

Article

Is Being Responsible Sustainable in Tourism? Connections and Critical Differences

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Abstract: Since the early 1990s, sustainability has formed a development paradigm for tourism. Recently, however, researchers and policymakers have shown considerable interest in the notion of responsibility in tourism. While responsible and sustainable tourism share many common elements, their ideological context and societal background may involve critical differences. The purpose of this review paper is to discuss the ideas of responsibility and sustainability in tourism and especially how they have emerged in tourism studies and activities, and what implications their differences may have for tourism development and its future practices and policies. Here, sustainable tourism is understood as being based on regulative structures involving multiple scales of policies and decision-making, while responsible tourism derives some of its core focus and practices from neoliberal governance with its emphasis on individualized and personalized behavior and decision-making. These different contextual backgrounds indicate why we should not automatically equate these two ideas in research, especially when thinking about how the growth-driven tourism industry could and should respond to global challenges in future. Furthermore, building on the structuration theory, the paper discusses how these two different approaches are often interconnected and can lead a way towards sustainable development in tourism.

Keywords: responsible tourism; sustainable tourism; sustainable development; neoliberalism; moral turn; ethics; regulation theory; structuration theory; duality of structure



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1. Introduction

Tourism researchers, policymakers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have shown considerable interest in the notion of responsibility in tourism [1–4]. As a result, responsible tourism is seen as “an established area of tourism research and practice” [5]. While undoubtedly an established area of study, the meaning of responsible tourism, however, is often conflated with the concept of sustainable tourism (or ecotourism) [6]. Richard Sharpley [7], for example, has stated that “it is difficult, or even impossible, to distinguish responsible tourism from the concept of sustainable tourism” (p. 385). For some scholars, responsible tourism is an application for sustainability [8,9] with a practical operational-level difference.

Conceptually, the idea of responsible tourism refers to tourism “with a particular focus on the ethical and moral responsibility of those engaged in tourism activities” [10] (p. 276). In that definition, “those engaged in tourism activities” covers tourism businesses and tourists: responsible tourism emphasizes the ability of tourism providers and their customers to make a positive difference through their actions [11]. In addition to academic interest, there have also been international policy discussions on the issue of responsibility in tourism [2]. According to these policy views, the tourism industry is in a position in which it has the potential to address global-scale challenges through business-driven development initiatives. For example, the World Bank [12] has highlighted the transformative role that the tourism industry might play in low-income economies and societies, especially

in Africa [13]. Similarly, Francesco Frangioli, the former Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), stated that the tourism industry could play a major role in the achievement of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [14]. The current United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which replaced the MDGs after 2015, have been viewed from a similar responsible tourism perspective [15–17].

Based on these policy documents and studies, responsible tourism seems to share common elements with sustainable tourism, and it is obvious that the tourism industry is increasingly seen as being responsible for various sustainability goals both locally and globally. In contrast to many policymakers and other commentators, however, the tourism industry itself may be slightly less enthusiastic about linking its responsibility aims and operations with the idea of sustainability. As Caruana et al. [5] (p. 115) point out, “the label of ‘responsible tourism’ is by far the most favored industry term.” As evidence of this, they refer to a study by the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) [18], which indicated that tour operators in certain regions are about five times more likely to use responsibility rhetoric in their operations compared to other alternative tourism terms such as sustainability or ecotourism. This raises a legitimate question about whether responsibility and sustainability do mean the same thing in tourism, especially to the industry, and about whether these terms and related processes have the same implications in respect to tourism development.

The purpose of this review paper is to discuss the notions of responsibility and sustainability in tourism and how they have emerged in relation to tourism. The main focus is on the idea of responsibility in tourism and how it relates to sustainable development thinking. Furthermore, the paper focuses on the potential implications of responsibility and sustainability in tourism development and how their relation could be harnessed in the context of sustainability needs in future tourism. To this end, Anthony Giddens's [19,20] structuration theory is applied. The paper starts by overviewing the concepts of sustainable tourism and responsible tourism. After this, the evolution of sustainability and responsibility in tourism is discussed. As the evolution of sustainability in tourism has been extensively reviewed in the literature [21–23], the focus is on the emergence of responsibility in tourism and its societal and academic contexts, which have received relatively little critical interest in tourism studies. Yet, those contextual issues may help us to understand the main weaknesses, but also strengths, of responsible tourism thinking in relation to sustainable development in tourism. Finally, the paper concludes by outlining how we might integrate responsibility and sustainability perspectives in tourism development.

