IN NEED OF NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS FOR TOURISM?

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Abstract: The principal aim of this paper is to evaluate the actions of tourism stakeholders towards nature within the context of environmental ethics. Through an understanding of the ethical stance taken by stakeholders towards nature, it becomes possible to comprehend actions and evaluate their suitability. The conceptual literature in the field of environmental ethics is utilized to analyze the policy statements and actions of stakeholders. The main conclusion is that the majority of them now pursue an ethic of conservation vis-a-vis an instrumental use of nature. However, there seems to be little desire for a further shift to a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic. Keywords: ethics, instrumentalism, conservation, libertarian extension, eco-holism. © 2003 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

Until the early 90s, limited attention was given to the role of ethics within tourism studies (Lea 1993). As the decade progressed, the application of ethics within the context of business began to have a wider audience, and a limited number of academic articles relating to tourism also began to appear (Karwacki and Boyd 1995; Payne and Dimanche 1996). Some authors briefly alluded to environmental ethics, including Hughes (1995) who introduced a limited environmental ethical perspective within the context of sustainable tourism in Scotland, while Hultsman (1995) related Leopold’s (1949) concept of the "land ethic" to the development of a "tourism services ethic". Yet as Fennell recently suggests, "Fundamentally, there is a..."
very weak foundation of research into tourism ethic studies to date" (1999:254).

Yet according to Holmes Rolston (1992) ethics are the prescriber of human conduct and law. One branch of ethics with a direct application to tourism, and which has become more topical as scientific research has provided evidence of environmental change caused by human agency, is "environmental ethics" (Vardy and Grosch 1999). A similar salient topic is the environmental consequences tourism can have for the non-human environment, as the actions of stakeholders towards nature have become more closely scrutinized. Given that the success of the industry is dependent upon the use of the natural environment, there is a case for evaluating the ethics of stakeholders towards nature, and asking whether there is a need for a new "environmental ethic" in tourism.

The primary focus of this paper subsequently falls upon the ethical approaches of stakeholders towards the non-human environment or nature. Within the context of this paper, the former term is viewed as being synonymous with the latter, both used advisedly to indicate that which exists independently of human agency. However, the choice to focus upon the interaction of tourism stakeholders with the natural environment rather than the cultural environment of destinations, is not to suggest that the interaction between tourism and culture does not raise ethical questions or is not an important topic for debate. Issues such as sex tourism, the displacement of people from land for development, and the exclusion of local people from resources such as water, all raise critical ethical dilemmas. Rather, the rationale for the focus of this essay being upon stakeholders interaction with nature, is a recognition that the complexity of a debate involving the ethics of the cultural impacts of tourism is beyond its scope and physical limits.

EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Based upon the absence of published articles, even ten years ago, it would have been highly unlikely to consider writing a paper on the relevance of environmental ethics to tourism. To write one today suggests a change in the wider context of thinking over the tourism-environment interaction. This change can probably be attributed to major influences whose contemporary evolution is often dated to the 80s. These include scientific evidence of environmental changes as a result of human actions; a wider concern over such issues in many cultures; and a growing awareness that tourism can have harmful effects upon nature.

During the 80s, there was a growth in environmental concern in Western societies, as environmental issues such as rainforest removal, ozone depletion, and greenhouse warming became topical media issues. However, as Garner (2000) points out, this growth in environmental concern was probably attributable to other influences beside that of solely the media. Cultural and structural changes in society, including the evolution of post-material values and an enlarging middle-class, are also likely explanations of the increased environmen-
tal concern. Evidence of this concern was provided by the increased popularity of “Green” or environmental political parties, in democratic elections in western Europe. For instance, in the 1989 European elections, the United Kingdom Green Party recorded its highest ever vote of 15%. Presently both the French and German governments contain ministers from their respective green parties. In a poll conducted in the mid 90s by the Market Opinion Research Institute in Britain, 35% of the population believed that environmental issues were the most important ones facing them (Martin 1997). This was a higher percentage rating than for health care, unemployment, and inflation.

