

**A critical overview of voluntary initiatives for a sustainable development of
the tourism sector**

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Biographical note

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Remark

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Abstract

This paper explores the diversity of voluntary initiatives within the tourism sector (codes of conduct, bills of rights, environmental plans, business schemes, check lists, international declarations), critically examining their respective levels of compliance with the ethical implications of sustainable development. A content analysis of international declarations on tourism adopted by World Tourism Organisation since 1980 shows a shift towards more explicit social and environmental concerns, but also indicates persisting and significant contradictions between these stated concerns and current practices. A comparison of various instruments reveals diverging points of views about “what tourism should be”. Their implementation process underlines a problematic attempt of self-regulation, which led to distinguish three levels of regulation in a context of sustainable development : win-win strategies, partnerships between tourism operators and environmental or social actors, and finally more traditional regulation.

Key words

Tourism, sustainability, ethics, content analysis, codes of conduct, governance, regulation, World Tourism Organization

INTRODUCTION

Since 1992, the tourism sector has been marked by a growing number of voluntary initiatives, in various forms : codes of conduct, bills of rights, environmental plans, business schemes, check lists, international declarations.

These initiatives concern either tour operators, the accommodation sector, host communities, overall destinations or tourists themselves. They deal either with business relationships, impact of tourism on local and regional environments, or with its socio-cultural effect on host communities. About fifty ecolabels for accommodation have been developed in Europe since the early 1980's, for instance (*ECOTRANS- ECO-TIP database*). These varied instruments have some crucial points in common, however :

- a call, explicit or implicit, for an ethic different from the short term routine of “business as usual”, and a willingness to tackle external issues influenced by or influencing the tourism business, beyond the ordinary range of activity for commercial firms;
- a reliance on a voluntary commitment, and further, a promotion of self-regulation for the tourism sector, rather than more traditional regulatory structures or procedures.

Meanwhile, tourism has to face the challenge of sustainability, quickly defined here as “a development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland report definition, WCED 1987)”, and discussed later in the paper. We identified, two key issues among the major issues raised by the idea of sustainable development : the growing contribution of tourism to greenhouse gas emissions (mainly through transportation), and its uncertain ability to foster the development

of Southern countries, while avoiding the social, environmental, and economic problems it can create.

Given the weakness of national policies for tourism, the ethical commitment of tourism operators appear as the main response of this sector to the challenge of sustainable development. A general recommendation of the Agenda 21- chapter 30, writes “Business and Industry, including transnational corporations,[...] should be encouraged to adopt and report on the implementation of codes of conduct promoting best environmental practices.” But beyond a formal compliance with Agenda 21, what is the effective content of these codes of conduct ? Does a confrontation of these different documents point out a convergence towards a common idea of the future of the tourism sector worldwide ? Does this content comply with Agenda 21, or does it leave it aside ? What are the possibilities for efficient codes of conduct, or certification processes, for tourism ? What does the call for a self-regulation of the sector reveal about its governance ?

Beyond the occasional rhetorical excess that can characterise contemporary discourse about tourism, current debates can be seen to reflect emerging issues which may determine the future regulatory context of tourist activity at various levels. After a quick description of the place of ethics in politics and in policy designing, and some review of the ethical implications of sustainable development for tourism, this paper questions the diversity of ethical conceptions concerning tourism through the comparison of their content and the analysis of their implementation process.

METHODS

Analysing the Concrete Contents and the Effective Implementation of Ethical Instruments

The basic material for this study consists in various types of documents. The criteria for selection was the existence of an explicit ethical concern within operational measures, but also the expression of a global vision of “what tourism should be”, in international declarations for instance. An important part of these documents were synthesised in two UNEP technical reports “Environmental Codes of conducts for tourism (UNEP-IE 1993)” and “Ecolabels in the tourism industry (UNEP-IE 1995)” ; electronic and conventional bibliographic sources were used to gather more recent ones.

More than 60 samples of material (listed in the following exhibit) with an “ethical content” have been identified. Yet they constitute only a fraction of those existing. Hence, several potential sources have not been exploited, but could be in a more expansive study along these lines: The World Commission on Sustainable Development’s final report on tourism, for instance, or the European Union action plan for tourism (Secrétariat d’Etat au tourisme 2001).

The survey was limited to official documents: final declarations, charters, label descriptions, recommendations, campaign programs. Drafts, reports or unpublished research papers were seen to express their authors’ personal opinion about ethics and tourism, rather than a

perceptible consensus on a conception of ethics within an institution (WTO, national government, companies), appropriate as a target of the research. To enlarge this study, it would be necessary to undertake an analysis of scientific conceptions of the sustainability of tourism, and of their underlying ethical prerequisites. The purpose would be to analyse the “translation” of the concept of sustainable development in this particular activity.

The meaning and reality for an ethics of tourism have been explored through an analysis concerning:

1. their origin and philosophical background ;
2. their content ;
3. their projects, the stakeholders they rely on, and the follow up mechanism they

introduce which appeared to be a key point of the research.

Point 1. attempts to provide an overview of all identified initiatives. In 2. and 3., the research concentrated on a few representative examples.

In order to provide a synoptic view and a comparison of these instruments, a manual content analysis was conducted, through a literal reading of the documents and a comparative approach. Six categories (with thirty subcategories) of ethical concerns have been defined, because they were often cited in codes of conducts, or because they could logically be considered as part of a sustainable development process (North/ South relationships for example). Many categorisations of ethical concerns can be defined (Hultsman 1995), in this paper the selected items refer as far as possible to sustainable development. These categories are: the right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel ; influence of tourism on host communities ; the social rights of tourism workers ; the protection of the local and global environment, the management of tourism resources ; the recognition of the economic role of tourism ; North/ South relationships and share of tourism benefits. A detailed analysis of subcategories made

possible a more accurate approach, for example about environmental conceptions of stakeholders (see Figure 5).

The main difficulties encountered were :

- the various forms (size, content...) of the basic material. These documents sometimes give an especially brief overview of a definite theme, even in proportion to their size. This was translated in the following tables by using a light to dark background for the items : light in the case of simple citation, medium if the document was more detailed, dark if the issue was often mentioned, or if the document proposed precise and complete recommendations.
- the opposition between the substantive and procedural approach of sustainability sometimes rendered the comparison difficult. The former provides detailed concrete measures; the latter deals with the decision process, such as participation, monitoring and evaluation, education and research, integration of the environment, planning, etc. This a classical dichotomy in sustainable development approaches, and a wide range of documents exist that might be characterized as falling somewhere between these two conceptions (Levarlet 1999).

