Global warming and tourism: chronicles of apocalypse?

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Abstract
Purpose – Global warming is a huge challenge faced by the mankind in the twenty-first century and beyond. The paradox of ecology lies in the pervasive attitude of lay people who overtly condemn pollution but do not alter their individual practices. Unfortunately, the scientific community has still not reached unanimous conclusions about the causes or impacts of global warming. To close this gap, the present paper aims to stimulate discussion in two main senses: the relationship between industry and global warming; and the role of tourism in the coming decades.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on reading and criticism of many works, this paper provides a conceptual framework for readers to understand social adjustment and adapting to climate change.

Findings – Many sources blame the tourism industry as being one of the major contributors to global warming and want the industry to take proactive moves to help address this. The present analysis exerts considerable criticism over the existent literature that presents tourism as a vehicle towards mitigation of the greenhouse effect. Based on the theory of commons, the paradox of Giddens and the consuming life, the main thesis of this paper is that modernity has created a symbolic bubble that confers a certain security to viewers but transforms them in consumed objects.

Originality/value – The originality of this research lies in the assumption that global warming or climate change generates a paradox. As a form of cultural entertainment, ecology and global warming form (jointly to apocalypse theories of bottom days) a new way of enhancing the consumption, where tourism unfortunately does not seem to be an exception. The theatricalization of danger contributes to the creation of an underlying state of emergency that is seen but not recognized. As Hurricane Katrina and other disasters show, people only take a stance when the economic order is endangered. Global warming as a phenomenon was considered seriously only when international leaders envisaged the potential economic losses of its effects, and not before. Following this, the tragedy of commons, as Graham puts it, explains the reasons why well-being can, under certain conditions, be a double-edge sword.

Keywords Disasters, Global warming, Ecology, Tourism, Apocalypse, Climate change, Environmental management

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction
In the popular parlance, the continuing rise of the average temperature of the earth’s atmosphere and its oceans is known as global warming. Among journalists, there is a wide consensus that human activities - ranging from the concentration of greenhouse gases to...
gases to deforestation, are the primary reasons for climatic change and the growing number of extreme weather events. The national and international academies of the most industrialized countries recognize these findings are unquestionable and the potential irreversibility of the problem if immediate course of actions are not taken. Based on empirical evidence, some model estimates for the twenty-first century predict that the global temperature will rise 1.5 to 1.9 C (2.7 to 3.4 F) and this is a comparatively modest scenario. As and when this occurs it will cause sea levels to rise and it will change the morphology of land masses as well as subtropical desert expansion. One of the proposed strategies to deter global warming is to stabilize and formally legislate for greenhouse gas reductions. The first attempt to achieve this change was the Kyoto Protocol to which 192 nation states subscribed, though the USA and China have yet to ratify the covenant. Given this scenario, global warming has in recent years, begun to pose a global threat to all cultures and nations (Brigham-Grette, 2006). However, there are some signs of progress as a number of countries have introduced carbon taxes and Norway currently has the highest level of carbon taxation with the objective of mitigating the effects of pollution (Gossling, 2009). The problem of climate change seems to be linked to the variability of temperatures worldwide. This seems likely to create serious problems for local economies and engender food crises (Conway and Schipper, 2011). What is important to denote here is that there is currently no consensus as to the extent to which global warming can be controlled. In fact, there is a broad range of viewpoints including those who believe that global warming is not necessarily going to curtail human activity.

Although many scholars have focused on the influence or effects of tourism on nature and ecologies (see for example: Stonich, 1998; Hughes, 2002; Hipwell, 2007; Tierney et al., 2011; Gómez-Martín, 2005; Holden, 2000, 2009; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Yeoman, 2007; Miller, 2001; Muller and Weber, 2008; Franch et al., 2010; Honey, 2008; Dubois and Ceron, 2006; Moen and Fredman, 2007), one of the methodological limitations is the emphasis given to research interviewees’ bias relating to the global warming situation. Based on formal and informal interviews, questionnaires and event complex mathematical algorithms, many studies preclude the fact that consumers and tourists are concerned about the problem of ecology and the individual behavioural adjustments that will be needed in order to tackle the problem. This fallacy leads scholars to think that tourism can change and prevent global warming effects. In this research we explore the dissociation between what people say and really do and the contradiction that the sustainability theory engenders. In recent years a large volume of books, conferences, and papers have drawn attention to the importance of controlling pollution in the atmosphere, yet paradoxically, the emission of hydro-carbon gases has exponentially increased. This raises some interesting points for discussion – for example, to what extent is tourism and sustainability actually sustainable? Further, could a radical hazard for humankind such as global warming, be commoditized as a form of cultural entertainment in an ethically correct way?

Given this backdrop, our thesis is that global warming is not only a real hazard but also a social construct elaborated by the social imagery of the times in which we live. The advances in secularisation that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has to some extent replaced the prevailing religious beliefs before this time with market forces. It does not mean that people no longer believe, but the trust historically associated with religion has to some extent been re-directed to other institutions.
Increasingly we see that politics sets the pace of a new kind of consumption where the boundaries are blurred. In this context, Apocalypse theories are typically a form of distraction and even entertainment in a more unstable, ever-changing world that is growing more concerned about the various security threats it faces.

Global warming and its historical parallels with religion

There is undoubtedly a strong connection between scientific advance and Protestantism. Max Weber brilliantly envisaged the prospects for our times many years ago. He foresaw that humankind would be constrained by its own desire to progress. In terms of Weber’s prophecy the market serves as a social construct that exerts control over the environment and natural resources (Weber, 1985).

James Turner (1986) observes that what has happened in the USA in relation to a decline in trust can be applied to the rest of the world. He explores how and why over time a growing number of believers surrendered to agnosticism and the role played by science this process. If religion tied human life to nature, the decline in faith is partly explained by advances in human understanding. In the middle ages, the authority of the church was not placed under the same lens of scrutiny. There were significant political tensions between Emperors and Popes, but institutions found ways of showing their allegiance to both State and Church. The internalisation of trade facilitated an interchange of ideas even with remote regions and among the diverse countries of Europe. This form of liberalisation taken together with reform in the Protestant movement challenged not only the legitimacy of popes and the Catholic Church but also the connection between humanity and the natural environment. The printing press was a key influence in this process as it decentralized the logic of education from control of the Church:

[...] the stunting of church authority and the weakening of church influence did have important consequences for belief. Secularisation stripped away one sort of built-in protection of religious belief. When the church formed a pervasive part of the social and cultural background, questions about its assertions were less likely to arise; when secularisation put the church at a greater distance, people became more likely to wonder about its claims; perhaps even its axiomatic principles (Turner, 1986, p. 13).