Tourism was also not immune to concern being expressed over its environmental impacts. Although its possible pernicious effects upon nature were noted as early as the 60s, it was particularly during the late 80s, that the environment entered the arena of pressure group politics. The founding of nongovernmental organizations, including the Ecotourism Society in the United States and Tourism Concern in the United Kingdom, campaigning for more humane and ethical forms of tourism, was reflective of a growing concern in some quarters over the effects of global mass tourism.

Labels used to describe new types of tourism also appeared in the 80s, including ecotourism, sustainable tourism and nature tourism, terms which have become ones of familiar usage. Despite their vagueness and ambiguous meaning, there is an implicit assumption within their wording: that these types of tourism are more compatible with the environment than the mass tourism that preceded them. Certainly under the aegis of ecotourism and sustainable tourism, attempts have been made around the world to appropriate those development schemes which balance the needs of indigenous people with resource conservation programs, such as the gorilla project in the Pare National des Volcans in Rwanda and the Annapurna Area Conservation Project in Nepal.

However, concerns remain over the interaction between tourism and the environment, sometimes leading to extreme forms of action. During 1998, tourism development was specifically targeted by “eco-warriors” for the first time in the mountains of Colorado in what the federal authorities described as the most expensive act of eco-terrorism to date (Vulliamy 1998). The rationale for the arson attack was that the planned facilities would be harmful to the wildlife in the area, especially for the planned reintroduction of the lynx into the ecosystem.

The negative environmental impacts that tourism development can sometimes have, for example leading to the draining of wetlands, destruction of coral reefs, increased rates of deforestation, pollution, and aesthetic blight, has led to increased pressure for stakeholders to evaluate their positions relative to nature. This pressure originates both from tourism pressure groups and from a changed context of international policy on development, which supports sustainable development and environmental conservation. Yet, to comprehend the behavior of tourism stakeholders towards the environment, it is neces-
sary to understand more fully the popular notions of nature, and the ethics that guide actions towards it.

Environmental Ethics

The changes in nature induced by human action have led to a questioning and reevaluating of ethical positions toward it. Environmental edics is subsequently concerned with redefining the boundaries of obligation to the environment and evaluating the human position towards it. Typical questions include responsibilities towards the environment, what might these responsibilities be, and from what sources are they derived? (Connelly and Smith 1999:7). Intrinsic to the subject is a search for a "new" environmental ethic which, according to Connelly and Smith (1999), is required because the need to reason about responsibilities to nature lags behind the ability to manipulate it. Cooper (1992) suggests that a popular answer of why there should be a new environmental ethic is that the lack of one spells catastrophe. However, he advocates that a new ethic needs to go beyond pragmatism, to give a new appreciation of the place of human beings in the world, through which it will be possible to achieve an "authentic" model of sustainable development. Robinson and Garrat (1999) suggest that environmental edics has a key role to play in defining the future of the human-nature relationship. They add that the emphasis has now become to find agreement of how humans behave towards the natural environment, rather than producing more scientific evidence of the adverse effects human activities have upon it. As Gorringe (1999) observes, if the consumer economy is preserved indefinitely, ecological forces will ultimately dismande it. He points out that by 1980, conservationist groups were already voicing the need for a new environmental ethic, which embraced plants and animals as well as people.

In terms of its relative position in the field, environmental edics is usually located in the applied vis-a-vis theoretical genre, juxtaposed to business ethics and bioedics (Fennell 1999; Westra 1998). However, as Westra (1998) remarks, unlike business or bioethics, an environmental ethic requires a more dian anthropocentric viewpoint of the world to establish who or what may possess a moral standing. Robinson and Garrat (1999) suggest this poses a major challenge within the field of edics, whose doctrines have traditionally been anthropocentric. Therefore environmental ethics asks "what ought to be" human behavior towards nature, rather than accepting the actuality of "what is". Yet, similar to many of the concepts in tourism studies, the field of environmental ethics is not free of ambiguity. According to Robinson and Garrat, "At present no one is wholly sure what environmental edics means or looks like" (1999:14).

