lock-in occurs when a sustainable entrepreneur focuses excessively on social objectives and loses sight of the environmental and/or economic objectives.

We differentiate between the risk of mission lock-in and effective mission lock-in. In the former, sustainable entrepreneurs may temporarily deviate from their hybrid equilibrium but are able to correct their course and restore balance. In the latter, mission lock-in is effective as the entrepreneur persistently prioritizes one mission at the expense of others, losing the capacity to identify and exploit opportunities in the neglected dimensions.

Figure 3 summarizes the tensions might arise between sustainable ventures' social and environmental missions (among other tensions) and lead to mission lock-ins. The following subsections explore these tensions as they manifest in environmental and social mission lock-in, respectively.

3.3.3. Environmental Mission Lock-In

We open our exploration of this unique form of mission lock-in by exploring how environmental goals can take precedent over social and economic goals within a sustainable venture.

3.3.3.1. The environmental imperative: overlooking social and economic objectives

One of the entrepreneurs we interviewed, Nicolas, expressed his particular focus on – and passion for – nature and preservation work, making it clear that environmental goals were his top priority. From the inception of his ecotourism venture, Nicolas has led anti-poaching campaigns. He established a network of community informers to detect and report poachers whether capturing their prey or selling their haul. He shares his expertise with the police, utilizing his knowledge of local wildlife to aid in identifying the offenses. However, these actions primarily focus on protecting nature, often overlooking the social implications and the vital role that hunting and fishing play in the survival of underprivileged communities. His focus on environmental issues led him to

neglect the social side of his activities—e.g. denouncing and prosecuting poachers or banning fishing without addressing the social factors that lead to those activities or result from efforts to curtail them.

Nicolas's dominant focus on the environmental aspects also primed him to lose sight of the economic elements of the enterprise. It drove him, for example, to develop informative television programs, run in partnership with a national broadcasting service, to raise awareness of environmental protection issues, which he ran at substantial costs for 3 years without financing or income.

3.3.3.2. Bumping against the (social/economic) guardrails

Nevertheless, Nicolas did not rigidly maintain his pro-environmental strategy. Instead, he 'bumped against the (social) guardrail' as described by Smith & Besharov (2019). The fishing and hunting communities, whose members were involved in poaching, heightened his awareness of community issues. Then, he realized that he ought to address the root causes of many instances of poaching – a lack of environmental knowledge and a social context of poverty – to advance his environmental mission. This interaction with key stakeholders about the social mission served as a guardrail (Smith & Besharov, 2019), preventing Nicolas' organization from overly prioritizing environmental objectives over social concerns.

Concerning the informative television programs, Nicolas and his management team realized the risks associated with overlooking economic considerations (high costs and few/no income). 'Bumping against the (economic) guardrail', Nicolas attempted negotiations with the national broadcasting service, which proved unsuccessful. Consequently, he reduced both the frequency and duration of these broadcasts to safeguard the economic viability and sustainability of his venture.

Although justification analysis of these statements confirms Nicolas still prioritized the environmental dimension of his work, he clearly demonstrates his awareness that communities must rise out of poverty, live with dignity, and gain issue awareness to participate in nature preservation. Without addressing these social issues, these individuals may overexploit their local environment to meet their vital needs. In line with

this recognition, Nicolas launched hybrid projects focused on generating income for communities, and raising environmental awareness, such as ecotourism. He explained:

We chose this area to say, 'it's a no-fishing zone.' We started working with the fishermen to make it no-fishing. The fishermen who were there at the time—we convinced them that we can turn this into an ecotourism site because people started coming to see [it]. (February 2018)

He also explained that he sees ecotourism as a vector for soliciting donations to support his environmental and social projects, as well as a revenue source:

But the interest is that the presence of fish—it can attract other donors. Apart from tourism, people can finance the actions. And because people are sensitive to the turtles, they can finance the fishermen for other things. (February 2018)

Still, Nicolas openly exploits economic and social opportunities in service of his environmental mission and goals, demonstrating their dominance over other factors in his decision-making.

Nicolas's momentary over-focus on environmental issues to the exclusion of considering, or at the cost of, the economic or social objectives of his sustainable venture speaks to the ways that an environmentally overfocused entrepreneur can veer towards environmental mission lock-in. However, he overcame the risk of environmental mission lock-in because he bumped against the social and economic guardrails and managed to recover a balance between his environmental mission and his social and economic missions.

3.3.4. Social Mission Lock-In

We continue our exploration of the various forms of mission lock-in in sustainable entrepreneurship by exploring how social goals can take precedent over environmental and economic goals within a sustainable venture.

3.3.4.1. The social imperative: overlooking environmental and economic objectives

Sustainable entrepreneurs sometimes focus primarily on enhancing the wellbeing of communities living in or near the biomes their ventures work with or within, using their environmental projects primarily to create social benefits for these groups.

For instance, our research indicates that Patrice was at risk of social mission lock-in due to his focus on mitigating the health impacts of plastic pollution in the neighboring village. To address this issue, he initiated a plastic waste recovery program led by local youth, aiming to reduce environmental pollution and improve community health and wellbeing – a dual outcome that was successful in collecting significant amounts of plastic and cleaning up the community. However, Patrice did not foresee the volume of waste that would be collected, leading to unplanned costs as he committed to paying the young participants for their efforts, which was another positive social outcome. Additionally, without a prior plan for recycling, the collected plastic was ultimately burned, causing air pollution. This outcome illustrates Patrice's initial oversight of environmental and economic considerations, focusing excessively on social benefits at the expense of broader environmental and economic impacts.

3.3.4.2. Bumping against the (environmental/economic) guardrails

Patrice overcame the risk of social mission lock-in when he bumped against guardrails because the economic and environmental concerns became apparent. He reassessed the project after realizing its negative financial impact and receiving criticism from international tourists about the environmental damage caused by burning waste. Consequently, he decided to terminate the project upon acknowledging these drawbacks. This situation illustrates how Patrice's excessive focus on social benefits, at the expense of environmental and economic sustainability, risked leading to a social mission lock-in.

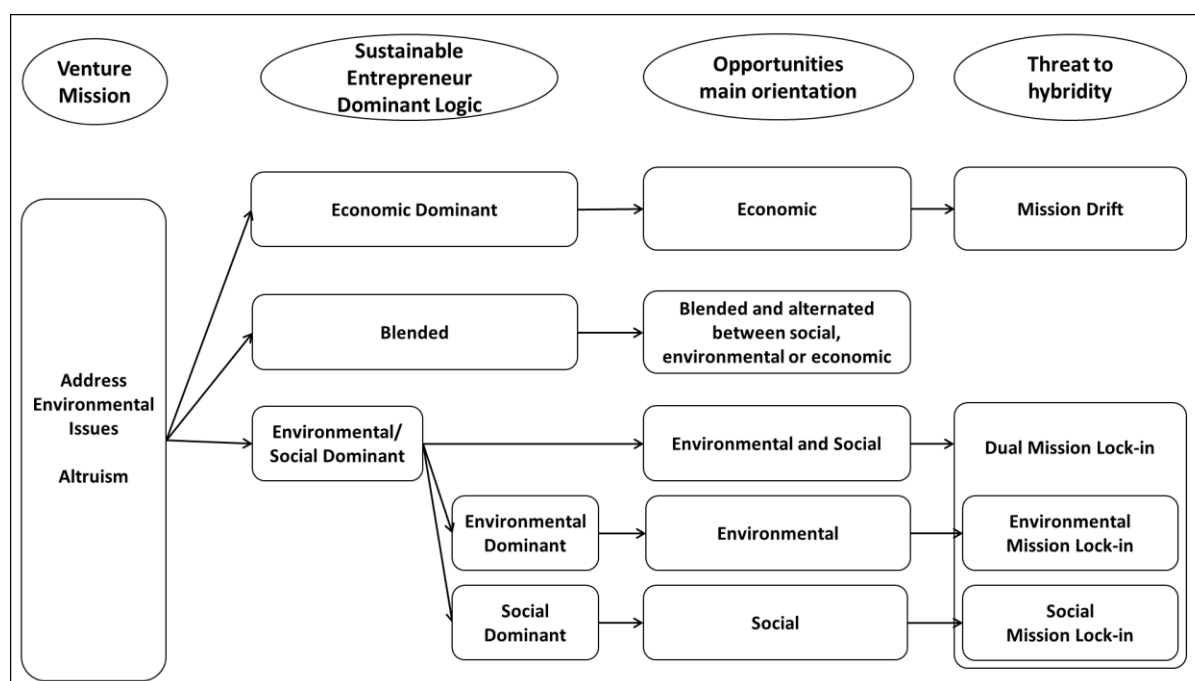
3.4. Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity Maintenance Model

Through our study of six sustainable entrepreneurs, we reveal patterns and connections among their logics, the opportunities they identify or pursue, and the impact on their venture's hybridity (see Table 3).

We identified one entrepreneur in our sample, Simon, made statements that demonstrated an economic logic dominated approach, and primarily pursued economic opportunities, which led us to consider him prone to mission drift—a focus on ensuring the economic survival of his organization at the cost of his pursuit of its social and/or environmental goals. We identified two entrepreneurs, Emile and Charles, who in contrast demonstrated blended logics through their statements and pursued hybrid opportunities or an alternating mix of opportunities across the social, environmental, and economic aspects of sustainability. We also identified three entrepreneurs who, temporarily (Nicolas and Patrice) or permanently (Greg), overfocused on social and/or environmental objectives, logic, and opportunities. Greg's statements demonstrated his belief in the intertwined nature of environmental and social objectives and logics, and his focus on opportunities that advanced both of those goals, which seemed to make him prone to what we consider dual mission lock-in – overfocusing on social and environmental objectives combined with losing sight of economic aspects of a venture. Nicolas's statements demonstrated his fixation on environmental issues, his pursuit of environmentally focused opportunities, and his potential to veer towards environmental mission lock-in – over-focusing on environmental objectives and losing sight of the social and/or economic aspects of a venture. Patrice's statements demonstrated his fixation on social issues above all else, his pursuit of socially focused opportunities, and his demonstration of at least one instance of what we call social mission lock-in—over-focusing on social objectives and losing sight of the environmental and/or economic aspects of a venture.

These findings of our research and analysis allowed us to build a model of sustainable entrepreneurship logics, and the threats to sustainable enterprises' maintenance of their hybridity, presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP HYBRIDITY MAINTENANCE MODEL

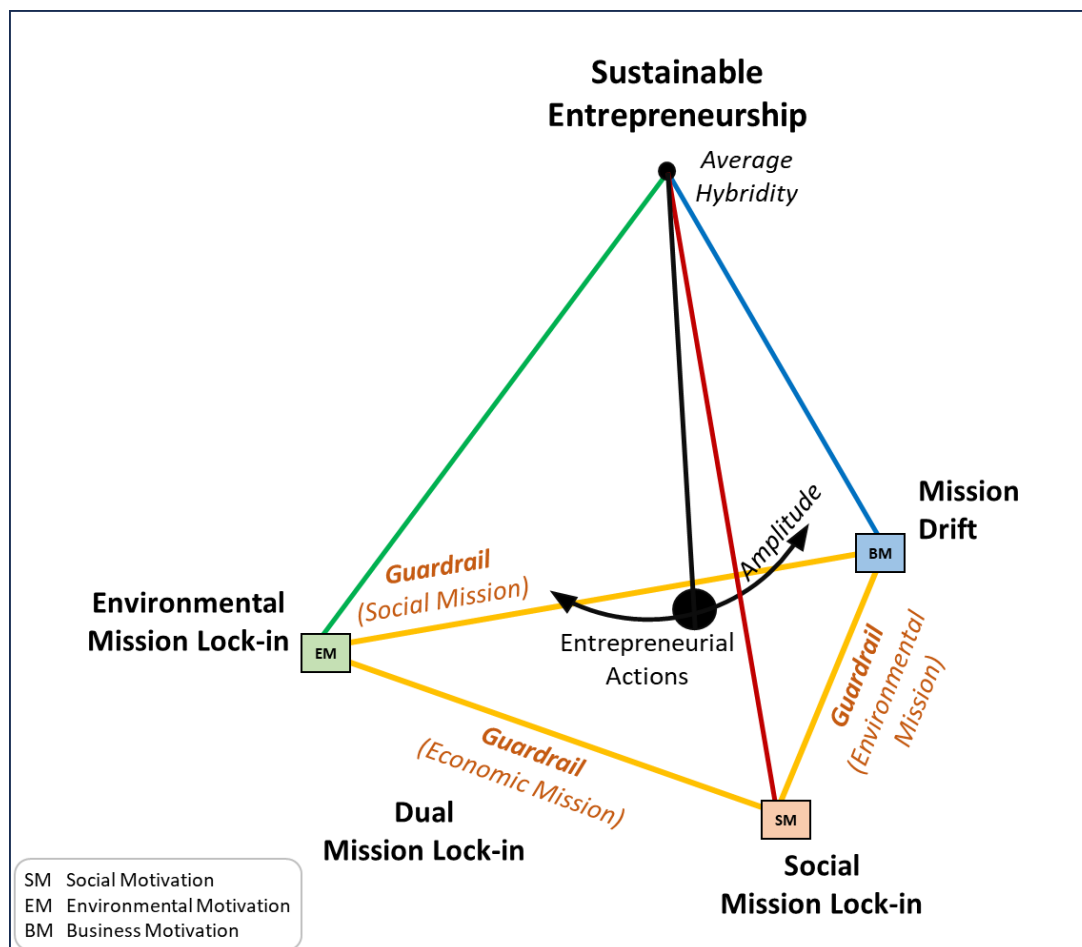


3.5. Risk of Mission Lock-In versus Effective Mission Lock-In

Prior research suggests that social enterprises can swing between the social mission and the economic mission, modeled between guardrails (Smith & Besharov, 2019) or like a pendulum (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022). The dynamics of this pendulum remain unclear. The longitudinal nature of our data shed light on this under-researched topic. The studied hybrid ventures oscillate between mission drift, social mission lock-in and environmental mission lock-in. Based on the dynamics identified and our analyses, we modeled our findings in figure 4.

Smith & Besharov (2019) identified factors such as expertise, external relationships, and formal structures that serve as stewards of the various missions of hybrid organizations, preventing excessive deviation toward any single mission. At the leaders' level, they emphasized the importance of mission-oriented expertise. Our field study further suggests that some entrepreneurs are predisposed to gravitate more strongly toward one mission, rather than being deterred from going too far in another direction. This attraction to one or two dimensions can be explained by the sustainable entrepreneur's motivations.

FIGURE 4 – PENDULUM OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP HYBRIDITY DYNAMICS



These motivations oriented towards one or two dimensions influence the recognition of sustainable opportunities (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011), and, by the same token, the types of social, environmental and/or economic opportunities exploited. For instance, Patrice is primarily driven by his community's well-being, making the social mission his primary motivation (SM). Conversely, Nicolas is deeply committed to the environmental mission, which strongly guides his opportunity identification and decision-making (EM). Similarly, Simon's focus is predominantly on the economic aspects of his activities, positioning the economic dimension as his point of attraction (BM). In conclusion, the maintenance of hybridity towards each mission is influenced by two distinct factors: its guardrails (Smith & Besharov, 2019) and motivations (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

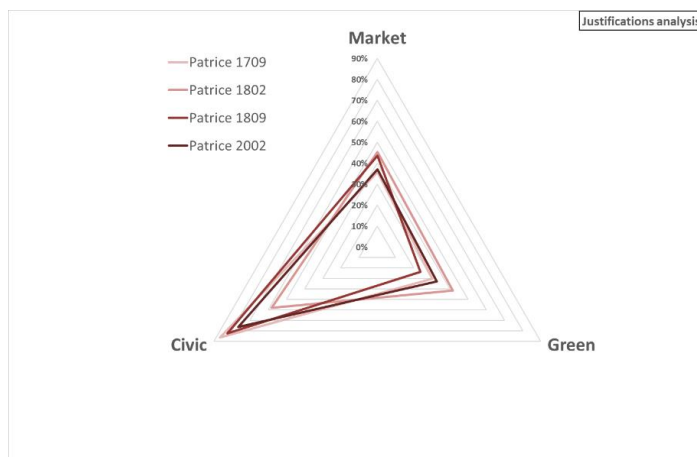
Emile and Charles, the most hybrid sustainable entrepreneurs launched hybrid entrepreneurial actions displaying minimal and momentary deviation from their triple hybrid approach. The discourses and entrepreneurial actions of other sustainable entrepreneurs indicate less balanced situations. On the one hand, Simon and Greg

were facing persistent risks threatening their hybridity. Simon's discourses and entrepreneurial actions seem to indicate an effective mission drift. Similarly, but in the other direction, Greg seems to be subject to an effective dual mission lock-in. Unlike the other studied cases, Greg's statements and choices did not oscillate, as they frequently prioritized the social and environmental dimensions. During the several rounds of interviews and observations, even if there was still a minimum level of economic-oriented activities, the economic dimension was frequently perceived as marginal, but maintained to publicize the company's social and environmental activities. On the other hand, Patrice and Nicolas were at risk of social or environmental mission lock-in as they were generally launching hybrid entrepreneurial actions but also, occasionally, lost sight of one of the dimensions.

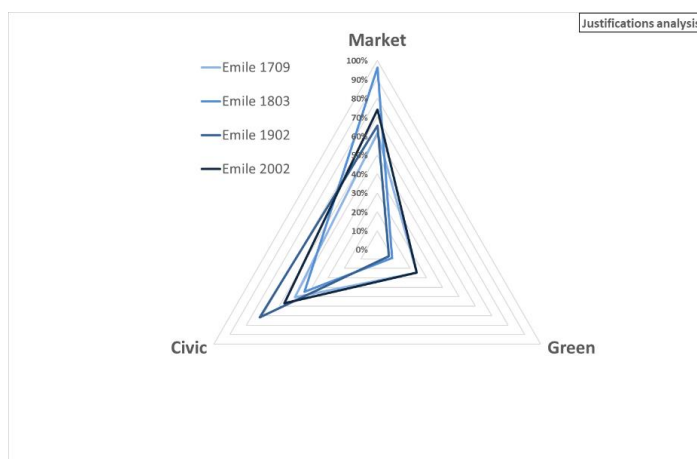
Our findings indicate that the average hybridity (fixation point) around which sustainable ventures oscillate is determined by the attractive power of their missions, with safeguards in place to limit or confine these oscillations within a specific framework. Specifically, our analysis of justification logics based on statements from entrepreneurs reveals varied emphases: Emile and Charles balanced social, environmental, and economic objectives equally; Simon was predominantly driven by economic goals; Nicolas focused mainly on environmental aims; Patrice prioritized social objectives; and Greg was influenced by both social and environmental goals.

Our findings further suggest that the amplitude of oscillations around these points may change depending on the nature of a sustainable enterprise. Based on the pursued opportunities, the pendulum of Greg, Nicolas, and Patrice's swings only slightly (see example of Patrice in graph 2), and with a low amplitude, likely due to their pursuit of a consistent type of opportunity. Other sustainable entrepreneurs of our study who exploit a wider range of opportunities – at sometimes mostly economically oriented and at others mostly socially and/or environmentally oriented – such as Emile (see graph 3) and Charles are swinging with a greater amplitude.

GRAPH 2 – LONGITUDINAL JUSTIFICATION ANALYSIS – PATRICE



GRAPH 3 – LONGITUDINAL JUSTIFICATION ANALYSIS – EMILE



Our analysis additionally indicates that the fixing point and the amplitude distinguish different types of mission lock-in in terms of dynamic. Greg (slightly misaligned anchor point and low amplitude) is dealing with persistent mission lock-in while Patrice and Nicolas (anchor point slightly off axis towards the social or environmental but large amplitude) are facing occasional mission lock-in. As such, both fixing point and the amplitude affect the dynamic of mission lock-in.

4. Discussion

Prior studies have documented the hybrid nature of sustainable entrepreneurs, and identified two major challenges to the maintenance of their hybridity: mission drift and mission lock-in. While social entrepreneurship studies have explored the dynamics of mission drift in recent years (Cornforth, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014b; Grimes et al., 2020; Staessens et al., 2019), scholars have barely analyzed the phenomenon of mission lock-

in. To our knowledge, it is only assessed in a case study of a social enterprise that maintained its hybridity (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022), and a quantitative study of WISEs (Staessens et al., 2019). This paper sought to address that research gap by analyzing cases of sustainable entrepreneurs navigating their hybrid triple bottom lines. Our research identified novel empirical information about mission lock-in as a phenomenon, and specifically differentiated several distinct types of sustainable entrepreneurship mission lock-ins.

In the sections below, we explore the implications of our findings for both future research and practice, focusing initially on the tensions and hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship. This is followed by a discussion on sustainability dimensions in small sustainable ventures in Benin and the associated managerial contributions.

4.1. Tensions and Hybridity in Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Sustainable entrepreneurship often targets social and environmental missions, leading to a hybridity that generates both tensions and synergies (Vedula et al., 2022). While existing research primarily focuses on tensions between economic and social (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014b; Ebrahim et al., 2014a) or between economic and environmental goals (Dixon-Fowler, Slater, Johnson, Ellstrand, & Romi, 2013; York et al., 2016), our study expands this understanding by exploring how sustainability also necessitates managing interactions between social and environmental dimensions (Nilsson et al., 2018; Selomane et al., 2019; UNDP, 2020).

Our case study analysis reveals that tensions between social and environmental goals can lead sustainable ventures to experience unique forms of mission lock-in. Unlike traditional mission lock-in, which typically centers on social goals at the expense of economic ones (Staessens et al., 2019), these tensions can drive ventures toward either environmental or social mission lock-ins. This suggests that the scope of mission lock-in extends beyond merely economic aspects, as commonly discussed in the literature, to include significant environmental and social interactions. For instance, an overemphasis on environmental objectives might cause entrepreneurs to overlook how their conservation efforts negatively impact neighboring communities. Our findings highlight the need for sustainable entrepreneurs to balance these competing priorities

carefully. For example, an excessive focus on environmental goals might lead entrepreneurs to overlook how initiatives like fencing off a primary forest to protect it could adversely affect local communities that depend on forest resources for their survival. Conversely, a focus primarily on social objectives might cause entrepreneurs to neglect the environmental impact of their projects, such as how improving crop yields might strain local ecosystems beyond their regenerative capacity.

Nevertheless, hybridity represents a fragile and dynamic equilibrium (Bennett, Gregory, Leaver, & Ramirez, 2012; Young, Kerlin, Teasdale, Soh, Kickul, et al., 2012), which cannot be fully understood by examining a static moment in time. Sustainable companies are characterized by their tendency to oscillate between societal and economic missions, reflecting ongoing adjustments to balance these objectives (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Smith & Besharov, 2019).

Our findings also support prior research that suggests organizations may maintain equilibrium between the diverse aspects of a multifold (in our case triple) bottom line by pursuing opportunities that address distinct aspects sequentially rather than only opportunities that simultaneously address all the aspects they seek to address (Anand et al., 2021; Belz & Binder, 2017). This in turn, and in our context, suggests that sustainable entrepreneurs may deliberately and strategically engage in mission drift or forms of mission lock-in for periods of time, until they are ready to explore a different opportunity related to a different aspect of their triple bottom line.

When sustainable entrepreneurs are confronted to tensions between the various dimensions of sustainability, they may adopt a paradoxical approach and then, they alternate their focus between different missions, thus dynamically and continuously shifting their priorities. This dynamic is essential to maintain hybridity over time (Smith & Besharov, 2019) and enables sustainable entrepreneurs to explore a wider array of possibilities.

The intensity of these dynamics may be mitigated when formal structures, organizational members, and external stakeholders align with specific components rather than embracing multiple objectives simultaneously (Smith & Besharov, 2019). To regain flexibility and dynamism, sustainable entrepreneurs can organize training

sessions or establish negotiation spaces (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014b). These initiatives aim to raise awareness among stakeholders about aspects of sustainability they may not fully understand, thereby enhancing overall engagement with the venture's diverse goals (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014b).

Prior research also shows that the dynamics of hybrid organizations evolve over time (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022), they do not reveal much about the nature of those evolutions. Our research shows that in some cases sustainable entrepreneurs are approaching mission lock-in but then bumped against the guardrail (Smith & Besharov, 2019). In other cases, if they have the choice, sustainable entrepreneurs continuously favor one or two dimensions. For instance, Greg continuously focused on the social and environmental objectives, often losing sight of the economic goals.

De Bernardi & Arenas (2022) and Staessens et al. (2019) describe mission lock-in as a systematic, and thus ongoing, issue. (Staessens et al., 2019, p.23). However, our longitudinal study showed that some entrepreneurs fell into short periods of mission lock-in but then revised their approach to navigating the diverse aspects of their triple bottom line, restoring equilibrium among their pursuit of those aspects—at least temporarily. Those entrepreneurs were subjected, at risk, of mission lock-in but did not face mission lock-in as it did not last.

We follow the metaphor of a pendulum proposed by De Bernardi & Arenas (2022), and go a step further stating that those oscillations present three specific features. First, the fixing point might be slightly offset on one of the dimensions. When it is the case, we might expect a permanent mission drift or social and/or environmental mission lock-in. Second, the speed of the oscillations might vary. Some sustainable entrepreneurs are indeed constantly exploiting social, environmental, and economic oriented opportunities whereas others are discovering and exploiting one opportunity after another. The third feature is the amplitude of the oscillations. Some sustainable entrepreneurs might follow shorter oscillations and favor hybrid opportunities (integration approach) while others might rather demonstrate larger oscillations and exploit a wide range of opportunities (paradox approach), from exclusively economic opportunities to exclusively social or environmental opportunities without threatening the general balance of their hybridity.

Distinguishing mission drift or mission lock-ins from unintentional instances of these phenomena may not be easy (Grimes et al., 2020; Varendh-Mansson, Wry, & Szafarz, 2020). However, based on our case analyses, we suggest that conscious statements of willingness and/or intention to return to a maintained hybrid goal equilibrium from entrepreneurs, as opposed to expressions of an ongoing, unconscious preference for fixation on specific dimensions of their multifaceted goals and activities, may distinguish the former from the latter. In other words, strategic changes in hybrid organizational dynamics involve a temporary shift, but also a clear willingness and/or intention to return to an equilibrium, while unintentional changes do not demonstrate the same willingness and/or intention, instead of continuing to favor and fixate on one dimension of an organization's multiple goals or activities over others.

Consequently, when sustainable entrepreneurs are facing mission lock-in, they make minimal or no adjustments to their strategic orientations, even as their enterprises increasingly prioritize one dimension over others. Drawing on Smith & Besharov's metaphor (2019), the enterprise lacks 'guardrails' that would maintain alignment with its hybrid mission, consequently drifting into areas that deviate from its intended hybridity. As exemplified by Greg's situation, in such scenarios, entrepreneurs struggle to identify and exploit opportunities related to the neglected dimensions.

Our field investigations and analyses lead us to propose a refinement—or rather, an expansion and diversification—of the existing definition of mission lock-ins. Specifically, prior studies state that mission lock-in occurs when social entrepreneurs “systematically overemphasize social objectives and lose sight of economic aspects” (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019, p. 3). However, our findings suggest the following conceptualization of the phenomenon in a context of triple bottom line:

- Mission lock-in occurs when sustainable entrepreneurs overemphasize social *and/or environmental* objectives and lose sight of economic aspects.
- Dual mission lock-in occurs when sustainable entrepreneurs overemphasize social and environmental objectives and lose sight of economic aspects.
- *Social* mission lock in occurs when sustainable entrepreneurs overemphasize social objectives and lose sight of economic and/or environmental aspects.

- *Environmental* mission lock-in occurs when sustainable entrepreneurs overemphasize environmental objectives and lose sight of economic and/or social aspects.

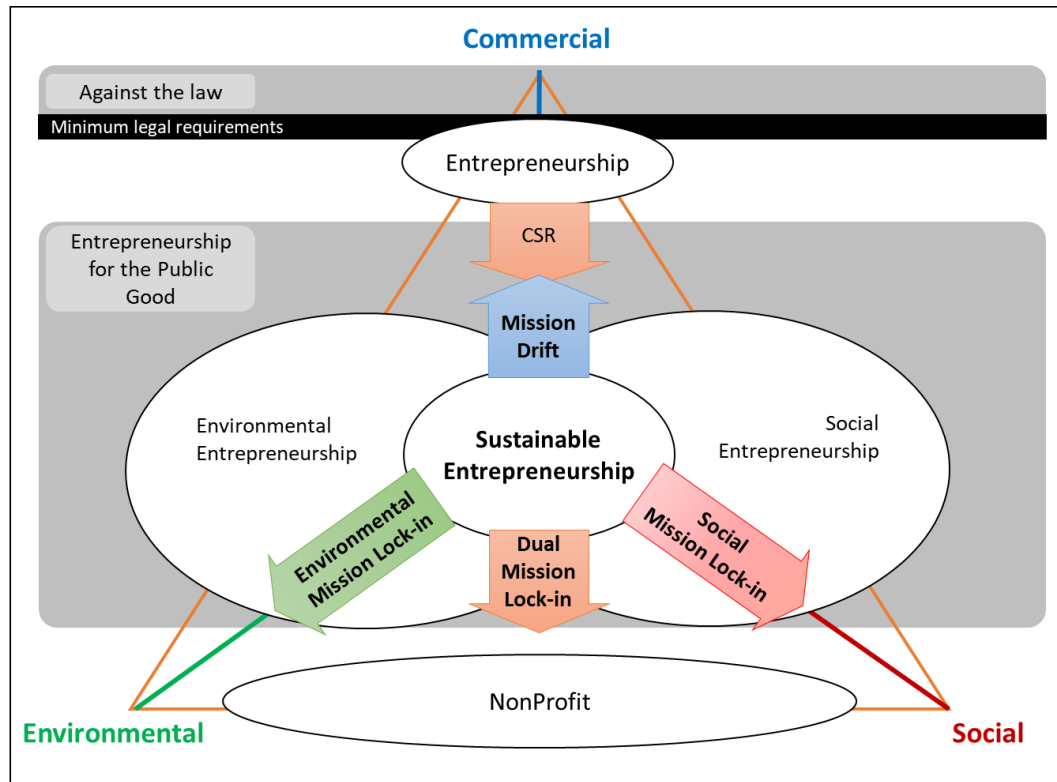
The distinction between hybridity and mission lock-in is subtle. Is mission lock-in primarily a result of an excessive focus on societal missions, or does it stem from a neglect of economic issues? Our research suggests that it is, in fact, a combination of those two components that precipitates mission lock-in. This hypothesis is supported by various indicators throughout our study. First, our study shows that the logics of action provide insights into which dimensions the sustainable entrepreneur is most familiar with and whether there is an imbalance among these logics. Analyzing these logics helps reveal if the entrepreneur disproportionately emphasizes certain dimensions over others, potentially leading to mission lock-in. Second, analyzing the nature of opportunities that the entrepreneur identifies and capitalizes on can yield further insights. A critical sign of mission lock-in is when an entrepreneur fails to recognize, identify, and leverage opportunities in neglected dimensions, thereby significantly influencing the organization's strategic choices and its hybridity, or the threats it encounters. Lastly, consistent preference for one or two dimensions, without variation over time, suggests an effective case of mission lock-in or mission drift.

Based on our research, we have built a model of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship, locating key vulnerabilities such as mission lock-in and mission drift – see figure 5.

Mission lock-in, like mission drift, can be mitigated by implementing guardrails (Smith & Besharov, 2019) as well as by recognizing the influence of underlying motivations (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). Smith & Besharov (2019, p27) define guardrails as 'formal structures, leadership expertise, and external stakeholder relationships associated with each side of the hybrid'. Our case studies reveal that while these guardrails help sustainable entrepreneurs avoid straying too far from their mission, entrepreneurs are also naturally inclined toward specific missions based on their motivations, which may be pro-business, pro-social, or pro-environmental. For example, entrepreneurs driven by a desire for autonomy through economic self-sufficiency see this as a way to gain independence from certain financial backers. However, entrepreneurs generally do not

operate in isolation within their organizations. Their management teams and other collaborators, who may also be motivated by specific goals, significantly influence decision-making processes, and consequently the organization's hybridity.

