

THE ROLE OF NGOS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN TURKEY

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THE ROLE OF NGOS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN TURKEY

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The Role of NGOs in Sustainable Tourism in Turkey

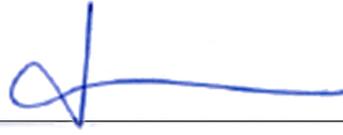
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May 2015

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ayşenur Gökçetin, certify that

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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Signature.....*A. Gökçetin*.....

Date .....*18.06.2015*.....

## ABSTRACT

### The Role of NGOs in Sustainable Tourism in Turkey

Given the worldwide importance of NGOs, which are regarded in recent years as the primary advocates and practitioners of sustainable tourism, this research seeks to determine the degree and nature of contribution by selected NGOs in Turkey for establishing and promoting sustainable tourism activities and to inquire their transformative power in terms of sustainable tourism. Activities of NGOs in developed and developing countries might present different patterns and analyzing the case of NGOs in Turkey, which is an emerging economy, might imply a new perspective.

With a preliminary NGO database search, relevant NGOs that are involved with sustainable tourism were identified and selected based on four criteria. After a content analysis of NGOs' websites with regard to their sustainable tourism activities, a semi structured interview was directed to NGO respondents. Afterwards, interviews were coded and results were analyzed in a qualitative manner. It is found that there are differences among directly and indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs in their involvement with sustainable tourism and their transformative power for sustainability and that sustainable tourism has not been established or developed well in Turkey to this day. In a nutshell, it is identified in this thesis that most pressing tourism issues in Turkey are the lack of effective management, environmental destruction and lack of clear tourism planning. Main roles of NGOs to address these issues are found to be raising awareness, conservation of cultural and natural assets as well as involvement in tourism planning.

## ÖZET

### The Role of NGOs in Sustainable Tourism in Turkey

Son yıllarda sürdürülebilir turizmin ana savunucuları ve uygulayıcıları olarak görülen STK'ların dünya genelinde önemini göz önünde bulundurarak, bu araştırma Türkiye'de faaliyet gösteren STK'ların, bu alanda etkinlik göstermeye yönelerek sürdürülebilir turizm eylemleri oluşturmak ve geliştirmek için yaptıkları katkının seviyesine ve doğasına ilaveten sürdürülebilir turizm konusundaki dönüştürücü güçlerini sorgulamaktadır. Gelişen ve gelişmekte olan ülkelerdeki STK'ların sürdürülebilir turizm alanındaki faaliyetlerinde farklılıklar görülmekle birlikte, bu durumun yükselen piyasa ülkelerinden birisi olan Türkiye'deki yerinin incelenmesi yeni bir bakış açısı sunabilir.

Ön bir STK veritabanı araştırması sayesinde sürdürülebilir turizm ile ilişkili olan uygun STK'lar dört ölçüte göre belirlenmiş ve seçilmiştir. Gerçekleştirdikleri çeşitli sürdürülebilir turizm faaliyetlerini saptamak için STK'ların web sitelerindeki veriler ışığında bir içerik analizi yapılmış, ardından araştırma katılımcıları ile yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerin kodlanmasında ve sonuçların analizinde nitel yöntem kullanılmıştır. Sürdürülebilir turizm ile doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkili STK'lar arasında sürdürülebilir turizm faaliyetleri ve sürdürülebilir turizm konusundaki dönüştürücü güçleri bakımından farklılıklar gözlenmiş, Türkiye'de sürdürülebilir turizmin tam olarak yerleşmediği ve gelişmediği görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırmada Türkiye'de turizm ile ilgili en önemli sorunların etkili bir yönetimin olmaması, çevresel tahribat ve belirgin bir turizm planlamasının olmaması olduğu saptanmıştır. Buna karşılık STK'ların üstlendiği başlıca roller farkındalık yaratmak, kültürel ve doğal varlıkları korumak ve turizm planlamasında yer almaktır.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBOs: Community Based Non-governmental Organizations

ENGOs: Environmental Non-governmental Organizations

GEF-SGP: Global Environment Facility's Small Grant Program

IMF: International Monetary Fund

INGOs: International Non-governmental Organizations

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

REC: Regional Environment Center

STGM: Civil Society Development Center (Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi in  
Turkish)

UN: United Nations

UNEP: United Nations Environment Program

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNCED: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCSD: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

WCED: World Commission on the Environment and Development

WTO: World Trade Organization

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

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## CHAPTER 1

### AN INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

The waves of globalization have resulted in rapid and profound changes on the societies of the world and these changes have mirrored themselves differently in diverse societies. Early on, it was hoped that globalization would bring with itself an acceleration of economic growth and welfare. However, as the years pass on, these hopes have been challenged by some environmental, social, cultural and technological facts. In particular, developing and underdeveloped countries have been affected by globalization due to their structural sensitivities to those massive changes and pressures (Finnetty, 2001). For example, product standardization and reduction brought by globalization threaten the diversity which is implied by the sustainability concept (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Monopolization of power centers around developed countries and in the hands of some grand companies did not provide help to those who struggle in poverty and who lack various resources to development; actually, it fostered marginalization for disabled communities. The implementations of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) also gave way to discrimination between first and third world countries. Efforts to compensate those effects of globalization are provided by more humanitarian organizations such as United Nations (UN) and especially United Nations Development Program (UNDP), although their effectiveness on different levels is not satisfactory (Finnetty, 2001).

Globalization has been affecting all sectors and tourism is no exception. In fact, tourism has experienced massive evolutionary and sometimes revolutionary

changes with the tides of globalization. And tourism industry is excessively vulnerable to the crises which globalization gave birth, among them environmental, economic and political ones, due to its voluntary nature (Swarbrooke, 1999; Hall, 2010).

Developing and underdeveloped countries alike are inclined to achieve a level of economic development. However, this attempt has not catered way to equality between the rich and the poor at all. Economic developments often have failed to address environmental, social and cultural problems in those countries (Finnetty, 2001). It is safe to state that if economic gains are not supported by the solutions to other vital problems whether in tourism industry or in another one, a holistic development cannot be mentioned and either an economic stability cannot be sustained for too long for non-developed countries.

### 1.1 Rationale for research on NGOs and sustainable tourism

The current state of development discussed above clearly indicates that there is an urgent need to embrace all dimensions of sustainable development at once and translate them into practices. On the one hand, tourism offers benefits to the societies in which it is conducted; it has positive impacts on socio-economic and political developments, for example, job opportunities (UNCSD NGO Steering Committee, 1999). It also fosters a comprehensive understanding of other cultures and leads to an appreciation of different cultures. But, resource based nature of tourism now calls for sustainable use of resources for the present and future generations. With globalization at hand, tourism is a rapidly growing phenomenon and has become a major dynamic in global changes: advancement in transportation systems, fragmentation of tourism products, trans-nationalization of ownership, mass tourism,

a consumerist perspective, commodification of various assets especially that of non economical ones such as culture (Hall, 2010) which may have negative impacts on environment, culture and economy.

It has been broadly recognized that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), either local or international, are major influencers of tourism planning and the sustainable tourism practices (Schelhaas, 2007; Wearing et al., 2005; Lovelock, 2001; Unerman and O'Dwyer, 2010; Finnetty, 2001; Sithole, 2005; Barnett, 2008; Kennedy and Dornan, 2009). The recognition of NGOs' importance in sustainable tourism mainly goes back to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992) or also known as Rio Summit. This summit was a consequence of United Nations (UN) sponsored World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987). This commission's report, or the Report of the Brundtland Commission called *Our Common Future* (1987), also identified NGOs as one of the vital stakeholders for achieving sustainable development. Similarly, United Nations Committee on Sustainable Development indicates in its *Tourism and Sustainable Development* paper (UNCSD NGO Steering Committee, 1999, p. 4) that "both environmental and social NGOs have an important role to play for community development by putting pressure on the industry and facilitating contracts and local participation".

Sustainable tourism actions such as ecotourism have been initiated by a range of NGOs as exemplary sustainable development in the world (i.e. Sithole, 2005). According to Schelhaas (2007, p.143) "many projects that aim for more sustainable tourism are started by 'forerunners'... this is usually NGOs and small tour operators." As they widened their scope of activities; NGOs have gained more competencies over the years and now they, especially highly professional NGOs,

have a bigger influence over policy making process; they have expert knowledge and contacts on certain issues and thereby could use their expertise in resourcing, lobbying and monitoring activities, vision, guidance, fundraising skills (UNCSD NGO Steering Committee, 1999; Mylonopoulos et al., 2010). Today, primary functions of NGOs seem to be supporting democratization and development (Aydın, 2011). At the same time, grassroots NGOs can encourage local activities by participation, understand the problems better, and find suitable solutions and practices in an effective way.

At this point, the question might be “Why should tourism be specifically involved with non-governmental organizations?” Although they are widely recognized as vital stakeholders for tourism planning and sustainable tourism initiatives, NGOs are comparatively little-focused in the tourism context. These organizations have illustrated that they are influential in encouraging or hindering tourism practices with differing reasons. For example, Goa, Vail, Bali, and Banff are some of the places where mainly environmental groups have been active, and made a noteworthy impact upon the way that tourism is practiced in these places (Lovelock, 2007). There are also instances in which some NGOs are impediment to such kind of development – i.e. NGOs funded by foreign donors (Mpfou, 2012). Hence, there appears a need for exploratory studies of NGOs and their role in the tourism sector in Turkey to fill this theoretical gap.

## 1.2 Purpose of the thesis

Given the attached importance of NGOs worldwide, especially environmental associations in the context of sustainable tourism, this research seeks to examine and evaluate the degree and nature of contribution by selected NGOs in Turkey to

establish and promote sustainable tourism activities within the framework of sustainable development in an exploratory manner. The need for collaboration and cooperation among various tourism stakeholders is often mentioned in the tourism literature (e.g. UNCSD NGO Steering Committee, 1999). However, the role of NGOs in sustainable tourism has just recently gained attention. So, this research aims to understand the role of NGOs in sustainable tourism in Turkey and to determine their transformative power in this perspective. The research analyzes the statements, propositions and activities of NGOs affiliated directly or indirectly with tourism in Turkey in a systematic way. Even though NGOs in Turkey have relatively short history, it is our belief that they have the potential to shed light onto direction of sustainable tourism for this country.

These organizations in Turkey, when compared to other countries, are often seen as less effective into politics and local people and when they are inspected, it seems that they are more involved with well being and development (Aslan, 2010). This study also aimed to contribute to the knowledge on the place and importance of sustainable tourism for NGOs whereas literature shows little research in the context of Turkey. Furthermore, comparisons among these NGOs in terms of their tendencies and attitudes for sustainability are also provided.

### 1.3 Research questions

The primary research question of the research is: What is the role of NGOs in sustainable tourism in Turkey? To posit an answer to it, supporting questions follow as:

- a) Is tourism in Turkey sustainable from the lenses of NGOs?;
- b) Are local NGOs in Turkey fitting organizations that can achieve sustainable development?;
- c) Do

NGOs have a transformative power for creating consumer and sector trends in tourism in line with sustainability?

#### 1.4 Objectives of the research

In line with the primary research question, this research has specifically the objectives of:

- discussing the notions of sustainable development and sustainable tourism for Turkey,
- presenting the development of NGOs in history,
- identifying NGOs' perceptions of tourism in Turkey,
- identifying the roles of local NGOs in sustainable tourism,
- determining their current and desired future roles of NGOs in driving sustainability and sustainable tourism practices,
- evaluating the capability of these organizations to reach sustainable tourism goals, and
- highlighting obstacles and opportunities for related NGOs to participate in this domain, presenting suggestions and general strategies for NGOs involved with sustainable tourism.

## CHAPTER 2

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

With global changes, various impacts of tourism are observed in a clear way now.

Butler (1999, p.8) asserts that “if there is a single factor that has the potential to change the nature of tourism more than any other, it is the introduction of the concept of sustainable development” because it promises fundamental changes in the components of tourism. The concept of ‘sustainable development’ has been long recognized together with 1987 WCED Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, which was commissioned by the United Nations (UN). It indicates that a sole economic success is not sufficient for the longevity of resources; that it is only plausible with intergenerational equity as well as intragenerational equity (Finnetty, 2001; Tosun, 2001; Macbeth, 2005). Here, sustainable development was explained as:

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs. (WCED, 1987, p. 8)

This report placed the concept of sustainable development centre stage and promoted it as a vehicle for deliverance (Murphy, 1994) on the basis that we do not inherit this planet from our predecessors, but rather borrow it from our successors, namely our children. Furthermore, the focus of the report was mainly on the environment rather than social or economic dimensions (Swarbrooke, 1999).

It could be suggested that the term has received a general welcome because there has been a growing concern that environmental resources are used unsustainably and that unsustainable use of resources would threaten humankind (Machbeth, 2005). This holistic concept encourages a long term approach and

presumes equal living for all – for now and then along with responsible use of any resources. According to Redclift (1991, p.37) sustainable development “is an overarching concept, a highly desirable end-point of development aspirations”.

As a term sustainable development is quite inspiring and hence many countries and communities have attempted to adopt its principles and suggested action plans. Macbeth discusses (2005) that even though its goals are not strictly followed, sustainable development has transformed the political discourse and has been involved within different levels of environmental and social policy and theory debates. Although a template for sustainable development to use by different countries is useful, it was argued that every country needs to determine its specific goals to attain sustainable development (Finnetty, 2001). As stated in *The Future We Want*, the Rio+20 outcome document by UNCSD (2012), every country faces specific challenges to achieve sustainable development.

## 2.1 Goals and objectives of sustainable development

The general goals for sustainable development earlier indicated by Brutland Report are reviving growth; changing the quality of growth; meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water and sanitation; ensuring a sustainable level of population; conserving and reserving the resource base; reorienting technology and managing risk; merging environment and economics in decision making. Furthermore, in Rio+20 Conference in 2012, which is the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), it was agreed upon that sustainable development goals should build on the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But as stated earlier, it is very difficult to construct goals that work for every country is quite

difficult; and suggestions and proposals for inclusive sustainable development goals are under evaluation for the time being (UNCSD, 2012).

In the Rio+20 outcome document, *The Future We Want* (UNCSD, 2012) the need to achieve sustainable development is reiterated by: promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living; fostering equitable social development and inclusion; and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports inter alia economic, social and human development while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges.

However, goals and objectives by themselves are not sufficient to achieve sustainable development. Finnetty (2001) argues that cooperation among different stakeholders supported by public participation is necessary. And these multiple stakeholders in development, including national and international NGOs, should share responsibility among themselves.

## 2. 2 Dimensions of sustainable development

Traditionally, sustainable development is divided into three major dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Generally, tourism is embraced in a society as a result of the view that revenue from tourism would develop the society by itself. As often found in literature, however, solely economic development is not an adequate indicator of the well being of the community (WCED, 1987; Lawn, 2003; Andereck and Jurowski, 2006). If other factors other than economic welfare are not taken into consideration, social situation could deteriorate and environment may be harmed. As

Andereck and Jurowski (2006) put forward, sustainable tourism activities depend on a welcoming host community and an attractive natural environment as well.

Economic sustainability demands that there is an efficient development and that costs and benefits of development are shared fairly (Macbeth, 2005; Choi and Sarikaya, 2005). A continuous economic growth is necessary to a degree, however, as Lawn (2003) indicates there is a threshold at which this growth would give rise to a lower quality of life because the benefits would be surpassed by the following costs. With respect to economic dimension, positive benefits of tourism are usually increased employment, investments and profitable businesses; and negative one is an increase in the cost of living (Andereck and Jurowski, 2006). Dwyer, et al. (2009, p. 67) states that “economic yields would increase value added per capita form tourism business activity, increasing the ratio of economic returns to resources used , while lower growth would put less pressure on carrying capacity, thus providing environmental and social benefits.” This statement indicates that an interplay between economic versus environmental and social impacts of tourism is inevitable to maintain sustainability of tourism.

Social sustainability implies that development enhances people’s control over their lives; empowers them; sustains and strengthens community life (Macbeth, 2005). Furthermore, concepts of social identity and social capital, community culture and its assets, social cohesiveness and pride relate to social sustainability. For this, conservation and promotion of culture the community is a requirement. Even though it is believed that benefits of tourism are generally thought to improve quality of life, social and cultural outcomes may not be always optimistic (Liu et al., 1987). As a result of intense tourism activities, population of these tourism destinations could increase dramatically. Combined with insufficient planning for tourism, problems

related to local identity and culture may arise since tourism affects local people's values, beliefs, habits (Andereck and Jurowski, 2006). As for sociocultural consequences of tourism, Dogan (1989) includes a lack of interest in traditions, materialism, increase in crime rates and other social conflicts. However, there are many other findings that tourism fosters better attitudes and hospitality towards strangers; enhances entertainment, historical and cultural exhibits and this way it promotes cultural identity (Andereck and Jurowski, 2006).

Environmental sustainability, sometimes referred to as ecological sustainability, requires that development helps ecological processes, biological diversity and environmental resources to continue into the future (Macbeth, 2005). Tourism is generally seen as a clean sector which does not give harm to the nature and our environment. However, the situation is reverse since tourism activities are mostly conducted in attractive but fragile environments (Dwyer, et al, 2009; Andereck and Jurowski, 2006). The most recognized adverse effect of tourism on environment is pollution through transportation and tourism facilities such as hotels; destruction of biodiversity by hunting and destructing the wildlife areas. Other negative environmental impacts include unplanned urbanization, noise pollution, large buildings that destroy views (Andereck, 1995). In a bigger picture, these problems could be listed as climate change, depletion of natural resources and loss of biodiversity (Dwyer, et al, 2009). Before, it was stressed that tourism could contribute to effective management and conservation of environment (Dwyer, et al, 2009), but there is a greater focus on now how tourism could diminish pollution and alleviate burden on natural resources (UNEP, 20002).

In the Rio+20 outcome document (UNCSD, 2012), it is emphasized that well designed and managed tourism can make an important contribution to the three

dimensions of sustainable development, has close linkages to other sectors, and can create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities. It is recognized that there is a need to support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity building that promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, flora, biodiversity and ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of local communities by supporting local economies and the human and natural environment as a whole.

Apart from these three main dimensions, recent debates suggest that sustainable tourism development involves even more dimensions (Choi and Sarıkaya, 2005). These include institutional/political and technological dimensions at the international, national, regional, and local community levels. Yet, it should be noted that all dimensions of sustainability are interconnected.

Political dimension refers to the dependence of sustainability concept to the political system in a country. For instance, sustainable tourism aims to enhance the life quality of local community, but the decisions are generally made by governments by excluding the local community. Therefore, inclusion of community to decision making process is a must to achieve the political dimension. Besides, stakeholder collaboration, community participation, tourism regulations, NGO involvement, placement of residents, and external or internal control of development are the other issues to be taken into consideration in this discussion. (Choi and Sarıkaya, 2005).

Tourism has been heavily affected by the technological advances in communication, information and transportation systems. Application of technology into tourism could lessen the environmental, socio-cultural impacts of tourism in a given destination. Moreover, technological tools such as the Internet allow the

stakeholders to exchange or disseminate information and to promote to a wider audience.

