

Business Ethics and Sustainability on Tourism: Assessing the Offer, the Demand and the Innovations

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Abstract *The paper analyzes the interdependence between business ethics and sustainability applied on tourism. First, it outlines the general framework, sustainability and holistic ethics, developed further in theory and practical examples. The main objective is to realize an analyses of the collected data from the ethical perspective: the magnitude of tourism' industry today and its trends which endanger or could aid durability; the frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism: the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; the main characteristics, on multiple faces, of the sustainable tourism; innovations in sustainable tourism; the demand's assessment for ethical consumption on tourism – all of this based on documentation, statistic data, chronological surveys in order to outline the development's tendencies of the territory where business ethics, sustainability and tourism join. And the junction (when it happens) starts first in one's mind as its core values, emerging his attitude and behavior and those of other related individuals to smalls group, wider communities, a global net. This potential radiation is the reason why this paper argumentatively pledges towards values as sustainability, cooperation, altruism, equity.*

Key words *business ethics, sustainability, tourism, education*

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Introduction

Why connecting Business Ethics, Sustainability and Tourism? Many years ago, the idea of the "Earth spaceship" made me see in a new light that we are ceaselessly traveling through the Univers, on the same route, indeed, but with a floating potential of food, water, oxygen, energy. We, the passengers, have to cope with the remaining supplies while the number of people on board and the amount of waste increase and the quality of the breathing air deteriorates. Some people on the ship are already in panic and prophecy the forthcoming death by suffocation, by thirst, starvation, freezing or other natural catastrophe – while others ignore them and continue to exploit the remaining reserves without measure, because on long term "we're all dead."

Due to this difference between mentalities and values, translated into opposite attitudes and behaviors, the environmental sustainability of the global economy has become a global, a local and an individual challenge ("think global, act local"). That is why this paper analyzes the interdependence between business ethics and sustainability applied on tourism, the latter being a worldwide export category which nowadays ranks fifth after fuels, chemicals, food and automotive products (while ranking first in many developing countries).

From the beginning, the paper outlines the general framework, *sustainability and holistic ethics*, developed further in theory and practical examples. The main objective is to realize an analyses of the collected data from the ethical perspective: the magnitude of tourism industry today and its trends which endangers or aids durability; the frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism: the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism; the main characteristics, on multiple faces, of the sustainable tourism; innovations in sustainable tourism; the demand's assessment for ethical consumption on tourism – all of this based on documentation, statistic data, chronological surveys in order to outline the development's tendencies of the territory where business ethics, sustainability and tourism join. And the junction (when it happens) starts first in one's mind as its core values, emerging his attitude and behavior and those of other

related individuals to small groups, wider communities, a global net. This potential radiation is the reason why this paper argumentatively pledges towards values as sustainability, cooperation, altruism, equity. Finally, the reader is invited to reflect, as Socrates once... do I *really* need all the things that I'm buying? including luxurious cruises or "ultra" all-inclusive vacations in a dream hotel-resort. Is there a deeper unsatisfied need behind my (type of) consumption? Can I be and do more?

Research framework: sustainability and holistic ethics – in theory and praxis

Since 1972, the Club of Rome's first report, "The Limits to Growth", coordinated by professor D. Meadows, outlighted the strong conflict between the industrial civilization and nature, noting the depletion's trend regarding the natural energy resources, raw materials and food, the consumption of those which are renewable at a higher rate than their regenerative capacity and the physical damage and pollution of the environment (water, air, soil). "Criticised at the time, there is now an emerging consensus that not only are there limits *to* growth but indeed there are limits *of* growth in terms of what it can deliver in social, ecological, equitable and individual outcomes" (www.clubofrome.org). Forty years later, on May 9, 2012, the same Club of Rome launched the report of professor J. Randers "2052 – A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years"; based on painstaking research and drawing on contributions from more than 30 thinkers in the field, he gives combining data, integrating hard science with an understanding of human nature (its systems and intuitions), raising the possibility that humankind might not survive on the planet if it continues on *over-consumption* and *short-termism* (the excessively short-term predominant political and economic model) and mainly concluding that: 1. the process of adapting humanity to the planet's limitations may be too slow to stop planetary decline (currently the human demand on the biosphere exceeds the global bio-capacity by some 40%); 2. the current dominant global economies, particularly the United States, will stagnate, while Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and ten leading emerging economies will progress, China will be successful, but there will still be 3 billion poor in 2052; 3. the global population will peak in 2042, because of falling fertility in urban areas; 4. the global GDP (gross domestic product) will grow much slower because of slower productivity growth in mature economies and lack of take-off in almost 190 poorer countries as society is gradually forced to handle issues of depletion, pollution, biodiversity decline, climate change, inequity – slowing growth in consumption growth will slow, with fall in disposable income in some places; 5. global energy use will reach a peak in 2040, because of continued increase in energy efficiency; 6. as CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere will continue to grow causing +2°C in 2052 and +2.8°C in 2080, the global warming could be the trigger for a possible collapse in the second half of the 21st century.