FIGURE 5 – MODEL OF HYBRIDITY IN SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP



This study contributes to previous discussions on organizational hybridity. Battilana & Lee 2014 revealed organizational activities, strategies, structures, processes, and meanings to maintain multiple organizational forms. Smith & Besharov 2019 studied the role of guardrails to combine contradictory and interdependent missions. Those studies brought insight into how hybridity may be maintained through the organization. We contributed to those literature bringing insights from the individual entrepreneurs' level.

This study builds upon previous discussions of organizational hybridity. Battilana & Lee, (2014b) explored how organizations maintain multiple forms through their activities, strategies, structures, processes, and cultural meanings. Similarly, Smith & Besharov (2019) investigated the role of guardrails in managing contradictory yet interdependent missions. These studies have enhanced our understanding of how hybridity can be sustained at the organizational level. Our contribution extends this body of knowledge

by providing fresh insights from the perspective of entrepreneurs, emphasizing how individual decision-making influences the maintenance of hybridity.

Finally, our research extends Patzelt & Shepherd (2011) 's model, which posits that prior knowledge – whether entrepreneurial or related to natural and communal environments – and motivations, whether for personal gain or to benefit others, are critical in recognizing sustainable opportunities. We extend this model by demonstrating that both knowledge and motivation shape the underlying logics that entrepreneurs use, which in turn affect their capability to identify and pursue sustainable opportunities.

4.2. Sustainability interactions in small hybrid organizations in South-Benin

Our paper explores a relatively unexplored area of research: hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship. Additionally, our study is set in a distinctive context made of small organizations embedded within the socio-cultural landscape of Southern Benin. We discuss how this specific context and the characteristics of the ecotourism sector influence the prior knowledge and motivations of entrepreneurs. These factors, in turn, shape the underlying logics that drive their actions, thus impacting organizational hybridity and the risk of mission lock-in in these settings.

Key research in the field has primarily examined large hybrid organizations. For instance, Battilana & Dorado's work included Banco Sol, with over 400 employees, and Los Andes, with more than 100 employees. Similarly, Smith & Besharov focused on Digital Divide Data, which employs over 1200 people. In contrast, our study shifts the focus to smaller hybrid organizations, specifically sustainable organizations with fewer than 50 employees. This shift is significant as the smaller size of these organizations introduces unique operational dynamics, including more adaptable and smaller formal structures and closer engagements with external stakeholders, which serve as critical guardrails as described by (Smith & Besharov, 2019).

Smaller organizations often maintain closer relationships with external stakeholders, a dynamic that can inadvertently increase the risk of mission lock-in. Indeed, sustainable entrepreneurs can be particularly motivated by the social cause when they have a proximity to the social problem (Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omorede, 2014) and when they feel a sense of obligation (Ruskin, Seymour, & Webster, 2016) towards the

community. Due to their proximity to the issues, sustainable entrepreneurs may feel an intensified drive toward social and environmental causes, thus reinforcing their commitment to these specific missions. This intensified drive can, however, enhance the risk of becoming overly committed to the social mission at the expense of the other missions.

Furthermore, internally, discussions among employees with varied orientations, whether hybrid or more aligned with one of the three missions, facilitate the maintenance of hybridity by socializing employees to the aspects they are less acquainted (Battilana & Lee, 2014a). In smaller organizations, the limited number of employees enhances this interaction, including exchanges with the leading entrepreneur. Such proximity not only fosters mutual understanding across different missions but also strengthens the organization's overall commitment to maintaining hybridity.

Creativity is often constrained by pressures towards bureaucratization (Smith & Besharov, 2019), which are more prevalent in larger organizations. Consequently, smaller organizations may benefit from greater flexibility and agility. As a result, we anticipate that oscillations between different missions will be both more significant and more rapid in these smaller entities.

In addition to considerations of organizational size, the NGO status of hybrid organizations within the Beninese ecotourism sector warrants further discussion. As is common in many African contexts, there is no specific legal framework for sustainable ventures (Littlewood & Holt, 2018), which often compels these organizations to adopt either NGO or corporate statuses. Within the ecotourism sector, many entities have chosen NGO status, with one entity incorporating an additional travel company. The NGO status brings specific expectations from external stakeholders who expect these organizations to prioritize their social and environmental missions. Stakeholders may criticize any commercial approach that extends beyond the legal status, and doing so, they are serving as a guardrail that helps maintain focus on social and environmental objectives. However, this setup can also lead sustainable entrepreneurs to overemphasize social and environmental missions, thereby risking mission lock-in.

Furthermore, the context significantly influences how tensions are managed (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). Our research focused on an African sociocultural context, which is characterized by a strong emphasis on spirituality (Kaboré, 2010) and community dynamics (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan et al., 2015). These factors manifest variably and with differing levels of intensity across various African settings.

Beninese spirituality is notably influenced by Vodoun, a religion that forms a vital link between Nature and communities. Research has consistently highlighted Vodoun's role in conserving natural resources, notably through the protection of sacred forests (sources). Vodoun can play a significant role in mitigating tensions between social and environmental dimensions. In our study, two sustainable entrepreneurs leveraged Vodoun not only to enhance environmental awareness but also to ensure the conservation of natural habitats. Additionally, religious beliefs provide a significant source of motivation for initiating entrepreneurial activities that benefit communities (Omorede 2014). Therefore, the spiritual context in Benin can also act as a powerful attractor, influencing sustainable entrepreneurs to possibly overcommit to their mission-driven strategies, thereby risking mission lock-in.

African contexts are characterized by the significant role of community in those societies. Communities are “an aggregation of individuals who share place, identity, fate, interest, and/or practice” (Bacq, Hertel, & Lumpkin, 2022, p. 2). African communities are defined by tightly knit networks of individuals with extensive and dense social connections, founded on principles of mutual aid, solidarity, and reciprocal exchanges (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006; West, 2014). In such contexts, entrepreneurs who are well integrated into their communities may serve as protective guardians of social missions (Smith & Besharov, 2019), particularly if they are active members of these groups (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Dubini, 1989). Consequently, these community networks play an essential role as guardrails for the social missions of sustainable organizations.

Furthermore, communities often engage as internal stakeholders in ecotourism projects, contributing to, supporting, or directly involving themselves in the initiatives. This dual role as participants and beneficiaries enriches their impact within the hybrid

organizational structure. These interactions also foster platforms for negotiation and discussion, crucial for sustaining organizational hybridity (Battilana & Lee, 2014a). Nevertheless, these engagements also promote an understanding of and support for the economic missions of these organizations, helping to avert the risk of mission lock-in by balancing social, environmental, and economic objectives.

Southern Benin presents compelling case studies in sustainable entrepreneurship due to the inextricable links between social (community) and environmental dimensions (Adams et al., 2004; Nilsson et al., 2018; Reyers & Selig, 2020; Selomane et al., 2019; UNDP, 2020), especially in an African setting. Additionally, the success of ecotourism ventures hinges on a synergistic relationship between a supportive community, a well-preserved environment, and robust economic activity. These elements are so interdependent that isolating one from the others could jeopardize the viability of the enterprises. Therefore, ecotourism entrepreneurs in Southern Benin must cultivate and maintain these interconnections to not only sustain but also enhance their operations.

4.3. Managerial Contributions

Our study also yields several interesting managerial contributions to the practice of sustainable entrepreneurship, and for consideration by sustainable entrepreneurs' stakeholders.

First, distinguishing between intentional and unintentional mission lock-in is crucial for authorities and intermediary organizations that support sustainable entrepreneurs. Understanding these differences can help these bodies identify when ventures are not temporarily making a strategic move and are at risk of jeopardizing their long-term viability due to an overemphasis on social and/or environmental goals. This knowledge enables them to guide entrepreneurs effectively, supporting them balancing the various sustainability goals and activities.

Second, our research suggests that some sustainable entrepreneurs may benefit from appropriate trainings—e.g. in how to understand and/or adopt economic logics to avoid the risk of mission lock-in. It also suggests that entrepreneurs should regularly investigate the business model – and specifically the profitability – of each project they

run to assess its economic self-sufficiency, and potentially reevaluate the emphasis they place on economic logics, if necessary.

Finally, our findings confirm previous research that suggests social and/or environmental efficiency requires a minimum level of economic efficiency (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). However, we show that practitioners must think critically about mission lock-in: Rather than a negative phenomenon that damages a venture's economic and ultimately social effectiveness, as it is presented in the limited body of literature that explores the topic, we present cases in which mission lock-in may not actually be harmful. For example, and to extend our findings, should practitioners take a negative view of mission lock-in that aligns with a venture's primary goals and motivations, but is constrained by guardrails that, for example, prevent a venture from over-focusing on one aspect of its multifaceted missions to the point that it ignores economic considerations unto bankruptcy?

4.4. Limitations and Future Research Avenues

Our study focused on sustainable entrepreneurs operating in one specific sector (ecotourism) and in one specific institutional context (southern Benin). Further studies are necessary to validate the applicability of our findings to sustainable entrepreneurship in other sectors and/or socio-cultural contexts. Further research on mission lock-in and hybridity dynamics in other contexts, and especially among women as opposed to our all-man entrepreneur sample pool, may be particularly interesting. Oakley (1997) notably demonstrated that women may approach entrepreneurial dilemmas in more humanistic ways than men. Women sustainable entrepreneurs may therefore be affected differently by the mission lock-in.

Our research also raises the possibility that sustainable venture activities and outcomes may vary according to an entrepreneur's hybridity logics profile. Some actors fear an erosion of the mission even if a smaller social impact can be mitigated by a greater market share, resulting in an increased overall social impact (Hockerts, 2010). Applied to ecotourism, we might assume that a smaller social impact observed in a larger number of villages might result in a greater social impact in total. In other words,

the greater affinity for the economic dimension could generate more impact. We encourage further investigation into this potential relationship.

Extant research demonstrates that the pursuit of collective interests (e.g. social and/or environmental goals) differentiates social and sustainable entrepreneurs from conventional economic entrepreneurs (Bacq et al., 2016). As sustainable entrepreneurs with multifaceted, hybrid goals exploit a diverse array of opportunities, we might assume they have a greater number of possibilities to recover if one of their projects goes awry. In other words, their ability to and interest in exploiting both social, environmental, and economic opportunities might lend them a greater degree of resilience than solely economically focused ventures, and thus a better chance of ultimately carrying out projects. For example, they might mobilize private funding, develop new commercial products, and solicit philanthropic funds simultaneously, whereas an economic entrepreneur might only be able to solicit private funding. Further research could explore this potential—as well as the effects of mission lock-in and/or hybridity maintenance on sustainable venture resilience.

Future research should also explore potential antecedents to hybridity. To wit, the sustainable entrepreneurs in our study made strategic decisions based on their own logics—but often, we found, after they had sounded out key stakeholders, such as their boards of directors, management teams, tourists, and beneficiaries. For instance, their communities may support the creation of a societal impact (Bacq et al., 2022) but could also influence the sustainable entrepreneurs' actions. New studies could, specifically, investigate how one or more of these stakeholder groups might influence a sustainable entrepreneur's hybridity dynamics. Theories focused on social networks, such as social capital theory, may offer interesting avenues for this line of future research.

Finally, investigations of hybridity through the lens of institution theory may prove fruitful in the future. For instance, investigations could explore whether a sustainable venture's legal status influences its structure and organization, whether policy measures push ventures towards commercialization and/or influence their hybridity dynamics (Staessens et al., 2019), or whether governments influence the objectives sustainable ventures pursue (Staessens et al., 2019).

Future research should further explore which factors interact and influence opportunity recognition and exploitation in sustainable entrepreneurship. For instance, prior knowledge might shape the entrepreneurial logics, or conversely, these logics could dictate the type of knowledge entrepreneurs seek or are receptive to. Similarly, our study underscores the influence of motivations in prompting entrepreneurs to adopt specific logics. However, it is also plausible that the established logics could guide the motivations to which entrepreneurs are most responsive. Clarifying these relationships would enhance our understanding of how sustainable entrepreneurs prioritize and act upon various business opportunities.

Conclusion

Sustainable entrepreneurs offer unique and promising solutions to dire social, environmental, and economic challenges facing societies. These hybrid actors must manage a triple bottom line of potentially complementary and/or conflicting logics, activities, and goals. Investigations into hybridity in social entrepreneurship spaces (Battilana & Lee, 2014a; Doherty et al., 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013; Smith & Besharov, 2019), and into the phenomenon of mission drift (Ebrahim et al., 2014b; Fowler, 2000; Jones, 2007; Weisbrod, 2004), have shed some light on this balancing act. However, we contribute to this stream of literature by investigating tensions between sustainable ventures' navigation of tensions between their social and environmental dimensions, or the phenomenon of mission lock-in within this entrepreneurial context.

We specifically focused on understanding how sustainable entrepreneurs deal with the potentially conflicting social and environmental logics inherent in their unique triple bottom line, and what effects their hybrid logics have on the opportunities they discover, evaluate, and exploit. We analyzed the justifications, embedded in interview statements and other data points, that sustainable entrepreneurs active in the ecotourism sector in southern Benin gave for their activities, as well as the types of opportunities they discovered, created, and exploited (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Our analyses shed new light on these types of organizations' hybridity logics and dynamics, and how effective mission lock-in may be identified.

Our study offered two main contributions to the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship hybridity: First, we documented previously unexplored tensions that may arise within these ventures between their social and the environmental dimensions. We identified three distinct forms of mission lock-in: dual mission lock-in, social mission lock-in and environmental mission lock-in. We proposed an extension and modification of the established definition of mission lock-in (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019), to reflect these distinct forms of mission lock-in, and the ways mission lock-in can manifest within the context we examined. Furthermore, our case studies offer novel insights into the dynamic nature of hybridity. We specifically examined the effectiveness of guardrails and motivations in preventing mission lock-in, enhancing our understanding of how these elements function within hybrid organizations. Additionally, we expanded upon Patzelt & Shepherd (2011) 's model of recognition of sustainable development opportunities, which posits that prior knowledge and motivations are crucial to this recognition process. Our findings indicate that entrepreneurial logics may significantly influence opportunity recognition.

Second, our investigation into the ecotourism sector in Benin presents a unique context for studying sustainable entrepreneurship. This sector is characterized by small ventures operating within a sociocultural framework deeply influenced by spiritual and community values. This setting not only enriched our study but also underscored the distinct challenges and opportunities that small sustainable enterprises face in such contexts.

These novel contributions enrich the empirical landscape with meaningful new insights into mission lock-in, thereby broadening our understanding of this underexplored phenomenon. Enhancing our knowledge in this area is crucial for both scholars and practitioners as they navigate the complexities of sustainable ventures. As societies face an increasing array of challenges in the years ahead, understanding how these uniquely hybrid organization's function, and recognizing the associated risks and opportunities, becomes essential. This understanding will better equip us to support the proliferation and success of sustainable ventures in addressing global sustainability challenges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX II – OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN ORDERS OF WORTH – CONSOLIDATED FRAMEWORK OF BOLTANSKI & THÉVENOT (PATRIOTTA ET AL., 2011)

Table I. Overview of the seven orders of worth in the consolidated framework of Boltanski and Thévenot

<i>‘Common worlds’</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Industrial</i>	<i>Civic</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Inspired</i>	<i>Fame</i>	<i>Green</i>
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Price, cost	Technical efficiency	Collective welfare	Esteem, reputation	Grace, singularity, creativeness	Renown, fame	Environmental friendliness
Test	Market competitiveness	Competence, reliability, planning	Equality and solidarity	Trustworthiness	Passion, enthusiasm	Popularity, audience, recognition	Sustainability, renewability
Form of relevant proof	Monetary	Measurable: criteria, statistics	Formal, official	Oral, exemplary, personally warranted	Emotional involvement and expression	Semiotic	Ecological ecosystem
Qualified objects	Freely circulating market good or service	Infrastructure, project, technical object, method, plan	Rules and regulations, fundamental rights, welfare policies	Patrimony, locale, heritage	Emotionally invested body or item, the sublime	Sign, media	Pristine wilderness, healthy environment, natural habitat
Qualified human beings	Customer, consumer, merchant, seller	Engineer, professional, expert	Equal citizens, solidarity unions	Authority	Creative beings, artists	Celebrity	Environmentalists, ecologists
Time formation	Short-term, flexibility	Long-term planned future	Perennial	Customary part	Eschatological, revolutionary, visionary moment	Vogue, trend	Future generations
Space formation	Globalization	Cartesian space	Detachment	Local, proximal anchoring	Presence	Communication network	Planet ecosystem

Source: Thévenot et al. (2000, p. 241).

TABLE I: SEMANTIC MARKERS – SEVEN ‘COMMON WORLDS’

‘Common worlds’	Reference	Semantic Markers
Market	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Assets/Capital, Attention to others, Buy, Buyer, Calculation, Compassion, Competition, Competitor, Contract, Contract concluded, Conversion, Customer, Demand, Desire, Detachment, Distance, Economically, Employee, Finance, Freedom, Get, Interest, Love, Luxury, Management/management/business, Margin, Market, Millionaire, Money, Monopoly, Oligopoly, Openness, Opportunity, Ownership, Payment, Policies, Price, Production, Profit, Property, Remuneration, Result, Rivalry, Salary, Saleable/sellable, Savings, Self-employed, Selfishness, Sell, Seller, Settled deal, Supply, Trade, Value, Wealth, Winner
	Patriotta, 2011	Allowance, Business processes, Cheap, Compensation, Costs, Dividends, Economical efficiency, Economy, Euro, Expensive, Forfeit, Investor, Liberalization, Profit, Profit maximization, Services, Success, Supplier
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	Benefit, Business, Client, Commerce, Deal, Independent worker, Liberty, Opening, Politics, Possess, Salesman, Sympathy, Wages
	Markers from the coding process	Budget, Cheque, Circuit (tourist), Commission, Company, Develop the activity, Entrepreneurship, Exploit (resources), Import, Means (financial), Microcredit, Negotiate, Offer, Partnership, Profitable, money-making, Promotion, Success, Tourism, Tours (tourists), Visitor, Wage-earning

Industrial	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Adapt, Analyze, Anticipate, Averages, Axis, Calculations, Calendar, Cause, Condition, Correct, Definition, Detect, Determine, Dynamic control (safety/security), Efficiency/effectiveness, Efficiency, Energy (at work), Environment, Experts, Formalize, Functional, Future, Cogwheels, Graph, Hypothesis, Implement/implant, Instrumental Action, Integrate, Interaction, Light, Management, Managers, Means, Measure, Method, Motivation, Necessary, Need, Objective, Operational, Operators, Opposed to risk, Optimize, Order/Classify, Organize, Performance, Plan, Predictability, Probability, Process, Professionals, Progress, Reliability, Series, Setup/Setting up/Implementation, Solution, Solve, Space, Specialists, Stabilize, Standard, Standardize, System, Task, Test, Time Models, Tools, Variable, Working
	Patriotta, 2011	Aggregators, Analysis, Causes, Check, Coal, Components, Consequences, Construction, Degree of efficiency, Emergency power supply system, Energy, Faults, Information, Installation, Knowledge, Lack of danger, Measurement instruments, Nuclear power, Perturbation, Production, Proof, Report/reporting, Scale, Security, Security management, Security system, Security tests, Supply system, Technique, Technological, Technological effects, Technological event, Technological production process, Technology, Time, Uncontrollability
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	Accountability, Direction, Goal, Impact, Indicators, Interact, Machinery, Means method, Methodology, Person in charge, Productivity, Results, Rigorous, Robust, Trial, Work energy
	Markers from the coding process	Database, Factory, Infrastructures, Location (space), Logistic means, Tests, Visitors guinea pigs, Walk (sense of functioning)
Civic	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Actions, Active mobilization, Aspiration for civil rights, Assembling, Association, Being moral, Code, Collective, Collective will, Common objective, Constant contact with the organization, Consultation, Cooperation, Corporatism, Decisions and ordering, Declaration, Democracy, Democratically, Election process, Escape from chaos (division) and isolation, Exclude, Extending, Formality, Gathering, Gathering for collective action, Governed, Join, Law, Legal, Legal and formal steps, Legal text, Legislation, Liberation from selfish interests, Membership, Mobilization, Movement, Official, Organizational goals, Participation, Processes, Recruiting, Renunciation of the particular, Representative / Delegate, Republic, Rights and obligations, Rule, Solidarity, State, Transform interests of each into a collective interest, Unification, Unitary concept
	Patriotta, 2011	Agreement, Anticompetitive, Approbation, Cartel, Central state control, Control, Corporate secrets, Democratic principle, Legal evaluation, Legal force, Legal precondition, Legal way, Legality, Nuclear consensus, Orderliness, Political commission, Political interests, Political intervention, Political misuse, Political negotiation, Political report, Precept, Proposal, Public interest, Reaction of state institutions, Resolution, Right/false, Socialization, State observation, State regulation, Suing, Violation of law
	Cloutier &	Assemble, Assembly, Citizen action, Collectives, Community,

	Langley, 2017	Consensus, Debate, Equality, Freeing people from selfish interest, Liaising, Moral beings, Political activism, Statement, State-run, The legal text
	Markers from the coding process	Arrest, Corruption, Criminality, Donation, Education, Funding (donation, donors), Governance, Government, Group of volunteers, Helping people, Learning, Nature clubs, NGO (GIZ), Population, Raising awareness, Right of reply, Showing a video, Social, Traffickers, Training
Green	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	
	Patriotta, 2011	Atomic waste, Biomass, Climate, Climate catastrophe, Climate change, Climate protection, Earth, Ecological, Environment, Environmental pollution, Environmental protection, Faune, Global warming, Health, Influence or danger on environment and human beings, Plants, Protection of the nature, Radioactive pollution, Reduction of CO2-emissions, Renewable energies, Rescue of the planet, Sustainability
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	
	Markers from the coding process	Agroecology, Agroforestry, Aquaponics, Aquarium, Biodiversity, Bush, Forest, Future Seed, Garbage, Killing (an animal), Mare, Medical, Nature Conservation, Park, Permaculture, Preservation, Protecting these resources, River, Solar, Waste, Wildlife, Wildlife (animal names)
Inspired	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Affective relationships, Anthroposophy, Anxiety of creation, Creativity, Dream, Emotional, Escapism, Fantastic, Fantasy, Feeling, Ghost, Idea, Inspiration, Intuition, Invisible, Irrational, Magic, Memories, Myth, Passion, Reflex, Religion, Spirit, Super-human beings, Unconscious, Un-measurable, Vision, Warmth
	Patriotta, 2011	Fascination, Genius
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	Desires, Flower, Grow, Marginal, Possibility, Unique, Wacky
	Markers from the coding process	Bible, Catholic, Demon, Evil spirit, Jesus, Love, Sacred, Taboo, Trance, Twin (Voodoo cult), Voodoo
Domestic	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Authority, Benevolent, Celebrations, Clothing, Common Sense/Good sense, Cooperation, Cordial Behavior, Debt, Determination of a position in the hierarchy, Duties (even more than rights), Engenderment, Faithful, Family, Family Ceremonies, Firmness, Frank, Generation, Harmony, Heraldry, Hierarchy, Honesty, Honour, Informed, Inscription of signs of value (titles), King, Leader, Loyalty/loyal, Punctuality, Rejection of Selfishness, Respect, Responsibility, Shame, Subordination, Superior, Task, Tradition, Transparency, Trust, Trustworthy
	Patriotta,	Arrogant, Common identity, Common sense within organization,

	2011	Dialogue, Euphemism, German nation, Information, Integration, Irresponsible, Seriousness, Transferability of international problems on German nuclear power plants
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	Belonging, Duty, Home, Honest, Network, Safety, Trusting, Values, Well-being
	Markers from the coding process	Dignitaries, Elderly, Police, Traditional
Fame	Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006	Audience, Brand, Desire to be recognized, Influence, Journalist, Message, Minimizing, Misleading, Mobilization, Opinion Leader, Persuasion, PR, Press Officer, Promotion, Propaganda, Public, Public Attention, Public Image, Public Opinion, Public Relations Officer, Receiver, Reputation, Sender, Spokesperson, Success (having)
	Patriotta, 2011	Advertising, Banner headlines, Boycott, Breach of promise, Camouflage, Campaign, Communication strategy, Fig leaf, Hearsay, Lip service, Lye, Media contact, Personality, Pillory, Populism, Public debate, Public legitimating, Public pressure, Recognition, Red herring, Reporting
	Cloutier & Langley, 2017	Buzz, Cool, Coverage, Credibility, Down playing, Media, Photogenic, Press, Showcase
	Markers from the coding process	Awards, Broadcast, Camera, Catalogue, Films, Image, Prizes, Projection, Report, Speeches, Television, TV show

Chapter 2 – Exploring Motivations and Demotivations

Abstract

Sustainable entrepreneurship, focused on addressing complex social and environmental challenges (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer, & Salignac, 2021), requires a comprehensive understanding of motivations and demotivations that impact entrepreneurial pursuits. This paper aims to investigate sustainable entrepreneurs' motivations and demotivations among sustainable entrepreneurs. Prior studies have focused on one or two dimensions of the triple bottom line and overlooked demotivations. This research seeks to provide a holistic of motivating factors driving sustainable entrepreneurs and demotivating factors hindering or even preventing them from persevering their activities. Furthermore, we aim to understand how those motivating and demotivating factors interact.

Based on a framework drawn from established research on entrepreneurial, pro-commercial, pro-social and pro-environmental motivations, this study conducts a longitudinal multiple case study within the ecotourism sector in Benin. By examining sustainable entrepreneurs from this sector, we offer a comprehensive framework of sustainable entrepreneurship motivations and demotivations.

Our findings unveil distinct motivational dynamics among sustainable entrepreneurs. We show that, for some sustainable entrepreneurs, pro-social motivations can be instrumental to achieve final environmental goals whereas other sustainable entrepreneurs are driven by instrumental environmental motivation to reach final social goals. Finally, while motivations are self- and other-oriented, our analyses showed that demotivation is mainly other-oriented. A major insight of our study is the prominent influence of stakeholders as both source of motivation and demotivation for sustainable entrepreneurs. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering sustainable entrepreneurship and avoiding threats on the organization's hybridity.

Keywords: Sustainable entrepreneurship, motivations, demotivations, ecotourism.

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Introduction

Our societies are grappling with complex social and environmental issues, highlighting the inadequacy of conventional approaches in addressing these issues (Hockerts, 2017). In response, a growing cohort of sustainable entrepreneurs has emerged (Parrish, 2010; Schlange, 2006). What sets these individuals apart is their unique ability to simultaneously address social and environmental concerns (Vuorio, Puumalainen, & Fellnhofer, 2018), adopting a holistic approach. Nonetheless, sustainable entrepreneurs encounter a plethora of challenges, ranging from typical entrepreneurial hurdles to more multidimensional difficulties stemming from their dual focus on entrepreneurship and societal good, straddling the line between entrepreneurship and nonprofit (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019). They actively pursue the public good, striving to balance the diverse dimensions of sustainability in a holistic way, often navigating the intricate tensions inherent in the triple bottom line framework (Vuorio et al., 2018).

In such a challenging landscape, motivation emerges as a crucial factor in the realization of sustainable entrepreneurial projects. Motivation serves as a vital link between the intent to undertake entrepreneurial ventures and the actual initiation of these activities (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). It drives entrepreneurs to undertake and persevere in entrepreneurial activities (Elfving, 2009). In other words, motivational factors are the driving force behind moving from intention to realization of these sustainable entrepreneurial projects. Research on motivations shed light on why entrepreneurs make one choice rather than another and why entrepreneurs subjected to the same stimuli may make different choices (Elfving, 2009; Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). As sustainable entrepreneurs aim at creating social, environmental and economic value at the same time, they are subject to motivational conflicts that will influence their goals and activities (Vuorio et al., 2018). Patzelt & Shepherd (2011) stated that research in entrepreneurship was not sufficient to explain the phenomenon in sustainable entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs may be propelled by strong social and environmental values. However, their actions and choices, which prioritize economic objectives and profit, indicate motivations distinct from those of entrepreneurs who prioritize social and/or environmental missions and view the economic mission as a means to achieve social and environmental objectives. Previous research has underscored the distinct motivations of social entrepreneurs, who are propelled by altruism or the aspiration to create benefits for others (Bacq, Hartog, & Hoogendoorn, 2016), and environmental entrepreneurs, who are motivated by the preservation of the environment (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Given that sustainable entrepreneurs strive to integrate both social and environmental objectives, it follows that their motivations are likely to encompass a combination of these factors.

Patzelt & Shepherd (2011) developed a model that elucidates the identification of sustainable development opportunities through a combination of knowledge and motivation. They delineated two types of motivation: a pro-environmental motivation termed 'Perception of threat of the natural/communal environment,' and a pro-social motivation termed 'Altruism towards others.' These motivations influence the priorities individuals assign between their social and natural environments (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurs require distinctive values and motives to maintain equilibrium among the social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Munoz, Farmer, Winterton, & Barraket, 2015; Parrish, 2010). In the opposite direction, individuals can also be demotivated. Demotivation corresponds to exerting negative influences on people's motivational states (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011).

What is not yet clear is the role of different motivations on various entrepreneurship types (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezcua, 2013; Vuorio et al., 2018) especially in sustainable entrepreneurship (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010; Muñoz & Dimov, 2015; Vuorio et al., 2018). We can expect sustainable entrepreneurs to be subject to various types of motivations related to the triple bottom line. Understanding what motivates these entrepreneurs to launch sustainable activities and to persevere despite the difficulties inherent to the triple bottom line is an important issue from a theoretical point of view, but also to be able to support and foster sustainable entrepreneurship. For instance, motivational factors could explain why some sustainable entrepreneurs remain hybrid while others face mission drift or mission lock-in. Scholars have examined entrepreneurial motivations (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011) and pro-social motivations (Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omorede, 2014; Ruskin, Seymour, & Webster, 2016a). Nevertheless, understanding the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs requires a more comprehensive approach, as sustainable entrepreneurs integrate social goals and environmental goals within the same venture (Parrish, 2010; Parrish & Tilley, 2010). More specifically, current research does not address how sustainable entrepreneurs' motivation allows them to persevere in their activities, and how they manage to remain hybrid by avoiding the pitfalls of mission drift or mission lock-in. Most studies focused on one type of motivation, but we still need to understand the interplay between different types of motivations. Furthermore, studies on the prioritization between self-oriented and other-oriented motivations reveal contradictory results (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012) and prioritization has not been investigated in sustainable entrepreneurship.

Despite our efforts, we haven't found a single recent article in a good journal dealing with demotivation in entrepreneurship, or even in management. Nevertheless, we may expect demotivational factors could discourage sustainable entrepreneurs in their activities or push them to abandon one of the sustainable dimensions.

Our research seeks to understand the mix of motivation and demotivation factors influencing sustainable entrepreneurs' actions and decisions. Therefore, this paper seeks to address the following central research question: what motivates sustainable entrepreneurs to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career?

Moreover, other research questions arise from this central question: what demotivates sustainable entrepreneurs? How are sustainable entrepreneurs dealing with conflicting or complementary social and/or green (de)motivations?

This study follows a longitudinal multiple case-study design, with in-depth analysis of sustainable entrepreneurs active in the ecotourism sector in Benin. By employing qualitative modes of inquiry, we identify the motives of sustainable entrepreneurs. We link each motivation to a corresponding dimension being entrepreneurial, commercial, social, or environmental. Then, we followed the same procedure for the demotivation factors.

Although some research has been carried out on entrepreneurial motivations, the mechanism by which motivations can shorten or prolong entrepreneurial action has not been established (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Therefore, we compare the combinations of motivation and demotivation of sustainable entrepreneurs who persevere to individuals who seem to be abandoning their sustainable entrepreneurship activities.