### 2.3 Sustainable tourism

The notion of sustainability as accompanying development is the key to understand sustainable development, indeed. Pearce (1993, p. 3) states that sustainability “means that the average wellbeing of global population rises over time.” In the context of tourism, sustainability could be defined as “tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” (Butler, 1993, p. 29). According to Bircan et al. (2010, p.18), the term ‘sustainability’ in tourism implies that tourism sector could continue to grow while enabling the sustainability of the new tourism opportunities in a manner that destinations can also satisfy the requirements of future generations.” UNWTO (2011) declares that the goals of sustainable tourism should include environmental preservation; social equity and cohesion; economic prosperity. Hence, sustainable tourism is not just concerned with protection of the environment; it is also concerned with long-term economic viability and social justice. UNWTO also warns against a misconception by stating that sustainable tourism is not a specific form of tourism, that all tourism activities need to be sustainable, even “mass tourism”.

The birth and development of the concept of sustainable tourism can be seen in Figure 1.

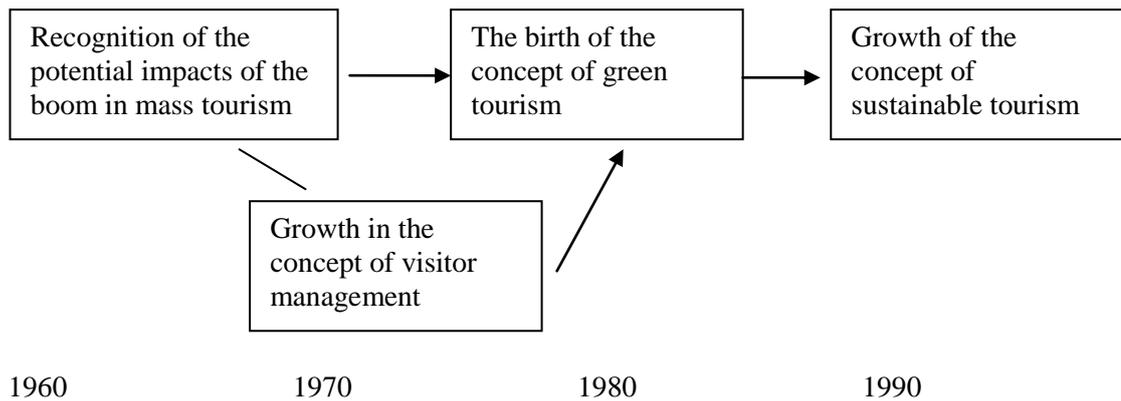


Fig.1. The chronological development of the concept of sustainable tourism. Adapted from Swarbrooke (1999).

After the Brutland Report (1987), tourism academics and practitioners began to consider its implications on tourism, and hence, sustainable tourism as a term started to be used from the late 1980s onwards although terms like ‘green tourism’ and ‘green issues’ attracted more attention at that time (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Along with sustainable tourism, alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism, nature based tourism, responsible tourism, community based tourism, soft tourism, minimum impact tourism, environmentally friendly tourism have emerged (Finnetty, 2001; Swarbrooke, 1999), which put more emphasis on environment, society and culture. Additionally, community participation and empowerment of local people in tourism has become major issues (i.e. Sofield, 2003; Richards and Hall, 2003). Collaboration and coordination between tourism stakeholders have also gained importance over the recent years. (i.e. Barkin and Bouchez, 2002; Byrd, 2007).

Butler (1993) takes a critical stance to the term of sustainable tourism by stating that this term has yielded successful only because it cannot be defined exactly and within this vagueness it has turned into an interest point for all tourism stakeholders. Similarly, Swarbrooke (1999) sees sustainable tourism as “a broad, ill-defined area.” Holden (2000) comments on this vagueness by saying that:

the ambiguousness of the concept of sustainability means that the political context, and especially the political values of those who have power and decision making, will be influential in determining the interpretation of sustainable tourism. (p. 173)

Moreover, Duffy (2002) claims that even ecotourism, supposedly the most green tourism type, is related to political economy and ideology on the world. And Macbeth (2005, p. 968) concludes that “no matter how regarded, tourism is deeply political.” And he warns that if sustainable tourism is not implemented with its core values in mind, this term would just support short term development and profiteers.

However, this should not mean that tourism and sustainability cannot go hand in hand. Actually, Barnett (1999) from Tourism Concern – a non-governmental organization which campaigns for better tourism – asserts that many NGOs see tourism a matter of development and that it should not be deserted as a concept; if tourism is a viable method for a destination to flourish, then tourism offers a great chance for suitable and sustainable development.

Macbeth (2005, p.966) stresses that “sustainable tourism is the slogan of the moment and is ‘attached’ to the government policies throughout the world.” The concept of sustainable tourism promote long-term perspectives, encourage notions of equity, calls for a critical evaluation of tourism, draws attention to the inter-sectoral linkages and facilitate cooperation and collaboration among different stakeholders (Berno and Bricker, 2001). Furthermore, Swarbrooke (1999) asserts that interest of tourism organizations in sustainable tourism been driven by professional bodies, media and pressure groups or NGOs (i.e. Tourism Concern, Green Flag, and the Campaign for the Responsible Tourism) which are the very emphasis of this study. It is expected that the concept of sustainable tourism is also embraced by NGOs who operate in Turkey. However, the extent and breath of the involvement of Turkey’s NGOs with this construct was not been deeply investigated so far.

## 2.4 Challenges for sustainable development and sustainable tourism

Notions of sustainable development and hence sustainable tourism present many challenges in practice. First, it has been claimed in literature that there is no consensus about sustainable development but there are various interpretations of the concept (Redclift, 1991; Butler, 1999; Berno and Bricker, 2001). As explained above, sustainable tourism is also susceptible to differing understandings at many levels, too. In line with this vagueness of the concept, Buckley (2012, p. 530) notes that “[tourism] industry advocates use the jargon of sustainability and community to strengthen the power bases and legitimize the current unsustainable practices.”

Second, by its nature, sustainable development implies “limits” such as carrying capacity limits, technological limits, etc.” (Butler, 1999; Finnetty, 2001). Finnetty (2001) criticizes this point by stating that these limits are not absolute, but rather dependent on time, institution, technology and environment. On the other side, the nature of the tourism industry and product comprises an inherent challenge to realize the principles of sustainability into tourism (Berno and Bricker, 2001).

Third, it is argued that sustainable development embraces quite an ethnocentric and North-biased view of the development process of developed countries and it fails to take seriously the integrity of other cultures, and their view of sustainability (Redclift 1991, Tosun, 2001).

Other general challenges to sustainable development include bottom up approach of sustainable development versus the traditional top down approach; and decentralization of governance. Berno and Bricker (2001) recognize fragmented fashion of decision making in tourism development as a hindrance to achieve sustainability.

Specifically, Tosun (2001) identifies the challenges of sustainable tourism development in the context of Turkey. These are the priorities of a national economy, a lack of a contemporary tourism development approach, the structure of the public administration system, the emergence of environmental matters and over-commercialization, and the structure of the international tourism system. Furthermore, while investigating the impacts of mass tourism especially in Turkey and Greece, Bramwell (2004) highlights some of the problems. These are the lack of control of the development of hotels and tourist sites and proper planning procedures; insufficient public utilities and infrastructure; speculative building processes, and conflicts between different levels of government. It is also stressed here that expansion of tourism created problems of regional inequality, particularly in Turkey.

## CHAPTER 3

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AS A STAKEHOLDER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

#### 3.1 The key stakeholders in sustainable tourism

Generally, the key stakeholders in sustainable tourism are categorized as the public sector including the supra-governmental bodies such as the European Union, national governments, local authorities, and the quasi-governmental organizations; the tourism industry; NGOs; the tourist; the host community; and the media (e.g. Swarbrooke, 1999; Cecile, 2012; Waligo et al., 2013).

As pointed out in the literature (i.e. Byrd, 2007; Waligo et al., 2013), stakeholders are essential components of sustainable tourism due to their facilitative roles and their involvement is one primary way to achieve and apply sustainable tourism practices. As such, Waligo et al. (2013) observe that sustainable tourism cannot be realized without effective stakeholder participation. Affecting or affected by tourism development, tourism stakeholders are various and this further complicates reaching a consensus on the definition and realization of sustainable tourism. For example, Berno and Bricker (2001) highlight the fact that from community to the international level, different stakeholders have different goals in terms of tourism development and they criticize that decisions are usually made in a mutually exclusive manner with little or no consultation or cooperation among those stakeholders.

Concerning the roles of these different stakeholders in sustainable tourism, Swarbrooke (1999) asserts that more sustainable forms of tourism are mostly related to the activities of the tourism industry and the attitudes of the tourist, rather than on

the actions of governments. In contrast with this view, in his study in which he reviewed approximately 5,000 relevant publications on sustainable tourism, Buckley (2012) finds out that private sector approaches to achieve sustainability such as self regulation, corporate social responsibility, ecocertification, destination marketing and demarketing have been promoted on a large scale, yet proved mostly ineffective since many tourism enterprises are concerned with adopting the practices which benefits their profits or public relations. He further adds that improvements in tourism are fuelled fundamentally by regulatory changes, in the face of political resistance and poor implementation by the tourism industry. Furthermore, he describes a less significant role for the voluntary sector by concluding that “large-scale voluntary improvements in sustainability are improbable, especially given low public pressure for sustainability and the particular ambivalence to tourism” (p. 535).

### 3.2 Why NGOs as a sustainable tourism stakeholder?

Universally the contribution of NGOs to sustainable tourism is acknowledged (e.g. Finnetty, 2001). The target of this research is then to identify concerned NGOs in Turkey and explain their role and their involvement level in terms of sustainable tourism. These organizations in Turkey when compared to other countries are seen as less effective into politics and local people and when they are inspected, it seems that they are more involved with well being and development (Aslan, 2010; Aydın, 2011). This study aims to contribute to the knowledge on the place and importance of sustainable tourism in NGOs whereas literature shows little research in the context of Turkey. Furthermore, comparisons among these NGOs in terms of their tendencies and attitudes for sustainability are also provided.

Despite their acknowledged importance to sustainable tourism planning (Jamal, 1999); NGOs as one of the sustainable tourism stakeholders, are a relatively little-studied phenomenon in the tourism context. Notwithstanding any theoretical or academic relevance of these interest groups, they have proven themselves to be instrumental in blocking or modifying many tourism development proposals around the world (Warren, 1998). Goa, Vail, Bali, and Banff, are just a few locations where particularly environmental groups have been active, and made a significant impact upon the way that tourism is manifested in these destinations (Lovelock, 2007). Furthermore, Holden and Mason (2005) claim that NGOs not only function as critics of tourism and adopt an advocacy for sustainable tourism; but they are also actively engaged with projects concerning tourism. It is suggested that “the motives of NGOs in these circumstances appear to have been ‘to boldly go’ where government or private commercial organizations would find political or economic resistance” (Holden and Mason, 2005, p. 421).

Why should civil society and more particularly an NGO be interested in sustainable tourism? A leading NGO in the field of sustainable tourism, Tourism Concern, asks this question to itself in the paper by Barnett (1999). She discusses that issues such as health, poverty, and natural disasters address to a wider audience and that is why NGOs interested in these issues attract more supporter. She contends that supporters of environmental and human rights would first hesitate in involving with tourism in spite of the argument that tourism affects cultures, environment and economy. Nevertheless, she concludes that NGOs have started to be involved in sustainable tourism because the problems produced by tourism have become quite ‘profound’ throughout the world.

Also, in the outcome document of Rio+20, *The Future We Want*, the position of NGOs for sustainable development is well defined:

We note the valuable contributions that non-governmental organizations could and do make in promoting sustainable development through their well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity, especially in the area of analysis, sharing of information and knowledge, promotion of dialogue and support of implementation of sustainable development. (UNCSD, 2012, p. 8)

### 3.3 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Quite often the terms NGOs and civil society are used interchangeably. Nevertheless, Finnetty (2001) points out that these two notions differ from each other and that civil society refers to the part of society that excludes government and businesses. He adds that NGOs are thought to be an essential component for democracies since “they have the potential to strengthen the civil society” (p. 39). For the purposes of this thesis, however, this distinction is not taken into consideration.

There are different definitions for NGOs, but generally they refer to formal organizations that are neither part of the state nor profit maximizing commercial companies (Unerman and O’Dwyer, 2010). They make claim either directly or indirectly on government so as to influence public policy without itself being willing to exercise the formal powers of government (Hall and Jenkins, 1995). Many such organizations are concerned with the environment, and many others are concerned with the issues relating to well being, development, education networking, research and advocacy (Unerman and O’Dwyer, 2010).

Non-governmental organizations range from voluntary organizations to think-tank institutions, social activities to citizenship initiatives, and from NGOs to trade unions and vocational chambers. Furthermore, they are sometimes regarded as one of the basic founding members of the process of transition from

totalitarian/authoritarian regimes to democracy, and the utmost primary factor of expansion of individual rights and freedom (Keyman, 2004).

Generally, NGOs are considered to be exemplary of the increasing salience of civil society in politics. For a focus on the drivers of sustainable tourism, these organizations have been chosen because sustainable tourism practices, i.e. ecotourism have been initiated by a range of NGOs as ideal sustainable development in the developing world (Butcher, 2007), and they emerged in the last decade as one of the principle advocates and implementers of sustainable tourism, often in the format of ecotourism (Higgins, 2001).

Non-governmental organizations have become quite visible and influential actors throughout the world (Beckmann et al, 2002). They operate at a range of levels – some of them operate at an intergovernmental level, some of them operate at a national level, some of them operate at a grassroots level and some of them operate across a range of different levels (Unerman and O’Dwyer, 2006; Holden and Mason, 2005). They also have influence over different areas. As International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) states NGOs are not only focusing their energies on governments and inter-governmental processes, but with the withdrawal of the state from a number of public functions and regulatory activities, NGOs have begun to assert their sights on powerful corporations - many of which can compete with entire nations in terms of their resources and influence according to IIDS (IISD, 2014).

### 3.3.1 NGOs in the context of tourism

An NGO, in the context of tourism, is defined by the United Nations as any formal association that neither is a government nor hopes to replace a government or its officials. It is funded from voluntary contributions and is not involved in for-profit

activity. Jafari (2000, p. 414) stated that “NGOs must support the goals of the United Nations or other governmental agencies that recognize them.” Tourism-oriented NGOs have their own specific objectives: they administer, strengthen and promote stewardship projects, and further the well-being of the host communities they visit. They help, support and empower local and indigenous communities by providing jobs, skills, home-ownership, health care, education and credit systems through community and conservation projects (Kennedy and Dornan, 2009).

According to Sithole (2005), it has become increasingly recognized that NGOs in general and environmental NGOs (ENGOs) in particular play significant roles in influencing sustainable tourism development. Lovelock (2007) adds that environmental interest groups have proven themselves to be instrumental in hindering or adjusting many tourism development proposals around the world. For example, as the catalyst and the architect of Arctic Tourism Project, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) tried to relate tourism and conservation in the Arctic Region by involving various stakeholders such as Arctic countries, tour operators, local community representatives and social scientists in the formation of tourism guidelines and codes of conduct for the region (Mason et al., 2000). Therefore, NGOs as a focus of an academic research seems relevant for the issue of sustainability. According to Jasanoff (1997) ENGOs:

display bewildering diversity of form, function, style and expertise, with missions ranging from research to litigation, from lobbying to community education, and from monitoring to natural resource protection. (p. 580)

NGOs have been engaged with tourism for a long time; and in fact, their attitude towards tourism has been a critical one. As discussed above, they campaign against forced relocation of communities and prostitution as a result of tourism; they campaign for environmental issues. Besides, some of these NGOs, especially in the

developing world, have been focused on the income generated by tourism (e.g. Tourism Concern). Some NGOs that are involved with tourism, however, seem to have their focuses in areas other than tourism and examples include WWF and Conservation International which have their major focuses on environmental protection (Holden and Mason, 2005).

### 3. 4 Issues related to NGO performance and impact

In this section, NGOs namely the voluntary sector is compared with the private sector in terms of their sustainability orientation. Information about the organizational and financial structure of the NGOs is provided as well as the extent to which NGOs are accountable for their actions discussed briefly. Effectiveness and autonomy of NGOs are investigated to determine whether they are eligible facilitators of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, an explanation about the inner sustainability of NGOs is given to discriminate between the sustainability that NGOs could offer and the sustainability of NGOs in the literature. Lastly, a framework for NGOs to transform tourism practices is presented here.

#### 3.4. 1 NGOs versus private sector

Firstly, NGOs often prioritize tourist development approaches that are inclusive of indigenous and/or host communities, maximize the 'quality' of interaction of tourism with host communities, and involve ethics of care for nature. Non-governmental organizations have also displayed a greater appreciation of the consequences of human action on nature and local economies and they give priority to alternative decommodified tourism products over commodified tourism experiences (Wearing, 2001).

On the other hand, the trans-national corporate approach to tourism development can rarely be considered best practice. Corporate philosophies and ideologies are fundamentally underpinned by a ‘capital accumulation logic’ that is simply speaking; “profits come before people” (Chomsky, 1999). It can be asserted that they value the final outcome which could be explained as the economic use-value of a product or a service (Wearing et al., 2005). And as Shumate and O’Connor (2010) put it, NGOs have greater public trust than governments, the media, or corporations on the issues such as environment, human rights, and health. In contrast, corporations often have less public trust on various social and cultural issues than governments or NGOs. According to Wearing et al. (2005), the mission statements of many corporations are evidence of this claim.

Over the last few years, however, corporate philosophy has been changing in a way so that sustainability demands or more specifically social, environmental and economic demands originating from the markets all over the world could be met in a smooth manner (Kalafatis et al., 1999; Wagner, 1997, cited in Wearing et al., 2005). Many corporations represent this increasing societal movement by selling and promoting ‘social responsibility’ or ‘sustainable’ policies and programs to their diverse markets. Khan (2002), a former UNESCO officer and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, points to this situation by critically stating that:

Sustainable development has been diverted by business, which has equated it with sustainable growth – an oxymoron that reflects the conflict between a mercantile vision of the world and an environmental, social and cultural vision. (p. 8)

Governance resides in the hands of a multitude of shareholders whose overriding motives are dividends, not environmental, social and economic responsibility in the case of corporations. In contrast, NGOs are funded by public memberships, public and private institutions and donations from philanthropic organizations that look to

support the various missions that NGOs undertake, for example poverty alleviation, education, health and environmental sustainability (Wearing et al., 2005).

From the perspective of NGOs, tourism is not just an ‘industry’ or activity undertaken for a ‘holiday’ away from home. Rather, they seek to realize a kind of tourism with the goal of affecting new and positive attitudes, values and actions in the tourist and the host community. Some NGOs look to support communities in developing countries and remote regions by carrying out or assisting in a range of research projects. Examples of this include environmental education, the fostering of attitudes and behaviors that are helpful in maintaining natural and social environments, and empowering host communities to operate and maintain sustainable approaches to industries such as tourism (McDonald and Wearing, 2002; Wearing, 2001).