2. Alternative Tourism Development Models

Sustainable and responsible tourism can be considered alternative modes of tourism [9,24–26]. In addition, there are several other terms referring to alternative tourism development thinking, such as ecological tourism, appropriate tourism and soft tourism [27] or regenerative and transformative tourism [28–30]. The latter terms represent relatively recent ideas in tourism research, and they are based on or call for a new kind of economic system that would be based on a degrowth, resetting the current market economy or creating post-capitalism economies that focus beyond growth and profit [31–33]. In the current economic mode, however, sustainable and responsible tourism are probably the most used and well-known terms in the field of alternative tourism.

2.1. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism, especially, was initially considered an alternative to conventional mass-scale tourism and related tourist activities [21,34]: as a response to the strong growth-orientation of the tourism industry [35,36] and its increasingly negatively perceived impacts towards physical and socio-cultural environments [37]. In this context, sustainable tourism highlights structural issues and the potentially unequal relationships in destination and tourism system levels [38,39]. From this perspective, sustainable tourism should be seen as “a subset of sustainable development” and a “tourism system that encourages qualitative

development, with a focus on quality of life and wellbeing measures, but not aggregate quantitative growth to the detriment of natural capital" [40] (p. X).

There are numerous definitions of sustainable tourism [9,41]. Probably the most commonly quoted definitions originate from the various policy documents outlined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The organization has committed itself to promoting sustainability in tourism development: according to their vision statement, "The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism" [42]. The organization's initial conceptualization of sustainable tourism followed the lines of the Brundtland Commission's report 'Our Common Future' [43], which defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of present generations without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Based on this, sustainable tourism was defined as an activity that aims to meet "the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future" [44] (p. 7). Since then, the UNWTO and other international policy organizations further elaborated upon the definition [45]. For example, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the UNWTO have jointly re-defined sustainable tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" [46] (p. 12). What is noteworthy here, compared with the original conceptualization from 1993, is the emphasis on meeting the 'needs of the industry'.

This otherwise small change reflects a larger evolution of tourism-centric perspectives in sustainable tourism development thinking and related policies, one which has been widely discussed in tourism research literature [22,47–49]. These kinds of industry-oriented or industry-based perspectives on sustainable tourism may not resonate well with the elements and principles of sustainable development, which do not privilege any specific economic sector and its needs in creating development, environmental well-being and meeting the needs of current and future generations [23,50]. Furthermore, an emphasis on the needs of the industry does not ideally relate with the notion of sustainable tourism as a subset of (and potential for) sustainable development. What it does represent, however, is a response on the part of the industry and key policymakers, such as the UNWTO, to the call for sustainability in tourism that is less limiting towards growth [31]. This has resulted in a new kind of vocabulary in tourism development discourses emphasizing a need for sustainable growth, for example [33].

Despite the fact that sustainable tourism is itself a contested concept, the idea has become "one of the great success stories of tourism research" [51] (p. 650). At the same time, however, the need for sustainability has probably become the greatest challenge of the contemporary tourism industry. This is largely based on the growth-driven paradigm of global tourism, including the current (sustainable) tourism development policies championed by international organizations such as the UNWTO [52]. According to many commentators, sustainable tourism development thinking seems to lack an operational approach on how to set the limits to growth in tourism [3,41]: the very dimension responsible tourism is considered to involve.

2.2. Responsible Tourism

The conceptual origins of responsibility in tourism are linked to Jost Krippendorf's [24] seminal book 'The Holiday Makers' [5,53]. Krippendorf indicated that tourists' consumption was becoming environmentally more responsible and that a viable market segment for such tourism products was evolving. Krippendorf's thinking was characterized by individualistic tourist-centric viewpoints. The argument for responsible tourism was based on the 'emancipation' of tourists—the new holidaymakers—who were assumed to evolve from 'lower' physical recreation needs towards a 'higher level' of needs, finally arriving at 'emancipation' and a critical consumer mindset both at home and while travelling.