Turner explains that the mindset of the clergy changed over the years. Even though beliefs tend to adapt to the prevailing social conditions, the medieval cosmology that had for so long, been taken for granted now prompted many questions. Religious life had gradually evolved and this also prompted liturgical changes. Theologicians prioritised the creed as a form of acquiring knowledge in response to the mysteries of faith in lieu of unconditional acceptance that had characterised belief in earlier times. The influence of rationality spread rapidly across a wide range of institutions during early medieval times and it brought with it the seeds of atheism. This new philosophy affected the traditional expressions of dependency on God. Pascal (1654) exemplified the dichotomy between the “God of Abraham” and the “God of Scientists”. Last but not least, one aspect that greatly concerned scholars was the question as to whether a Creator God would protect humankind from disaster and catastrophe? This question is still debated and science has shed relatively little light on this except that our understanding of a created order has similarities with our understanding of nature and its ability to evolve and repair the damage done by human activity over the centuries. The point here is that the advent of printing technology did not cause atheism, but it
facilitated a much greater flow of information and diverse interpretations about sacred
texts. It can be argued that this in turn led to an irreversible process of fragmentation
on matters of faith and belief. In view of this, it is not surprising that traditional
expressions of faith were eroded over a period of time. A devastating earthquake
affected Portugal in 1755 and this prompted a process of secularisation that had such
an impact that noted scholars such as Voltaire or Rousseau envisaged the need to
develop a new scientific explanation for natural disasters so that further secularisation
might be prevented. Even though countries across Europe had not questioned the
existence of God, the emerging view – similar to the faith-based views of today –
reflected the realisation that nature is an evolving force whose laws are governed by
specific parameters. Although this view is reflected in religious belief it is sometimes
disassociated with science. It can be argued that the growth of atheism has helped to
resolve inconsistencies in religious explanations relating to aspects creation and the
evolution of species. Geology, anthropology and other disciplines purported to reveal
contradictions with religious sources such as the Bible in relation to evolution and the
age of the planet and these assertions added to a sense of confusion and distrust. In
essence then, the prevailing views of Western society abandoned the paradigms of
religion and embraced scientific explanation in order to find answers to existential
questions. To some extent, secularism, risk, agnosticism, science, and earth
degradation are inextricably linked (Turner, 1986; Nigg, 1996). It can be argued that
if scepticism opened the door to doubt, this facilitated the advance of science and
further accelerated the process of secularisation and a decline in traditional faith-based
beliefs.

In contrast, Sharpley and Jepson (2011) argue that religiosity is not in decline but
that it has been substituted by more secularized expressions. Their explanation reflects
the fact that societies are becoming more secular in nature and replacing traditional
rites and cultural rules with a more subjective form of religiosity. This explanation
would suggest that the number of people who believe in a divine Creator (God) has
diminished as alternative explanations relating to the living planet have increased.
These forms of contemporary spirituality reflect a more individualistic search for
meaning than perhaps at any other time in recorded history. The natural landscapes
provided by ecology act as fertile conduits for escaping from industrialisation and
urbanism and these impressions may well be sufficient to confer a reason to believe. In
this context, it is not surprising that apocalyptic theories have emerged – partly as a
form of cultural entertainment with serialized television coverage and partly to guide
intellectual thought in its quest for meaning. Historically, the concept of apocalypse
has taken the format of a guide for human behaviour that was closely related to the
mainstream Church. Here, the apocalypse is defined in terms of the “end times” as
determined by the human condition. The process of secularisation has not eliminated
human but decentralized the hierarchal order of medieval structures, paving the way
for new interpretations of sacred texts.

The end of a millennium represents a significant moment in time that prompts
reflection about economic growth, consumption and the nature of capitalism and its
lines of authority. It is also the case that a significant proportion of society has
historical viewed this period in relation to the interpretation of “End times” events
(Bull, 1998). Zoroaster’s legacy played a key role in the creation of “End times” theory.
Cohn argues that Zoroaster, who lived between 1000 and 1500 BC was the first to
envisage the question of apocalypse and to define this in terms of two contrasting forces in conflict with each other – Asha (the order) and Druj (the chaos). The context for this theoretical development was a period of turbulence and war and given the dichotomy between domination, obliteration and freedom, his theory was linked to a social discourse. Here, suffering or redemption almost always relates to the socio-economic context (Cohn, 1998). McGinn (1998) reminds us that once the Roman Empire fell, medieval Christianity became detached from the Roman concept of civilisation. As religion was the stepping stone to redeem inter-group disputes, the belief in a last judgment prompted questions about how and when the world would end. Scholars like Beda and Gregorio Magno were pressed to study the sacred texts to discern details ad signs of these troublesome events. Sociologically speaking, the person-hood of Christ also reflected different interpretations, ranging from an authoritarian ruler (at the second coming) to more flexible interpretations. To some extent, this prompts an interesting question for believers: Why might signs of impending disaster and apocalypse cause panic among the faithful?

Kumar (1998) responds to this question and interprets the apocalypse as a guise for utopia. After exploring the diversity of sentiments expressed throughout Europe during the tenth century, Kumar believes that we are witnessing the decline of hope and trust. The growing number of disasters in a more secularized world is evidently a sign that denotes that the end is near. However, unlike medieval times, the scarcity of hope situates humanity in a difficult position in relation to death and afterlife. Kumar observes that these events were not viewed as a disaster in the tenth century because the overwhelming majority of the population held deep religious convictions. In fact, the Catholic Church discouraged open discussion of “End times” prophecy but it was the Protestant and Reform movements that considered “End times” theology to be important. The sense of violence, pestilence and destruction centred on apocalypse theory was at the time, mitigated by a strong faith in God and in a better world to come. In current times, the social imaginary lacks any sense of certainty and hope in a better world and the advances made by atheism have altered the perspectives of lay people in relation to natural disasters. In this context, Kumar acknowledges that industrialized societies are less convinced by signs of apocalypse as they are much more easily manipulated by the media and by politicians. It is for these reasons the concept of an apocalypse has been commoditized as a form of entertainment that has opened the door to new risks and dangers, especially exponential consumption. It is perhaps not surprising that some journalists and TV programmes have linked global warming to “End days” prophecy as this sensationalizes their presentation of modern day realities and circumstances.