So, 40 years after the Club of Rome's first warning, the present path of the humanity's systems (doing "business-as usual", based on short-termism), very resilient toward real change, remains a malign one, and another kind of future need another kind of values underlying society and economy, centered on equity and sustainability.

Sustainability means the long-term maintenance of the functional capacity of the interconnected and complementary systems of our contemporary society, taking into consideration "the triple bottom line" (*environmental, economic and social*) extremely difficult to reconcile (Elkington J., *Cannibals with Forks* apud Crăciun, Morar, Macovicuic 2005). This involves strategic intervention in the markets, values, transparency, technology cycles, forms of partnership, time management and corporations' leadership - asking revolutionary changes regarding the way that companies act in businesses, aiming to take into account the long-term interests of certain broad and diverse categories of stakeholders (Grober, U., 2001). *Sustainability is pre-conditioned by moral, which generate attitudes and behaviors more accurate and cooperative.*

In the *environment*, the exploitation and environmental degradation are caused by multiple complex and interrelated factors: legislation very permissive, low level of technological competence and awareness of the dangers to which the local population is exposed, the high cost of clean technologies etc.

Economically, sustainability and business ethics require new forms of governance that take more into account the nature as a production factor and it is difficult to specify them in a (global) market economy which operate decentralized, even if at international level there are set steps on the path of sustainable development. The market failures occur on collective goods, such as environment, over which there is not exclusiveness; placing the environmental goods outside the market allow the emergence of

social costs generated by organizations that adopt the behavior of the "clandestine passenger" and together, *the natural and social costs*, lower the level of satisfaction and wellbeing of indigenous communities.

Socially, the changes related to the principle and praxis of equity in distribution implies the availability of the society, of the economy and of everyone to accept these changes in our production and consumption behavior, and even in our lifestyle: 1. the firstly affected is the distribution of development opportunities within the complex north-south; 2. how well will be tolerate within society an ecological modernization, with no guarantee that the possibilities of life, work and consumption will be rightly distributed?; 3. the "distributive inter-generational equity", respectively the interests of future generations, should be considered in *nowadays* distribution of opportunities.

In *politics*, the current short-term programs (depending on the success in the elections and oriented to higher living standards for the simple reason to secure power) are incompatible with sustainability. New values, orientations and lifestyles cannot be regulated on political and administrative level, but an increased, aware and responsible participation of the citizens (interconnected through social dialogue which brings together political representatives, individuals, groups, associations engaged to link the personal interests with the community's interest) and the education for sustainable development (linking civic education, environmental education, health education) are the sine qua non condition for durability, due to the fact that these all generate structural, institutional and financial consequences (Zilleßen,H., 1998).

Methodology of research

This paper is the result of the bibliographic and interdisciplinary study on three related topics/ concepts: business ethics, sustainability and sustainable tourism.

The sources I selected vary by multiple criteria: 1. the topic's profile: the key-words are representative for distinct field of discursive knowledge, but their area is interconnected in everyday use; more, one's practical choices and actions on this matters determine the quality of his life, and one's life is linked, more or less, with other's lives; 2. the information's source: books, articles, official webpages of international representative institutions for sustainability and tourism (e.g. UNWTO); 3.the relevance of the studied material: I searched for eloquent books and articles of Romanian and from abroad professors rated highly in the Business Ethics' field, and other writers, authors specialized on the topics mentioned above.

The main methods used in the paper's elaboration are: documentation, a critical data's analysis (data comparison), written discourse, explanation, questioning, exemplification.

