



# **When the SSE communication marketing serves as a promotional tool for tourism development in regional contexts : questions and perspectives in the context of BMK region for a theoretical model**

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**Abstract :** In the changing context, the role played by the social and solidarity economy (SSE) ventures is evolving. To conduct the necessary change, especially in terms of duality of their mission, and to forecast a strategic positioning regarding the private sector, these organizations must formulate and implement marketing strategies adapted to their social objectives and the needs of the market. This market can no longer be apprehended in a local standpoint, but should incorporate a more global vision. Furthermore, when destined to enhance the tourism sector in a regional context, further questions are to be asked, before conceptualizing the practical answers and solutions to be implemented. Instead of interviewing actors from social and solidarity sector or public agencies or offices, we explored the subject otherwise. We conducted a literature review to identify theoretical or empirical studies, linked directly and indirectly to the possible association between SSE communication marketing and tourism development in a predetermined context, to be analyzed for inductive insights and strategic prospects. As for the principal objective of this paper, we seek to present a framework (a theoretical model) of how to promote tourism sector in BMK context by developing communication marketing for SSE organizations.

**Keywords:** Communication Marketing – Tourism Development – Theoretical Model– Social And Solidarity Economy Ventures.

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## 1. Introduction

Being for so long the prerogative of private sector, communication marketing is progressively put into use in new possible ways within other horizons unexplored until recent years. Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a sector considered to be unfit for such practice and yet, its organizations are incessantly evolving towards innovative ways of creating value, social and economic, such as deployment of communication marketing. Even their missions are changing because they aren't revolving only around solving social problems, but include nowadays making profit that can be reinvested in the organization, distributed to the members or made as developmental investment of the local community, which benefits the attractivity and the touristic potentialities of this latter, and by extension, that of the region. However, discussing marketing under the umbrella of SSE sector raises immediately and unequivocally two main questions (MAYAUX, 2012, in BAYLE and AL., 2012), before even addressing that of its possible correlation to tourism sector:

- the first is : is it appropriate, or even legitimate, to articulate it, strategically and operationally speaking, in social and solidarity sphere distinguished by its particularities as the alternative way of doing business, its business model, its missions and its stakeholders, to not mention it all?

This is said, marketing is more the translation of products and services' commercialization by private enterprises. For this reason, the practitioners and theorists usually refer to it as a tool to transform the value created by the organization into financial profit. This is why its use by SSE organizations is questioned and has to be formulated by adequate strategies, operational axes, and actionable levers. Suffice it to say that the "why" and the "how" are explored in this work.

- the second is : what differentiates the SSE organizations, especially in terms of their contextualization and values created for their different targets ?

Every SSE organization has a particular identity and has a mission. The mission followed is defined by the duality of the objectives: social and economic. These two coexist in the actual context characterized by frequent and inconsistent mutations and economic transformations, conjunctural and structural at once. Furthermore, the present work raises new questions through intersecting views on the relation between the innovative practice of communication marketing by SSE organizations and the promotion of tourism sector in contextual regions. We aim to propose perspectives as to how to exploit the results, of these transversal and analytical regards, in BMK region. But the difficulty consists of the absence of theoretical references and empirical works in the matter. As follows, the subject is studied under its key components in order to find how to establish the correlation envisioned in the start and examples are searched to give insights and practices to discuss and resume at the end.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the present literature review, we'll be examining certain points appertaining to the subject described in the previous introduction. By doing so, we'll be able to formulate more adequate questions, than those aforementioned which are also framed and answered, in terms of coherence, efficiency of their eventual resolution and the research required to conceptualize effective approaches, solutions, and tools.

### 2.1 From communication marketing to entrepreneurial marketing : towards an active role of entrepreneurship in marketing

Besides of discussing the marketing in SSE sector, which is a novelty itself in Moroccan context, it is necessary to approach the question of marketing from an evolutionary viewpoint. Indeed, whenever

marketing is discussed by authors, both empirically and theoretically, it is done under the light of its communicational version (especially, digital marketing), without any association with the entrepreneurial dimension. Nevertheless, it's mandatory to acquire such knowledge for ventures and entrepreneurs, in how to conceptualize and implement a marketing strategy suited to promote their businesses and their concepts in a competitive context, yet, it should be put to use for a larger purpose. According to Ionitã, 2012, the shift of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) itself from small ventures and start-ups, for which it was initially designed and designated, to entrepreneurial sphere characterizes its value and adaptability to key practices such as creativity, creation of new concepts solving social and economic problems, and the tendency to be alert and to seize opportunities. In this regard, there is a need to identify and clarify the differences between a venture owner and an entrepreneur. If the former is searching for a personal growth and pursue financial objectives to ensure an income for his family, by running and managing a business, the latter is focused on the economic growth, the impact and the attractiveness of the business itself (to ensure a strategic positioning and to enhance the brand image for a better performance, financially and globally). An entrepreneur, using marketing, develops a positive attitude towards innovation. In other words, his main goal is not only to promote his existing business, but aims to enlarge its conception by introducing new processes, products and services (enhance even the customer experience) while exploring new markets and new ways to optimize the preexisting or the anticipated activity (Ionitã, 2012). In line with these arguments, EM can be defined as “*proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation*” (Morris, Schindehutte and Al., 2002, P. 5). For better results, it should be used in addition of marketing which is “customer-centric focused”.

