The Limits to Growth, Responsibility and Overtourism

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International Centre for Responsible Tourism
Institute for Place Management, MMU
Earthrise Apollo 8 1968
Finite world

- Population
- Soils & Food
- Fish and oceans
- Water
- Energy
- Oil, minerals & metals
- Pollution/Waste
- Climate change
- Poverty
- Food shortages, famine
- Conflict
- Refugees
- Non-linear change
Sustainable Development: a long history?

- 1972 World Commission on Environment & Development
- 1980 World Conservation Strategy
- 1987 Brundtland Report & Our Common Future
- 1992 Rio Environment & Development – UN Commission on Sustainable Development
- 2000 Millennium Development Goals
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development
- 2012 Rio+20
- Sustainable Development Goals

Very little to show for it.........
40 years

• 1972 World Commission on Environment & Development
• 1972 Publication of the Limits to Growth
• Four World Summits

• We are not making progress fast enough
• Overtourism is a consequence of doing no more than paying lip service to sustainability
Business as Usual


• http://energyskeptic.com/2016/limits-to-growth-is-on-schedule-collapse-likely-around-2020/
Climate change

Atmospheric CO₂ at Mauna Loa Observatory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PARTS PER MILLION</th>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>340</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>360</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>380</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>410</td>
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Mauna Loa

1958
280 ppm

2013
400 ppm

2017
410 ppm

Spot the Difference

There is one difference between the two pictures: can you see it?

Arctic Summer 1979-2000 Average
Arctic Summer 2012

Answer: In 2012, there is 2.94 million km² less ice than there should be, according to historical averages. This is clear evidence of worsening climate change. (Source: nsidc.org)
We create the carbon emissions

Climate change: US report at odds with some in Trump team

4 November 2017 | US & Canada

The scientists' predictions include:

- A global sea level rise of up to 8ft (2.4 metres) cannot be ruled out by the end of the century.
- Risks of drought and flooding will increase
- There will be more frequent wildfires and devastating storms

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-41868878
How years compare with the 20th Century average

2015 was the warmest year on record.

- Red line: 10 warmest years
- Green line: 10 coldest years

Source: NOAA
Hotels climate change commitment means 90% reduction in carbon

The hotel sector needs to reduce its carbon footprint by 90% to meet climate change commitments according to a report from the International Tourism Partnership (ITP).
Plastic waste

North Pacific Gyre

[Image of ocean gyre and plastic waste]

[Image of people working at a polluted beach]

[Image of microplastics under a microscope]

[Image of people at a polluted site]

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Plastic Pollution: the Anthropocene
2.5 BILLION METRIC TONS OF SOLID WASTE IS PRODUCED ALL AROUND THE WORLD
AND WITHIN THAT 275M METRIC TONS IS PLASTIC WASTE
2 BILLION PEOPLE WITHIN 30 MILES OF THE COAST CREATE
100M METRIC TONS OF COASTAL PLASTIC WASTE
AND EVERY YEAR, 8 MILLION METRIC TONS OF PLASTIC GOES INTO THE OCEAN

WHAT WE CAN DO
- REDUCE PLASTIC IN WASTE STREAM
- IMPROVE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
- INCREASE CAPTURE & REUSE
- HEALTHY OCEANS

Plastic Pollution in the Five Gyres

- In the North Pacific Gyre plastic pollution outweighs plankton six to one.
- Crabs and other biota are catching rides on floating plastic posing a risk of spreading invasive species.
- Plastic pollution is becoming apparent even in the most remote areas.
- Heavier plastics, like polytetrafluoroethylene, are more likely to be found near land as they do not float.

Midway Atoll
North Pacific Gyre
North Atlantic Gyre
Indian Ocean Gyre
South Pacific Gyre
South Atlantic Gyre
Ocean currents carry plastic pollution into accumulation zones called gyres.
The fig leaf falls off

The fig leaf of sustainability

Bumping up against the limits to growth

Social & economic conflict
"We may get to the point where the only way of saving the world will be for industrial civilization to collapse."

Maurice Strong
Taking Responsibility for Tourism

Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?

Fig. 76. Boiling a Frog without His Knowing it. No Sensation with an Extremely Slow Rate of Change.

CLIMATE SUMMIT

What if it's a big hoax and we create a better world for nothing?

- Energy Independence
- Preserve Rainforests
- Sustainability
- Green Jobs
- Livable Cities
- Renewables
- Clean Water, Air
- Healthy Children
- Etc., Etc.
What of the academy?

