
Sustainable tourism is not the same as Responsible Tourism

Tourism was slow to respond to these challenges. In 1992, twenty years on from the Man and the Environment conference, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF – now the World Wide Fund for Nature) commissioned a discussion paper from Tourism Concern on sustainable tourism, which identified 10 key elements.³⁶ There were four principles (sustainable use of resources; reducing over-consumption and waste; maintaining diversity; supporting local communities) and six processes (integrating tourism into planning; involving local communities; consulting stakeholders and the public; training staff; marketing tourism responsibly; undertaking research). The agenda for the 21st century, *Agenda 21*, adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, focused on sustainability actions appropriate to groups at international, national and local levels. The programme called on countries to “promote, as appropriate, environmentally sound leisure and tourism activities”, as well as “the formulation of environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programmes as a strategy for sustainable development of urban and rural settlements, and as a way of decentralizing urban development and reducing discrepancies among regions”.³⁷ It was not until three years later that the World Tourism Organization and World Travel and Tourism Council published *Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development*.³⁸ It too identified areas for action including waste, energy, water, hazardous substances and transport. It also identified some approaches: land-use planning, design, partnerships, corporate social responsibility and involving staff, customers and communities.

By the time tourism was considered at the Commission on Sustainable Development (the post-Rio process) at the United Nations in New York in 1999, Ministers of Tourism were reminding those present that Rio had been about environment *and* development. Subsequently the World Tourism Organization (WTO) launched its *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation* report at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.³⁹

36 Eber (1992)

37 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: §36.10 g 7.20 e

38 WTO and WTTC

39 Tourism and poverty reduction was endorsed by the United Nations at CSD 7 (the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development at the UN in New York 19–30 April 1999. www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd07.shtml)

In 1993, the WTO, now UNWTO,⁴⁰ defined sustainable tourism development very generally as meeting “the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future”,⁴¹ The WTO’s definition was more technical by 2001: it was envisaged as “leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.⁴² Its approach has been consistently triple bottom line in its focus on economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The Lanzarote Declaration, a Charter for Sustainable Development, agreed by the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in 1995, also addressed the issues with a firmly triple-bottom-line perspective; tourism development should be “ecologically bearable in the long term, economically viable as well as ethically and socially equitable for the local communities”. The Lanzarote Declaration argued that the “active contribution of tourism to sustainable development necessarily presupposes the solidarity, mutual respect, and participation of all the actors implicated in the process” and asserted that all “options for tourism development must serve effectively to improve the quality of life of all people.”⁴³ The Responsible Tourism agenda is broader than the environmental and, in common with these early definitions of sustainable tourism, recognises the importance of cultural integrity, ethics, equity, solidarity and mutual respect – placing quality of life at its core.

The WTO asserted that principle of sustainability should be applied to all forms of tourism; that it had to be applied to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development; and that a balance had to be struck between “these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.” In this 2004 conceptual definition the UN agency responsible for tourism recognised that sustainable tourism required “the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders ... [and] strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.” The language of the definition reflects the difficulty of any generic definition of the concept. The WTO definition refers to the “optimal use of environmental resources”;

40 The World Tourism Organization dates from 1970, though there were predecessors. It became a specialized agency of the UN in 2003 and from 1 December 2005 it was renamed the UNWTO. I have followed the convention of using the contemporary name in citing publications.

41 Sharpley (2000): 9–10

42 Quoted in Liu (2003): 460

43 Lanzarote Declaration 1–2.

respecting “the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities” contributing “to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance”; and providing “benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed...”⁴⁴ This is not a technical definition – ‘optimal use’, ‘authenticity’, ‘inter-cultural understanding and tolerance’ and ‘fairly distributed’ are desirable ends but they are incapable of neutral objective definition. Setting sustainable tourism management objectives is inherently political.

As the history demonstrates, it has long been recognised that environment and development are inseparable challenges. They are combined and magnified in the oxymoronic concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development lacks definition and measurable indicators, to determine whether or not tourism is being successfully managed towards sustainability by government. Lip service is paid to the concept: it is used to generate work for consultants and NGOs, to bolster the reputation of companies and governments, but rarely are the outcomes measured or reported. We are not able to demonstrate whether tourism is becoming more or less sustainable; the concept is widely used but it is difficult to determine whether the ideas are operative or inoperative.⁴⁵ The concept appears to be operative and is often used to secure resources and support, but in practice the principles are not applied, the concept is inoperative, the objectives are not achieved. It is left to someone else. Responsibility is not taken.