While the EM is characterized by the presence of entrepreneur, and by that the influence of his personal value and traits on the way of conducting marketing, Anderson and Al., 2009, argue that there is no actual consensus regarding the correlation between firm performance and the personal factors of the entrepreneur. Yet, marketing practice is a direct consequence of decisions made by the ventures, whether in the person of the entrepreneur or not. In both cases, there is a person or a group of persons making decisions on how to communicate about the enterprise, its brands and its products or services. Bearing the difference of thinking and acting between effectual and predictive logic (entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs), Dew and Al., 2009, presented the five following determinants :

- a. *Vision of and for the future* : for effectual logic, it's about creativity because the entrepreneur shapes the future and transforms his vision into reality by the means at his disposal, whereas the predictive logic emphasizes and prioritizes predictions based on analytical data, mainly because the past is reinvented under the prism of actionable insights;
- b. *Decisions making* : in one case, the purposes are translated by actions (predictive logic), in the other, the available means determine these actions (effectual logic). In some cases, the entrepreneur refers to available means to imagine purposes and then, shapes the required actions to achieve them;
- c. *Attitude towards risk* : there is a possibility to define the attitude towards risk based on two factors, namely: losses to be afford and profits to be gained by the venture or the entrepreneur in lead;
- d. *Attitude towards the external actors*: there are two scenarios. One is to cooperate and to establish partnerships with outsiders in order to gain advantages on many levels while the other is to adopt only a competition posture;
- e. *Attitude towards contingencies*: these contingencies are, by nature, uncertain, unexpected and complex. In predictive logic, the venture choses to avoid them, but the entrepreneur, in the case of effectual logic, fructifies them for the benefit of maximizing the venture performance and attractiveness.

By exploring the possibilities of marketing implementation in SSE sector and that, for an eventual promotion of tourism industry in a contextual region, and based on the formulas presented above, changes and contingencies, among other factors, should not be viewed and considered as obstacles, but instead, must be apprehended as opportunities to innovate. For this reason, the objectives are continually transformed and the marketing thinking is to be imaginative more than anything else. For a better understanding of such possibilities, we need first to analyze SSE sector and tourism industry.

## 2.2 SSE, a sector yet to be developed by the use of Marketing and EM

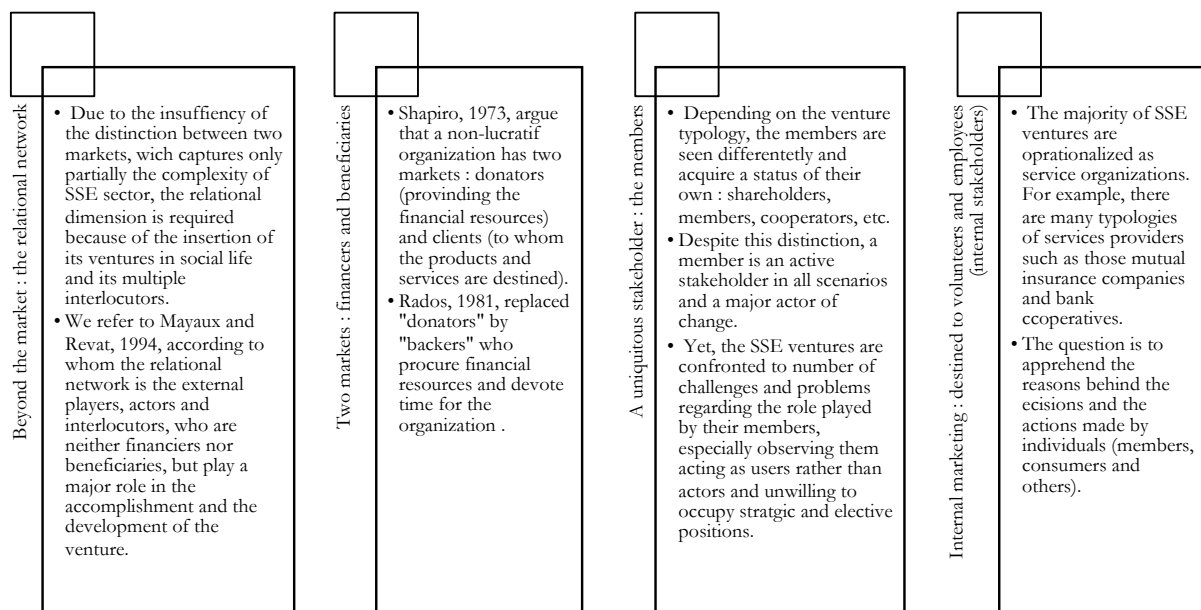
Unlike the private sector, SSE ventures are known to constitute an alternative aiming to solve social problems in community and to induce a social change. Aligned with this logic, Chopart and Al., 2006, depict the main underlying principles of SSE:

- voluntary membership and commitment: whether it's a part of private sector or non-profit sector, social economy, for example, is formed by members adhering freely and deliberately to the values and standpoints of its underlying movement such as cooperative movement;
- dual quality: in movements of SSE such as that of cooperatives, every member has a dual quality as an active member and a worker in the case of a production cooperative while in the case a consumer cooperative, he plays the role of a member and a consumer. The goal behind this duality is to ensure the joint interest of all and to prevent the rise of conflicts of personal interests while pursuing social and economic objectives;
- limited profitability: without refraining its ventures from making profits, which is necessary to enable the development of their activities, the SSE has no aim in valorising its capital nor making a personal use of the profits. Such uses are regulated by the venture's status. Usually, these status anticipate scenarios such as repaying the contracted loans, remuneration of members contributions, and every surplus is placed in reserves. In other words, profits become a collective property of the organization and cannot be shared between members for a personal appropriation;
- equality between members: despite the amount of their contributions to the capital of the organization or the significance of their contributions to its activity, all members dispose of equal rights. The principle underlying the attribution of rights is "one man equals one vote". From this perspective, the SSE venture has a foundation of a partnership rather than that of a capital company.