Given that a central tenet of environmental ethics is concerned with defining the human position and responsibilities to nature, it is necessary to understand how current attitudes to nature have been formulated and shaped. In most cultures, religion has been a major influence. For example, Judaic-Christianity has been condemned by some
commentators as the most anthropocentric of world religions, promoting careless and rapacious attitudes to the non-human environment (Hooker 1992; White 1967). The belief that "man" is made in the image of God, combined with "his" orders to Adam and Eve to "dominate and subdue" the earth in the Book of Genesis, led to a presumption that man had been granted dominion over the non-human and inanimate environments (Nash 1989; Pepper 1996). This was further enhanced by the dominant position of man over nature in the early Greek and medieval notions of the "Great Chain of Being". The removal of God from the earth to a celestial high inherent to Judaism, also meant that God took on a metaphysical identity and the surrounding environment lost its spiritual value; consequently saving souls means following God's will and not nature's (Pepper 1996). Within this "Despotic Interpretation" (Levinson 1995), nature is thus created by, but not inhabited by God. The belief of dominion, externalized nature, while also challenging the Pagan belief system of guardian spirits or genus loci present in all non-human life and inanimate nature (Stone 1993; White 1967). When stripped of a spiritual value, nature was no longer sacred, and could subsequently be used by humans in an instrumental fashion without moral qualms (Ponting 1991).

Yet, as Stone (1993) suggests, to blame "ecocide" upon Judaic-Christian philosophy is not especially convincing. Not least because the biblical attitude towards the non-human environment is ambiguous. Challenging the theme of "dominion", is the notion of "stewardship", a theme inherent to the Muslim as well as the Christian faith. Expressed by the Arabic term khalifa in Islam, the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad emphasize the responsibility of humans to act as stewards of nature, which contains gifts of Allah (Foltz 2000). Within Christianity, theologians are now emphasizing God's "greenness", and the activist tradition of a respect for nature within their creed (Pepper 1996). Stewardship in Christianity stresses that all animate and inanimate objects are part of God's creation, and no one part is inherently superior to the other (Simmons 1993). This interpretation means not unconditional ownership of parts of the planet but a caretaking on trust, subsequently with an ethic of environmental concern (Connelly and Smith 1999). However, within this doctrine, humans still retain a place at the apex of creation, acting as the stewards over other animate and inanimate objects. As Nash (1989) suggests, inherent within the concept of stewardship is the notion that God has given nature to humans.

The blaming of "ecocide" upon Judaic-Christian philosophy also has less credence when the attitudes of other world religions towards nature are considered. Religions in non-Western societies tend to have creeds which discourage a demarcation between the human and non-human environments. For instance, the Hindu and Jain religious principle of ahimsa (non-injury or non-violence) encourages the belief that harmony pervades the whole universe and that one should respect nature as having the rights and worth of human life (Mieczkowski 1995). While emphasizing the soul and its separate existence from the material world, Hinduism also teaches of the transmigration of the
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soul in different lives, often from human to animal. There is also a belief in an array of lesser gods who appear in natural forms such as trees, plants, and animals. In Buddhism, the taking of life is forbidden and vegetarian eating propagated, while Chinese Taoism stresses the harmony of the cosmos and the unity of all things, both human and non-human. Yet, even in those cultures in which the prevalent philosophy encourages a closer and integrated relationship between humanity and nature, industrial development has resulted in a high level of unsustainable use of resources and associated pollution. Holdgate (1990) suggests that the demonstration effect of lifestyles in Western societies, has a persuasive influence upon the cultures of lesser developed countries, even where religious beliefs and philosophical thought may encourage a different perception of the environment to the one commonly held in the West. For example, Foltz (2000) remarks that the dominance of the petroleum industry and the widespread pursuit of a consumer-based lifestyle in many Muslim countries, means that Muslims must share responsibility with Christians and others for the rapidly deteriorating state of the environment. Similarly in India, the commitment to rapid industrialization made by Prime Minister Nehru resulted in practices which in the long run have been detrimental to human communities and to new habitats (Gosling 1990).