**The ecocide and sustainability in tourism**

Culprit and paradox are two of the characteristics of humankind and Broswimmer (2005) introduces the concept of ecocide to describe how the ecological contradiction works. His main argument is that the problem of ecology and pollution is not only explained by means of biology but also by cultural studies. With the passing of years, many scholars have commented on the advance of pollution and contamination but at the same time, the levels of hydrocarbon emissions into the ozone layer had been increasing. Broswimmer conceptualises the problem of ecology in three stages. The first facet is marked by the appearance of language and the second stage is
characterised by food shortages that prompted homosapiens to expand their geographical presence worldwide. Ultimately, the industrial revolution paved the ways for the advent of instrumentality which heralded the supposed superiority of humans in the created order. Whether homosapiens advanced because of the assistance of nature (the technology of medicine arose from contributions made by animals and plants) the principle of ecocide – the destruction, damage and loss of ecosystems – creates a quandary in the sense that humans are imprisoned by their own illusion of sustainability. In modern society, the entertainment industry has developed its own diagnosis about the relative complexity of the ecological fragility of the planet. Its presentation of differing perspectives tends to polarize scholars and scientists and it is often difficult to find shared ground in terms of appropriate courses of action that could be taken in an attempt to reverse the impact of global warming (Broswwimer, 2005). In this context it is difficult to see how fragile ecosystems – now disappearing at an accelerating rate, might be fully understood and preserved for future generations.

Cortina (2003) argues that human consumption serves as a form of communication in the sense that patterns of behaviour and consumption reflect on lifestyle and portray a story about materialistic success to others. In a material and globalised world, the philosophy of ethics could perhaps do more in terms of exploring the dichotomies as to why many people survive in situations that characterise poverty with minimal material resources while others live in outright opulence. Cortina examines how justice, freedom and happiness contribute to an ethic of consumption and explores the psychological motivations which intervene and affect the act and logic of consumption. According to Cortina, the ethic in consumption is greatly influenced by contemporary aspects of capitalism. Cortina argues that only moral reform will encourage humans to re-consider their behaviour and to re-define the limits of consumption in the context of life satisfaction and that a more robust on-going dialogue is needed between the different theories in ethics and philosophy. Cortina raises the question: How can people become more concerned about the environment and the impact of pollution unless they are directly connected to the hardship experienced by others and the on-going ecological decline? In fact, contemporary patterns in consumption and late-modernity have turned the problem of ecology and preservation into a commodity. To put it brutally, a thesis of this kind implies that any effort to break the cycle of global warming is more likely to reinforce it. In view of this, it is not surprising that the world is starting to witness an acceleration of the problems associated with global warming (such as severe weather events) and the consequent economic damage to the economies of industrialized countries. Following this, one might speculate that post-modern thinking is not sufficiently enlightened to envisage any significant behavioural changes unless economic resources are compromised. Furthermore, it can be argued that changes in public opinion are now more than ever before related to the kinds of events that jeopardize economic wellbeing. There was an observable change in both American and European public opinion about ecology after the Hurricane Katrina disaster and the release of former US Vice President Al Gore’s movie about global warming. Prior to this, McKercher (1993) among others, reminded us that the sustainable tourism concept does at least engender a discussion about aspects of dependency in relation to economic development and its importance above all, to tourism development. The need to find ways of controlling adverse economic and climatic impacts as well as the conflicting interpretations of sustainability can in
themselves cause inertia because the task is so daunting. In this context, McKercher focuses not only on how sustainability is being used for commercial purposes, but also to justify polemic public policies that are being developed in the cause of ecology.

Given the economic turbulence of modern times, initiatives led by a plethora of national and international organisations to stabilize and revitalize national and local economies seem to be relatively ineffective. Over and above these efforts a new wave of activity, focused on raising awareness of and the need for eco-education is needed in order to achieve a reasonable degree of sustainability (Taylor and Carson, 2010). Although it is a challenging prospect, eco-education does however bring with it some benefits for tourism – especially in relation to regions with scarce natural resources where progress in ecology conservation is likely to appeal to those with an interest in eco-tourism. In these more difficult regions, characterised by little or no regular precipitation the preservation of eco systems is now a key priority and so income from eco-tourism is more likely than not to support this kind of initiative. It is the case however, that under-development is related to a lack of planning and training. Education not only helps to solve many problems in the adoption of sustainable tourism but it also facilitates improvement in the coordination of different stakeholders’ interests (See for example: Farrell and Runyan, 1991; Jollife, 2005; Hipwell, 2007; Stubbs and Cocklin, 2008; Muller and Weber, 2008; Contini et al., 2009). Skanavis and Giannoulis (2010) lament the fact that Greece has not historically embraced a strong pro-environmental policy in order to encourage tourism. In particular, there was little or no effort made to integrate environmental interpretation with industrial policy. They argue that in order to accurately and effectively interpret changes in ecology it is necessary to proactively monitor the impact of ecological changes on local communities (Skanavis and Giannoulis, 2010).

The observations made in the body of knowledge relating to the theme of sustainability are overwhelmingly related to patterns of consumption and human behaviour (see for example: Okello and Yerian, 2009; Mamadi, 2004; Hjalager, 2000; Tsaur et al., 2006; Ambrosie, 2010). This implies that if the phenomenon of mass tourism was demonstrably affecting the nature of the tourism experience (the tourism product) then much greater pressure for change from lobby groups and others might be anticipated, together with a call for action. This logic does to some extent illustrate one of the dilemmas of post-modernity. There are two main reasons for this. First, an assumption of this nature seems to be embedded in dichotomy between the nature of “work” on the one hand and “leisure” on the other. In fact, in today’s world they are much more closely interrelated than ever before. Second, eco-friendly theories tend to demonize the market as they are viewed as the source of negative influence on economic progress and to some extent mitigate against attempts to build a logical business case for environmental protection. In other words, what has tended to define the market in recent times has been the convergence of control and instrumentality (e.g. a quest for goals to be achieved). If it is hypothesised that a green revolution is possible and that new ways of producing and consuming can be found, then a radical shift in thinking and behaviour will follow. If not, researchers and writers on the topic will continue to argue about cause and effect and to present viewpoints that are often contradictory and that fail to illuminate the scale of the problem.

In recognition to this, Dinica (2009) explores the connection between governance, ecology and sustainable tourism argues that all governmental agencies should adopt
appropriate interventionist policies to ensure the protection of cultural heritage, waste management and energy efficiency. Dinica concludes that sustainability is only possible if all stakeholders and in particular, the State commit to the process. In so doing, they have the political will and capacity to deal with any unexpected problems. This collaborative approach is especially important given the fact that countries are governed by ideologies ranging from neo-liberalism to social democracy and these provide their operational blueprint for defining the degree of governance. Dinica (2009, p. 584) adds:

[...] taking a country as the unit of analysis, and focusing on the resource dimension, sustainable tourism is understood in this study as the form of development that prevents the generation of negative impacts on the resources used by tourism across the country – natural, environmental, cultural and man-made – while contributing to the continuing attractiveness of the country as a holiday destination. All tourism destination and products are expected to develop by avoiding negative resource impacts, while continuing to attract visitors, contributing in this way to the sustainable development of the national tourism sector.

Dinica considers the tourist system as an all-encompassed organism whose components are inextricably intertwined. Similarly, her views on the development of sustainability reflect the central role of the political process.