This is the first study to undertake an in-depth longitudinal analysis of sustainable entrepreneurship motivation and demotivation. Our data confirm previous research showing that a higher level of pro-social motivation than commercial motivation is needed to undertake sustainable entrepreneurial activities. Our research provides two important new insights into sustainable entrepreneurship motivation. First, thanks to our analyses of the interactions between social and green motivations, we show that pro-social motivation can be instrumental to achieve environmental goals and vice versa. Second, we identified demotivation factors and revealed that they are linked to stakeholders: authorities, communities, funders, and internal teams. Demotivation seems to be mainly other-oriented.

1. Theory

1.1. Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Our societies are facing multiple social crises, including poverty, inequality, hunger, and health issues, alongside pressing environmental challenges such as climate change (Masson-Delmotte, Zhai, Pirani, Connors, Péan, et al., 2021), biodiversity loss (Ceballos, Ehrlich, & Raven, 2020), and air pollution (WHO, 2016). Sustainable entrepreneurs occupy a unique position to offer effective solutions to those crises, as they navigate the complexities of these interconnected issues by embracing the three interrelated pillars of sustainability (Nilsson, Chisholm, Griggs, Howden-Chapman, McCollum, et al., 2018; Reyers & Selig, 2020; Selomane, Reyers, Biggs, & Hamann, 2019).

Sustainable entrepreneurship is defined as the "discovery, creation, and exploitation of opportunities to create future goods and services that sustain the natural and/or communal environment and provide development gain for others" (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011, p. 632).

With its hybrid nature and commitment to the triple bottom line, sustainable entrepreneurship provides a distinctive viewpoint (Anand et al., 2021; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). However, it requires an adapted approach, as the methodologies and models commonly employed in entrepreneurship literature may not be suitable for analyzing entrepreneurs and their ventures driven by a sustainable mission (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Parrish, 2010). While conventional entrepreneurs often prioritize profit as their primary objective (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2012), aiming to minimize harm in their practices (Bacq et al., 2016), sustainable entrepreneurs are driven by a broader societal mission (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

While surviving in competitive environments, they stay true to their values (Parrish, 2010). As entrepreneurs imprint their enterprises with their own values (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999), sustainable entrepreneurs are key to understand sustainable entrepreneurship. They are combining social, environmental and economic values (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Vuorio et al., 2018). However, "when combining social, environmental and economic value creation together, conflicts in underlying values and motivations influencing an individual's value creation goals are likely to emerge" (Vuorio et al., 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurs face multiple tensions related to the triple bottom line; between social and business goals (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019; Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014), between environmental and business goals (Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002) and between social and environmental goals, a relation that has yet to be fully explored in sustainable entrepreneurship literature but has been addressed in corporate sustainability studies (Nilsson et al., 2018; Selomane et al., 2019). In this

context, motivation plays a significant role as it explains which goals sustainable entrepreneurs choose to pursue (Elfving, 2009). The balance between these objectives is dynamic and undergoes evolution over time (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Smith & Besharov, 2019) and requires entrepreneurs to navigate complex and sometimes paradoxical choices among various options that could either promote or undermine one or more sustainability dimensions (Ozanne, Phipps, Weaver, Carrington, Luchs, et al., 2016; Smith & Lewis, 2011; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Those choices impact hybridity which could be threatened by mission drift, when sustainable entrepreneurs prioritize the economic goals and lose sight of the societal goals (Cornforth, 2014; Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2019), or mission lock-in, when they prioritize the societal goals and lose sight of the economic goals (Copestake, 2007; De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens, Kerstens, Bruneel, & Cherchye, 2019).

1.2. Motivation

1.2.1. Definition

We need to clarify and define the concept of motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004). At its core, motivation refers to ‘the human drive to satisfy the body’s need for survival, with its highest form reflected in achievement motivation’ (Carsrud, Brännback, Elfving, & Brandt, 2017; Maslow, 1943).

In a work environment, motivation encompasses a blend of internal and external factors that initiate actions and constitute the link between intention and action (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Studying motivations unveils the factors that activate individuals, the factors that steer their decisions and actions, and elucidate why individuals react diversely to identical stimuli (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Motivation not only impacts the acquisition of people’s skills and abilities (E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004) but also determines the characteristics of action: its direction (choice), intensity (effort), duration (persistence) (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004) and form (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Moreover, motivation can manifest consciously or subconsciously; ‘people can act without being aware of the motives and values underlying their behavior’ (E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004). Unfortunately, gathering information on subconscious motivation is difficult to achieve (E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004).

1.2.2. Emotional Antecedents: Self-Oriented Versus Other-Oriented Motives

Motivations are grounded in emotions, with scholars identifying various emotional triggers depending on the orientation of motivation, either self-oriented or other-oriented. Self-oriented motivations may stem from sources such as passion (Carsrud et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Omorede, 2014; Ruskin, Seymour, & Webster, 2016b; Shane et al., 2003), frustration (Ruskin et al., 2016b), as well as emotions like

happiness, joy, anger and/or fear (Miller et al., 2012). Conversely, emotional antecedents of other-oriented motivations include sympathy (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Ruskin et al., 2016b), empathy (Bacq & Alt, 2018; McMullen & Bergman, 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Ruskin et al., 2016b) and compassion (Germak & Robinson, 2014; McMullen & Bergman, 2017; Miller et al., 2012; York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016). There has been an ongoing debate regarding the primacy of self-oriented motives over other-oriented motives in influencing individual behavior (Agle et al., 1999). Recent research suggests that both motives can serve as the ultimate motivation for an individual.

1.2.3. Motivation types

In motivational theories, scholars differentiate between various types of motivation: intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, and final versus instrumental motivation (Elfving, 2009).

An important distinction is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation revolves around external rewards such as money or status (Elfving, 2009; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Vuorio et al., 2018), or the desire to benefit others (Grant, 2008), while intrinsic motivation stems from the inherent satisfaction derived from the task itself (Elfving, 2009; Grant, 2008; Twenge et al., 2010). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are not mutually exclusive. Intrinsic motivation is also associated with an implicit system that works at the unconscious level whereas extrinsic motivation is linked to an explicit system operated under conscious awareness (Hermans, Slabbinck, Vanderstraeten, Brassey, Dejardin, et al., 2017).

Another distinction is made between final motivation related to 'end-state goals', and instrumental motivation related to 'intermediate goals' (Elfving, 2009). Trying to achieve an 'end-state goal' is a final motivation (Elfving, 2009). Individuals may also be driven by an instrumental motivation and aim an 'intermediate goal' which is something that indirectly helps achieve the 'end-state goal' (Elfving, 2009). For instance, the passion for entrepreneurship can be the final motivation to create a venture. In contrast, when the final goal is to get rich or become independent, then creating a venture is an instrumental motivation (Elfving, 2009). In a similar perspective, Bay & Daniel (2003) draw our attention to a hierarchical order for goals. Individuals classify goals depending on how important they are to achieve their overall goals (Bay & Daniel, 2003; Elfving, 2009).

1.3. *Motivation in Sustainable Entrepreneurship*

Our literature review reveals that various types of entrepreneurs, being social, sustainable, environmental, or conventional, may be driven by entrepreneurial, pro-commercial, pro-social, and pro-environmental motivations. For instance,

entrepreneurs in the biotechnology sector driven by commercial interests may find more motivations by finding cures for diseases than the lure of money, prestige and/or status (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Conversely, it appears that pro-social motivations alone may not be sufficient to induce market-based behavior (Vedula, Doblinger, Pacheco, York, Bacq, et al., 2022).

We might question whether entrepreneurs are also motivated by social and environmental values, and whether the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs differ from those of entrepreneurs. However, since motivations serve as the bridge between intentions and actions (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011) and the goals of the ventures are rooted in the entrepreneurs' values (Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009), the strategic decisions made by sustainable entrepreneurs reflect specific motivations. Furthermore, motivations, along with intentions and the emphasis on societal benefit, serve as distinguishing factors between entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs dedicated to social causes or public good (Bacq et al., 2016; Vedula et al., 2022). Despite making positive societal contributions (Bacq et al., 2016; Van Praag & Versloot, 2007), and even when implementing CSR policies, entrepreneurs opt to emphasize profitability (Bacq et al., 2016) without challenging the core business model of their ventures. Furthermore, if for-profit ventures shift their focus and engage in social responsible activities, they would incorporate the boundaries of social (or sustainable) entrepreneurship (Zahra et al., 2009).

Consequently, social entrepreneurs embed a social mission at the core of their enterprises, driven by altruistic motives (Bacq et al., 2016; Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Miller et al., 2012). Similarly, ecopreneurs adopt an environmental mission, motivated by the preservation of the environment (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Motivation in sustainable entrepreneurship should be considered a novel theoretical construct because it incorporates the environmental dimension alongside social entrepreneurship motivation.

We anticipate that sustainable entrepreneurs are motivated not only by entrepreneurial motivations but also by pro-commercial, pro-social and pro-environmental motivations. Given that success in sustainable entrepreneurship is determined based on the 3 dimensions of the triple bottom line, we expect these dimensions (commercial, social, and environmental) will significantly influence the success of sustainable ventures. The interactions among these dimensions may result in trade-offs, such as those between social and economic objectives for social entrepreneurs, or synergies, like those between environmental and economic goals for environmental entrepreneurs (Vedula et al., 2022).

The distinction between pro-social and pro-environmental motivations may be questioned. However, the inherent differences in the nature of the social and environmental dimensions necessitate their differentiation. The social dimension

typically involves conflicting goals, irrationality, and information asymmetry (Arend, 2014) while the environmental dimension is grounded in physics and entails more tangible, predictable and testable processes (Arend, 2014).

In the subsequent sections, we examine entrepreneurial motivations and motivations associated with the various dimensions of the triple bottom line: pro-commercial, pro-social and pro-environmental motivations. Bull & Ridley-Duff (2019) have demonstrated the complexity in delineating the frontier between social and economic dimensions. Therefore, distinguishing motivations according to the dimensions is not an obvious task. Additionally, we categorize motivations based on their orientation: towards oneself (self-oriented) or towards others (other-oriented). Finally, we explore how these motivations interact and combine. A detailed overview of sustainable entrepreneurship motivations in the literature is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MOTIVATIONS

Literature	Entrepreneurial motivations (common)	Specific Triple Bottom Line motivations		
		Pro-Commercial	Pro-Social	Pro-Environmental
Self-oriented	• Goal • Achievement • Fear of failure • Self-efficacy/locus of control • Status/power/prestige/recognition • Personal development • Entrepreneurial activities • Perceived personal threats (necessity Ep) • Role models / family attitudes • Need for stimulation/risk taking/taste for variety • Own boss / Independence / Autonomy	• Personal wealth • Value creation (improvements) • Reputation / Stakeholder reputation	• Personal fulfillment • Religious conviction • Drive for social connection (Relatedness/network/influence) • Influence • Satisfying feedback • Impure altruism	• Personal gains (perception of pollution threat on well-being) • Way of life and/or connection to a specific place • Drive for social connection (network) • Passion for green products & services • Cost savings • Government policy initiatives (e.g. environmental taxes / local authority permit requirements)
Other-oriented	• Fairness (> altruism) • Employee satisfaction	• Gaining financial benefits from ecological initiatives • Gaining financial benefits from initiatives aiming the poorest populations	• Altruism (pure & impure) • Develop gains for others / Social value creation (Nurturance / Sense of obligation / Moral judgment / Solve social problems) • Social justice • Welfare considerations • Closeness to social problem • Money/financial benefits to continue with the activities	• Ecological values / Address degradation of natural environment • Altruistic motivation for animals • Personal values-feeling responsible for environment • Family values (next generation) • Improve human wellbeing (impact on social & physical environment & on health) • Searching alternatives • Educating others

Based on (Aileen Boluk & Mottiar, 2014; Arend, 2014; Bacq & Alt, 2018; Baum & Locke, 2004; Berns, Townend, Khayat, Balagopal, Reeves, et al., 2009; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Birley & Westhead, 1994; Bruton, 2010; Carsrud et al., 2017; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Carter, Gartner, Shaver, & Gatewood, 2003; Dorado & Ventresca, 2013; Dubini, 1989; Edelman, Brush, Manolova, & Greene, 2010; Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016; Germak & Robinson, 2014; Grant, 2008; Grant & Gino, 2010; Gunawan, van Riel, & Essers, 2021; Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010; E. Locke, 2000; Lumpkin et al., 2013; McMullen & Bergman, 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Omoredede, 2014; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Potluri & Phani, 2020; Ruskin et al., 2016a; Shane et al., 2003; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Steel & König, 2006; Stubbs, 2017; Twenge et al., 2010; Vedula et al., 2022; Vuorio et al., 2018; Williams & Schaefer, 2013; York et al., 2016; Zahra et al., 2009)

Subsequently, we will compare these theoretical motivations with the empirical motivations identified through our field study.

1.3.1. Entrepreneurial motivations

Several factors influence the decision to start a business and the entrepreneurial process: (1) cognitive factors such as ability, intelligence, and skills (Carter et al., 2003; E. Locke, 2000; Shane et al., 2003), (2) individual factors like opportunity cost, social

capital, financial capital and career experiences (Shane et al., 2003), and (3) external factors such as political factors, market forces and resources (Shane et al., 2003). Antecedents have also been identified in social entrepreneurship: mission, opportunity identification, access to resources/funding and multiple stakeholders (Lumpkin et al., 2013; Omorede, 2014)

Human motivation significantly shapes the entrepreneurial process and influences individuals' decisions to pursue entrepreneurial or social entrepreneurial opportunities (Carsrud et al., 2017; Lumpkin et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2012; Omorede, 2014; Shane et al., 2003). Motivation serves as a crucial link between intentions and entrepreneurial actions (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), explaining why some individuals identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities while others do not (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

Entrepreneurs are driven by various motivations, which impact their decisions and actions (Shane et al., 2003). For instance, the desire for independence may drive some entrepreneurs to self-finance their ventures, while others may seek venture capital (Shane et al., 2003). Entrepreneurs enact these motivations uniquely, creating ventures rather than simply working in them (Carsrud et al., 2017).

Understanding entrepreneurial motivations helps elucidate why entrepreneurs choose certain types of business over others and how they respond to different stimuli (Carsrud et al., 2017). How they enact their motivations ultimately influences the success of their ventures (Carsrud et al., 2017).

Based on literature in entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and environmental entrepreneurship, we have identified various entrepreneurial motivations that transcend business, social, and environmental dimensions.

Most of those motivations are self-oriented and include, among others, goal (Carsrud et al., 2017; Shane et al., 2003, 2003; Steel & König, 2006), achievement (Carsrud et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Shane et al., 2003), status, power, prestige and recognition (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Carter et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2012; Vuorio et al., 2018), entrepreneurial activities as an end in themselves (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), and independence and autonomy (Carsrud et al., 2017; Shane et al., 2003). We also identified two other-oriented entrepreneurial motivations: striving for fairness (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018) and employee satisfaction (Berns et al., 2009).

We will now review motivations linked to the triple bottom line.

1.3.2. Pro-commercial motivation

Through this paper, the term 'pro-commercial motivation' will refer to motivations that drive sustainable entrepreneurs to pursue commercial goals. The most cited pro-commercial motivations oriented towards the entrepreneur is personal wealth in the

form of money and other forms of compensation (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Carsrud et al., 2017; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Carter et al., 2003; Edelman et al., 2010; E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004; Miller et al., 2012; Twenge et al., 2010; Vuorio et al., 2018). Other pro-commercial self-oriented motivations are aiming public awareness (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013): value creation through CSR innovations and reputation building towards targeted communities and markets (Arend, 2014). The aim of those two motivations is to pursue a commercial goal even if they relate to the social and environmental dimensions. Entrepreneurs must pay attention to the risk of backfire if they are insincere (Arend, 2014). When their behavior violates their beliefs, entrepreneurs are facing dissonant loyalty (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013).

Entrepreneurs may also be motivated to pursue commercial goals while they are oriented towards others or nature. For instance, entrepreneurs may be motivated to gain financial benefits (long-term profits, cost savings, and government incentives) from ecological initiatives (Gunawan et al., 2021) or societal impact initiatives (Stubbs, 2017; Vedula et al., 2022). They may also be motivated to provide goods and services to poor populations that did not have access to them before (Bruton, 2010).

1.3.3. Pro-social Motivation

Pro-social motivations can be defined as the driving forces behind sustainable entrepreneurs' pursuit of a social purpose (Lumpkin et al., 2013; Omorede, 2014; Zahra et al., 2009) or as "the desire to expend effort to benefit other people" (Grant, 2008; Miller et al., 2012). Researchers have emphasized the importance of pro-social motivations in both social entrepreneurship (Lumpkin et al., 2013; Omorede, 2014; Vedula et al., 2022) as well as in environmental entrepreneurship (Vedula et al., 2022). Pro-social motivation is considered as stemming from altruism but may also serve as an instrumental motivation to gather reciprocity (McMullen & Bergman, 2017). For instance, pro-social motivation has 'the potential to preclude the entry of competitors, for good or bad, by eliciting customer loyalty or beneficiary gratitude' (McMullen & Bergman, 2017).

Motivations aiming a social purpose may manifest in various forms. Self-oriented motivations include personal fulfillment (Germak & Robinson, 2014), religious convictions (Omorede, 2014), entering a network (Aileen Boluk & Mottiar, 2014), and satisfying feedback (Omorede, 2014).

Altruism represents a motivation bridging self- and other-oriented motives and involves a "motivation to improve the welfare of another person" (Penner et al., 2006 cited in Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018), which may be influenced by self-interest.

A significant other-oriented pro-social motivation is the aspiration to generate "economic, environmental, and social gains for others", (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011) known as social value creation (Gunawan et al., 2021;

McMullen & Bergman, 2017) often driven by a sense of obligation (Ruskin et al., 2016b). Other other-oriented pro-social motivations include considerations of social justice (Ruskin et al., 2016b), welfare concerns for the entrepreneur's community (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Dubini, 1989), and closeness to social problems (Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omorede, 2014).

1.3.4. Pro-environmental motivation

In alignment with the definitions of pro-commercial and pro-social motivations, we conceptualize 'pro-environmental motivations' as the driving forces driving sustainable entrepreneurs to pursue environmental objectives.

Self-oriented pro-environmental motivations identified in scholarly literature include a desire to mitigate threats of pollution to their own well-being (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011) or to achieve cost savings (Font et al., 2016). Additionally, some entrepreneurs may be motivated by a specific lifestyle or a connection to nature, such as living close nature (Aileen Boluk & Mottiar, 2014; Font et al., 2016), or by a passion for environmentally friendly products and services (Font et al., 2016; Potluri & Phani, 2020). Public policies, such as environmental taxes or permit requirements, may also influence pro-environmental motivations (Williams & Schaefer, 2013).

Conversely, the literature reveals pro-environmental motivations that are oriented towards others or nature rather than self-interest. Ecological values, aimed at safeguarding the environment (Font et al., 2016; Gunawan et al., 2021), personal values related to feeling responsible for the environment (Gunawan et al., 2021), and a commitment to address degradation of the natural environment (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; York et al., 2016) motivate pro-environmental behaviors. Furthermore, educating others to protect the environment also serves as another source of green motivation (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).

Finally, pro-environmental motivations may drive entrepreneurs to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors, while also serving instrumental purposes in achieving social or commercial objectives. For instance, by contributing to environmental preservation, sustainable entrepreneurs enhance the health of family members or safeguard their wealth and reputation (Gunawan et al., 2021). Social values (such as improving human well-being) and family values (emphasizing family welfare) have been identified by Gunawan et al. (2021) as potential drivers for the adoption of pro-environmental behaviors. Additionally, pro-environmental motivation may be instrumental in yielding financial benefits, as sustainable entrepreneurs may reduce energy costs for environmental reasons while simultaneously enhancing the financial performance of their ventures (Font et al., 2016).

1.4. Motivations Interactions and Impacts

The motivations to launch business activities with sustainability objectives are numerous and varied. Pro-social motivations alone, like pro-business motivations alone, are not sufficient for an individual to engage in social entrepreneurship (Germak & Robinson, 2014). A unique blend of pro-social and pro-commercial motivational factors is needed to engage in social entrepreneurship (Germak & Robinson, 2014). As sustainable entrepreneurship adds the environmental dimension to social entrepreneurship, we can assume that the motivational mix will also include this additional dimension.

The social entrepreneurship literature emphasizes the trade-offs between social and economic goals; markets are considered as a means to achieve the social mission (Vedula et al., 2022). In this perspective, pro-commercial motives are considered as instrumental motivation. The environmental entrepreneurship literature offers another point of view considering synergies between environmental and economic goals; markets are considered as ends (Vedula et al., 2022). In other words, environmental entrepreneurs are aiming hybrid environmental and commercial goals. In this point of view, pro-commercial motives are considered as final motivation, together with pro-environmental motives. Furthermore, a few examples in the literature suggest that different types of motivations can interact, reinforce, or oppose each other.

First, some motivation factors can influence other motivation factors. For instance, Locke & Latham (2002) revealed how monetary incentives interact with goal motivation. Paying people only if they reach the goal can generate a negative impact on motivation if the goal is very difficult. Nevertheless, goal motivation is stronger when people believe that they can attain the goal.

More specifically about the triple bottom line and entrepreneurial motivations, some authors revealed that pro-social motivation can reinforce entrepreneurial action and that entrepreneurial motivation can reinforce pro-social action. On the one hand, pro-social motivation does not hinder entrepreneurial action. On the contrary, social enterprises provide evidence that pro-social motivations can encourage entrepreneurial initiatives (McMullen & Bergman, 2017). On the other hand, incentives such as profit can be a powerful incentive for entrepreneurs to engage in complex social issues such as microfinance and access to housing or complex environmental issues such as lack of environmental efficiency in supply chain systems (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013). In addition, pro-social motivations focused on the well-being of communities can lead to pro-environmental entrepreneurial actions (Gunawan et al., 2021). And finally, we can highlight the pro-commercial motivations that may inhabit some entrepreneurs when they exploit opportunities that are beneficial to nature (Gunawan et al., 2021).

1.5. *Demotivation*

Just as motivation activates and guides decision-making towards certain behaviors, demotivation is poised to play the inverse role by restraining or even obstructing action, and potentially redirecting an entrepreneur's choices towards alternative behaviors.

Demotivation is directly linked to motivation because it is the negative counterpart or motivation. While motivation is the combination of internal and external factors that initiate actions (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), demotivation exerts negative influences on motivational states which could lead to 'withdraw effort and disengage from their work' (Chen et al., 2011). We define demotivation as factors that "reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action." (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p139). Furthermore, just as motivation activates and guides decision-making towards certain behaviors (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), demotivation is poised to play the inverse role by restraining or even obstructing action, and potentially redirecting an entrepreneur's choices towards alternative behaviors. Demotivation should not be confused with amotivation which is a lack of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p139).

While motivation to act has garnered significant attention from scholars, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring demotivations—factors that can redirect, hinder, slow down, or even halt entrepreneurial action. Nevertheless, demotivations can wield significant influence within a company (Hebda, Vojak, Griffin, & Price, 2012). Just as motivations can propel a sustainable entrepreneur towards realizing their project, demotivations have the potential to impede progress or even lead to abandonment. Similarly, while motivations can shape hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship by prompting entrepreneurs to prioritize certain missions over others, demotivations related to sustainability dimensions could counteract or reinforce these tendencies. Moreover, just as motivations explain why individuals respond differently to the same stimuli, demotivations should provide insights into these dynamics. Given these important areas of inquiry, which have been partially addressed in existing literature on motivation, it seems imperative to investigate the inverse forces impacting sustainable entrepreneurs.

Motivations stem from various factors, including intentions, past experiences, and emotions. Ruskin et al. (2016a) investigated the emotions of social entrepreneurs and found that passion and frustration drive self-oriented motivations, while empathy and sympathy fuel other-oriented motivations. Similarly, emotions could serve as antecedents to demotivation. In entrepreneurship, negative interactions with various stakeholders (family, friends, government, and funders) generate anger, frustration, powerlessness, resentment, loneliness, shame, resentment, self-doubt or fear (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). Those negative emotions have a demotivating power towards aspiring entrepreneurs (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). Fear, for instance, may play a role towards the

entrepreneurial motivation. Entrepreneurs may fear potential failures such as “fears of losing a client, not being paid, not delivering on time, out of control cash flow, as well as the fear of not having enough time to spend with family, friends and loved ones” (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2015, p. 185). Nevertheless, in some cases, fear of failure constitutes a barrier to entrepreneurial activities but, in other cases, fear is the source of their determination to succeed (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2015; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011).

Our paper responds to the numerous calls to further investigate why individuals engage and persist in hybrid forms of entrepreneurship (Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omoredé, 2014) and extend current knowledge by studying the additional environmental motivation to the pro-social and pro-commercial motivational factors. Furthermore, our paper aims to shed light on the mysteries surrounding entrepreneurial demotivation.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research approach

The initial objective of this study was to identify the motivational and demotivational factors in sustainable entrepreneurship. The central question in this paper asks what motivates sustainable entrepreneurs to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career? Moreover, other research questions arise from this central question: What demotivates sustainable entrepreneurs? How do conflicting or complementary social and/or green motivating and de-motivating factors interact?

A qualitative case study approach is adapted to our research objectives (Yin, 2009). More specifically, the methodological approach taken in this study is an inductive multiple-case research design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens, Bacq, & Milanov, 2021). We adopted this methodology because it is well suited for a research topic in its infancy (Eisenhardt, 1989) like motivation and demotivation in sustainable entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs, and more specifically founders, are the central actors who form policies and routines of an organization (Grimes et al., 2019). Sustainable entrepreneurs are the central actors who can influence the hybridity of their organization. Therefore, the unit of analysis of our study is sustainable entrepreneurs and the phenomenon-driven case under investigation is the (de)motivation of sustainable entrepreneurs (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Ruskin et al., 2016a).

When entrepreneurs adopt an identity and corresponding values, they sign an implicit contract with the organization's key stakeholders and generate expectations in terms of behavior and performance (Grimes et al., 2019). Therefore, actions that are inconsistent

with this stated identity could generate questions from these stakeholders about the authenticity of the organization (Grimes et al., 2019). Collecting data from these stakeholders therefore allows us to assess the consistency between the stated motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs and their actions.

2.2. Research Context

We used a sample of entrepreneurs within a single industry and a single region to limit other sources of variance than motivations (Shane et al., 2003). We chose sustainable entrepreneurs from the ecotourism sector active in Benin (West Africa).

In this study, our interest in ecotourism entrepreneurs stems from the fact that they fully fit the definition of sustainable entrepreneurs because they integrate both environmental and social purpose into their venture (Parrish, 2010; Parrish & Tilley, 2010). In other words, we selected the ecotourism sector because it is characterized by intertwined social, environmental, and commercial objectives corresponding to the triple bottom line.

2.3. Sample Selection

We decided to limit the scope of our study to southern Benin for four main reasons. First, ecotourism is particularly developed in Benin thanks to its environmental tourist assets (coast and national parks), and its cultural tourist assets (among others, Benin is considered the cradle of Vodoun). Secondly, ecotourism ventures are managed by Beninese entrepreneurs, unlike in other countries where ecotourism is mainly managed by the state or by international organizations. We also decided to minimize sample variation linked to environmental factors (Reypens et al., 2021; Zott & Huy, 2007). Finally, the first author has a privileged contact with a key entrepreneur in the sector since 2012 and with the main sustainable entrepreneurs since 2015. Those contacts offered unique opportunities for case research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

From the list of declared ecotourism entrepreneurs active in the South of Benin, we selected only entrepreneurs available for at least 3 rounds of interviews.

Lastly, we needed enough variance in the hybridity profiles of the entrepreneurs. Some entrepreneurs present a low level of activity in ecotourism because they favor their careers in the private or in the philanthropic sector. We kept those entrepreneurs because they bring variance and help us to investigate what demotivates some entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable entrepreneurship and push them to favor commercial career opportunities or to dedicate themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career.

We interviewed sustainable entrepreneurs of 11 ecotourism organizations in 2017 and 2018. Once we applied our criteria, we selected a final sample of seven entrepreneurs active in ecotourism or initiating ecotourism activities (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 – OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Ecotourism entrepreneur	Founding Year	Publicized Mission Statement	Informants	Relevant archival data sources
Emile	1999	The promotion of ecotourism and local development projects throughout Benin, for a responsible, fair and solidarity human development.	1 Founder, 2 managers, 3 European trainees, 2 employees, 1 client	Website, social media, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Charles	2005	To contribute to the emergence of a generation of "world citizens" able to propose and/or implement local and sustainable solutions for a human development respectful of Nature.	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 5 European trainees, 4 employees, 10+ clients	Website, social media, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Patrice	1995	To contribute to the regeneration, preservation and enhancement of natural ecosystems, and the whole well-being of populations in Benin.	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 1 manager, 2 employees, 3 members of the community, 10+ clients	Website, social media, reports, informational billboard, leaflet
Greg	1996	To transmit an environmental conscience to the populations through information, education, sensitization, and awareness especially in schools through environmental clubs	1 Founder, 2 managers, 2 employees, 1 social partner, 4 clients	Website, social media, online articles, informational billboard, leaflet
Nicolas	1995	To promote the conservation and rational use of biological diversity, through information, education, and sensitization of the various actors and especially of the youth.	1 Founder, 1 manager, 3 employees, 1 funder, 10+ clients	Website, social media, documentary film, reports, online articles, promotional and informational billboards, leaflet
Simon	1996	Through its associative and cultural approach, it proposes a more equitable tourism which is closer to the population and its traditions	1 Founder, 1 co-founder, 2 employees, 2 clients	Website, leaflet, Statutes
Arnaud	2004	Struggle for development through education for peace and training, production and transformation while integrating environmental factors	1 Founder	Leaflet, Social media (LinkedIn)

2.4. Data collection

Two years prior to the start of data collection, we established contact with one of the main entrepreneurs of the Benin Federation of Responsible and Solidarity Tourism Organizations. Then, we conducted more than 72 semi-structured interviews in French with the sustainable entrepreneurs. In addition, we collected all available data to triangulate the data (Eisenhardt, 1989). First, we collected all available documentation in paper and electronic format. We also conducted open-ended interviews with all stakeholders we could meet. We conducted internal interviews with managers, employees and trainees, and external interviews with beneficiaries, community members, tourists, and other tourism entrepreneurs. We completed our data collection with on-site observations.

As stated by Locke & Latham (2004) “motivational states exist in consciousness; thus, introspection must be used to study it”. Introspection is needed to grasp psychological concepts like desire, self-efficacy, and purpose. Introspection contributes to a more precise understanding of motivations, but this tool is particularly useful for understanding personal motivations (Locke & Latham, 2004). Knowing how a manager

motivates his/her employees is different from knowing how an entrepreneur motivates him/herself (Locke & Latham, 2004).

Introspection allows us to study the self-motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs, or in other words, what energizes them to undertake and persist in their activities (Locke & Latham, 2004). More specifically, introspection presents three advantages that are particularly useful in the context of our research. First, introspection is indicated when respondents are confronted with “conflicts both within themselves and between themselves and others” (Locke & Latham, 2004), which is the case for sustainable entrepreneurs facing tensions between social, environmental, and business dimensions. Second, introspection allows for the study of failures and goal frustration (Locke & Latham, 2004), and thus for the study of potential demotivations. Finally, introspection is appropriate for studying short- and long-term goals (Locke & Latham, 2004) which is aligned with the tensions faced by sustainable entrepreneurs which may differ in the short term from the long-term tensions.

Therefore, introspection is an ideal tool for studying the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs. In concrete terms, semi-structured interviews will provide more accurate data than questionnaires (Locke & Latham, 2004).

Introspection covers a group of data collection methods (Titchener, 1912). In our research, we used direct introspection (Titchener, 1912) by asking sustainable entrepreneurs to describe their current motivations and then their past motivations. During the interviews, the investigator checked how the respondents interpret the questions and helped them to introspect (Locke & Latham, 2004). The interviews happened face to face except in 2021 via (video) calls due to the Covid crisis.

In February 2022, we conducted a follow-up session where we presented our research findings to the sustainable entrepreneurs included in our study. This session served as an opportunity to gather feedback, as well as to further elaborate on and clarify their motivations and demotivations as sustainable entrepreneurs. We also clarified which motivations were instrumental for other final motivations.