Results and discussion

1. The magnitude of tourism industry nowadays (inbound and outbound tourism)

Currently, international tourism (travel and passenger transport) accounts for 29% of the world's exports of services and 6% of overall exports of goods and services. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks fifth after fuels, chemicals, food and automotive products, while ranking first in many developing countries (<http://media.unwto.org>). Since 1998 it ranks prevalently through export industries.

A press release of UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) shows that total export earnings generated by international tourism in **2013** reached US\$ 1.4 trillion (or US\$ 3.8 billion a day, on average). Receipts earned by destinations (the travel credit item in the Balance of Payments) from international visitors grew by 5% to reach US\$ 1159 billion, while an additional US\$ 218 billion was earned by international passenger transport¹. In absolute terms, receipts in destinations around the world increased

¹ According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, receipts in destinations worldwide from expenditure by international visitors on accommodation, food and drink, entertainment, shopping and other services and goods, reached an estimated US\$ 1159 billion (euro 873 billion) in 2013. Growth exceeded the long-term trend, reaching 5% in real terms (taking into account exchange rate fluctuations and inflation). The growth rate in receipts matched the increase in international tourist arrivals, also up by 5%, reaching 1087 million in 2013, from 1035 million in 2012.

by US\$ 81 billion (euro 34 billion, comparatively less due to the depreciation of the dollar) from US\$ 1078 billion (euro 839 billion) in 2012 (figure 1).

Asia and the Pacific is the fastest growing region, while Europe takes biggest share. Europe, which accounts for 42% of all international tourism receipts, saw the biggest growth in 2013: up US\$ 35 billion to US\$ 489 billion (euro 368 billion (bn)). Destinations in Asia and the Pacific (accounting for 31% of all tourism receipts) increased earnings by US\$ 30 billion to US\$ 359 billion (euro 270 bn). In the Americas (20% share), receipts increased by US\$ 16 billion to a total of US\$ 229 billion (euro 173 bn). In the Middle East (4% share) total tourism receipts are estimated at US\$ 47 billion (euro 36 bn) and in Africa (3% share) at US\$ 34 billion (euro 26 bn).

In relative terms, Asia and the Pacific (+8%) recorded the largest increase in receipts, followed by the Americas (+6%) and Europe (+4%).

Among the *top ten tourism destinations by receipts*, Asian destinations Thailand (+23%), Hong Kong (China) and Macao (China) (both +18%) saw strong growth, while the United Kingdom (+13%) and the United States (+11%) also posted double-digit increases. Receipts in Spain, France, China, Italy and Germany grew between 1% and 5%.