This individualism and consumer-orientation is typical of many responsible tourism definitions. Blackstock et al. [10], for example, state that responsible tourism thinking guides our focus towards actions by individuals who are influenced by ethics and social norms. While ethical principles or shared social norms are not purely individualistic but shared, their impacts on our actions are interpreted and understood as being based on individual behavior and decision-making processes in tourism consumption and production [54]. Indeed, the core idea of responsible tourism refers to tourism with a focus on the ethical and moral responsibility of those engaged in tourism operations, namely tourists and entrepreneurs [10]. Hence, there is a market context for responsibility with traditional demand- and supply-driven elements. The recent burgeoning interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in tourism studies and policies, for example, can be seen as an indication of these markets for responsibility in tourism [55,56]. In general, CSR principles and practices refer to the private sector's interests to respond externally (and/or internally) to pressures and ethical obligations that emerge in their operational environment [57,58].

The operationalization of responsibility markets in tourism has created numerous codes of conduct for both tourists and businesses. One of the most well-known sets of principles is the Cape Town Declaration [59] from 2002. According to the Declaration, responsible tourism development aims to minimize negative impacts; generate greater economic benefits for local communities and their well-being; involve locals in decision-making; conserve natural and cultural heritage and maintain their diversity; provide enjoyable experiences for tourists with more meaningful connections with local people; provide access for physically challenged individuals, and be culturally sensitive and build respect between hosts and guests. As interpreted by Fennell [60], the responsible tourism operates on the people-to-people scale, which provides an impression that it is a concrete, bottom-up and thus 'doable' and 'realistic' approach. In this respect, responsible tourism is often seen as an implementation of sustainable tourism thinking into practice [3,61]. However, in addition to this kind of 'division of labor' between the concepts, there are some other contextual differences that are perhaps more fundamental than their different relationships to theory and practice.

3. Contextualizing Sustainability and Responsibility in Tourism

3.1. *A Long Walk to Sustainable Development in Tourism*

There are several reviews focusing on the societal and conceptual backgrounds of modern sustainability thinking and its connection with tourism (see [40,50,62–64]). Scholars have highlighted that, although the term became known and popular only in the 1980s and early 1990s, the need for sustainability in development has a rather long history that also involves tourism and recreation-related issues. Hall [63], for example, draws the historical antecedents of sustainable development and tourism from the influence of Romanticism and the early conservation movement, which were interlinked with and followed by the creation of the first national parks in the late 19th century. Similarly, Butler [62] has emphasized the historical influence of the conservation movement and the need to manage human-environment relations at an institutional level. He highlights the idea of carrying capacity as an integral part of the history of sustainability thinking, suggesting that the operationalization of carrying capacity is a fundamental step towards sustainability in future tourism (see [65,66]). In this respect, the carrying capacity approach considered an implementation tool for sustainable development in tourism. In the recent decades, however, the idea of carrying capacity has not been a highly fashionable framework in tourism studies and management [23]. Academically, it turned out to be a challenging exercise to define a magical maximum number of visitors and tourism activities that could exist in a certain space and time frame without causing unacceptable negative effects on resources [67]. In a resource (i.e., destination management) context, carrying capacity thinking highlights visitor numbers, use limits and impacts on natural and social systems and resources [68,69], which can be restraining and thus negative for the development plans and activities of the growth-oriented tourism industry.

These academic and societal antecedents are valuable to recognize, as they form the context for the institutionalization of sustainable development in the 1970s and 1980s. They also highlight a long-term need to govern human impacts and human-environment relations based on a rationalistic planning and regulative management approach [70–72]. Following that background, a sustainable use of resources involves the idea of the limits to growth [49,73]. In the 1960s and 1970s, this referred to the increasingly evident fact that the Earth's resources are not infinite. Thus, it is not surprising that the term sustainable was explicitly used in its current connotation by the Club of Rome in 1972 [71]. In their final report, titled *The Limits of Growth*, the authors stated: "We are searching for a model output that represents a world system that is: 1. sustainable without sudden and uncontrolled collapse; and 2. capable of satisfying the basic material requirements of all of its people" [74] (p. 152). Later, the sustainability term was also explicitly used in the World Conservation Strategy of 1980 by the International Union for Conserving Nature [75], which placed a strong emphasis on natural resource use and conservation; however, there were also social and economic aspects involved [64]: the third specific objective of the strategy aimed "to ensure the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems, which support millions of rural communities as well as major industries" [75] (p. 7). Thus, the linkages and interdependency between ecological, social and economic environment were clearly evident, but the core focus was given to the natural resources, which were considered to have the capacity to support and maintain socio-economic systems if those resources were used in a sustainable way. Later, the IUCN and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) helped to establish a World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1982. In the following year the WCED created a commission chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, which produced the aforementioned highly influential report 'Our Common Future' in 1987—the report that set the elements and principles of sustainable development as we know it today [63,64,76].