By the association of social economy and solidarity economy, SSE sector is conceptualized and declined as a third economy, an alternative to the private sector and by that, to capitalist ventures. Constructing an alternative model is a way to overcome risks and contradictions related to private activities, which is more the case knowing that SSE is about re-embedding the social in economics, as it was throughout its development, and promoting an economy serving the human and enhancing the local and regional development. This latter, that cannot be dissociated from social development, on one hand, and from sustainable development in its diverse dimensions (ecological and social, specially), on the other hand, will be discussed in the next part of this literature review. Yet, there's a need to point out the hybridization of actionable logics, strategic principles, and resources (combining monetary, non-monetary, market, non-market and human capital) to surpass the limitations of classic models, public and private especially. Consequently, SSE ventures can pursue a duality of missions, economic and social, declined in socio-economic business model that permits the adoption of marketing and EM.

Certainly, marketing does not define the mission or the project of the organization, but it is used to serve a promotional purpose and efficiency definition of how the concept, the brand, or the venture is solving stakeholders' problems and bringing practical solutions and answers. Furthermore, it's up to the members of the organization to accomplish the task of defining the mission and the project promoted by

their marketing strategy. According to Mayaux, 2012, the know-how of marketing enables key aspects of assessment and examination of the project by stakeholders, on the one hand, to formulate and communicate efficiently and appropriately about its mission, improving by that its comprehension and its perception, on the other hand. Nonetheless, there is a risk that marketing could, explicitly or implicitly, intervene and operate in a way that transforms the project to be seen and perceived as more “promising” or more “communicative”. Such intrusion and transformative capacity, which can’t be completely controlled in case the venture is inexperienced in the matter, should give rise to real critical and responsible reflection regarding the application of marketing in SSE ventures. Marketing tools being adaptable, questions their supposed neutrality (Mayaux, 2012). It’s under this postulate that Mayaux, 2012, portrays the four key features of marketing in SSE ventures (see figure 1).



**Figure 1 :** Adaptation of the four distinctive elements of marketing in SSE sector - from Mayaux, 2012

Even though these characteristics should be considered when implementing a marketing strategy in the case of SSE ventures, it is mandatory, nevertheless, to develop them more accurately based on the venture’s needs, objectives and business model, on one hand, and to incorporate other means to induce a positive socio-economic impact and to achieve the predetermined performance, on the other hand. Among the dimensions to take into consideration, there’s also the context variable because the venture should communicate with a large number of stakeholders, financiers, clients, public and private actors, to mention only a few. Furthermore, as presented in the section above, there’s an increased need for an association between marketing and entrepreneurial marketing, particularly in the conception of the new economy and the complex reality related to the currently undergoing changes in every sector and in the society itself. This latter is redefined systematically as it presents a more complex equation of coexisting generations (Baby-boomers, X, Y and Z, among others). On one side, there are more risks, challenges, and problems, especially in terms of intensified competition in every sector and industry which adds more variables to the already multivariable marketing equation and economic formula. On the other side, there are opportunities generated by the trends (initiated and generalized by influencers on social medias), the digital revolution (that opens a whole universe of possibilities to all ventures,

including those of SSE), and social disruptions (related particularly to the increased awareness of multiple issues, ecological and social for example, and to a more educated and informed individuals).

In the present paper, the global objective is to analyze the correlation between marketing in SSE ventures and touristic development in a regional context. To this end, we need to address more two variables, tourism and context of study, before formulating actionable recommendations, conceptualizing and proposing a theoretical framework.

### **2.3 Tourism industry and how it can be related to SSE**

Buckminster Fuller, an American author, futurist, and inventor, has this famous citation outlined by the Guardian in a published article entitled “Six reasons why mass tourism is unsustainable”, which goes as follows : “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete”. Based on this argument, the problem with the tourism sector lies in the use of an industrial model initially shaped and adapted for other sectors such as real estate, cars, and consumer goods. Not only this resulted in an international explosion of tourism, changing by that the face of this industry and the landscape of the places where it is developed (economically, socially, and culturally), but with the introduction and the proliferation of the digital revolution and digital marketing, including virtual experiences and smart tourism, the sector became more competitive to the point that it constitutes the viable and primary source upon which the entire economy of so many regions and countries is built. Only in 2013, the Guardian declared that the annual revenues of this sector surpassed 2 trillion dollars. In a decade, and comparing the tourism industry to a high-speed train, we can imagine how it changed and what prospects it has even if we consider that this train was stopped momentarily by the Covid-19 pandemic, but only to explore new horizons and to benefit from technological and social trends, and the disruptive innovations highlighted by various sectoral actors. Pushing this line of thought further, one question is to formulate the role played by SSE ventures in making the tourism sector better (in terms of its environmental, socio-economic, and cultural impacts), and creating an innovative and different version, if not an alternative. For this purpose, we refer to the concept of SSET (Social and Solidarity Economy Tourism) presented and researched by Gilles Caire in 2023. He argues that this concept is translated by a different kind of tourism that is more human, social, open, and responsible-oriented industry. Between a “tourism for all” and a “supportive tourism for local development, communities growth, personal change of different social classes”, the ISTO (International Social Tourism Organization) is constantly exploring how to integrate social dynamics, cultural dimensions, and qualitative economic changes in this sector (ISTO, 2020). To this end, SSE ventures have a role to play depending on their activities, sectors, and the value produced through their socio-economic business models.