Nevertheless, like many of other studies, this work advocates the need to find new, alternative energies in order to avoid compromising the tourist-environmental resources. This viewpoint is associated with a high degree of instrumentality wherein development is an ongoing tension. Dinica’s argument convincingly explains that the failure of some countries to adopt efficient programmes of sustainability is based on State ideology. Furthermore, the ecological agenda seems to be subject to the economic idiosyncrasies of a process that is both conceptually unethical and impersonal. This is the main limitation cited in Dinica’s work and unless it is resolved, philosophical thinking about a utopian way forward lies in the belief that the economy and the market are part of solution rather than being viewed as the cause of the problem. This viewpoint engenders what some writers such as Broswimmer (2005), Scott and Becken (2010) refer to as the “paradox of global warming”. Historically, human beings have taken from nature whatever resources they need in order to survive and these behaviours have contributed to the current state of affairs and the fact that some parts of the planet have been damaged to the extent that human habitation is difficult to sustain. In this context, citizens are voicing concerns but government and inter-government agencies are seemingly ineffective in their efforts to coordinate efforts to reverse the impact of pollution. Given this scenario, the threat of global warming has magnified in such a way that it has become a source of cultural entertainment that characterises the differences between what people say and do. If the developed western nations are to break free of this paradox, there is no escaping the fact that the quest for ecological preservation will need to be re-thought in relation to a different paradigm for dealing with the problem. It has been the case now for several decades that tourism development has been dominated by an auto-administered approach to sustainability. In this scenario, the concept of climate change was a rather fashionable approach to the study of eco-systems – now in contrast, urgent action is needed. In part, this is because science is playing a pivotal role in predicting and anticipating how the negative effects of tourism are likely to cause future economic
problems. It is for this reason that radical tourism strategies are needed to mitigate the steadily rising impact of global warming. One of the most frightening aspects of this new phenomenon is the lack of certainty about the earth’s future. To some extent, the primary threat in the heated debate about global warming is whether or not preventative strategies will bring about a change of mindset and behaviour in a concerted effort to secure a carbon-neutral future (Weaver, 2011). The realities of tourism sustainability are not only embedded in current practice but the industry’s willingness (or otherwise) to contribute to environmental improvement (Becken, 2008; Scott and Becken, 2010). McGranahan’s (2011) view is that the scientific literature is weak in two areas. First and foremost, ecology-related research seems to be inextricably intertwined with an economic rather than a conservative dynamic. Second, the outcomes of research to-date have been limited to park-protected areas which exclude the action of human beings beyond the boundaries of national parks. Further, one of the contradictions of the ecology paradigm lies in the practices of international tourism. Important evidence suggested that even though tourists demonstrate certain worries about global warming, they are unable to change their social behaviour and practices (Anable et al., 2006). Next, we will debate in depth the extent to which the tragedy of commons sheds light on humankind’s inability to break the global warming paradox.

The tragedy of commons revisited
One of the most valuable attempts to shed light on the issue of global warming originates from Hardin’s (1968) presentation of his “theory of commons”. His theory or paradox of commons offers an illustration of the likely outcomes whenever individuals act independently and follow their own goals. In essence he predicts that a degree of “indifference” is a function of an individual’s unique concerns. Although individuals in some groupings claim to be concerned about likely scenarios, their intentions and behaviours do little or nothing to mitigate the situation. Here, “inaction” is defined by convergence between genuine concern and the likelihood that the individual will coordinate their own efforts to do something about the situation. Hardin (1968) argues that the tendency to inertia is a function of the lack of consequences and the fact that costs and benefits are unequal for individual stakeholders. Although an individual can try to maximize their own personal profit, they are unlikely to consider the costs and/or implications for others. Hardin makes the point that if all stakeholders take this course of action, the level of individualism reflected in selfish behaviour will precipitate disaster. Further, he argues that the probability that local resources will be depleted is directly related to the potential for individual gain. Hardin is also concerned about he called the “population problem”. He concurs with a Malthusian thesis that the growth in population is conditioned by accessibility to food and the quest to acquire land. This effectively exacerbates the problem of population growth. A logical and technical solution to the problem of this paradox is related to moral values and Hardin argues that ultimately “knowledge” is perishable as it is insufficient to guarantee sustainable coexistence. To illustrate the nature of the problem, it is worth considering the following scenario. Historically, subsistence communities might well have been limited in terms of their ability to increase their control of land, cattle and other resources by the territorial boundaries imposed by others. However, in expansionist times, each and every subsistence family is likely to expand (if it is possible to do so) by adding more
cattle to an augmented territory. In so doing, two sets of implications arise one is positive and the other negative. The former is a function of the “increment of one animal” while the latter relates to the probability of overgrazing. The negative consequences of any particular decision equate to a fraction of $-\frac{1}{2}$.

With the benefits of hindsight, Hardin admits that by:

[... ] adding together the component partial utilities, the rational herdsman concludes that the only sensible course for him to pursue is to add another animal to his herd. And another; and another . . . but this is the conclusion reached by each and every rational herdsmen sharing a commons. Therein is the tragedy. Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each perusing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of emotions. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all (Hardin, 1968, p. 1244).

In the quest for a sustainable world, it is hypothesised that humans evaluate their costs and confer any perceived or actual losses to “the commons” in the hope of securing the maximum personal gain. The concept of private property that in one sense encourages individualism, competence and trade, also generates pollution because “the owner of a factory on the bank of a stream- whose property extends to the middle of the stream- often has difficulty to seeing why it is not his natural right to muddy the waters flowing past his door. The law, always behind the times, requires elaborate stitching and fitting to adapt it to this newly perceived aspect of the common” (Hardin, 1968, p. 1245). Furthermore, Hardin’s account of the “hegemony of freedom”, reflects on a key distinguishing feature in the form of the lack of constraints on individual behaviour. He argues that not only do humans generate pollution in their quest for personal gain but they also create a state whereby the dislocation of concern about individual behaviour is the order of the day. The human cosmology is fraught with contradictions – the same energy that is being questioned by ecologists is the promoter of mass-transport (cars, aeroplanes, trains and so forth) that enable day-to-day movement – to work and for leisure. Although we can criticise the significant role played by the USA and other developed nations in global warming, the rest of us follow this example on a daily-basis.

The radical re-shaping of transport infrastructure in the USA and in Europe after the Second World War characterised a new way of managing organisations but at a higher cost in terms of ecology. The rapidly accelerated production of motor vehicles facilitated a greater degree of mobility that ever before and at the same time, contributed negatively to global warming effects as well as the ontological security of humankind and its planet. In this context, Freund and Martin (2007) go on to say:

hyper-automobility is characterized by the greatly increase use of larger vehicles. In the United States, they are referred to as light trucks and include pick-ups, vans and sports utility vehicles. Since the early 1980s these vehicles have increased from a negligible proportion of annual sales to a majority. The larger size of vehicles is evidence of the hyper-consumption involved in hyper-mobility, they use more space, more material resources, and more energy (Freund and Martin, 2007, p. 39).