*The Sustainability Report*, jointly issued by SustainAbility ([www.sustainability.com/](http://www.sustainability.com/)) and GlobeScan ([www.globalscan.com](http://www.globalscan.com)), found that business and political leaders are lagging far behind NGOs in driving the move to sustainability, based on a global poll of approximately 1,600 sustainability experts. Survey respondents came from corporate, government, NGO, academic, research, and service organizations located in more than 90 countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand.

#### 3.4.2 Issues about NGO structures

Some NGOs act as intermediaries to implement and manage projects funded by international agencies or governments and may serve as a bridge between these funders and local communities. These intermediary NGOs have usually a paid management staff and they are funded by international funders. On the other hand, community based

organizations (CBOs) are more close to their communities. Intermediary NGOs and CBOs sometimes work together on mutual projects (e.g. Inelmen et al., 2004). Intermediary NGOs generally attract funds and as CBOs increase their capacity, they start to implement projects by themselves (Finnetty, 2001).

Yet, NGOs may not be the best answer to promote sustainable tourism practices. According to Mpfou (2012) the programs implemented by the NGOs in Zimbabwe are predetermined and are detached from the cultures of the communities in which they are implemented. In view of the argument that culture is an important component in development, both as cultural capital and in defining development, he concludes that the prescriptive NGOs' development programs are detrimental to cultural sustainability and sustainable development in Zimbabwe. It might be the case because NGOs are not necessarily non-governmental; some NGOs are funded by foreign donors, a situation which obtains in Zimbabwe. This lack of independence is the source for the prescriptive agenda shaping their development programs.

### 3.4.3 Accountability of NGOs

Unerman and O'Dwyer (2010), discriminate between upward and downward accountability of NGOs, which can describe the situation put forward by Mpfou (2012). In development NGOs, the most general form of accountability mechanism is upward accountability, or also known as functional accountability or hierarchical accountability. Upward accountability recognizes that the NGO is accountable to those who give funds, and that those providing funds want an account so that they can check what the money has been spent upon. On the other hand, downward accountability recognizes that NGOs can and should be accountable not just to those who fund them, but also to their beneficiaries. Recently, some governments that fund overseas development aid have

come to realize that to make the use of aid more effective, it is essential for NGOs to employ downward dialogue with their beneficiaries in addition to being upwardly responsible to those who grant their funds (Edwards and Hulme 2002; Unerman and O'Dwyer, 2010).

#### 3.4.4 Effectiveness and autonomy of NGOs

Lovelock (2007) states that most of these organizations feel they are in strong positions to minimize the negative impacts of tourism. However, they also tend to feel excluded from the tourism policy process and feel that existing legislative and planning frameworks are not adequate in terms of allowing NGOs input into tourism planning. A significant number of NGOs also feel that governments do not address their concerns over the impacts of tourism.

Lovelock (2007) concludes that NGOs felt they had a wider definition of sustainable tourism. They felt that the tourism industry (including governments) would sacrifice long-term ecological sustainability for financial gains and that governments and the industry still look to the mass tourism model and the idea of mass-infrastructure induced growth. In line with this, Kennedy and Dornan (2009) claim that in the absence of a profit motive, their emphasis and value of tourism is placed on personal growth experiences and economic, social and environmental sustainability for the communities where their activities take place. Schelhaas (2007) also claim that many projects that aim for more sustainable tourism are started by 'forerunners':

In ... tourism this is usually NGOs or small tour operators. On the other hand, the free market approach to tourism, unlike the work that NGOs undertake, not only depletes resources, but also provides little economic benefit to host communities, particularly in developing nations, and constricts the range of experiential opportunities available to the tourist. (p. 167)

Barkin and Bouchez (2002) indicate that there is a creative role of a local NGO in promoting an alternative approach to development that might contribute to reconciling the conflicting interests in the region by explicitly recognizing the special role that NGOs can play in facilitating community participation. Moreover, Devine (2003) contributes that the changes in the world have allowed some NGOs to decrease their level of financial dependence on donors, but have forced them to rely much more on resources derived from their members so that they can support sustainability issues.

Finnetty (2001) found that NGOs have become influential development actors in the developing world over the last two decades, and are becoming increasingly involved in sustainable activities. His research's results show that NGOs play a crucially important role in Belize, not only in the tourism sector, but also in the development of the country in general. To add, Sithole (2005) writes that the roles of NGOs have witnessed notable transformation to attain higher levels of competency and influence over policies in the various sectors they operate, occupying critical gaps as important participants in (environmental) management. Traditionally, NGOs would function in the roles of campaigning, activism and consciousness raising. Today, however, they have become resourceful in terms of scientific and technological findings, policy making and implementation, all of which makes them competent authorities. NGOs, now, have specialized knowledge and contacts on specific issues and can use their expertise in resourcing, lobbying and monitoring (Schelhass, 2007).

#### 3.4.5 NGOs' sustainability

When the issue of sustainability in terms of NGOs is inspected, it is seen that there is a literature devoted to the sustainability of NGOs themselves. Like other bodies, NGOs also need to disclose their sustainability activities and present resources; otherwise, they may lose their legitimacy (Crespy and Miller, 2010; Lovelock, 2007). Nowadays, each sector and especially the NGO sector, increasingly demands a larger role in designing, developing, and implementing sustainability programs but before that they should ensure their own (especially financial) sustainability. Furthermore, as Devine (2003) implies, some donors require NGOs they assist to be sustainable, otherwise these NGOs are viewed as not credible and influential. Given this fact, Devine (2003) is concerned that the drive for this kind of sustainability has changed priorities, with the outcome that NGOs have become inward looking and more anxious about their own survival than the long-term security of their members.

#### 3.4.6 Transformative power of NGOs

With their non-profit nature and bottom up approach, expertise and effectiveness, NGOs have the potential power to transform the current tourism practices. That NGOs have started to work as full partners with governments at all levels (Potapchuk et al., 1999) further illustrates their capacity of transformation. In the context of sustainable tourism, NGOs should exert power on other stakeholders if they are to be presumed as agents and partners for change. To change and transform the tourism practices, the actions to be taken by NGOs are provided in a framework by UNCSD NGO Steering Committee (1999, p. 11-12), and according to this framework, NGOs should:

- initiate stakeholder dialogue on community involvement in tourism development, recognizing social and gender divisions in communities;

- promote consultation processes in tourism planning, involving local communities;
- launch educational and awareness programs on tourism for local communities, support and promote history research and museums;
- promote the respect for indigenous peoples and local communities' self-determination, autonomy and social and cultural integrity;
- strengthen their efforts to empower disenfranchised groups (in particular women) to become involved in local tourism planning and management;
- develop participatory programs to support the integrity of local cultures and economies;
- support the sustainable resource use and initiate environmental actions on different levels to conserve the environment while the tourism is developing;
- analyze the experience with sustainable tourism in different parts of the world, in order to disseminate methodology/positive examples of community involvement in tourism;
- support the use of traditional knowledge, practices and innovation systems relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and promote actions on different levels to eradicate poverty, protect human rights and conserve the environment while working in tourism.

### 3.5 NGOs in the world

Unerman and O'Dwyer (2010) indicate that NGOs should attract interest from academic research because this is a large sector. It is estimated that there are over 52,000 international NGOs (Union of International Association, 2012) and this implies there are many more local NGOs in the world. NGOs like UNICEF, Oxfam, Save the Children, and Greenpeace are international large organizations [not to be confused with Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) such as United Nations or International Labor Organization]. Whereas, a local NGO could be run just by one person at the grassroots level (Unerman and O'Dwyer, 2010).

In the studies concerning NGOs, there is a tendency towards studying NGOs in underdeveloped, developing and developed countries (Mfpou, 2012; Lovelock, 2007; Kennedy and Dornan, 2009; Sithole, 2005). These NGOs in different countries are also compared and this comparison seems to pay off since there is a chance to look at the picture from a broader and a more critical view. For example, Lovelock (2007) looks at similarities and differences evident between the responses of ENGOS about tourism industry in 'developing' and 'developed' countries in the study region. He contends that the growth in awareness and in the size and strength of the civil [environment] movement has been uneven across Asia, and in most Asian countries, the movement is still in its formative stage. It can be claimed that their goals, functions, target audience of NGOs vary depending on the welfare of the country. Lovelock (2007, p. 5) concludes that "those grassroots ENGOS in developing countries without the luxury of a vast middle class constituency and even corporate sponsorship, may not have the same options open to them in terms of the modes of action they may take, as their more institutionalized Western counterparts". Consequently, their actions may impact in different ways upon the tourism sector.

This study, however, is different from the previous ones in that it looks at NGOs in Turkey which is an emerging market economy. With the process of rapid growth and industrialization in social and business activities, Turkey might showcase and highlight specifics of NGOs peculiar to emerging market countries.

### 3.6 NGOs in Turkey

According to Hirai (2007), NGOs related to environmental issues constitute only 0.4%, forest related NGOs represent 0.7%, whereas vocational-including tourism NGOs make up 10% of the NGOs in Turkey. When interest areas of the NGOs in Turkey are inspected, it is seen in this report that environment protection policies (13.4%), environment policies (10%), protection of consumer right policies (2.1%) have a place in the list, but there is item on the list related to tourism or sustainability. This case shows that NGOs' potential effect to sustainable tourism and interest in it could be in an indirect way. Actually, according to the study by Aydın (2011), which investigates the impact of NGOs on tourism in the province of Düzce in Turkey, it is concluded that local NGOs fail in positively influencing regional tourism. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no study which presents an overall picture for Turkey to this day.

In 2008, the Bahcesehir University Economic and Social Research Centre (BETAM) conducted a study to gather data about the environmental NGOs in Turkey. The results show that the ratio of environmental NGOs to all other NGOs is 0.7 %. In recent years, however, an increase has been witnessed in the number of environmental NGOs. It has been observed that the number of environmental institutions founded between 1995 and 2007 is three times more than the number of such institutions established between 1924 and 1995; 76% of the environmental

NGOs has been active for twelve years, and 1/3 of them (156 establishments) are located in three of the largest cities in Turkey: Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. From the geographical distribution point of view, Central Anatolia (158) and Marmara Regions (127) take the top two ranks, and East (32) and South-eastern Anatolia (19) take the bottom two ranks, respectively.

In a more recent project conducted by Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) in cooperation with CIVICUS (2011) to describe the state of civil society in Turkey, civil society or NGOs are divided into six categories as associations (56.01%), cooperatives (37.82%), chambers (3.09%), foundations (2.96%), trade unions (0.06%), and civil servant trade unions (0.06%). It is stated that there are over 15,000 NGOs within these categories in Turkey. Of all the associations, 9.8% are professional associations, 6.5% services for improving and supporting social life, 3.8% culture and resort activities, only 1.6% environmental, and 1% social associations. When the focus areas of the foundations are inspected, it is seen that 21.2% of them concentrate on culture, 8.1% on regional development; 4.3% are social and historic cultural foundations, 4.2% environmental, and only 2.1% tourism foundations. It should be acknowledged that these numbers are quite low in proportion to Turkey's population: there is one NGO for every 780 people in the country.

In the report of OECD for Turkey (2012), it is stated that although participation mechanisms such as local environment committees, the EIA procedure, and Councils for the Environment and Forestry exist, public participation is a relatively new process in many instances. The absence of environmental reporting by industry has in a number of cases tended to exacerbate conflicts with NGOs and the public. Environmental NGOs will need to address a range of issues in order to

establish themselves as stimulating and constructive partners for environmental progress. Furthermore, local communities and environmental NGOs have not been closely enough involved in planning nature conservation programs, implying that there is a lot to do for NGOs in Turkey yet. It is emphasized though that a number of local development projects, some largely driven by NGOs (e.g. TEMA) or international organizations (e.g. UNDP), are having positive results, particularly for rural populations in depressed areas, but the situation for tourism is not described in the aforementioned report.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Research design

This thesis is comprised of a qualitative exploratory study which employs both primary and secondary data. Secondary data includes a content analysis of websites of select NGOs. As for primary data, an exploratory survey method is utilized which depends on semi-structured interviews as the research technique (Finnetty, 2001). Thematic issues are discussed in a systematic manner in order to reveal information about the impact and power of NGOs in terms of sustainable tourism in Turkey.

By employing qualitative research, this study takes a critical and interpretive approach as used in social sciences. While the “objective” quantitative research is a deductive method; qualitative research is inductive by nature since theory forming and the development of meaning is process based and occurs as the research is conducted (Neuman, 1991). In addition, the qualitative approach allows researcher to interact with the sources of information in their usual environments (Mpfou, 2012).

As such, exploratory studies are advocated in social sciences especially in relation to new research themes or when dealing with an existing issue from a new perspective. Although it has not been well defined as a concept, exploratory studies could help discovering generalizations, descriptions and understanding of a phenomenon (Mason et al., 2010). This research design deemed appropriate since the present aim was to investigate the role of Turkish NGOs for sustainable tourism and their impact on the tourism sector for the first time. Within the scope of an exploratory research, this study obtained data to investigate specific type of organizations, namely NGOs. However, the number of these NGOs, which focus on

sustainability of tourism, is rather sparse. Marshall and Rossman (2006) considers survey method as an appropriate mode of inquiry and making inferences about a large group based on data from a relatively small number of individuals (in the present case, organizations) in that group.

In this exploratory and qualitative approach, the primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews because they allow investigating the issues within study by utilizing inquiries that elicit in-depth answers (Yin, 2009).

#### 4.2 Sampling

The sampling procedure used in selecting the research participants is a non-probability sampling method known as purposive or judgmental sampling (Babbie, 1995). In line with the purpose of the study, this sampling procedure appears most advantageous as it allows for the sample population to include the most informed in terms of knowledge of the study topic and most likely to transform tourism business (Finnetty, 2001). Interviews were conducted with 13 key respondents from 13 NGOs involved in tourism, sustainability or both.

Focusing on this somewhat small and thematic group, or in other words NGOs related to sustainable tourism in Turkey, is considered by the researcher to be most conducive to acquiring in-depth contextual information on the subject. Several NGOs operate country wide, yet since most of them have their headquarters in Istanbul, this situation did not cause any big problem in terms of data collection as the most representative NGOs could be found within the borders of this city.

According to the study by Hirai (2007), there were approximately 507 NGOs which have actively engaged in their offices in Istanbul. According to his report, NGOs related to environmental issues constitute only 0.4%, forest related NGOs

represent 0.7%, whereas vocational-including tourism NGOs make up 10% of the NGOs in Turkey. When interest areas of the NGOs in Turkey are inspected, it could be seen in this report that environment protection policies (13.4%), environment policies (10%), protection of consumer right policies (2.1%) have a place in the list, but there was nothing related to tourism or sustainability. This case shows that NGOs effect to sustainable tourism and interest in it could be in an indirect way.

Although it is not possible to eliminate the biases completely in this type of research, it is feasible to minimize and diminish them as much as possible. To tackle this challenge, a preliminary list of NGOs has been established on the basis of a research on the internet and on various publications. Afterwards, two comprehensive NGO databases have been carefully analyzed to extract specific NGOs. These two databases are provided by Civil Society Development Center (STGM) and REC Turkey. STGM is an organization funded by EU Commission and it aims to develop civil society in Turkey, increase participation and pluralist democracy. Since STGM has one of the most comprehensive NGO databases, it is referenced by various other institutions and organizations.

The second database provider, namely Regional Environment Center (REC) was established by the European Commission, Hungary, and the United States in 1990. Currently, the REC is legally based on a charter signed by the governments of 29 countries and the European Commission, and on an international agreement with the government of Hungary. REC Turkey Office works for achieving sustainable development goals and more specifically works in the area of environment. It also supports coordination between governments, NGOs, private sector and other stakeholders. After the matching of the NGOs in these two databases, the websites of the NGOs have been inspected to confirm that they are involved with tourism,

sustainability and sustainable tourism development. In this phase, few NGOs have been eliminated from the list since it became obvious that their interests and activities were not relevant to the core of this study.

In total, 19 cases have been identified and selected based on four criteria: the extent to which the organizations have pioneered sustainable tourism and the amount of experience from this, in order to reflect the diversity of different types of NGOs within a broader population; and convenience principally the availability of written sources on the subject within non probability sampling. The criteria also require that NGO should be in the field of tourism, sustainability, environment, etc. which is of concern for sustainable tourism and they should reflect true nature of an NGO in that they are organizations or associations which make claim, either directly or indirectly, on government so as to influence public policy without themselves being willing to exercise the formal powers of government (Hall and Jenkins, 1995).

Selected NGOs for the study include Buğday Association, ÇEDBIK, TEMA Foundation, TMMOB Chamber of City Planners, TUSIAD, ÇEKUL Foundation, TMKV, WWF Turkey, Deniztemiz Turmepa, Doğa Association, SEDEFED, TURSAB, TUROB, TAÇ Foundation, TYD, TUREB, TUGEV, TTOK, and TURAD. Although those 19 NGOs were initially identified for the study, 13 of them responded through e-mail or phone. Hence, the total sample of the study is 13 and for this research and the unit of analysis is specified as NGO.

### 4.3 Data collection

#### 4.3.1 Interviews

As the first step of data collection process, interviews with the selected NGOs respondents were conducted. Before the interviews, NGOs were e-mailed first and then

the key respondents from NGOs were contacted to seek relevant information. Most of the time, e-mails were not replied by NGOs immediately. In this case, NGOs were called by phone to draw their attention to the research or follow up calls were made to confirm the time of meeting with them. It was observed that NGOs which are indirectly affiliated with tourism are more responsive to both e-mails and phone calls than NGOs that are directly affiliated with tourism. Moreover, they seemed to be more willing to participate in the study. As indicated above, initially 19 NGOs were identified for the purposes of this study; 11 of them were indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs (IND NGOs), and 8 them were directly tourism affiliated NGOs (D NGOs). However, three of the IND NGOs and three of the D NGOs did not respond at all. This situation is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of NGOs Identified and Number of NGOs Contacted.

NGO type	# of NGOs identified	# of NGOs contacted	Response rate %
IND NGO	11	8	72,7
D NGO	8	5	62,5

All of the interviews were conducted in the headquarters of NGOs with key respondents. Approximate time of an interview was 45 minutes but it lasted longer when additional topics came up by the choice of key respondents. The key respondents included project managers and coordinators, advisors, secretary generals, conservation officers and external relations officers of the NGOs. An interview sheet was prepared to assist the conduct of the interviews. Because the sample consisted of two distinct groups – NGOs indirectly affiliated with tourism and NGOs directly affiliated with tourism – the interview questions were adapted for both groups of respondents respectively (See Appendix B).

The interview questions were prepared through a careful literature review to explore how the specific NGOs work and what their transformative role in sustainability and sustainable tourism is (Lovelock, 2001; Devine, 2003; Sithole, 2005; Kennedy and Dornan, 2009). Afterwards, a pilot interview was conducted with an officer of an environmental NGO which is not included in the study to improve upon the interview questions and research design prior to data collection.

The interview includes 22 items, three of which are fully structured. These questions were addressed to the representatives of NGOs such as president, vice president. The interview consists of three sections. The first section gathers general information about the person interviewed and about the structure of the NGO. The second part tries to explore and define the stance and contribution of NGOs in terms of tourism, sustainability and sustainable tourism and consists of nine items. In the last section, the transformative power of NGOs in terms of sustainability is inspected so that an evaluation of NGOs could be made to determine whether they are drivers of sustainability for tourism in Turkey or not. This section has 13 items. Five fully structured questions are used in the interview so that the targeted information could be collected effectively and precisely. However, the rest of the questions are fully open ended since the aim of this thesis is to explore particular issues, namely, the role of NGOs in sustainable tourism.