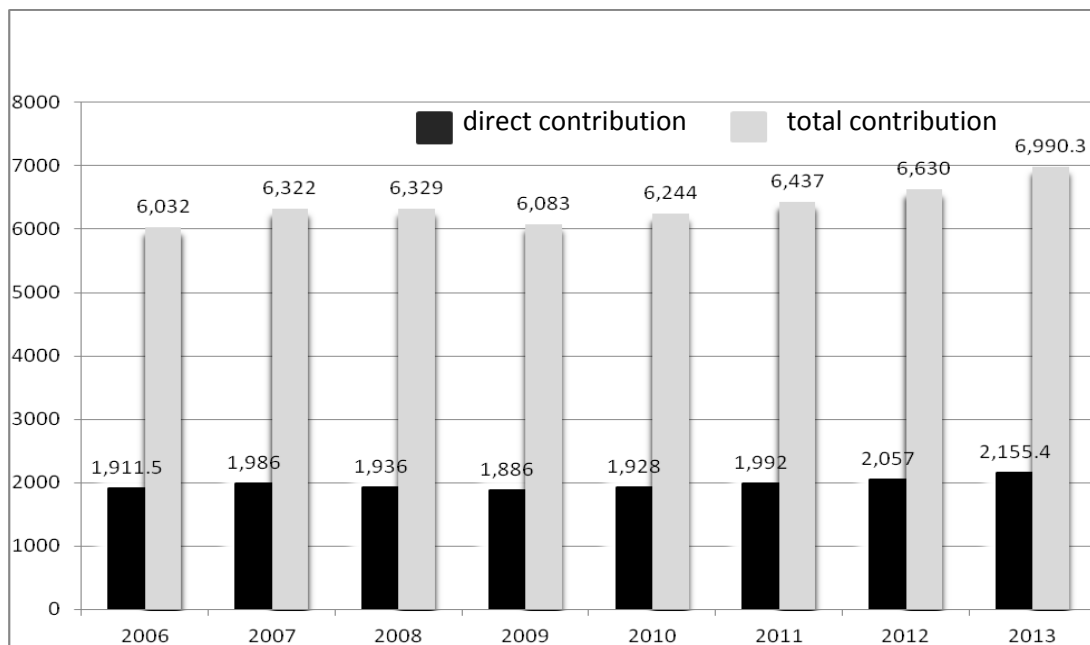


Fig. 1 Direct and total contribution of travel & tourism to the global economy from 2006 to 2013 (in billion US dollars)

(data processed from www.statista.com)

China, Russia and Brazil account for half the world's increase in tourism expenditure. The emerging economies of China, Russia and Brazil have been dynamic drivers of outbound tourism in recent years. In 2013, these three source markets accounted for some US\$ 40 billion of the total US\$ 81 billion increase in international tourism expenditure. China, which became the largest outbound market in 2012 with an expenditure of US\$ 102 billion, saw an increase of 26% in spending last year to a total of US\$ 129 billion. The Russian Federation became the fourth largest outbound market in 2013, following a 25% growth to US\$ 54 billion. Brazil entered the top ten by expenditure at tenth place, on the back of a 13% increase to US\$ 25 billion.

The performance of key advanced economy source markets was comparatively more modest, with the exception of Australia which spent 9% more. France (+5%) recovered from a weak 2012, whereas the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada increased expenditure by between 2% and 4%. UNWTO forecasts a growth in international tourist arrivals of between 4% and 4.5% in 2014 (figure 2).

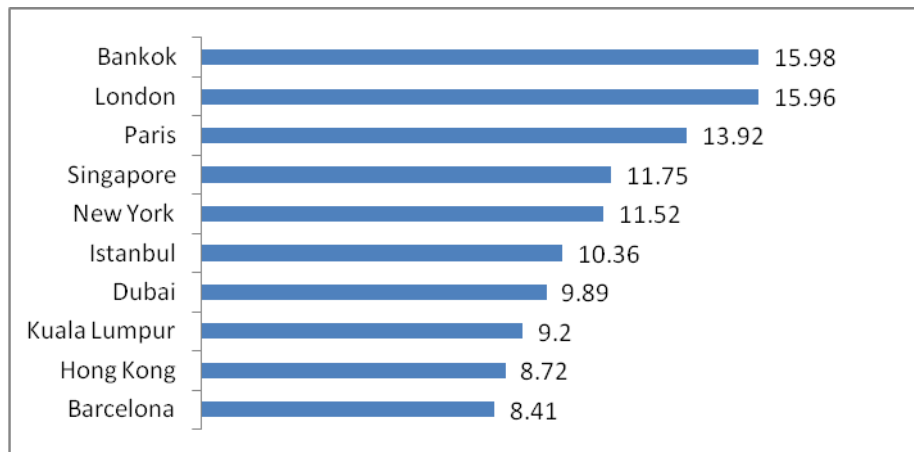


Fig. 2 Top destination cities by international overnight visitors in 2013 (in millions)
(data processed from [www. statista.com](http://www.statista.com))

2. Trends on tourism which imperil sustainability

Tourism, for over 15 years a worldwide export category which ranks first in many developing countries, is one of the first victims of the environment's degradation (floods, earthquakes, ski slopes without snow, polluted streams that are no longer usable etc.), but both is a sector that contributes to environmental degradation by people's transport, the construction of accommodation and access routes (all of this change the landscape, disrupt the ecosystem, generate pollution and waste), the overuse of drinking water or geothermal resources (with impact on flora and fauna in that area, possibly until the extinction of some species), the wood's alteration (by landslides, avalanches, overuse), some tourists' actions which can harm biodiversity (the destruction of natural habitat of species, the alteration of the ecological balance of the caves, hunting, the accidental introduction of alien species in an ecosystem, the waste's disposal and wastewater discharged directly into the environment), fishing and hunting vacation etc.