Responsible Tourism and sustainable tourism are not the same thing. Responsible Tourism places the emphasis on what individuals and groups do to address those sustainability issues which arise in particular places, addressing local priorities, transparently reporting what is being done to address the local priorities. When individuals, businesses or governments assert that they are engaging in Responsible Tourism, ask them for the specifics. Ask:

- 1 What are they taking responsibility for?
- 2 How are they taking responsibility, what are they doing and how much are they doing? and
- 3 What have they achieved?

The outcomes and impacts are the evidence we need to look for to judge whether responsibility is being effectively taken.

Responsible Tourism recognises that tourism is what we, visitors and visited, make it. We are individually and collectively responsible for how

44 WTO (2004): 7

45 Harris (1971): 49

tourism functions in a place, for its positive and negative impacts. If we take responsibility, we can change it.

Tourism may be unsustainable for many reasons, some of which are more easily addressed than others. Some can be resolved through individual decisions by consumers and producers, if sufficient individuals make the change. But some of the causes are more intractable. The world's population continues to grow rapidly and more of those individuals have time and financial resources to travel, at least for the foreseeable future.⁴⁶ Often suggestions to deal with fossil fuels by growing biofuels are adopted without thinking about the consequences for food production and water supply. There is a tendency to focus on one issue rather than to seek to address, in an integrated way, the major issues which confront us. Individual action by consumers and businesses can contribute, but such initiatives are vulnerable to freeloading, which undermines the efficacy of any individual contribution. The tourism sector's responsibility for addressing its contribution to anthropogenic climate change is given close attention in Chapter 6.

The tragedy of the commons

Close to Lake Koronia on the northern coast of Greece, the local mayor, over a good lunch, described at length to me what was on his mind. He was receiving increasing numbers of complaints from hoteliers and guest-house owners because of falling occupancy rates, resulting in lower prices and revenues. The problem was an oversupply of beds. As I went to leave he invited me to see his new guest house in the process of being converted. He had correctly calculated that with his connections, and a modern newly decorated property with good facilities, he would capture enough of the market to have a profitable business. He would benefit to the detriment of all the other accommodation providers. Of course, in time, others will develop new rooms which will be to his detriment – this tragedy plays out in Greece and around the world.

Tourism is dogged by the 'tragedy of the commons', a phrase which describes how the individual pursuit of self-interest does not necessarily result in the common good, and, moreover, in a finite world may result in ruin for all. In an influential paper that appeared in the journal *Science* in 1968, Garrett Hardin described how individuals who rationally and independently pursue their own self-interest will ultimately deplete and degrade a shared

⁴⁶ The 'perfect storm' which we confront as a species in a finite world is likely to begin to restrict growth later this century.

limited resource even though this is not in the long-term interest of the group or society.

As Hardin writes:

Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons.⁴⁷

Writing more than a decade before Hardin, Gordon described the same issue in the context of fishing:

There appears ... to be some truth in the conservative dictum that everybody's property is nobody's property. Wealth that is free for all is valued by no one because he who is foolhardy enough to wait for its proper time of use will only find that it has been taken by another. The fish in the sea are valueless to the fisherman, because there is no assurance that they will be there for him tomorrow if they are left behind today.⁴⁸

This is not a new problem. Hardin was writing about an issue which also concerned Aristotle: "What is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest";⁴⁹ and William Foster Lloyd who, writing in the wake of the enclosure movement in England in 1833, developed a theory of the commons as a critique of Adam Smith, suggesting that improvident use of property owned in common was likely to lead to overgrazing, as individuals pursued their own short-term interest. We have known about the tragedy for a long time but continue to fail to take responsibility for it.