Of course, the paradigm of sustainability is based on actors and their relationships with other actors but this believe almost always generates a counter-productive effects or cybernetic process. For this reason, social learning plays a crucial role in internalizing the importance of sustainability in communities. Further to this...
explanation, conventional mass-tourism, will in the next few years, set the pace for sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism can be defined at least to some extent as a set of organized-attempts to reject the profit-driven orientation and to enhance local commitments to environmental protection (Koutsouris, 2009). On the other hand, Higham and Cohen (2011) estimate that tourism contributes only 5 per cent to the total global volume of CO2 emitted into the atmosphere annually. The importance of mitigating green-house effects seems to be closely associated with the ability to reduce these emissions in the next years. In so doing, tourism and the forms of energy it uses will play a crucial role. However, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that ever increasing demand for travel is actually increasing the impact of pollution. For this reason, two alternative models are proposed to examine this complex matter. The first delves into the dependency relationship of tourism as a commercial activity with the problem of climate change. The future of tourism activity and its related resource deployment would seem to be closely linked and perhaps even determined by the relative degree of success in reducing the emission of CO2 gases. Second, a new model is presented that focuses on tourist behaviour and the possible policy-making responses that will be needed to adapt tourist destinations so that they comply with a more eco-friendly paradigm. Higham and Cohen argue that these assumptions are trivialized whenever people plan their holidays. For some reason, social imaginary projects the fact that global warming is a risk but the images – however forcefully they are presented, have yet to change the day-to-day attitudes and behaviours of the majority of people at a micro-sociological level. It is unfortunate that both stances are part of the problem rather than offering a potential solution. Tourism studies to-date reveal that the nature of the tourism product and the experiences that consumers seek arise from a much broader process that links local resources, material costs and consumers (stakeholders). This perspective not only trivializes the role played by capitalism and consumption in generating the global warming problem but it also ignores the sociological roots of the problem. At this juncture, it is important to denote how capitalism, consumption, markets and global warming are inextricable intertwined. The majority of analysts and other professionals who write about climate change and profess concern about green-house effects are likely to have a materially wealthy profile, characterised by two cars, multiple televisions and other electronic devices and relatively frequent annual long-haul travel. In the next section, we will discuss the extent to which sustainable tourism is failing because of consumption behaviour and the related conceptual contradiction between materialism and environmental concern and seek to identify the barriers to understanding that underpin the connection between behaviour, perception and climate change. These connections have as yet, received comparatively limited attention by analysts and climate change researchers (See for example, Hares et al., 2010).

The politics of climate change
One of the best books about human indifference to greenhouse gas emissions and related impacts is The Politics of Climate Change authored by A. Giddens (2011). This work poses a challenging question to its readers: “Why do most people, most of the time, act as though a threat of this magnitude can be ignored?” The problem of global warming is the essence of the threat, although its interpretation is subjective in nature. In some respects, it has parallels with other kinds of risks – for example, though who
have a subjective fear of travelling in an aircraft might choose to ignore the related risks of smoking or engaging in other high-risk behaviours. However, the fact is that the majority of experts agree that human behaviour is responsible for global warming, although there are numerous other theories about alternative causes and impacts.

In view of the complexity of the debate about cause and effect, it would seem that there is a pressing need to adjust regulatory frameworks that would at least begin to compensate for the apparent acceleration in global warming in parallel with contemporary lifestyles and the advance of materialism. As established earlier in this paper, it is clear that human activity is difficult to influence – people will always question why they should change their consumption habits if others are unwilling to change (the tragedy of commons argument). In view of this, it could be argued that Governments should do much more to tackle the growing problem by direct interventions that are designed to stem the levels of greenhouse gas emissions. If such a course of action is to be effective, it would require international co-ordination as an essential, proactive step in coping with the growing incidence of natural catastrophes. The lack of such coordination – which would need to be enforced via a unique legal-framework and an integrated approach to international governance – is arguably the main reason why the level of global warming is worsening year by year.

Giddens is convinced that those who blame domestic and international markets are misguided because markets are ultimately regulated and controlled by nation states. It is his view that concerted governmental action is needed if emissions are to be reduced in the years ahead. Further, Giddens’ perspective in relation to the role of tourism – still a growth industry – is that positive action can be taken by seeking to influence patterns of human consumption and behaviour because the challenge for ecology is interrelated with ethical and political action. The fact is that the volume of gases released into the atmosphere is growing year on year and to manage this scenario, changes in energy policy and usage are needed. In turn, this poses its own challenges but it also opens new doors of opportunity too. Typically, media tactics in seeking to influence public opinion about the worsening situation involves:

- presenting pseudo-experts who are themselves credible scientists but lack specific expertise and data to speak authoritatively;
- portraying a sense of division – even when there is a consensus of agreement; and
- selecting and presenting evidence selectively in support of a specific position.

There are already a number of radical thinkers who argue that humankind is in danger if these tactics are allowed to prevail. Giddens adds that by general agreement, the “safe” level of atmospheric carbon dioxide is 350 ppm, yet this level has already been exceeded.

Giddens’s work clearly illustrates and explains why the problem of global warming is not necessarily intertwined with the effects of carbon but with the dependency of industrialized nations on oil. Following the war between Arab league countries and Israel in the 1970s, developed countries found themselves in an unfamiliar situation in terms of supporting their industrial output. The conflict led to uncertainty and most industrialized countries began to formulate new strategies with the aim of reducing their dependency on oil by diversifying their energy supply. However, in the end, the USA was obliged to intervene in the Middle East and to partner more closely with

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Saudi Arabia in its quest to secure its energy requirements and raw materials in the form of coal, oil and gas. It can be argued that American interest in the Middle East not only re-ignited some long-simmering conflicts but also highlighted that the USA had serious concerns about its own energy reserves.