Illustration 1: Documents analysed in the survey

- 1. UNEP- IE, *Environmental Codes of Conduct for Tourism*, Technical report N° 29 1993.**
 1. International Chamber of Commerce: *Business Charter for Sustainable Development*
 2. *The World Travel and Tourism Council's Environmental Guidelines*
 3. The Ecotourism Society: *Ecotourism guidelines*
 4. *Canada's code of Ethics and Guidelines*
 5. The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum: *Charter for Environmental Action in the International Hotel and Catering Industry*. (<http://www.ihei.org>)
 6. *Sustainable Tourism: the challenge of the 1990s for Finnish tourism*
 7. New Zealand, *Principles for the Tourism Industry*
 8. Travel Industry Association of America : *Things business can do*
 9. *Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) code for environmentally responsible tourism*
 10. World Wildlife Fund (WWF): *Tourism Concern Principles for Sustainable Tourism*
 11. *Australia Code of Environmental Practice*
 12. Alliance internationale de tourisme/ Fédération internationale de l'automobile : *Charter of Ethics for tourism and the environment* <http://www.fia.com>
 13. England: *Principles for Balanced Development*
 14. The Africa Travel Association: *Ecotourism Manifesto*
 15. *The International Youth Hostels Federation Environmental Charter*
 16. *Guidance for those organizing and conducting tourism and non governmental activities in the Antarctic*
 17. *The Mauritian code of Ethics for tourism: for Mauritians*
 18. *We, the Responsible Host Association*
 19. American Society of Travel Agents in Association with Club Med: *Ten commandments on ecotourism*
 20. *The Himalayan Tourist Code*
 21. Trinidad and Tobago: *guide for turtle watching*
 22. *Welcome to Heidelberg*
 23. English Tourism Board: *20 tips for visitors*
 24. American Automobile Association: *Environmental tips for world trips*
 25. *Guidance for visitors to the Antarctic*
 26. European Tour Operators Association: *Guidelines for the visitor*
 27. *Save our Planet's guidelines for low impact vacations*
 28. *Credo of the peaceful traveller*
 29. ICOMOS: *Charter of cultural tourism*
 30. *Welcome to Australia*
- 2. International organisations**
 1. WTO/OMT, *Manila Declaration on World Tourism*, October, 10, 1980, <http://www.world-tourism.org/Sustainb/SustHom.htm>
 2. WTO/OMT, *The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document*, August, 27, 1982
 3. WTO/OMT, *Tourism bill of rights and tourist code*, Sofia, September, 26, 1985
 4. WTO/OMT, *The Hague Declaration on Tourism*, April, 14, 1989
 5. WTO/OMT, *WTO statement on the prevention of organized sex tourism*, October 1995
 6. World Conference on Sustainable tourism, *Charter for Sustainable tourism*, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
 7. Conférence internationale sur le tourisme et le développement durable en Méditerranée, *Déclaration de Calvia*, April, 19, 1997
 8. UNEP et AIIHA/ *Environmental Action Pack for Hotels*
 9. Plan d'action pour la Méditerranée/ PNUE, *Tourisme et développement durable*, Malte 1999
 10. WTO/OMT, *Global code of ethics for tourism*, October, 1, 1999
 11. Nations Unies- Conseil Economique et Social- Commission du développement durable, septième session, avril 1999, *Tourisme et développement durable. Rapport du Secrétaire Général*.
 12. Programme d'action pour la Méditerranée, Agenda Med21, Chapitre XXXXI, Gestion d'un tourisme compatible avec le développement durable
- 3. Outside Europe**
 1. Association des producteurs en tourisme d'aventure du Québec (APTAQ), *Code d'éthique*. <http://www.aptaq.qc.ca>
 2. Costa Rica Tourism Institute, *Certification in Sustainable Tourism Program*
 3. *South Australian Design Guide for Sustainable Development*
 4. *Agenda 21 for Baltic Sea Region Tourism*, August 1997, http://www.surfnet.fi/agenda21/tour_rep.html
 5. Kiskeya Alternative certification program, <http://www.kiskeya-alternative.org/certif/>
 6. Green Globe: The Worldwide Certification Programme for Sustainable Travel & Tourism, <http://www.greenglobe.org/>

7. Tour operators initiative for sustainable tourism development, avec PNUE, Unesco, OMT, <http://www.toinitiative.org/>
- 4. Europe**
 1. Travel Agents and Tour operators in Europe, *Déclaration d'Ectaa contre le tourisme sexuel impliquant des enfants* http://www.ectaa.org/sex_tourism_fr.html
 2. Environmental Management Service (ministère fédéral allemand), *The Green Book of Tourism*
 3. Grande Bretagne: The Green Tourism Business Scheme, <http://www.greentourism.org.uk/>
 4. Eco-tip: répertoire de bonnes pratiques sur le tourisme et l'environnement, <http://www.eco-tip.org>
 5. Calvia Agenda Local 21, <http://www.bitel.es/dir~calvia/kagenda.htm>
 6. Conseil de l'Europe- Comité des ministres aux Etats membres, *Recommandation n°R 94 (7) relative à une politique générale de développement d'un tourisme durable et respectueux de l'environnement.*
- 5. France**
 1. Atalante : *Charte éthique du voyageur*, <http://www.atalante.fr>
 2. Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux: *Les gîtes Panda: une démarche partenariale pour un concept basé sur le développement durable*
 3. Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : *Charte d'adhésion des "Hôtels au Naturel"*
 4. Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France/ Europarc : *Charte européenne du tourisme durable dans les espaces protégés, version définitive*, juin 1998, <http://www.parc-naturels-régionaux.tm.fr>
 5. Fédération pour l'éducation à l'environnement en Europe/ Fédération française de naturisme : Campagne Les clefs vertes, <http://clefsvertes.iffrance.com>
 6. Fédération française des Stations Vertes et des Villages de Neige: *Charte des stations vertes de vacances.* stations.vert@wanadoo.fr
 7. Pavillon bleu d'Europe, *Questionnaire campagne 2000*, <http://www.blueflag.org>
 8. Center Parcs, *Dossier de presse Automne Hiver 1999*, <http://www.centerparcs.com>
 9. Accueil paysan: l'Éthique
 10. Clévacances : *Charte de qualité*, infos@clevacances.com
 11. Assemblée permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture. Label Bienvenue à la ferme, <http://paris.apca.chambagri.fr/apca/default.htm>
 12. Pays d'accueil touristiques: Le réseau du tourisme vert
 13. Les plus beaux villages de France: Charte de qualité 1998
 14. ACCOR: La charte environnement de l'hôtelier, <http://www.accor.com>
 15. Ministère de l'Environnement, Réserves naturelles de France, *Code de bonne conduite du visiteur de réserve naturelle.*

Ethics in Politics, Ethics as a Background for Public Policies

The ethical engagement of tourism operators most certainly does not concern merely their own altruistic practices and charitable initiatives. The stakes are much higher for the marketing of the tourism industry or the public management of tourism, in the current context of globalisation, and point toward particular compulsions and competitive advantages, rather than altruism and charitable efforts alone.