This is an elegant description of the problem of common pool resources,⁵⁰ where the common pool resource is a fugitive, migratory, resource. In Hardin's view, it was a tragedy because overexploitation and ruin follow predictably from the rational behaviour of individuals pursuing their individual self-interest in an unregulated commons. Hardin's tragedy of the commons

47 Hardin (1968): 1244

48 Gordon (1954): 124

49 Aristotle: Book II Chap 3

50 Common pool resources are those where users diminish the resource and the amount available for others, but where users cannot be excluded. This results in over-use and an unwillingness by users to maintain them, since they cannot be sure to capture the benefit. It is one of the roles of government to manage common pool resources. See Healy (1994) for a discussion of common property resources and tourism.

was developed to argue for restraint in the growth of population, but it is far more widely applicable. The tourist, like the fish, is a fugitive migratory resource. Hardin's view contradicts that of the economist Adam Smith, who believed that although a free market may appear unrestrained and chaotic, it is in fact self-regulating, and that the 'invisible hand' of the market ensures that individuals acting in their own self-interest benefit society as a whole.

In spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose ... be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society.⁵¹

Smith was writing in the eighteenth century when the world seemed a lot less finite than it is today. We now realise that precious commodities are in increasingly short supply. As John Beddington, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, has argued we face a 'perfect storm', leading to civil conflict and mass migration as people flee from the worst-affected regions.⁵² Tourism constituting nearly 12% of global consumption contributes to creating the perfect storm, and will not be immune from the consequences. The Arab Spring was precipitated by the 2011 winter drought in eastern China's wheat-growing region, resulting in increased importing and doubling of global wheat prices. The price spike was a significant trigger for regional instability and a dramatic reduction in tourism to Tunisia and Egypt.⁵³ Gleick⁵⁴ has written about the long history of conflicts over water in the MENA⁵⁵ countries, the part played by climate change and reduced water availability, the recent increase in incidences of water-related violence and pointed to the complicated connections between water and conflict in Syria.

The tragedy of the commons is at the heart of Lord Marshall's⁵⁶ description of the tourism and travel industry as "...essentially the renting out for short-term lets of other people's environments, whether this is a coastline, a city, a

51 Smith (1759 6th edition 1790): 350

52 John Beddington. Speech to UK Sustainable Development 2009 conference, 18 March 2009. BBC: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7951838.stm>. The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/mar/18/perfect-storm-john-beddington-energy-food-climate>

53 Sternberg (2012)

54 Gleick (2014)

55 Middle East and North Africa

56 Chair of British Airways speaking at the first Tourism for Tomorrow Awards in 1994

mountain range, or a rainforest".⁵⁷ These are all commons in the sense that they are open-access or common-pool resources, even though parts are sometimes privatised for tourism use. Tourism makes extensive use of common pool resources:⁵⁸ public and merit priced⁵⁹ spaces, streets, public squares, parks, museums and galleries and yet pays no user fees for that public space. As Galbraith pointed out in *The Affluent Society*, first published in 1958, in communities where public services fail to "keep abreast of private consumption", an "atmosphere of private opulence and public squalor results..."⁶⁰ Freeloading contributes to the destruction of public space and environment, an issue which we focus on in Chapter 3 when we look at destinations.

In *The Logic of Collective Action*, Olson challenged the presumption that the potential benefit of collective action would naturally lead individuals to co-operate. He wrote: "...unless the number of individuals is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests*"⁶¹ (emphasis in original).

How does this apply to tourism? As Lord Marshall tacitly acknowledged, and as Holden argued in 2005, tourism is dependent upon resources – natural resources and public places in particular – which share the characteristics of open-access, common pool⁶² or common property resources.⁶³ Healy has argued that the inability to control the use of common property resources and the absence of resource protection undermines any incentive to reinvest in the nature reserve or public space, because of the free-rider problem. Tourism landscapes are, Healy argues, subject to over-use, and to the 'investment incentive' problems: why invest in maintaining the environment if you cannot ensure that the free-riders do not gain the advantage of your investment?⁶⁴

57 Quoted in Goodwin (2002): 17. The next sentence, the enlightened self-interest case for business engagement with the sustainability of tourism is more often quoted: "These 'products' must be kept fresh and unsullied not just for the next day, but for every tomorrow."

58 See Briassoulis (2002) who concludes that "tourism commons... the collection of all tangible and intangible resources ... are identical to the tourist product." (pp. 1081–1082)

59 Merit goods are those that a society judges should be available on the basis of need or in the public interest freely available and priced, for social reasons, below cost or market value.