The whole data collection spanned a period from September 2017 to February 2022 (see table) and represented a total of 160 hours of recorded interviews. This longitudinal data collection is particularly suited for studying the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs. “Motivations and goals may change overtime” (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Elfving, 2009). Entrepreneurs' motivations are influenced by their stakeholder networks (Parrish, 2010; Sarasvathy, 2004) and by their environment in general (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). These contexts change over time (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Parrish, 2010; Sarasvathy, 2004). Therefore, entrepreneurs face changing contexts, but this is particularly the case for entrepreneurs active in ecotourism in West Africa. The various crises in neighboring countries (Ebola, Boko Haram, ...) and/or in Benin (Covid) have had major impacts on local and international tourism. To cope with changing

situations and contexts, entrepreneurs must be able to adapt their objectives and motivations, and make sense of the new situation (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Ruskin et al., 2016a). Our longitudinal study allows us to study motivations over time and avoid extrapolating conclusions based on temporary, context-specific motivations.

TABLE 3 – OVERVIEW OF OUR FIELD INVESTIGATION AND INTERVIEWS

	Round	Patrice	Charles	Emile	Greg	Nicolas	Simon	Arnaud	
Exploratory	2015 July	0 h 14 m							0 h 14 m
	2016 July	3 h 18 m							3 h 18 m
2017 Life stories Entrepreneurs	2017 February	10 h 50 m							10 h 50 m
	2017 September	4 h 41 m	2 h 30 m	2 h 34 m	2 h 54 m	3 h 04 m	5 h 34 m	2 h 21 m	21 h 18 m
2018-2019 Follow-up interviews	2018 February	5 h 35 m	1 h 10 m		1 h 12 m	4 h 49 m		2 h 41 m	12 h 47 m
	2018 March			2 h 06 m					2 h 06 m
	2018 September	3 h 28 m	1 h 57 m	2 h 12 m	2 h 21 m	2 h 50 m	4 h 35 m		17 h 25 m
	2019 February	1 h 05 m	6 h 34 m	2 h 05 m		7 h 37 m	2 h 37 m		20 h 01 m
2020-2021-2022 Follow-up interviews and Opportunities	2020 February	3 h 24 m	11 h 58 m	5 h 44 m	9 h 54 m	6 h 37 m	4 h 20 m	3 h 20 m	41 h 59 m
	2021 June	0 h 59 m	0 h 50 m	0 h 56 m	0 h 30 m	0 h 58 m	0 h 43 m		5 h 00 m
	2022 February	1 h 13 m	2 h 11 m	1 h 01 m	1 h 52 m	4 h 27 m	4 h 53 m	0 h 54 m	16 h 34 m
	Total général	34 h 51 m	27 h 13 m	16 h 41 m	18 h 45 m	30 h 25 m	22 h 44 m	9 h 17 m	159 h 58 m

In addition, studying motivations via a longitudinal approach is needed because motivations may change over time. For instance, some scholars highlight the changes between pro-social and pro-self motivations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Miller et al., 2012). These changes can eventually lead to mission drift (Miller 2012). The initial other-oriented motivations could eventually drift to more self-oriented motivations after the start of the business (Miller et al., 2012).

2.5. Coding procedure

First, we used the stakeholders' interviews and documentation collected to assess the sustainable entrepreneurs' organization profiles (among others: mission, opportunities, activities, and financial sources) and the other professional activities of those sustainable entrepreneurs.

Then, to assess motivation and demotivation factors of each sustainable entrepreneur, we performed several iterations to triangulate between the data, the existing literature, and the emerging theory (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens et al., 2021).

We coded the sustainable entrepreneurs' interview transcripts following our motivation framework based on the literature (see table 1). We identified motivation and demotivation factors. Then, we coded corresponding text segments to distinguish motivation factors from demotivation factors, but also between entrepreneurial, commercial, social, and environmental dimensions. Afterwards, if the motivation factor was already identified in the literature, we refined the coding to the corresponding label. Thanks to those analyses, we were able to distinguish between motivations already identified in the literature and motivations that have not been identified.

TABLE 4 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS' PROFILES

Organization of	Arnaud	Simon	Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas
Venture Goal/mission	Altruism Address ecological issues						
Mission	Agriculture and sustainable development Fight against poverty (agriculture, environment, water and local development)	Promotion of fair tourism closer to population and traditions	Promotion of Ecotourism and local development projects for a human responsible, fair and solidary development	Local and sustainable solutions for a human development respectful of nature.	Preservation of natural ecosystems and integral fulfillment of human being	Raise environmental consciousness through information, education, and awareness	Preservation of the nature through information, education and awareness
Opportunities Exploited	• Blended	• Commercial	• Blended • Green & Social • Commercial	• Blended • Green & Social	• Social & Green • Social • Blended	• Social & Green • Social	• Green • Green & Commercial • Green & Social
Activities	• Low/no level of activities : Few trainees welcomed.	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits between different ecotourism attractions and transportation between these places • Intercultural trip	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits, catering, accommodation and conference facilities • Creation of Eco touristic circuits for the community development and biodiversity preservation. • Carbon offset project: reforestation and improved stoves • Tourism trainings • Consulting	• Ecotourism: organization of circuits, catering and accommodation • Creation of ecotourism circuits to benefit a community and preserve biodiversity • Animal reserve • Sustainable agriculture • Education in citizenship and environmental awareness	• Ecotourism: accommodation, catering and organization of circuits • Farm school – Sustainable agriculture • Educational (reinforcement) and cultural center for young people • Radio broadcasts to raise environmental awareness • Raising awareness of environmental preservation • Community and/or environmental projects	• Ecotourism : organization of circuits • Community awareness of nature conservation and spirituality • Intercultural and inter-generational dialogues • Support of indigenous peoples for the conservation of their territories • Volunteer tourism	• Ecotourism : organization of circuits • Organization of whale-watching tours • Museum : environmental education center • Awareness campaigns within communities • Anti-poaching actions • Production of nature awareness TV programs • Forthcoming: Museum of waxworks of famous and historical figures
Financial Sources	• Call for projects	• Tourism (Ecotourism Circuits, tour operator) • Occasional personal donations	• Call for projects • Tourism and consulting • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Tourism (Rooms, restaurant & bar) • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Tourism (Rooms, restaurant & bar) • Ecotourism	• Call for projects • Mostly local tourism to raise awareness. • Ecotourism (limited)	• Call for projects • Tourism • Ecotourism
Share of ecotourism activities	Very low	Only ecotourism	High	Medium	Only ecotourism	Low-Medium	Only ecotourism
Non-Ecotourism professional activities	• Consulting • Academics	None	• Consulting	• Fish farming • Consulting	None	• Local public administration • Support of orphanages	None

For instance, when Emile declared:

“for me the most important thing on earth is to be useful to others” Emile, 2017

He was motivated by social value creation (Gunawan et al., 2021; McMullen & Bergman, 2017).

Similarly, when he declared

“So, for me, it's much more that, it's actually, I'm happy when I manage to achieve something, something that I hadn't achieved yet or that others have difficulty achieving. And it's not necessarily something that gives money, but it's something that I've done.” Emile, 2020

He was driven by achievement motivation (Carsrud et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2012; Shane et al., 2003)

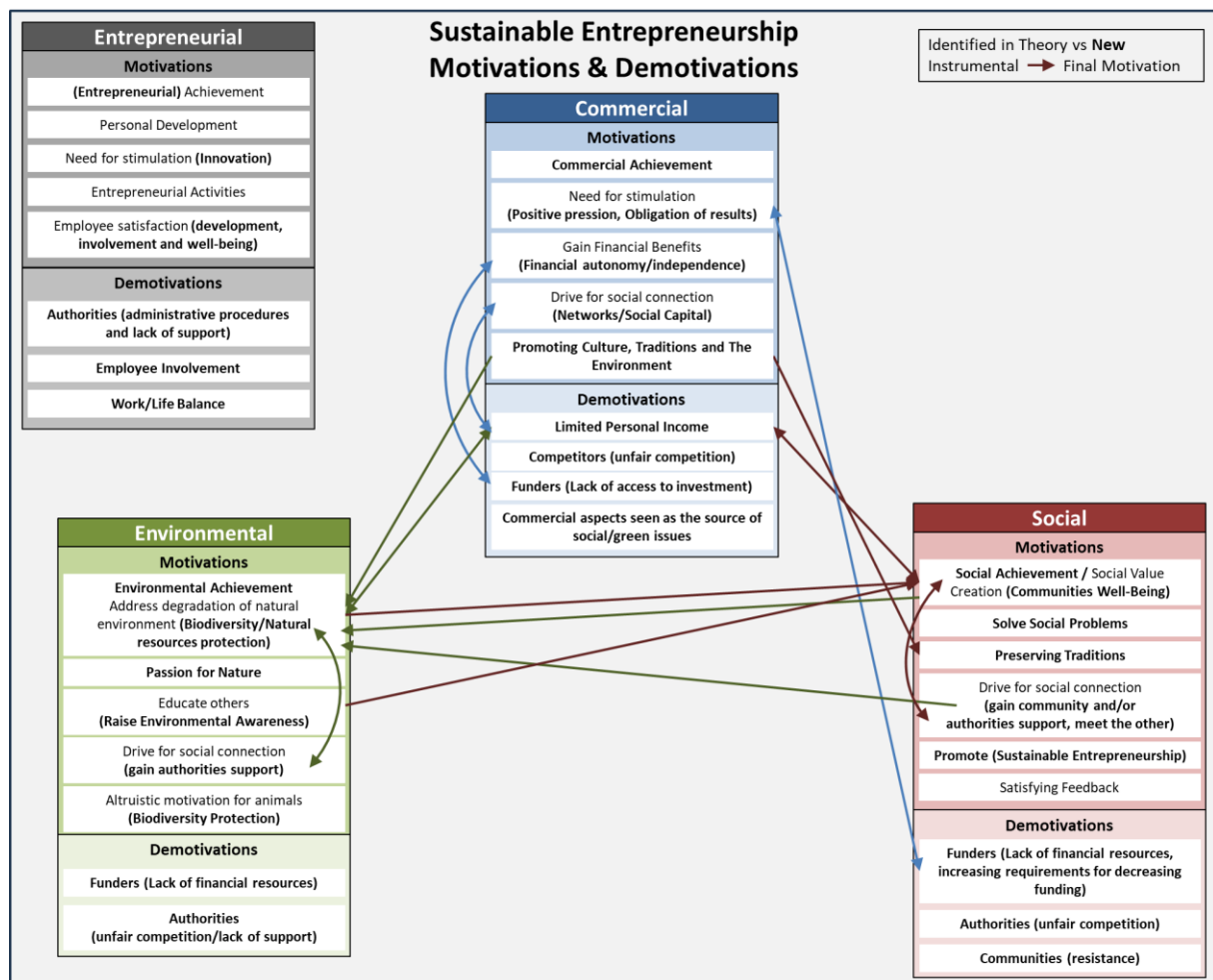
After several iterations and the last round of interviews to verify our findings, we also distinguish final from instrumental motivations.

3. Findings

Based on our analyses, we established motivational profiles for each of the studied sustainable entrepreneurs, as outlined in Appendix #1. Additionally, we compiled the motivating factors and demotivating factors of all the sustainable entrepreneurs in Model 1 below. Motivators and demotivators not previously documented in the motivation literature are highlighted in bold. Some motivational factors were previously recognized but not categorized in the same manner as those identified in our field study. These slightly varied forms are denoted in bold within brackets. Furthermore, thanks to the clarification round we made a clear distinction between final motivations and instrumental motivations. Lastly, certain demotivation factors are counteracted by motivating factors (indicated by an arrow pointing from a demotivation to a motivation).

Motivators and demotivators already identified in the literature are indicated in bold. Some motivational factors were known but not in the form of the factors identified in our field study. These slightly different forms are indicated in bold in brackets. In addition, thanks to a final follow-up session in February 2022, we distinguished between final motivations and instrumental motivations. Finally, some demotivation factors are counterbalanced by motivating factors (arrow pointing from a demotivation to a motivation).

MODEL 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MOTIVATIONS AND DEMOTIVATIONS



We will first review the contributions of our research field to the different types of motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs. Second, we will be able to analyze the social-green motivational interactions. Then, we will investigate demotivation factors and their interactions with motivation factors. Finally, we will analyze which motivational features could explain the level of dedication of the entrepreneur to their sustainable entrepreneurship activities.

3.1. Achievements, social and green motivations.

Based on our field research, we refined the concept of achievement motivation in the case of sustainable entrepreneurship, and we identified a new social motivation and a new environmental motivation.

First, we were able to distinguish the different types of achievement as a motivating factor in sustainable entrepreneurship. In entrepreneurship, the achievement of success occurs when an entrepreneur exploits 'an opportunity for some form of gain, often believed to be economic' (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). However, our field allowed us to distinguish entrepreneurial achievement from business, social, or

environmental achievement based on the dimension of gain that the entrepreneur values. Achievement may also be linked to several dimensions. For instance, Greg does not distinguish social from environmental dimensions. He aims at the well-being of communities embedded in a preserved/restored environment.

While many entrepreneurs have acknowledged the interconnectedness between communities and their environment, a perspective emphasized by existing literature (Nilsson et al., 2018; Reyers & Selig, 2020; Selomane et al., 2019) and international organizations like the UNDP, Greg takes a more holistic approach. Unlike others, he views these dimensions not merely as interconnected, but as fully integrated with one another. According to Greg, they are inseparable, with each dimension reliant on the other for its existence. For instance, Greg enacts a new social motivation - preservation of traditions - as well as new environmental motivations - passion for nature, within an education program. He organizes youth camps where elderly people share their traditions and their passion for nature.

3.2. Demotivating Factors

Motivations are considered as driving forces pushing entrepreneurs to move from entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial action (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). In the opposite direction, demotivation considered as “external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In an entrepreneurial context, we propose to consider demotivations as a reverse engine that will slow down, or even inhibit, entrepreneurial action. Some of those demotivation factors were linked to stakeholders: employees, communities, authorities, donors. Other demotivation factors were related to the entrepreneur: limited personal income, work/life balance and fear of mission drift.

3.2.1. Other-Oriented and Self-Oriented Demotivations

In the motivation literature, researchers distinguish between self-oriented and other-oriented motivations (Miller et al., 2012; Ruskin et al., 2016a). Similarly, we differentiate between self-oriented and other-oriented demotivations.

Most demotivating factors are other-oriented. Negative interactions with stakeholders such as family, friends, government entities, and funders constitute demotivating factors in entrepreneurship (Sharma & Kumar, 2022). Our findings also underscore the significant role of stakeholders in either fostering or hindering entrepreneurial endeavors. Specifically, our study reveals that key stakeholders, including internal actors like employees and management teams, as well as external actors such as authorities (due to cumbersome administrative procedures and lack of support), funders, communities, and competitors, can exert motivating or demotivating influences. Furthermore, authorities and beneficiary communities appear to be key

stakeholders capable of either motivating or demotivating sustainable entrepreneurs based on their level of support for the sustainable ventures' projects. These findings resonate with the literature's emphasis on the pivotal role of third parties (Hunt & Fund, 2016; Sharma & Kumar, 2022; Vedula et al., 2022)..

We identified three self-oriented demotivations among sustainable entrepreneurs.

Firstly, some entrepreneurs may be so dedicated to their sustainable organization that it adversely affects their work-life balance. The extent to which their activities dominate their time and encroach upon family and leisure pursuits serves as a demotivating factor.

Secondly, a demotivation specific to sustainable entrepreneurship relates to the limited personal income it offers. Most of the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied declared they could potentially earn higher incomes through alternative activities such as consulting, public sector or NGO employment, or other entrepreneurial ventures. Some of them enact these activities in parallel of the ecotourism activities. Despite these opportunities, some entrepreneurs opt to focus on the sustainable venture's activities nonetheless.

Lastly, some sustainable entrepreneurs face difficulties with business aspects because, from their perspective, business is the cause of many social and environmental problems. Our findings suggest that this demotivation is particularly prevalent among entrepreneurs that transitioned from the philanthropic sector to launch ecotourism projects as a means to diversify their funding sources. Conversely, sustainable entrepreneurs with prior business experience who enter sustainable entrepreneurship for ethical reasons appear less affected by reluctance to conform to commercial norms.

3.2.2. Instrumental motivations to mitigate demotivations

As discussed earlier, some motivations may be instrumental to fulfill final motivations (Elfving, 2009). We identified a similar dynamic between motivations and demotivations. Some motivations are instrumental to mitigate demotivations. First, the demotivation linked to the difficulties of accessing financing has generated a motivation: a positive pressure to find solutions to achieve financial independence. Second, sustainable entrepreneurs active in ecotourism have sacrificed time and higher incomes that they could obtain in other career choices. In most cases, this potentially demotivating factor is offset by pro-social and pro-environmental motivations. Additionally, in some cases, the opportunity to develop their network for their private business activities mitigates the loss of time and the limited income in sustainable entrepreneurship.

3.3. *Social-environmental (de)motivation interactions.*

In this section, we will explore the intricate relationship between social and environmental motivations in sustainable entrepreneurship. First, we will examine how these motivations intersect and influence each other. Next, we will delve into their impact on maintaining hybridity.

3.3.1. Three patterns of instrumental & final 'social-environmental' motivations.

The existing literature shows that some entrepreneurial motivations can be instrumental to reach an intermediate goal that will indirectly reach an end-state goal related to a final motivation (Elfving, 2009). Some research has attempted to determine the final dominant motivations between environmental and commercial motivations, others between social and commercial motivations. None of them has studied which are the final dominant motivations on the social-environmental axis. First, on the axis of ecological and business dimensions, York et al. (2016) showed that environmental entrepreneurs' identities could be commercially dominant, ecologically dominant, or blended. Second, in social entrepreneurship literature, some scholars have suggested that there is an equilibrium between self-oriented and other-oriented motivations (Peredo & McLean, 2006) and others have suggested that social motivations are prioritized by social entrepreneurs (Austin et al., 2012). Therefore, Miller et al. (2012) called for the study of the configuration of multiple motivations.

Our research deepens these results by investigating all 3 dimensions, including the axis between the environmental and social dimensions. In looking at pro-social and pro-environmental motivations, we have seen three patterns emerge.

Final pro-social motivation – A sustainable entrepreneur may be driven by a final pro-social motivation and an instrumental pro-environmental motivation. In other words, the pro-environmental motivator is not intrinsic but has the objective of achieving the pro-social motivation. In this case, sustainable entrepreneurs consider that a healthy environment and preserved nature are necessary for the well-being of a community which is their primary objective. For instance, Patrice is essentially driven by a pro-social motivation. His central objective is to enhance the overall well-being of the people in his community. However, he realized that this cannot be achieved in a degraded environment. Therefore, environmental preservation becomes an instrumental motivation to contribute to the ultimate motivation of creating social value.

Final pro-environmental motivation - A sustainable entrepreneur may be driven by a pro-environmental final motivation and a pro-social instrumental motivation. The preservation and/or regeneration of the environment is central in this case, but the sustainable entrepreneur considers that nature cannot be preserved when the surrounding populations do not have sufficient living conditions. In this perspective,

those sustainable entrepreneurs have observed that the populations, even sensitized with the environment, can make the choice degrade nature for their survival. For example, Nicolas is essentially driven by a pro-environmental motivation. Initially, he wanted to fight illegal fishing and poaching by pursuing the culprits within the communities. However, he realized that, to achieve this final goal, he could not continuously fight against the communities. If the populations concerned were less poor and found economic opportunities through the preservation of nature (tourism, honey production...) then, they would become partners in achieving the final goal of nature. Creating social value for the communities thus became an instrumental motivation to achieve the final motivation of environmental preservation.

Social and environmental motivations integrated - And finally, some sustainable entrepreneurs may consider social and environmental aspects to be inseparable and one and the same thing. In their eyes, there is no overriding factor between nature and the well-being of people. They are as much motivated by communities as they are by nature because they see communities as part of nature. For instance, Greg, which is a member of the Alliance of Mother Nature's Guardians, wishes to share his integrated vision of the environment and the social to move away from an anthropocentric vision of the world.

3.3.2. Environmental & Social Motivations: Balancing Guardianship and Threat

All the sustainable entrepreneurs studied have defined a social and environmental mission for their hybrid organizations, considering it as central. The hybrid nature of their organizations is not guaranteed and can be threatened by mission drift (Cornforth, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014; Grimes et al., 2019; Jones, 2007) and mission lock-in (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). Hybrid organizations are protected by guardrails against these threats to their hybridity (Smith & Besharov, 2019). One of these guardrails consists of relationships with external stakeholders. If practices are no longer aligned with one of the missions, these stakeholders alert the sustainable entrepreneur.

Our study explores the dual impact of sustainable entrepreneurs' social and environmental motivations on maintaining societal goals and the potential risk of mission lock-in, which could threaten organizational hybridity. We found that sustainable entrepreneurs from the ecotourism sector in Benin are deeply integrated within their communities and concerned by environmental issues, a relationship supported by several factors. Notably, the small scale of their enterprises (typically fewer than 50 employees) facilitates direct engagement with external stakeholders. Furthermore, the socio-cultural environment in Benin underscores community importance, fostering a culture of solidarity and information exchange among individuals (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan, Apitsa, & Adegbite, 2015), including entrepreneurs. This dynamic is further enriched by the spiritual traditions of Vodoun, prevalent in Benin, which not only strengthens community ties but also promotes environmental stewardship (Djagoun, Zanvo, Padonou, Sogbohossou, &

Sinsin, 2022; Toko Imorou, Arouna, Houessou, & Sinsin, 2018). These findings suggest that while the strong community and environmental orientation of these entrepreneurs supports their social and environmental motivations, it may also predispose them towards rigid adherence to their initial missions, potentially leading to mission lock-in.

Sustainable entrepreneurs are driven by a commitment to the well-being of the communities close to them. These communities, deeply embedded in a sociocultural context characterized by solidarity (Mutabazi, 2006), serve as natural guardians of the organization's social mission.

Additionally, environmental preservation remains a paramount concern for these entrepreneurs, as nature, a silent beneficiary, cannot directly prompt adherence to environmental goals. However, sustainable entrepreneurs remain attuned to indicators of environmental degradation, such as increased waste, forest fires, and declining wildlife populations. Additionally, we have observed specific stakeholders acting as guardians of the environmental mission. Sustainable entrepreneurs may be challenged by youths trained in nature clubs established in their ecotourism organization, and by international tourists who opt for ecotourism over traditional tourism due to their heightened awareness of environmental and social issues.

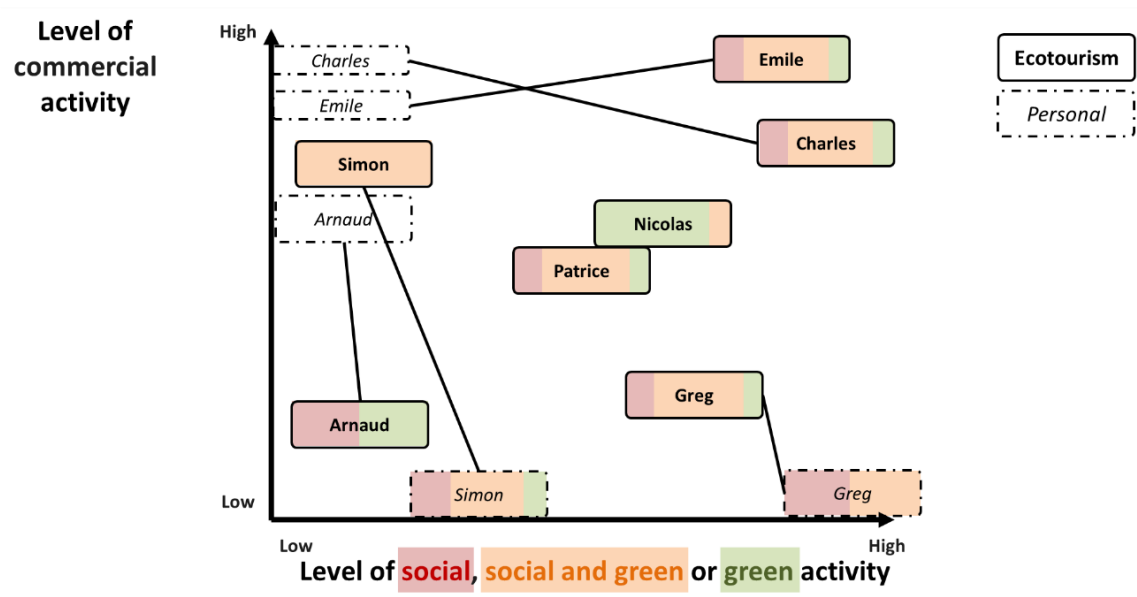
The intricate interplay between social and environmental objectives within sustainable ventures plays a crucial role in balancing these missions, ensuring that neither is marginalized at the expense of the other. Community support acts as a pivotal social motivator that not only fosters community awareness but also enhances environmental preservation efforts. Conversely, nearly all sustainable entrepreneurs have established nature clubs or similar initiatives aimed at promoting environmental awareness. These clubs, however, serve a dual purpose. Beyond educating the community about environmental stewardship, they also strengthen social bonds within and across generations, thereby enhancing community well-being and fostering a more cohesive society.

3.4. (De)motivation factors to prioritize sustainable entrepreneurship.

We conclude our analysis by focusing on the central question of this article: what motivates sustainable entrepreneurs to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career?

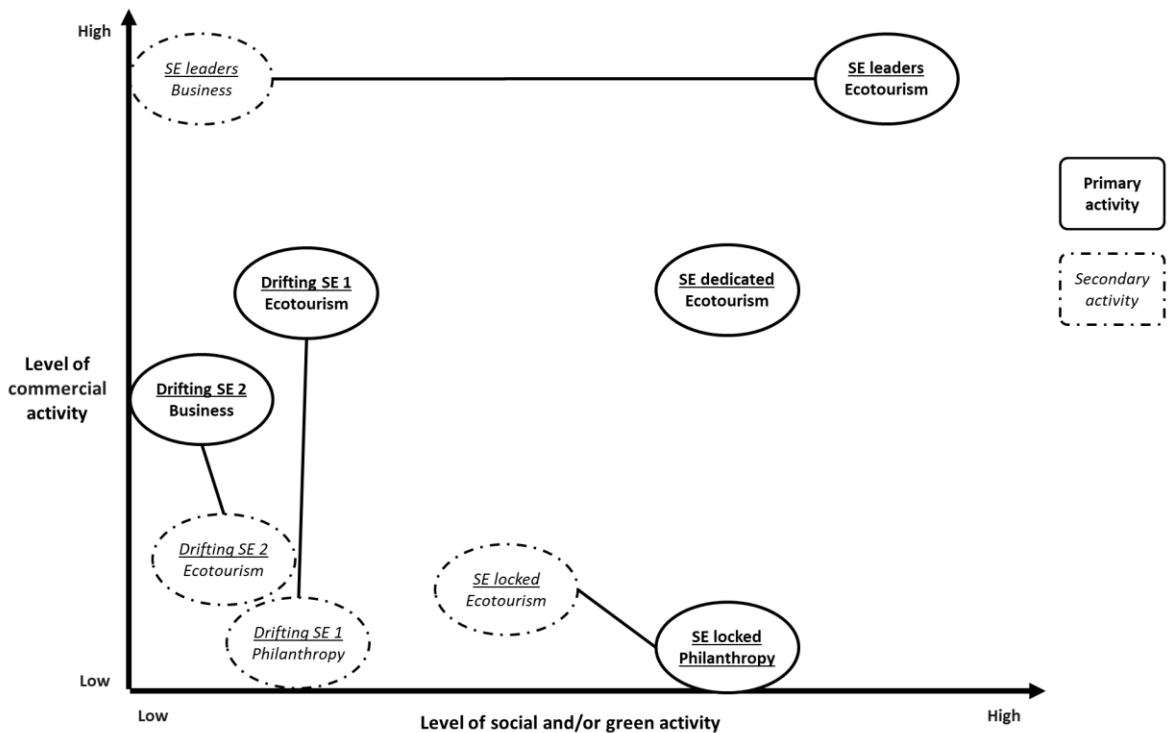
We evaluated and compared the level of commercial activity (number of international and local tourists) and the level of social, social and green, and/or green activities (number and size of community and/or environmental projects). We also conducted these assessments for the other business activities of each sustainable contractor (see graph 1 here below)

GRAPH 1 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS : ECOTOURISM VERSUS PERSONAL ACTIVITIES



We completed those analyses assessing which was the primary and secondary professional activity of each sustainable entrepreneur. Those approaches allow us to evaluate if the sustainable entrepreneur is willing to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career. We identified distinct profiles (see graph 2 – here below)

GRAPH 2 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP : HYBRIDITY PROFILES AND ACTIVITIES



Finally, we have compiled the main (de)motivating factors that were indicated by the sustainable entrepreneurs. We also included (de)motivations related to the exploitation of ecotourism entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as those related to the search for philanthropic funding (see table 5 – here below).

TABLE 5 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MOTIVATION PROFILES.

	SE Leaders	SE dedicated	SE locked	Drifting SE 1	Drifting SE 2
Primary Motivation	Social & Environmental Achievement	Social/ Environmental Value Creation	Social/ environmental Value Creation	Entrepreneurial activities	Personal wealth Monetary gains
Secondary Motivation	Achievement (social, environmental, and/or entrepreneurial)	Financial autonomy of the organization	Promotion of culture, traditions and nature	Meet other cultures	Insufficient financial resources
Motivation towards exploiting ecotourism entrepreneurial opportunities	Source of motivation : Entrepreneurship to generate revenues	Source of demotivation : limited interest in additional entrepreneurial activities	Source of demotivation : Economic activities secondary towards social and green value creation	Source of motivation : entrepreneurial activities	Limited interest – priority to existing personal revenues
Motivation towards gathering philanthropic fundings	Source of motivation : Develop networks and partnerships	Source of demotivation : Limited access to funders	Source of demotivation : Difficulties to gather fundings	Source of demotivation : Important difficulties to gather fundings	Source of demotivation : Important difficulties to gather fundings

First, we identified Sustainable Entrepreneurs leaders (SE Leaders) in ecotourism. They attract the largest number of international tourists; they manage to generate important revenues for their ecotourism organization. They also attract important funding. They focus mainly on ecotourism activities, although they are considering delegating some of the activities if they can build up competent teams. In this case, they hope to be able to use the time freed up to launch other sustainable entrepreneurial activities. They also develop some private business activities (consultancy and fish farming). Those sustainable entrepreneurs are driven by social and environmental value creation, but also by a hybrid achievement motivation, combining entrepreneurial, commercial, social, and environmental dimensions. They are motivated to exploit ecotourism entrepreneurial opportunities and to develop new partnerships to gather philanthropic funding.

The second type of profile is sustainable entrepreneur dedicated to their cause but who feels struggling to generate revenues and gathering funds. They solely focus on their ecotourism organization even if they had other opportunities for more lucrative careers. Like SE Leaders, those dedicated sustainable entrepreneurs are mainly driven by social and/or environmental value creation (see social-green trade-offs). Their secondary motivation is to provide financial autonomy for their organization. Unlike leading sustainable entrepreneurs, they are relatively demotivated to develop more entrepreneurial activities and to find new funders.

We identified a last type of SE dedicating most of his time to ecotourism: 'Drifting SE 1'. Unlike the previous types of SE, his ecotourism activities are limited on the social and green dimensions as he is mainly active in the organization of ecotourism circuits for small groups of tourists. He brings tourists to the other ecotourism entrepreneurs, but he does not generate a direct impact on communities or nature. As he focuses mostly on the entrepreneurial side of ecotourism, he may be considered as potentially threatened by mission drift. Beside his ecotourism activities, he tries to realize a few philanthropic projects. His motivations are related to entrepreneurial activities as such and to meeting other cultures. In contrast, the search for philanthropic funding is a major source of demotivation for him.

The last two types of SE did not engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities. They are following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career.