Ethics, in its broadest sense, is a philosophical enquiry into the values present in any policy or individual action. Publications demonstrate the positions held by tourism operators within ethical debates ; attitudes range acceptance of regulation by market forces, to a willingness to

attempt regulation beyond the dictates of the market. Fennel and Malloy (1999) studied the ethical commitment of operators among selected ecotourism, adventure, fishing, cruise lines, and golf courses; they note that ethics shouldn't be considered merely as the field of action of a few motivated tourism operators, nor as an argument to reach a part of a segmented market, as for ecotourism operators. Rather, ethical concerns constitute a discussion, more or less conscious, about the purpose of one's action—even a search for its collective justification. Indeed, to various extents, the ethical debate plays itself out in the political and policy arguments as well as in the complex play of market forces. At final, analysis of ethical instruments—such as they are—in the field of tourism, elicits the leading ethical assumptions and aspirations that construct current tourism development, and discerns its private and public regulation.

Contrary to morals, a concept dealing principally with individuals, their values and principles, ethics is a more collective and pragmatic notion. It attempts to rationalize a collective action and its consequences. Therefore, “[...] ethics reside between, the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’”, Bowman as quoted in (Hultsman 1995:555). If ethics often calls for moral principles in its search of justice, one must keep in mind that a collective value can be based upon a moral vice, just as economic relationships between individuals can be based upon egoism. Ethics relates to various philosophical foundations, from relativism to the Kantian perspective or Rawls' theory of justice (Fennel and Malloy 1999), but also to concrete contents and practices, which the present paper insists on:

[...] any code of ethical practices [...], needs to be grounded in a more paradigmatic footing. As Johnston suggested, while it is possible to develop ethical practices without such a paradigmatic footing, having a basic or foundational grounding for

ethics can preclude problems caused by ‘zealous but ignorant moral reformers’. This grounding would serve as the basis, the foundation, or the underlying principle, for widely accepted industry standards and practices (Hultsman 1995:554).

Ethics is usually more or less stabilised, internalised in a regulatory context, discussed for example when the parliament adopts a law, and more broadly contested by various social movements. Both the ethical arguments and the confrontation of interests (be they market, vote, negotiation or demonstration) take part in the evolution of this regulatory context. Wider ethical debates arise when new problems and newly considered unfair situations occur, and when communities are unable to solve these new problems with previously defined responses. The reason why ethics progressively suffuses the debates about environmental problems, is that the environment and the sustainable development concept raises in an unprecedented way several questions involving either “nature”, future generations, or distant countries in a global perspective (equity in North/ South relationships).

This paper argues that operators seldom act following an altruist maxim, but rather act within a regulatory context (e.g. law, market rules) which is shaped by ethics. New practices of tour operators, NGO’s or international organisations’ opinions about tourism, suggest the likely evolution of this regulatory context. Therefore, ethical practices of members of the tourism industry are not interesting by themselves, but by their ability to push to the elaboration of a new political agenda for the sector. Overall discussions of the purpose of tourism, its undesired impacts and its inequity, reveal the political debate about tourism, and contribute to understanding of the current and future state of governance for the tourism sector.

The Ethical Implications of Sustainable Development

Rio Revisited, the Sources of a Misunderstanding

“Sustainable development has survived almost a decade of rhetorical excess and academic scepticism” (Lafferty 1996:185). Sustainable development remains, in discourse, if not in practice, the basic foundation of numerous public policies and initiatives in the field of tourism. However, much of current discourse on sustainable development seems to have little or nothing to do with its initial inspiration. More insidious, still, is the possibility that a more or less deliberate misperception of the Rio Conference’s implications, and of the global project and the global ethics they contain, is the source of a current confusion in debates about tourism development.

Indeed, when one reads official publications on sustainable development, it seems that the persisting reference to “a development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland report definition, WCED 1987)”, should be considered as sufficient to prove that everyone shares a common concern. That is by no means obvious.

Above all, sustainable development is a concept driven by international concerns, which was introduced to take into account environment and development global issues : the persisting poverty in Southern countries, the increase of inequality between developed and developing countries, the greenhouse effect, the depletion of non renewable resources. The international community responded with a principle which is in fact less ambiguous than it seems. The lines following the famous definition quoted above state that :

[...] It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of 'needs', in particular needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priorities should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development follows a similar outline : priority to the development of Southern countries (articles 5 and 6), responsibility of developed countries to fight against pollution (article 7), and priority to long term and global issues. To summarize, there is no decent development without a healthy environment, and "In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have *common but differentiated responsibilities*. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit to sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command" (article 7).

In that conception, social relationships within and between States, between present and future generations should be controlled by an equity principle. Sustainable development appears as a more normative than analytic concept, with operational objectives gathered in the 40 chapters of Agenda 21.

There is [in Agenda 21] a theoretical foundation describing the relationship between man and nature; there are limited number of integrated guiding principles; there is a clear identification of problems to be solved and the actors who must take

responsibility for solving them; and there is a multifaceted and relatively specific agenda for change (Lafferty 1996:190).

In official documents concerning sustainable development (national strategies, local Agenda 21, sector-related programs), it is often surprising to note that specific issues, whether local or sector-oriented, often take priority over the basic principle of global equity and also over global environmental constraints. The need to deal with global pollution is usually mentioned (while one questions how high its priority is ranked) whereas underdevelopment issues generally disappear, as does concern with future generations.

The main reason for that shortfall is that whereas sustainable development is primarily the affirmation of a global project, it is also a method for approaching environment and development relationships. Specificity lies in an assessment of environmental and social externalities, and in a stress put on long term prospects. This attractive method can be implemented not only on a global scale, but also on local, issue-specific scale, sometimes seeming very distant from the general issues of the Rio Conference : specific stakes of a community, or long term profitability of the tourism sector, for instance. The divergence with initial objectives of sustainable development occurs when these *internal* concerns exceed *external* constraints and global concerns : tourism no longer questions its contribution to global warming, or its ability to foster the development of Southern countries. This progressive divergence of point of views explains that stakeholders believe they share common concerns, while this is not the case. Although sustainable development ultimately makes sense on a global scale, currently in most circumstances, each category of stakeholders assesses it relatively to its own objectives and priorities.