60 Galbraith (1958): 191, this is most often quoted as 'private affluence and public squalor'

61 Olson (1965): 2

62 Common pool resources are very similar to common property resources and here I am using common pool to include both. Common property resources differ in that the common has designated owners who are in theory able to manage it collectively.

63 Holden (2005): 340

64 Healy (1994): 597 There is little or no motive for investment if the benefit goes to all and the investor gains no advantage from it.

The most intractable open access challenge confronting the travel and tourism industry is greenhouse gas emissions. As the world's population and the international economy grow, so does the demand for aviation, one of the principal contributors. On a prosaic level, we have all experienced the tragedy of the commons, often as farce, at the luggage carousel in the arrivals hall, where individuals seek advantage by crossing the yellow line, crowding the carousel to grab their bags – at the expense of the group and their own ability to get their bags on to a trolley. Tour operators continue to organise trips, and tourists continue to visit, destinations like Venice, Prague, Machu Picchu and the Peak District despite the congestion. The individual benefit to them of visiting outweighs any discomfort they may experience from congestion. Congestion, like traffic, is always caused by others.

At the heart of the tragedy of the commons and the logic of collective action is the free-rider or freeloader problem. As Ostrom has argued: "Whenever one person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to the joint effort, but to free ride on the efforts of others."⁶⁵ This is why tourism so often turns to the state, to national or local government, to fund destination marketing. All tourism businesses benefit from collective marketing and all can potentially benefit as free riders at the cost of those who contribute. To ensure that all contribute, businesses in the tourism sector look for government funding which effectively means that the sector is free loading on local tax payers – which other industry looks to government and the taxpayer to fund its marketing? Where accommodation providers contribute through a bed tax or levy this is generally reliant on local regulation and ordinances.

How then to address the tragedy of the commons? How is tourism to be made more sustainable? Whose responsibility is it?

As we have seen that one approach is to rely on the state to enforce rules which ensure that the public good is respected and assured, the rational best interest of the group protected and furthered by legislators, administrators and enforcers who are able to determine the collective interest and to ensure that everyone contributes, removing or criminalising the free rider option. Effectively, political action is taken to ensure that through legislation everyone within the jurisdiction complies with a minimum standard of behaviour, even when there would be individual advantage from non-compliance.

Human behaviour can be, and is, regulated through legislation or by rules within an organisation like a trade association or company. However,

65 Ostrom (1990): 6

individual rational self-interest is also constrained or channelled through social norms. Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius have demonstrated how social norms can be used to motivate individuals to be more environmentally responsible in hotels.⁶⁶ Bicchieri in a paper in 1990 suggested that people may start to co-operate, experiment and adjust their interactions and strategy resulting in a norm of co-operation and that these behavioural patterns can spread across a society; and argues that “social norms embody a form of rationality and are ultimately reducible to individual preferences and beliefs.”⁶⁷ Bicchieri has also suggested how norms evolve and how particular psychological propensities may naturally lead individuals to evolve fairness norms.⁶⁸ Porter and Kramer argue that there are five ways in which corporate advantage can be ‘reaped’ and the competitive benefits remain substantial even where there are free riders. Those companies which take the lead gain an edge over the others; by engaging others in the initiative companies can “greatly diminish the free rider problem”⁶⁹; those with the largest market share will gain the most; by aligning the effort with other corporate strategy the benefits are enhanced; and there are reputational and relationship benefits for those which take the lead by taking responsibility.⁷⁰ Following Bicchieri’s argument, social norms of responsibility may evolve in the same way as fairness norms.

Responsibility: What’s in a word?

There is a fundamental difference between responsibility and sustainability. Sustainability is an abstract noun; it defies definition in any meaningful sense until transformed into an adjective (sustainable) and attached to another noun like tourism; and even then it requires further definition. General definitions are always mere aspirational statements of intent and generally in-operative. Sustainable and sustainability are generally used passively in large part because the end state or objective is undefined and therefore inoperative.