The influence of religion upon thinking about humans' place within nature is evident in how ethics has been applied to the environment. The ethic of "instrumentalism" or the "use of the environment" (Simmons 1993) is based upon an anthropocentric view that the resources of the earth are solely of instrumental value for human use, their value limited to the pleasure and profit they bring to humans. Within the ethic of instrumentalism, the human species is viewed as morally superior to non-human parts of nature. Such a viewpoint is strongly influenced by Rene Descartes' discourse on the irrelevance of ethics to the human-nature relationship, in which all animals are viewed as insensible and irrational, unable to feel pain and are to be likened to machines (Nash 1989). Yet, within this ethic, nature is not necessarily always viewed homogeneously, and hierarchies of beings are identifiable. Based upon the moral significance of sentience, it is possible to differentiate between creatures or entities, that can experience pain or pleasure. Subsequently, sentient non-human animals may be granted an intrinsic value, in the sense that it is recognized that they have important interests which matter to them. Yet although these interests are taken into account, human interests will take precedent. The rest of nature, including living but non-sentient beings, has only an external value.

A second version of the anthropocentric position is the "conservation ethic", which places emphasis on ecological conservation for the benefit of humankind, rather than for the intrinsic value of any entity. This is the most common form of moral reasoning over nature and the most common diktat of contemporary environmental policy. As Vardy and Grosch (1999) suggest, it was arguably the dominant ethic of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and also the principal ethic of the World Commission on Environment and Development report or "Brundtland Report" (WCED 1987) on sustainable development. Within the concept of sustainable development, the moral responsibility rests with ensuring that future generations inherit an undiminished bank of natural resources, rather than a recognition of the "rights" of nature.

In contrast to anthropocentric ethics which refute the intrinsic value of nature, the ethic "of the environment" (Simmons 1993), accords all non-human entities the same moral standing as human beings. Subsequently, all individual non-human animals should be given the right to an uninterrupted freedom of existence, and have the same rights as humans. From this perspective not to recognize the moral worth of non-human animals would be to commit "specism". It is also possible that the intrinsic value of nature can be extended beyond sentient beings, termed the ethic of "libertarian extension", by Vardy and Grosch (1999). This ethic seeks to apply the principle of individual rights to not only all non-human animals but also all ontological beings and objects (such as trees, plants, and rocks). The basic premise is that all entities are worthy of a moral and ethical status based upon the function of their existence. Subsequently, it can be argued that all natural objects should have legal rights, a point poignantly made by Stone. In his thesis, he says that it is not a defense against natural objects having rights to say that they cannot speak. "Corporations cannot speak either; nor can states, estates, infants, incompetents, municipalities, or universities. Lawyers speak for them, as they customarily do for the ordinary citizen with legal problems" (1972:450).

An alternative ethic, termed "ecological extension" (Vardy and Grosch 1999), prioritizes the rights of species and the inter-relatedness of all entities, rather than the rights of individual beings. The essentiality of diversity and functioning of the ecosystem is emphasized within this ethic, with moral standing being given to the whole, rather than the individual. This ethic is also referred to as "eco-holism", and is exemplified in the Gaia hypothesis, in which the planet is characterized as a single and unified (or holistic) living entity with its own in-built rationale. Such an interrelatedness is stressed in Aldo Leopold's (1949) "land ethic", in which he believed an action to be right, when it preserved the stability and integrity of the biotic community. The focus upon the survival and value of ecosystems and species, over the rights of individual beings, may produce interesting moral dilemmas. For instance, is it right to cull thousands of seals to preserve a certain species of fish, or to reintroduce wolves into an ecosystem, even though this would probably result in the death of sheep and loss to human welfare?

In summary, there are at least four environmental ethical perspectives which recognize or refute the rights of nature and individuals to varying degrees. Within an anthropocentric framework, defined as viewing nature for the benefit of humankind, there are the ethics of "instrumentalism" and "conservation". In contrast, the recognition of the intrinsic value of both sentient and non-sentient entities can be
expressed through the ethic of "libertarian extension". Lastly, the ethic of "ecological extension", emphasizes the collective moral standing of the ecosystem, over the rights of individual entities.