In all three of these key texts, the Club of Rome, the World Conservation Strategy document and the Brundtland report, the tourism industry was never explicitly acknowledged as an economy or topic that would have relevancy to sustainable development. However, after the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992, the need to implement the principles of sustainable development within wider economic and social development processes was highlighted in addition to the role of sustainability in tourism as well as the tourism industry's potential for advancing the goals of sustainable development on a local scale [63,77,78]. Since then, the idea of sustainability has been a central theme in tourism development policies, and sustainable development has emerged as a paradigm and a dominant way of thinking about development in tourism [9,79,80].

Indeed, Moscardo et al. [81] (p. 533) have noted that "there is increasing pressure on tourism planners, developers and managers to consider sustainability issues". Theoretically, this pressure calls for a need to set the limits to growth in tourism [23] by creating structures and collaborative processes and practices that lead the industry towards a sustainable development path. These structures and related institutional arrangements can be interpreted by applying the regulation theory, which involves interrogating (i) a regime of accumulation and (ii) a mode of regulation [82]. The former refers to the organization of 'supply and demand', while the latter mode is focused on the structures that aim to sustain the processes of production and consumption [83]. In order to develop sustainable tourism, there needs to be a viable business base rooted on a functioning regime of accumulation. In a sustainable development context, however, the mode of regulation and related practices, norms, rules and institutions need to include a long-term perspective involving the elements (environment, social and economic 'pillars') and principles (holism, equity and future orientation) of sustainable development [43]. Thus, these modes of sustainability regulation aim to balance the regime of accumulation with environmental, socio-cultural and economic elements that ideally involve institutional structures beyond individual operators or customers and their current direct (market) relations. These kinds of institutional

structures may present a contrast with the contextual perspectives of responsible tourism, which will be discussed next.

3.2. *Emerging Responsibility in Tourism*

In contrast to sustainable development and sustainable tourism, there has not been a high level of interest in the societal and theoretical backgrounds of responsibility thinking in tourism. This relative lack of interest may result from the common understanding that the two concepts are quite the same [7]; thus, their backgrounds and ideological contexts are also commonly assumed to be the same. That said, however, there have been relatively active discussions on some associated modes of tourism, such as volunteer tourism [84–87]. These discussions are fruitful when contemplating the academic and societal contexts of responsibility discourse and responsible tourism.

While responsibility undoubtedly has connections to sustainability thinking in tourism [3], its emergence and role in touristic consumption and production relates to societal processes and academic discussions that differ from those of sustainable development. One key societal and economic policy process, relevant to responsibility, is related to the political and economic phenomenon called neoliberalism and its implications with respect to the governance of tourism and its growth [88]. A cursory reading of current tourism studies literature reveals that neoliberalism is a popular target for a wide range of critical notions concerning the nature of contemporary tourism [33,89–91]. Although neoliberalism may be an easy scapegoat for all sorts of wrongs, as it “can be held responsible for anything” [92] (p. 2), it is truly evident that neoliberalism has played a key role in organizing the global tourism system, its supply-chains and related socio-economic and geographical relationships [83,93]. Despite its widespread usage, however, the concept of neoliberalism appears to be a relatively challenging one to define. Indeed, there are many different interpretations/conceptions of the term’s meaning and what kinds of implications it has for research and socio-economic development [94,95]. In addition, the evolution of the neoliberal project has been highly contextual [96], meaning that its processes, practices and impacts are “embedded in a particular geographic, political, social and economic context” [88] (p. 9).

Neoliberalism is commonly linked to the policies of free market ideology and the politics of Margaret Thatcher (United Kingdom) and Ronald Reagan (United States) in the 1980s [95]. With respect to economic policies, neoliberalism refers to market-oriented reform strategies that aim to reduce the state’s role and influence on the economy and development, especially through privatization [95,96]. A key assumption is that if the markets (i.e., production and consumption) could be made to work based on self-regulation with limited government intervention, economic self-interest and competition would eventually provide the mechanisms necessary to regulate and limit the ‘negative externalities’ of economic growth for society and the environment at large [97,98]. In this respect, David Harvey [96] has observed that neoliberalism has become an ethic in itself, which “holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market” (p. 3). Related to this process, Peck and Tickell [99] note that the centralized role of the markets is processed through ‘roll back’ and ‘roll out’ neoliberalism: the former refers to a withdrawal of government involvement and regulations, while the latter is evident in various intervention policies that enable the private sector to penetrate areas that were previously considered the domain of the public sector. In tourism, ‘commercial orphanages’, based on volunteer tourism [100,101] or private conservation areas for nature-based tourism [91,102], are examples of the neoliberal mandate for the commodification of everything [96], demonstrated by private sector penetration into fields that are usually considered the responsibility of the public sector.