Responsibility is a contested word; the meaning is contested for every generation in highly charged arguments between parents and adolescents. It is a fundamental part of the socialisation of a child into an adult. Taken or

66 Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008)

67 Bicchieri (1990): 861

68 Bicchieri (2005)

69 Trade associations are often used to achieve this – for example with health and safety standards through the Federation of Tour Operators and now ABTA in the UK.

70 Porter and Kramer (2002): 10-11

given, responsibility requires action and often carries accountability for action or inaction and for intended and unintended consequences.

Reported as first occurring in English in 1599, responsible is defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1983) as (a) 'correspondent or answering to something'; 'answerable, accountable ... liable to be called to account' (b) 'morally accountable for one's actions; capable of rational conduct' 1836; (c) 'capable of fulfilling an obligation or trust, reliable, trustworthy' 1691; (d) 'of respectable appearance' 1780; (e) 'involving responsibility or obligation' 1855. Responsibility is reported as first occurring in 1787 'the state or fact of being responsible'; 1796 'a charge trust or duty for which one is responsible.'

The etymology of the word is from the Latin *responsabilis* and *respondere* and it continues to carry the sense of obligation from the Latin along with the sense of moral purpose which resides in the idea of taking responsibility – of being amongst those – or the one – who does not look away or pass by on the other side. There are three clear elements in the concepts of responsible and responsibility and of course language evolves and meaning changes subtly, and not so subtly, over time.

- 1 The **capacity, willingness or obligation to respond** – the idea which lies behind the quotation often falsely attributed to Edmund Burke: 'All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing';
- 2 **Obligation, accountability, liability and blame** – responsibility is imposed on us – the sense we don't like – it is this sense of responsibility which gives rise to guilt and shame;
- 3 **Empowerment, respons-ability**, the opportunity to take responsibility, the opportunity to demonstrate our good character, to feel good about ourselves.

Visser (2011) discusses responsibility in his book on *The Age of Responsibility*; he places it in the context of 'our ability to respond'; as a counterbalance to rights; and points out that "Taking responsibility, at home or in the workplace, is an expression of confidence in our own abilities, a chance to test our limits, to challenge ourselves and to see how far we can go. Responsibility is the gateway to achievement."⁷¹ Visser recognises the empowerment that comes with the taking of responsibility.

Taking responsibility is a way of taking ownership in our lives, of acknowledging our own hand in the shaping of destiny. Responsibil-

71 Visser (2011): 4

ity is the antidote for victimhood. Responsibility, if we manage it well, should never be like the curse of Sisyphus, eternally rolling a rock uphill, but rather a blessing gratefully received. For what can be more joyous than making a positive contribution in the world, or making a difference in someone else's life?⁷²

Kramer and Porter advocate 'Responsive CSR' which they define as comprising:

two elements : acting as a good corporate citizen, attuned to the evolving social concerns of stakeholders, and mitigating existing or anticipated adverse effects from business activities...⁷³

Responsibility is a highly nuanced word. As we have seen, it is about how we respond individually and collectively to the issues which we see around us. Do we respond willingly, decide this is something we should and can do something about and take responsibility OR do we have responsibility placed upon by an employer or by legislation? In either case we are accountable – but in different ways. Responsibility is not spread evenly around society – we expect children to take less of it than adults; we expect more of those in positions of public office, those who are legally accountable and those who receive salaries because of the responsibility they carry, than we do of 'ordinary people'. We admire those who take responsibility and make great personal efforts and sacrifices to tackle a particular injustice or issue. This is in the tradition of wanting to make a difference.

Internationally a Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities⁷⁴ was proclaimed in 1998 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the city of Valencia, so it is also known as the Valencia Declaration. It was designed to strengthen Human Rights through the assigning of 'duty' meaning an ethical or moral obligation; and 'responsibility', an obligation that is legally binding under existing international law, pursuing the transition from moral rights to legal rights and transforming moral duties into legal duties. This is couched in the language of duty, obligation and legal accountability.