In line with this vision, one of the multiple definitions, presented by so many actors, combines the underlying dimensions of this approach: ‘tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation’ (United Nations Tourism Statistical System, 2010). By implementing a model of tourism based on this definition, the regional actors and political deciders contribute significantly to the social change, economic growth, and materialization of sustainable development goals.

However, by referring to social dimension, we don’t search to highlight the position held by workers of the tourism industry in a local context or the stakeholders, private as public actors, but it’s more about population practicing tourism (locals and tourists especially), SSE ventures operating in the local ecosystem, and the prospects of developing the tourism sector in a sustainable way. The SSE ventures present alternative practical solutions to the capitalist economy and profitability, which excludes the loss of the communities sociocultural identities and of their potentialities on many levels. When looking for an alternative for the existing conception of tourism, five dimensions need to be viewed under the

prism of SSE sector: social, cultural (and democratic), economic, environmental, and human (CAIRE, 2023). More importantly, Tiarchi and Karamania, 2016, postulate that, in more or less of a decade, this “alternative of tourism” will eventually be the ‘reference’ and the ‘mainstream’. Its scientific values, empirical practices, and theorized paradigms are yet to be determined, mainly because there are multiple types of ‘new tourism’. By crossing many references and reviewing the underlying literature, two conceptions should be addressed in this paper: characteristics of alternative tourism, established by Holden, 2000, and the transition from ‘cultural’ to ‘creative’ tourism, developed by OECD, 2014.

- Focus on the characteristics of alternative tourism

Even though there exists a number of variables determining the alternative tourism, it’s difficult to conduct an exhaustive and overall research. Furthermore, the goal is not to acquire such data for implementing a new approach of tourism, but to understand the correlation between three universes that can be associated in a logic of creating a different value for the community and the region: SSE sector, marketing and tourism. That’s why the overview table presented by Holden, 2000, summarized the characteristics of alternative tourism, and there’s also the possibility to reinvent the existing model based on these characteristics (see figure 2).

<p>Local development and ownership of diverse businesses related to tourism industry, directly or indirectly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale of development</li> <li>• Sustainable growth</li> <li>• Businesses owned by the locals</li> </ul>	<p>The production of a differentiated value and the diversity of impacts generated by ventures activities, including those of tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient social impact toward positive change</li> <li>• Minimize environmental and cultural impact</li> <li>• Produce an economic transformation</li> </ul>	<p>The completion and association between sectors in order to create a dynamic and sustainable ecosystem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linkages between sectors and industries of the local economy are maximised and rethought in an optimised way</li> <li>• Reduce the reliance upon external resources and sectoral actors.</li> </ul>
<p>The development of local tourism ideology and the exploration of new ways of retention of economic expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the retention of tourism's expenditure by local activities and actors</li> <li>• Enlarge the target so that the model would be attractive, by the perception of external actors.</li> </ul>	<p>Sharing, communication, and concertation with all stakeholders: the locals, entrepreneurs, public agents, private ventures, and more :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the localised power</li> <li>• Engage the people in the socioeconomic dynamics and involve stakeholders in decision-making process</li> </ul>	<p>Instead of appealing to external consultants and agents, the path of development is determined by local people and entrepreneurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pace of development is defined by local actors in order to ensure a practical and beneficial change for the community</li> <li>• External influences are limited in terms of decision and strategy making.</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 :** The characteristics of alternative tourism - adapted from Holden, 2000, P. 92

In the light of these considerations and articulations, the tourism development in a contextual region depends upon the creation of a local ecosystem where there are business transactions, commercial interactions, partnership and relational constructions. Yet, taking into consideration the fact that the SSE ventures, for most of cooperatives and mutuals organizations, in Morocco are mostly based on a cultural folklore, local products or traditional concepts, all the complexity is to think an innovative transition from ‘cultural’, to englobe the previous aspects, to ‘creative’ tourism while promoting cultural heritage and local potentialities. That’s the reason why it was necessary to focus on the second conception below.

- Focus on the innovative transition from ‘cultural’ to ‘creative’ tourism

In addition to what is mentioned above, the choice of this transition is also related to the segments of tourists attracted by the concept of cultural and creative tourism. In the perspective where SSE ventures become more competitive and promote products and services contributing to the enhancement and reinvention of tourism experience in a local context, their creativity must be communicated to different targets via different channels and in various contents. This point, is one of our recommendations and conclusions, will be incorporated in the proposed theoretical model at the end of this paper. Nevertheless, questions arise regarding the ‘why’ of destinations’ attractivity and influence. According to Tiarchi and Karamania, 2016, tourists make their choice based on the opportunities to have a memorable and unforgettable experience, creative activities proposed by different actors, including the

SSE ventures (restaurants, hostels, artisanal garments and clothes), creative atmosphere, and new challenges, among others.