One way to approach the role and implications of neoliberalism in contemporary tourism development is through the idea of governance. Like neoliberalism, governance has multiple connotations and contexts [103,104]. From a political science perspective,

Rhodes [94] has defined governance as “the self-organizing inter-organizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game and autonomy of the state” (p. 15). It is an ideological approach focusing on public-private sector relations in societies. An alternative approach is based on corporate governance, which mainly deals with the issues and systems by which individual companies are managed and controlled [105]. Although there have been previous attempts to examine the political dimensions of tourism governance, especially in relation to policy-making and sustainability [51,106], the most common approach has been based on the corporate dimension in tourism [55].

As noted, tourism businesses and their clients (i.e., tourists) have been the core subjects of responsibility in tourism research and governance. These two groups, or perspectives, are obviously highly interrelated in the making of responsible tourism. On the one hand, responsible tourists (the new holidaymakers) are assumed to push the industry towards greater responsibility [24]. It is assumed that an increasing environmental awareness in consumption and societies, in general, leads to greater demand for responsible tourism products, to which the businesses aim to respond [107]. Based on academic empirical evidence, it is rather difficult to confirm whether such environmental awareness has actually resulted in a significant increase in responsible tourism demand in practice (see [7,108]). Indeed, as Font and McCabe [109] (p. 874) state: “the portion of travelers that actually purchase sustainable tourism products remains rather limited”.

On the other hand, the tourism industry can be seen to be evolving towards greater responsibility based on its emancipation and greater commitment to the places of tourism [24,107]. This line of thinking is highlighted in the CSR approaches, which according to Harvey [96] is a convincing example of the evolution of neoliberalism in the western world. Conveniently, the idea of CSR has become a fashionable way to think about and organize responsible tourism operations [58], which has led Chettiparamb and Kokkranikal [6] to suggest that the integral connection between responsible tourism and CSR is its distinguishing of responsible tourism from sustainable tourism. As in the case of responsible consumers, CSR thinking is based on the ethical and moral character of individual tourism operators [55,110]. Despite its positively defined groundings, there has also been harsh criticism aimed at the corporate governance of responsibility (see [15,110]), questioning whether the business-oriented lens of CSR could, in practice, truly manage to include communities, the poor, and environmental concerns [111,112].

In this respect, an increasing individualization of responsibility is interestingly and ambivalently related to the ‘moral turn’ in the social sciences. The moral turn takes a critical stance towards deepening market relations into arenas that have traditionally been considered as public and social goods [113,114], but it has also further fueled the role of individuals in creating change [115,116]. In general, the moral turn refers to our need to care not only for ‘our own’ and people close by, but also for distant strangers [113,117]. This resonates well with the discussions on responsible tourism, and especially volunteer tourism (see [84]), aimed at social development goals in distant tourism destinations that “bring together the tourist, corporation, and ‘locals” [118] (p. 145). Indeed, according to Su et al. [119], one of the key themes in describing the moral turn has been responsible tourism. By taking a critical stance towards neoliberal governance, however, the moral turn provides both an alternative and complementary way to understand the emergence of responsibility in tourism.

According to Butcher [87], the moral turn and resulting geographies of responsibility and care are based on the notion that through an awareness of our individual place in global trade we are able to extend our responsibility and care to distant others. What he criticizes in this context are the transformed relations and positions of public and private spheres: what used to be public and a subject of wider politics has become individualized and personalized (contained) qualities of moral consumers and businesses. This very same emphasis on individuals and their behavior and, ultimately, their responsibility or irresponsibility was notable in Krippendorf’s [24] thinking for him, personal ethics

was at the core of the new emancipated holidaymakers. Recently, Sin [118] has critically stated that “it is worthy to note that no matter whether it is the corporation or the tourists, responsibilities are indeed performed by people” and “each and every act of responsibility is enacted through the individuals involved” (p. 141).