It is far from clear that the Agenda 21 project is, has ever been, or could ever be a truly common preoccupation and priority. This difficulty no doubt helps to explain the dilemmas discussed above. However, given the apparent consensus about the Brundtland report and Agenda 21 in academic and technical productions of knowledge regarding sustainable tourism development, these ironies and challenges merit some clarification with respect to their implications for tourism.

Global ethics ?

Rio was, as expected, a forum in which the reference to morals was broader than in other international conferences (Antoine, Barrère and al. 1994:15, personal translation).

William Lafferty sees within Agenda 21 a pragmatic and a realistic inspiration on the one hand, and a consensual inspiration on the other. The former comes from the growing scientific consensus about global threats, such as the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer depletion, biodiversity loss or desertification for instance (all these issues are contained in corresponding international conventions). The latter is a consequence of the democratic consensus expressed in Rio and extended to other levels (i.e. the Maastricht treaty or the Action Program of the European Union). The stronger the democratic consensus is, the stronger the call for ethics is. These two inspirations show once again the very pragmatic nature of ethics, as an attempt to rationalize a collective action in a specific context. "A foundation has been laid which ideological purists may reject, and cynical politicians exploit, but which normative pragmatism can and should work with (Lafferty 1996:190)." According to Lafferty, scientists can take part in the translation of this project into local or sector-related

objectives compatible with global constraints, but their task is also to point out the diverging points of views about sustainable development so as to clarify their implications.

Questioning tourism through sustainable development.

Although neither the Agenda 21 nor the Brundtland report refer explicitly to tourism, its recommendations and objectives pertain to this activity.

The first global issue is the impact of tourism on energy consumption, atmospheric pollution, and the emission of greenhouse gas. Following Agenda 21, tourism managers must consider the contribution of their activity to the growing mobility of modern societies, and consequently its contribution to the emissions of Greenhouse gas and global warming. In its recent publication "Tourisme, Environnement, Territoires : les indicateurs (Rechatin, et al. 2000)", the French Institute for the Environment estimated that the transportation of domestic and international tourists visiting France contributed within a range from 7 to 8 percent of the total amount of French emissions. That contribution estimate minimal, given that one might, for greater accuracy, add the emissions from tourism-related accommodation, equipment, and indirect emissions (such as merchandise delivery...). Forecasts show a growing contribution of tourism to these emissions, mainly due to the growth of international tourism. France committed itself, according to the Kyoto protocol, to stabilise its emissions to their level in 1990. Therefore, transports could reveal a major gap between tourism and sustainability, given the numerous environmental problems linked to their development : greenhouse effect, use of non renewable fossil energy sources, air pollution, noise, fragmentation of natural habitats. According to a recent OECD report (2000), air transport is likely to exceed road transport in its contribution to global warming from 2010 to 2040. On the other hand, the consequences of global warming on tourism have been recently studied : modification of

climatic amenities (lack of snow, excess heat in some sunny areas), beach erosion, coral bleaching and health risks (malaria) have been pointed out (Ceron 1999).

A second question is whether tourism can foster development in Southern countries, in the context of a global market dominated by northern operators, and in which tourists travel mainly between developed countries. Further exploring the relationships between tourism and economic development would be beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is clear that the domination of the global market by Northern operators underlines their responsibility for pollution, and introduces questions regarding measures which could bridge the gap between developed and developing countries. At stake are transfer of technologies (article 9 of the Rio declaration) like Internet or Global Distribution Systems (GDS), the impact of transnational corporations in the developing world, transfer of knowledge and know-how to SMEs, or deregulation and free trade (GATT) consequences on competitive conditions between destinations.

FINDINGS

Philosophical Orientations and Role of Interest Groups in the Elaboration of Ethical Instruments

First, as expected, ethical instruments are quite diverse. The main explanation of this diversity arises from the different developmental trajectories of the parties involved. After a period during which documents focused primarily on the responsibility of states, more recent and current approaches aim at corporate business and local destinations, with a growing prominence of NGO's (like *WWF*, *Tourism concern*, *Tourism for Development* or *Groupe Developpement* in France). Contrary to what occurs in an economic sector like agriculture or energy, the ethical debates in tourism emerge principally from the business sector and the civil society. This situation can be explained by the very late recognition of tourism as the "first global industry", despite its vast associated impacts on communities and their environments.

The ethical inspiration of the documents is a mix of several distinct driving forces.

- Business operators, who are looking forward to internal rules for their activity, to market new products or to manage their corporate image. Another argument for a growing concern on the part of the business sector, especially of the transnational corporations, is the environmental awareness of consumers and host communities, which leads operators to adopt proactive instruments. These initiatives are obviously related to various pressures : as a Go and Haywood report (1990, quoted by Hultsman) a general growth of interest in tourism marketing has coincided with a commensurate expansion of concern about the negative effects -

social, environmental, economic, cultural- and of attempts to generate tourist traffic through marketing.

- The international conservation movement, which refers to NGOs and associations involved in nature conservation, sometimes blamed for not paying attention enough to human communities. Raphaël and Catherine Larrère (1997) relate their philosophy to North-American Puritanism (a moral imperative to preserve the remains of original Nature). These groups carry a negative perception of tourism and usually show a strong scepticism about its positive impacts. However, their recent involvement in the field of tourism is real (see, for instance, WWF's works about tourism and biodiversity), even if it's qualified with a great deal of caution. These organisations often campaign for a nature-based tourism, or ecotourism, likely to provide funds and justification for nature conservation. Therefore, they are not interested in tourism in and of itself, but as a means to protect species as well as natural habitats. International conservation movements share a stake in the management of tourism in protected areas.

- The environmentalist movement, which is historically more related to various social movements in the developing world than the previous ones (see for example the Third World Network, and its opinion on tourism : <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>). Such movements seek ways of harmonizing environment and development, since the Stockholm conference (1971), and have contributed to the idea of "écodeveloppement"(Sachs 1981) and to the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (Godard 1994). Among the many issues taken up by environmentalists, a few stand out: the search for an alternative to

liberalism, and more broadly speaking a search for societal and environmental criteria or choices rather than economic criteria, often accompanied by a willingness to let local societies control their development (and their tourism development). Economic benefits of tourism in the Third World are generally regarded by members of such movements with strong scepticism.