The Charter of Human Responsibilities was first proposed in 1999 by the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World. As they point out:

the notion of responsibility is found among all human groups. There are differences, though, in the way in which responsibility is assumed. In

72 Visser (2011): 5

73 Kramer and Porter (2006): 84

74 <http://globalization.icaap.org/content/v2.2/declare.html>

some societies responsibility is assigned by the group to one individual, rather than taken up by one person or another at his or her own initiative. So the way in which each person is held responsible for his actions in practice varies. And cultural differences are even more marked when it comes to giving a legal context to the concept of responsibility.⁷⁵

Recognising this, Edith Sizoo⁷⁶ edited a collection of papers about responsibility and culture providing a set of reference on the meaning of responsibility in a range of linguistic and cultural traditions. As Sizoo points out in her introduction:

the idea of responsibility does resound everywhere, although it is often expressed with more than one word, depending on the various relationships between people on between human-beings and the non-human living world.⁷⁷

As she points out, “in concrete behaviour, people are not always sure where the line is drawn, what is still to be considered a manifestation of [responsibility] and what is not.”⁷⁸ In non-western languages Sizoo argues responsibility means not only ‘carrying a change’ it is “often also synonymous with the ‘burden’ (literally and figuratively).”⁷⁹ She quotes Hans Jonas who wrote in *The Principle of Responsibility*, “We have become more dangerous for nature than nature has ever been for humanity. The danger are we.”⁸⁰ Sizoo argues that human beings are part of a ‘woven universe’ and that responsibility “not only transcends one’s own place of residence on the earth, but also transcends out own lifetime to that of future generations.”⁸¹

There follows a brief consideration of the values and attributes attached to the word responsibility in a number of countries and cultures. These are drawn from only one source in each case and it should be remembered that there will be a varied understanding of the concepts within cultures and linguistic groups. They are presented here to remind us all that interpretation and translation is an art form and that words cannot simply be translated – particularly when, like responsibility, they carry embedded values, attitudes and meaning of considerable significance – and they are often contested.

75 www.charter-human-responsibilities.net accessed 30 July 2014

76 <http://www.charter-human-responsibilities.net/spip.php?article133>

77 Sizoo (2010): 21

78 Sizoo (2010): 22

79 Sizoo (2010): 23

80 Sizoo (2010): 40

81 Sizoo (2010): 43

Arab-Islamic Culture: the discourse of responsibility “is to a great extent an ambiguous and problematic discourse.”⁸² Responsibility is “negatively associated with questioning/interrogation and the fear of being asked”; “associated with the exercise of power in a way which does not allow those subjected to it to ask questions”⁸³; and, “responsibility is generally felt to be a burden.”⁸⁴

Brazil, Portuguese: Brazilian dictionaries “agree on their definitions of *responsabilidade* as an obligation to answer for one’s own actions and those of others.”⁸⁵ Responsibility is a burden.

China, Confucian Thought: responsibility in Chinese has two characters *ze* and *ren*. *Ze* means to tax, entrust with a duty, to ask, reprimand or demand and it also has the meaning of to chastise or punish. *Ren*, ‘assume the role’, ‘shoulder the responsibility’ – trust, faithfulness and sincerity. In Chinese culture the relationship of responsibility is rooted in subordination: it means “entrusting a person worthy of confidence with a responsibility, or demanding assumption of a responsibility from a person worthy of confidence.”⁸⁶

France: “two complementary etymologies: the Latin verb *spondere*, to promise, to undertake to be responsible for someone or something, and *respondere*, to answer or answer for... a commitment to oneself ... and commitment to others in terms of taking action.”⁸⁷ Citing Brémaud, responsibility is a weight and a burden; the person who carries responsibility is distinguished from the common herd – they are “lofty, true, exceptional, important, absolute, major and even eminent...”⁸⁸. The French civil code makes an “explicit link between responsibility and fault”.⁸⁹ This tends to make Responsible Tourism less attractive as a concept in France.

Germany: *Verantwortung*, responsibility, can be used retrospectively or prospectively. Retrospective responsibility is concerned with the attribution of fault and guilt. Prospective responsibility by contrast are concerned with professional roles, duties and responsibilities linked to particular tasks.⁹⁰

82 Al-Noman (2010): 135

83 Those who dissent may be seen as totally irresponsible

84 Al-Noman (2010): 152

85 Trajber (2010): 214

86 Siyan (2010): 157

87 Eberhard (2010): 116-117

88 Eberhard (2010): 118

89 Eberhard (2010): 123

90 Ranson (2010): 194-5

Bonhoeffer participated in a failed assassination attempt on Hitler and was executed for it. Bonhoeffer argued that civic courage and responsible action “could only come from a free sense of responsibility in a free man”. Bonhoeffer distinguished between duty and responsibility: “In the end, the man of duty will have to do his duty even if towards the devil.”⁹¹