Thus, in contrast to the sustainable development thinking that emphasizes the role of structures and institutional arrangements that provide a regulated arena in which individuals (tourists and businesses) act and behave, in moral and care ethics the responsibility act is defined and performed by (moral) subjects, individuals. As such morality is explicitly or implicitly understood relationally as a “socially constructed set of values that are agreed upon by individuals and societies” [86] (p. 3); the responsibility in tourism becomes situational [85]. This means that the institutional structures and regulative governance models that characterize sustainability in tourism may not apply in responsible tourism.

4. Discussion

“If we encounter a poor trader selling coral necklaces whilst on holiday, should we buy it to help the man and his family or refuse to buy to discourage damage to the reef?” Butcher [87] (p. 77)

The above question, although taken from a different context, is a demonstrative one for understanding the premises of sustainable tourism and responsible tourism and their respective differences. These differences are not only academic or rhetoric by nature: they influence what kinds of implications tourism development may have with respect to the environment, local communities and their role in tourism, and eventually, how we can and should set the limits to growth in tourism.

Current realities of sustainable tourism management, with its new vocabularies of sustainable and inclusive growth, are increasingly characterized by neoliberal growth needs defined by the markets [33,120]. Still, in its foundational ideological meaning, sustainable development in tourism is based on the need to involve regulative frameworks and institutional structures that go beyond the markets and individual and personalized responsibilities (see [121]). These structures of sustainability ultimately govern production and consumption, and it is these structures that should guide and regulate the industry’s development practices and, thus, the environmental impacts of tourism. Under the current neoliberal governance, this top-down mode, or ‘hierarchical command’ to use Jessop’s [95] terminology, is not a very popular one. Still, hierarchical command may be needed when the markets fail to provide sustainability or responsibility by mismanaging the negative externalities in economic growth, which has been the case with airline carbon emissions, for example [52,122]. This calls for a stronger public-driven governance. However, some scholars have questioned whether sustainability can be realized based on the current market-driven economy or if there is a need for diverse post-capitalist economic alternatives (see [32,123,124]) that would have the potential “to facilitate a truly sustainable tourism” [125] (p. 1745).

In contrast to the regulative notion of sustainability, the idea of responsibility in tourism is more personalized and voluntary-driven, with a core focus on individual attitudes, behavior and actions. It is also scaled to the destination or even single operator unit level, while sustainable tourism ideally works in a local-global nexus. Still, both sustainable and responsible tourism aim to minimize the negative and maximize the positive social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism in destination communities and environments. Rather than regulative framework, however, responsible tourism promotes the role of individuals’ ethical consumption and production. On the one hand, this responsibility emphasis is a product of neoliberal ‘self-organizing’ modes of new governance with its attendant CSR initiatives and the assumed creation of a perfect green consumer who does not consume less but consumes in a responsible way [49,126]. This market-driven ethos, with preferably limited external interventions and regulations, makes responsible tourism more attractive for the tour operators and the industry in general [18]. On the other hand, responsible tourism discourse is influenced by the moral turn thinking,

which emphasizes our responsibility to care for distant others. Needless to say, these two contexts for responsible tourism are almost antithetical, but they both have resulted in the emerged emphasis on individual and personalized responsibility.

Returning to Butcher's [87] question above, the decision between whether or not to buy a coral necklace is a challenging one for both sustainable tourism and responsible tourism. In responsible tourism, the question becomes personalized, and from this perspective it may be very difficult to evaluate how the lived and experienced poverty of a 'distant other' relates to the existence of a reef. When decision-making is based on individuals' awareness and perceptions of distinct and sometimes arbitrary incidents, it may become impossible to think and see collectively beyond these situational encounters; a tourist is taken by the moment. In this sense, responsible tourism as an individualized ethical and market-driven approach which may have a relatively limited capacity to respond to the holistic and long-term needs typical for sustainable development planning and decision-making.

While the increasingly industry-oriented practices of sustainable tourism governance are not ideally capable of responding to the current and long-term challenges of the global tourism industry [31,127], the regulative idea of sustainable development does at least aim to involve such structures and prospects. From that perspective, the answer to whether or not to buy a necklace from a poor vendor should be based on a wider and collective socio-economic and environmental knowledge and should follow planning guiding regarding how the benefits and costs of tourism development should be shared and organized on a destination level. Ideally, by doing so, the individual tourist would not experience a situational moral dilemma. When travelling, however, the reality faced is often very different and, thus, an ethical consumerism has its role to play, in practice. A realist approach may be acknowledging that neither markets nor regulations alone lead the tourism industry towards a path of greater sustainable development.