In this perspective, the theoretical transition proposed by Tirachi and Karamania, 2016, can be adapted to show, synthetically, how alternative tourism can surpass limitations of the two versions by its transformation. By integrating findings, which resulted from literature review and crossed with our practical observations in the field, we can present the conception in figure 3.

	Cultural tourism	Creative tourism	Culturo-creative tourism
<b>Orientation</b>	Cultural patrimony - past	Future vision	Formula = past + future
<b>Structure</b>	Promote the local folklore	Innovative concepts: use of technology and digitalization	Rethink culture as an innovative experience
<b>Internalities</b>	Use of local products	Platforms and contents:	Combine two formulas: classic
<b>Externalities</b>	Create cultural experiences	virtual immersive experience	digital, of cultural patrimony
<b>Process and practices</b>	Turn culture into a promotional lever	Co-creation and participative approach of stakeholders	Create SSE businesses to promote cultural and local concepts
<b>Value generation</b>	Value chains	Value networks	Experience by active participation
<b>Value focus</b>	Tourist as consumer	Tourism as experience	Art of making relational experiences
<b>Entrepreneurial logic</b>	Entrepreneurial tourism	Creative activities / concepts / trends	Rethink and reinvent tourism developing SSE ventures
<b>Ecosystem transformation</b>	Public and private actors	Public and private actors, the locals and external actors	Public and private actors, ventures, the locals

**Figure 3 :** Transition from culture to creative tourism to create a new alternative 'culturo-creative tourism' - adapted from OECD – 2014, P. 53, mentioned by Tirachi and Karamania, 2016, P. 10

In addition to the initial transition developed by the authors aforementioned, we introduced our interpretation of deductions based on the previous analysis. The SSE ventures have a crucial role to play and to do so, they need to deploy an appropriate communication marketing strategy. Furthermore, the use of such strategy should be realized in terms of relational and experiential logics, which are dissociated in the present case. Richards, 2012, argues that a correspondence exists between the constituents of two variables: experience (strategic view) and practices (operational and actionable articulation of the predefined marketing strategy). These elements can be apprehended under the three functions of communication marketing: cognitive (to inform the target), conative (call to action), and affective approach (to induce an emotional charge, to arise questions related to the ventures and their brands, and to showcase the object of communication marketing by highlighting its advantages, values, and qualities). Indeed, the first phase of tourism experience is about 'learning' through practical solutions such as workshops that can be organized by SSE ventures, locals, or public actors. The second phase is about 'tasting', used here as a figurative term to reflect the feeling induced by the experience, that can be achieved by collective or personalized experiences (open ateliers and immersion in the universe of SSE ventures such food and hostel cooperatives, for example). The third phase is related to 'seeing' for purposes of exploring the community, the region, their cultural and natural patrimony, and this, through the creation of 'itineraries' and 'collaboration' between public agents, locals, and SSE ventures. The last phase is turned to 'buying', to englobe all the possible transactions made possible by the entrepreneurial tourism such as hostel reservations, donations, and local folkloric products purchase. To this end, there is a need to create a 'vitrine' in the virtual world (social medias, especially) and 'shop windows' made on the spot by mastering the codes of local folklore, the association to business concepts, the trends, the history of the community, the colors, and so more. It's by associating the



virtual and the real universe that an efficient marketing strategy can be defined by SSE ventures for the benefit of developing tourism sector, and by far, tourism entrepreneurship, in the region where they are implanted.

#### **2.4 Contextualization: a matter of knowing the potentialities and exploring new horizons**

In a wide international context, the cooperative model is one of the most used because it doesn't only generates millions of jobs, but it is the sum of a variety of ventures and over a billion of members (Bertrel, 2014). This assumption, outdated in terms of evolutions and mutations that occurred and significantly impacted the whole SSE sector, constitutes a reference to give an idea of the importance of this sector in the socioeconomic dynamics within a national and international ecosystem. More importantly, the associative action showed a revolution, and not only an evolution, because of the diversity and increase of associations, on one hand, and their domains of intervention and regions of their implantation (Boushara, 2022), on the other hand. In this line of reasoning, BMK region is no exception, but rather an example of a context that greatly benefited from the SSE movement these recent years and has the potential to push the limits even further by a possible association between SSE, tourism industry, and sustainable development. Not only the region has natural landscape, but the cultural diversity presents an asset that can be translated by business opportunities and by that, development vector of tourism entrepreneurship and territorial attractivity can be associated. On the cultural front, there's a social diversity that revolves around the coexistence of Arabs and Berbers, with a notable distinction between folklore pertaining to each subculture. Furthermore, in the recent change of regionalization plan, the region includes five provinces: BM, K., A., FBS, and K.. Combining these fives, which are characterized by their geographical and natural individualities, the region presents a promising touristic and entrepreneurial potential. In addition to the fact that the water constitutes a peculiarity in this mountainous region, sectors such as agriculture, energy, crafts, and mining are increasingly developing and generating an additional value to the local economy. Yet, even though there's a real capacity of tourism industry, regarding hotels and restaurants, for example, its dynamism, particularly in respect of external and international tourists, is not following the contextual economic and social development. One of the reasons presented by El Yousfi, 2019, in his paper, is that of the notable absence of infrastructures, even the basics required to implement a viable sustainable tourism development model are absent.