Definitions of sustainability and sustainable tourism were not given on purpose before posing the questions. Questions were asked to participants with minor adjustments in terminology or according to interest of their work to reflect different backgrounds of NGOs. The chance of elaborating on a question or theme was given to participants to deeply dig into the issue. The researcher was cautious about not manipulating the answers and therefore a non-directive language was used. When

controversial or personal information was addressed, although an atmosphere of sharing ideas mutually and confidentiality had been emphasized in advance, participants were not forced to give full responses at all.

Interview responses were noted down during interviews and they were transferred to electronic environment as soon as possible by following standard transcription conventions and afterwards possible themes and coding categories were identified on notes. To assemble and organize transcriptions, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software QDA Miner was used.

Through an iterative process, codes were produced thematically and inductively, identified and revised. As more data was examined, identified codes were generally merged or split. Eventually seven code groups emerged with a total of approximately 38 codes. Several queries were done to find salient co-occurrences of the selected codes and as patterns in the data emerged, queries were run for combinations of codes such as “conflict with other stakeholders” and “inclusion to tourism planning” to gain useful insights. Below is provided the list of the codes identified during the coding process:

1. Information about NGO
2. Problems in tourism
3. Interest for sustainable tourism
4. Sustainability understanding
5. Cooperation with other stakeholders
6. Contribution to sustainable tourism
7. Transformative power of NGOs

As a result of the coding process, a general information about NGOs were drawn, i.e. descriptions, members, target audience, resources of the NGOs. Moreover, problems in tourism in Turkey as well as actions taken against those problems and contributions by the NGOs were identified and coded under the categories of environmental, socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions of sustainability. The NGOs interest for sustainable tourism practices and their sustainability understandings were analyzed in two separate code groups, yet commented on together. Cooperation and conflict with other stakeholders on sustainable tourism was treated in a different code group. Lastly, their capacity to induce a change in the current tourism practices was investigated throughout the declarations and statements of the respondents in detail.

#### 4.3.2 Content analysis

Content analysis of the selected NGOs' websites was deemed necessary to identify the role of each specific NGO, and in this fashion useful data could be extracted from their websites, as well as their publications and articles and reviews about them. This method makes use of available data especially if it is in word or image format, and hence, it is suitable for the aims of the study as NGOs offer such content to public. After collection of the relevant content from the websites of the selected NGOs, coding was conducted according to categories based on the fields of works done by NGOs. In this way, the sustainability focuses of different NGOs projected to the general public were identified (economic, social and environmental focus). Table 2 offers a profile of these NGOs by clarifying their field of works and their affiliation with tourism.

Table 2. Summary for the Fields of Works by NGOs.

NGO	Economic dimension	Environmental dimension	Social dimension	Affiliation with tourism
1. TEMA Foundation	+	+	+	Indirect
2. Buğday Association	+	+	+	Indirect
3. ÇEKÜL Foundation	+	+	+	Indirect
4. Doğa Association	+	+	+	Indirect
5. TMMOB Chamber of City Planners	-	+	+	Indirect
6. SEDEFED	+	+	+	Indirect
7. TURMEPA	+	+	-	Indirect
8. WWF Turkey	+	+	+	Indirect
9. TUGEV	+	-	+	Direct
10. TUROB	+	+	+	Direct
11. TURSAB	+	+	-	Direct
12. TTOK	+	-	+	Direct
13. TURAD	+	-	+	Direct

Content analysis is especially useful for the aims of the study since it identifies the intentions, focuses or communication trends of an individual, group or institution (Berelson, 1952). In this case, NGOs affiliated directly or indirectly with tourism were analyzed as far as their focus, role in and impact on sustainable tourism. For the content analysis, mainly the websites of the NGOs were visited and further research on the web was done according to the links that the websites of the NGOs provided.

Website of each NGO was scanned through in order to find their statements, works, supports, and achievements etc. in the field of sustainable tourism or for the non-existence of such kind of information. In addition, key word searches for “sustainability”, “tourism” and “sustainable tourism” were used to get the relevant information. After that, this information provided by NGOs was classified according to the tree tenets of sustainability, namely, economic, environmental and social

sustainability. Although this can be seen as a rigid categorization, it is widely used and helps to comprehend the different roles those NGOs undertake and their field of work.

#### 4.3.3 Results of the content analysis

##### 4.3.3.1 Economic dimension

Nearly all NGOs aim for economic sustainability according to their statements in their websites, which is only natural because sustainable development in developing and undeveloped countries requires an obvious increase in the welfare of societies. Some of the NGOs claim that tourism can alleviate the stress on natural resources if tourism is exercised in a specific area since people would turn to tourism to gain money rather than consuming natural resources themselves (i.e. TEMA Foundation's Machael project, Doğa Association's Halfeti ecotourism project). And as one of the NGOs put forward, ecotourism can help people to learn how to sustain ecological reserves while allowing them to earn money from tourism activities (Buğday Association's TaTuTa project).

NGOs support economic sustainability with other means, too. Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey (TTOK) has worked on a project of diversification of tourism centers in Istanbul. This project supports a more even distribution of tourism incomes between various sites and hinders extreme utilization of just one site, and hence adding to cultural and environmental sustainability, as well. Tourism Development and Education Foundation (TUGEV) promotes Istanbul as a congress center and tries to create a city image accordingly. In their mission statement, they reveal that their "mission is to increase the function of tourism in Turkey; to create new potential areas; to increase the profit Turkey gets from tourism".

Although indirectly related to tourism, Doğa Association has founded a ‘Nature Fund’ in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. With this fund, they aim to conserve the biological diversity on selected areas. Doğa Association is also very sensitive about the impact of tourism on local life. In Birecik, Halfeti they conducted a ‘Nature Tourism Development Project’. With this project on nature tourism, they envisioned that it would be possible for tourists to stay longer and spend quality time in the district, and that the local products would be sold in some parts of the district and this would provide financial benefits. Furthermore, it was expected that migration of local people from the area would be discouraged because they could earn money from ecotourism.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Turkey has restored an old building and transformed it into an ecotourism center. Another NGO, the Foundation for the Promotion and Protection of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (CEKUL Foundation) carried out Kadikoy Historical Bazaar Rejuvenation Project with the municipality and the aim of this project was to have economically a livelier bazaar at the same time to preserve the old rubric of the place. CEKUL Foundation also has conducted a huge number of restoration projects in different cities with different main purposes.

As an economic initiative for tourism, Touristic Hotels and Investors Association in Turkey (TUROB) offers awards to facilities which attract the most foreign exchange to the country. Besides TUGEV and the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB), they actively work on developing and marketing tourism, and on incentives. Within their advocacy roles, they are in charge of directing national and foreign tourism investors.

However, it does not mean that those NGOs are supportive of economic benefits of tourism no matter what happens. Indeed, they object to tourism plans or implementations especially if realization of tourism in a specific area conflicts with their primary concerns (i.e. environment, culture). For example, the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA Foundation) sued against a thermal tourism center in Yalova in 2010. And also a tourism investment project in İztuzu was stopped by WWF Turkey in the past.

#### 4.3.3.2 Environmental dimension

Since more than half of the NGOs analyzed for this study are environmental NGOs, they naturally emphasize environmental sustainability in their missions and activities. Some of them think that sustainable tourism activities such as nature tourism and ecotourism assist to preserve and conserve cultural values and biological diversity (i.e. Doğa Association, WWF Turkey, TEMA Foundation). Considering the fact that the term ‘sustainability’ could be used only because it is a fad and attracts monetary funds; care should be taken when interpreting the projects presented by those NGOs. Do they initiate and implement their projects for the sake of sustainability itself or do they attempt to acquire just the money that those projects attract? The answer to these questions would be clear after the analysis of interviews with NGOs.

As the global agenda is shifting towards a ‘sustainable development’ model, tourism NGOs also have started to embrace environmental sustainability dimension along with the economic concerns for tourism. For instance, TUROB, the biggest Hotels and Investors Association, now has a Greening Hotels certification program through which it encourages higher standards for hotels and more sensitivity to

natural resources. This NGO states that “it cares for the environment for the purpose of sustainable tourism, acts sensibly regarding landscaping and co-operates with the relevant foundations.” It has signed a protocol with TAP (Portable Battery Manufacturers and Suppliers) and ÇEVKO (Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste Recovery and Recycling Trust) on separation of waste batteries and packaging wastes, too.

Awareness programs about environmental resources and conservation of nature is among the primary focus for many NGOs in this study. Attention has been on conservation of rare species and biological diversity, protection of ecosystem, climate change and relation of these problems to tourism. Indeed, one of NGOs strongly believes that “this kind of tourism [nature tourism] would build environmental awareness among the local people (Doğa Association, Halfeti Project). Another NGO works for the protection of coastal areas, marine life, and ecosystems under sea. This NGO, namely TURMEPA DenizTemiz Association, is hence involved with sustainable sea tourism activities: they provide educational activities to school children against the pollution of seas and other water resources. They also have hands-on cleaning activities on coastal areas and in the sea by integrating the community. Besides, there are NGOs that offer ecological literacy seminars in vocational schools of tourism and hotel management (e.g., TEMA Foundation).

#### 4.3.3.3 Social dimension

Educational activities in tourism could be regarded in the dimension of social sustainability. Capacity building programs for the people who work in the field of tourism both ensures that a better service is given to visitors and also widens the perspective of, for example, tourism workers on appropriate conduct of tourism.

Seminars and panels that are forwarded to tourism investors and managers could facilitate fair distribution of employee rights. TUGEV and TUROB are leading NGOs for this type of capacity building programs in the field of tourism.

As they represent the civil society, it is expected that they try to involve local people in planning, implementation and evaluation of tourism activities. Nearly half of the NGOs assert in their websites that they strive to empower women and other low regarded sections of society in their project areas. They also want to educate local people and tourism staff alike so that a higher quality of tourism service could be offered and so that the tension between hosts and visitors are minimized.

Community participation has become an essential component of NGO movement especially after Brutland Report and the Rio+20 Summit. An act of sustainability calls for most of the time a bottom up approach, but empowerment of local people is required for this aim. Therefore, NGOs try to integrate local community in their programs and projects. Two of the NGOs state in their websites that they aim for a democratic participatory process (i.e. TEMA Foundation, CEKUL Foundation). Another one (WWF Turkey) utters that by taking into consideration cultural and economical needs, they involve local people in planning and implementation of the projects.

These NGOs encourage local people to practice sustainable tourism activities so that they get the most benefit out of tourism. At the same time, these hosts are the ones who would most likely to protect their own resources and they are the essential component of workforce in tourism. One of the NGOs (Bugday Association) asserts that their aim is to create sensitivity and to raise consciousness about ecological living practices. Further, they add that to inform people about how to live in harmony with the environment surrounding them and to add to their skills; they

conduct tourism projects which allows for an exchange of information and culture between hosts and visitors. Another NGO (Doğa Association) claim that local women would have a chance to publicize and sell their handwork and this would contribute to the empowerment of them through ecotourism activities.

Restoration projects in which these NGOs have been involved focus generally on conserving cultural heritage assets. They also allow local people to utilize renovated or rejuvenated buildings, bazaars, etc. for tourism activities if possible. In this way, the community can gain important economic benefits from tourism and hence this would lead to a social transformation in the community, hopefully in a positive manner. Especially, CEKUL Foundation is a leading NGO in this area and it works diligently on the conservation of natural and cultural heritage in Turkey. Other than that, WWF Turkey and Doğa Association have similar cases in different areas on renovation of historical places and transformation of society.

Their pressure and support on sustainability is not always on the practical level; these organizations have a big deal of publication on either sustainability or sustainable tourism. The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), in cooperation with the Federation of Industrial Associations (SEDEFED), published Turkey Sustainable Tourism Report in 2013. TEMA Foundation translated *State of the World* (i.e. Transforming Cultures: from consumerism to sustainability, Innovations for a Sustainable Economy) into Turkish. CEKUL Foundation has books dedicated to cities like Bursa, Gaziantep and Mardin through a book series project called ‘Cities That Conserve Themselves’ as well as articles and guide booklets on sustainable culture tourism. Buğday Association and Doğa Association promote natural life in Turkey through their publications. WWF Turkey has an article on coastal conservation areas and sustainable tourism. TURSAB and TUROB have

tourism promotion brochures or maps. They also release scholarly articles on sustainable tourism issues: “Sustainability of Environment and Tourism”, “Towards a Sustainable and Tourism Oriented Urban Transformation: Eminönü Historic Peninsula City Center” by TMMOB (the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) City Planners Chamber and “Sustainable Culture Tourism” by CEKUL Foundation could be given as examples. TUGEV, TUROB, TURSAB, and TURAD also collect information on the state of tourism, statistical or non-statistical data, and disseminate them among the relevant stakeholders. TUROB, for instance, conduct questionnaires; prepare reports which inform the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and other stakeholders. A report by TUROB titled *İstanbul Otellerinin 360° Değerlendirilmesi* (“360° Evaluation of İstanbul Hotels) (Hatipoğlu, B., Alvarez, M.D., 2013, İnelmen, K., and Ünalın, D.) by TUROB is a recent example for this matter. TTOK offers resource documents on tourism in its library but the library catalogue does not involve sustainable tourism yet. In summary, all NGOs, whether directly or indirectly affiliated with tourism, provide publications on sustainable tourism, or at least on the concept of sustainability.

These NGOs have wide extent of sustainability practice ranging from coastal tourism to ecotourism and urban tourism fields even though many of them are indirectly related to tourism. The fact that Turkey is rich in terms of cultural, natural resources and that tourism holds an important place as indicated in the 2023 Tourism Strategy of Turkey (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) as a source of national revenue makes it inevitable for many governmental or non-governmental organizations to include tourism somewhere in their agenda.

It can be concluded from the analysis of these NGOs’ websites that most environmental NGOs see ecotourism as a rural development tool. Tourism NGOs, on

the other hand, call for the diversification of tourism and destinations so that more tourists could be attracted in a wider area and more income could be obtained. As most of the NGOs in the study mainly facilitates in environmental issues, environmental dimension of sustainability is seemingly considered and handled much more than the others. Further, it can be understood from their statements that social sustainability is emphasized in nearly all NGOs. However, their practical realizations were comprehended fully after the results of face to face interviews with NGOs. These results are reported in the upcoming section.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

For the present research, data were collected from 13 NGOs in total; eight of them are indirectly affiliated and five of them are directly affiliated with tourism (See Table 2). Nine of the respondents were male and four of them were female in this study; and their age range between 25 and 60 as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Profile of Interviewees.

Respondent	Gender	Age	Organization	Position
1	Male	> 35	Buğday Association	Rural networks officer
2	Male	>30	CEKUL Foundation	Urban studies coordinator
3	Female	>25	Doğa Association	Project coordinator
4	Male	>30	SEDEFED	Research expert
5	Male	>35	TEMA Foundation	Rural development project manager
6	Male	>30	TMMOB Chamber of City Planners	Secretary
7	Male	>50	TUGEV	Secretary general
8	Male	>60	TURAD	President
9	Male	>50	T TOK	Financial advisor
10	Female	>25	TURMEPA DenizTemiz Association	Conservation projects coordinator
11	Female	>30	TUROB	External affairs officer
12	Male	>40	TURSAB	External affairs officer
13	Female	>25	WWF Turkey	Conservation officer

For the purposes of this research in this context, grouping the NGOs the way they defined themselves was considered as a better clue to gain insight about their ideal work and their interest areas in a general manner. Therefore, to delve more into their focus of work, respondents of the NGOs were asked to categorize their organization. A substantial portion (6/13) indicated that they work on conservation; particularly conservation of nature and cultural assets. Four out of 13 noted that they primarily serve for information generation and exchange in their fields. Following that, there were three NGOs that concentrate on developing tourism sector (i.e. accommodation,

tour services and vocational tourism schools). Three of them clearly indicated that their aim is to create best practices in the field they operate. Providing guidance is a major focus for two of the NGOs, that is, they counsel other relevant bodies with their expertise. Two of them emphasized that they are not a pressure group and that they operate in a non-activist manner. One of the NGOs in this study is actually a union of NGOs, and its major activity is to represent its members. A summary of these groupings are shown in Table 4 together with the years of service by NGOs.

Table 4. Groupings of NGOs According to their Focus and Years of Service.

Focus	Rank	Percentage (%)
Conservation	6/13	38
Information generation and exchange	4/13	30
Generating best practices	3/13	23
Guidance	2/13	15
Development of tourism services	3/13	23
NGO representation	1/13	7
<b>Years of service</b>		
Less than 10 years	2	15
11-20 years	3	23
21-30 years	4	30
31-40 years	1	7
41 or more	3	23

After a general understanding of the focus of the sampled NGOs, first three structured questions were addressed to the respondents. The aim here was to grasp their relationship level with tourism industry, their willingness to support sustainable tourism and their willingness to cooperate with other tourism and or environmental bodies to achieve sustainable tourism. On a scale of 1 to 5; 1 indicated ‘not interested’ and 5 indicated ‘very interested’ and the results are given in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5. Interest Issues (On a scale of 1 to 5).

	IND NGOs*	D NGOs**
	Mean	Mean
Relationship with tourism industry	3.12	5.0
Supporting sustainable tourism	4.0	5.0
Cooperating with other stakeholders to achieve sustainable tourism	3.0	4.6

Note: \*Indirectly Tourism Affiliated NGOs

\*\* Directly Tourism Affiliated NGOs

Table 6. Ranks of NGOs in terms of their Involvement with Sustainable Tourism.

	Affiliation	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Relationship with tourism industry	IND	8	5.13	41.00
	D	5	10.00	50.00
	Total	13		
Willingness to support sustainable tourism	IND	8	5.13	41.00
	D	5	10.00	50.00
	Total	13		
Cooperation for sustainable tourism	IND	8	6.13	49.00
	D	5	8.40	42.00
	Total	13		

	Relationship with tourism industry	Willingness to support ST	Cooperation for ST
Mann-Whitney U	5.000	5.000	13.000
Wilcoxon W	41.000	41.000	49.000
Z	-2.427	-2.431	-1.068
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.015	.285

a. Grouping Variable: affiliation

b. Not corrected for ties.

Mann-Whitney U test indicated that perceived relationship with tourism industry was statistically significantly lesser for the IND NGOs (Mdn = 5) than for D NGOs (Mdn = 4,  $U = 5.0$ ,  $p = .015$ ). The same result holds for their interest in supporting sustainable tourism,  $U = 5.0$ ,  $p = .015$ , where in both cases IND NGOs reported higher involvement and willingness. However, in regard to the answers given to the question about cooperation for sustainable tourism, the results of the types of NGOs were not significantly different. These results could be taken as an indication that the operation “principles and perceptions” of the NGOs indeed differ by the type.

All of the NGOs that are directly affiliated with tourism stated that they have full relationship with tourism industry; that they are very interested in supporting sustainable tourism but the willingness to cooperate with other stakeholders is relatively low (i.e. tourism and or environmental NGOs).

