

Taking Responsibility for Tourism

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Abstract

As Lincoln pointed out to his Secretary of War in 1864, “You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” Responsible Tourism emerged in an effort to challenge the persistence of “business as usual” cloaked and obscured in the rhetoric of a vague aspiration to attain sustainability. Responsible Tourism arose from discussions with UK tour operators about how they could make tourism better and in South Africa, the post-apartheid government’s effort to harness tourism to improve livelihoods. The 2002 Cape Town Declaration called on governments “businesses, tourists and local communities - to take responsibility for achieving sustainable tourism, and to create better places for people to live in and for people to visit.” When businesses and destination governments clearly state the sustainability issues they are addressing and why, they can report their positive impacts and secure credit for them. Responsible Tourism results when we take responsibility as producers or consumers - it is about what we do and what we achieve.

Responsible Tourism emerged at the turn of the millennium in the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, the outcome of an official side event of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The World Responsible Tourism Awards were founded in 2004 and have grown in stature year on year. In 2007, World Travel Market launched World Responsible Tourism Day and subsequently featured across all four days of the show. The idea of linking the concept of responsibility with tourism was not without precedent; we shall look at those shortly, but it is important to recognise that the movement was from the outset, founded on practice, in business and governance on behalf of communities in the places they live and work and which are “sold” as destinations by the travel and tourism industry.

Sir Colin Marshall, then chair of British Airways, perhaps inadvertently acknowledged this when launching the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards in 1994 he described the tourism and travel industry as “...essentially the renting out for short term lets of other people’s environments, whether this is a coastline, a city, a mountain range, or a rainforest”. The next sentence, the enlightened self-interest case for business engagement with the sustainability of tourism, is more often quoted: “These ‘products’ must be kept fresh and unsullied not just for the next day, but for every tomorrow.” (Goodwin, 2002:17)

The UK NGO Tourism Concern campaigned for many years, pointing out that we take “*our holidays in their homes.*” Destinations are comprised of two very different kinds of space: accommodation, attractions, restaurants, bars, and cafes for which payment is required, and public spaces, open access, common pool or common property resources: the public realm. (Goodwin 2016, 18-23) Local people encounter tourists in both kinds of space, but it is in the public realm, where visitor volumes are unmanaged, that overtourism arises as the antithesis to Responsible Tourism.

The Asian proverb: “Tourism is like a fire; you can cook your meal on it, or it can burn your house down”, memorably describes the problem. In more and more places, residents and visitors are feeling that they are experiencing overtourism. Tourism is managed by local governments and national park authorities in regulatory frameworks provided by national governments. In workshops conducted in South Africa in the wake of the Cape Town Declaration, participants frequently

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discussed the need for a "whole of government approach." The 1996 White Paper carefully defined the roles of national, provincial and local governments, placing responsibility on the national government to "coordinate the tourism-related efforts of all government departments and related" government institutions. At the local government level, the White Paper recognised the importance of "environmental planning and land-use, product development, marketing and promotion" (1996 White Paper §6.1ii, 6.3) and identified twelve responsibilities, including facilitating "the participation of local communities in the tourism industry."

India's Prime Minister, Modi, argues that national development is "not an exercise in top-down governance, but rather a citizen-led people's movement." Applying this to tourism, he has asserted the importance of destination-centric convergence, of government departments working together with communities and businesses to use tourism for sustainable development. (Pande & Goodwin) If it can be achieved, this approach to governance will improve tourism for residents, tourists, and businesses alike. For this reason, the Cape Town Declaration and the 2022 Charter include involving "local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances".

The Concept of Responsibility

In *The Holiday Makers* Jost Krippendorf called for "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." (Krippendorf, 107, 109) The concept of responsibility is complex. As children, we argue with our parents and other adults about what constitutes responsible behaviour. and many of us have a second course when, as parents, we argue with our children.