- Interdisciplinary work is difficult & undervalued
- Few cross the divides between physics and chemistry let alone the humanities, social & natural sciences
- The high ranking journals tend to be specialist.
- Sustainability is still not a unit of assessment in the REF
- The peer review process is conservative and narrow.
- Industry is more multi- & interdisciplinary
“Sustainable and Responsible”

• Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Tourism are not the same thing

• Responsible Tourism is about taking responsibility for achieving sustainable development through tourism.

• Sustainability is an abstract undefined aim – almost meaningless

• Responsibility is what we take when we address the local issues
Taking responsibility

Whose responsibility? Everyone’s

Nobody’s

Taking and Exercising Responsibility

WTO Global Code of Ethics

Principle of Sustainability

Economic, Social & Environmental

You cannot outsource responsibility ..
The Challenge

• Many of the sustainability issues which we face cannot be solved by individuals as consumers: Politics.

• Sustainable Consumption and Production cannot be delivered by producers and consumers alone

1. Tragedy of the Commons
2. Externalities and Market Failure
3. Freeloaders
Why Responsibility?

• to respond, to act,
• responsibility implies and requires action.
• critical to creating change is acknowledging and owning up to problems, and taking responsibility for making changes.
• Responsibility is free – you can take as much of it as you can handle

Child protection
Orphanages
Animal Welfare
Responsible Travel takes a variety of forms, it is characterised by travel and tourism which

1. *minimises negative* environmental, social and cultural impacts;

2. *generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the wellbeing of host communities, by improving working conditions and access to the industry*;

3. *involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances.*

*Cape Town Declaration 2002*
4. makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to the maintenance of the world’s diversity;

5. provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural and environmental issues;

6. provides access for people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged people; and

7. is culturally sensitive and engenders respect between tourists and hosts.
Responsible Tourism

Is about

• Making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.

• in that order

• Must involve local people in determining their local priorities.

Characterised by

• Minimising negative impacts

• Maximising positive impacts

• Making a contribution to conservation

• Enjoyable experiences and meaningful connections

• Culturally sensitive and based on mutual respect.

• Accessible to all

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Why Responsible?

**Accountability**
Actions and consequences can be attributed to individuals or legal entities, who can be held accountable, and legally they are liable.

**Respons-ability**
Individuals and organisations are expected to respond and to make a difference. This requires partnerships, a plurality of relationships, learning, praxis, and critical reflection.

**The Ostrich problem**
- They’ll sort something out

*RESPONSIBILITY*
“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”
~ Abraham Lincoln ~
Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed in a more responsible way. “Responsible tourism is tourism which: minimizes negative social, economic and environmental impacts. generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities.

Definitions | Sustainable Tourism
sustainabletourism.net/sustainable-tourism/definitions/
Core values of Responsible Tourism

Taking Responsibility: action

• Transparency
• Reporting
  – Inputs
  – Outputs
  – Outcomes
  – Impacts

Certification

• Opaque
• Unenforceable
• Communicates little

In a destination with water shortages how would you select the hotel with the lowest water consumption per bed night?

*it is not only for what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do.*

Moliere

WWW.VERYBESTQUOTES.COM
Greenwashing is a real challenge

• Each time a traveller or holidaymaker checks into a certified hotel and goes to the room to find the thermostat set at 15C, all the lights and the TV on, and a bit of card stuck in the key card light switch, more damage is done to certification. When you turn the thermostat up or off, switch off all the lights and the TV, and put the towels back on the rail as you leave in the morning only to find, on returning to your room, the aircon back on, a freezing room with lights blazing and fresh towels, consumer confidence in certification is undermined.

• The consumer has no effective redress. The hotel does not award itself the certificate and makes no particular sustainability claim. The consumer has no contractual relationship with the certification agency. The consumer has been miss-sold but has no redress.

• Levelling down – the consumer cannot know the actual performance

Evidence Matters

• The Awards set a standard
• Too much use of Responsible Tourism for greenwashing
• Evidence Matters – transparent reporting
  – Village Ways
  – CGH Earth and Kumarakom
• A label is not enough – consumers are becoming more critical
• Responsible Tourism is becoming mainstream
• “experiential travel with strong sustainability”
Tourism is not a natural phenomenon

- Tourism is what we – the producers and the consumers – make it
- It is a social construct
- Access = Egress

- The metrics matter
  - International arrivals
  - Length of stay
  - Spend and retained yield
  - Key question is does a destination use tourism or is it used by it?
Tourism is a social construct

• Tourism is what we – consumers and producers make it.
• We can change it.
• “every individual tourist builds up or destroys human values while travelling.”
• “rebellious tourists and rebellious locals”

• “Orders and prohibitions will not do the job – because it is not a bad conscience that we need to make progress but positive experience, not the feeling of compulsion but that of responsibility.”