While there are contextual differences between the ideas of sustainability and responsibility in tourism, there are also synergies that are not based on the notion that the concepts are the same in practice. A potential way to think about how sustainable and responsible tourism could be integrated, and how the dichotomy between regulative (institutional) structures and individual (moral) agency could be overcome, would be to look once again to Anthony Giddens' [19] structuration theory. The idea of the duality of structure [20,128] is a particularly prospective one. The theory focuses on the creation and reproduction of (social) systems by providing a framework for the analysis of the relations between structure and agents, without giving full dominance to either. Thus, individuals and their behaviors and actions are not totally constrained by institutional structures, which are considered the medium of human activities as well as the result of those very same activities. Therefore, structures do not only shape and limit, but also enable and provide possibilities for human behavior, and people actively contribute to the formation of specific structures in time and space. While structures are transformed by human activities, people are also still dependent on their current existence and their future goals and strategies.

In tourism development contexts, sustainability management and its regulative modes represent a structure, while individualized and personalized responsibility behaviors by tourists and/or entrepreneurs indicate an agency that is practiced within existing structures. Those structures are slowly transformed by choices and decisions made in tourism consumption and production. In this intertwined governance connection, sustainability and responsibility are both social theories and social practices organized and performed in particular ways in different contexts. While this all may sound theoretical and difficult to put into practice, there are existing illustrative cases. For example, in many places, the growth and economic importance of nature-based tourism has resulted in pressures to open protected areas, such as national parks, to commercial tourism operations [129]. This process was also initiated in Finland in the 1990s; while tourism businesses have managed to use their agency to transform these originally 'no organized tourism' areas into contexts suitable for their commerce, they have also aligned their operations with the rules of these areas based on specific formal agreements about Sustainable Tourism

Principles that include detailed objectives that help in implementing the principles in practice [130]. These principles set by the Metsähallitus, the state governing agency of public lands, also condition their operations outside of protected areas. Without a sufficient element of sustainability based on this public-driven governance, these places may simply become another example of neoliberalized nature for the industry to exploit.

Another example of a conventional mass tourism context is the (TOI) to Sustainable Tourism [131], which relates to a broad research area of indicators and certification in sustainable tourism (see [132–135]). There are numerous other certifications for sustainable tourism, but the TOI is a very demonstrative one here. The TOI was a joint initiative by UNEP, UNESCO, UNWTO and a group of private tour operators with an aim “to create synergy between tour operators who share a common goal to develop and implement tools and practices that improve the environmental, social and cultural sustainability of tourism” [131]. The TOI was launched in 2000 and its principles were relatively widely adopted by major European travel agents. The initiative set structural rules and indicators for tourism businesses, which were regularly audited. If a hotel failed to fulfill the minimum requirements, it was not included in the portfolio of available accommodation options for individual consumers to choose from when looking for a holiday package. Compared to the previous protected area example, here the duality of structure was based on a more complex division between international policymakers and tourism businesses, leading to the co-creation of the regulative governance structure in which individual tourists practice their agency. The challenge, again, is that those minimum requirements should genuinely fulfill sustainability needs and, thus, should not represent a ‘green washing’, which is often used for disguising and justifying inadequate environmental practices by businesses.

5. Conclusions

In the context of the current neoliberal economy, we can rather safely conclude that without the markets there is no responsible tourism, but without regulative frameworks setting certain limits to tourism growth in the future, there will be no sustainable tourism. Indeed, while industry-oriented and market-driven responsibility initiatives and practices are potential ways of doing sustainable tourism in practice, the idea of sustainable development in tourism is not limited to markets and the agency of tourists and/or operators alone. Nor is it inherently exclusively focused on the destination scale. Responsible tourism shares many common elements with sustainable tourism, but its societal and ideological contexts involve some critical differences. These differences may also justify why these ideas should not automatically be equated in research, especially when thinking about how the tourism industry could (and should) respond to local and global sustainable development challenges. However, strong regulations and institutionalized rules will probably ring hollow if people are not genuinely willing to act and behave in responsible ways. Thus, being responsible is an important step towards and an integral part of sustainable development governance in tourism, for without responsible tourists and businesses, sustainable tourism will be impossible to achieve in theory and in practice.

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