Environmentalists share with many anthropologists of tourism a denunciation of the destruction of host communities by tourism. In effect, most of the ethical implications of sustainable development are rooted in this movement, even if the most radical point of views can coexist with the most pragmatic ones.

- A more specific, and fragmented but increasingly integrated movement, or set of circumstances that connect those defined as “indigenous peoples” also present a stake in tourism management. This concerns countries whose native people suffered from occidental colonisation. In New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, the revival of indigenous cultures deeply influences the ethical pronouncements of the tourism sector, particularly since, under Agenda 21, Indigenous Peoples are considered a "Major Group". This involvement of indigenous people can concretely take surprising forms, such as the allowance to engage in the operation of gambling casinos, as a particularly lucrative form of tourism. See for example : *New Zealand principles for the tourism industry; Australian Tourism Industry Association: Code of environmental practices; Africa Travel Association : Manifesto.*

Among these movements, a major differentiation rests on the scale of the various parties' actions. Among NGO's for instance, WWF or Tourism Concern have a world wide presence

and action, whereas others are much more local, and will insist on themes such as tourist behaviour towards host communities, share of tourist benefits with local population. The environment will also be approached from a local perspective: tourism shouldn't threaten the resources upon which everyday life of the host population is based. Often, in the ensuing competition for resources, claims to tourist revenues are made on the basis of duration of residency in the area. Such tensions are a major detriment to tourism's contributions in developing countries, where it may be perceived as creating virulent local conflicts despite positive impacts on regional or national economies. Studies of such highly localised tourism related conflicts can increasingly be found in academic research, sometimes pushing the argument so far as to preclude any possibility of constructive engagement with tourism for improved outcomes (Place 1998). Yet the phenomenon of increased autonomy for local level associations in the developing world, and their increasing hostility toward Northern environmentalists, is worthy of note. It increasingly leads to denial of the right of Northern countries to impose their environmental norms on Southern countries, since the major contributors to global pollution are developed countries.

In practice, recent initiatives like eco labelling or certification evidence efforts at partnership between these different types of movements. Thanks to such partnerships, a business operator may establish previously unimaginable environmental legitimacy, or an NGO may bolster the efficiency of its campaign, through marketing and promotional abilities of an associated tour operator. In France, such cooperation between WWF and the *Fédération of Gîtes de France* (which organises self-catering accommodation and B&B in rural areas) led to the implementation of "Gîtes Panda" in protected areas. Meanwhile, independent hotels found it advantageous to join the brand "Hôtels au naturel", and benefited from the promotion and selling forces of the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks (the brand "natural parks")

is especially attractive for tourists). The environmental code of conduct for tourist of the *Guide du Routard* was also elaborated with the input of WWF-France.

Towards a Common Future for the Tourism Sector ?

No doubt more synergies such as those described above will emerge; the question is whether the conservationist and commercial types are most likely to form partnerships that contribute to the hostility and alienation of more environmentalist and indigenous factions. The assertion according to which “As theses [ethical] discourses continue and nourish one another, it is natural to anticipate the emergence of a common ground of ethics for tourism services (Hultsman 1995:555)” needs to be tested with empirical research. The hypothesis that discourses are powerful enough to conciliate or to relegate interests within such complex conflicts remains under question.

The evolution of the ethics of tourism in a global forum: WTO

The evolution of WTO declarations was first analysed (Figure 2), from the Manila Declaration in 1980, to the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in 1999 (the selected declarations are exposed in the WTO Web site in a “Sustainable Development” chapter:

<http://www.world-tourism.org>).

Illustration 2 : Evolution of international declarations on tourism since 1980

	WTO, Manila Declaration on World Tourism, October, 10, 1980	WTO, The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document, August, 27, 1982	WTO, Tourism bill of rights and tourist code, Sofia, September, 26, 1985	WTO, The Hague Declaration on Tourism, April, 14, 1989	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999
Right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel					
Influence of tourism on host communities					
Social rights of tourism workers					
Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources					
Recognition of the economic role of tourism					
North/ South relationships and share of tourism benefits					

From no citation in the declaration (white), to strong citation (black)

Although the 90's obviously showed an evolution of the ethical debate -from a persistent claim for a recognition of the economic role of tourism and of the right to rest and leisure, to recent approaches more devoted to the social and environmental impacts of tourism- a more detailed analysis will point out contradictions within these ambitious objectives.

The affirmation of a right to rest and leisure as a factor of personal accomplishment (which implies, according to the authors of the Declarations themselves, that the development of transport should be encouraged) is constant since the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, as well as the recognition of the role of tourism in the World economy. The statement of a liberal base to tourism development is more recent, incrementally increasing, and culminates in the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, with numerous quotations: “[...] the world tourism industry as a whole has much to gain by operating in an environment that favours the market economy, private enterprise and free trade [...]”, “[...] sustainable tourism is by no means incompatible with the growing liberalisation of the conditions governing trade in services [...]” The objective is “to promote an equitable, responsible and sustainable world tourism order, whose benefits will be shared by all sectors of society in the context of an open and liberalised international economy.”

Concerning more qualitative social dimensions of tourism, only “social tourism” is mentioned in the *Manila Declaration*. The *Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code* adopted in Sofia in 1985 marked a turning point in taking into account host communities interests, especially through the denunciation of sex tourism and drug tourism. The reference to environmental concerns remained very elusive until the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. An inclination to denounce rather threats for tourism (wars, terrorism...), than negative impacts of tourism, except the most obvious ones, was noted (the only admitted limitations to

the development of tourism concern protected areas, the more general impact of tourists transportation on the environment are never mentioned...).

The more significant example is that the contribution of tourism to global warming through transportation related emissions (as mentioned above), or the role of tourism in developing countries, are never approached in WTO declarations. This is surprising, given the role of global forum to which the WTO aspires. Concerning greenhouse effect, one can notice contradictions: is the claim for a continuous growth of the tourism sector, in a barrier-free travel climate, compatible with the limitations of greenhouse gas caused by transportation ? Neither limits to tourism activity (except in protected areas, and with allusions to the ill-defined "carrying capacity" of destinations), nor promotion of environmentally friendly means of transportation are introduced (a preference given to train rather than planes or automobiles for regional trips, for instance, or to long holidays rather than to short trips, as expressed recently in European Commission working groups reflections on sustainable tourism (Secrétariat d'Etat au tourisme 2001)). Generally speaking, WTO seems reluctant to consider most of the issues that may threaten the liberal growth of tourism, which is somehow logical for an institution whose activity is primarily dedicated to the promotion of tourism. In that perspective, is WTO the most credible to discuss the implications of sustainable development for tourism ?