Jost Krippendorf
Whenever a place gets spoilt, we move on!

Cricketer Holidays

Visit Ludlow and you will be treated as a temporary resident

Ludlow: the UK’s first Cittaslow
www.cittaslow.org.uk
Tourism is unusual in that consumers travel to the destination (the factory) to consume the product.

Much closer to the producers the workers

Opportunities for additional sales of goods and services:

Complementary products
Tourism and the travel industry “is essentially the renting out for short-term lets, of other people’s environments, whether that is a coastline, a city, a mountain range or a rainforest.

These ‘products’ must be kept fresh and unsullied not just for the next day, but for every tomorrow”

Who collects the rental or user fees?
The real challenges?

• Responsible Tourism should focus on the issues which matter locally.
• Those issues vary significantly from place to place – water.
• The only genuinely global issues are carbon (GHG) emissions and plastics – long half lives.
• Child protection is an ongoing issue – being ‘discovered’
• Making better places for people to live in - livelihoods
Responsible Tourism is becoming mainstream – more greenwashing

• Never mind the patter – watch the hands

• Responsible Tourism and Sustainable Tourism are not the same thing

• Sustainable Tourism is the aspiration – an aspiration which is little more than decorative wishful thinking.

• Responsible Tourism is about what you do to achieve sustainable development through tourism
The Business Cases for Responsible Tourism

• The right thing to do
• Minimising risk
• License to operate
• Product quality
• Cost savings
• Staff morale
• Market Advantage

• Market Advantage
• Experience
  – richer
  – more authentic
  – guilt free
• Differentiation and PR
  – Reputation
  – Referrals
  – Repeats
Is it really this bad?
Does anyone enjoy this?
What of the sacred and the profound?
Overtourism

• Google Advanced Search 394,000
• Google Scholar 10

Too many tourists

• Google Advanced Search 362,00
• Google Scholar 1,240

(China’s Qingdao Huiquan Beach during the height of peak season)
Overtourism

Hundreds of angry Venetians have protested tourism in their city, brandishing shopping carts and prams. Source: Facebook

Hundreds of walkers waited their turn at the summit of Wales’ highest peak.
The major themes of WTM London in 2018 will be

**Overtourism &**

**Coping with Success**
Whenever a place gets spoilt, we move on!

Old Town Sq Prague
beverage from £0.49

thirsty? book a flight to hungary & poland
from £24.99* at wizzair.com

WIZZ

wizzair.com

budapest
gdansk
warsaw
katowice/krakow

barnacia morelli
Bukchon Hanok Village

Tourists are fine until you see them every day

Issues

• externalities of noise, litter, loss of privacy, crowding and now falling property prices
• visitors and tour companies are free riders,
Overtourism the antithesis of Responsible Tourism

**Responsible Tourism**

- Making better places to live in and better places to visit
- In that order
- Running up against the limits to growth

**Overtourism**

- Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably.
Our holidays their homes

• “Your everyday life is someone else’s adventure”
Destinations are open access resources

If everybody fishes as he wants “taking from a resource which belongs to no individual, you end up destroying your neighbour and yourself. In free fisheries, good times create bad times, attracting more and more boats to chase fewer and fewer fish, producing less and less money to divide among more and more people”. Canadian Minister of Fisheries quoted in Ostrom:8
The challenge.....

- to use tourism achieve sustainable development
- sustainable development through tourism
- the aspiration of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism rather than to be used by it.

- It is about what producers and consumers do.
- It is about what we do to tackle the issues which matter locally
What do these all have in common?

• The Atmosphere

• Our Oceans

  Rio+20

• Destinations
Tragedy of the Commons

- Occurs when individuals by seeking to maximise individual benefit damage the collective resource by exceeding the carrying capacity of that resource.
An ancient problem

• “what is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest”
Aristotle Politics Book II Ch 3

• “The fish in the sea are valueless to the fisherman, because there is no assurance that they will be there for him tomorrow if they are left behind today.” Gordon 1954
The freerider problem

- Anybody who cannot be excluded from benefiting from the benefits of a collective good, once produced, has little incentive to contribute voluntarily to the production of preservation of the good.

- “Whenever one person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to the joint effort, but to free-ride on the efforts of others.”

(Ostrom 1990)
Overtourism

- Overtourism is what happens when tourism is not managed sustainably.

- Overtourism is the opposite of Responsible Tourism – the antithesis.

- It is the consequence of not having placed sufficient priority on sustainability.
Industry ‘must listen to locals on overtourism’ says Carnival chief

Travel industry leaders should “listen very carefully” to complaints of ‘overtourism’ by local communities, says Carnival Corporation chief executive Arnold Donald.