As for its geographical positioning, the region has a strategic location because it is situated at the crossroads of touristic and main urban centers (Rabat, Marrakech, Fez, and Casablanca). It can therefore benefit from the mainstream traffic by promoting its potentialities and conducting a significant change in its socioeconomic universe. The ecosystem, in its correlation with the three distinctive geographical formations, incorporates new and old actors: while the plains can be destined to industrial and agricultural activities, including those of SSE sector, the mountains of Middle and High Atlas as well as foothills can be conducive tissues of renewable, green, and segmented sector activities. Despite of this, the region still a marginalized touristic destination even though it multiplies strategies and models in this matter. This underrated performance may be reversable by the implementation of a model based on the SSE ventures, related directly or indirectly to tourism sector.

As for these ventures, their underlying models are the equivalent of local development and, because they're created by necessity and then, by social innovation, they are incremented subsequently in an entrepreneurial logic. In the third edition of the SSE fair, held in BM in December 2022, more than 320 ventures had their stands as exhibitors to promote and value regional products, cultural patrimony, and inherited know-how (ALM, 2022). Visited by the current minister of "tourism, craft and SSE", it demonstrates the attention and importance given to this sector as a real asset in business strategy, and a

vector of socioeconomic growth, in mountainous and rural zones especially. In this line of thought, the entrepreneurial projects manifested by the creation of innovative concepts and ventures of SSE sector should be articulated in communication marketing strategies and transformed into promotional tools of the region's attractiveness and competitiveness as well as its social change and sustainable development. There should be a correlation between such observations, realities, and prospects, all the more due to the increase of SSE ventures' number such as cooperatives that are distinguished by their sector diversity and colossal number (more than 3730 organization only in the end of 2021 according to the official figures published by the "Office of Development of Cooperation"). By adding these elements to the previous ones deduced from the literature review, we can presently discuss the possibilities of defining a model of "communication marketing deployed by SSE ventures in BMK regional context that serves as promotional tool and development vector of its touristic entrepreneurship and industry", on one hand, conceptualize and analyze this model, on the other hand.

### **3. TOWARDS A MODEL OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION MARKETING IN THE SERVICE OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM : A BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CHANGE**

Before presenting the model conceptualized on the basis of deductions, conclusions, and correlations made through the literature review as well as contextualization, it is necessary to discuss some relevant aspects of the dilemma posed under the equation of three variables: SSE ventures, communication marketing associated, and tourism development in contextual region, or in local community. The works being conducted in the field of tourism development and SSE ventures are numerous, yet, the implementation of communication marketing, a label suited hitherto to private sector, is not only rare, but is more fabricated in partial questioning of some or other constituents, such as cooperatives. This complicates matter because this paper seeks to explore, which is done in the above sections, how communication marketing implemented by SSE ventures can contribute to the tourism development in a contextual region, and to propose a model adapted to this issue. For these reasons, some points are discussed below as guidelines to shape the underlying logics, and dimensions of the theoretical model.

We can introduce the concept of district as a combination of two associated and complementary networks: economic and social (Parodi, 2005). While the former revolves around the density of ventures and organizations pertaining to sectors and seeking to develop competitive advantages and sector specializations, which is why they replicate the competitors most successful and efficient strategies to innovate otherwise based on the acquired insights; the latter is composed of workers who are looking for social change and they do it by changing organizations where they carry out a professional activity, on one hand, and status that can be achieved by becoming members of SSE ventures, on the other hand. In this regard, Italy presents a valuable reference through its industrial districts that have been developing and renovating in different sectors in association with local culture such as textiles, clothing, leather, footwear industry, fashion in a broad way, mosaic, glass, and gastronomy, among others. This gave Italy, in general, and its localities and temporalities, in particular, a certain attractiveness as privileged tourist destination. This opens the doors for local development via SSE ventures and related marketing. We won't be exploring SSE in this context, but suffice it to say that tourism, regarding this analysis, is the result of a local development. Different actors, locals as externals, promote the sociocultural assets and patrimonies transformed into original concepts that guarantee a touristic immersion in terms of experiential and sensational dimensions as well as emotional narratives.