Sizoo's edited collection of cultural perspectives on the notion of responsibility rightly reflects our world's cultural and ethical diversity; these differences at community and personal levels cannot be ignored; they are often deeply and passionately held. Sizoo's collection is intended to "encourage reflection on the meaning of individual and collective responsibility". There is generally a "tension between 'duty' and 'responsibility'". It can be reduced to a limited legal sense, or as in so many Corporate Social Responsibility strategies, it can be reduced to philanthropy. It can be associated "with something imposed from above or with a sort of moralising rhetoric that induces feelings of guilt." It can be used by governments and businesses to place the onus on individuals. Sizoo reminds us of the debates about equivalence in the process of translation and Panikkar's comment that "when translating concepts, equivalents are not symmetrical." (Sizoo, 16, 17, 18)

Sizoo points out that "people in most (if not all) language areas, share at least *two core meanings* of responsibility: 'carrying a charge' and 'having to account' for the way the charge is carried out." In some cultures, it is synonymous, figuratively and literally, with burden; in others, it combines charge with "worthy of respect. Responsibility is perhaps best understood as a relationship "being charged with" or "being accountable to". It is widely associated with action but it may, as in China "one may at times show great wisdom and responsibility precisely by refraining from action. In French, "responsabilité" carries responsibility, accountability and liability. Royal and Martin, in their chapter, draw out the indigenous perspective; accountability is perceived as being based on "an ethic of responsibility which is responsive to others and to the living systems of the earth." In the West, Sizoo points out, that responsibility has a "dual but indivisible nature" to (a) "assume a task out of free will" and (b) "to legally account for one's acts in exercising a task", to take responsibility (blame) for negative consequences. (Sizoo 23-26 & 31,34; Goodwin 2016 26-29).

Responsibility is then a complex concept, and when we use it, we need to recognise the world's complexity and diversity. In this author's view, the two periods of debate, which most of us

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experience and endure, assist in developing a nuanced understanding of the concept. We ignore the nuances of meaning at our peril, not least because the linguistic and cultural understanding of responsibility is rooted in ethical and religious ideas about the character of our relationship with nature and our responsibility, or not, to future generations. In the debates on climate change at the COPs, these understandings of our ethical responsibility bubble to the surface. Are the beneficiaries of fossil-fuelled industrial revolutions liable to pay others for “loss and damage”? Nearly all of us would like others to carry the burden of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while we continue with business as usual. Sizoo argues that responsibility is “a charge”, an obligation to “care for”, and “an obligation to *see to it that care is taken.*” She concludes, “Responsibility... is the overarching, key principle for humanity to live together and care for each other, as well as care for life on earth.” (Sizoo 43, 44)

Responsible Tourism arises both from accountability, through legislation, regulation and contracts of supply and employment and from the willingness of individuals and organisations to respond. There are then three dimensions to Responsible Tourism: **accountability** to shareholders or the law, **capability** or **capacity**, and the expectation and willingness to **respond**.

“Responsibility is shouldered because there is something that can be done, and the individual or organisation has the capability to act, to make a difference. With the opportunity comes the impetus to responsibility. Capability assumes capacity – responsibility is attributed or accepted because the individual or group had both the opportunity and the capacity to act. Individuals and organisations are expected to respond because they can make a difference – they have ‘respons-ability’ because they have both capacity and opportunity. They have also to be willing and feel themselves able to react, to take the initiative and to act.” (Goodwin, 2016, 40)

Writing from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Royal and Martin make the same argument, emphasising “responsiveness rather than a judicial approach and a burdensome sense of guilt.” They focus on ‘response’ meaning “sympathetic empathetic relationship”, which they name “sympathetic resonance”, and ‘ability’ the action taken in response. ‘Ability’ then is the action inspired by sympathetic resonance. Royal and Martin added: “One has to have the means and resources to act: that is to say, one has to have the ability to act.” (Sizoo, 48,49) This gives rise to the “positive experience” which Krippendorf identified as the motivation for action “positive experience, not the feeling of compulsion but that of responsibility” (Krippendorf, 109)

The “loss and damage” caused to others by the burning of fossil fuels have been known for decades, dismissed by economists as “externalities.” The consequences of climate change and air pollution are real, and they affect people’s lives. A number of scholars have, over the last two decades, reminded us that on our finite planet, there are limits to growth and that tourism can only meaningfully contribute to sustainable development “by embracing the idea of transformative change through concepts such as degrowth and planetary limits.” (Chakraborty, 8130, Shikida 93) The travel and tourism sector understandably seeks sustainably to maintain business as usual and growth. Vian, Garvey & Tuohy point out that “carbon-fix’ strategies such as BECCS, REDD+ and carbon markets” are “a palliative carbon mitigation strategy, which maintains business-as-usual and reproduces unjust practices of resource appropriation and environmental subjugation and overexploitation.” (Vianet al, 10) The understandable scramble for quick fixes to enable the maintenance of business as usual and claims of sustainable practices generally ignore the negative impacts of particular solutions.