Drawing on Susstein’s work, Giddens explains that there are two broad positions in relation to this complex issue. The first relates to the need for immediate regulation to mitigate the high probability of enduring environmental damage and the second position advocates that action should only be taken as and when hard evidence of risk arises. The “regulate now” position is seen to be the stronger argument because of the level of paranoia associated with climate change. The alternative position of acting solely on irrefutable evidence is inherently a riskier approach as it implies that reactionary measures taken in the aftermath of natural events might provide an enduring form of corrective action. These two positions also highlight the contradictory nature of sustainability and development and what seems to be important here is the fact that sustainability entails both continuity and development that is linked to progressive action. At the outset of the environmental movement, analysts and commentators began to highlight the differences between these positions but also sought to examine aspects of interrelatedness between these positions. A further consideration is the inherent trust that humans tend to place in technology and their ability to make appropriate interventions in support of development. This line of thinking contrasts sharply with traditional more conservative views about the best ways to achieve conservation. Further, Giddens brilliantly highlights the importance of politics in addressing the challenge of climate change. In order to reverse a worsening situation and at the same time, take into account the many different cultural contexts, Giddens makes the following significant points:

- Industrialized nations are more concerned about reducing the emission of gases in relation to their own energy security purposes than they are about the broader issue of their own contribution to global warming.
- The differing challenges of ensuring national energy security and reducing emission levels affects the extent to which consensus can be achieved in co-ordinated policies designed to protect the environment.
- Taxes carbon should be imposed by nation states so as to encourage efforts to seek and deploy alternative forms of energy.
- Nation states must play a coordinating role in securing international coalitions and interventionist strategies designed to deter global warming.
- Global warming is one of the most serious risks humankind has ever faced and will continue to face in the future.
- Despite the Fukushima tragedy, nuclear power can be considered as a valuable alternative to carbon-based energy sources.
- Markets are not the problem but they can help to generate the solution.
- Risks open the door to new opportunities if humankind can understand and respond to the need for change.

Giddens’ critique on the climate change issue is relatively optimistic as he argues that concerted action can reduce public concern relating to perceptions of the threat it poses.
In fact, he believes that the problem of pollution that faces the environment collerates with the expansion of capitalism and materialism and the fact that the latter in particular has become embedded in society. As the rationale of the market is to maximize profit it is not able to stem the ongoing expansion of materialism in isolation. Rather, as was demonstrated at the last Copenhagen climate conference, the response from industrialized countries was somewhat muted in favour of attempts to hold current levels of pollution and to restrain developing countries from exacerbating the problem. As a result of this policy which is described by some writers as “bio-colonialism” (here pollution quotas effectively impede growth in developing countries), the poorer, less well developed countries have to contend with constraints on their production. Giddens suggests that taxes on carbon emissions could help to alleviate the pressures facing nation states but where these taxes have been introduced in developed countries they have not deterred consumption, instead they seem to serve as a justification for increasing it – as if the “penalty” for polluting has been paid via carbon tax. It could be argues that other forms of taxes on potentially anti-social behaviour such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and prostitution seem conversely to maximize human need for these kinds of consumption experience. This phenomenon was examined by Zizek (2005) in relation to the nature of “sin”. In essence, Zizek points out that the imposition of federal taxes on consumption activities associated with anti-social activity activities tends to increase market profits from the related activities and the same time, the burdens on the State increase due to ill health and other problems related to anti-social consumption patterns. It could therefore be argued that by following this policy of taxing energy consumption that is most closely related to global warming, that it might actually undermine efforts to reduce emissions. Last but not least, Giddens believes that there are a number of contradictions that stem from the nature of this paradox. Unlike a problem, a paradox can be likened to aspects of scientific thinking, such as the second law of thermodynamics which describes the probability that efforts made to resolve a conflict in one direction will generate conflicts in other directions. Philosophically speaking, if we are convinced then that global warming equates to this kind of paradox it is going to require a multi-faceted response.

**The challenge of tourism**

To fully appreciate the environmental state of emergency that western societies face, it is important to consider the work of Beck (2006) who argues that attitudes changed after the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Ukraine. This event marked a new beginning in terms of calculating aspects of risk. Unlike medieval travellers who had to consider the possible dangers they might encounter while travelling, the risks associated with travel are much lower for the individual traveller but much greater in terms of the cumulative damage that is caused by mass travel. According to Beck, the society of risk distributes the hazards evenly across the population irrespective of hierarchy or wealth. Stalling (1997) adds that researchers need to investigate the nature of risk from a sociological perspective. As a concept, “risk” seems to be determined by the principles of contingency. For example, an earthquake or a flood activate social mechanisms that generate a response and thereafter serve to reconstruct and evaluate the relative levels of vulnerability associated with the event. In fact, the relative degree of vulnerability felt by any nation state is itself determined by a wider process of legitimacy based on political opinion and market reactions (Stalling, 1997). This issue
has also been examined by the French sociologist Robert Castel who explains how society has always sought to construct a zone of cohesion as a form of protection from the risks that might threaten their existence. During both pre-industrial and in post-industrial societies, the way of thinking about the labour force depended on the stance and actions of the State in deterring vulnerability. In this context, risk became a mediator between the market and the supply of labour. In the Middle Ages social bondages were circumscribed by kinship based on physical proximity and risks arose if the system of protection (disaffiliation) was undermined. In general, the medieval system had a high degree of cohesion and orphans were relocated to other families so as to ensure their survival. Even though communities were more vulnerable to natural disasters, virus outbreaks, epidemics and economic shortages people generally felt more secure. The sense of protection acted as a conduit for a relatively fluid social exchange at least until the time of the Black Death that devastated most parts of Europe in the fourteenth century, thereby undermining the demographic equilibrium and various local economies in the decades that followed. A seriously depleted work-force prompted greater mobility in the quest for new opportunities and better pay and conditions. Furthermore, subsistence lifestyles led to the creation of other structures for economic development and accelerated the process of disaffiliation that led to much greater individualism in more recent times. The birth of liberal modernity during the late eighteenth century was caused by greater individual mediation between individual needs and working conditions. A new, more liberal economy coincided with early attempts to create a new cosmology in which any individual felt able to determine their own destiny. In this context, Castel recognises was is termed the “current inflation of risks” and a corresponding tendency towards even greater liberalisation. According to Castel (1999) the process of liberal consumption plays a pervasive role for two main reasons. First it prompts a more fluid type of capital movement that transcends the boundaries of nationhood. Second, the desire for freedom of choice weakens the social connectivity of people to the extent that there is a dramatic difference in the prevailing sense of community and protection as compared with society in the medieval period as described above. Arising from this a widening sense of insecurity tends to contribute other forms of social realignment in the quest for association (Castel, 2006). The progressive deregulation of wages that began in the 1970s provided a further source of uncertainty and taken together with the deregulation of markets and fluctuating property prices, contributed to changing and less predictable patterns of consumption and consumer behaviour. Prior to this period, employees had relatively little flexibility in terms of their ability to individually negotiate aspects of pay and conditions but this trend has accelerated as collective bargaining has been progressively undermined by market forces in industrialized nations. According to Castel, these and other significant societal changes have contributed to the development of a new paradox. On the one hand, citizens feel better protected because of medical, healthcare and technological advances but on the other hand more vulnerable because they live in a more globalised, less community-minded world. If these developments are viewed in perspective, it can be seen that the process of individualisation is closely linked to changing patterns of consumption. Here, the former is guided by the quest for egality while the latter is mirrored by a broadening spectrum of branded products that are designed to appeal to market niches and provide a sense of security via the acquisition of material possessions. In turn, this process generates two contrasting scenarios - as consumption
increases unabated it increases environmental risk, though the opportunity to consume an ever expanding array of products and services has enabled the market to commoditize happiness (Castel, 1997, 1999, 2006). Finally, Ordoñez (2006) acknowledges that a tightening “net of fear” is a product of globalisation and mass consumption. As noted earlier, this seems to be related to technical advances that have brought about improvements in health and in living conditions, coupled with a growing sense of vulnerability arising from the rapid societal changes that are occurring. Following the analysis provided by Castel and Beck, Ordonez argues that the power of information has not only transformed our perceptions of risk and danger but heightened the social imaginary that contributes to fear of the future. In essence, what is suggested is that perceptions of risks are not strictly linked to the sentiment of fear and vice-versa. To illustrate this point, it is helpful to review events relating to the Popocatepetl Volcano, Mexico, that erupted at the end of the twentieth century. This event did not alter the lifestyle of the indigenous people nor did it culminate in the introduction of technological equipment in order to provide an advanced warning of the possibility of future volcanic activity. In fact, it seems to be the case that whenever scientists install monitoring equipment, indigenous people feel threatened by a new level of predictive monitoring. These observations demonstrate the extent to which perceptions of risk and societal values are associated.