On the one hand, the 'drifting SE 2' states that he wants to concretize an ecotourism project since 2015 but he has not done it yet, or only a few rare visits of trainees that were not very lucrative and generated rather little social or environmental impact. He may be considered as facing mission drift. He mainly devotes himself to other professional projects: consulting missions for the private sector or academic missions. His motivation is mainly self-oriented: personal wealth and monetary gains. About his ecotourism organization, he is demotivated by insufficient financial resources. He shows limited interest in exploiting ecotourism opportunities, and he faces important difficulties to gather funding.

On the other hand, the 'SE locked' also states that he wants to welcome more international tourists but, currently, he focuses mainly on the organization of school visits to raise nature and community awareness among schoolchildren. He is facing difficulties to generate revenues as he overlooks international tourists. Therefore, he mainly works for a local public administration trying to improve the well-being of his fellow citizens. The 'SE locked' is motivated to create social and environmental value as to promote culture, traditions, and nature. He is not comfortable with entrepreneurial activities as, in his point of view, economic activities should always be secondary towards social and green value creation. Furthermore, he showed demotivation due to his difficulties to gather funding.

4. Discussion

4.1. Theoretical contributions

Through our research, we aim to contribute to the literature on motivations in sustainable entrepreneurship. This study offers some important insights into the motivational mix that drives sustainable entrepreneurs to persevere in their hybrid activities, but also that contributes to the maintenance of their hybridity. While pro-

social motivations have been identified as key drivers in both social and environmental entrepreneurship (Vedula et al., 2022), we propose to also consider the importance of pro-environmental motivations. Furthermore, we connect the social and green dimensions of sustainable entrepreneurship by studying trade-offs between social and environmental motivations.

Despite their initial intentions, some entrepreneurs encounter difficulties to launch and maintain their sustainable entrepreneurial activities and to maintain their hybridity.

On the one hand, they may face mission drift (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Jones, 2007; Weisbrod, 2004) because the private income gap between sustainable entrepreneurship activity and other conventional entrepreneurial opportunities is too high. The self-oriented motivation to earn private income is more important than the other-oriented pro-social and pro-environmental motivations. Those result are aligned with expectancy theory (Edelman et al., 2010) which states that motivation needs a certain level of expectancy (“subjective probability that effort will lead to an outcome”), valence (“anticipated satisfaction”), and instrumentality (reward attractiveness to motivate people to attain it). In this case, the self-oriented commercial motives outperform the pro-social and pro-environmental motives.

On the other hand, some entrepreneurs tend to lock their mission (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019) because their pro-social and pro-environmental motivations are the ultimate motivation, and the business aspects are only instrumental motivations to achieve these social or green ideals. Their favorite scenario is to find funding to develop philanthropic activities without the need to launch entrepreneurial activities; they consider those commercial activities as secondary. Those cases show that pro-social and pro-environmental motivations are not a sufficient condition. There must be a balance between an entrepreneurial mindset and the three sustainability-related motivations to foster the emergence and continuity of a sustainable entrepreneurship project. The social & environmental motivations are a prerequisite but must be combined with entrepreneurial motivation, like the sustainable entrepreneurs’ leaders profiles, or at a minimum level of interest in entrepreneurial activities, like the sustainable entrepreneurs dedicated profiles.

We identified three distinct ways to deal with the social-environmental motivations. First, sustainable entrepreneurs may be primarily driven by pro-social motivations and enact instrumental environmental motivations to achieve social goals. They realize that environmental preservation is needed to better achieve their social objectives, mainly the well-being of the beneficiary community. Second, other sustainable entrepreneurs are primarily driven by pro-environmental motivations and enact instrumental social motivations to achieve environmental goals. They realized it is particularly complicated to raise environmental awareness among communities in difficulties. The well-being of those communities will support their environmental efforts. The last approach is a mixed social-environmental motivation. For the concerned sustainable entrepreneurs,

the social and environmental components of sustainability are part of the same inseparable whole. Their motivation is therefore dual, comprising both social and environmental components.

Motivations and demotivations are crucial elements that influence the recognition of sustainable development opportunities (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). To fully grasp the dynamics of sustainable entrepreneurs, it is also essential to consider their prior knowledge and expertise, which significantly shapes decision-making processes (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Smith & Besharov, 2019). Furthermore, at the organizational level, several mechanisms are critical in maintaining hybridity. Formal structures provide a framework for action, anchoring the enterprise's activities within defined boundaries, while external stakeholders wield influence and serve as a check, ensuring that the sustainable enterprise does not deviate from its mission.

Finally, a good balance between entrepreneurial, commercial, social, and environmental motivations is necessary to maintain the hybridity of sustainable entrepreneurs. However, this balance is not enough: motivations must outweigh demotivations. We found that the main demotivations were other-oriented and relate to stakeholders such as public authorities, funders, competitors, or communities. Stakeholders are playing a key role in sustainable entrepreneurs' motivations.

4.2. Managerial Contributions

Our research elucidates significant managerial implications by delineating the motivational and demotivational factors influencing sustainable entrepreneurs. We have discovered that stakeholders play a pivotal role, potentially positive or negative, in shaping these dynamics. In the Beninese ecotourism sector, key stakeholders include employees, management teams, communities, authorities, and funders, each exerting influence that can either motivate or demotivate.

At the team level, it is crucial for sustainable entrepreneurs to address not only skills and knowledge gaps but also the motivational dynamics during recruitment. Building a team that compensates for any motivational imbalances at the leadership level is essential. A well-balanced motivation among team members enhances the organization's ability to maintain its hybrid nature and adhere to its sustainable mission. By engaging teams with the local communities and within their environments, entrepreneurs can leverage past experiences to foster a deeper commitment to the organization's goals. This balanced approach ensures that the organization is well equipped to overcome challenges and achieve its sustainability objectives.

Communities serve multifaceted roles, acting as partners in hosting tourists, beneficiaries of social activities, and crucial agents of environmental preservation. Their central role must be strategically supported.

Authorities represent an exogenous influence over which entrepreneurs typically have limited control. Yet, some entrepreneurs have successfully engaged in lobbying to shape policies that support sustainable entrepreneurship and its hybrid nature. Understanding these dynamics allows policymakers and supporting organizations to identify and foster entrepreneurs who are likely to succeed. Tailored support strategies can then be developed, focusing on amplifying motivational factors and alleviating demotivational elements. This targeted approach ensures that interventions are not only supportive but also strategically aligned with the unique needs and challenges faced by sustainable entrepreneurs.

Whether private or philanthropic, funders also play a critical role in either motivating or demotivating entrepreneurs. In response, many sustainable entrepreneurs strive to generate their own income to reduce dependence on external funding sources like grants or investment capital.

Moreover, to avoid mission drift or mission lock-in, sustainable entrepreneurs may establish 'guardrails' being specific formal structures, entrepreneur's expertise, and foster stakeholder relationships (Smith & Besharov, 2019). These safeguards are essential for maintaining strategic focus and ethical alignment.

Our findings stress the importance of a holistic approach to supporting sustainable entrepreneurship, one that considers the complex interplay of sustainable entrepreneurs' motivations and external influences.

4.3. Limitations

Due to practical constraints, this paper examines sustainable entrepreneurship motivation in a specific context with specific actors: ecotourism entrepreneurs in the South of Benin. Nevertheless, many factors influence how different types of motivation affect different entrepreneurs.

First, the scope of this study was limited to the motivations and demotivations of ecotourism entrepreneurs from the South of Benin. Sustainable entrepreneurs from other institutional contexts and socio-cultural backgrounds may enact different types of motivational mix.

Second, the actors studied were only men whereas there are significant differences between men and women entrepreneurs. Some motivation factors are higher for women: autonomy, change, seeking a challenge, and self-determination (Carter et al., 2003). Women entrepreneurs are also more motivated by personal enjoyment and helping others (Carter et al., 2003). Moreover, women driven by the desire for autonomy, and men driven by external reason like opportunity identification were more likely to become entrepreneurs (Carter et al., 2003). Men are also more motivated by prestige. There is still some debate about the gender most affected by the desire for financial

success (Carter et al., 2003). Other researchers revealed differences based on the color of the skin in the US. For instance, whites are more motivated by the desire for financial success than blacks because black entrepreneurs are facing structural barriers and do not associate entrepreneurship growth with significant financial success (Edelman et al., 2010).

Furthermore, this study focuses on established sustainable entrepreneurs (>10 years). The motivational mix needed to start a new sustainable entrepreneurial venture may be slightly different than the motivations of the entrepreneurs studied in our research.

4.4. Future Research Avenues

Our paper opens interesting research avenues. Our empirical study takes place in a cultural context characterized by a traditional model that impacts African enterprises (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul, Bruton, & Wood, 2009; Khayesi, George, & Antonakis, 2014; Littlewood & Holt, 2018; Mutabazi, 2006; Omorede, 2014; Seny Kan et al., 2015). The priorities set by entrepreneurs may be influenced by the traditional system of thought that coexists with the occidental system of thought in African societies. Moreover, the institutional context facilitates or hinders the emergence of sustainable ventures. Local institutions have varying degrees of influence on the opportunities available to sustainable entrepreneurs. For instance, the absence of a specific status for sustainable ventures can force sustainable entrepreneurs to choose a status that does not correspond to their activities. Carsrud & Brännback, (2011) suggested examining how the context impacts entrepreneurial motivation. We could examine how motivation change over time when a sustainable entrepreneur is confronted with a new environmental situation. In parallel, the management team's motivations may also influence sustainable entrepreneurs' motivations. Our research showed the importance of the stakeholders, also internally, on their demotivation. Further work is required to establish which motivation profiles are the most adequate for the management team depending on sustainable entrepreneurs' motivation profile.

We focused on men entrepreneurs while women entrepreneurs may have distinct motivation (Carter et al., 2003; Gunawan et al., 2021) and may be more prone to sustainability dimensions whereas men seems more interested by business aspects (Vuorio et al., 2018). Nevertheless, there seems to be no gender differences for sustainable entrepreneurial intentions (Vuorio et al., 2018).

Furthermore (de)motivations could also vary depending on the age of the sustainable entrepreneur. Younger generations seem to value extrinsic rewards more than older generations (Twenge et al., 2010). Are there also difference of (de)motivation depending on the age in sustainable entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process (Shane et al., 2003) and we may expect motivations to change over time. For instance, nascent sustainable entrepreneurs may

also have specific motivations and be demotivated by the fear of the unknown or by the fear of not finding their first client. Consequently, different mixes of motivation over time could lead to decisions that would be different if the sustainable entrepreneur were faced with the same choice at different time intervals. Scholars interested in the temporal dimension could use the temporal motivational theory (TMT) (Carsrud et al., 2017; Steel & König, 2006).

Researchers have been interested in the impact of knowledge on motivation for some time (E. A. Locke & Latham, 2004). Knowledge about the potentialities linked to the activity can influence motivations. Furthermore, we can assume that knowledge can help sustainable entrepreneurs better identify different types of opportunities along the different dimensions of TBL. What, then, might be the impact of this knowledge on the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs? What kind of knowledge will help sustainable entrepreneurs and motivate them to enact sustainable entrepreneurial activities? Does the managerial background have an impact on sustainable entrepreneurship motivation? The right mix of knowledge and motivation impact the recognition of sustainable development opportunities (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). What could be the right balance for successful sustainable entrepreneurs? Is it possible to foster and improve the mix of knowledge and motivation?

Beyond questions related to the right mix of motivations in sustainable entrepreneurship, the importance of each of the motivations for the sustainable entrepreneur could influence his or her decision-making. In addition, the components of each of the dimensions may also have an impact. For example, Bacq & Alt (2018) showed that the cognitive and the affective dimension of empathy could have a different impact on the development of social entrepreneurship intentions. Since empathy is an emotional antecedent of other-oriented motivations (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011), we can assume that cognitive or affective dimensions of empathy may have an impact on motivations.

Exploring demotivation factors in entrepreneurship is a relatively new in entrepreneurship. However, considering the specificities of sustainable entrepreneurship, it would be beneficial to compare our findings with those on demotivations in other entrepreneurial forms such as traditional entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and environmental entrepreneurship, as well as with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Both sustainable entrepreneurship and CSR encompass dimensions of sustainability and profitability. What sets sustainable entrepreneurship apart from CSR initiatives is the emphasis on societal mission in the former, and profit maximization in the latter. Given the nuanced boundary between these two concepts, investigating entrepreneurs'

motivations and demotivations from both perspectives could provide valuable insights into their distinctions.

Conclusion

Since the foundational studies in management motivation (Birley & Westhead, 1994), it has been acknowledged that motivations are not isolated but coexist in dynamic interplay. Yet, research exploring the interconnections among diverse motivational forces remains scarce. In line with studies on social entrepreneurship (Bacq et al., 2016; Gunawan et al., 2021; McMullen & Bergman, 2017; Ruskin et al., 2016a) and environmental entrepreneurship (Font et al., 2016; Williams & Schaefer, 2013), which highlight the unique motivational blends, our work proposes that sustainable entrepreneurship similarly features a complex amalgamation of motivational and demotivational factors spanning entrepreneurial, commercial, social, and environmental dimensions.

Sustainable entrepreneurship presents innovative pathways to address the profound social and environmental challenges our societies face today. A nuanced understanding of the motivations and demotivations guiding sustainable entrepreneurs is crucial for supporting their strategic decisions, including the identification and exploitation of sustainable opportunities (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). Our research not only identifies these factors but also elucidates their interrelationships, providing a foundation for targeted support strategies. Recognizing which entrepreneurs to support and how to effectively support them is paramount in fostering ventures that not only remain active and hybrid but also contribute significantly to the common good.

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Résultats - Simon

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs Instrumentale

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Environnemental
Motivations	Accomplissement	Activités entrepreneuriales – Voyage	- Rencontrer d'autres personnes (touristes & communautés) - Pousser les personnes à se rencontrer	
Démotivations	- Démarches administratives - Peu de soutien des autorités	Concurrence déloyale (acteurs informels)	Ressources financières insuffisantes	

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Résultats - Emile

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs Instrumentale

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Environnemental
Motivations	- Développement personnel - Innovation - Accomplissement	- Réseau/capital social - Indépendance/Propre pression positive - Obligation (de résultats)	- Création de valeur sociale - Résoudre des problèmes sociaux - Sensibiliser et encourager l'entrepreneuriat (durable) - Soutien des autorités	- Protection de la biodiversité - Soutien des autorités
Démotivations		(Revenus personnels limités comparativement aux autres possibilités)	- Pression des donateurs: soutien décroissant et exigences croissantes - Concurrence déloyale des autorités - Manque d'appropriation des communautés	Concurrence déloyale des autorités

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Résultats - Charles

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs Instrumentale

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Environnemental
Motivations	- Développement des équipes - Implication des équipes - Bien être des équipes et atmosphère positive	Accomplissement	- Obtenir le soutien des communautés - Rencontrer l'autre/Lutter contre les préjugés	Préservation des ressources naturelles
Démotivations			Résistance des communautés	

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Résultats - Patrice

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs *Instrumentale*

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Green
Motivations		Autonomie financière de l'organisation	<u>Création de valeur sociale</u> <u>Bien-être de la communauté</u> (Feedback satisfaisant)	<u>Préservation de l'environnement</u> Passion pour la Nature
Démotivations	- Equilibre vie privée/vie professionnelle - Implication des équipes et leurs résultats	(Revenus personnels limités comparativement aux autres possibilités)	- Ressources financières insuffisantes - Incompréhensions des communautés - Résistance/coopération insuffisante des communautés	

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Résultats - Nicolas

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs *Instrumentale*

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Green
Motivations		Autonomie financière de l'organisation	- Obtenir le soutien des communautés - Création de valeur sociale - Promouvoir la culture locale	- Préservation de la Nature Sensibiliser les communautés à l'environnement Sensibiliser les autorités à l'environnement Sanctionner les personnes qui détruisent la nature
Démotivations		Investissements difficilement accessibles		- Ressources financières insuffisantes - Manque de soutien/d'implication des autorités

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Résultats - Greg

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs *Instrumentale*

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Green
Motivations	Transfert de compétences (comme un passage relais) – Equipes.	Promotion de la culture, des traditions et de l'environnement - Autonomie financière de l'organisation qui rend heureux - Appui direct aux plus faibles. Ex du miel où si on cherche grande échelle, on triche et met du sucre. "Quand la raison économique passe en premier, la raison sociale trépassse et l'environnement est en péril."	<u>Création de valeur sociale</u> <u>Préservation des coutumes et traditions</u> - Feedback satisfaisant Rencontre d'autres peuples - Communautés	<u>Préservation de la Nature</u> – « la nature peut exister sans les hommes, mais nous ne pouvons exister sans la Nature ». Trouver le côté social de l'homme dans la nature Sensibiliser à l'environnement - Textes de lois
Démotivations	- Equilibre vie privée/vie professionnelle - Démarches administratives	Argent détruit les valeurs sociales et la nature. (p ex monoculture qui détruit environnement)	- Ressources financières insuffisantes Argent détruit les valeurs sociales et la nature. (p ex monoculture qui détruit environnement) Communautés	

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Résultats - Arnaud

Déjà dans la théorie vs **Nouveau**
Motivation Finale vs *Instrumentale*

	Entrepreneurial	Commercial	Social	Environnemental
Motivations	• Revenus • Accomplissement • Développement personnel des employés	• Autonomie financière de l'organisation	• Création de valeur sociale • Feedback satisfaisant	• Protection de la biodiversité
Démotivations	• Difficulté de recrutement de qualité, aligné du point de vue logique/dynamique		• Ressources financières insuffisantes	• Ressources financières insuffisantes

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Chapter 3 - Managing Hybridity Tensions within Ecotourism

Organizations in Benin

Abstract

Sustainable entrepreneurship holds significant potential for addressing contemporary social and environmental challenges. Sustainable entrepreneurs encounter inherent tensions due to the hybrid nature of their organizations. Existing literature emphasizes the tensions that arise from the conflicting objectives of social and economic goals. However, uncertainties persist regarding environmental tensions and the management strategies for hybridity within African contexts. Our article aims to study the inherent tensions in sustainable entrepreneurship and the management modes of these tensions in an African context. We have employed theoretical frameworks of hybrid organizing, management of sustainability tensions, and African management. We conducted a qualitative, longitudinal methodology study of five sustainable entrepreneurs in Southern Benin's ecotourism sector. At various levels of hybrid organizing, sustainable entrepreneurs employ different modes of tension management (win-win, trade-off, integration, and paradox). Our study shows that sustainable entrepreneurs who adopt a paradoxical approach have access to a wider variety of opportunities and demonstrate greater resilience. Furthermore, community and spiritual approaches have played a role in facilitating tension management. Our findings underscore the critical need for context-specific solutions to navigate hybridity challenges in sustainable entrepreneurship and to enhance positive impacts for the common good.

Keywords

Sustainable entrepreneurship, Hybrid organizing, Tensions, African context, Ecotourism, Benin

³ Paper co-authored with Frank Janssen and presented at:

First version of the paper based on a Hybridity Multilevel model :

- o 13ème Congrès International Francophone en Entrepreneuriat et PME (CIFEPME) – Trois-Rivière 2016 - 1er prix pour la meilleure communication de type 'conceptuel'
- o 13th Annual Social Entrepreneurship Conference – Los Angeles 2016
- o 8th Belgian Entrepreneurship Research Day (BERD) – UCL Mons 2017

Current version

- o SustainLab Seminar ICHEC – Brussels 2023

Currently under review (3rd round) for potential publication in Revue Internationale PME – Special issue on « Nouveaux imaginaires de et sur l'Afrique par l'entrepreneuriat »

Introduction

Our societies face numerous social and environmental problems. African countries are at the forefront of climate-related challenges (IPCC, 2018), biodiversity collapse (Ceballos, Ehrlich & Raven, 2020), and poverty (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019). To address these challenges, new forms of entrepreneurship are blurring the boundaries between businesses and NGOs (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019). Sustainable entrepreneurship represents an ideal type of entrepreneurship for the public good as it combines economic, social, and environmental issues (Hoogendoorn, Van der Zwan & Thurik, 2019; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Parrish & Tilley, 2010; Vuorio, Puumalainen & Fellnhofer, 2018). The hybridity of sustainable entrepreneurs creates value but also generates tensions among the dimensions of sustainability (Muñoz, Janssen, Nicolopoulou & Hockerts, 2018; Vuorio et al., 2018).

The way sustainable entrepreneurs manage tensions depends on the context (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018), particularly in Africa which provides a setting characterized by a strong community (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul, Bruton, & Wood, 2009; Mutabazi, 2006, 2007) and spiritual dynamic (Kaboré, 2010), especially in Benin (Djogo-Djossou, Huynen, Djègo, & Sinsin, 2012). Articles dedicated to sustainable entrepreneurship in an African context published in well-ranked journals are scarce (Spence, Ben Boubaker Gherib, & Ondoua Biwolé, 2011). Nevertheless, sustainable entrepreneurs have the potential to enhance the prosperity of African societies and provide an ideal context for studying hybridity.

Employing the hybrid organizing model (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014), we study where hybridity tensions related to the three sustainability dimensions play out. Then, we explore the various tensions management modes. Specifically, we study how sustainable entrepreneurs manage the inherent tensions of hybridity in the context of Southern Benin. Studies conducted on sustainability tensions in business, where the main mission remains commercial, provide a framework for analyzing tensions in sustainable entrepreneurship, where social and environmental missions are central. Four different approaches may be mobilized: win-win, trade-off, integration, and paradox (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014; Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge, 2015; Hahn, Figge, Pinkse, & Preuss, 2018; Ozanne, Phipps, Weaver, Carrington, Luchs, et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015).

To achieve our research objectives, we have selected a sector integrating social, environmental, and commercial dimensions: ecotourism. We conducted a longitudinal multiple case study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) of five ecotourism sustainable entrepreneurs from 2015 to 2022.

Our research indicates that tensions within sustainable entrepreneurship often arise between the environmental and social dimensions. Concerning modes of managing tensions, the entrepreneurs studied predominantly favored trade-off, integration, and engagement with paradoxes. Certain management approaches carry distinct risks: the

win-win strategy may lead to mission drift, whereas the trade-off strategy can result in mission lock-in. However, those opting for integration sustain a strict form of hybridity, while those embracing paradoxes uphold a dynamic hybridity that offers them more opportunities and resilience. Furthermore, community and spiritual approaches significantly facilitate the management of these tensions in the Beninese context. This study offers novel insights into the dynamics of sustainable entrepreneurship within a specific African setting. Enhancing understanding of practices that mitigate tensions associated with hybridity may foster the development of sustainable entrepreneurship across Africa.

1. Theoretical framework

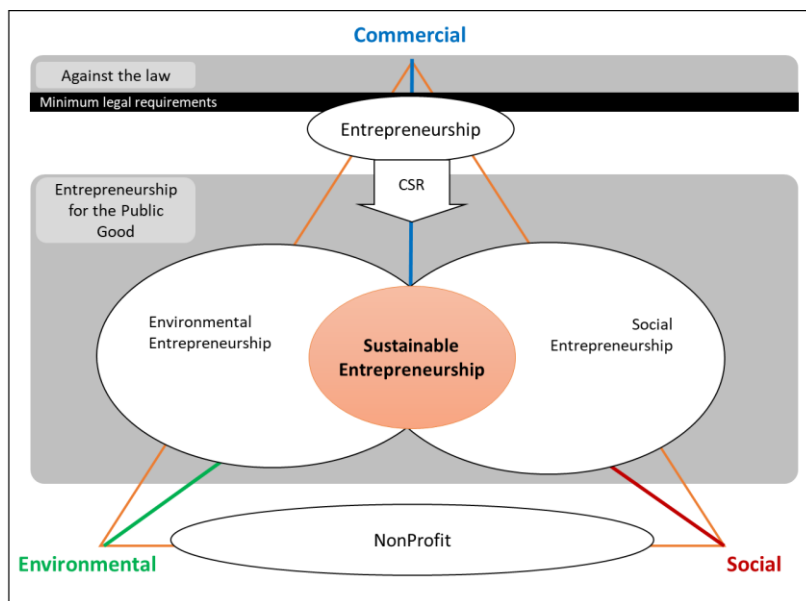
1.1. Sustainable Entrepreneurship: the ideal type

To tackle the diverse societal challenges facing our societies, various and new forms of entrepreneurship have emerged (Anand et al., 2021; Vedula et al., 2022). The boundaries between these different concepts are blurred (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019), nevertheless, certain key elements help distinguish them. Table 1 presents the definitions and key elements, and figure 1 positions them in relation to the dimensions of sustainability (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer, & Salignac, 2021; McMullen & Warnick, 2016; Spence et al., 2011; Vedula, Dobliger, Pacheco, York, Bacq, et al., 2022).

TABLE 1 – ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CSR: DEFINITIONS AND KEY ELEMENTS

Concept	Definition	Mission/Purpose
Corporate Social Responsibility	« Actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001) » (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011, p. 143)	Commercial with an ethical dimension
Entrepreneurship	« Process by which “opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited. » (Shane et al., 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p218)	Commercial (may include an ethical dimension)
Social Entrepreneurship	« Process of identifying, evaluating and exploiting opportunities aiming at social value creation by means of commercial, market-based activities (...) » (Bacq & Janssen, 2011, p. 388)	Social via commercial activities
Environmental Entrepreneurship	« ‘Process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting economic opportunities that are present in market failures’ which relate to environmental problems. » (Dean & McMullen, 2007, p58; Hörisch et al., 2017)	Environmental via commercial activities
Sustainable Entrepreneurship	« the discovery, creation, and exploitation of opportunities to create future goods and services that sustain the natural and/or communal environment and provide development gain for others. » (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011, p. 632)	Environmental AND social via commercial activities

FIGURE 1 – ENTREPRENEURIAL FORMS AND SOCIETAL MISSIONS



Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities to create future goods and services (Shane et al., 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p218). While entrepreneurship contributes positively to society, notably through job creation, its primary aim is still to generate private gains (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2012) focusing more on avoiding harm rather than proactively doing good (Bacq, Hartog, & Hoogendoorn, 2016; Fisscher, Frenkel, Lurie, & Nijhof, 2005). Entrepreneurs might adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices, extensively studied in the corporate sustainability literature (Hahn et al., 2014). In this context, they implement positive actions for society beyond what is legally required (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). CSR does not inherently align with entrepreneurial activity but primarily represents a commitment to societal responsibilities (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011).

To move beyond CSR practices, we must rediscover the motivations, intentions, and significance of actively doing good for society rather than being driven by private gains (Austin et al., 2012; Bacq et al., 2016; Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009). New hybrid forms of entrepreneurship have emerged. Social entrepreneurship aims at a social mission (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Battilana & Lee, 2014; Janssen, Bacq, & Brouard, 2012; Saebi, Foss, & Linder, 2018), and environmental entrepreneurship targets an environmental mission (Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002). Vedula et al. (2022) propose the concept of entrepreneurship for the public good (EBP) to encompass them. In this model, business activities are primarily utilized as tools to tackle societal challenges (Bacq et al., 2016).

At the heart of our study, sustainable entrepreneurship is defined as the discovery, creation, and exploitation of opportunities to produce goods and services that preserve the natural environment and provide gain for others (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011, p. 632). This concept constitutes an ideal type of entrepreneurship for the public good (EBP) addressing the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable

development (Muñoz et al., 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Vuorio et al., 2018). Muñoz & Cohen (2018) recommend a comprehensive approach that assesses the interdependencies among ecological, social, and economic systems. Sustainable entrepreneurship, characterized by its environmental and social missions, should not be confused with corporate sustainability, where the primary goal remains economic.

Sustainable entrepreneurs exhibit distinct characteristics. Although driven by entrepreneurial motivations (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011), they are also propelled by a desire to 'change the world' (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Vuorio et al., 2018). Their broad expertise extends beyond market dynamics to include deep insights into natural and social environments (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). Sustainable opportunities enable entrepreneurs to positively impact the natural environment and community, simultaneously creating value for themselves and other stakeholders (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

Contextual factors significantly influence the creation and development of sustainable businesses. These factors encompass formal and informal institutional structures, relationships with stakeholders (Schlange, 2006), the prevailing cultural context, and specific social norms, including norms of familial interdependence (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). While research in sustainable entrepreneurship has predominantly been concentrated on European and North American settings (Anand et al., 2021), it notably overlooks West Africa, a region with a population comparable to the European Union.

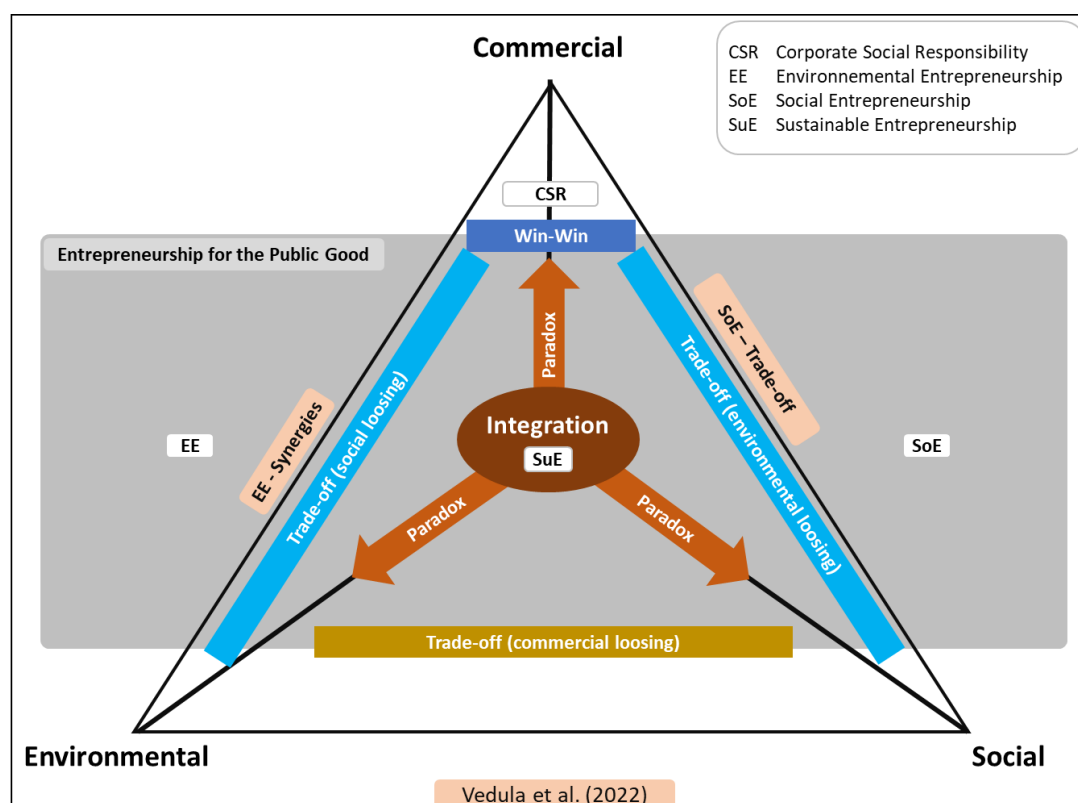
1.2. Sustainability Tensions

Organizations are considered hybrid when they combine identities, forms, or logics that conventionally are not associated together (Smith & Besharov, 2019). By integrating social, environmental, and commercial logics, sustainable entrepreneurs manage hybrid organizations. Hybridity diversifies access to resources by engaging a variety of external stakeholders (Smith & Besharov, 2019), but also presents persistent challenges due to multiple tensions (Smith, Gonin, & Besharov, 2013; Smith & Besharov, 2019).

Two significant threats jeopardize the delicate equilibrium of hybrid organizations. Mission drift occurs when the sustainable business prioritizes economic activities over its societal mission and, in doing so, loses sight of its 'raison d'être' (Cornforth, 2014; Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2019; Varendh-Mansson, Wry, & Szafarz, 2020). Conversely, mission lock-in occurs when sustainable entrepreneurs, overly committed to their mission, neglect economic viability, thereby endangering their organization's (Berger-Douce, Coeurderoy, Constantinidis, Favre-Bonté, Germain, et al., 2023; Copestake, 2007; Lahaye & Janssen, 2016; Staessens, Kerstens, Bruneel, & Cherchye, 2019). Identifying mission drift or mission lock-in is a challenging task as organizations alternate their focus over time between their mission and commercial objectives (Smith et al., 2013). De Bernardi & Arenas (2022) use the metaphor of a pendulum swinging between societal and economic realms.