For the territorial governance, in terms of political action in the conception of Goutleb, 1993, it can only be of meaning and induce a significant impact in the local and regional community when it

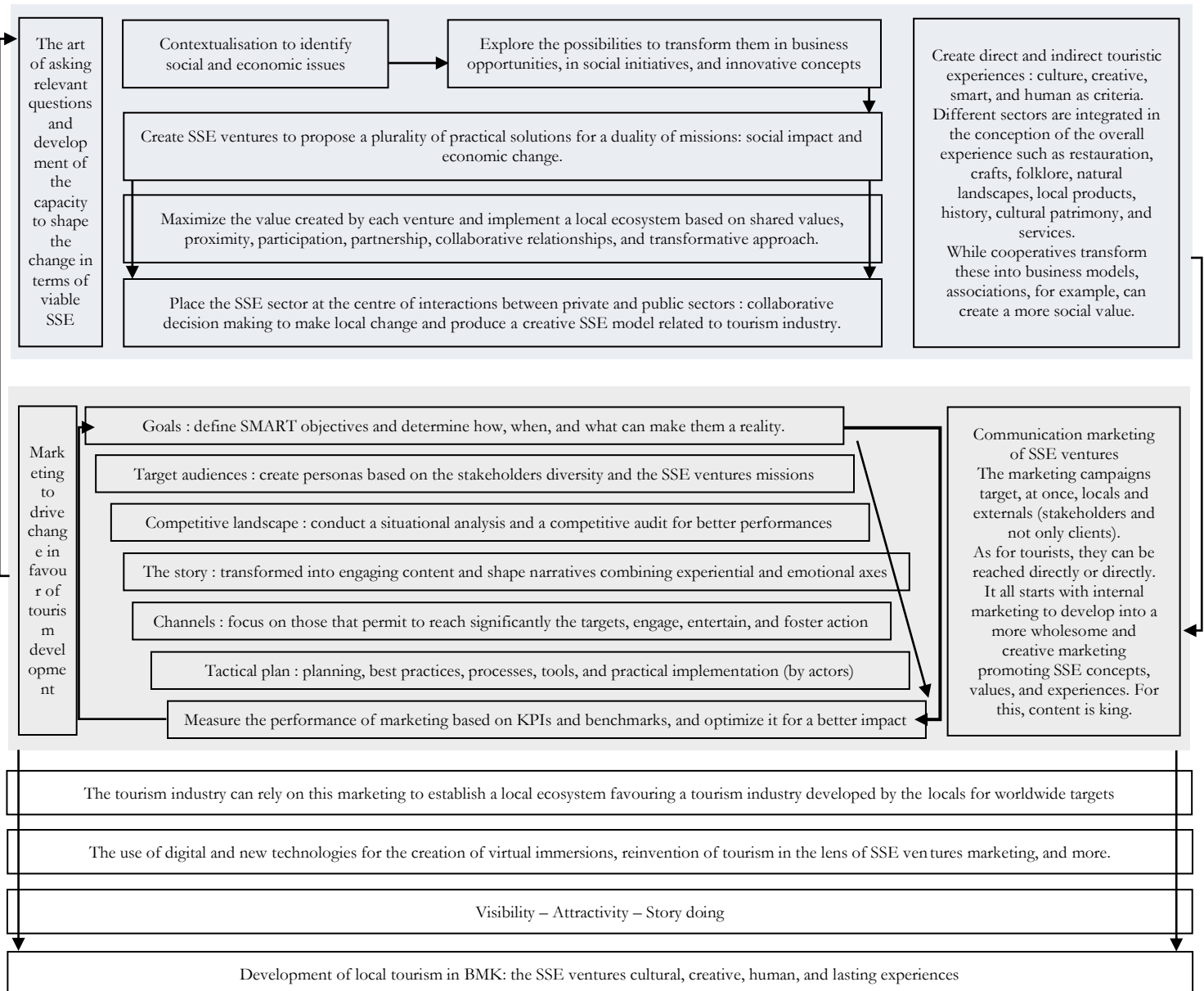
satisfies four conditions. Based on these conditions, we made some correlations to adapt them to our topic as follows:

- Involve and engage local actors in sociodynamic, as value creator, beyond businesses and entrepreneurial universe. Not only they should participate actively in the daily life of their communities, to produce a positive change, but they also need, and that's the most important part, communicate about it by posting pictures, stories, reels, or sharing life-changing stories in social medias, for example. Given that the SSE ventures are the real contributors to this change, by creating innovative concepts, by promoting entrepreneurial initiatives in different areas, and by addressing social and economic problems, their role and value creations need to be centralized in their communication marketing campaigns. Moreover, every marketing strategy should focus on telling emotional stories on how the socioeconomic transformation is done by these ventures. Given the idea that the tourists worldwide are looking for experiences in line with their beliefs, needs, and visions, the discovery of a region reinvented by SSE innovations, while insisting on the fact that social innovation in this perspective is about rethinking the present by the lens of SSE initiatives for a lasting change, can constitute a motivation for them to choose it as a destination, to share their experiences, to support the SSE projects, and to eventually make recommendations in their network by Word Of Mouth (WOM) and Electronic Word Of Mouth (EWOM), among other communicational vectors and channels.
- Foster the development of different kinds of territorial capital, especially cultural, patrimony, and immaterial capital: this can be achieved by sharing the know-how, the crafts' history, the sociocultural history through products and services as Moroccan gastronomy and tapestry, to cite only a few. The best way to share is by deploying communication marketing strategies implemented by SSE ventures that transform such capitals into real-life and entrepreneurial concepts;
- Seek and encourage synergies and "learning effects" between different actors in the local ecosystem and beyond. In this case, there's a possibility to establish a long term collaboration between actors from the two underlying actors of our study: tourism actors and SSE ventures. We can add local actors (citizens), private and public actors that operate in this local ecosystem. Of course, external actors may be implicated in this dynamic through the establishment of partnerships, but the development searched by the present paper is one that is made by the locals for the locals, especially by the use of communication marketing as a promotional tool in the service of SSE ventures, which are changing directly and indirectly the local tourism industry;
- Ensure transformative relationships on the basis of the previous point. Between the market and the context, SSE ventures should explore new horizons in terms of strategic partnerships, business relationships, and commercial collaborations. By acquiring a central role in the local context, they can be seen as more performative and innovative by different stakeholders, mainly clients from diverse localities, because their communication marketing can cover more targets by including and reaching those of their partners, for example.