As tourism continues to grow globally, particularly in South East Asia, the growth of the tourism sector brings important development opportunities, but also immense challenges on local communities, affecting namely the most vulnerable groups of society (particular where this relates to exploitation, trafficking and abuse of children, e.g. the sexual exploitation of children in tourism in the Mekong sub-region (<http://media.unwto.org>)).

We note three trends on tourism, often correlated with negative effects on environmental conservation and on the socio-economic situation of developing countries (Suchanek, N., 2001):

1. the increase of travelling by plane – the intercontinental tourism increased between 1985 and 1996 by 73%. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assesses, in the report published in 1999 entitled "Aviation and the Global Atmosphere" that annual emissions from air transport, extremely harmful to the climate as the gas is emitted at high altitude, will increase by 3 %; other harmful factors: the noise, the materials with high energetic intensity used in the construction of an aircraft like aluminum, the building and expanding of the airports which often cause an overload of the target communities;

2. more and more all-inclusive vacations, fruitful for the touristic companies, involve *closed circuits* (except for brief trips outside the holiday villages, in buses with air conditioning), thus largely excluding local population from profit (most of the times even food is imported from industrialized countries);

3. more and more cruises on the same all-inclusive principle, in which the vessels usually halt for a day on a coast or on a third world tropical island, where locals usually keep the trash, because most part of the tourist expenditure (transport, accommodation and meals, even the souvenirs purchased on board) reaches into the pockets of international tourism companies. The economy of the dream islands and coastal regions of the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, South Sea or Indian Ocean, only benefit from the short trips, the snacks that tourists take, souvenir trade, prostitution and, the only significant source of income (if it is brought under regulation!), from taxes (tax for entrance, tax for port or tax "per capita"

tourist). Some companies that organize cruises extremely exploit the “dream islands” they bought or took on their own management (e.g. Salt Cay in the Bahamas)...so what about durability?

3. A frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism: Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) adopted in 1999 by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization and acknowledged by the United Nations two years later is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development. Addressed to governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike, it aims to help maximizing the sector’s benefits while minimizing its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe. The Code’s 10 principles cover the economic, social, cultural and environmental components of travel and tourism: 1. Tourism’s contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies; 2. Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment; 3. Tourism, a factor of sustainable development; 4. Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement; 5. Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities; 6. Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development; 7. Right to tourism; 8. Liberty of tourist movements; 9. Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry; 10. Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (<http://ethics.unwto.org>).

Even it is not legally binding, the Code features a voluntary implementation mechanism through its recognition of the role of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE), to which stakeholders may refer matters concerning the application and interpretation of the document. Significant progress on the implementation of the Code has resulted in 49 member States having already incorporated the Code into their legislative texts, while 48 countries have indicated that the principles are being used to guide the development of new national laws and regulations – so the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism has been instrumental in promoting and developing sustainable forms of tourism based upon ethical principles.

4. Sustainable tourism: the main traits on multiple faces

The *ecotourism*, within the sustainable tourism paradigm, is a part of the green economy aiming to satisfy the demand for public goods with a low impact on the environment by adapting to its characteristics and without incurring other fees, in some cases reducing the existing ones. Regarding the sustainable tourism it is equally important to protect the social and the cultural environment of the local communities through the tourist’s participation in the local activities by *adaptation* and *integration*. By promoting *natural tourism*, *cultural tourism*, *“soft adventure” tourism* there are highlighted the local traditions and customs without disrupting the lifestyle of the locals. The local communities benefit from sustainable tourism through economic development, job creation, infrastructure development which can raise their standard of living.

Humane tourism, a part of the movement of responsible tourism, aims to empower local communities through travel related businesses around the world, first and foremost in developing countries. Its idea is “to connect travelers from Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand seeking new adventures and authentic experiences directly, to local businesses in the specific locations they wish to visit” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_tourism), enabling travelers to experience the world through the eyes of its local people while ensuring that tourist dollars benefit the local community directly.

Regarding the management, the promotion of sustainable tourism practices includes the *community-based sustainable-tourism*, based on the premise that the people living next to a resource are the ones best suited to protecting it, so locals run the businesses and are responsible for promoting the conservation messages to protect their environment.

The potential for the ecological tourism’s development is largely on hand to small and medium enterprises. It is estimated that in the next two decades the growth rate of investment in ecotourism will exceed six times the average of the economical global growth (Constantinescu, C., 2012).