While recent studies have concentrated on managing tensions in corporate sustainability, they do not address sustainable entrepreneurship, since their primary goal is still commercial profitability. Researchers have identified four approaches to managing sustainability tensions: 'win-win,' 'trade-off,' 'integration,' and 'paradoxes' (Ozanne et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). We illustrate these approaches according to the dimensions of sustainability and various forms of entrepreneurship for the public good, as shown in Figure 2. These approaches were developed for the context of enterprises moving towards greater sustainability; we have adapted them to sustainable entrepreneurship where sustainability is already the key feature of the organization and its missions.

FIGURE 2 – ENTREPRENEURIAL FORMS, SOCIETAL MISSIONS, AND TENSIONS APPROACHES



The 'win-win' approach primarily focuses on creating synergies and typically overlooks underlying tensions because the economic dimension remains a priority (Sommer, 2022) because the economic dimension remains a priority (Ozanne et al., 2016; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). This approach aligns with CSR (Bacq et al., 2016) or with mission drift when the sustainable entrepreneur loses sight of their societal mission. Conversely, the trade-off approach aims to mitigate tensions by adopting a 'win-lose' strategy, which involves sacrifices in one area to gain in another. Studies on the sustainability of companies active in the oil and gas sector (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015) suggest that societal goals may be secondary (Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). However, in the specific context of sustainable entrepreneurship, it is imperative that sustainability goals remain at the heart of the company's missions. In this case, a trade-off occurs when the sustainable entrepreneur agrees to lose on one or two

dimensions to gain on other dimensions of sustainability. The third approach, integration, involves managing tensions by adopting a balanced approach among the various dimensions without favoring one at the expense of another (Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Unlike "win-win", the economic dimension is not prioritized. The last approach, paradox, involves accepting and exploring tensions rather than resolving them (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Organizational paradoxes involve elements that are separately logical but together are contradictory and interdependent in a dynamic relationship that cannot result in a solution (Sommer, 2022). They persist over time and require acceptance and ongoing efforts to manage (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015).

Research in environmental entrepreneurship predominantly explores synergies between environmental and economic objectives ("win-win" approach) while research in social entrepreneurship focuses on tensions between economic and social goals (approaches "trade-off," "integration", or "paradox") (Sommer, 2022; Vedula et al., 2022). Sustainable entrepreneurship, situated at the intersection of these dynamics, inherently involves navigating both tensions and synergies among these divergent objectives. Vedula et al. (2022) acknowledge a close link between social and environmental dimensions; however, the nature of the tensions arising from this interconnection and strategies for managing them are still not well understood. Our study also aims to shed new light on this social-environmental axis, which offers interesting research perspectives (Vedula et al., 2022).

1.3. Hybrid Organizing Dimensions

Sustainable entrepreneurs mitigate tensions through hybrid organizing, defined as 'the activities, structures, processes, and meanings by which organizations make sense of and combine aspects of multiple organizational forms' (Battilana, 2018, p. 1280; Battilana & Lee, 2014, p. 398). Exploring hybridity within sustainable entrepreneurship provides compelling insights (Anand et al., 2021), introducing additional complexity by integrating the environmental component into current studies that examine hybridity solely from social and economic perspectives.

Hybrid organizations are subject to both external and internal tensions (Battilana & Lee, 2014). Externally, their environment may create tensions due to the role of institutionalized forms, which can confer legitimacy and provide access to resources (Kraatz & Block, 2008). Sustainable entrepreneurship manifests across diverse institutional forms, potentially leading to misunderstandings among external stakeholders such as governments, private investors, philanthropic funders, beneficiaries, and customers. Stakeholders in the NGO sector might perceive sustainable entrepreneurs as illegitimate, criticizing the non-redistribution of profits to beneficiaries. Private sector actors may fear that it is an unprofitable or risky investment since the logic is not primarily dictated by profit. Internally, tensions can materialize between social, environmental, and commercial objectives. The adoption of varied logics within the organization may result in conflicts regarding the prioritization of goals

and the allocation of resources (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2010). If they prioritize the commercial dimension, they face mission drift (Cornforth, 2014; Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, 2014), and if they prioritize the social and/or environmental mission, they lock in their mission (Copestake, 2007; De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens, Kerstens, Bruneel & Cherchye, 2019).

Studies on hybrid organizations identify five areas where tensions can arise and hybridity can be maintained: in organizational activities, workforce composition, organizational design, inter-organizational relationships, and organizational culture (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014).

Organizational Activities – The literature distinguishes two levels of integration of organizational activities. Integrated hybrids implement a set of activities to achieve societal and commercial goals (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Saebi et al., 2018) such as microfinance institutions. In contrast, differentiated hybrids consist of separate organizations targeting complementary objectives, like a commercial enterprise whose revenues support a social organization (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Saebi et al., 2018). This aspect also pertains to the selection of activities and the strategic allocation of resources across these activities (Cornforth, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014) and how resources are allocated among these types of activities (Jones, 2007).

Workforce Composition – Battilana & Dorado (2010) have shown that the profiles of workers significantly impact the management of the hybrid organization. Their study indicates that recruits with a hybrid profile are more suitable for organizations than those with purely commercial or social profiles. Another strategy for managing the workforce in a hybrid organization involves providing trainings on aspects of sustainability that are less familiar to employees (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

Organizational Design – This dimension includes a series of levers that manage the tensions of organizational hybridity. First, the formal organizational structure defines coherent objectives and strategies in relation to the hybrid mission (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012; Gupta, Beninger, & Ganesh, 2015), such as balancing between clients and beneficiaries (Battilana et al., 2012; Gupta et al., 2015). Designated negotiation spaces that facilitate discussions on goals and strategies across departments can enhance the maintenance of hybridity (Battilana & Lee, 2014). Incentives and control systems are another lever to ensure the organization's hybrid mission (Battilana & Lee, 2014) to achieve expected performance (Battilana et al., 2012; Mair, Mayer, & Lutz, 2015; Zahra et al., 2009). Finally, governance and leadership contribute to shaping the norms and values that act as 'guardrails' to preserve hybridity (Battilana, 2018; Smith & Besharov, 2019).

Inter-organizational Relationships – External stakeholders play a crucial role in either sustaining or challenging the hybridity of the organization (Smith & Besharov, 2019). This may involve communities, beneficiaries, clients, suppliers, funders, investors, or institutional partners. Some stakeholders, like communities and public authorities, are

able to soften the tensions between the hybrid organization and non-hybrid partners (Gillett, Loader, Doherty, & Scott, 2019; Savarese, Huybrechts, & Hudon, 2021). Entrepreneurs utilize various levers, including communication (Davies & Doherty, 2019; Obermiller, Burke, Talbott, & Green, 2009; Smith et al., 2013), funding sources' choice (Battilana et al., 2012), and partners selection, alongside efforts to institutionalize their organizations through measures such as lobbying public authorities.

Culture – Whether linked to the commercial and/or social world, organizational culture, composed of shared values and behavioral norms, shapes and is shaped by the four preceding elements (Battilana, 2018). Organizations that manage their hybridity successfully are those that have created and maintained a hybrid organizational culture that combines societal and financial objectives in all aspects of the organization (Battilana, 2018). The prevailing culture within a hybrid organization is deeply influenced by the broader cultural context in which it operates.

1.4. Managing Sustainable Enterprises Within African Contexts

Sustainable entrepreneurship cannot be conceived solely within markets, but also within social systems and territories (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). Research that is primarily focused on Europe and North America (Anand et al., 2021; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Vuorio et al., 2018) often overlooks the unique dynamics of other contexts. Moreover, the Western management model cannot be directly transposed to Southern countries (Spence et al., 2011), particularly in Africa (Dia, 1991). Studies show that contextual factors significantly influence the motivation of social entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Omoredede, 2014) and sustainable entrepreneurs in West Africa (Nhemachena & Murimbika, 2018).

African contexts provide a rich framework for studying sustainable entrepreneurship, particularly due to their strong community dynamics (Apitsa, 2019; Dia, 1991; Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan, Apitsa, & Adegbite, 2015) and specific challenges related to limited resources (Spence et al., 2011). This sociocultural context can additionally be utilized strategically in management practices (Benabdeljlil, 2012).

Few studies exist on African companies striving to adopt sustainable practices, and even fewer address sustainable entrepreneurship in Africa.

These research domains are constrained by a scarcity of available data (Kolk & Rivera-Santos, 2015), and the identification of sustainable entrepreneurs is further complicated by a lack of legal recognition, restricting access to pertinent data (Walsh, 2015), unlike what can be done in Belgium or France, among others (Economie.gouv.fr, n.d.; SPF Economie, 2019).

Entrepreneurs from various forms of EBP are deeply rooted in their communities, influencing their societal impact (Vedula et al., 2022). A literature review by Bacq, Hertel, & Lumpkin (2022) explored the role of communities in an EBP context. They

define a community as a group of individuals sharing a place, identity, or common interest. According to them, entrepreneurship can generate societal impact by being for, in, with, made possible by, and driven by these communities. However, among 227 articles reviewed, only 14 specifically focus on Africa, with none addressing French-speaking countries in West Africa.

The community approach plays a crucial role in managing actors and organizations in Africa, profoundly influencing management practices. In South Africa, the concept of Ubuntu (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, & Kolk, 2015; West, 2014) and similar philosophies in various African regions (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006, 2007) advocate interdependence, reciprocity, and minimizing self-interest (Rivera-Santos et al., 2015; West, 2014). These systems, which emphasize harmony, compassion, and tolerance (West, 2014), are rooted in shared cultural or ethnic identities (Rivera-Santos et al., 2015), thereby strengthening family and community ties (Khavul et al., 2009). In these contexts, entrepreneurs feel an extended responsibility not only to their immediate family and employees but also to the families of these employees, often connected by ethnicity, language, and religion (Spence et al., 2011). They are encouraged to contribute to a broad community network maintained through practices of solidarity and mutual aid, including gift and counter-gift (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006, 2007; West, 2014). Information is rapidly exchanged among peers or within the same generation (Mutabazi, 2006). Furthermore, intergenerational respect for elders is crucial (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan et al., 2015), as long as they share power (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006). Elders thus play a significant role in controlling individuals' actions for the community, but they are also guardians of a thought system, a value system, and a rule system (Apitsa, 2019).

The second approach within African contexts draws from traditional worldviews (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, & Kolk, 2015), notably characterized by a deep-seated attachment to spirituality (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006). The influence of spirituality on entrepreneurship has been studied in the context of Western Christianity but remains underexplored for traditional West African religions, such as Vodoun (Gundolf, Saraglou, & Janssen, 2021). Yet, these beliefs shape social and environmental actions and entrepreneurial dynamics. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Tunisia, religious beliefs stimulate social initiatives (Kanyurhi, Bashige, Karhamikire, Mushigo, Mushagalusa, et al., 2021; Omorede, 2014; Spence et al., 2011). Moreover, they support the conservation of sacred groves in Burkina Faso (Kaboré, 2010), sacred forests (Kokou & Sokpon, 2006), and animal species in Benin (Djogo-Djossou et al., 2012), where practices related to Vodoun encourage environmental preservation (Briones Alonso, Houssa, & Verpoorten, 2016; Djagoun, Zanvo, Padonou, Sogbohossou, & Sinsin, 2022). These ecological principles actively foster the emergence of entrepreneurial conservation initiatives (Gunawan, van Riel, & Essers, 2021). These two approaches, communal and spiritual, particularly prevalent in an African context, provide specific insights into the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship.

2. Methodology

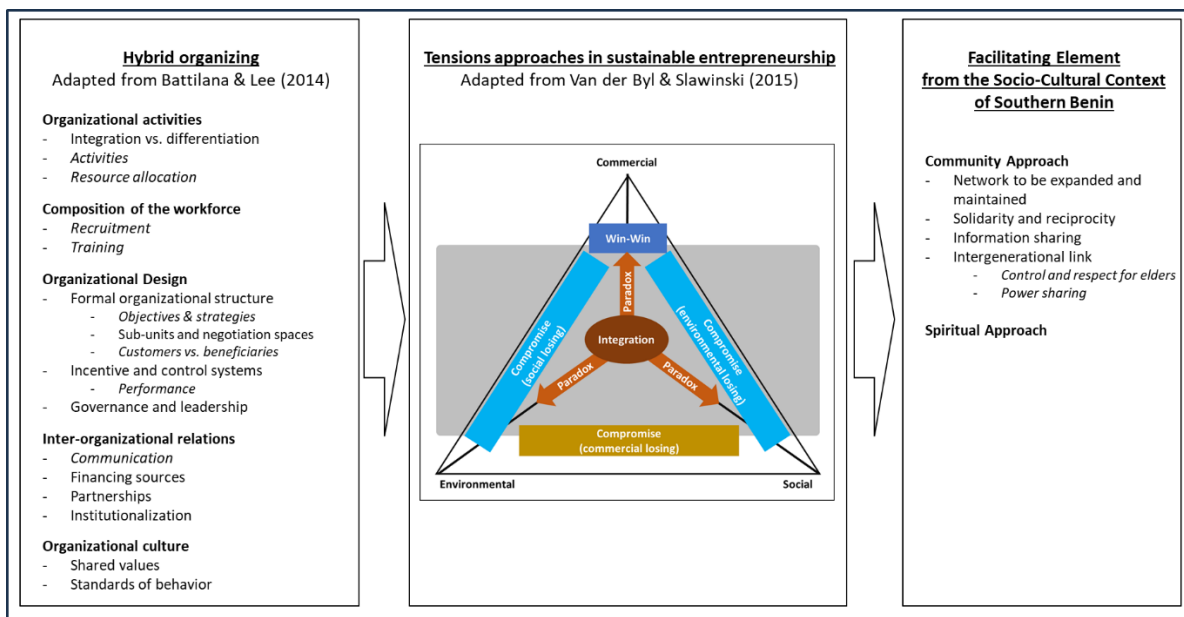
2.1. Research Design

For our study, we adopted an abductive approach, alternating between theory and fieldwork. The initial 'life story' interviews enabled us to collect preliminary data and identify underlying tensions effectively. Subsequently, we pinpointed the specific organizational levels at which these tensions manifest (Battilana & Lee, 2014) and adjusted our data collection methods accordingly. Finally, we utilized various approaches to managing tensions for our analyses (Ozanne et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015).

Our multiple case study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens, Bacq & Milanov, 2021) focused on five entrepreneurs in the ecotourism sector (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Reypens, Bacq & Milanov, 2021). This method was selected for its capacity to theorize in underexplored domains and examine dynamics within a specific environment (Eisenhardt, 1989), such as hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship. Our longitudinal approach, spanning from 2015 to 2022, was crucial for comprehensively understanding the evolution of the entrepreneurial process within a hybrid context (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Parrish, 2010).

Our exploration of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship has not only revealed intriguing research opportunities but also allowed us to refine our research design, as illustrated in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 – RESEARCH DESIGN



Our research questions are based on this model: What are the inherent tensions in hybridity that arise from the intersection of environmental, social, and commercial dimensions? How are these tensions managed by sustainable entrepreneurs? What are the management modes of these tensions specific to the socio-cultural context of Southern Benin?

2.2. Research Context: Ecotourism in Southern Benin

Ecotourism is a particularly suitable sector for study because entrepreneurs are faced daily with difficult choices among these various objectives. Ecotourism adheres to six key criteria (Donohoe & Needham, 2006; Fennell, 2014; Swan & Morgan, 2016), encompassing environmental aspects (such as nature preservation), social aspects (including the equitable distribution of profits to the community and ethical behavior), and elements at the confluence of these dimensions (like environmental education and sustainability). Thus, ecotourism constitutes an optimal environment for the study of sustainable entrepreneurship. We selected the Beninese ecotourism sector for our study due to its unique composition of predominantly local entrepreneurs, contrasting with other West African regions where state or large foreign entities predominantly drive the sector.

In most African contexts, including Benin, the statuses of social or sustainable enterprises are not clearly recognized, which forces entrepreneurs to opt for NGO or traditional business statuses (Littlewood & Holt, 2018). Adopting the research strategy used by scholars addressing similar challenges in social entrepreneurship (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014; Rivera-Santos et al., 2015; Zahra et al., 2009), we applied the concept's definition to identify the actors for our study. Our extensive field surveys confirmed that ecotourism entrepreneurs in Benin align with the theoretical definition of sustainable entrepreneurship by actively pursuing social, environmental, and economic objectives through their entrepreneurial activities. Upon completing our data collection, we presented the definition of sustainable entrepreneurship to the studied entrepreneurs, all of whom affirmed their alignment with this definition. Furthermore, this definition is consistent with the principles outlined in the charter of the Beninese Federation of Responsible and Solidarity Tourism Organizations (FBO-TRS, 2009).

Unlike corporate managers who implement sustainability policies, sustainable entrepreneurs are driven by a societal mission and are already at the heart of sustainability (Hahn et al., 2014). Regularly faced with tensions and difficult choices, they provide an ideal field of study to observe hybridity in action (Anand et al., 2021; Spence et al., 2011). As leaders of their organizations, these entrepreneurs play a critical role in maintaining hybridity (Smith & Besharov, 2019) as they direct their organizations based on their personal values of sustainability (Spence et al., 2011).

From the onset of our fieldwork, ecotourism entrepreneurs in Benin have navigated significant challenges, including diminished tourist interest due to external crises such as the Ebola pandemic (mainly in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) and Boko Haram

attacks (Nigeria), as well as disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic. This context has thus put these sustainable entrepreneurs under pressure and pushed them to identify new ways to meet the challenges of hybridity, but also of the context in which they operate.

2.3. Case Selection

Initially, we reached out to all entrepreneurs registered with the FBO-TRS, adding non-member organizations within the sector. We excluded companies led by foreign groups to avoid cultural and size-related biases, as well as those whose entrepreneurs were not available to participate in at least three rounds of interviews. This process allowed us to retain 11 companies.

To minimize variance attributable to environmental factors (Reypens, Bacq, & Milanov, 2021; Zott & Huy, 2007), we confined our study area to southern Benin excluding organizations in the north due to their distinct cultural characteristics, different tourist profiles, and higher security risks.

We then selected sustainable businesses that met minimum activity criteria. In the absence of established criteria in the literature, we observed that some actors hosted a maximum of five tourists annually, while others welcomed at least twenty tourists during the same period. This distinction enabled us to establish a threshold differentiating occasional from recurring activities. We applied the same logic to societal aspects, requiring at least one project per year.

Next, we selected five sustainable entrepreneurs who met the same criteria – sustainable entrepreneurs in the ecotourism sector who manage one or more sustainable organizations – while offering contrasting models (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) in terms of their economic dynamism or the projects conducted, whether they are consistently hybrid, alternate between different dimensions, or tend to favor one dimension. They constitute an ideal study context, especially as founding members, thus exerting significant influence over organizational characteristics, including cultural aspects (Smith & Besharov, 2019; Wry & York, 2017; Zahra et al., 2009). These organizations are funded partly by ecotourism revenues and partly by grants from international donors for social and environmental projects. By identifying, creating, and exploiting new opportunities during the period covered by our study, they effectively engage in entrepreneurial dynamics. We noted that ecotourism constitutes a significant portion of their funding; following the Ebola and COVID crises, many were compelled to lay off staff or forgo their own salaries. We have anonymized the names of the sustainable entrepreneurs. The profiles of the selected sustainable companies are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES OF THE SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS STUDIED.

Sustainable Entrepreneur	Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas
Integration vs differentiation	Differentiated Organizations Integrated Activities	Integrated Organization & Activities	Integrated Organization & Activities	Integrated Organization & Activities	Integrated Organization & Activities
Organizational Activities	Ecotourism: organization of circuits, catering, accommodation, and conference facilities Creation of ecotourism tours to benefit a community and preserve biodiversity. Carbon offset projects Tourism training Consultancy	Ecotourism: organizing tours, catering and accommodation Creation of ecotourism circuits for the benefit of a community and the preservation of biodiversity. Animal reserve Sustainable agriculture Citizenship education and environmental awareness.	Ecotourism: accommodation, catering and tour organization Farm school - sustainable agriculture Educational (school reinforcement) and cultural center for young people Radio broadcasts to raise environmental awareness Raising awareness of environmental preservation Community and/or environmental projects	Ecotourism: organizing tours Community awareness of nature conservation and spirituality Intercultural and intergenerational dialogue Supporting indigenous peoples in preserving their territories Voluntourism	Ecotourism: organizing tours Organization of whale-watching tours Museum - environmental education center Community awareness campaigns Anti-poaching actions Production of nature awareness programs In progress - Museum of African wax figures
Resources Allocation	Hybrid – social, environmental & economic	Hybrid – social, environmental & economic	Social Environmental Economic	Environmental & social as an indivisible whole	Environmental Social
Workforce Composition	20-50 pers Development agents, Sales representatives, Trainees	10-20 pers Young trained as hybrids, Nature Club, Employees	5-10 pers Employees, Teachers, Guides	5-10 pers Development agents	10-20 pers Employees, Media experts Lawyers, Young trained as hybrids

Sustainable Entrepreneurs		Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas
Organizational Design	Organizational Structure	Travel Company NGO Tourism school	NGO	NGO	NGO	NGO
	Incentives and Control Systems	Control by the entrepreneur No incentive	Control by the entrepreneur Election of Employee of the Year	Control by the entrepreneur No incentive	Control by the entrepreneur No incentive	Control by the entrepreneur No incentive
	Governance	Board of Directors: advice and validation	Board of Directors: advice and validation	Board of Directors: advice and validation	Board of Directors: advice and validation	Board of Directors: advice and validation
Inter-organizational Relations	Funding sources	Ecotourism Call for projects Tourism and consultancy Carbon offsetting	Ecotourism Call for projects	Ecotourism Call for projects	Ecotourism Call for projects	Ecotourism Call for projects Tourism Museum
	Partnerships	Communities International organizations	Communities International organizations	Communities International organizations	Communities Traditional and spiritual leaders Public authorities	Communities International organizations Public authorities
	Institutions	Lobbying	Lobbying			Lobbying
	Communication	Hybrid + differentiated	Hybrid + differentiated	Communities and Environment	Communities and Environment	Tourism and Environment
Organizational Culture		Hybrid Social and environmental Economic	Hybrid	Social and environmental Economic	Social and environmental	Environmental (and social) Economic

Emile initiated ecotourism circuits in Benin to demonstrate the economic value of biodiversity and support 'self-sustaining' projects that improve local communities' lives and preserve nature. Along with his team, he expanded this initiative by developing additional projects hosted in the NGO and the travel agency of his organization.

Charles initially established a fish farming business in a wetland area and later expanded his operations to include ecotourism initiatives to encourage conservation. By raising awareness among local hunters, he helped establish a wildlife refuge and a Hunting Museum, incorporating traditional and spiritual (Vodoun) practices, as well as a hunting council to regulate and preserve wildlife.

Patrice launched a radio program on environmental preservation and, with land donated by local dignitaries, developed ecotourism infrastructure, an educational center, and a farm school, thereby strengthening his social and environmental commitment to the community.

Greg, a local dignitary and the secretary-general of his municipality, leads an organization dedicated to solidarity tourism and conservation projects with indigenous communities, emphasizing his commitment to protecting their lands.

Nicolas, driven by his passion for nature and wildlife, initially concentrated his efforts on raising awareness through television programs and a Nature Museum. He is also involved in pursuing poachers through networks of informants and contacts with authorities. In addition to these approaches, he has integrated community well-being into his actions and has enabled the retraining of former poachers into eco-guards who now use their skills to guide tourists.

Each of these entrepreneurs illustrates a unique approach to sustainable entrepreneurship, integrating social, environmental, and economic goals into their projects. These cases show how they lead and influence their organizations while adapting their strategies to the changing needs and challenges of the local context.

2.4. Data Collection

From 2017 to 2022, we conducted nine rounds of interviews and data collection, amassing a total of 119 hours of discussions with five sustainable entrepreneurs and various stakeholders. As founding members, these entrepreneurs are central to shaping the policies and defining the organizational routines of their companies (Grimes et al., 2019; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Smith & Besharov, 2019), which justifies our focus on their testimonies. Table 4 provides detailed objectives for each wave of data collection, including the dates and duration of the interviews.

TABLE 4 – RECORDED INTERVIEWS

	Year	Emile	Charles	Patrice	Greg	Nicolas	Total
Life Stories Entrepreneurs	2017	2h34	2h30	10h12	2h54	2h54	
	2018	4h18	3h08	9h03	3h33	7h39	
Follow-up Interviews	2019	2h05	6h34	1h05	0h00	7h37	
	2020	5h44	11h58	3h24	9h54	6h37	
Follow-up Interviews & Opportunities	2021	0h56	0h50	0h59	0h30	0h58	
	2022	1h01	2h11	1h13	1h52	4h27	
Total		16 h 41	27 h 13	25 h 59	18 h 45	30 h 15	118 h 54

Our initial interviews with sustainable entrepreneurs explored the ‘life stories’ of their organizations and their personal profiles, including their education, professional experience, and family situation. To ensure comprehensive coverage, if any aspects had not yet been addressed, we inquired further into the various dimensions of the hybrid organization: organizational activities ("What activities do you undertake?", "If you had additional income, what would you use it for?"), workforce composition ("How many people work for you?", "What are their profiles?"), organizational design ("What are your objectives?", "How do you manage tensions between the dimensions of sustainability?", "Who makes the decisions?", "Who is on the board of directors?"), and inter-organizational relationships ("What are your sources of funding?", "Who are your partners?"). Follow-up interviews enabled us to gather updated information regarding these activities.

To capture the entirety of the phenomenon of sustainable entrepreneurship and interactions with stakeholders (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018), we employed a data triangulation strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989). Beyond interviews, our data collection included a diverse range of materials such as brochures, photographs, posters, documents, and website content. We conducted open interviews with both internal stakeholders, including managers, employees, and interns, and external stakeholders such as beneficiaries, community members, tourists, and fellow entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. Direct observations, photographs, and videos complemented the data collection. Table 5 provides a summary of the declared missions, profiles of the entrepreneurs and stakeholders interviewed, along with the various additional sources of information utilized.

TABLE 5 – SELECTED CASE STUDIES

	Year of creation	Declared missions	Interviews	Additional data sources
Emile	1999	Work to promote ecotourism and local development projects throughout Benin, for "responsible, equitable and mutually supportive human development".	Emile (founding entrepreneur), 2 managers, 3 European trainees, 2 employees, 1 customer	Website, social networks, reports, online articles, promotional and informational posters, flyers
Charles	2005	Contribute to the emergence of a generation of "world citizens" capable of proposing and/or implementing local and sustainable solutions for human development that respects Nature.	Charles (founding entrepreneur), 1 co-founder, 5 European interns, 4 employees, 10+ customers	Website, social networks, reports, online articles, promotional and informational posters, flyers
Patrice	1995	Work towards sustainable management of natural resources and the full development of human beings.	Patrice, 1 co-founder, 1 manager, 2 employees, 3 community members, 10+ customers	Website, social networks, reports, informational posters, leaflets.
Greg	1996	Promoting environmental awareness and well-being for all	Greg, 2 managers, 2 employees, 1 social partner, 4 customers	Website, social networks, online articles, informational posters, flyers.
Nicolas	1995	Promote the conservation and rational use of biological diversity, through information, education and awareness-raising among the various stakeholders, especially young people.	Nicolas, 1 manager, 3 employees, 1 backer, 10+ customers	Website, social networks, documentary film, reports, online articles, promotional and informational posters, brochures.

2.5. Data Analysis

To study the tensions inherent to hybrid organizations and the strategies for managing these tensions, we adapted and integrated a theoretical framework on corporate sustainability (Ozanne et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015) to the specific demands of sustainable entrepreneurship. We further explored how entrepreneurs employ African management approaches and strategies (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan et al., 2015) to effectively navigate these challenges.

Utilizing an iterative data analysis process in continual dialogue with the existing literature, we refined our analytical methods. After transcribing the interviews, we used NVivo12 to code the data according to the dimensions of hybrid organizing (Battilana & Lee, 2014), allowing us to pinpoint specific tensions faced by the entrepreneurs and their approaches to manage those tensions (see Table 6). Additionally, we cataloged

common community and spiritual practices intrinsic to African management styles (Dia, 1991; Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan et al., 2015), which are crucial in managing these tensions.

3. Results: Hybridity Tensions and Management Approaches

We identified the tensions and the corresponding strategies employed by sustainable entrepreneurs, as detailed in Table 6. Each strategy represents a distinct approach to managing tensions: win-win, trade-off (with potential losses in commercial, social, or environmental aspects), integration, or paradox. Furthermore, we explored the influence of community engagement and spiritual practices on the management of these tensions.