To conclude, WTO *Global Code of Ethics* is a considerable attempt to synthesize many different ethical concerns raised by tourism development. However, the synthesis conceals major contradictions : how to reconcile the promotion of mass transport and the limitations of global warming; free trade and liberalism with a more efficient regulatory practices that reflect our knowledge about environmental fragility and social stresses and their potential

serious consequences for security at various levels ? What about the increasingly disenchanted voices, all too rarely heard, from the developing world ? This attitude is very symptomatic of an internal sector-related attitude. WTO contributed to the recognition of the right to leisure and the place of tourism in the modern world; it will be just as indispensable in the future to tackle sustainable development problems insofar as they don't question tourism development (eco management of hotels...). However, will it be possible to compromise in discussion of collective issues, external issues, that might limit tourism's economic expansion ? Some of the most important issues seem to be revealed by these internal contradictions or meaningful silences in the existing formal literature on such topics.

Diverging points of view about the future of tourism

The second analysis that informs this paper used the same methods of content analysis but applied them to various instruments such as the ethical charter for travellers of a small tour operator, an ethical charter for tourism in protected areas, a green label for accommodation, the environmental plan of an international corporation, and selected international declarations on sustainable tourism. This comparison of ethical instruments underscores the diversity of projects, contents and stakeholders, and as such, divergent notions regarding the future of tourism.

Content differences, hence concepts of tourism practice, not only reflect the variation of projects and aims (see *supra*), but also what Colin Hunter (1997:852) calls the "adaptive nature" of sustainable tourism : "[...] different interpretations of sustainable development are appropriate under different circumstances", even if it is clear that the sustainability of tourism ultimately makes sense on a global scale. For example, focusing on economic aspects of sustainability rather than environmental or social concerns, or the opposite, depends *in fine*, on the characteristics of the region concerned. In protected areas, tourism will have to be

“Environment-led Tourism”, related to a strong interpretation of sustainability, whereas in a mature urban destination, it might be a “Tourism Imperative”, or “Product-led Tourism”. For definite territories, with particular types of critical natural capital, such as endangered species, tourism development might be excluded altogether (McKercher 1993). In our present study, it is thus not surprising that the *European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas* insists more on nature protection and biodiversity than other similar documents devoted to different places. The difference would be the same between a fragile host society, with a strong desire to prevent or be adequately compensated for the negative effects of tourism, and a society used to tourism.

However, these differences of approaches also show latent contradictions about “what tourism should be”. The existence of differentiated responsibilities of developed versus developing countries towards sustainable development, is raised in only one of the sources examined here: the *Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean*. It states that :

“In the last 30 years 80% of the tourism development has been concentrated in the Northwest of the Mediterranean. This creates two different starting points. In the more developed areas there is a need to restrict unlimited economic growth and to rehabilitate the natural and built environment. In the emerging tourism destinations it is essential that sustainable development initiatives are prepared that will prevent the deterioration of their resources and guarantee their continued viability in the future.

Neither the *Charter on Sustainable Tourism* nor the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* refer to this issue. Likewise, though global warming is an issue which has the potential to

challenge each category of stakeholders, and each category of place, the contribution of tourism to the greenhouse effect is raised only by two charters geared solely toward the accommodations sector: *The Environment Charter of the Hotelier* and the *Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group*. These omissions reveal potential conflicts surrounding the key issues of sustainable development applied to tourism.

Illustration 3 : comparison of main ethical categories for various instruments

	Atalante TO : Charter of Ethics for the Traveller, 1997	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment Charter of the Hotelier, 1999	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group, 1998	Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Right to rest and leisure, freedom to travel							
Influence of tourism on host communities							
Social rights of tourism workers							
Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources							
Recognition of the economic role of tourism							
North/ South relationships and share of tourism benefits							

Illustration 4 : detailed comparison of subcategories of the ‘Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources’ for various instruments.

Detailed approach of “Protection of the local and global environment, management of tourism resources” category	Atalante TO : Charter of Ethics for the Traveller, 1997	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment Charter of the Hotelier, 1999	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group, 1998	Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Waste management							
Water management							
Energy consumption							
Contribution to greenhouse effect							
Nature protection and biodiversity							
Landscapes							
Cultural heritage							
Impacts of transports on the environment							
Limitation of air or road traffic							
Limitation of construction							
Action on spatial and temporal concentration							
Limitation of tourism development when appropriate							

The same kind of analysis (unpublished) exists for other categories.

Future Governance for the Tourism Sector: The Implementation Gap

To summarise the challenges of the particular circumstances outlined above, we find that the type of regulation needed in the tourism sector depends on :

- the nature of the issue a given form of tourism has to face: for instance, greenhouse effect raises complex questions involving numerous stakeholders in various time-space scales; Water management by resorts is more local and supply-oriented;
- the regulatory context, deeply influenced by current circumstances of globalisation ;
- the organisation of tourism supply : whether the tourism supply is dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), major hierarchical corporations, or networks of independent operators based on voluntary agreements, the implementation process will vary according to the dominant type of supplier

While raising the social or environmental awareness of stakeholders can be considered a worthy objective in and of itself, without an agreement upon efficient mechanisms to induce action, otherwise, sustainable development will remain a simple catchphrase.

Identification of projects and stakeholders

Differences in the content of the documents studied reflect the wide variety of projects and stakeholders. A tour operator or a hotel chain which seeks to provide environmental guidelines with concrete targets and actions to its members will be necessarily less ambitious in its objectives than an international organisation (such as the Council of Europe, the Commission of Sustainable Development or WTO), whose purpose is to disseminate it's a more comprehensive global vision of "what tourism should be". Indeed, the latter are not

required to report their performance. As is oftentimes the case with policy, the more ambitious the objectives, the less specific the guidelines.

In particular, one can discern two distinct attitudes towards ethics of tourism, which produce two different approaches of the implementation process. On one hand, operators, or groups of operators, are attempting to govern their own activities (*Environment Plan of Accor Group, Environmental certification ISO 14001 of Center Parcs, International Tour Operators Initiative*), which depends, in theory, upon a strong commitment, and may facilitate rapid implementation. On the other hand, NGO's and other groups of actors, relying on various sources of legitimacy, seek to regulate other actors' activities, sometimes without submitting to assessments of their own activity. The *Charter of Ethics for Tourism and the Environment* of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, claims the tourists, the states, the national authorities, and the tour operators, to be active in the protection of natural and built heritage, without taking into account the contribution of automobile emissions to greenhouse effects, or other relevant environmental issues.