Environmental Ethics for Tourism

Owing to the complexity of tourism, involving a variety of stakeholders, it is subsequently difficult to talk of a homogenous environmental ethic for this industry. However, in terms of establishing the framework for stakeholders' interaction with the environment, government policy for tourism has a major influence. Referring to the development of contemporary mass international tourism, one of the first government policies was initiated by Spain's General Franco in the 50s. Based upon an instrumental ethic, General Franco's Plan Nacional de Estabilization of 1959, possessed an inherent policy of "crecimiento al cualquier precio" (growth at any price). Focused upon a desire for economic growth and modernization, the pursuit of this policy was at the cost of environmental destruction, ultimately leading by the 90s to a decline in tourist numbers to parts of Spain as the environment was perceived to have lost its quality.

As referred to earlier, the late 80s marked not only a watershed in the conceptualization of human interaction with the environment, but also in the goals of tourism development. Policies driven by economic imperatives, divorced from the environmental costs of resource usage, meant that destinations in a mature stage of development had become increasingly aware of the need for an emphasis to be placed upon conservation. For example, Holder (1988), while describing the range of environmental problems that had resulted from the accumulative effects of tourism development in the Caribbean, emphasized the need for resource conservation because of communities' economic dependency on tourism.

By the 90s, the need for a conservation was also being emphasized by other stakeholders in tourism. In one of the earliest public strategies on sustainable tourism decided by different stakeholders, including representatives of government, nongovernmental organizations, industry and academia, the Globe'90 conference in Canada identified five main goals (Fennell 1999). The first four related to aspects of development and tourist experience, the fifth, to maintaining the quality of the environment on which the previous four depended. However, such calls for a conservation ethic in tourism, were not taking place in a vacuum free from the context of international directives on development policies in the wider world. Besides a realization that destruction of nature was "bad" for tourism businesses, the recommendation for the pursuit of sustainable development by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), has had a major influence upon directing development policy. The influence of the conservation ethic of sustainable development upon an international policy for tourism development was clearly illustrated by the end of the 90s. At the second United Nations General Assembly Special Session held in New
York in 1997, to review the progress made upon the implementation of Agenda 21, specific reference was made to tourism.

According to the official record of the proceedings, the expected growth in the tourism sector and the increasing reliance of many developing countries, including small island developing States, on this sector as a major employer and contributor to local, national, subregional and regional economies highlights the need for special attention to the relationship between environmental conservation and protection and sustainable tourism (Osborn and Bigg 1998:169).

Although the shift within tourism policy to a conservation ethic post-Brundtland is now de rigueur, there is little evidence to suggest a further paradigmatic movement in tourism policy making, toward recognizing the intrinsic rights of nature. However, an isolated example of a move towards the ethical principle of ecological extension is hinted at in the "United Kingdom's Strategy for Sustainable Development". Concerning its guiding principles for sustainable leisure and tourism, the report states that "The environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a leisure asset". Yet, while this may convey a recognition of the value of "being", the second part of the sentence gives a more instrumental value to nature: "Its enjoyment by future generations and its long-term survival must not be prejudiced by short-term considerations" (DOE 1994:182).

However, it would be misleading to suggest that all tourism stakeholders have decided to adopt a conservation ethic to govern their practices of interaction with nature. Certainly the growth in the popularity of the new forms such as ecotourism and nature tourism, besides suggesting an increasing concern for nature by the tourist, ironically also present opportunities for the instrumental use of nature in the pursuit of short-term financial benefits. In the early 90s, the headline in a Belizean newspaper read "Eco-terrorism at Hatchet Caye", in reference to a United States resort owner who had attempted to blow up part of an ecologically fragile coral reef to make his resort accessible to larger boats (Mowforth and Munt 1998). The use of wildlife in an instrumental fashion was dramatically illustrated by a US tour company, who offered "Kill a Seal Pup" vacations to Newfoundland (Evans 1993). The theme of the vacation was the opportunity to batter seal pups to death on the ice, a chance apparently taken up by thousands of customers.