TABLE 6 – TENSIONS, TENSIONS APPROACHES & FACILITATING ELEMENT FROM SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT OF SOUTHERN BENIN

		Tensions				Tensions Approaches (Adapted from Van der Byl & Slawinski (2015))						
Hybrid Organizing Dimensions	Hybrid Organizing Sub-dimensions	Description	Commercial	Social	Environmental	Strategy	Tensions Approach Analysis	Tension Approach	Sustainable entrepreneurs involved	Facilitating element from sociocultural context of southern Benin		
	Integration vs Differentiation	NGO status	- Difficulties soliciting private financing (banks and investors)	- Unfair competition with traditional tourism businesses + Credibility with donors	+ credibility with donors	Choice of NGO status	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Charles, Patrice, Greg, Nicolas	/		
		NGO status + Enterprise status	- Administrative burden - Taxation	- Fear of mission drift (enterprise takes over from NGO)	- Fear of mission drift (enterprise takes over from NGO)	Choice of 2 structures: NGO status + enterprise status	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Emile	/		
	Organizational Activities	Increase ecotourism activities	+ Income for the sustainable organization	+ Income for the community - Disruption of village harmony and balance - Risk of dependence on tourism	+ Limit tourism to preserve the environment + Tourism revenues to finance environmental projects	No/few tensions, as the number of tourists is not (yet) large enough. Communities are involved and supportive Development of ecotourism up to a certain level. Thereafter, to avoid dependence, reorientation of tourist flows.	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements Acceptance of tensions	Integration Paradox	Charles, Patrice, Nicolas, Greg Emile	Community mobilization - solidarity Community mobilization - solidarity		
	Activities	Raising awareness of environmental preservation	- Non-productive human resources + Limited	+ Social cohesion	+ Preservation of the environment	Environmental awareness projects for local communities (animal sanctuaries, nature tours, nature clubs).	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Charles, Patrice, Greg, Nicolas	Community mobilization - inter-generational link		

impact										
		Limiting activities that impact the environment (fishing, hunting and urban development)	+ Tourist appeal if the environment is preserved	- Affecting community well-being (access to housing, food supplements, additional income)	+ Environmental protection	Intergenerational awareness of nature and spirituality	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Greg	Community mobilization - inter-generational link & Mobilization Spirituality (Vodoun)
						Fight against poaching (network of informers, information to law enforcement agencies, penalization)	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (social losing)	Nicolas	/
						Setting up community projects (ecoguards) to combat turtle fishing. Alternative income from tourism	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Nicolas	Community mobilization - solidarity
						Revaluation of hunters (hunting museum & hunting festival) and mobilization of Vodoun cults.	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Charles	Mobilization Communities - solidarity, information, inter-generational link, network Mobilization Spirituality
						Alternating depending to opportunities	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Charles & Emile	/
Resource allocation	Investing in commercial, social or environmental issues	+ Invest in tourist facilities (rooms, various amenities, etc.)	+ Financing social projects to benefit communities	+ Financing environmental projects (refuge, environmental awareness)	Investissements qui permettent d'améliorer progressivement chaque dimension	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Nicolas & Patrice	/	
					Priorité aux projets sociaux et environnementaux	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Greg	/	
Composition de la main d'œuvre	Recruitment	Recruit the best profile on CV rather than someone from the	+ Most efficient person	- Community support - Risk of lack of involvement in community well-	- Risk of a lack of commitment to preserving the environment	Recruit on the basis of the profile best suited to the position. Community or environmental awareness is not a consideration.	Focus on the economy	Win - Win	Patrice (before)	

	community		being			Involve community youth in nature clubs. Subsequently, recruit promising young people from among these sensitized community members.	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Patrice (after), Charles , Emile, Nicolas et Greg	Mobilizing communities - Intergenerational links and solidarity
	Socialisation	Familiarize and sensitize employees to the issues of the dimensions that are least familiar to them	- Loss of time for commercial work + Societal profiles aware of commercial and financial issues	- Loss of time for social work + Commercial profiles aware of social issues	- Loss of time for environmental work + Commercial profiles aware of social issues	Ask NGO managers to occasionally support the company, and vice versa.	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Emile	Mobilizing communities - solidarity
Organizational Design	Formal organizational structure (objectives, strategies, sub-units and negotiating areas, customers vs. beneficiaries)	Tensions between different departments/ structures within the organization	+ Support the objectives and strategies of the sales organization + Promote customers	+ Promote the objectives and strategies of the social structure + Support beneficiaries	+ Support the objectives and strategies of the Environmental structure	Setting up common discussion forums - choosing priorities according to opportunities Ad hoc support (human and financial resources) between departments/structures	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Charles & Emile	Mobilizing communities – inter-generational link, solidarity, networking & information
	Incentive and control systems (performance)									
	Governance and leadership	Board member profiles - commercially, socially, or environmentally oriented	+ Support the objectives and strategies of the sales organization + Promote customers	+ Support the objectives and strategies of the social structure + Encourage beneficiaries	+ Promote the objectives and strategies of the Environmental structure	Most board members come from or are in contact with the target community. They follow recommendations of the sustainable entrepreneur in whom they have confidence and who is respected as an elder.	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Patrice, Emile, Charles , Greg	Community mobilization – inter-generational link, solidarity

Inter-organizational relations	Communication	Communication adapted to the target - customers or funders	+ Promote tourism offerings	+ Demonstrate the social impact of our projects	+ Demonstrate the environmental impact of our projects	Promoting ecotourism and environmental/social projects on the same website	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Emile & Nicolas	
						Promotion of environmental/social projects on one website	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Charles & Patrice	
						Promotion of ecotourism on an external site dedicated to tourism				
						Promotion almost exclusively of social/environmental projects	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Greg	
	Funding sources	Soliciting bankers and investors or funders	+ Solicit bankers and investors, who will be more receptive to the commercial aspect.	+ Solicit funders - who will better adhere to the social component	+ Solicit funders - environmental projects - who will be more inclined to support the social component.	Solicit different types of funding sources, adapting the message accordingly	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Emile & Charles	
						Solicit mainly, if not exclusively, funders	Win/lose situation	Trade-off (commercial losing)	Patrice, Nicolas & Greg	
	Partnerships	Invest in relationships with various local stakeholders	- Waste of time that could be used for commercial activities	+ Better integration into the community + Better understanding of community needs	+ Access to information on biodiversity from experts + Easier access to local populations to raise awareness of environmental issues	Invest in stakeholder relations in general, but in a more structured and intense way with stakeholders who can contribute to achieving the organization's objectives (fishermen, hunters, etc.).	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Nicolas, Charles, Emile, Greg & Patrice	Mobilization Communities - Network
										Community mobilization - solidarity, information, networks

opportunities					Quitting the partnership	Focus on the economy	Win - Win	Nicolas
	Private/NGOs partnerships	+ Financing	+ more resources for the mission	+ Resources for the mission	Invest in relationships with diversified partners	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Emile & Charles
Institutionalization	Lobby to defend the interests of ecotourism vs. mass tourism	- Waste of time + Mass tourism. Promotion of Benin as a destination and ecotourism	+ Support for social aspects of ecotourism	+ Support for environmental aspects of ecotourism	Active lobbying for ecotourism and social/environmental projects without militating against mass tourism.	Equivalent weight of sustainability elements	Integration	Nicolas

Organizational culture	Shared values & Standards of behavior	Comfortable tourist facilities (air conditioning, swimming pool, etc.)	+ Comfort for tourists	- Inequalities in relation to community members + Opportunity to raise awareness among Benin's wealthy class (politicians, businessmen, etc.)	- Impact on climate - Impact on consumption (water, energy, etc.)	Not to invest in facilities that run counter to their values (swimming pool, air conditioning) Carry out development work, but in or via a partner structure to limit criticism from stakeholders aware of societal issues	Win/lose situation Acceptance of tensions	Trade-off (commercial losing) Paradox	Patrice, Nicolas & Greg Emile & Charles
		North-South inequalities in travel opportunities	+ source of revenue	+ Intercultural exchanges - Inequalities and injustices for community members	- Impact on climate	Attract as many tourists as possible... and make them aware of the impacts of climate change without addressing the issue of their travel.	Acceptance of tensions	Paradox	Emile, Charles, Patrice, Greg & Nicolas

3.1. Organizational Activities

Integration vs. Differentiation – Due to the lack of legal recognition for hybrid organizations, ecotourism entrepreneurs in Benin face limited options, having to choose between NGO status and a commercial enterprise status. For historical reasons, four entrepreneurs have chosen NGO status (integration), reflecting their strategic approach. They function within a societal context where commercial interests are secondary (trade-off – commercial dimension losing).

The fifth entrepreneur established two separate entities: an NGO focused on managing environmental and community projects via ecotourism circuits, and a travel company aimed at attracting international tourists, which financially supports the NGO. Emile adeptly manages the coexistence of these two contrasting logics through a paradoxical approach.

Activities – The entrepreneurs in our study encounter tensions among economic goals (maximizing tourist numbers), environmental concerns (over-tourism harming biodiversity and contributing to climate change), and social challenges (excessive number of tourists disturbing the village's balance and harmony).

Most sustainable entrepreneurs report only minor tensions, as the current level of tourist activity does not substantially disrupt community or ecological balances. These entrepreneurs continually strive to balance the different dimensions of sustainability in an integrative approach.

Emile alone has reached an activity level that poses a risk of creating economic dependency on ecotourism revenues within the communities he serves. Should a crisis affect this sector (COVID, terrorist threats, etc.), a decline in tourism could lead to a major economic crisis for the community. To mitigate this dependency risk, when a village becomes too successful, Emile strategically redirects activities from those villages to less frequented villages, albeit at the potential cost of reducing customer satisfaction. This strategic geographic redistribution among communities serves multiple goals: it addresses social concerns by reducing dependency risks, tackles environmental issues by preventing over-tourism at single sites, and fulfills economic aims by diversifying and enhancing the appeal of available sites, thus embodying a paradoxical approach.

Community and spiritual dynamics have facilitated the management of tensions. Sustainable entrepreneurs enhance the collective dynamics of their decision-making by employing community-oriented approaches grounded in the principle of solidarity.

Sustainable entrepreneurs also face tensions between environmental preservation and the development of income-generating activities. They have chosen to increase awareness (trade-off – commercial losing) by establishing wildlife sanctuaries, conducting nature tours, and forming nature clubs. These various strategies have engaged communities to achieve their goals. In a specific instance, Greg has

incorporated spiritual elements into an intergenerational environmental awareness program. Elders introduce children to spirituality and nature conservation during a 5-day immersion in a natural setting.

Furthermore, we identified tensions between environmental and social dimensions. Nicolas and Charles have seen their environment threatened by community needs for housing (urbanization), food, and/or additional income (hunting/fishing). We identified three approaches. First, Nicolas engages in legal battles against poachers from local communities (trade-off—social losing). Next, Nicolas also developed a project to reconcile social, environmental, and economic dimensions (integration). Faced with the poaching of sea turtles, he designed a project for eco-guards in consultation with fishing communities. These former fishermen collect newly hatched turtles and then organize turtle releases by tourists. The impacts are positive socially (income for the eco-guards), environmentally (preservation of turtles), and economically (ecotourism). Nicolas fostered a sense of solidarity (a community-oriented approach), reasoning that short-term personal gains from selling turtles must not jeopardize the community's long-term prosperity via the eco-guards' sustainable income. Nicolas mobilized solidarity (community approach) because the short-term individual benefits (selling turtles) cannot threaten the long-term community well-being (income from eco-guards). Lastly, Charles adopted a similar approach (integration) to manage the tensions arising from excessive hunting in his area. Hunters have been made aware of the consequences of overhunting: if this practice continues, it is likely that their children will not be able to hunt the same species as their ancestors. Together, they created a hunting festival during which, through an inventory, a council of hunters determines which species can be hunted without risking their extinction in this ecosystem. Charles employed both community and spiritual strategies, involving hunters taking oaths to their Vodoun deity to refrain from hunting specified species temporarily and to serve as custodians of Nature.

Resource Allocation – All the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied managed tensions between funding social projects, funding environmental projects, and investing in ecotourism infrastructure aimed at increasing future revenues. Three approaches were identified. Charles and Emile employed paradoxical strategies by flexibly adjusting their investments to seize available opportunities, skillfully alternating or combining economic, social, or environmental priorities based on situational demands. Nicolas and Patrice, meanwhile, adopted an integrated approach, carefully allocating resources to fully address each of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Lastly, Greg consistently prioritized social and environmental projects (Trade-off – commercial losing).

3.2. Workforce Composition: Challenges of Worker Engagement and Recruitment for Management Positions.

Workforce composition (Battilana & Lee, 2014) poses significant challenges for the entrepreneurs we studied, primarily due to the tension between hiring competent

individuals and selecting members from the local community. Operating with a primary focus on societal missions over profit objectives, these enterprises face constraints in offering competitive salaries, complicating the recruitment of qualified managers and planning for the succession of sustainable entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs themselves often accept reduced salaries compared to what they could earn elsewhere, motivated by goals of environmental preservation and social value creation.

Our field research revealed two distinct recruitment approaches with varied outcomes. Initially adopting a Western approach, Patrice initially relied exclusively on skill-based recruitment via resumes, disregarding the potential benefits of community membership. This method proved unsuccessful as the motivations of the young recruits did not align with the organization's societal missions. Instead, these potential recruits favored higher salaries offered by other organizations, which, while lacking a societal mission, provided greater financial incentives. Subsequently, Patrice revised his recruitment strategy to effectively incorporate candidates from familial and community networks. Conversely, the other sustainable entrepreneurs directly embraced a community-centric recruitment approach, prioritizing recruitment of young people motivated by social and environmental values from beneficiary communities. Their Nature clubs and awareness activities allow them to identify and train young volunteers who combine strong societal motivation with the necessary skills for the organization. This method, reflecting the principles of gift and counter-gift in African management (Mutabazi, 2006), promotes a deep integration of new recruits into the organizational and community dynamics.

Employees can also be socialized and made aware of the aspects of sustainability that are least familiar to them (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014). By fostering mutual support between the leaders of the NGO and the enterprise, Emile leverages the community approach based on solidarity and the principle of give-and-take. In a paradoxical approach, he shifts focus between economic, social, and environmental objectives, depending on the most pressing needs.

3.3. Organizational Design

Tensions in organizational design can occur at the level of the type of structure, incentives and control systems, and governance (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

At the level of formal organization, most of the sustainable entrepreneurs studied opted for a single structure that oversees all activities, while Emile simultaneously established an NGO, a travel agency, and a tourism school. He manages resources between these entities effectively without major conflict. Emile leverages his role as founder and elder to foster solidarity, occasionally directing his employees to support the sister organization. Moreover, Charles and Emile live with the tensions and involve their teams in this mode of management inherent to pursuing multiple objectives (paradox).

The literature on hybrid organizations recommends creating spaces for discussion to manage tensions (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Canales, 2014), a practice observed in our

case studies. These meetings, integral to the community dynamic, facilitate constructive exchanges and are well received by participants. Charles and Emile take this dynamic a step further by encouraging initiative taking, thereby enhancing employee fulfillment.

Secondly, tensions due to the hybrid nature of sustainable enterprises can be exacerbated or, conversely, mitigated through incentives and control systems. No such policy was linked to the management of sustainability tensions.

Regarding governance, all the sustainable organizations studied have a board of directors, but it generally tends to follow the directives of the sustainable entrepreneur. Most board members are drawn from the targeted community or have strong ties with the entrepreneur, influencing governance decisions. Informal governance prevails, influenced by interactions with key stakeholders such as family members or funders. Such interactions often result in project adaptations or abandonments, which the board of directors typically ratifies without substantial alteration. Thus, the board of directors has a limited impact on the actual management of tensions.

3.4. Inter-Organizational Relationships

In analyzing the external communication strategies of organizations run by sustainable entrepreneurs, we identified three distinct approaches. Emile and Nicolas integrate the promotion of ecotourism with their social and environmental projects on the same platform (integration). In contrast, Charles and Patrice have developed parallel communication channels tailored to specific target audiences and projects, reflecting a paradoxical approach. Greg, on the other hand, focuses almost exclusively on promoting social and environmental projects, effectively sidestepping potential tensions (trade-off – commercial losing).

Regarding financing, sustainable entrepreneurs engage with a diverse array of actors from both the business world – including banks and investors – and the charitable sector, comprising funders and donors. This variety in funding sources helps them to sustain and expand their networks. Patrice, Nicolas, and Greg primarily seek support from funders, a strategy that results in some commercial opportunities being foregone (trade-off – commercial losing). Conversely, Emile and Charles utilize a paradoxical approach, tapping into various funding sources based on emerging opportunities.

Partner selection is another area where these entrepreneurs have made strategic choices. They have cultivated strong partnerships within their communities (integration) and are or were actively involved with the FBO-TRS. However, a notable dynamic of coopetition has been observed – balancing between competition for projects or clients and collaboration to expand mutual networks for resource sharing (paradox). Instances where members were expelled from the FBO-TRS for not adhering to solidarity principles, such as paying membership fees, illustrate the practical enforcement of community norms. Nicolas made this decision because he saw no benefit in

maintaining their social network (win-win). Nevertheless, he maintained contacts and developed occasional partnerships with active members of the FBO-TRS.

The most recent networking strategy by Emile and Charles includes fostering connections within both the NGO sector and potential funders, as well as with commercial entities and bankers (paradox). Their extensive social networks, larger than those of other sustainable entrepreneurs, enable them to uncover more opportunities than peers who are less versed in navigating both sectors.

Lastly, Nicolas has committed to ongoing active lobbying with public authorities to support ecotourism and social/environmental projects, a strategic effort that embodies the three sustainability dimensions (integration).

3.5. Culture

Culture represents a realm where tensions related to the dimensions of sustainability intersect (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Saebi et al., 2018; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011; Vuorio et al., 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurs strive to create a hybrid corporate culture where everyone is concerned with social and environmental missions, as well as the financial health of the organization. They not only raise awareness within their teams but also engage communities and policymakers externally about societal challenges.

However, these entrepreneurs occasionally encounter tensions between the expectations of international tourists and the need for environmental conservation. For instance, Charles has introduced amenities such as air conditioning and a swimming pool to attract well-off local visitors. This strategy enhances the financial stability of his organization and serves as a platform to influence an economically and politically important audience in Benin about sustainability issues. Moreover, this approach helps expand his social network, potentially beneficial in times of need. Such strategic decisions by Charles and Emile highlight the paradoxical dilemmas they navigate, contrasting with other entrepreneurs who might view these concessions as compromising their environmental values (trade-off – commercial losing).

Finally, all sustainable entrepreneurs within the ecotourism sector adopt a paradoxical approach due to the clash between the negative climate impact of international tourism and their environmental missions.

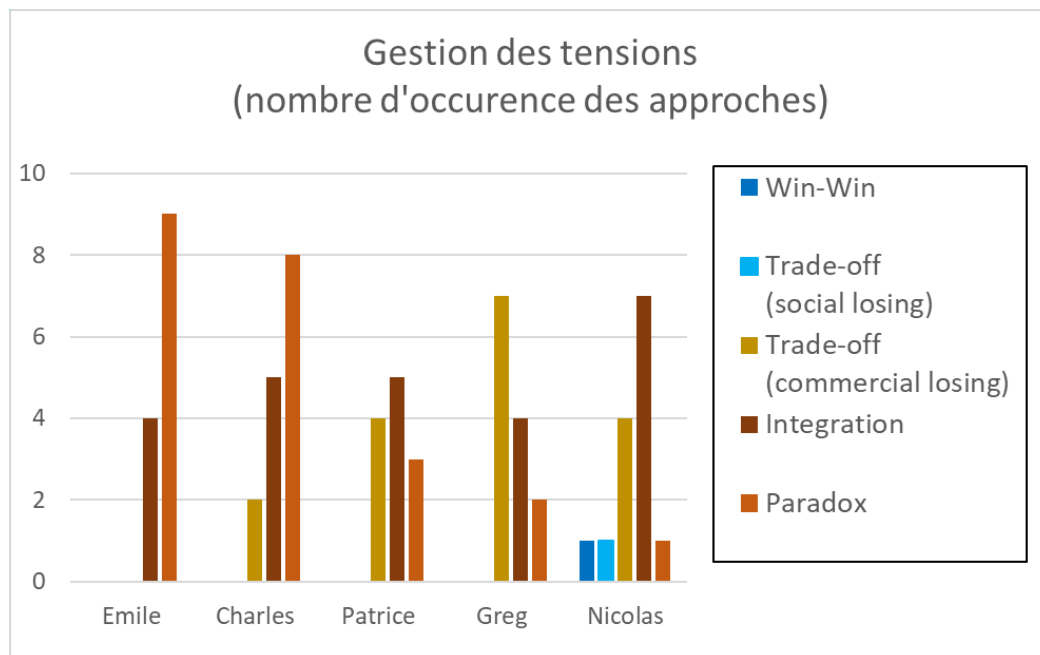
4. Discussion

4.1. *Paradoxical Management of Tensions for Resilient Sustainable Entrepreneurship*

Sustainable entrepreneurs and their organizations face inherent tensions due to their hybrid nature, positioned at the intersection of the business world and the NGO realm (Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2019). Our study shows that these tensions arise not only between

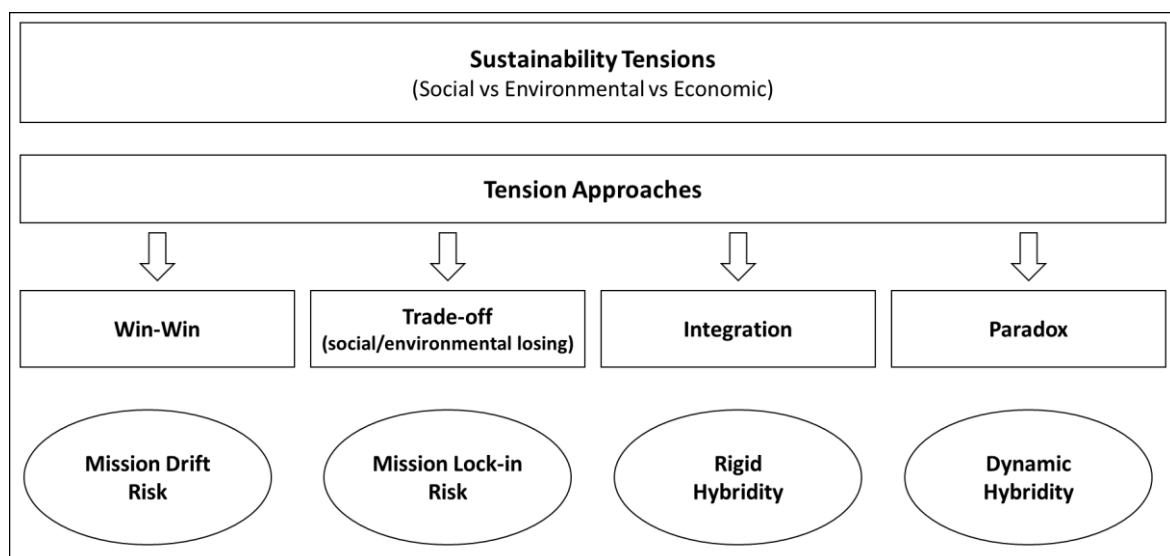
social and economic issues but also involve environmental concerns. In accordance with the literature (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014), the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied have implemented activities, structures, processes, and meanings to mitigate the tensions arising from hybridity. We have documented the occurrences of different tension approaches for each sustainable entrepreneur in Graph 1.

GRAPH 1 – TENSIONS APPROACHES – STUDIED SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS.



These analyses reveal the link between the tension management approach of the sustainable entrepreneur and the type of hybridity of the respective organization, as illustrated in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4 – TENSION MANAGEMENT - STUDIED SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURS.



Firstly, sustainable entrepreneurs can adopt a win-win approach, favoring economically advantageous options. However, this potentially compromises their social or environmental objectives, risking mission drift (Cornforth, 2014; Grimes et al., 2019; Staessens et al., 2019; Varendh-Mansson et al., 2020). Conversely, if they tend to favor trade-offs where social or environmental missions prevail over economic gains, they risk mission lock-in (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022; Staessens et al., 2019). The third approach involves maintaining a strict balance between environmental, social, and economic objectives through integration, potentially leading to rigid hybridity in their organization. In the final approach, entrepreneurs embrace paradoxes, accepting and managing the contradictions inherent in their diverse missions (Ozanne et al., 2016; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015), which can promote dynamic hybridity (De Bernardi & Arenas, 2022).

During our study, the sustainable entrepreneurs were subject to significant tensions due to various crises: declines in tourism due to health concerns such as the Ebola epidemic, security threats like the Boko Haram terrorist group in neighboring countries and the COVID-19 pandemic. These crises highlighted the impacts of different tension approaches. Entrepreneurs who extensively utilized integration or trade-off approaches sometimes had to draw on financial reserves or reduce operations, occasionally resulting in layoffs. For example, Greg leaned towards an integration approach (commercial losing), patiently soliciting support from funders and donors. In contrast, Patrice and Nicolas, who adopted the integration mode, attempted to stimulate the local tourism market with limited success. Emile and Charles, meanwhile, pursued a paradoxical approach to manage tensions, continuing to develop activities even during crises. For instance, during the COVID crisis, Emile launched carbon offset projects, and his primary aim was to generate financial results. Then he achieved social goals (through improved stoves reducing fuel costs for households), environmental goals (reducing carbon emissions), and economic benefits (earning commissions). According to Berger-Douce et al. (2023), sustainability enhances company resilience, and our study suggests that the approach to managing sustainability tensions also affects this resilience. Paradoxical approaches, offering a broad spectrum of solutions, enhance adaptability and thus resilience during times of crisis. The tensions approach directly influences the hybridity of sustainable organizations, thereby affecting the risks of mission drift or mission lock-in.

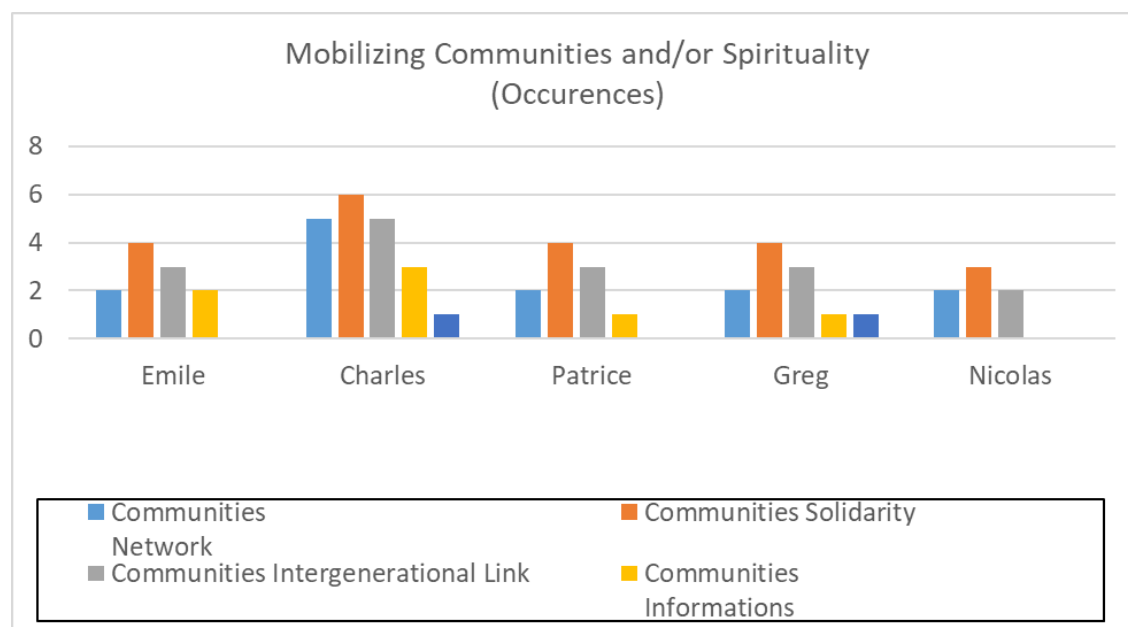
4.2. Communities and Spirituality to Facilitate Tension Management

In Southern Benin, the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied leveraged both community and spiritual resources to develop solutions that mitigate tensions among various issues (see Graph 2).

Contrasting views exist regarding the role of communities in entrepreneurship for the public good. Some organizations, such as Ashoka, portray the entrepreneur as a savior of a passively benefiting community (Bacq et al., 2022). Conversely, according to Peredo & Chrisman (2006), the community itself can act as both the entrepreneur and

the enterprise, an idea exemplified by community-based enterprises where the community collectively manages the business to produce a variety of benefits. Furthermore, communities can mitigate tensions between hybrid and non-hybrid organizations (Gillett et al., 2019; Savarese et al., 2021).

GRAPH 2 – MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES AND/OR SPIRITUALITY



Contrasting views exist regarding the role of communities in relation to entrepreneurship for the public good. Some organizations, such as Ashoka, depict the entrepreneur as a savior of a passively benefiting community (Bacq et al., 2022). Conversely, according to Peredo & Chrisman (2006), the community itself can act as both the entrepreneur and the enterprise, an idea modeled as community-based enterprises where the community collectively manages the business to produce a variety of benefits. Furthermore, communities can ease tensions between hybrid and non-hybrid organizations (Gillett & Savarese).

The communities targeted by sustainable entrepreneurs in ecotourism embody a mix of different community types as established by Bacq et al. (2022). Our study adds to this discourse by identifying specific factors pertinent to the community approach within an African context. The sustainable entrepreneurs we examined utilize community mechanisms to mediate tensions among economic, social, and environmental demands: building and sustaining networks, fostering solidarity and reciprocity, sharing information, and maintaining intergenerational respect for elders (Apitsa, 2019; Mutabazi, 2006, 2007; Seny Kan et al., 2015). These elders may choose to support the entrepreneur as long as they believe he or she acts in their best interest. For instance, Patrice was granted land to develop projects that benefit the community. Charles's ability to meet environmental conservation goals depends significantly on the active support of local dignitaries and hunting representatives. Similarly, Nicolas's project for marine turtle eco-guards relies on the full commitment of fishing communities. When

elders endorse a solution, they can delegate young community members to execute the project. This does not engage the whole community but instead involves specific individuals facing challenges who are appointed by the elders to implement projects like the eco-guards.

These interactions demonstrate that unlike models where the community remains passive, sustainable entrepreneurs in Benin actively engage communities in governance and decision-making. This community model not only strengthens organizational resilience but also improves the management of the hybrid tensions typical of sustainable businesses in African settings, where community and spiritual dimensions are particularly influential.

4.3. Managerial Contributions

Our research highlights several managerial contributions aimed at improving the practices of sustainable entrepreneurs and promoting their emergence through public policy support.

Understanding the inherent contradictions in hybrid organizations can help sustainable entrepreneurs better cope with hybrid tensions. Instead of limiting their strategies to practices that simultaneously integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions, adopting more diversified approaches can enhance their resilience.

Furthermore, some entrepreneurs may encounter difficulties in managing sustainability tensions as well as in engaging their communities and both internal and external stakeholders. The African sociocultural context offers intriguing solutions, such as enhancing local integration (Littlewood & Holt, 2018) by leveraging key sociocultural features of African contexts (Khavul et al., 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan et al., 2015), adapted to the local setting. This strategy facilitates the mobilization of community networks and imbues the organization's activities with deeper meaning.

The success and sustainability of enterprises are profoundly influenced by the cultural context and social norms surrounding the entrepreneurs (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Spence et al., 2011). Public policies play a crucial role in recognizing and supporting the uniqueness of sustainable enterprises through tailored legislative frameworks. In Benin, the current rigid system forces entrepreneurs to opt between two statuses – NGO or enterprise – that are unsuitable for the needs of hybrid organizations. Establishing specific legal forms for these enterprises could alleviate institutional tensions and foster the growth of sustainable entrepreneurship.

4.4. Limits and future research avenues

Our findings are specific to the distinct sociocultural context of Southern Benin and should not be directly extrapolated to other African contexts, given their extensive diversity and variability.

Our research, initially focused exclusively on male entrepreneurs, reveals limitations such as significant gender differences in entrepreneurial opportunities within this institutional context (Khavul et al., 2009). Female entrepreneurs, often driven more by ecological, social, and family values (Gunawan et al., 2021), highlight the need for broader gender representation in research. While our study considered the cultural dimensions, a comprehensive analysis must also integrate the socio-economic factors (Benabdeljlil, 2012). Additionally, the focus on sustainable entrepreneurs within a single sector might limit the variability in responses (Sommer, 2022).

To overcome these limitations, future research should include women sustainable entrepreneurs to explore how their motivations and strategies differ from those of their men counterparts. It would also be beneficial to examine entrepreneurial practices across various sectors that encounter different types and intensities of tensions, offering a more nuanced understanding of the challenges in sustainable entrepreneurship. Finally, a deeper examination of the underlying factors that influence the decisions and strategies of sustainable entrepreneurs could yield new insights into the dynamics of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

Africa, frequently confronted with profound social and environmental crises, may find in sustainable entrepreneurship a pathway to viable solutions. Sustainable entrepreneurs employ diverse strategies to manage the tensions inherent to their hybrid nature. Our study has shown that adopting a paradoxical approach to tension management offers greater flexibility for sustainable entrepreneurs, helping them avoid the pitfalls of mission lock-in or mission drift. Furthermore, these entrepreneurs integrate practices unique to the Beninese context that serve as catalysts in the implementation of their projects, drawing significantly on strong community and spiritual foundations.

Research into sustainable entrepreneurship and the management of its inherent tensions is still nascent. The rise of various forms of African sustainable entrepreneurship could redefine entrenched perceptions about Africa and inspire new narratives about its economic, social, and environmental landscapes. This calls for further research to explore these dynamics more comprehensively, potentially examining how these innovative models can influence global practices in sustainability.