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions” is a persistent and widespread aphorism, oft-quoted but too often ignored in practice, with multiple origins from the Greeks onwards. The phrase “First

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do no harm" (Latin: *Primum non nocere*) is a part of the original Hippocratic oath; again the origins are obscure but ancient. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle distinguishes between *phronesis*, which is practical and effectively deals with particulars and *sophia*, which is concerned with deliberation about universal truths. Responsible Tourism draws on *phronesis*. It requires the determination of desirable ends and the ability to determine how to achieve them whilst avoiding unintended consequences and negative impacts in particular. Inconvenient ancient wisdom, tried and tested over centuries, is still ignored. Ignored at our peril.

The converse of responsibility is, of course, irresponsible. The charge of irresponsibility is used against adults and children to attempt to secure particular behaviours. The concept of responsibility is a two-edged sword. For example, in discussing tourism, the concept can be used positively to encourage actions that make tourism better or to castigate tourists whose behaviour is disruptive or disrespectful and destinations, the management of which has resulted in overtourism.

As we shall see, the Responsible Tourism movement emerged from the realisation that sustainability is an abstract objective which too often lacks definition. It is an important aspiration, but it is vulnerable to platitudes, and too often, it results in specious claims disguising inactivity and sometimes significant negative impacts.

It is not sufficient merely to understand. Responsible Tourism requires action. It is our responsibility to identify problems and determine appropriate ends and means of achieving them working alone, or in partnerships with others, to achieve change, to make tourism better. As Fennell has pointed out, there are "two widely regarded conditions that free an individual of his or her responsibility: ignorance and inability." (Fennell 1093). We need to raise the issues, ensuring that few can credibly claim ignorance, and then we must demand action from those who have the ability to make a difference. Monitoring and transparent reporting play an important part in encouraging change. The World Responsible Tourism Awards recognise leaders, raise awareness of what the leaders are doing and encourage others to follow.

Origins of the Responsible Tourism Movement

The 2002 Cape Town Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations resulted from convergence between work with UK tour operators and the adoption of Responsible Tourism in the South African 1996 post-apartheid White Paper on *The Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa*. The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism is arguably the founding document of the Responsible Tourism Movement. (Goodwin 2016, 254-259) The conference was organised by the Responsible Tourism Partnership and Western Cape Tourism as a side event preceding the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 and was attended by 280 delegates from intergovernmental organisations and twenty countries.

There were, of course, antecedents. Krippendorf's work is by far the most significant. He established a new paradigm. "Krippendorf's vision of more sustainable and fair forms of tourism [are] now a worldwide and established paradigm." (Lane, 2003) He dismissed those who spoke of mass tourism as a plague; he was not anti-tourism. He sought rather to "bring all of those involved as much benefit as possible, but not at the expense of other people or of the environment." (Krippendorf, 31) In an echo of the tragedy of the commons (Hardin) Krippendorf asserts that the "primary interest" of the tour operator "is the short-term growth of their own business and not the long-term development of a well-balanced tourist trade." (Krippendorf, 20) He understood that tourists, "King Guest", engage in conspicuous consumption, displaying their relative wealth; "we have paid for it. ... Responsibility is rejected, egoism rules. (Krippendorf, 29, 33)

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Krippendorf was amongst the first to recognise the growth of adventure and experiential travel and, deploying Maslow's hierarchy of needs to tourism argued that tourists were becoming more demanding he foresaw the "birth of a new travel culture", one in which tourists seek "the satisfaction of social needs: contact with other people and self-realization through creative activities, knowledge and exploration." No longer manipulated, tourists were increasingly critical consumers, he wrote "the readiness and desire for a different tourism is becoming more widespread day by day." (Krippendorf, 74) Growing demand for experiential tourism has encouraged the development of more responsible forms of the production and consumption of tourism. Krippendorf recognised that proposals for change needed to be as infectious as possible and must not degenerate into rules for regimentation and manipulation. They must make the experience of freedom possible." He asserted the individual responsibility of the travellers and holidaymakers, "[e] very individual tourist builds up or destroys human values while travelling." (Krippendorf, 109)

Particularly prescient was Krippendorf's recognition of the desirability of "artificial holiday worlds in the form of large holiday centres" – today's all-inclusives. He argued that "cultural protection" and "host population protection" sometimes required tourism "...in reservations in 'ghetto-like' centres". This was a "more 'hygienic' solution, because the destination area could benefit from all the economic advantages while restricting contact to a limited area and a small circle of people and thus protect itself from the overwhelming ecological and, even more importantly, cultural 'infection'." (Krippendorf, 122)