Nevertheless, much of the industry would seem to support a conservation ethic. Central to its approach has been the development of codes of conduct to regulate its operations. The development of such codes were perhaps indicative of a realization of a need for self-regulation vis-à-vis possible imposed government regulation. As Mason and Mowforth (1996) point out, the majority of these codes have come from the coordinating organizations which represent private companies within the industry. These include the International Air Transport Association, the World Travel and Tourism Council, the Association of British Travel Agents, and the American Society of Travel Agents. The dominance of the conservation ethic, supported by a techno-
centric approach, is typified in the World Travel and Tourism Council environmental guidelines cited in Mason and Mowforth (1995), which lay down aims for environmental improvement programs for the industry. Their basic premise is that a clean and healthy environment is essential for the furthering of tourism. The environment is treated in an externalized and scientific way, with the emphasis being placed upon providing a solution to environmental problems through the employment of improved environmental management and technological controls, rather than a re-evaluation of human interaction with it. Such a technocentric approach typifies the industry's strategy toward conservation.

Some individual mass market tour operators, such as Touristik Union International and the Thomson Travel Group (now formally part of the same organization) have developed environmental policies to govern their actions. Again, these policies display a technocentric bias, emphasizing the search for management and technical solutions to problems associated with the environment, through the use of hotel and destination environmental audits, for example. Hotel groups have also adopted environmental auditing to improve their quality of operations, a notable development was the International Hotel Environment Initiative, in 1993. The development of environmental auditing and management systems is prioritized, to address issues such as reducing energy waste and pollution emissions, and the usage of pesticides. Within the private sector, emphasis is being placed upon conservation through a reliance upon improved environmental management and technological development, rather than a suggestion of a move to a less anthropocentrically rooted ethic.

Yet, there is evidence to suggest that some nongovernmental organizations, whose ethic may extend implicitly if not always explicitly beyond conservation to eco-holism, are attempting to practically implement it through the economic opportunities accruing from tourism. Supported by the rationale that nature has an economic value from tourism, environmental NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and Conservation International, have been involved with "debt for nature" swaps. The basic tenet of this concept is that the agencies repay the debts of governments owing to banks at discounted rates, in return for a policy of conservation of agreed areas which otherwise may be placed under threat from other development activities such as logging and agriculture. Appropriate forms of tourism are then encouraged in these areas, the revenues of which will be used, to support the administrative and management structures necessary to support their conservation.

However, the conservation ethic remains the central explicit theme of most environmental nongovernmental organizations, in their policies and codes of conduct. For instance, in the principles for sustainable tourism, produced by the WWF (1992) in cooperation with Tourism Concern, a conservation ethic based upon the concept of sustainable development is emphasized. In an empirical study of codes of conduct for tourism which were mostly produced by NGOs, Malloy
and Fennell (1998) established that the majority were ecologically and conservation based.

As a tourism stakeholder, local communities in destinations are often assumed to be willing to employ a conservation ethic to the nature that surrounds them. Indeed an inherent part of the rationale of Agenda 21 assumes that local communities involved in the development process will be supportive of nature conservation. Within the context of tourism, this is often particularly assumed to be the case, with the economic rationale for the conservation of resources being obvious. Despite the fact that the notion of community is problematic, often involving the conflicting interests of its different tourism stakeholder groups, it cannot be assumed that united local communities will necessarily advocate conservation. This is particularly likely to be the case when alternative forms of development to tourism are perceived as offering better economic and social opportunities.