Regarding these elements, the economic culture to formalize in the community should combine social innovation, creation of dynamic ambiance and an ecosystem where actors (social and economic, especially those of SSE) entertain privileged proximity relationships, transformation of the local market, and openness on the outside (through revolutionized initiatives, creative products/services, relational capital, and craft know-how). Furthermore, the SSE network should be constructed by diverse typologies of SSE ventures operating in different areas of expertise and sectors: cooperatives, associations, mutuals societies, and alternative solutions to capitalist economy. For this alternative economy, local actors need to develop an appropriate communication marketing to promote their businesses, initiatives, and socioeconomic business models in case of dual missions (social and economic in the case of cooperatives, for example). The question is how to operate a communication

marketing efficiently and successfully to promote, not only their ventures and brands, but also the tourism in the region where they are implanted?

Otherwise, the issue is about the way to use communication marketing in SSE ventures to contribute to tourism development in local context. Knowing that these ventures have a key role to play, that an association exists between the two universes (SSE sector and tourism industry), and that BMK region has many potentialities that can be transformed into touristic assets, the theoretical model can be defined as a multivariable formula (see figure 4).



**Figure 4 :** The proposed theoretical model of the transformation of tourism by communication marketing of SSE ventures in BMK region – elaborated by the authors

Even though we don't refer to dependent and independent variables because the choice made in terms of methodology requires to explore the issue differently, this theoretical model highlights the correlation that exists between SSE ventures and tourism development through a performing and efficient communication marketing, deployed by the former, in a regional context. In this regard, SSE

ventures have the possibility to be organized in districts within the underlying local ecosystem (social and economic networks like the previous Italian example) to formulate more engaging, experiential, and emotional communication marketing strategies. These strategies, and by far, their practical and tactical articulations, should be deeply embedded in local context and incorporate different actors in their conception and sharing on the appropriate channels, social medias especially. Thus, tourists relying on differentiated content, in particular that created and shared by other tourists (locals and externals), make their choices of destinations to visit and cultures to explore based on what SSE ventures have to offer (cultural heritage, workshops, local gastronomy, trips, social encounters, activities proposed and customized by associations' societies and cooperatives, and overall, personalized experiences that reflect the real value of the localities, temporalities, socioeconomic particularities, and cultural patrimony) and this, beyond the mere tourism industry.

For these reasons, the public actors, especially in terms of governance, have a key role to play by reconsidering what local attributes should be taking into consideration to shape a development model SSE-oriented. In the same line of thought, private sector can establish collaborations, partnerships, and complementarities with SSE ventures to reinvent the local economy in the light of social, ecological, cultural, and alternative economic considerations. In other words, this theoretical model constitutes the first step in a change that can be conducted by rethinking communication marketing of SSE ventures to promote and develop tourism sector in the region of BMK.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Prior to the formalization of the guidelines of the present work, we conducted a systematic literature review based on the three constituents of the subject: SSE ventures and their communication marketing, and tourism development in region contexts. The outcomes weren't presented above due to the absence of exploitable links. In other words, presenting such a systematic literature review without deductions or theoretical extrapolations relates more to broad previews and overviews of separated subjects. Nevertheless, through this task, it was possible to identify some papers, mobilized in the analysis and interpretations done precedingly, that can be of value. Moreover, it is necessary to stipulate that we avoided to cross a large number of studies, but we focused more on the papers incorporating key elements that can be transformed into insights (about how the theoretical model can be shaped and what dimensions should be embedded in it). At the beginning, the objective was to use "intersecting views" to explore international experiences of tourism SSE-oriented, but the conception and the proposition of a theoretical model seemed to be more interesting, especially in the perspective that we look forward to translate this model by an empirical study for a more practical conception and an eventual deployment in case studies.

Based on the unraveled correlations, the above findings showed that SSE ventures should be a core part of the local community, and by extrapolation of the region context, to explore social and economic problems that can be transformed into opportunities translatable into innovative concepts and businesses. Then come the communication marketing as a promotional vector of their activities, and the differentiated value they create. The strategy implemented should reflect an alternative vision of how the tourists and the locals can benefit from an immersive experience. By that, there's a possible association between alternative tourism (culturo-creative) and SSE sector because it's more about a sum of local experiences (products, services, and more) produced by a dynamic and creative ecosystem (made by the locals for an alternative economy and tourism) than a simple tourism businesses that can prove unattractive and harmful for the community (all the more so due to the trends on social medias, the changing requirements of tourists, and the advent of new destinations proposing different innovations based on their temporalities, localities, and patrimonies). The choice is more complex and

uncertain. That's why a performing communication marketing deployed by SSE ventures can highly and considerably contribute to the promotion and development of tourism in their local context. The question that arises in this matter is: how to evaluate the performance of this communication marketing and in what metrics and indicators its impact on tourism development can be measured?

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