On the other hand, those percentages were lower for indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs. First, indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs are somewhat less interested in developing a relationship with tourism industry. One of the respondents admitted that they once had thought of excluding tourism activities from their projects based on the fact that tourism is a resource based activity. Another one conceded that they promoted tourism in a project area only because tourism would increase level of income and hence the local people would not be forced to consume natural resources to earn their livings. Yet, these NGOs have more willingness to support sustainable tourism than their level of interest with tourism industry. This finding might reflect their sustainability orientation in terms of use of resources. These NGOs are also least interested in cooperating with other stakeholders with the purpose of achieving sustainable tourism.

Andereck and Jurowski (2006) explain this overall situation with social exchange theory. According to this theory, those who give importance to tourism and see the benefits greater than the costs would be supportive of tourism development efforts. However, those who witness greater costs or who are not interested in the positive outcomes would not support tourism. In fact, it was observed in the present study that, most NGO respondents' decision making process might be influenced by social behavior as discussed by Homans (1961). Homans (1961) summarizes the social exchange theory in three propositions:

1. Success proposition: When one finds they are rewarded for their actions, they tend to repeat the action.
2. Stimulus proposition: The more often a particular stimulus has resulted in a reward in the past, the more likely it is that a person will respond to it.
3. Deprivation–satiation proposition: The more often in the recent past a person has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes.

In other words, those NGO officials who perceive their engagement in tourism to be beneficial for the attainment of their goals and their public image would be more likely to continue their involvement, whereas vice versa is also the case for those who have experienced problems in their pursuit for tourism related projects.

### 5.1 Sustainability understandings of NGOs

As seen in literature (i.e., Butler, 1999), it is widely recognized that the term sustainability is a vague one and easy to manipulate and misinterpret. To determine the role and transformative power of select NGOs in sustainable tourism, it is crucial first to probe their understanding of sustainability since it is this understanding that gives shape to their actions in their work of sustainability or sustainable tourism.

Three respondents of the NGOs that are indirectly affiliated with tourism complained about the vagueness and abuse of sustainability.

We do not like this concept. As is the case with the terms of democracy and freedom, everybody uses sustainability as they will. Hence, we avoid using this concept. We use it only in academic environments; other than that we convey our message with different words. (R2)

[Sustainability] is being abused. Therefore, we do not insert sustainability in everything or to everywhere. (R3)

There is definitely a tumult about the concept.... For me, instead of sustainable development, the term sustainable ecosystem should be used because the concept of development is abused severely and now it is economic development which draws more attention, unfortunately. (R10)

In addition, six of the NGOs (4 IND, 2 D) defined the term in line with the sustainable development definition of Brutland Report (1987, p. 1), namely, as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” A different definition for sustainability came from the official of an NGO which is directly affiliated with tourism. The respondent reported that they do not see the term as ‘green’ in the way it is perceived by the general public. The term rather implies for them sustainability of communications, personnel and service, and economy (R11). Three of the NGOs’ respondents provided no definition for sustainability. Among these, one informant demanded that it is the researchers who should find the definition. Two others only expressed that it is related to continuity. In addition, two of these NGOs are directly affiliated with tourism while one of them is not (R6, 7, 9).

Aside from sustainability understanding of the NGOs, their involvement with different forms of tourism was inquired to have a clue about their approach to sustainable tourism practices. To this end, most project developed forms of tourism by the selected NGOs are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Most Project Developed Forms of Tourism by NGOs.

Forms of tourism interested	IND NGO total: 8	D NGO total: 5
None	1	0
Ecotourism	4	2
Rural tourism	3	4
Urban tourism	1	5
Coastal tourism	3	2
Nature tourism	3	4
All	1	2

Of the eight indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs, one NGO rejects interest in any form of tourism believing that tourism in Turkey consumes its own resources and its respondent states that nature based tourism consumes natural resources without any restoration. Nonetheless, they have rural tourism and agritourism projects in their agenda. One IND NGO is interested in all forms of tourism above because they “seek for sustainability whether in mass tourism or alternative tourism. Two D NGOs out of five give importance to all forms of tourism including mass tourism. The rest of the NGOs have projects related to ecotourism, rural tourism, urban tourism, coastal tourism and nature tourism.

## 5.2 Qualification of NGOs for offering sustainable tourism practices

Although the current data might not immediately reveal whether these NGOs have enough qualified, professional members that might offer contribution for sustainable tourism practices as the study did not include all members of NGOs but representatives for each; it gives a hint about their potential qualification for the matter. Segrado and Farmer (2006) acknowledge that NGOs need to have an adequate number of qualified professional members to be able to contribute to the projects with a high technical content, or make good use of limited resources. In terms of the potential of NGO members, Cecile (2012) asserts that NGO members could quickly recognize problems and offer solutions thanks to their grassroots experience, and that they could immediately adapt to changing conditions.

In the interviews, questions regarding respondents’ education level and their field of study were also directed. It is found that all respondents have at least an undergraduate degree. When their field of study and expertise are inquired, it is seen that they hold degrees in management, economics, architecture, urban planning,

agricultural engineering, biology, literature, and law. It can be inferred that these NGOs could offer expert knowledge in the economic, environmental, social and political dimensions that could be influential in the orientation towards sustainability. However, further research could be useful to measure the capability of NGOs in terms of human resources and their expertise to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

### 5.3 Problems regarding tourism in Turkey

Respondents provided insight with respect to the current situation of tourism in Turkey. Table 8 profiles the responses of all interviewees in the present research. Each respondent identified more than one tourism related problem in general and there are 11 problems identified altogether.

Table 8. Problems Regarding Tourism in Turkey.

Problem	Frequency	IND NGO Fr.	D NGO Fr.
Lack of effective management	5/13	4	1
Environmental destruction	5/13	2	3
Lack of clear tourism planning	5/13	4	1
Perception of tourism solely as income generator	4/13	1	3
Urbanization and construction	3/13	2	1
A culture of consumption	2/13	2	0
Balance between conservation and use	2/13	1	1
Unawareness	2/13	2	0
Unavailability of tourism investments	1/13	1	0
Non-localization of tourism	1/13	1	0
Lack of qualified training and human resources	1/13	0	1

#### 5.3.1 Lack of effective management

One of the most agreed upon problem regarding tourism was that of ineffective management. Respondents felt that necessary care is not given to the management issues around tourism by the governmental bodies. Specifically, the respondents believed that there is a lack of inspection in tourism and there is a need for long term

control mechanisms; museums are managed poorly; and government bodies are authoritative in their decisions and act arbitrarily on occasions without including the views of local people. Furthermore, one respondent claimed that municipalities do not handle recycling in the proper way or they do not claim a role at all. This respondent contended that more and more facilities in tourism have started to do recycling as it is profitable in every way and; yet added that the driving force behind recycling has a profit orientation rather than a sustainability orientation, a point that is argued in literature extensively (Chomsky, 1999; Wearing et al, 2005). For this reason, it could be argued that the central government and civil society should take more responsibility for management processes.

### 5.3.2 Environmental destruction

Respondents of the NGOs in this study see destruction of environment as a major problem; this destruction might be caused by a non-tourism activity (i.e. construction of a dam) and hence could pose hindrance to the development of tourism or it is the direct result of tourism (i.e. destruction of natural habitats for tourism facilities).

Most respondents felt that environment is being abused by tourism activities. One respondent noted that tourism is influential in the pollution of seas, especially by boats, yachts and cruises. Another one pointed out that the phenomenon of unplanned fast tourism as well as having only short term goals for development result in ignoring environmental and social aspects of tourism and it is a threatening situation particularly for rare species and natural habitats. To note, these respondents were officers of IND NGOs. One of the NGO officers stated that:

We cannot realize any kind of tourism here in its true sense other than mass tourism... For example; nature tourism here intends to eliminate nature. In Turkey, tourism cuts its own throat. (R1)

### 5.3.3 Lack of clear tourism planning and policies

Five of the respondents identified lack of clear tourism planning as a primary challenge for tourism in Turkey. One respondent from an indirectly tourism affiliated NGO argued that conservation policies in Turkey are perceived as in fact tourism policies. It means that if there is a conservation policy, it is generally realized just for the sake of image making. Another respondent from an indirectly tourism affiliated NGO thought that in the absence of well developed master plans, it would be futile to talk about the issue of tourism planning. From these two observations, it could be concluded that there is no explicit scheme of tourism planning perceived by these NGOs.

One of the respondents from an IND NGO pointed out to the need of developing a comprehensive inventory and developing tourism strategies accordingly. But he noted that these two processes are not executed effectively in Turkey and most of the time inventory work is skipped in tourism strategies and plans.

Lastly, a D NGO commented on the top-down nature of tourism planning in Turkey again. It was signified that particularly between 1960s and 2000s tourism policies were determined by supra-structures. But the criticism was more about the way living standards are determined – including standards for tourism – and it was concluded that universal standards should apply to tourism. From the lenses of these respondents, NGOs in Turkey does not seem to have sufficient control to create meaningful changes.

### 5.3.4 Perception of tourism solely as income generator

One-third of the respondents put forward that there are major problems about how tourism is viewed within this country. Mainly, they criticized that tourism is regarded

as just an instrument of income generation. For one of the respondents, tourism should be the result of the general wellbeing of the society; not simply a means to increase the standard of living. This solely economic orientation meant that no importance is given to the interaction between tourists and hosts, and that there are reactions against tourism within society.

Since tourism is seen mainly as a source of income, it is quite understandable that bigger numbers of tourists are desired by the tourism sector. However, an officer from an NGO which is directly affiliated with tourism admitted that the data about the numbers of tourists is occasionally exaggerated. This big number encouraged tourism sector to construct bigger and bigger hotels but there is indeed a misinterpretation of the data by the sector. Nowadays, younger and more backpacker or explorer kind of tourists travel more, which implies that there is more demand for small boutique hotels than before. Hence, it is essential to grasp other dynamics other than the number of tourists not only to generate income from tourism but also to alleviate the stress on environment and society. A respondent drew attention to the money oriented perspective of tourism and criticized the commodification of cultural and natural assets into tourism products:

When there is nothing else to hold on, tourism is conducted [as the primary economic activity]. It is not a favorable situation that tourism is transformed into a thing that could be bought and sold with money. (R2)

### 5.3.5 Urbanization and construction

With the introduction of tourism to new destinations, one respondent told that construction of hotels and other facilities, and the changes brought with tourism interferes with local residents' way of life and forces them to move away from this new destination. The same respondent also pointed out that dam constructions affect

nature around the site in negative ways and in some cases causes ancient touristic sites to be buried under water (referring to dam in Halfeti in Turkey).

Respondents from one directly and one indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs stressed that density of construction on the coastal areas, and especially on the coasts has increased along with unplanned urbanization to indicate the importance of planning.

#### 5.3.6 A culture of consumption

Two of the indirectly tourism affiliated NGO respondents located problems around tourism on a deeper level by implying that tourism has traditionally a consumption orientation. One of the respondents gave the example of Şirince, a small town in Western Turkey. With the introduction of mass tourism to Şirince, the local people moved to other areas. The same process is happening in Halfeti at the moment, though at a lesser degree, as discussed in the section above. Now, Şirince, which had enjoyed agricultural production long years, is a center of just consumption. Another respondent declared that “We are against tourism at some point because we are against the consumption oriented lifestyle” (R2).

#### 5.3.7 Imbalance between conservation and use

Two respondents, one from an indirectly and one from a directly tourism affiliated NGO, during the interviews, underlined the importance of balance between conservation and use of resources and claimed that this is one of the major challenges in the process of achieving sustainable tourism in Turkey. Of particular importance was given to higher amounts of carbon emissions by planes, and excessive water and energy consumption at hotels. One of the respondents argued

that although traveling is a human right, it should not outweigh the inner balance of environment.

#### 5.3.8 Other problems

Other than the problems mentioned above, there are some issues identified by single NGO respondents. Since these issues might give further insight about the situation of tourism in Turkey, they are also presented here. A respondent from an indirectly tourism affiliated NGO stated that local people do not have much money to invest in tourism; thus, it was suggested that the state give the incentive to them so that they could earn a living through tourism. However, there have been some problems with this approach in practice. For instance, entrance to the castle in Hasankeyf was prohibited since the castle deemed to be dangerous due to the falling rocks, and also the use of pavilions by the river was also banned by the officials. But this respondent felt that the castle should be restored and reinforced by the relevant state bodies and regained into use.

Like the issues identified as lack of effective management and clear tourism planning; the issue of insufficient investment on tourism straightforwardly points to the role of governmental bodies in tourism. It might be concluded that governmental bodies are thought to operate in the area of tourism ineffectively by the respondents of the NGOs in this research.

Two respondents pointed out the problems regarding the social dimension of sustainability in tourism. First of these, a respondent from one of the directly tourism affiliated NGOs, indicated that the employee turnover rate is too high in the sector. In fact, the other one, from an indirectly tourism affiliated NGO, mentioned non-localization of tourism as a major tourism issue. It was also added that village life is

becoming extinct; to prevent this from happening the suggestion was to foster rural local development and cooperatives in those villages. These two issues could be assessed differently from the ones above which are related to the dimensions of environmental or economic sustainability in tourism.

#### 5.4 Cooperativeness of NGOs

In a context where NGOs are regarded as one of the key stakeholders for sustainable tourism, their relationship with other tourism stakeholders is of importance to be able to assess their role in the development of sustainable tourism practices. In this section, cooperation of NGOs with other NGOs, governmental bodies and local people as well as state of conflict with other stakeholders are analyzed.

##### 5.4.1 Cooperation with other non-governmental and governmental bodies

As a part of the interview, NGO respondents were asked whether they contact and cooperate with other NGOs, social movements or official bodies to achieve sustainable development or sustainable tourism within their interest area. Responses are diverse and summarized in Table 9 below:

Table 9. Cooperation with Other Non-governmental or Governmental Bodies.

Availability of cooperation with	IND NGOs (total: 8)	D NGOs (total: 5)
Local NGOs	5	0
Countrywide NGOs	6	4
Regional development agencies	2	0
Ministries	3	2
Local authorities	2	3

Respondents from five INGOs indicated that they work with local NGOs and social movements in their projects. D NGOs do not seem to be involved with local social

platforms, associations or NGOs. However, different findings were observed in relation to the cooperation with countrywide NGOs. Almost all respondents stated that their NGOs have worked or collaborated with other countrywide NGOs in a project to contribute to sustainable development or tourism. It could be concluded that D NGOs give more emphasis to cooperation with country-wide NGOs than with local NGOs, and this might imply that directly tourism affiliated NGOs are not rigid players on the social dimension of sustainability in terms of inclusion and empowerment of local people.

It was attained that both indirectly and directly tourism affiliated NGOs collaborate with ministries. These contacted ministries include the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Forest and Water Management, Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. Likewise, both types of NGOs collaborate with local authorities such as municipalities, governorship, and special provincial administrations. Nonetheless, indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs seem to have lesser cooperation with local authorities, and actually one of those NGOs' respondent put forward that local authorities are not participatory by nature and far from any cooperation in sustainability matters. Overall, indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs have looser ties with authority whether it is national or local. This may, in turn, have some negative impacts on the integrative projects on sustainable development.

#### 5.4.2 Cooperation with and inclusion of local people

Any cooperation with local NGOs includes the involvement of local people to some extent. However, since inclusion of local people is one of the hallmarks of

sustainability (Swarbrooke, 1999), particularly that of social sustainability, the findings are elaborated here.

Three NGOs in the present study declared no involvement with larger community. One respondent from an indirectly tourism affiliated NGO stated that they are not involved with local people or community due to their focus of work. A D NGO respondent implied no cooperation with community, and it seemed that they steered for sector related work through a commercial enterprise they formed within the NGO. Another directly tourism affiliated NGO respondent acknowledged that although they have had a relationship with local people based on mutual benefits, they had failed in involving the community in a tourism related project which was in south western part of Turkey.

Two indirectly tourism affiliated NGO respondents reported partial cooperation with local people or community. First respondent deemed inclusion of local people into the projects of NGOs essential. Yet, it was accepted that this NGO does not carry out all projects itself; rather just gives them the support from a distance. Therefore, its community involvement efforts have been limited (The same respondent pointed out that the cooperation among local people or villages are not enough and suggested that there be a general network for all cooperatives in the rural areas for effective practices of sustainability). The second respondent admitted that they need the support of community to achieve their goals. However, it was reported that in their tourism focused project there was little involvement on the part of local people. In effect, this NGO respondent was glad that there was no serious resistance to their project although participation rates were low. To verify this claim, in their tourism development project document, it had been written that this NGO respondent aimed for creating collaboration among local people, involving elder people to lead

the community; but it seems that the project did not produce effective results at the end. Moreover, two of the D NGO respondents indicated interest for community involvement but their efforts were relatively few. One of the directly tourism affiliated NGO officer recognized the importance of community involvement but stated that they focus more on raising awareness in sector and increasing employment rate in tourism. Another officer of a directly tourism affiliated NGO informed that they have both national and local boards and that their local boards inspect and find solutions for regional tourism issues. However, inclusion of local people was not mentioned specifically.

According to the responses, five of the indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs and only one tourism NGO work together with local people. During the interview, R1 stated that they generally have a good relationship with the local people and have their trust. According to R5, they had an effective cooperation with local community in one of their local development project and realized decision making process together with them. Also, R8, R10 and R13 said that they try to involve local NGOs and community in their work. All of these latter respondents are from indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs. In addition, the respondent from a directly tourism affiliated NGO stated that they organized a workshop to provide local women with some handicraft, which yielded successful outcomes. These results are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Type of NGO and Cooperation with Local People.

	IND NGOs (total: 8)	D NGOs (total: 5)
No cooperation	1	2
Partial cooperation	2	2
Full cooperation	5	1

It is inferred from the statements of respondents that indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs have stronger ties with community and local people (5 out of 8 IND NGOs), but only three of these interactions contain a tourism theme. One directly tourism affiliated NGO officer reported cooperation with local people. Four other tourism NGOs' projects do not cover full cooperative work with locals.

#### 5.4.3 State of conflict with other stakeholders

Four IND NGOs and two D NGOs stated that they have conflicts with other stakeholders. The rest of the NGOs stated there is no conflict experienced.

Descriptions and reasons for availability or unavailability of a conflict with other stakeholders are elaborated below and presented in Figure 2.

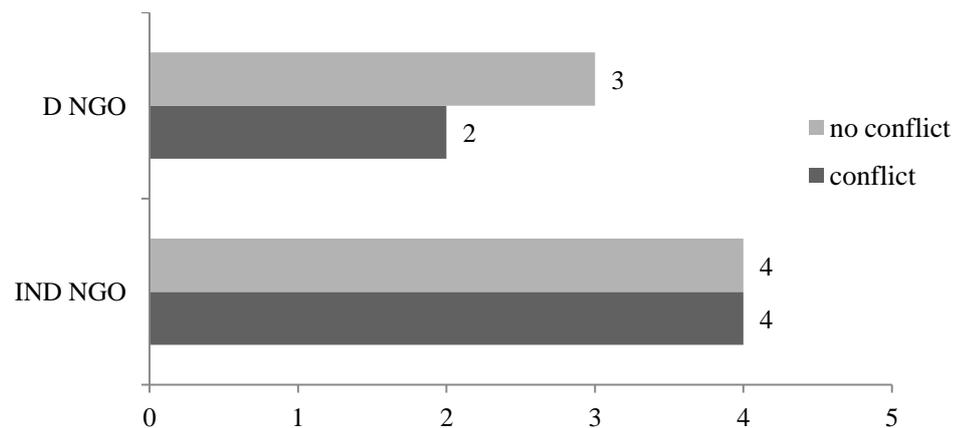


Fig. 2. State of conflict with other tourism stakeholders.