Fair-Trade Tourism supports the rights of indigenous communities in order to participate in the touristic process in position of equal partner and equally beneficiary along with other key members involved.

The European Commission funded in 1999 the British project for 3 years *Tourism Concern's International Fair Trade in Tourism Network*, a network which managed to bring together over 150 organizations (industry, NGOs and universities) through which it could have been examined the industrial realities with implications on tourism in developing countries, recommending in conclusion the tourism's orientation to ethical business practices and progressive management in order to protect the attractiveness of the touristic destinations and obtain more substantial benefits for the local communities in the area where they evolve.

The primary beneficiaries of Fair Trade in Tourism are groups and sections of the local community: 1. without decisional right before; 2. which were economically, socially disadvantaged or discriminated in the projection/conduct of the travel plans; 3. which were involved in new initiatives of interest regarding tourism; 4. which want to engage in the domestic/ international market but, in order to be successful, they need technical and organizational support; 5. they are formally or informally employed in the sector initiated by Fair Trade in Tourism; 6. they situate like public/ private partner or civil society in the overall developmental context; 7. they are supporting the ethical code that guides the partnership agreement, they have the capacity of a product realized by fair trade, monitored and guaranteed this way.

In terms of *implementation*, the Fair Trade in Tourism requires change concerning fairness within: 1. the international conventions on trade (International Trade Agreements); 2. the touristic industry (transnational corporations and independent investors); 3. temporary empowered people from the community of destination; 4. the consumer's behavior; 5. the governmental policies regarding destination.

It is estimated that due to the diversity of circumstances of local destinations as well as the complexity of the touristic system, it is not possible a single model for implementation, but were developed indicative criteria for fair trade in tourism (by Tourism Concern's international Fair Trade in Tourism Network, 1999 - 2000):

1. *Fair trade partnership between the investors and the local community* through consultation and fair negotiation, accountable and transparent operations, social and environmental audit, the use of the local human capital (individuals, private companies, civil society) in partnership with their preparation for employment and position in management; investors aware and willing to adhere to regulations derived from local, national or international tourists' countries of origin (such as health control, environmental regulations), anti-corruption practices;
2. *equitable distribution of benefits to local members* through fair price negotiated in partnership with local suppliers; fair competition between the local and foreign investors to boost opportunities for local investment and competition; right distribution of tourism revenues considering the use of public goods, infrastructure, natural resources, using local materials and products; foreign investors to comply with taxation at destination; in marketing, open and transparent information of the consumer regarding how touristic activities benefit the local population as well as to the manner in which tourists / travelers can help the priorities of the socio-cultural, economic and environmental needs of communities on destination, respect for cultural goods (the adaptation of indigenous and local culture for tourism to be done only in terms of consultation and the possibility of control by the involved community on public lands, sacred traditional settlements of the community which should be recognized and protected);
3. *fair trade issues between tourists and indigenous people*, respectively informed and responsible tourists who could make mutual exchanges with the local people respecting their culture, paying a fair market price, and also locals who ask for a fair price;
4. *equitable and sustainable use of resources* - investment and environmental research, implementation of measures to stimulate the local environment, consultation with the local community, adherence to relevant national and international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and other regulations, including regulations that would apply in the tourists' country of origin;
5. *fair wages and working conditions* which reflect the international standards for work, such as the national minimum wage, the freedom of association, health and safety, labor without the involvement of children or slaves, without discrimination.

5. Innovations in sustainable tourism

Considering, on the most basic level, *innovation* as a creative new idea brought forth and applied to provide some types of business value (idea which can take the form of / or new traits of a product, of a disruptive or incremental process, management, logistic or institutional), in the tourism industry it is difficult to classify which new ideas and concepts are innovations.

Within tourism, innovation tends to be driven by external forces such as changing demographics, government policy, environmental changes or social issues, however, this is not always the case and innovation in tourism can be artistic or design based and improve the quality of service or visitor experience and are described as value innovations (Nankervis *et al.* 2005 apud Dodds). Innovations can be found globally, from small islands, countries and states, in both developing or developed destinations, showing elements needed for sustainability and benefits such as: *human partnership dynamics; capacity building; education and knowledge sharing; accessibility and benefit to wider stakeholders, evaluation and management* (Dodds Rachel, 2012).