Such a scenario existed in the case of the St. Lucia Wetlands of Natal in South Africa. The area's rich biodiversity of fauna and flora encouraged the government to pursue a policy of ecotourism development there, as an alternative to the proposed mining of the afforested dunes for titanium dioxide which would have a greater negative environmental impact. Yet, surveys among local people, mainly Zulus, showed support for the option of the development of mining over ecotourism. The reason being the mining companies had always paid relatively high wages while providing education and health facilities for communities, compared to the Natal Parks Board which manages the St. Lucia Wetlands. It pays low wages, and is historically associated with the seizure of land from local people to establish game reserves (McGregor 1994). Similarly, large segments of the local community of Aviemore in Scotland were opposed to the activities of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who were fighting through the use of litigation the development of a funicular railway for tourism which threatened the ecology of the area (Holden 2000). Many local people favored its development, upon the rationale of the promised extension of the tourist season, and the associated employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

It is suggested, based upon the policy statements and codes of conduct developed by tourism stakeholders, that the environment has been placed on the agenda as a prime consideration of how tourism is to be developed in the future. Subsequently, there has been a shift away from an instrumental ethic as a basis of conduct for the use of nature, to a more conservation based ethic. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the paradigm shift in wider development policy to sustainable development, with its inherent conservation ethic. This shift from instrumentalism to conservation, however, remains rooted in an anthropocentric context, based upon the realization that laissez-faire tourism development causes environmental problems, ultimately damaging the industry and the ability of present and future generations
to sustain their livelihoods. The concept of the environment still remains as a scientific and externalized entity, largely devoid of any spiritual value.

Such a change in ethic is also reflective of post-material values becoming more ingrained in cultures, especially Western ones, with the development of large middle classes in the social structure of their societies. There is little evidence to suggest that a new environmental ethic is desired by the majority of tourism stakeholders, with the exception of eco-warriors and possibly some environmental based NGOs. A simple reason for this lack of desire is probably explained by a consideration of whom a new environmental ethic would benefit or more poignantly disadvantage. Given that an ethical shift has already taken place within an anthropocentric framework, a new environmental ethic would have to be positioned within a non-anthropocentric context. That is an ethic which would act as a prescriber of human conduct with nature, would have to view the rights of nature as equal to those of humans. This would mean emphasis being placed upon the survival of species and ecosystems in the ethic of eco-holism, or upon the individual rights of sentient and ontological beings, intrinsic to libertarian extension. Given that neither ethic has been employed in the wider context of human development, it is only possible to hypothesize upon the practical implementations of the adoption of either ethic into tourism policy. Certainly their embracement would move decisions upon tourism development, towards a position, where environmental concerns were paramount. Eco-holism would probably permit tourism development provided it could be proved not to harm the overall functioning of the ecosystem, while libertarian extension would in likelihood lead to the refusal and delay of much tourism development, as the rights to being of objects was legally contested. Increased litigation and more extensive environmental legislation, including the requirement for more detailed environmental impact assessments, would be the likely consequence of adopting such an ethic. Tourism development would be restricted and the likelihood of denial of access to areas of nature for tourism increased. Subsequently, there would seemingly be little direct benefit or incentive for the majority of tourism stakeholders, including government, industry and local communities.

The acceptance of non-anthropocentric ethics, to govern our interaction with nature, would at this juncture seem unlikely in the immediate future. The acceptance of such a construct would require a conceptual shift in the belief system upon which decision making is currently made, notably away from a rationalized, scientific and externalized view of nature, to a more inclusive and spiritual one. Yet, for those who aspire to a more radical environmental ethic, tourism perhaps offers a vehicle of opportunity to partially achieve it. The fact that the natural environment can be given an economic value in a conserved state, through its use for tourism, means that environmentalists are not forced to fight conservation battles based upon the mere esoteric and altruistic concept of its intrinsic value. It is in the long-term economic interest of all tourism stakeholders to conserve nature as a resource. In the mask of a conservation ethic based upon an economic rationale,
it may be possible for willing stakeholders to subversively pursue a more radical ethic based upon the intrinsic rights of nature "to be".

In summary, there is no simple answer to the question of whether tourism needs a new environmental ethic. On the evidence of policy and management statements since the 80s, there is a strong argument to suggest that a new ethic of conservation now governs many tourism stakeholders' interactions with the environment. Yet the rationale of the ethic remains anthropocentric, concerned with the economic and social well-being of communities, rather than recognizing the rights of nature. The employment of a more radical ethic would require a conceptual leap which would challenge the perceived interests of most tourism stakeholders who presently show little desire to take such a leap.

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