The majority of the projects can be classified into the following categories

- Codes of conduct within a particular profession. The logic is sector-oriented: while environmental concerns may be addressed, environmental issues oftentimes remain secondary item to the profit motive. For example, the *Business Charter for Sustainable Development* of the International Chamber of Commerce conveys support for the idea of sustainable development, but not at the expense of economic growth and profits. On this particular point, the *Global Code of Ethics* of WTO, or *The Canadian Code of Ethics* adopt the same perspective. The chief priorities are relationships with consumers, innovation, the

environment. Internal rules (proper to the activity concerned) usually supersede external rules (relevant to broader communities or development issues).

- Environmental codes of conduct for operators, which focus on particular aspects of the environment such as water or air quality management, waste (*The World Travel & Tourism Council's Environmental Guideline ; Charter for Environmental Action in the International Hotel and Catering Industry*), or biodiversity (*Ecotourism Guidelines*).

- Integrated instruments relating to sustainable tourism which attempt to combine social, economic and environmental concerns into a unique, comprehensive document (*Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* of WTO, *Finnish Tourist Board Charter*, *WWF Tourism Concern Principles for Sustainable Tourism*, the *Code for Environmentally Responsible Tourism* of the Pacific Asia Travel Association).

- Codes of conduct and Charters aimed at influencing the behaviour of the tourists who visit the destinations. The selected themes concern the attitude of tourists towards local environment and host communities, with a strong concern for sex tourism as it can appear even in the guise of other tourism forms (*Ten Commandments on Ecotourism* of the American Society of Travel Agents, *20 Tips for Visitors* of the English Tourist Board, *Environmental Tips World Trips* of the American Automobile Association, *Charte éthique du Voyageur* of the tour-operator Atalante).

- A more anecdotal category attempts to inform and educate resident populations of tourist destinations as to the adequate attitude towards tourists. Residents of host communities are to smile, treat fairly and not exploit the visitors, keep their homes clean, etc.(see for instance, the *Mauritian Code of Ethics for Tourism : for Mauritians*, Government of Mauritius).

In addition to the emergence of a diverse array of the projects, we have observed in recent years an evolution of the type of stakeholder involved, or supposed to be so, in sustainable tourism development. Since 1980, host communities, tourists, civil society (NGO's, trade unions), and tourist operators (oddly enough, for surely they have always been implicated) have all become progressively better recognised as major actors in international arenas.

Trade unions are identified as a major group under Agenda 21; their recognition testifies to the fact that more attention is being paid to human resources in the current tourism development, in a sector characterised by low skill and low paid labour force. After mass-tourism marketing and the appearance on the scene of a more flexible and autonomous "new tourist" (Vanhove 1996), the tourism sector acknowledged it was time to take into consideration not only the needs of tourists, but also their rights and duties. The emergence of globalisation (Go 1996), and with it the consolidation of tour operators, accommodation suppliers and travel agencies (most trying to avoid national legislation and its implicit limits to economic growth), necessitated the inclusion of these key stakeholders in the policymaking process.

Illustration 5 : stakeholders pointed out in the international declarations on tourism since 1980

	WTO, Manila Declaration on World Tourism, October, 10, 1980	WTO, The World Tourist Meeting : Acapulco Document, August, 27, 1982	WTO, Tourism bill of rights and tourist code, Sofia, September, 26, 1985	WTO, The Hague Declaration on Tourism, April, 14, 1989	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999
Governments					
Local communities					
Host communities					
Tourist operators					
Tourists					
Civil society					

The implementation process

The key point of our study of ethics-focused instruments in the tourism sector appeared to be the efficiency (or lack thereof, as is oftentimes the case) of the implementation process.

Current implementation guidelines gives good indications of the potential pitfalls and possibilities for future governance of the tourism sector. Figure 7 compares three elements: ambition in objectives (which, as defined in the previous content analysis, assumes that the more numerous the ethical items taken into account by the instrument, the more ambitious it is considered), the content of the implementation process, and the strength of enforcement/compliance mechanisms vis-à-vis intended target actors.

A wide range of follow up mechanisms exist, embodying an important contrast between those most ambitious and least able to implement and enforce, and those least ambitious, but more able to implement and enforce measures. An example of the former, is the WTO, which has limited means to implement its Global Code of Ethics, in spite of the creation of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics, of a Protocol for implementing the Code, and of a complicated Conciliation mechanism for the settlement of disputes. An example of the latter is the Accor Group, which can easily convince hoteliers members of the company to implement its Environment Action Plan. Probably conscious that the implementation of the Charter could be checked by customers, the Accor group recommends that its members not communicate about the charter to customers unless 10 out of 15 key actions of the charter are implemented. Between these extreme positions, partnership appears to be more efficient as an encouragement of environmentally sound practices. The French Federation of Nature Parks, for example, provides expertise, promotion campaigns, and authorises the use of its trademark to hotels involved in the ambitious, strongly controlled “Hôtels au Naturel” program. In this way, the implementation of an environmentally friendly tourism is made

possible by the existence of a common interest between the Natural Park and private sector entrepreneurs.

Illustration 6: Implementation process of various instruments

	Atalante TO Charter of Ethics for the Traveller, 1997	European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, definitive version, June 1998	WTO, Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, October, 1, 1999	ACCOR: The Environment t. Charter of the Hotelier 1999	Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France : Charter of Adhesion to the "Hôtels au Naturel" Group, 1998	Calvia Declaration on Tourism and Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, April, 19, 1997	Charter on Sustainable Tourism, Lanzarote, April, 28, 1995
Ambition in objectives							
Implementation process	Diffusion of the Charter to 80 000 copies. Partnerships (Lonely planet...)	Adhesion of pilot parks, reporting	Protocol of implementation, World Committee on Tourism Ethics, Conciliation mechanism on a voluntary agreement	Progressive in hotels (2600 members for the group). Annual reporting at the group level	Voluntary adhesion to the charter. Voluntary group (11 hotels in 2000)	No process	No process
Capacity to enforce	Very weak	Medium (the park places its competence and resources to the disposal of operators). Operators commit themselves by signing the Charter	Weak (voluntary agreement with low incentive)	Strong (hotel chain, with command and control decision process)	Medium. No compulsory adhesion. In case of adhesion, annual control, satisfaction inquiries of customers. Commercial argument : hotels promotion compensate environmental commitment.	Very weak	Very weak

The "ambition in objectives" category is deduced from the content analysis, as explained before.