Consulting the special issue (2012) of *Téoros* magazine, it showcased seven case studies from different regions of the world as well as different sizes location in both the developed and developing world, illustrating different benefits, which could be categorized as: 1. *direct, indirect or relationship benefits*; 2. benefits from elements of strategic importance: *implementation; human partnership dynamics; operational effectiveness; economic performance*. The studied communities, regarding sustainable tourism, are from: 1. Uganda, tented camps (MacKay&Campbell 2012) ; 2. Moose Cree ecolodge in Canada (Graci 2012); 3. Gili Trawangan, an island in Indonesia (Willmott and Graci 2012); 4. Canada's Gaspésie and Isle de Madeline (Rajaonson&Tanguay 2012); 5. Dominica, the Waitukubuli National Trail project (Sarrasin&Tardif 2012); 6. Northern Cataluña (Berthet 2012); 7. Chumbe Island in Tanzania (Dodds 2012).

For instance, the Waitukubuli National Trail project carried out in Dominica is an example of a novel co-management practice for ecotourism-related resources. Local participation and involvement in planning tourism by multiple stakeholders led to the development of tourism corridors between the segments of the trail and marginalized communities have therefore also benefited from tourism in addition to the plan being solely for ecological protection.

I will also mention the case study about Chumbe Island in Tanzania which showcases how, through partnership, effective conservation and management has benefited the local communities as well as the overall country; environmental education offered to both tourists and teachers and Tanzanian students have facilitated knowledge sharing that has been so successful, the educational framework is now used nationally.

6. Assessing the demand for ethical consumption on tourism

First, a general notice on consumption in developed capitalistic countries: initially, the activist groups on consumer's rights have targeted the quality and safety of products, fair price and the critique of the public's manipulation through advertising campaigns devoid of honesty and decency; the past 30 years, the focus has shifted to *ethical consumption* - it promotes a conscious and deliberate decision to purchase various products and services which, besides that they satisfy the economic and commercial interests of the consumers, they correspond to their values and moral convictions. Ethical consumption is manifested by acting and reacting: the boycott of the products of those companies that are accused for their incorrect social, ethical or environmental policies; the refusal to buy products tested in an abusive manner; the refusal to buy products made in poor countries by physically overworked underpaid workers, or children; the preference for organic, reusable or recyclable products etc.

In 2001 it was performed the first pan-European survey on ethical consumption on a test sample of 12000 people in 12 EU countries, aiming to outline "the consumer's attitudes toward corporates' social responsibility" by identifying the moral issues that consumers consider important and which therefore they take into account when selecting the products. The consumer's selection criteria: 1. the social responsibility assumed by a company – 70% of the consumers claimed this criterion; 2. the attitude towards social responsibilities of companies - 50% of the consumers claimed this criterion (Spain ranked first by 89% and the Netherlands with 81%); 3. the permission to pay more for products with positive environmental and social impact - 20% (Denmark ranked first by 56%, while Italy ranked the last by 24%). Then, assessing how companies pay attention to their social responsibilities, nearly 60% of the subjects expressed that this issue

is not satisfactorily put into effect in business practice (Finland 75%, UK 71%, Netherlands 40%, Denmark 44%, Sweden 46%), (Crăciun D., Morar V., Macoviciuc V., 2005).

On sustainable tourism, there are multiple studies outlining the demand for it, however, most consumers will not ask for more sustainable options - they expect the touristic provider to just do it. Sustaining Tourism has undertaken a number of studies to determine overall demand on this subject and assess demand for green products, and below there are the annual main results since 2007, showing gradually how the demand arises:

Table 1. Evolution of the demand on sustainable tourism years 2007-2012

(data processed from <http://www.sustainabletourism.net>)