Clayton (2009) argues that one of the most problematic issues for tourism in relation to climate change is the degree of dependency on tourism revenues in some developing nations. This scenario must be viewed in the context of increasing global consumption and the leadership demonstrated by large countries like India and China in their quest to secure the energy resources needed to sustain their economic growth and the related patterns of domestic consumption. This situation is not only likely to have profound implications for climate change but also for tourism. Clayton also points out that policy makers in developing countries often seek to maximize the perceived benefits of tourism by permitting and even encouraging the construction of new mega-structures to lodge more and more visitors and yet at the same time, the biosphere of host countries is being reduced. Paradoxically, if economic activity in developing nations slows, then poverty re-surfaced but it can be argued that if economic development is not sustainable, then climate change poses an even more serious long-term risk. In this context, the extent to which sustainable tourism can be controlled and planned by developing nations is the very important question raised by Clayton’s work. As with Giddens however, Clayton is optimistic that if appropriate courses of action are taken in the short term, the longer future of tourism is secure – providing that a sustainable development path is determined by Government policy makers with compliant guidelines for developers.

It is our view that the connections between global warming and tourism cannot be fully understood without consideration of the array of societal changes outlined above and the associated consequences. The paradox of ecology, as noted earlier, corresponds with the encounter between two contrasting cultural values, acceleration and conservation. From its inception, capitalism was certainly moulded as a force so as to guide industrialisation and in turn, this engendered a growing sense of uncertainty. The paradox is that the expansion of capitalism is dependent on natural resources (the paradigm of sustainability) but the danger is that this exhausts the local resources needed to maintain equilibrium between the competing demands of consumers and the
environment. Under the guise of individual consumption, modern day capitalism strives to connect people and goods worldwide (Giddens, 1991, 1999) and the hype that surrounds branded goods and services in particular, creates a kind of a show (theatralisation) that screens out the “bad news” associated with the upwards spiral in consumption. It is important to note here that consumers are in the main, disinterested in the consumption habit changes that are needed in order to revert global warming yet, this objective is likely to be essential in future generations. Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that there is a growing aversion to global warming as awareness of the potential effects grows. As Bauman put it, this globalised culture does not pay attention to anything that alters the economic order. Misery, injustice, war, poverty and so forth are widely ignored so long as they do not endanger the economy.

Is attitudinal change a pre-condition for climatic change?
While many eco-friendly supporters claim to be playing a part in the reduction of carbon gases by industrialized countries, they are still travelling in cars and aeroplanes and using PCs on a daily basis. In fact, the market is now adapting its products and advertising to exploit the growing ecological concern but it is questionable as to whether technological advances have yet to make an impression on the ever-growing volume of emissions. In a similar way, eco-destinations are of course, commercial products that have been specifically designed to enhance ecological protection but they seldom take into account the environmental cost of transporting tourists to experience the product. These are just some of the more obvious examples of contradictory consumption behaviour that characterise twenty-first century lifestyles in developed nations. Dovers observes that humans have the capacity to adapt relatively quickly to risky situations and extreme events where (Dovers, 2009). This innate ability to adapt can be seen in responses to natural disasters such as flood, tornados, droughts or hurricanes. In general terms, the prevailing conceptual framework on planning relating to natural disasters focuses on risk reduction as its main strategy. Nonetheless, some authors believe that this approach to planning tends to generate a climate of security and that there is insufficient flexibility to make the changes necessary to mitigate the longer term impacts of climate change. Those countries that are characterised by a relatively high level of development tend to demonstrate more fluid adaptation to natural disasters while developing countries tend to struggle more in coping with risk. This represents a serious problem if we take into consideration the fact that industrialized nations are responsible for producing some 70 per cent of greenhouse gases. Furthermore, technological and scientific advances have generated a more efficient anticipatory adaptation approach in industrialized nations than in developing ones, especially in relation to projections about the potential impacts on climate change. The relatively sophisticated level of preparation in developed countries also poses a risk because the wealthier countries are much less likely to modify their energy supply strategy and as consequence of this, poorer countries are much more likely to suffer (Berrang-Ford et al., 2011).

Morton et al. (2011) contend that global warming is a problem that is significantly affected by the nature of communications – not only in terms of the way that risks are presented by journalists but also in relation to the perception of uncertainty that scientists typically find difficult to accept. As noted earlier, the nature of science and the expectation of scientists is that factual information is the standard required for
communicating with the public. However, the reality is that negative news in relation to climate change tends to promote passivity whereas positive reporting engenders inertia because the public is typically sceptical. However, Morton et al. observe that: 

[...] in the face of uncertainty, people were more convinced of their effectiveness of action when climate impacts were framed positively rather than negatively, and they intended to individually take action as a result of these feelings of efficacy (Morton et al., 2011, p. 108).