Self regulation versus traditional regulation ?

Agenda 21 advocates the enforcement of self-regulation, alongside more traditional regulation forms :

Business and industry, including transnational corporations, should ensure responsible and ethical management of products and processes [...]. Towards this end, business and industry should *increase self-regulation* [...] (Agenda 21, chapter 30.26).

Such calls for self-regulation can be observed both in practice and in academic research on sustainable tourism. For instance, tourism expert Victor Middleton's approach (Middleton 1998), explicitly calls for self-regulation of the tourism sector:

[...] there is an increasing recognition that forms of self regulation through voluntary initiatives by commercial enterprises will be a vital element of any successful development and implementation of more sustainable practices. (Middleton and Sieber 1999:35).

In the existing bulk of publications pertaining to sustainable tourism, however, one can hardly discern a shift of these regulatory powers towards sustainability. And indeed, at this time, the tourism sector's response to Sustainable Development is principally comprised of self-regulation initiatives and rhetoric.

This situation raises several crucial questions:

- Issues which are not relevant or perceptible at the level of the corporation, nor at the local level, which are privileged levels of self-regulation initiatives, might be overlooked or neglected.

For instance, the assessment of spatial and seasonal tourist concentrations, imperceptible at local levels, must also be addressed and dealt with at a national level since they are both determined by the strategies of the larger operators. Additionally, they determine public transport policies and their impacts on the environment. The implementation of the right to rest and leisure also calls for national solidarity mechanisms (aid for construction of popular resorts or for the departure of undertraveled individuals); these concerns are quite distant from those of tourist resort managers and shareholders. The same applies not just to national level phenomena, but to broader ones, such as taking into account the impact of tourism on global warming.

- On the other hand, once the stakes are clearly identified, it must be clear that approaches focusing on stakeholders and the territories are fully legitimate. But identifying the stakes often requires a national evaluation process (Ceron and Dubois 2001), and probably an ethical debate about the future of tourism at national and global levels.

The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol on reduction of greenhouse gas illustrates that emerging issues have already begun to influence tourism development. For instance, the possibility of a future tax on kerosene for airplanes might change the competitive conditions between current tourist destinations. However, the tourism industry and national governments have yet to tackle really the issue. Many of the documents analysed in this study are quite removed, as yet, from the initial objectives of sustainability, as defined in the Rio protocols. They concentrate largely on specific problems, without paying attention to global concerns, which appears to be a minimum requirement for Sustainable Development.

So, who might be the main participants of future sustainable development policies for tourism? Linking the problem of implementation with sustainability, three possible levels of regulation of the tourism sector appear :

- Win-win strategies, in which companies, thanks to monitoring, evaluation and a better organisation, can find short term advantages in acting for environmental or social purposes, i.e. for cost savings in energy, water consumption, sewage disposal, staff motivation. . . . At present major operators appear as the most efficient actors in the implementation process, but are unwilling to undergo objective assessment of their own activity. Will Accor or Club Med revise their global strategies, will they move away from the most overdeveloped areas, forsake profits in order to diminish spatial concentrations of tourism which are harmful to the environment ? Will they willingly move away from the coastline, to avoid contributing to coastal erosion or coral bleaching (Furley, Hughes and al. 1996), given the powerful attractiveness of the sea for tourists ? Will European hoteliers stop settling in suburban areas, and begin locating their infrastructure in proximity to public means of transportation? Will TUI (the first European TO) question its spatial settlement to limit greenhouse gas emissions or to contribute more to development of Southern Countries, despite the competition it must face ? Not without substantial incentives; perhaps not then.

- To go further, the growing success of partnerships between the business sector and credible environmental or social groups (like NGO's: WWF for biodiversity or EPCAT for Child Sex Tourism), which aim to strike a balance between a marketing advantage and an environmental or social action, has to be underlined.

These mixed solutions seem to favour networks, voluntary chains of suppliers, which have the capacity to combine diversity of approaches (especially in marketing), and collective force, for partnerships and the dissemination of knowledge. However, these partnerships will not amount to a very strong movement unless environmental partners have enough influence : communication and bargaining power, public support, marketing force through their trademarks, and the existence of legally binding instruments if no voluntary agreements are established.

- More controversial issues do not appear to be solved by a self-regulation of the tourism sector and should be part of a wider political debate on tourism and its consequences. Such issues include global warming, technology transfers for Southern countries (Internet, GDS), impacts of free trade and liberalisation of services on the environment and on developing countries. With these types of contentious issues, specific national policies and regulation, are oftentimes missing. Even if self-regulation will provide improvements towards sustainability, governments should be more active participants. In any event, the only way to have ethical concerns widely accepted and implemented is to have them discussed in political forums (Godard 1999).

CONCLUSION

Sustainable Tourism Development: Consensual or Contested Process ?

This survey offers an initial critical overview of complicated recent ethical debates about tourism. It reveals divergent opinions, often overwhelmed in the effort to act upon ethical assertions by the number of initiatives, and therefore underscores the need for comparative studies. The process of seeking conscious or unconscious omissions while exploring the contradictions within the content of the codes revealed the deeper complexities beyond the surface of the apparent consensus.

It our intention that this work may serve to assist tourism operators in finding their own way given the numerous (and multiplying) ethical approaches which have been discussed. Critical examination of current instruments and practices provide criteria to evaluate compliance with sustainable development and contribute to the development of more efficient instruments in the field of eco-labelling and certification processes. Such a limited contribution seems all the more crucial given that beyond the horizon of environmental and social awareness these instruments make possible, the efficiency of implementation appeared quite low.

But the lack of consensual, coordinated actions at this time should not be taken only as a failing. Rather, it can be seen as raising one common question: instead of appearing as a way to obtain consensus, shouldn't sustainable development be considered as a way to explore the contradictions between differing visions of tourism (Theys 1999) ? The implementation of sustainable development depends on the awareness of the issues, on the agreement about appropriate organisations to solve these problems, but also on the priority our societies will

grant to global constraints, to future generations, and to the economic development of certain sectors and countries. What is really at stake is a democratic debate and a political struggle to critically engage and socially expand the global ethics initiated by the Rio conference, and to translate that engagement and expansion into actions.

Applied and academic research on tourism must be willing, and increasingly able to tackle the sorts of multi-scale analyses of emerging tourism governance that can constructively inform such discussion. A combination of theoretical work, regarding sustainable development assessment, and methodological approaches, especially about the analysis of social and political discourses and arguments in the field of tourism, might inform further, broader research.

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