Year	Items on sustainable tourism (restatement of the main indicators)	Respondents' affirmative answer	A study by
2007	Would you select an airline, hotel or rental car service that used more environmentally friendly products or processes?	>50%	
2008	On a business travel, do you look to 'green while away'?	90%	Deloitte Consulting
	Do you buy much or more organic food as before the recession?	48%	US study
2009	Do you always take into consideration the impacts on a host community when travelling?	15%	a study of 400 visitors to Toronto, Canada
	Do you purchase locally made souvenirs in a destination?	48%	
	Do you rather choose public transport than renting a car in a destination?	47%	
	Would you visit an environmentally hotel or resort?	34%	US study
2010	Are you interested in a company offer on a sustainable holiday option?	44%	a mass tour operator on US and European customers
	Do you appreciate more a company that actively invests in environmental/social initiatives?	44%	
2011	Is sustainability among the top three influencing factors when booking vacations?	22%	Kuoni
	As traveller, when you choose the hotel, are you influenced by the support the hotel gives to the local community?	58%	CondeNast Traveler on their customers
2012	Do you want a more responsible holiday?	75%	The Travel Foundation and Forum for the Future
	Would you make environmentally friendly choices on trips this year?	71%	TripAdvisor
	Will you pay more for products from companies that show a commitment to social responsibility?	~ 50%	Nielson

Research implications and limitations

The implications and limitations of this work derive both from its theoretical character, partly analytical, partly expository.

In fact, in this paper there are developed and correlated primary themes / concepts on the worldwide political and economic agenda and its goal is beyond the juxtaposition of data, aiming to inspire the reader's attitude and behavior towards sustainability as respect for himself, for the others and for the humans' host, the Earth. Just that many times, on tourism and outward, *the purchasing power of the consumer conditions his consciousness*, and not vice versa; in terms of quality of life, even if it is important for consumers to protect their interests in the market (on short and long term), only some consumers are (self-) educated and actively involved in this, those who financially afford the privileged ethical consumption.

Although statistical data surveys on ethical consumption have significant implications in the business world, causing companies to redirect their marketing strategies and policies towards the display of codes of ethics embodied in the manufacture and promotion of ethical products and despite any "social responsibility" would display corporations, *for businesses in general and for tourism in particular the basic*

motivation remains economic, not moral - hence the rhetoric “business ethics, as well as ecotourism: are they an oxymoron?” (Crăciun D., Morar V., Macoviciuc V., 2005).

Conclusions

The sustainability involves a fundamental *mutation from the anthropocentric ethics toward holistic ethics* and it is conditioned by the preservation of ecological balance, sociopolitical fairness and human skills embodied in a self-reflexive behavior, lifestyle and ability to act outside the personal interest (Martin, K., 2004). The sustainability becomes more than a word (in a formal speech of the Club of Rome, World Bank or the U.N.O.) or than a technocratic project for the intelligent management regarding resources only within the praxis of a civilizing project which harmonize tradition and innovation, the businesses and the ethics.

Issues such as climate change, biodiversity, poverty reduction, protection of vulnerable groups of population, economic and social sustainability of tourism development, empowerment of local and indigenous communities, access to education and training and to decent employment, as well as responsible business practices in the tourism sector constitute important areas of political orations and some concrete measurements of tourism companies and organizations as WTO, its members and part of the tourism’ stakeholders – and they are more or less (sometimes more and sometimes less) followed by concrete, authentic and durable efficiency.

The pillars of responsible and sustainable tourism are environmental integrity, social justice and economic development. As the market is far less democratic than the political votes, the ethical consumption and the pleading for him remain a privilege of those with purchasing power. The market’s failure in the case of collective goods such as the environment and in particular its exploitation in the tourism sector could be corrected by the intervention of the representatives of general interest through: 1. supervision of the market’s well-functioning within the *carrying capacity* of its natural environment; 2. implementation of a system of clear rights, exclusive and transferable; 3. highlighting the gap between the private cost and social cost of a business and balancing them through taxes (reducing the gap between private optimum and social optimum) and taxes (aimed on the one hand the economic providers, on the other hand the tourists, general tax and taxes especially for tourism, like eco-taxes); 4. aid for eco-tourism through finance (assurance for bank loans, partially subsidizing the rate of interest, public-private partnerships for major investments) or assistance in entrepreneurship training (Constantinescu, C., 2012).

The *Ecotourism* and *Fair Trade tourism* could be a real chance to protect biodiversity if they come to *replace* the current forms of tourism and not supplement them (Suchanek N., 2001).

Finally, as many theorists, philosophers and ideologists have drawn attention, the ethical dimension of consumption implies reconsidering *consumption itself* as purpose of economy, society, politics and individual destiny. Perhaps the real ethical engagement should measure the *quality* of products consumed excessively, opulent and alienating with the *quantity* of goods and services that we all really need to live better in a sustainable economy.

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