For one IND NGO, tourism itself is the source of conflict as the respondent said: “We are in disagreement with the tourism industry [since it relies on heavy consumption of resources].” Besides, three IND NGO respondents mentioned conflicting perspectives and practices with governmental bodies. These governmental bodies include Ministry of Forest and Water Management, Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning and TOKI (Housing Development Administration

of Turkey). Fights over authority, contestation, differing philosophies were identified as the reasons of this conflict.

Two D NGO respondents affirmed that they experience conflicts with others but did not give specific examples. One respondent commented that this conflict is inevitable in the face of a tourism policy differing from overall policies. Therefore, he asserted that “there should be comprehensive government policies which could also be applied to tourism” (R8).

One IND NGO respondent stated that they do not have any conflicts with other bodies, especially governmental ones. The second NGO respondent rejected any conflict and argued that “sustainability is supposed to be applied in every aspect of the life, and therefore, although there are lots of disagreements in other areas; there is much more agreement in terms of sustainability among tourism stakeholders.” The third IND NGO respondent explained the no-conflict situation with the lack of developed NGOs, which is addressed in the literature about NGOs in Turkey (Aslan, 2010). Furthermore, a fourth respondent explained that there is a mutual understanding and harmony among the governmental bodies they work with since everybody is aware of the difficulties confronting sustainability.

Three D NGO respondents reported that they do not have any conflict with other stakeholders. One of them replied that they do not discriminate between ‘the interests of tourism, environment, community and culture’, and therefore, they are not in opposition with any other stakeholders (R12).

It should be noted that most of the NGOs saw governmental bodies as the relevant stakeholders to be assessed. Other NGOs, individuals, local community or tourism industry were out of interest or irrelevant for them.

## 5.5 Financial sustainability of NGOs

It is well recognized that NGOs might rely on voluntary donations for their very existence or their financial resources might be scarce. This makes them vulnerable to the politics and priorities of their donors (Devine, 2003; Segrado and Farmer, 2006; Mpfou, 2012) and hence, they might face the danger of generating projects which are enforced rather than the ones truly required. Therefore, revenues of the NGOs was investigated first by checking their websites regarding their revenue declarations and after that NGO respondents were asked to give further detail about types and source of their revenue during the interview.

First of all, it should be mentioned that a few of the NGOs gave adequate information about types and sources of their revenue in their websites. But, this lack of information was compromised during the interviews. In the analysis, it was found that all of the NGOs mainly rely on membership fees. This is followed by income from immovable assets, donations, financial aids, festival and exhibition revenues, and campaigns. Based on the type and mission of NGOs, there are other revenue sources. These include partnership with national or international organizations or companies, publications and products, and interest. Additionally, it was indicated that higher number of volunteers relieves NGOs from dependence on monetary resources.

Second, opinions of respondents about the financial sustainability of their NGOs were explored during the interviews, in order to understand whether these resources are sufficient for them to function effectively in their projects. The respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 13 simply stated that they have the sufficient resources. Five other respondents' statements are somewhat similar. These five respondents above implied that that they have sufficient financial resources but some of them

have different and indirect reasons for this. For example, R11 explained that long years of service has given them the confidence for future existence. Besides, R12 said that their social and political background as well as their capability gives them economic viability. Aside from these positive opinions about financial sustainability, R8 had a hesitant tone and R10 was not clear about their own sustainability.

Of course, to function in the area of sustainability and to advocate sustainable practices, it is important that NGOs are sustainable themselves. However, this issue is not primarily dwelled on this paper, and it might be another topic for further research.

#### 5.6 Contribution of NGOs to sustainable tourism

In line with the framework by UNCSD NGO Steering Committee (1999) discussed earlier, actions taken by the selected NGOs for their transformative power towards achieving a more sustainable tourism are outlined in this section. As presented in Table 11, 10 items were identified as contribution to sustainable tourism by NGOs in Turkey.

Table 11. Contribution of NGOs to Sustainable Tourism.

	IND NGOs	D NGOs
Raising awareness in community	5	1
Conservation of cultural/natural assets	5	1
Involvement in tourism planning	4	0
Providing training for tourism students/employees	2	2
Educating school children	3	0
Lobbying	1	2
Creating best practices	2	0
Publications on sustainable tourism	2	0
Offering investment	1	1

### 5.6.1 Raising awareness in local people and community

According to the respondents' description, the NGOs in this study are most active with regards to raising awareness in local people and community about how to conduct tourism in an effective and sustainable way as well as how to conserve environmental resources. Five indirectly and one directly tourism affiliated NGOs indicated their work in this area.

The aim of one of the five IND NGOs' nature tourism project highlights this point:

[Our aim is] conducting educational and informative activities which includes giving local women information about tourism, sharing knowledge with the local government; explaining them that returns in tourism are usually long term by nature and that it is possible for everyone to join in tourism activities, and presenting them the best tourism practices in situ. (R3)

Other four IND NGOs point out that generating and sharing information is one of their primary tasks. But it should be noted that they are mostly focused on sharing information related to conserving environment unlike the activities stated by R3 above. To this aim, they publish various online or offline material on sustainability and sustainable tourism. These publications made available by these NGOs could be seen in the content analysis section of Chapter 4 in this thesis. Besides, they offer seminars to local community on how to preserve environmental and cultural resources.

The only directly tourism affiliated NGO which is preoccupied with tourism research generates their own studies or shares other studies with public, and they disseminate knowledge to other tourism stakeholders to be utilized by them.

### 5.6.2 Educating school children

Less tourism-specific than the point stated above, educational activities in primary and secondary schools are among the works three IND NGOs are conducting in this research and they could be further regarded as one of the awareness raising activities of the NGOs. All these three NGOs have officers, volunteers or ambassadors that are particularly responsible for offering education to school children at different ages. In the case of volunteers or culture ambassadors, these people are first equipped with relevant knowledge through the trainings offered in the NGO headquarters and then they go and implement educational activities with school children.

It was observed that one of these three NGOs has been notably more active than the rest and has a ‘culture ambassadors’ program in which the aim is to raise awareness about various types of heritage in primary school students all over Turkey and to develop a sense of identity, awareness of local history in them. The second one organizes educational workshops on coastal conservation, offers materials on sea conservation to schools and involves school children in the conservation activities of the NGO. The third NGO makes presentations about climate change, endangered species and biodiversity, and nature friendly consumption in schools because it believes that awareness raising activities are essential in changing the lifestyles of the people.

### 5.6.3 Conservation of cultural/natural assets

As much contribution is provided for the conservation of cultural and natural assets for the sake of tourism. Respondents of four indirectly and two indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs provided information about their conservational work.

One of these NGOs promoted beekeeping and nature tourism activities in the biologically and culturally rich area of Maçahel in the Black Sea Region by providing infrastructure, accommodation, and research and by empowering the local people. Its respondent acknowledged that they did not have a direct endeavor in terms of tourism and that they just strived to protect environment, as inferred from this statement:

In Maçahel, we promoted [nature] tourism as an alternative solution so that local people would not cut trees there to earn their living. But this is also for the benefit of tourism, and this makes our contribution indirect. (R5)

Three NGOs were observed to be more focused on conservation within the framework of [sustainable] tourism and can be seen in the extracts below.

To promote the city together with the Beypazarı municipality, we have worked on the flora of the area and promoted it for tourism because it seems that this is a way of protecting species and habitats. (R3)

In fact, this NGO led a project funded by GEF-SGP (Global Environment Facility – Small Grants Program) of UNDP in the area of İnözü Valley in Beypazarı, Ankara between 2005 and 2008. İnözü Valley is a natural and archeological site as well as one of the important bird areas and key biodiversity areas in Europe. This valley hosts various species such as black stork, Egyptian vulture and lanner falcon. With their nature tourism project, this NGO tried to involve and empower local people in tourism; promoted natural diversity of this tourism destination in cooperation with the local municipality. Besides, a traditional mansion was rejuvenated into the Beypazarı Nature House to accommodate the visitors to the area and to disseminate knowledge about the natural and cultural assets (Bircan, et al., 2010). Any income generated from the Nature House was invested back in nature, contributing directly to the conservation of the area's biodiversity. In this manner, this NGO ensured preservation of natural and cultural assets in the area.

A campaign similar in its aims to this project was also conducted by this NGO in the southeastern part of Turkey, namely Hasankeyf which is a natural conservation area and an archeological site. The construction of a dam in an area of ancient Mesopotamia in Hasankeyf was strictly opposed by this NGO and national and international campaigns were conducted in cooperation with other stakeholders against the construction of the dam. It has been argued that there would be severe environmental, cultural and social impacts of this dam to the region. The historic town of Hasankeyf would disappear together with hundreds of archaeological sites. Many people would be displaced and important habitats for globally and regionally endangered species would be wiped out. Hence, it was demanded from the government that Hasankeyf be nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status and a local tourism strategy be implemented so that preservation of the site could be ensured as well as tourism investment and revenue could be attracted. In addition to Hasankeyf campaign, this NGO applied for another GEF-SGP fund to realize ecotourism in Halfeti, a district in the southern part of Turkey which is now given a cittaslow status. Rich in terms of biological diversity and architectural remains, this destination already has a dam constructed, leaving the local people without fertile soils. Here, ecotourism has been proposed as an economic development tool and in order to attract relevant funding for the preservation of cultural and natural assets.

Two other IND NGO respondents stated that they campaign for more nature friendly forms of tourism as environmental NGOs. One of these NGOs is working on a project of sustainable development in the Mediterranean, which includes five countries and eight conservation sites. The respondent indicated that a southern coastal part of Turkey, Kaş, is also included in the project as a marine protected area and that a master plan has been created accordingly. It was argued that sustainable

tourism should be part of this master plan because of the characteristics of the area, and that cultural and natural resources should be preserved within the framework of tourism. The same NGO also initiated a conservation and responsible tourism project in the ancient site of Likya in the Mediterranean Region in 2002. The other of these NGOs is specifically engaged in the conservation of marines and coastal areas and it has been working for or against diverse tourism activities in the southern coastal part of Turkey to achieve overall sustainability in these destinations. For example, Gulf of Saros which is located in the north of Gallipoli Peninsula is a tourism attraction with its natural landscape and biodiversity, and it became a special environmental conservation area with the lead and campaign of this NGO in 2010.

The last IND NGO in this section is focused on the protection and promotion of environmental and cultural heritage in Turkey and has conducted quite a number of projects in tourism destinations or attractions. They started with the restoration of traditional built environment. Their flagship project in this sense involved seven cities in the seven regions of Turkey. Particularly, restoration and preservation plans were designed for the selected areas. Following, plans for reconciliation of towns and fortresses, and cultural routes were established and implemented by them.

The one tourism related NGO is more focused on conservation of cultural assets. As a part of cultural identity of Turkey, coffee houses hold a particular importance. This NGO had a project to improvise and revitalize old coffee houses in a part of Istanbul.

#### 5.6.4 Providing training for tourism students/employees

Two directly and two indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs offered training programs for [tourism] students and employees. From the two IND NGOs which offered

tourism training to the community for their sustainable tourism projects, first one aimed to raise qualified tourism workers within a certification program. They collaborated with the Public Training Center (Halk Eđitim Merkezi) and another NGO to organize a certificated training and made it compulsory for tourism employees to participate in their training sessions. As a part of their nature-based tourism project, the second NGO built a pension in the project destination and gave a related training to the personnel of the pension.

From the two D NGOs, the first one has offered trainings for high school tourism students, tourism employees and workers. The second one also provides training tourism personnel (especially in hotels) and the respondent of this NGO (R11) stated that their understanding of sustainability mostly relates to economic sustainability and specifically to sustainability of business, personnel, service, communication and economic stabilization. Therefore, these trainings are essential part of their organization and they offer seminars and panels with the aim of higher personnel motivation and lower turnover rate; such as certification programs, first aid trainings and foreign language courses. Yet, it is much more difficult to observe that social and environmental aspects of sustainability are taken into consideration in these last two cases.

#### 5.6.5 Involvement in tourism planning

In response to whether these NGOs try to minimize environmental, social or economic impacts of tourism, some of the respondents identified their involvement in tourism planning as a contribution. Although no D NGO respondent stated an involvement with tourism planning, respondents from four IND NGOs uttered their participation to planning activities as a positive impact on tourism. These NGOs act

as counselors with their expertise in specific domains such as cultural heritage, environmental planning, water management, etc. as exemplified below:

In our projects, usually local governments take the initiative. What we do is guiding and leading them with our expertise. We help them generate policies and we ourselves generate strategic plans. (R2)

However, it should be noted here that since stakeholder involvement is indispensable to the concept of sustainability, respondents were separately directed the question of “As an NGO, do you feel included or excluded in [sustainable] tourism planning process?” in the last part of the interview to comprehend their perception about NGOs’ inclusion level to planning process. Those findings are also presented in this chapter.

#### 5.6.6 Lobbying

One IND NGO and two D NGO utilizes lobbying activities but not necessarily to achieve sustainability in tourism. Lobbying is the only area where D NGOs seem to be more active than their counterparts in this study.

By reaching decision makers, we try to force them to take action about planning and sustainability. (R13)

Because we have members from government and ministries; we are quite effective in politics. (R7)

Our ‘Nature, Adventure and Sustainable Tourism Committee’ is working to render tourism more sustainable [in Turkey]. (R12)

The first NGO above which is indirectly affiliated with tourism has conducted coastal tourism projects in the southern part of Turkey and their sustainability focus is relevant to tourism. According to the statement of second respondent above, this D NGO has a potential power in lobbying; however, there is no evidence as for sustainability concerns. Rather than achieving sustainability, however, Buckley

(2012) warns that lobbying might be used by some tourism advocates for avoiding environmental restrictions and gaining public access to public natural resources.

The third respondent informed that they have a special committee committed to sustainable tourism and they work with ministries to influence them. However, as the respondent did not give further information about the works of this committee, the website of the NGO was further searched through to reach committee announcements, activities and written reports. First of all, the name of the committee presents concepts of nature based tourism, adventure tourism and sustainable tourism as parallel to each other. However, sustainable tourism is an overarching term which might be applied to nature tourism, mass tourism, etc. (Butler, 1999). Second, as seen on their website, apart from sustainable tourism, ecotourism, nature tourism conferences and panels; they promote hunting tourism as a part of their committee work. Yet, sustainability of hunting tourism is controversial and Deere (2011, p. 30) draws attention to this point in the context of African hunting tourism by concluding that “only in rare, site-specific contexts have natural resources been managed in a manner that promotes social development while upholding conservation values.” Overall, it could be asserted that there is an ambiguity about what sustainability refers to for this NGO.

#### 5.6.7 Creating best practices

For NGOs to be able to transform tourism activities, they should first illustrate the best sustainable tourism practices themselves or they should educate community by conveying information about best practices from all over the world. Only two DNGOs asserted that they create best (or at least good) practices in this study:

We try to demonstrate what we approve by example cases and projects. So, for instance, we cannot claim that we are against mass tourism but we exemplify agricultural tourism in practice, which we think is a better alternative. (R1)

It is our aim to transfer experiences from best practices in tourism to the local community. (R3)

#### 5.6.8 Offering investment

One IND and one D NGO respondents reported that they offer or attract investment for tourism. One of these NGOs has formed a fund from the donations and invested in a nature tourism product by providing tourism infrastructure of the destination. The other NGO is involved with the restoration of old buildings and operates tourism facilities in these traditional old buildings. With the revenue from these facilities, it further invests into other tourism related areas.

#### 5.7 Transformative power of NGOs on changing holiday habits of visitors

In this study, it was found that four IND NGOs and two D NGOs do not work for changing the habits of holiday makers since it is irrelevant to their functional area or they are content with the current visitors. To exemplify the latter case, one D NGO respondent stated that they target a specific segment that is interested in history and historical buildings. Hence, they “do not strive to change holiday habits of visitors who accommodate in hotels in Antalya. Only governmental regulations could change those people’s holiday habits” (R9). This view reflects the government-dominant, authoritative perspective of creating changes in tourism.

On the other hand, the respondents of four IND NGOs and three D NGOs reported that they try to influence and change holiday habits of visitors via different methods. Below is given the results of these efforts:

These holiday habits have not changed yet. Visitors choose agritourism mainly because they do not want to pay for accommodation. Although they are supposed to work in the farm with the aim of information exchange, they are reluctant to work. (R1)

We organized awareness raising campaigns and activities about the beach tourism, but I think it proved to be ineffective. (R10)

Besides unsuccessful examples above, there are also success stories in which NGOs were able to change the holiday habits or mindsets of the visitors and tourism service providers:

[With our nature based tourism project], they [visitors] have realized the importance of biodiversity and we created awareness in local community. (R5)

As a result of diving tourism, a marine conservation area has been designed.... Although prime ministry did not approve the rules identified for this conservation area, visitors and tourism establishments have adopted them. (R13)

The quotations above belong to the respondents of IND NGOs. According to their reports, two of them have become unsuccessful in transforming visitors in line with the philosophy of their NGO. Other two NGOs declared being successful in creating a change in the habits of visitors. Below is given the reports of respondents from D NGOs.

We provide information to the tourism sector and try to transform it. In this way, tourism sector can change visitors' habits. (R8)

Our sustainability initiatives are not the main reason of visits to Turkey by European tourists, but these contribute to their travel choices. Mostly European tourists transform the way we provide tourism service. Local tourists' level of awareness [on sustainability] is still lower. In addition, Middle Eastern tourists usually ignore sustainability efforts. However, it is our duty to instill these values to our guests. (R11)

[With our 'early reservation campaign, visitor numbers increased from 300 hundred to 2,5million [in four years]. And this is an indicator of success for us as we changed their holiday habits dramatically. (R12)

The first of the D NGOs has the potential to affect the holiday habits of visitors indirectly via changing the tourism sector. The second one critically analyzes current

habits of visitors from different backgrounds, and asserts the need for transforming visitors. It is contended that visitors or tourists should be willing or ready to change. At this point, various factors need to be taken into consideration such as the background, education level of the tourists. The third quotation is debatable in that it might ignore the dimensions of sustainability by just focusing on visitor numbers.

#### 5.8 Perception of NGOs about their inclusion to tourism planning

Involvement in sustainable tourism planning was identified as one of the contributions offered by directly or indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs in the current study. However, it is important to explore the government's attitude to these NGOs or tourism stakeholders through the perceptions of the respondents. Therefore, the question of "As an NGO, do you feel included or excluded in [sustainable] tourism planning process?" was posed to them. The findings are presented below.

Three of the IND and three of the D NGO respondents expressed that they are fully involved in sustainable tourism planning process.