Harrison and Husbands published a series of case studies in 1996; in their introduction, they argue that the term "does not refer to a brand or type of tourism." They present it as "a framework and a set of practices that chart a sensible course between the fuzziness of eco-tourism and the well-known negative externalities associated with conventional mass tourism." They recognised, as did their contributors, that "local communities, governments, tourists and investors" recognised that new ways of managing tourism would be required to cope with quantitative growth and the spread of tourism (Harrison and Husbands, 5, 13) The Cape Town Declaration asserted firmly "the importance of making all forms of tourism sustainable through all stakeholders taking responsibility for creating better forms of tourism and realising these aspirations."

Ecotourism was a problem in the 1990s for two reasons: first, because, in most cases, it was little more than marketing hype and second, because when challenged on sustainability, many operators and hoteliers said that sustainability was the concern only of ecotourism. By the mid-nineties, the exhortation to 'take only photographs, leave only footprints' was already being questioned; surely rent should be paid, and communities compensated for the opportunity costs of losing access to their natural resources.

Thirty years prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development the UN had held the first Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, in 1972, and declared that a "point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference, we can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and wellbeing depend." (Stockholm, 3) Frustration at the lack of progress on sustainability through the UN Conferences, Stockholm in 1972, Nairobi 1982, Rio 1992, and Johannesburg, 2002) and the lack of attention to tourism contributed to the momentum which was harnessed in the Cape Town Declaration. In the context of the challenges, we face in a finite world, Bonhoeffer's words are a call to action we should heed, "We have learnt, rather too late, that action comes, not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility." (Bonhoeffer, 103)

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As early as 1980 the Manila Conference on World Tourism was convened "to consider the responsibility of states for the development and enhancement of tourism" (Goodwin 2016:33) In 2001, the UN General Assembly adopted the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics, subtitled "For Responsible Tourism", emphasised the need "for the promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism that could be beneficial to all sectors of society," (UNWTO,3)

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) undertook a survey of its volunteers working in the developing world to determine the salient issues; tourism came out as the major issue. A year or two later, it would likely have been HIV/AIDS. In 1998, VSO launched a WorldWise campaign focused on the hidden costs of holidays borne by local people and their cultural and natural environment. Travelling to a Fairer World" used data collected for VSO by NOP, a commercial polling company, in their random UK omnibus survey. 'Imagine if rich foreign tourists continually visited your local area, – 87% of respondents said they would object to having tourists parked outside their homes every day, 'wanting to use [their] home and resources'; 83% would object to groups of tourists lining up to 'take photographs of [their] family and home without asking permission first'; and 75% objected to tourists expecting them to 'dress up as City stockbrokers or Morris dancers'. By contrast, the same research found that 'rich foreign tourists' would be welcome if: they respected their culture (89%); if the money they spent on holiday stayed with local people (86%); if some of the money they spent on holiday was used to build better roads and public transport for local people (85%); and if they took time to learn about local places of interest (82%). (Goodwin 2011, 54-55)

In 2000 the British trade association ABTA, found that for 29% of holidaymakers, the tour operator's reputation on environmental issues was very important, and 41% said it was important. For 85% of respondents, it was very or fairly important that their holiday does not damage the environment Goodwin, 2002. 27) Tearfund commissioned commercial polling on consumer attitudes to Responsible Tourism. The cost, weather and quality of facilities were judged by respondents to be of most importance when choosing a holiday but the quality of local social, economic and political information (42%), opportunities to interact with local people (37%) and environmental impact (32%) were all judged more important than the ethical policy commitments of the company (27%). But all of these concerns were regarded by this representative sample of travellers as more important than whether or not they had travelled with the company before (26%). This last point was not lost on many operators. (Goodwin & Francis, 275)

VSO funded research with AITO members revealed that a commitment to ethical tourism was impractical. Would a tour operator or accommodation offering only vegan food be successful? Clearly one or two in any destination might be successful, but any business choosing to offer only vegan food would substantially limit its market. To claim to be ethical and serve non-vegan food would bring negative and damaging comments. The AITO research revealed that a surprising number of their members were already adopting "responsible practices for a range of reasons: personal commitment, awareness of the importance of corporate social responsibility and ... commercial advantage." (Goodwin 2002,30) AITO adopted Responsible Tourism.