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General Conclusion

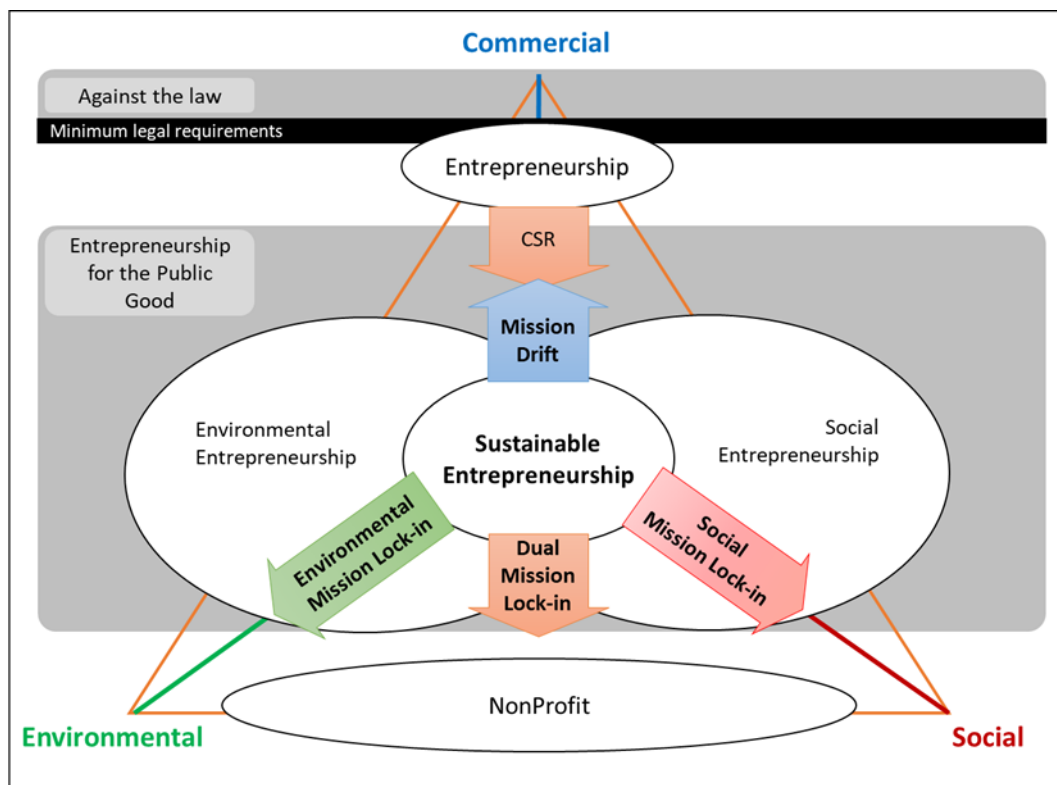
1. General overview of the findings

The aim of this dissertation is to gain a deeper understanding of how hybridity plays out in sustainable entrepreneurship, the ideal-type combining both social and environmental missions with commercial activities. More specifically, we sought to examine how sustainable entrepreneurs manage the trade-offs and synergies related to the three dimensions of sustainability, especially between the environmental and social dimensions. To achieve this, we focused on their logics of actions and their motivations. These two elements help explain their entrepreneurial actions (Dorado & Ventresca, 2013). Subsequently, we explored the management methods that these sustainable entrepreneurs implement to maintain their hybridity. These management methods enact different approaches to the inherent sustainability tensions. They also mobilized specific community and spiritual approaches to facilitate the tensions management.

Our first article aims to uncover the logics of actions in sustainable entrepreneurship, and then to assess how these logics can influence the identification and exploitation of opportunities. This approach allows us to shed new light on the concept of mission lock-in. Our research has revealed various forms of mission lock-in: a social mission lock-in, an environmental mission lock-in, and a dual mission lock-in focused simultaneously on both social and environmental dimensions. Some sustainable entrepreneurs face higher risks of mission lock-in or drift, while others are already experiencing these challenges. Thanks to those analyses, we draw a model of hybridity to locate the different key concepts – see figure 1.

The goal of the second article is to investigate the motivations of sustainable entrepreneurs, in other words, what drives them to turn their entrepreneurial intentions into actions. We also explored the demotivations that hinder or even block sustainable entrepreneurs in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities. Beyond entrepreneurial motivations, we differentiated motivational factors based on their social, environmental, and economic orientation. We observed that some entrepreneurs had a final motivation with a social or environmental orientation, and they had developed instrumental motivations related to the other dimensions. Furthermore, the demotivations are primarily oriented towards others, affecting stakeholders such as funders, authorities, and communities. We have identified significant links between the social and environmental dimensions, which are key drivers of motivation for sustainable entrepreneurs.

FIGURE 1 – MODEL OF HYBRIDITY IN SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP



We sought to deepen our understanding of sustainable entrepreneurs' operations, particularly focusing on the management practices within their hybrid organizations aimed at preserving hybridity. Beyond established theories on hybrid organizations, we uncovered managerial and organizational practices rooted in the Beninese cultural context. Sustainable entrepreneurs leverage community-oriented approaches by engaging their networks, embracing solidarity and reciprocity, sharing information, and nurturing intergenerational ties. Additionally, some studied sustainable entrepreneurs adopted a Beninese specific spiritual approach based on Vodoun to soften the tensions between the social and the environmental dimensions. The sociocultural context plays a pivotal role in balancing the social and environmental dimensions, crucial for sustainable development.

This research contributes to the understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship and its hybridity. Table 1 summarizes the various articles of the thesis, outlining the theories employed and the findings discovered.

TABLE 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

Title	Research Questions	Theories	Key Findings
Thesis Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity - Exploring the Influence of Logics and Motivations	- How do sustainable entrepreneurs manage the tensions within the three sustainability dimensions and strive for their own hybrid equilibrium?		
Article 1 – Individual level Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity: A Justification Approach to Mission Lock-In	- How do sustainable entrepreneurs navigate the potentially conflicting economic, social, and environmental logics that undergird their activities? - How do those logics potentially affect both opportunity exploration and the risk of a venture veering towards of Mission Lock-In?	Theory of Justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Thévenot, Moody, & Lafaye, 2000)	Sustainable entrepreneurs may lock their social mission (Social Mission Lock-In) as well as their environmental mission (Environmental Mission Lock-In), or both at the same time (Dual Mission Lock-In) In some cases, the organization is at risk of Mission Lock-In. In other cases, Mission Lock-In is effective. Hybridity is dynamic phenomena and oscillates between the dimensions of sustainability

Article 2 – Individual level Exploring Motivation and Demotivation in Sustainable Entrepreneurship	- What motivates sustainable entrepreneurs to engage and persevere in their sustainable entrepreneurial activities instead of following commercial career opportunities or dedicating themselves to a social and/or environmental philanthropic career? - What demotivates sustainable entrepreneurs? - How do conflicting or complementary social and/or green motivating and de-motivating factors interact?	Motivation Theory (Aileen Boluk & Mottiar, 2014; Carsrud, Brännback, Elfving, & Brandt, 2017; Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omorede, 2014)	A framework of sustainable entrepreneurs motivations and demotivation Social motivation may be instrumental towards a final environmental motivation Environmental motivation may be instrumental towards a final social motivation Demotivation is mainly other-oriented
Article 3 – Organization level Managing the tensions of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship – African approaches	- What are the inherent tensions in hybridity that arise from the intersection of environmental, social, and commercial dimensions? - How are these tensions managed by sustainable entrepreneurs? - What are the management modes of these tensions specific to the socio-cultural context of Southern Benin?	Tensions Management (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014; Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, & Figge, 2015; Ozanne, Phipps, Weaver, Carrington, Luchs, et al., 2016; Smith & Besharov, 2019; Sommer, 2022; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015) Hybrid organizing (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014) African Management (Apitsa, 2019; Khavul, Bruton, & Wood, 2009; Mutabazi, 2006; Seny Kan, Apitsa, & Adegbite, 2015)	At various levels of hybrid organizing, sustainable entrepreneurs employ different modes of tension management (win-win, trade-off, integration, and paradox). Sustainable entrepreneurs who adopt a paradoxical approach have access to a wider variety of opportunities and demonstrate greater resilience. Community and spiritual approaches facilitate tension management.

2. Integration of key findings

2.1. Methodological Contributions

In our first article, we implemented a methodology for evaluating and quantifying the logics in discourse as described by Patriotta et al. (2011). Unlike Patriotta et al., who applied this approach to written materials like newspaper reports, we adapted it to analyze spoken discourses, transcribing and measuring them for our study. This method proved beneficial for examining the logics of various stakeholders in social entrepreneurship, including teams, boards of directors, clients, and community members.

In the context of our research in Africa, we explored additional methodologies such as social network analysis (Borgatti et al., 2018) and the Social Value Orientation questionnaire. However, we encountered unique challenges in applying these tools within the African context. Specifically, in our social network analysis, we tried to assess the frequency, diversity, and extent of contacts of the sustainable entrepreneur. Our findings indicated that their networks were more extensive, varied, and intricate than those we observed in Belgium during some tests, underscoring a heightened complexity in mapping the social networks of Beninese entrepreneurs.

Additionally, measuring social value orientation, which gauges the degree of concern individuals have for others (Murphy et al., 2011, p771), presented unique hurdles. While the tool, which requires respondents to choose resource allocations between themselves and an unknown person, functioned smoothly in Belgian tests, it was met with extensive inquiries by Beninese entrepreneurs. They sought to understand the identity and needs of 'the other' before making decisions, reflecting a deeper community integration. Due to these complexities, we decided to shift our focus to semi-structured interviews and observations, which offered richer insights into the entrepreneurs' perspectives and actions.

2.2. Theoretical contributions

Research in the fields of social and environmental entrepreneurship has been extensive, yet the study of sustainable entrepreneurship, while less abundant (Vedula, Doblinger, Pacheco, York, Bacq, et al., 2022), is on the rise (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer, & Salignac, 2021). The disparity in the volume of publications might suggest a lower prevalence of sustainable entrepreneurship. However, it may also reflect the inherent difficulties in identifying research subjects where entrepreneurs prioritize both social and environmental missions. The investigation of such entrepreneurs is inherently more complex, adding an additional layer to the existing frameworks of social or environmental entrepreneurship. This complexity is further amplified as organizations

evolve, often gradually incorporating social and/or environmental objectives into their core missions.

Bull & Ridley-Duff (2019) have highlighted the blurred lines distinguishing commercial from philanthropic enterprises. Their review focused primarily on the commercial-social axis. Integrating the environmental aspect poses similar challenges, complicating the differentiation among various forms of entrepreneurship aimed at the common good. The theory of hybrid organizations, as outlined by Battilana & Lee (2014), provides a framework for making these distinctions, suggesting that factors such as organizational activities, resource allocation, and performance can be crucial in understanding the nuances of these enterprises beyond their stated missions.

A central theme of our research is the mission of the sustainable entrepreneur, serving as a pivotal link between the organization's identity and its actions. This concept is crucial in defining the organization's *raison d'être* and its objectives (Grimes, Williams, & Zhao, 2020). In our study, the missions of all the sustainable entrepreneurs adhered to the principles of sustainable entrepreneurship by incorporating both social and environmental goals within an entrepreneurial context. However, deviations from these missions can signify strategic changes, or alternatively, lead to mission lock-in or drift. As Grimes et al. (2020) and Varendh-Mansson et al. (2020) suggest, such deviations surpass mere strategic changes when they misalign with the organization's identity and are perceived as divergent by stakeholders (Grimes et al., 2020). Evaluating these shifts is complex and necessitates periodic analysis. Our observations revealed minor, quickly corrected changes over a year, as well as longer-term trends.

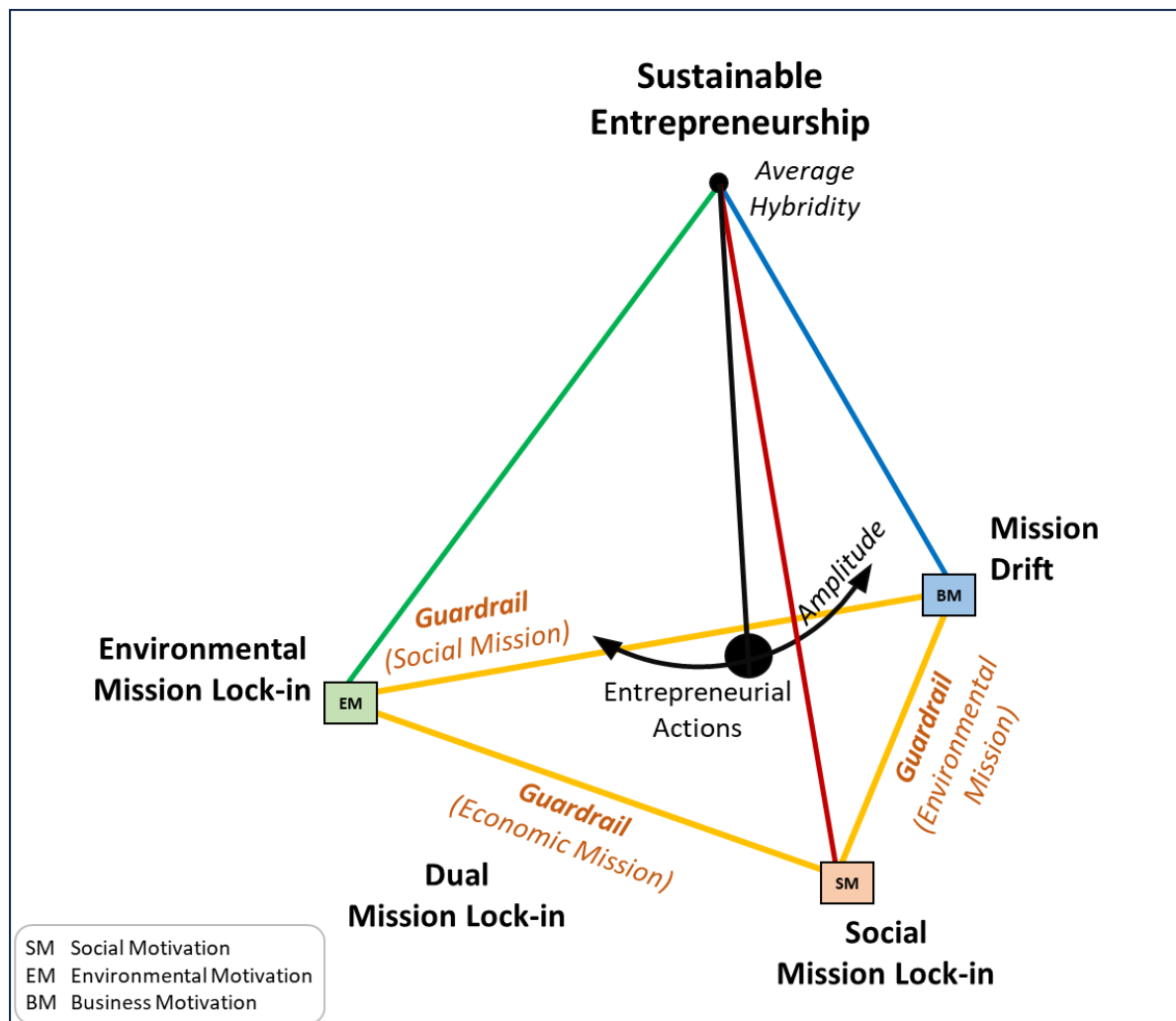
Hybridity is dynamic, with potential directional changes in the organization's missions effectively regulated by guardrails (Smith & Besharov, 2019). These guardrails prevent mission lock-in and mission drift thanks to formal structures, leveraging the expertise of sustainable entrepreneurs, and relying on the vigilance of external stakeholders to ensure the organization's actions remain aligned with its core sustainable missions.

De Bernardi & Arenas (2022) employed a pendulum metaphor to capture the essence of hybridity in social entrepreneurship. Extending this metaphor to sustainable entrepreneurship, the pendulum's swing encompasses not two, but three dimensions of sustainability. This representation not only highlights the complexity of the triple bottom line hybridity but also underscores key dynamics in sustainable entrepreneurship, such as the number and positioning of fixation points, and the oscillation's amplitude and velocity. These aspects vary with the nature of the hybrid organization: differentiated hybrids, where societal and economic activities are distinct, suggest dual fixation points, whereas integrated hybrids imply a singular point. The oscillation patterns can also be indicative of the organization's state – continuous oscillation might suggest temporary mission lock-in, whereas the absence of oscillation could signal a mission drift or permanent mission lock-in. The pendulum metaphor,

however, implies a system in which sustainable entrepreneurs manage their organizations by unconsciously responding to the oscillations. Alternatively, one could perceive sustainable entrepreneurs as actively navigating the hybrid nature of their sustainable businesses, often with a degree of conscious intent. In this light, it resembles more of a 'mission surfing,' where sustainable entrepreneurs adeptly surf different waves, seizing opportunities as they emerge.

Some sustainable entrepreneurs adopt a rigid approach to the inherent tensions in their activities, resulting in a strict hybridity that limits their ability to fully capitalize on available opportunities. Conversely, other entrepreneurs embrace a paradoxical approach, persistently pursuing opportunities that may appear contradictory. This strategy enables them to seize more opportunities, which is invaluable in environments with limited resources, enhancing their resilience. We modeled those dynamics in figure 2.

FIGURE 2 – PENDULUM OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP HYBRIDITY DYNAMICS



On an individual level, a detailed examination of final motivations can reveal the boundaries and inform the alignment of entrepreneurial strategies and activities with the core aspirations of entrepreneurs.

Moreover, while existing research on entrepreneurial motivations for the common good predominantly focuses on a narrow set of factors (Aileen Boluk & Mottiar, 2014; Germak & Robinson, 2014; Omorede, 2014; Ruskin, Seymour, & Webster, 2016), motivations in sustainable entrepreneurship are diverse, encompassing a wide array of factors across the three dimensions of sustainability. Predominantly, research has emphasized social value creation and environmental preservation as primary motivations. However, these findings are not universally applicable, as other motivating factors, such as the preservation of traditions, a passion for nature, or even religious beliefs (as identified in Omorede (2014)'s research), can be equally important for certain sustainable entrepreneurs.

In the realm of entrepreneurial motivation, the exploration of demotivation factors remains notably scarce. However, concepts of demotivation (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011) and amotivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), as explored in psychology, are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial motivations. To focus solely on motivations without considering demotivation and amotivation is akin to analyzing a vehicle's functionality based only on its ability to move forward, disregarding the roles of braking and reversing. Additionally, the extent of demotivation in sustainable entrepreneurs is influenced by the entirety of their activities, not limited to those within their sustainable enterprise. Entrepreneurs engaged solely in their sustainable venture are likely to experience greater impacts from demotivation compared to those who have additional income-generating activities.

Moreover, the relationship between entrepreneurs and their communities is multifaceted and involves varying degrees of engagement (Bacq et al.). During our field research, we observed that sustainable entrepreneurs may work at the same time for, in, with, enabled by, and driven by their communities. The entrepreneurs in our study balanced independent decision-making with active engagement and consultation with their communities, demonstrating a nuanced approach to community involvement. Communities play a pivotal role at multiple levels; they are not only a primary source of motivation or demotivation for sustainable entrepreneurs but also act as a guardrail. Specifically, they help ensure that strategic decisions align with the company's social mission.

When considering workforce composition, Battilana & Dorado (2010) provide insights into microfinance institutions grappling with diverse employee profiles. Similarly, in the context of Beninese ecotourism, effective recruitment and retention of employees are foundational for operational success. Here, entrepreneurs capitalize on the cultural context of solidarity and reciprocity. A notable strategy includes prioritizing former

volunteer interns, who have proven their commitment and motivation in the absence of financial incentives. In addition, employees who are committed to and cognizant of social and environmental causes not only serve as guardians to preserve hybridity but also drive the identification and exploitation of new sustainable opportunities.

Sustainable entrepreneurs, while adaptive to their institutional environments, also possess the capacity to shape institutional settings (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Our research found that while some entrepreneurs actively seek to influence public policy for the common good, they often overlook the potential to steer these policies towards creating a more favorable institutional environment for themselves. This oversight sometimes leads to difficult decisions, potentially perceived as mission drift, but which seems to be paradoxical choices such as upgrading infrastructure (like air conditioning and swimming pools) to attract, welcome, accommodate and influence political figures. However, by continuing to seize significant social and environmental opportunities, these entrepreneurs maintain their hybrid status.

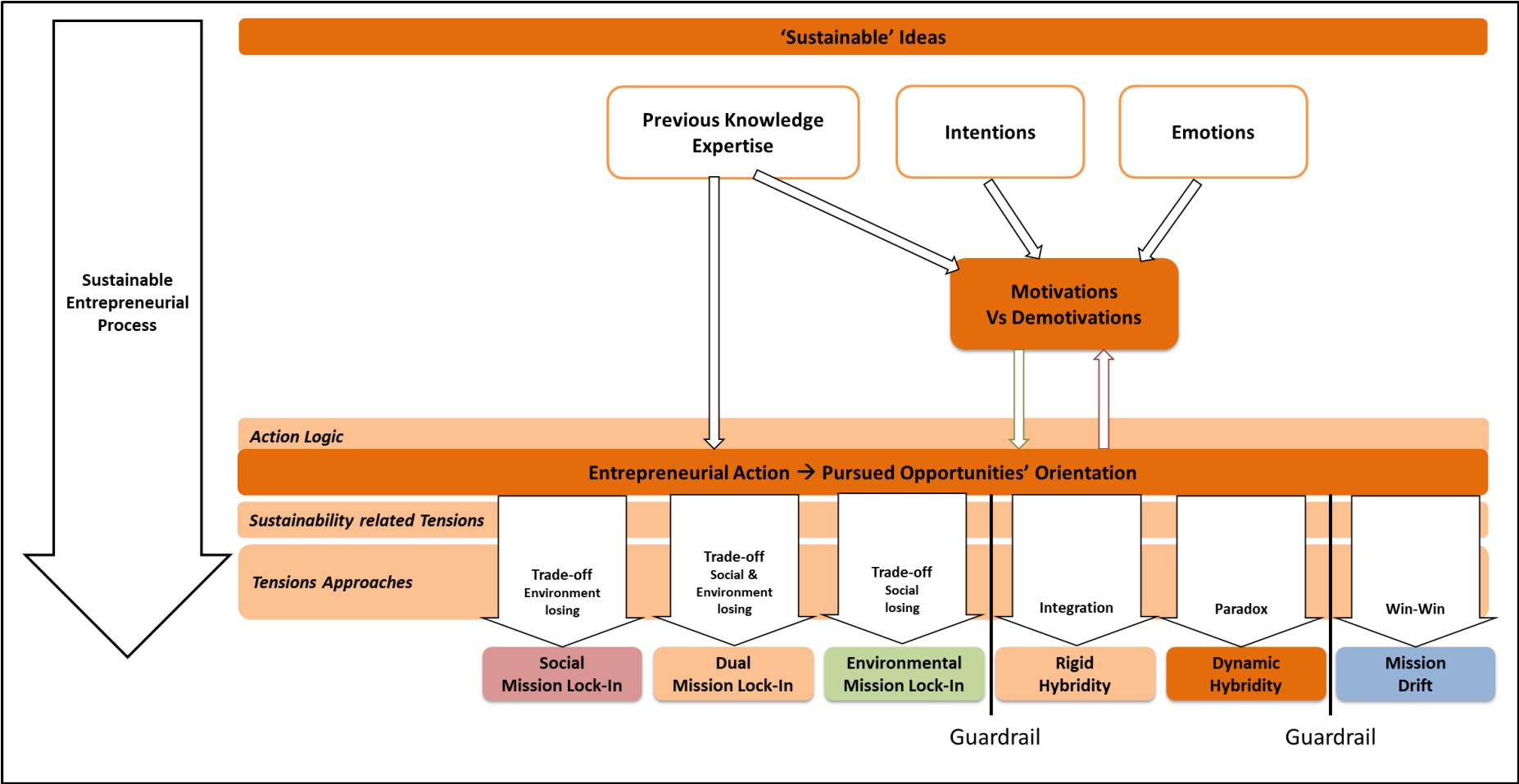
Lastly, sustainable entrepreneurs exhibit a notable potential for resilience during crises, particularly those who enact paradoxical approaches to manage the sustainability tensions. Research indicates that environmental entrepreneurs, particularly those possessing a hybrid identity, excel in empathizing with a broad spectrum of stakeholders (York, O'Neil, & Sarasvathy, 2016). This heightened empathy is important to improve their ability to devise innovative solutions to complex challenges, particularly those emanating from the diverse and often competing logics embedded within their business models (York et al., 2016). Some of our case studies suggest that in times of crisis, they exhibit greater resilience because they can engage with two different worlds. For example, following the COVID crisis, while conventional tourism actors had few alternatives, the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied reactivated their potential funders and used their time freed up by the absence of tourists to submit applications and project proposals.

2.3. Sustainable Entrepreneurship Hybridity Model and Process

Our research has led to the development of a hybridity model in sustainable entrepreneurship (see figure 3), detailing a clear process. The entrepreneurial process transitions from sustainable ideas to actionable ventures (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). A blend of emotions, intentions, and prior knowledge shapes the motivations (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011) and demotivations of the sustainable entrepreneurs. This motivational mix dynamically interacts within the different dimensions of sustainability. Central to maintaining a sustainable entrepreneurial project is a societal motivation—whether social, environmental, or both. The interplay between the social and the environmental dimensions compels the entrepreneur to harness both types of motivation, ensuring the project's sustainability.

If the motivational mix is balanced and robust, the sustainable entrepreneur will transform intentions into sustainable entrepreneurial actions. Then, unavoidable tensions arise. The entrepreneur faces choices: prioritizing financial viability may lead to mission drift away from societal goals. Excessive focus on community or environmental preservation can jeopardize commercial objectives, and afterwards also societal objectives (Staessens, Kerstens, Bruneel, & Cherchye, 2019), and ultimately the organization's sustainability. Alternatively, adopting a strict approach might only yield moderate outcomes by balancing social, environmental, and financial viability without excelling in any. The most dynamic approach involves alternating focus on different types of opportunities as they arise. This approach requires active management to maintain hybridity and proactive communication with stakeholders who may misunderstand the shifting focus, perceiving it as mission drift or lock-in. The sustainable entrepreneur can benefit significantly from the socio-cultural context. In Benin, for instance, community and spiritual approaches have proven effective in managing tensions.

FIGURE 3 – SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP HYBRIDITY MODEL



2.4. Practical contributions

In this section, we outline practical contributions that are pertinent to entrepreneurs, policymakers, and investors/funders.

Entrepreneurs should begin with a thorough self-assessment of their motivations and the mission they aspire to actualize within their sustainable businesses. This introspection allows them to discern between the logics they are adept in and those where they lack comfort. Such awareness opens avenues for targeted solutions, ranging from seeking specialized training to enhance their skills to recruiting individuals with complementary strengths.

Recruitment presents a unique challenge, particularly when sustainable entrepreneurs are unable to offer competitive salaries compared to the private sector. Identifying individuals willing to accept potentially lower wages, motivated by pro-social and pro-environmental values, is key. Therefore, recruitment poses a significant challenge for sustainable entrepreneurs. In studying two microfinance institutions, Battilana & Dorado (2010) contrasted two practices. On one hand, recruitment of profiles is based on their capabilities (either working on the societal component or the economic component). On the other hand, the organization hires profiles without professional experience that they could train in a hybrid manner. The need for hybrid profiles is confirmed by our research. However, for the choice of recruitment strategy, there might be a third way. Sustainable entrepreneurs can select former volunteer interns as they likely are already aligned with the social and environmental mission and, at the same time, identify among these volunteers those who have capabilities complementary to those of the sustainable entrepreneur.

In addition, negotiation and discussion spaces (Battilana, 2018; Battilana & Lee, 2014) are crucial in managing the tensions associated with hybridity. These forums not only heighten management teams' and employees' awareness of less familiar sustainability dimensions but also serve as crucial points for alerting about risks of mission drift or lock-in. Moreover, they facilitate the dynamic engagement with communities and stakeholders, informing and reassuring them about the organization's commitment to its societal missions.

Stakeholders in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship play a crucial role in its development. When it comes to financing these enterprises, investors and funders might find the mix of logics and operational modes of sustainable entrepreneurs challenging to comprehend. To bridge this gap, financial organizations could tailor their support and financing options to better align with the distinct hybrid nature of sustainable businesses. Additionally, fostering collaborations between investors and funders presents a strategic alternative. Such partnerships could leverage the strengths

of both parties, creating a more supportive financial ecosystem for sustainable entrepreneurs.

Support programs tailored for sustainable entrepreneurs need to be carefully crafted, taking into account the specific motivations of the entrepreneurs, their commitment to sustainability principles, prevailing socio-cultural practices, and the particular needs of the regions they operate in (Spence, Ben Boubaker Gherib, & Ondoua Biwolé, 2011). Policymakers can play a vital role in nurturing the growth of sustainable enterprises. This can be achieved by providing specialized training programs, creating adaptable policy frameworks, establishing clear benchmarks for success, and implementing effective mechanisms for auditing societal impacts (Arend, 2014). A significant challenge for sustainable entrepreneurs in Benin is the lack of a specialized legal status that accurately reflects their unique business model, often leaving them to choose between an NGO or conventional business status. Policymakers have the opportunity to address this gap by developing a legal framework and specific statuses tailored to the needs of sustainable enterprises. Such an initiative would not only legitimize these businesses but also prevent potential perceived unfair competition by competitors.

3. Limitations and implications for future research

Our research has certain limitations. First, we employed a longitudinal approach, which was instrumental in evaluating the evolving hybridity of sustainable enterprises. This methodology, involving one or two rounds of interviews annually, served well for midterm analysis. However, it inherently restricts our ability to capture the more immediate, short-term dynamics (spanning days or weeks) as well as the longer-term evolution that unfold over periods extending beyond five years.

Furthermore, in light of the unique characteristics of the sustainable entrepreneurs we studied, it becomes interesting to explore additional factors to better gauge the broader applicability of our findings. These include examining aspects such as gender, professional background, the dynamics of entrepreneurs who function in a collective setting, and distinguishing between entrepreneurial profiles driven by necessity versus opportunity. The incorporation of these diverse variables not only enriches our understanding but also opens up new and intriguing avenues for future research in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Concerning motivations, we were able to identify both motivations and demotivations, but it might be prudent to assess at what point motivational factors no longer outweigh demotivational factors. Another research avenue involves tools that measure the orientation of social value (Murphy et al., 2011) or environmental value in Western contexts that are accustomed to these types of questionnaires.

Previous research already showed the link between religion, spirituality and entrepreneurship (Giacomin, Janssen, Shinnar, & Gundolf, 2021) while others more specifically acknowledge the potential significance of religious beliefs in shaping pro-social motivations (Omoredede, 2014). Although several entrepreneurs mentioned their religious affiliations in their narratives, our data collection did not systematically capture this dimension. In many African societies, animist beliefs often intertwine with environmental concerns. Notably, in Benin, the Vodoun religion is deeply connected to environmental preservation efforts (Toko Imorou, Arouna, Houessou, & Sinsin, 2018). This interplay was evident in one of our case studies, where Vodoun principles were instrumental in harmonizing community interactions with environmental conservation objectives. Future research focusing on how different religious beliefs influence the nuances of hybridity in sustainable entrepreneurship could unveil rich, culturally embedded insights, expanding our understanding of this complex field.

In our research, we focused our efforts on sustainable entrepreneurs who were able to work in teams, but who played a leadership role within their organizations. Other, more or less collective, entrepreneurial forms exist, including in the context of community enterprises (Bacq et al., 2022; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). Studying the logics and motivations within a collective approach will provide a complementary and enriching perspective on these initiatives.

In our research, we focused on sustainable entrepreneurs who not only had the capability to collaborate effectively in teams but also assumed leadership positions within their organizations. However, it's important to acknowledge the existence of diverse entrepreneurial models, ranging from individual to more collective forms, particularly in the realm of community enterprises (Bacq, Hertel, & Lumpkin, 2022; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). An exploration of the underlying logics and motivations from a collective standpoint promises to offer valuable insights, adding a nuanced and comprehensive dimension to our understanding of these entrepreneurial initiatives.

4. Closing remarks

Sustainable entrepreneurship represents a vital intersection, effectively bridging realms once considered disparate. By embracing both social and environmental missions, sustainable entrepreneurs are pivotal in addressing societal challenges. Their actions, influenced by a complex interplay of motivations and logics, enable tailored management approaches that harmonize the various aspects of their ventures. Additionally, these practices are finely tuned to local cultural nuances, enhancing their impact and relevance.

Exploring the individual, organizational, and institutional dimensions of sustainable entrepreneurship opens rich research avenues, providing valuable insights for entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and policymakers. This exploration lays the groundwork

for a model of entrepreneurship that serves the common good, encapsulating a paradigm shift towards more responsible, holistic entrepreneurial practices – a shift that not only meets current societal needs but also fosters a sustainable future.

« We have been walking a long road towards restoring both our forests and the communities that should be looking after them. We have to heal both at the same time.»

Appolinaire OUSSOU LIO

(Rooting for the Future - Gaia Foundation, n.d.)

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