We have participated in government meetings since they usually invite us to these events. (R1)

As advisors [to the government], we have a lot to say about tourism planning. (R2)

At this point, we are taken seriously as an NGO since we are one of the biggest and most influential foundations in Turkey. (R5)

As our NGO have members from both tourism sector and government such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, we are quite effective in politics and decision making. (R7)

Yes, we are included [in tourism planning indirectly]. They use the data we have generated when forming tourism strategies. (R8)

We contribute to the formation of legislation. They [decision makers] ask for our opinions. And usually we see that they conform to these opinions. (R10)

Three of the IND and two of the D NGO respondents stated that they are somewhat included in the tourism planning process. Some responses include:

Our opinions are always asked by the decision makers but they do not apply these opinions most of the time. (R11)

We are just beginning to be included in the planning process. There are collaboration meetings in progress. (R13)

If they ask for our opinion, we respond them [but nothing else]. (R9)

As we collaborated with lots of official and civil organization on solution centered projects regarding sustainable tourism, we can claim that we are included somewhat. (R12)

Two of the IND NGO respondents claimed that they are not included or excluded in tourism planning. However, none of the D NGO respondents asserted that they are excluded.

When there are even no master plans, it would be absurd to talk about tourism planning. (R3)

We are not included in tourism planning. (R4)

It is seen that there are different responses from different NGOs. There are both IND and D NGO respondents stating that their organizations are fully or partially included in tourism planning. However, only some of the IND NGOs claimed that they are not included in this process.

## 5.9 Perceived stance of government towards sustainable tourism

NGO respondents were asked to comment on the central government's stance towards addressing sustainable tourism since NGO's contribution to sustainable tourism development is facilitated by a constructive and positive approach of the government on the issue. Mostly, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was held the responsible body for sustainable tourism development from the government wing.

The respondents' opinions are presented in Table 15 and explained below without revealing their identities.

Table 12. Opinions of the Respondents.

Opinion	D NGO	ID NGO
Government's understanding of sustainable tourism is limited	5	2
Government stance towards sustainable tourism is (progressively) satisfactory	2	3

Five of the IND and two of the D NGO respondents stated that the sustainability understanding of the government is limited. One of the respondents from an IND NGO explained that "For them, ecotourism means constructing hotels in the middle of nature" (R1). Another IND NGO respondent expressed that there is confusion about the term by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and argued that the Green Star certificate offered by this ministry does not really promote sustainable tourism in the tourism sector. Among these respondents, two of them concluded that sustainable tourism is used "just to attract revenue" and that "it is used as an economic tool not in a constructive but in a consumerist way". To note, one of the IND respondents did not comment on this item on the interview.

Respondents of two of the IND NGOs and three of the D NGOs found the stance of the government towards sustainable tourism to be progressively satisfactory. They presented the laws and regulations, 2023 Tourism Strategy of Turkey as examples of awareness by the government on sustainability and alleged that "alternative tourism has become a distinct tourism strategy" (R4). Furthermore, a respondent from a D NGO added that "The Ministry of Culture and Tourism provides incentives, and the best example is the Green Star certificate" (R11). However, one of IND NGO respondent added that there are still bureaucratic

obstacles while one D NGO commented that “the concept of sustainability is new for them [the government] and we need to push and support them for that matter” (R13).

## CHAPTER 6

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research started by asking the question of “What is the role of NGOs in sustainable tourism in Turkey? And are they leading the way or lagging behind? To complement these questions, three other sub-questions are addressed. Is tourism in Turkey generally sustainable from the lens of the selected NGOs? Are local NGOs in Turkey fitting organizations that can lead the way to sustainable tourism development? Do NGOs have a transformative power for creating consumer and sector trends in tourism in line with sustainability? In the discussion section of this thesis, these questions are addressed in a systematic manner to describe the profile of NGOs in the development of sustainable tourism, if any.

Two groups of NGOs, namely directly and indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs, are investigated in this research in terms of their contribution or non-contribution to sustainable tourism development. As Aydın (2011) stated, engagement of NGOs in roles such as education, promotion, investment, or consulting that may influence the trajectory of tourism directly or indirectly, represents a milestone for the economic, social and cultural development of tourism in a particular area, and hence requires attention.

#### 6.1 Is tourism in Turkey sustainable from the lens of NGOs?

Before setting the context for the contribution and impact level of NGOs for sustainable tourism, probing over the problems related to tourism in Turkey could provide insight about the fields of work NGOs (should) engage in. A rigid categorization of these problems includes environmental, socio-cultural, economic

and political dimensions and is seen in Table 13. Although included in discussions of sustainability concept, a technological dimension was not comprised in this list since none of the respondents mentioned a technology related issue and it was not inquired during the interviews, either.

Table 13. Tourism Related Problems by Sustainability Dimensions.

	Problems
Environmental dimension	environmental destruction Construction consumption based nature of tourism imbalance between conservation and use
Socio-cultural dimension	Urbanization consumption based nature of tourism extinction or deterioration of culture
Economic dimension	perception of tourism solely as income generator lack of investment high employee turnover rate
Political dimension	lack of effective management lack of clear tourism planning and policies

It is expected that different types of NGOs address different issues identified above based on the primary goals and missions of their organization. It could be assumed, for example, that an environmental NGO would prioritize the environmental issues regarding sustainable tourism when involved with tourism directly or indirectly.

Although this is the case at times, the sampled NGOs are seen to embrace various problem dimensions as implied by the principles of sustainability, which requires a holistic approach itself. For instance, by supporting agricultural tourism and rural development, one of the IND NGOs aims for economic and social sustainability such as in the form of empowerment of women. Another IND NGO strives to conserve the natural habitats of rare species by offering education to raise awareness in local people and by attracting investment to the area so that these people could turn to other resources to earn their living.

The issues identified above are presumed to be addressed by all the relevant stakeholders to achieve sustainable tourism goals. At this point, the present respondents' opinions about the government's stance towards sustainable tourism were inquired since it is ultimately the legislation and regulation, funding and fiscal incentives, and planning by government that shape the trajectory of sustainable tourism in a country (Swarbrooke, 1999). The respondents from seven of the NGOs implied that sustainability understanding of the government, or more precisely the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, is limited and encompasses the economic aspects of tourism. This affects the related laws and legislation, funding and incentive, and planning. It should be reminded that five out of these seven NGOs were indirectly tourism affiliated and mostly environment oriented, and they expect more environmental focus from the government on laws and legislations. On the other side, respondents from five NGOs (2 IND, 3 D NGOs) in total agreed that the government is addressing sustainable tourism in the legal framework, in the planning process and with incentives.

Actually, in the Strategic Plan by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey for 2010-2014, the unavailability of sustainable, effective and established culture and tourism policies is indicated as one of the weaknesses of the Ministry in a critical way. Besides, it is also acknowledged here that there is a risk of environmental degradation if sustainable tourism practices are not implemented. Yet, although alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism are indicated in the 2023 Tourism Strategy of Turkey, there is no discussion of sustainable tourism included. Offering guidelines for the future of tourism in Turkey, these two documents showcase a lack of understanding of sustainable tourism by the Ministry and support

the respondents' arguments that the government does not address the sustainability issues in tourism.

Overall, majority of the IND NGOs criticized the current stance of the government towards sustainability and sustainable tourism to be incomprehensive while most of the respondents from D NGOs commented that the government plays a leading role in development of sustainable tourism. This contrast in results was more evident in the case of Green Star certification by the Ministry. Green Star certificate is given to accommodation facilities that meet the criteria with the aim of conservation of the environment and raising environmental awareness (www.kultur.gov.tr, 2014). While an IND NGO respondent claimed that this certificate does not promote sustainability practices in tourism, a D NGO respondent saw it as the best example for sustainable tourism incentives. It can be inferred from these results that the expectations and perceptions of the respondents from different NGOs vary greatly or sometimes can be contradictory. In any case, it is argued that "NGOs constitute a viable alternative to government as channels of development assistance, particularly in developing countries" (Cecile, 2012, p. 19). Although the stance of NGOs towards sustainability and sustainable tourism could be regarded as an important determinant, the present results indicated that they are more reactive to the lead of the Ministry rather than being proactive. So, if not lagging behind, these NGOs did not seem to be leading the way towards sustainable tourism, as well.

6.2 Are local NGOs in Turkey fitting organizations that can lead the way sustainable tourism development?

When the profile of the interviewees is analyzed, all of the respondents have at least a bachelor's degree from a university, but none of them holds a degree in an area

related to tourism such as tourism and hospitality management. It should be acknowledged that the field of sustainability calls for the integration of different fields so that the economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions of sustainability could be achieved in an optimum way in a specific area. And the respondents of the NGOs that are directly or indirectly affiliated with tourism in the current study exemplify this diversity. However, although all of the respondents were involved in sustainable tourism projects in some way, the non-existence of the tourism as a major (especially in the directly tourism affiliated NGOs) here might be attributable to that tourism education in Turkey did not involve until recently or fully cover the field of sustainability. Yet, this needs further research and elaboration in the context of Turkey. It also means that NGOs' contribution to sustainable tourism could be in a limited way due to these NGOs' lack of tourism awareness, as indicated by Aydın (2011). This lack of expertise and awareness in the field of tourism, however, could be compromised by collaborating with external tourism experts, academics, and tourism sector.

As important as their expertise and awareness in tourism, sustainability understandings of NGOs also give a hint about their current and potential contribution to the sustainable tourism development. Besides, it is the academics, tourism industry and NGOs operating outside of the communities that shape the concept of sustainable tourism. It was concluded in this study that indirectly tourism related NGOs avoid using the term due to its vagueness; nearly half of all NGOs in the study interpret the term in the common way. And that three (two D, one IND NGO) out of 13 NGOs do not have a concrete concept for the term sustainability seems to be an alarming issue if they are to play a major role in sustainable tourism. Particularly, considering the small number of tourism related NGOs, as İçduygu et al.

(2011) indicate (i.e. 4.2% environmental and only 2.1% tourism foundations of all foundations in Turkey), their comprehension of the concept of sustainability is much vital in order to claim a role for NGOs in sustainable tourism in Turkey overall.

When their involvement with different forms of tourism is analyzed, it is seen that nature tourism and rural tourism take the lead, followed by ecotourism and urban tourism in their tourism projects. Interestingly, coastal tourism attracts less attention by these NGOs considering the fact that Turkey is a popular 3S tourism destination.

As Cecile (2012) comments, tourism cannot survive independently and is a multi-disciplinary service that comprises several stakeholders who need to work together to define and achieve sustainable tourism goals. Partnership and cooperation between the various stakeholders in tourism is clearly a requirement (Berno and Bricker, 2001). In this research, NGOs are presented as one of the primary stakeholders for sustainable tourism and it is known that NGOs do fieldwork and directly act with several stakeholders. The extent to which they cooperate with other stakeholders in the context of tourism has a major impact on the quality of their sustainability achievements, if any.

Theoretically, stakeholder collaboration is widely regarded as an approach to solving the problems associated with a lack of understanding and an insufficient number of shared goals between the several stakeholders often involved in tourism. Up to now, a number of studies have called for stakeholder involvement in the sustainable development of tourism. However, the diversity and heterogeneity of tourism stakeholders complicates the process (Waligo, et al., 2013). As a stakeholder, NGOs are generally shown to be both campaigning and proactive bodies, capable of functioning in a broad range of natural, economic and political environments. They can act as negotiator between conflicting groups. Some NGOs seem to have

extraordinary skills in partnerships based upon shared aims with local communities, the private sector and other NGOs (Holden and Mason, 2005). And they have a global view to manage all stakeholders included in the network of sustainable tourism; their non-profit status warrants other partners about their good will; and NGO members' varied background makes it possible to cooperate with diverse stakeholders and to address various issues (Cecile, 2012). Therefore, the question of 'what is the position of the select NGOs in terms of cooperation?' should be addressed to determine their eligibility for sustainable tourism development.

First, cooperation of NGOs with other NGOs or governmental bodies was analyzed in this study. It was found that cooperation with countrywide NGOs was the most common type of cooperation for the sampled NGOs. As for cooperation on the local level, however, D NGOs do not seem to collaborate with local NGOs at all, while IND NGOs are quite active in this matter. It could be suggested that, for a more bottom up approach to tourism, cooperation with local NGOs is also a requirement. When cooperation with governmental bodies was inspected, it was seen that development agencies, ministries and local governments emerged as the relevant partners for cooperation. Among those partners, development agencies were not mentioned by, again, D NGO respondents. However, it should be elaborated here that regional development agencies were assigned to all regions in Turkey in 2006, to achieve planning and development goals at the regional level on topics that include tourism (Hatipoğlu et al., 2014). These regional development agencies are a viable tool for the establishment of sustainability and a mutual inclusion by both parties is essential at this point to manage the development of sustainable tourism. As another finding, it was observed that the rate of cooperation with ministries and local governments were lower for IND NGOs. Overall, it could be concluded that IND

NGOs are more civil sector oriented while D NGOs are more public sector oriented when it comes to cooperation for sustainable tourism development.

Second, involvement and inclusion of community was studied to elaborate on the nature of NGO cooperation. Community involvement implies socio-cultural and economic, if not environmental, sustainability within the context of tourism and it is known that NGOs have prioritized development approaches that include host community perspectives (Wearing et al., 2005). In the present study, IND NGOs rated themselves much higher on this aspect than D NGOs. In fact, five of the IND and one of the D NGOs have full involvement of community in their projects. Two of IND and two of D NGOs benefit from partial involvement of community in their project areas. No cooperation or involvement is observed in the case of one IND and two D NGOs. These findings are in line with the fact that IND NGOs cooperate more with local NGOs, which is discussed above. And in sum, nearly half of the all NGOs cooperate extensively with local people. As representatives of civil society, however, they could be expected to be more active in terms of inclusion of community or local people. Particularly directly tourism affiliated NGOs should take a part in community involvement if they wish to assume a role for sustainable tourism development.

Although most of the NGOs desire community involvement in their projects, this process might be difficult. As one of the respondents reported, they were “glad that there was no serious resistance to their project although community participation rates were low” (R3). This situation regarding cooperation with and involvement of community is in line with the case study by Svoronou and Holden (2005) in which it is concluded that NGOs are not necessarily warmly welcomed by local residents, and that many years may be required to form a trust relationship between an NGO and

the local community. The argument of Segrado and Farmer (2006) is also relevant at this point as they indicated that the local community refused the activities of the NGOs, with participation in their projects limited to the women of the community” in their study concerning the impact of NGOs on sustainable tourism in México. Hence, NGOs might be required to form a background for cooperation before taking action.

Involvement in tourism planning is one of the items which scored relatively higher on the list of contributions by NGOs in Turkey to sustainable tourism. Actually, only six respondents from IND NGOs identified themselves as contributors to sustainable tourism through planning process; no D NGO respondent mentioned it as a contribution. Later, respondents’ perceptions as to whether they are included in the tourism planning by the government were inquired. This time, again six of the respondents from IND NGOs asserted that they feel included to some extent. Surprisingly, all of the respondents from D NGOs declared that they feel included in tourism planning; yet, some of them accepted that they have not participated in this process.

With these responses in mind, it is necessary to evaluate the Turkish legislative framework to arrive at an overall conclusion about NGOs potential to be involved in tourism planning. Gürsoy (2006) asserts that NGOs are likely to be a part of tourism committees and they have the potential to provide input since they have access to knowledge and expertise. It is argued that governments and NGOs should act together as partners and complement one another’s endeavors to avoid depletion of scarce resources and to provide effective service to the society in a search of sustainable development (Cecile, 2012). In the case of Greece, as reported by Mylonopoulos et al. (2010), the Greek legislation does not offer much space for

NGOs to take action in tourism planning. They contend that “the provisions in the legal texts are limited to their potential collaboration with state bodies, local government and local societies” (p. 150).

To understand the Turkish context, 2023 Tourism Strategy of Turkey and Action Plan for 2007-2013 which is prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey could be helpful. It is observed here that NGOs are assumed a more passive role in strategic tourism planning since NGOs are expected of approval of or feedback on the strategic tourism planning rather than active involvement in decision making process even though they are indicated as collaborators throughout the strategy. Furthermore, in the Strategic Plan for 2010-2014 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, only some NGOs are seen as key partners for tourism; yet they are identified as strategic partners, suppliers and as beneficiaries. According to İçduygu et al. (2011), in line with the above discussion, 73% of NGO participants in their study perceived that civil society has limited or no impact in policy. In addition, it was found out that Turkey’s legislation concerning NGOs was seen as very limiting by 69% of the participants, in spite of the recent law reforms. That most of the NGOs in the current study felt they are included to tourism planning might be explained by the fact that they are the biggest and most influential NGOs in Turkey. It is expected that at least these influential NGOs are invited or included by the government for tourism planning.

6.3 Do NGOs have a transformative power for creating consumer and sector trends in tourism in line with sustainability?

NGOs’ contribution or impact to sustainable tourism development could be categorized into four dimensions, namely environmental, socio-cultural, economic

and political as seen in Table 14. Although included in discussions of sustainability concept, a technological dimension was not comprised in this list since none of the respondents mentioned a technology associated contribution or impact and it was not inquired during the interviews, either.

Table 14. NGOs' Contributions to Sustainable Tourism.

	Contributions
Environmental dimension	raising awareness in community conservation of natural assets educating school children
Socio-cultural dimension	conservation of cultural assets providing training for tourism students/employees publications on sustainable tourism
Economic dimension	offering investment creating best practices providing training for tourism students/employees
Political dimension	involvement in tourism planning Lobbying

NGOs function within a network and they act in collaboration with several different actors, and they could generate data or gather data from a number of resources and could apply to various ways such as publications, seminars, public education, or media to raise awareness in relevant sustainable tourism stakeholders. They could also launch extensive awareness campaigns on the worst impacts of tourism with the funding available from international bodies. Thanks to their non-profit, non-governmental nature, NGOs' reliability is claimed by the respondents to be higher than that of profit organizations or governments. Hence, NGOs are at an advantage in guiding the other stakeholders about the ways to approach tourism in a sustainable manner and this makes their awareness raising efforts more meaningful. It was seen in this study that NGOs are most actively engaged in awareness raising activities in community including school children; but more directly tourism related NGOs

should use their skills and expertise to address the lack of awareness about sustainability in the community. This is an important role NGOs should undertake in a country context which has diverse natural and cultural resources to be maintained for the future. Besides, raising awareness in local people is particularly necessary to ensure a more bottom-up approach in tourism.

However, first NGOs themselves should be aware of the concept of sustainability in order to conduct awareness raising activities. As discussed by Waligo et al. (2013), stakeholders, or NGOs in this case, become involved in sustainable tourism initiatives when they have an awareness and understanding of its significance. For instance, what was originally a nature-based tourism project led by one of the NGOs turned into an ecotourism project seven years later. This change of mindset might showcase an increased NGO awareness about tourism activities to be conducted in the region. To clarify this point, nature tourism or nature based tourism is usually defined as “any form of tourism that uses natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form” (Fennell, 2009, p. 372) and “simply as a travel to natural places” while ecotourism is defined as “a type of nature-based tourism that benefits local communities and destinations environmentally, culturally and economically” (The International Ecotourism Society, 2014). Therefore, any tourism that takes place in relatively undisturbed areas is nature-based tourism, but ecotourism must satisfy sustainability principles. It can be concluded that more focus on ecotourism might have resulted from awareness within the NGO and hence this might have led to awareness raising activities with regard to sustainable tourism.