The Carnival Corporation chief responded to recent protests against mass tourism in Venice by acknowledging the city is “overtaken” and said “a bit of regulation” would help.

However, Donald insisted: “I don’t think cruise is the issue with the numbers crowding Venice.”

The head of the world’s biggest cruise group told Travel Weekly: “We have to listen very carefully and closely to locals. We know an unhappy crew means unhappy guests.

“When guests get off the ship, unhappy locals mean unhappy guests. The locals have to be happy. We have to listen to them.”
Sustainable development means different things to different people

• “Sustainability still too abstract, too general – we can’t define it.

• People engage with issues – with particular issues

• Relevant local issues – culture and context are critical

• It means making changes and it requires engagement in political processes
Using Tourism to Make Better Places to Live In

• To use tourism to achieve sustainable development
• Sustainable development through tourism
• the aspiration of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism rather than to be used by it.

Tourism is like a fire – you can use it to cook you food or it can burn your house down.
The antonym is Irresponsible

Two primary meanings

- Unreliable, untrustworthy, unlikely to be held to account or mentally or financially unfit to be held accountable

- Lacking a sense of responsibility, akin to carefreeness the trait of being without worry or responsibility
The challenge…..

• to use tourism achieve sustainable development
• sustainable development through tourism
• the aspiration of Responsible Tourism is to use tourism rather than to be used by it.

• It is about what producers and consumers do.
• It is about what we do to tackle the issues which matter locally
Berlin Tourist Bashing Turns Ugly

Barcelona is full. Don't come!
pic.twitter.com/kWL4xorZhv
Not a new problem

• The challenge of managing tourism sustainably for residents, tourists and day visitors has been recognised for twenty years. Clements 1989 Boissevain 1996 Bosselman, Poeterson & McCarthy 1999 Fyall & Goddard
• Kotler demarketing 1971

• We now have a pejorative word for it: overtourism, some kick back. Problems of success ......

• “rebellious tourists and rebellious locals”
Proximate causes

• The proximate causes of overtourism are locally apparent – it is the consequence of the volume, behaviour and impacts of tourists and the tourism industry in the destination.

• At the heart of the problem is the fact that we take our holidays in other people’s homes
Emerging principles

• Manage the people who are there – residents, commuters, visitors and tourists,
• Decide what degree of homogeneity is aspired to.
• Whole of government approach – departments and levels/spheres.
• Evidence based management
• Sustainability fundamental to competitiveness
Causes: research themes?

- Low cost of travel and its larger scale.
- Disintermediation creating supply and reducing costs.
- Propensity to consume.
- We take our behaviours and mores with us.
- New originating markets.
- Public realm is free.
- Distribution strategies – “chips with everything”.
- Whose place is it? The marketers?
- Seasonality maybe a good thing.
- Value (in cash and status) of tourism jobs.
- Honeypots.
## Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>Management</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of travel</td>
<td>Scale of arrival facilities</td>
<td>Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of travel</td>
<td>Capping arrivals</td>
<td>Ban particular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop marketing</td>
<td>Ban particular products</td>
<td>Fining bad behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>De-marketing</td>
<td>Timed tickets</td>
<td>Hosing the steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target segments</td>
<td>Ban new accommodation</td>
<td>Privileged access for locals</td>
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<td>Licence and tax</td>
<td>Deconcentration</td>
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<td>Regulate the P2P market</td>
<td>Alter transport routes/stops</td>
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Theory

- Park Planning sacrifice zones, carrying capacity and Limits of Acceptable Change
- Common Pool Resources
- Tragedy of the Commons
- Tourism Area Life Cycle
- System 1 and System 2 thinking and the ostrich problem
FATAL FLAWS

- Phronesis
- Tragedy of the commons
- Prisoners’ dilemma
- Short-term-ism
- Poor understanding of risk & probability
Political Question

• Will the destination use tourism or be used by it?
• Tourism is what we make it, hosts and guests, we can make it different.

• “The tourism crisis in Barcelona is further proof of the emptiness of the promises of neo-liberalism that deregulation and privatisation will allow us all to prosper….

• “Of course, the answer is not to attack tourism. Everyone is a tourist at some point in their life. Rather, we have to regulate the sector, return to the traditions of local urban planning, and put the rights of residents before those of big business. .. Win back democracy for the city … put its institutions at the service of the common good” Ada Colau 2014

• Overtourism is further evidence of the limits to growth
http://haroldgoodwin.info/links/

http://www.slideshare.net/HaroldGoodwin

RTNews
http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/

Cape Town Declaration
http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/

WTM Responsible Tourism Blog
https://news.wtm.com/category/responsible-tourism/