This perspective suggests that the role of the media in framing news reporting about climate change is of paramount importance in determining how people respond and behave in their daily lives. It would seem that risk can be communicated by emphasizing the potential risks and also the future benefits arising from an appropriate response. In this vein, Bauman (2007) argues that modernity and capitalism have changed the behaviour of humankind in recent decades. In this scenario, workplace organisations tend to reject workers who do not meet their expectations and this sense, human resources have become as expendable as material resources. In a similar way, processes of control now tend to focus on addressing behaviours that are perceived to undermine the efficiency and efficacy of workplace systems. This reality is accompanied by a migration policy that aims to engender economic stimulus in times of constraint. In this respect, the capitalist system values the contribution made by a comparatively few people and excludes others who are less able to to contribute to the generation of wealth. This contrast can of course, be evidenced in many sphere of life. Bauman denounces the fact that modern consumers have become as self-commoditized as the goods they seek to buy. Although the market has historically highlighted the interaction between supply and demand, hitherto the boundaries had been blurred as the tenets of capitalism are based on the relative attractiveness of products that will appeal to a wide array of consumers. For Bauman, secularisation involves not only religion but also politics. In the past, citizens were interested in the public affairs and claims of politicians as their contributions would typically provide solutions to their concerns. Today, the market has invaded and to some extent, replaced the role of the State. In this sense, the rules of the market now encompass public life too and tend to determine what is or are not appropriate behaviour and action. It is therefore important to recognise that we now live in a society that is characterised by a lack of order and separation between consumers and goods. In the twenty-first century society of consumers, human worth has become a function of purchasing power and the potential horizons of consumption. In this scenario, people are both consumers and subjects but their real worth is determined by their product purchasing power. Philosophically speaking, a term coined by Bauman – the “Fetishism of humanity” helps to illuminate the realities of twenty-first century life. In this modern age, the security of a personal computer offers a form of stability that real life can no longer guarantee but in so doing, our very humanity is compromised and to some extent jeopardized by the fact that people no longer share the same level of connectedness as they did when communities lived subsistence lifestyles. In essence then, contemporary life is characterised by new and different ways of producing and consuming that is largely controlled by information systems. Here, the internet is increasingly replacing and/or substituting for personal contact with others and has become a valued conduit to enable lonely people to find like-minded friends and/or partners. At home, people have become accustomed to witnessing disasters of various
kinds on their TVs each and every night. In one sense, disasters have become compulsive TV viewing for an audience of millions and in a curious way, this act also engenders a kind of security for those who witness the daily events of distress and disaster from every corner of the planet. So what do these changes actually mean? Modern capitalism has become a wave that is blurring traditional boundaries between reason and emotion. Love stories and tragedies or love embedded in tragedies increasingly corresponds with the discourse and content that one can observe in contemporary entertainment – films, TV programmes and news.

Bauman argues that consumerism can be viewed as a type of social covenant that governs citizenship and, at the same time, triggers more messages about production and consumption that are designed to educate lay people. However, consumption and consumerism are two different things. The former refers to humanity’s unique ability to take more than it needs while the latter can be characterised as a form of pathological behaviour rooted in humanity’s growing sense of alienation. A dynamic society of twenty-first century consumers now places value on goods that do not endure for all life – in fact, greater value is placed on the fact that prestige products are replaced almost annually. This form of voracious consumer behaviour in turn helps to perpetuate a continuous cycle of consuming and producing which has particular symbolic meaning in the context of social interaction. A decline in trust and personal contact has also been associated with the quest for novelty. Although our parents or grandparents lived in a society that prioritised the virtue of material success based on hard work, it can be argued that modern day capitalist society values above all, entrepreneurship and the capacity to adapt to rapidly changing market conditions.

Paradoxically the greater the perceived need for human interaction, the greater the loneliness people feel in this age of internet communications. Bauman reminds us that the society of consumers encourages values oriented to short-terms where self-identity, emotions, self- experimentation play a pivotal role. This type of narcissism produces an increase in fear and panic that drives them to yet more consumerism. Bauman’s main thesis is that an excess of consumption function rather like a ritual mechanism and softens the uncertainness of a hostile world. As a form of cultural entertainment, ecology and global warming provide a parallel equivalent to “end days” apocalypse theory. It is also a rather perverse form of consumption and international tourism is central to this process. The theatralisation of danger contributes to the creation of an underlying state of emergency seen but not recognised. As Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters have shown, people only take a stance when the established economic order is threatened. The phenomenon of global warming will only be taken seriously when international leaders fully conceptualise the potential economic losses of its effects. Following this, the tragedy of commons, as Graham put it, explains the reasons why human wellbeing can under certain conditions, be a double-edge sword.

Conclusion
Global warming is a major global issue with significant local impacts. However, scientists have still not reached unanimous conclusions about its causes or impacts. Many sources point the finger of blame at the tourism industry. International tourism is now widely considered to be one of the major contributors to global warming and there is growing pressure on the industry to take proactive measures in order to redress its impact. The tourism industry draws heavily on nature and on natural
resources and so it does have a responsibility to ensure that these resources are preserved by means of sustainable consumption initiatives. While tourism contributes to global warming, it is also impacted by global warming and as tourists are visiting regions affected by global warming in increasing numbers (such as the melting glaciers in the Polar Regions) these destinations might in time, become uninhabitability. In this context, the implications are that the global tourism industry is likely to be seriously affected as a result of global warming. Yet, so far, it is questionable as to whether the responses of the tourism industry to the global warming debate have been adequate.

In order to reduce the impact of tourism on global warming and vice versa, tourism practitioners have to effectively mobilize all the economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and technological resources available to them. The way in which tourism practitioners address this issue will become a key value statement for the industry. The key strategic question is: what should the tourism industry do in order to help reduce global warming while at the same time securing its long term goals?

The contention here has been that there is a significant gap between what people say and do. This dissociation had been observed by the founding fathers of social science and global warming remains a prime example of this. A variety of researchers have emphasised the pervasive role played by the mass media and by journalists in characterizing the nature of natural disasters and the risks associated with the increasing incidence of extreme weather-related events. However it is apparent that the boundaries are blurred between the reasons for and the outcomes of such events (see for example: Augé, 2002; Baudrillard, 2006; Neumayer and Barthel, 2011). The importance of normalized economic losses seems not to be the disaster’s damages but the complacency of societies not only in accepting the green house effects, but also to deter the wealth accumulation in disaster-prone zones (Neumayer and Barthel, 2011). To some extent, events can be understood from two alternative perspectives, by their causes or by their effects. While the former refers to the socio-cultural and material condition that produced the disaster, the latter one focuses strictly on an all-encompassed view that does not respond nor identify the involving reasons. As a result of this, an event paves the way for the advent of a new event creating a process of simulacra that never ends. Last but not least, the global warming like many others eco-risk not only has been elaborated in new form of entertainments captivating the audience but also engenders a serious challenge for next generation. At the same time, the eco-risk that supposes the greenhouse effects seems to be a risk and a show. Under such a context, the role of tourism and hospitality to mitigate eco-risk remains still an open question. This conceptual research tried to stimulate the debate around the problem of ecology and consumption. Even though developing countries may face the risks of warming and opted to change their practices, if central nations do not take radical action on this issue, the future of tourism remains uncertain.

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Further reading


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