Tourist education can be offered as a technique to achieve sustainable tourism. Yet, Swarbrooke (1999) takes a critical stance on the issue by stating that since we even do not know exactly what sustainable tourism is, it is not possible to provide

guidelines to the tourists and that it is a prerequisite that tourists are open to be educated (i.e. show sensitivity to provided guidelines). From another perspective, tourists might need education about environmental protection and the use of resources particularly in the context of ecotourism or cultural tourism since tourists usually lack information about their impact in a different culture and environment, on socio-economic and socio-cultural development, and about the environmental costs of tourism. In this study, one respondent from a D NGO (R11) assumed full responsibility for their NGO to raise awareness in and to educate the urban tourists. However, this respondent adds that it is the European tourists, rather than pressure groups like NGOs, who educate Turkish tourism industry more in terms of tourism product and service with their demands. In the example of local and Middle Eastern tourists, it is seen that these tourists are not open to a sustainability message in line with the discussion by Swarbrooke (1999).

Nonetheless, NGOs should strive to educate tourists in order to change their consumption matters and promote appropriate, environmentally relevant and socially acceptable behavior in the destinations as indicated by the UNCSD NGO Steering Committee (1999). For example, Tourism Concern tries to influence critical thinking and stimulate ideas in visitors (Tourism Concern, 2014). In the present study, approximately half of the respondents indicated that their NGOs aim to change visitors' habits through different channels such as awareness campaigns, introduction of more environment friendly forms of tourism. Yet, only two IND NGOs reported to be successful in their endeavors. There is no explicit effort or project on the part of D NGOs in terms of changing habits of visitors for better. In essence, it was the impression during the interviews that D NGOs focus on the quantity rather than quality of the visitors. At this point, especially D NGOs in Turkey need to challenge

visitors to think about the impact of their holiday. Yet, it is difficult to implement considering the fact that more and more tourists are targeted every year by the tourism sector and by the Ministry.

Conservation of and cultural natural assets is a high priority for tourism destinations because the communities here heavily rely on those resources that are at risk of degradation by tourism activities. This type of a work corresponds to three of the problems regarding tourism in Turkey, namely environmental destruction, urbanization and construction, and imbalance between conservation and use. In this research, there are five NGOs which assume a role for the conservation of natural assets together with the cultural ones, all of which are environmental, IND NGOs in essence, to achieve sustainable tourism. The number of NGOs involved in nature conservation is actually more than four but some conservation projects did not relate to any current tourism activities (i.e., forestation activities in non tourism areas); and hence, they were not included here for the aims of this thesis.

One of these respondents proposed alternative forms of tourism such as ecotourism or nature based tourism as a means of preservation of cultural and natural assets (or tourism products in this context) in three different destinations, namely Beypazarı, Hasankeyf and Halfeti. However, interestingly, tourism is at the same time presented as a threat to the biological diversity in the website of this NGO. Another respondent tried to distance their NGO from tourism activities even though they had a nature tourism project which aimed to conserve nature and culture in a part of Black Sea Region. A third respondent whose NGO is primarily involved with the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, criticized the fact that heritage is perceived to be equal to tourism in Turkey and asserted that conservation should be done not necessarily for the sake of tourism. It is evident that they do not see the

tourism issues as a focus of their work although all their activities and projects contribute to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage assets which are indispensable components of a tourism product. It might be concluded here that these conflicting perspectives by the NGOs on tourism in essence showcase the dilemma IND NGOs are experiencing about the sustainability that tourism might offer. It is well acknowledged by them that tourism, particularly mass tourism activities could bear negative as much as positive consequences. And this point was made clear by one of the respondents when she stated that they aim to negotiate between the conflicting ends:

We had projects in Antalya, Çıralı. Our NGO sees tourism as an alternative goal. However, sometimes the goals of tourism conflicts with that of environment. That is where we interfere to maintain the balance. (R3)

Swarbrooke (1999) identifies that much of the sustainable tourism debate seems to have ignored the employees to some extent and instead concentrated on hosts, visitors and tourism enterprises. However, tourism employees and students comprise the backbone of tourism sector and need more attention from tourism stakeholders, from NGOs in this case. There is inevitably a relation between sustainable tourism and human resources. As such, providing training for tourism employees and students helps attaining a sustainable workforce, social equity and better tourism service. Besides, this would enhance the self image of employers and increase the status and motivation of the employees. In this way, also the high employee turnover rate could be solved to some degree (Swarbrooke, 1999). In the current study, four NGO respondents mentioned their tourism employee or student trainings and seminars. It was seen that IND NGOs are more engaged with local community in this aspect and offer them tourism training to help them diversify their financial resources with tourism, while D NGOs are more involved with providing relevant

schooling to tourism students and employees in the tourism sector. It is concluded that NGOs help professionalization of tourism workers in different contexts based on their function areas. Evidently, the studied IND NGOs having an environmental focus see tourism as a way of conserving nature. On the other hand, the tourism affiliated D NGOs focus on prospective or current tourism workers as a means of capacity building for tourism labor. Although government and tourism industry are mostly held accountable for devising local training programs and establishing educational projects (i.e., by the UNCSD NGO Steering Committee, 1999), NGOs seem to have claimed an active, complementary role regarding tourism training. The contributions by these NGOs in general towards the economic dimension of sustainability include creating best practices and offering investment as well as providing training for tourism students or employees.

Given the deficiencies in tourism practices, there is a need for learning from present best practices. And NGOs define the “ideal” and propose best practice models for implementation from their perspectives. A sustainability approach was evident in the best practices the IND NGOs has introduced in this study. One of the NGOs implements agritourism as a role model for the community while the other NGO introduces best practices to local people within its nature tourism project. These best practices are intended to provide optimum benefit in terms of revenue, environmental conservation and socio-cultural impact. Furthermore, as the best practices for tourism are adopted by the local community, there would be more investment to the destination as well as an increase in visitation. However, there is no single D NGO in Turkey which is nationally recognized for its best practices in terms of their contribution to the advancement of sustainable tourism.

Tourism investments are usually provided by public sector or private sector. However, as the voluntary sector, NGOs could also attract or even offer tourism investment. In this study, there were two IND NGOs with respect to this item and both had a focus of sustainability. It should be noted that NGOs have the potential to promote investment in sustainable tourism, including ecotourism and cultural tourism, which may include creating enterprises and facilitating access to fiscal resources, including through microcredit initiatives for local communities in areas with high tourism potential.

Diversification of tourism is perceived as a means to achieve sustainable tourism development (Bramwell, 2004). It can include increasing the number of activities and attractions, attracting new type of tourists and extending the tourism to areas where tourism is yet developing or underdeveloped. Types of alternative tourism such as ecotourism, agritourism, nature tourism and culture tourism allow for a diversification in tourism. However, it should be noted that their sustainability could also be as controversial as that of mass tourism as discussed in the literature (Butler, 1999). In the current research, it was found that IND NGOs developed more projects in ecotourism. On the other hand, D NGOs were seen to be more active in mainstream urban tourism projects. It could be concluded here that IND NGOs are more inclined to the diversification of tourism in Turkey. However, seven out of the 13 NGOs in the present study were reported to have interest in rural tourism projects which are less predominant as a tourism activity. This fact might illustrate that NGOs in these study could be, if not current, potential actors for sustainable tourism development given that diversification of tourism brings with itself more sustainable practices. Nonetheless, in the research by Aydın (2011) which examines the impact of local NGOs on tourism in a province of Turkey, it is found that local NGOs offer

no or little contribution to the diversification of tourism in the province. This disparity in findings strikes the discrimination between locally and nationally functioning NGOs and the reasons for semi-conflicting findings might be various but the most important one is, as also pointed out by Aydın (2011), his study includes all NGOs in the province without eliminating NGOs that are unrelated to tourism.

NGOs implement various lobbying activities which target public sector for sustainable tourism practices, and they try to influence sustainable tourism agenda by combining information from official sources with other information that they have generated or gathered. For example, ENGOs in Zimbabwe have effectively advocated environmental impact assessment studies to become a legal requirement in all new tourism infrastructure projects in the Zambezi Basin (Sithole, 2005; Mpofu, 2012). Lobbying or more generally advocacy was found to be one of the impacts of the NGOs to the political dimension in this research since NGOs have the potential to influence government policy to improve sustainable development. In Turkey, it is reported that NGOs are more likely to be active in social services and solidarity, less focusing on advocacy and policy oriented activities in general (İçduygu et al., 2011). Actually, this statement confirms the finding that nearly half of the NGO respondents claimed to take part in tourism planning and none of these respondents were from D NGOs. Yet, 11 of all NGO respondents felt that they are not excluded by the government in tourism planning; and in fact, only two of the IND NGO respondents felt excluded. Evidently, there is a discrepancy between the reality and perception about involvement in tourism planning and it could be inferred that currently involvement in tourism planning is more goodwill than action for the NGOs.

Similarly, only three NGO respondents mentioned lobbying activities in the study, yet only two indicated a work on sustainable tourism advocacy. These are the

activities that follow a political targeted strategy and aim to immediately affect the opinion of policy makers on legislation and regulation (Cecile, 2012). They include consultation and participation, negotiation, and expertise sharing. Low level of this kind of lobbying for sustainability necessitate that NGOs have a more developed understanding of lobbying activities and recognize its importance in decision making. There should be more campaigns by these NGOs, which target decision makers to intervene and transform tourism policies. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that lobbying does not always mean achieving the intended outcomes. Deep-rooted state and private interests sometimes resist to changes that threaten their power (Sithole, 2005). Therefore, it could be alleged that lobbying is just a starting point to engage the state and other stakeholders in realizing sustainability in tourism.

As a further note, NGOs strive to gain lobbying support through various other ways and these follow a public opinion targeted strategy (Cecile, 2012). In other words, action on public opinion is also way of influencing policy makers. Respondents in this study identified media releases, research, websites, media events and newsletters or e-mails as the proper tools to attract attention and to push the state for sustainability. On the other hand, all of the respondents rejected using public protests in a strict way. This finding implies that NGOs in this research prefer adopting more complementary or collaborative rather than confrontational role in their lobbying activities.

#### 6.4 Implications for future research

As this thesis is an exploratory study on the contribution and impact of country-wide operating NGOs to sustainable tourism, it provides a general framework for future research in the context of Turkey. At the least, the study should be considered a

baseline study that could conveniently be expanded within Turkey and elsewhere, to provide further constructive comparisons.

A quantitative study could be done on only directly tourism affiliated NGOs or on only indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs such as environmental NGOs to identify in detail their particular roles for achieving sustainability in relation to their organizational objectives and interest areas as found in literature in the context of diverse countries. This kind of a study would require a relatively bigger sample to be able to represent its universe and its results would help either validating or refuting the findings of the current thesis. A further study which focuses specifically on host and visitor education, awareness campaigns, tourism research, tourism policies, or stakeholder involvement or conservation of tourism assets and products from the view point of NGOs would complement the current research framework. A further study which measures the capability of NGOs in terms of their human resources and expertise to achieve sustainable tourism goals could also be useful.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The present study was the first of its kind to investigate the impact of NGOs on sustainable tourism as well as NGOs' transformative power in making tourism sustainable in Turkey. However, it was not possible in this thesis to identify the exact number of the projects on sustainable tourism that these NGOs engaged in because this would yield only a very rigid numeric categorization of their works and activities. At some point, some of these NGOs have not implemented any sustainable tourism projects themselves but collaborated with other stakeholders as opinion leaders; or at occasions, they have resisted to tourism development at specific destinations in order to object to unsustainable practices on behalf of environment or community. In addition, as they have diverse focus of work, their sustainable tourism orientation might be quite indirect or even enforced. This thesis, therefore, attempted to capture the overall contribution of 13 relevant NGOs, which operate country-wide, to the development of sustainable tourism either in a direct or indirect way and tried to identify their stance, role and transformative power in sustainable tourism development in the context of Turkey, which is an emerging market economy.

As the background and focus of the selected NGOs were quite diverse, they were categorized according to their affiliation with tourism as indirectly tourism affiliated NGOs and directly tourism affiliated NGOs. It was concluded that there is a difference between the results of these two groups in terms of their interest in tourism industry, their willingness to support sustainable tourism and their interest in cooperating with other stakeholders. Furthermore, comparisons were presented to assess their level of cooperation with community as well as their state of conflict

with other stakeholders. Most importantly, these two groups were evaluated in terms of their contribution to sustainable tourism practices. Lastly, their power of transforming the holiday habits of visitors was inquired to find there is a substantial difference between the two groups.

Aside from comparing two set of NGOs to observe any difference in the context of sustainable tourism, this thesis aimed to provide an overall framework for sustainable tourism in Turkey through NGOs. What do these NGOs understand when sustainability or sustainable tourism is implied? This question should be the starting point to comprehend the nature of their stance and contribution or non-contribution to the development of sustainable tourism since their approach would be shaped by their beliefs, definitions and judgments about sustainability. It was explored that IND NGOs are more critical in fully embracing the concept of sustainability while three respondents had difficulty in providing a definition. At this point, the educational background of the respondents gained importance because the results presented in this study reflect the opinions and beliefs of the respondents as much as the NGOs they represent.

Tourism issues to be addressed within the context of sustainability are various. The most pressing problems in tourism were identified to be lack of effective management environmental destruction and lack of clear tourism planning, implying deficiencies in political and environmental actions. This political confrontation by NGOs is not surprising if they are deemed to be substitutes of public sector or representatives of civil society. As Cecile (2012) asserted, when governments fail to generate sustainable measures in tourism industry, NGOs might become the best alternative to implement and manage a sustainable tourism development or they act

as the biggest supporters of sustainable tourism in a tight cooperation with the government.

Parallel to the findings of the research by Mylonopoulos et al. (2010) which is on the NGOs' contribution to sustainable tourism development in Greece, it is concluded here that NGOs' role for sustainable tourism in Turkey is fundamentally informing and raising awareness in community as well as conservation of cultural or natural assets. Besides, they contribute to sustainable tourism development through their involvement in tourism planning and by providing training for tourism students and employees. It is also found out here that the other roles they assume for sustainable tourism development include educating school children, lobbying, offering investment, creating or showcasing best practices, helping and guiding local governments and sustainable tourism reporting. However, it should be noted that the more special role assumed by each NGO depends on the circumstances under which it functions, its mission and objectives, and the tourism environment in which it operates because various factors influence NGOs' intentions to engage sustainable tourism.

It should be underlined that NGOs possess deep-rooted and various experience, expertise and competency fields which will be importance to the implementation and review of environmentally sound and socially responsible sustainable tourism development. They can be regarded as effective in their role of sustainable tourism as they conduct conservation projects, lobbying community based programs, trainings and seminars, and certification and standards for sustainable tourism. As one of the key tourism stakeholders, these organizations could do multitasking. They not only cooperate with local communities and NGOs, but also in conjunction with governments, tourism business and tourists towards the goal of sustainable tourism.

## APPENDIX A

### NGO WEB PAGES WHOSE CONTENT WAS ANALYZED

Buğday Association, <http://www.bugday.org/>

CEKUL Foundation, <http://www.cekulvakfi.org.tr/>

Diversification of Tourism Centres in İstanbul Project,

[www.istanbulturizmmerkezleri.org](http://www.istanbulturizmmerkezleri.org)

Doğa Association, <http://www.dogadernegi.net/>

Greening Hotels Certification Project, <http://www.greeninghotels-turkey.org/>

SEDEFED, <http://www.sedefed.org/>

TEMA Foundation, <http://www.tema.org.tr/>

TaTuTa, Organic Farm Visits in Turkey, <http://www.bugday.org/bugdaygil/Tatuta/>

TMMOB Chamber of City Planners, <http://www.spo.org.tr/>; <http://www.spoist.org/>

Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey, <http://www.turing.org.tr/>;

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touring\\_and\\_Automobile\\_Club\\_of\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Touring_and_Automobile_Club_of_Turkey)

TUGEV, <http://www.tugev.org.tr/>

TURMEPA DenizTemiz Foundation, [www.turmepa.org.tr](http://www.turmepa.org.tr)

TUROB, <http://www.turob.com/>

WWF Turkey, <http://www.wwf.org.tr/>

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Section A

##### General Information about NGOs

- Organization name:
- Name:
- Age:
- Gender:
- Education:
- Relevant Training:
- How long have you been involved in this organization?  
(In what capacity: Volunteer and/or professional)
- Previous and current positions and time durations:
- How do you categorize/identify your organization? (in one or a couple of words)
- What is the target audience of the organization?
- How many members does the organization have?
- Who are your members in general?  
Academia and students, tourism industry, media, local people
- What kind of funding is available to you?  
Member/international donations/government/tourism industry/other

#### Section B

##### The Stance of NGOs

1. What is the extent of the relationship of your NGO with tourism industry?  
1 Not related    2    3    4    5 Very related

2. How much is this organization interested in supporting sustainable tourism?  
1 Not interested 2 3 4 5 Very interested
3. Does this organization see benefits in developing closer relationships with tourism industry/environmental organizations?  
No / Yes and why?
4. How do you define sustainability? Is it a primary issue for your NGO?
5. Does the organization work to minimize environmental/social/economic impacts of tourism? (What is the role of the organization in relation to the impacts of tourism?)  
No / Yes:
6. What kind of aid do you offer to the community so that sustainability/sustainable tourism can be achieved?
7. How much money/time/energy do you spend on tourism issues?
8. What is the foremost important environmental/sustainable tourism issue for your organization?
9. What type of tourism are you most concerned about? (ecotourism/coastal tourism/nature/mountain/rural and village/urban)

#### Transformative Power of NGOs

10. What type of approach do you take to achieve sustainability/sustainable tourism goals? (public education/media releases/newsletters or emails/ lobbying politicians/ public protests)
11. Is there a networking with other social movements, individuals and civil society organizations in order to achieve sustainability/sustainable tourism? If so, please describe its nature.

12. Regarding the importance of community and stakeholder involvement for tourism development to be sustainable, what type of partnership do you create with locals?
13. Do you have partnership with international NGOs? Please explain.
14. What is the conflict situation with other stakeholders (NGOs, locals, government, and tourism industry) in the context of sustainability?
15. What do you think about your organization's capability in terms of giving input to other stakeholders? (Are you resourceful in terms of input?)
16. To what extent do the public take the issues your organization raises into account in their holiday making behavior?
17. Do you feel pressured by other formal or informal bodies? If so, in what ways?
18. Which bodies does your organization intend to force and challenge?
19. What is the contribution of the organization to sustainable tourism planning process? Do you feel included or excluded?
20. What do you think about the government's attitude towards addressing sustainable tourism?
21. What do you think about your organization's intrinsic sustainability? (Do you have enough [economic] resources in order to continue to exist?)
22. Do you monitor and measure your success at projects/works concerning sustainability, tourism or both? And how?

### Section C

Is there anything you would like to add and comment on?

Thanks for your cooperation!

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