India: *Uttardaitva* and *zimedari* are both compound words used in India combining ‘reply, response, answer’ with ‘responsibility’ or ‘duty’: it has to do with what we must ‘give’ others, what we owe them, what is due to them’. “In many Indian languages the conjunction of response and burden is common, in many modern Indian languages it is linked to action, ‘*kartavya*’: valor, courage, skill in action.”⁹²

New Zealand: Emphasis on response-ability, “responsiveness rather than a judicial approach and burdensome sense of guilt.”⁹³ Ability meaning both taking action and the ability to act – they quote the Charter “our responsibility is proportional to the knowledge and power which each of us holds.”⁹⁴ The Maori principle of Kaitiakitanga “requests that humans take responsibility for their actions and interventions in the natural world” and “responsibility between individuals and between people.”⁹⁵

In Spanish responsibility translates as ‘*la responsabilidad*’. The meaning overlaps with common English usage – but the order in the online dictionary is liability, duty, obligation, authority, accountability and last maturity ‘to show some responsibility’. The usage that involves taking a lead, standing out from the crowd, ‘stepping up to the plate’⁹⁶ is less prominent in the Spanish usage.⁹⁷

In the USA: responsibility “has the double meaning of accountability and being in charge”⁹⁸. In a nation founded on individualism Christians argues that “collective responsibility is extraordinarily difficult.”⁹⁹

Working with the Association of Independent Tour Operators it was clear

91 Ranson (2010): 200

92 Paranjape (2010): 83-4

93 Royal and Martin (2010): 48

94 Royal and Martin (2010): 49

95 Royal and Martin (2010): 55,56

96 To take responsibility for doing something; based on the baseball meaning of *step up to the plate* (move into position to hit the ball) <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/step+up+to+the+plate> accessed 30 July 2014

97 <http://www.spanishdict.com/translate/responsibility> accessed 30 July 2014

98 Christians (2010): 65

99 Christians (2010): 74

that the Association would not, and could not, commit to ethical tourism because it was too broad. The commitment to responsibility, rather than to ethical practice, may be seen by some as a weaker proposition. However, the advantage of the concept of responsibility is that it suggests that members need to respond, to act, rather than standing, or sitting, on their principles and their ethics. Responsibility implies and requires action. AITO was the first trade association to commit to Responsible Tourism, and the recognition that sometimes harmful effects outweigh the good was important. Critical to creating change is acknowledging and owning up to problems, and taking responsibility for making changes.¹⁰⁰

Ethics begins with taking responsibility for the other, with accepting that others have rights too. When other human beings are regarded, and treated, as less than human our ethics are in jeopardy. As Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*, “everyone is really responsible to all men, for all men and for everything.”¹⁰¹ In English we have no easy way of saying this, ‘common humanity’ is perhaps closest to it. In southern Africa *Ubuntu*, an Nguni Bantu word, means human-ness. It is both a moral attribute of individuals and an inter-connectedness – something close to ‘I am because you are.’ It is a social ethic, a unifying vision enshrined in the Zulu maxim ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’ (‘one is a person through others’).¹⁰²

Krippendorf’s legacy

Jost Krippendorf, more than anyone else, has promoted the ethic of responsibility in tourism. His work informed the approach taken in the UK to developing Responsible Tourism, and his influence is also evident in the South African national policy. Krippendorf was motivated by the negative cultural and environmental damage that the post-war tourism boom had inflicted on his native Switzerland in the 1950s and 1960s: right from its inception, Responsible Tourism has not solely been concerned with the developing world. In 1975 Krippendorf published, *Die Landschaftsfresser: Tourismus und Erholungslandschaft, Verderben oder Segen?* [*The Landscape Eaters*] which raised concern about the impact of tourism on the Alpine landscape. In 1982 he argued: “ecology should be placed before economy in tourism, not least for the sake of the economy itself and all who participate in it.” This was an early

100 Goodwin (2016)

101 Dostoevsky (1952): 170

102 Gade (2012): 492