Responsible Tourism developed into a movement which seeks to encourage businesses and destination governments to exercise responsibility; it focuses on outcomes and impacts. "it is about encouraging and motivating people, individually and in groups, to take responsibility for making tourism more sustainable." (Goodwin, 2016, 37). It has not been without its critics (Goodwin 2011, 37-42).

"We take 'Our Holidays in Their Homes', we should respect and empower our hosts ... We may have cleaner hands if we stand aside from the practice of responsible tourism, but we

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will not make the world a better place. We must take responsibility and begin to make changes – we can constructively criticise those who are not changing fast enough but reward and encourage those who are making progress.” (Goodwin 2002, 33)

Be transparent about why, what, and impacts.

Responsible Tourism grew from praxis, from efforts to make tourism better. From the outset, the focus was on identifying what issues mattered locally, not forgetting the global impacts of locally produced greenhouse gas emissions, waste plastics, which so often end in gyros in the oceans, and biodiversity extinction. Not every issue matters everywhere; there are places which are regularly short of potable water others have an abundance, and flooding is their problem. So, identify the issues that matter locally, the ones that can be addressed by the business, alone or working with others, and tell customers and other businesses what is being done and why. Transparency matters, so report what you are doing and the impacts of your efforts.

Businesses

Responsible Tourism is defined by what is done to make tourism better and its impacts. There is a range of reasons why taking responsibility makes business sense: it is the right thing to do, contributes to the licence to operate and minimises risk; can bring cost savings, enhance product quality and reduce carbon emissions from transport; contribute to staff morale and perception of non-financial value in their work inherent in the contribution tourism makes to their community and its natural and cultural heritage. There is also a market advantage in non-financial competition secured through PR and reputation, and referral and repeats in the context of a global market trend towards experiential travel. (Goodwin, 2016, 78-91)

Since the launch of the Responsible Tourism Awards in 2004 many hundreds of businesses, large and small, across six continents have been recognised for their efforts to make tourism better for communities and the environment. The range of the Responsible Tourism agenda has expanded, as is evidenced in the Awards and 2022 Charter, which reflects the progress made in two decades since the 2002 Cape Town Declaration. Work on child and human rights, and pro-poor and inclusive tourism, and Porter’s espousal of shared value have strengthened the socio-economic agenda. It is also clear that the positive impacts of those being awarded now, are very significantly greater than those awarded in the early years. (Goodwin 2016, 257)

The concept of Responsible Tourism was not necessarily intended to be consumer-facing, although the considerable success of Responsible Travel, launched in 2001, demonstrates that the concept has market value. The adjective responsible is not as important as the verb to take responsibility. Taking responsibility can be described as green, regenerative, restorative, slow or conscious travel. Evidence of positive impact is the essence of Responsible Tourism. The test of Responsible Tourism is being able to demonstrate positive impacts and the avoidance of negative impacts, not the language used to claim credit.

Box 1 The 2022 Responsible Tourism Charter

Sustainability is an aspiration. It will only be realised if and when we take responsibility for making tourism sustainable. Responsibility drives sustainability. Responsible Tourism is about "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit."

- Recognises that greenhouse gas emissions, plastic waste, and biodiversity extinction are global issues requiring local action. Potable water is also an issue in many places, but not everywhere;

- Sets goals, measures and reports efforts to minimise negative economic, environmental, and social impacts, including crowding and overtourism;
- Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities by providing better employment conditions, developing shared value with local businesses to create more and better livelihoods and addressing the economic needs of the economically poor and marginalised;
- Involves local people in decisions that affect their communities, their lives and life chances
- Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity, lived cultures and cultural monuments;
- Addresses biodiversity loss and is nature-positive;
- Provides inclusive employment for the differently abled and people of diverse ethnicities, gender and sexual orientation;
- Provides more enjoyable experiences for all, through more meaningful connections with local people and a greater understanding of local history and culture, and social and environmental issues;
- Offers culturally sensitive experiences engendering respect between tourists and hosts, and building local pride and confidence.

Recognising that sustainability is a journey and that we will need to do more when we can, we commit to

- do what we can to make tourism better;
- explain why we focus on particular issues and what we are doing to address them and
- recognising that transparent and auditable reporting on the impacts of our efforts is essential to demonstrating what is being achieved by those taking responsibility;
- moving our sector towards sustainability.

www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/2022-responsible-tourism-charter

Destinations

South Africa in 1996 declared Responsible Tourism “an absolute necessity if the country is to build a successful and sustainable tourism industry... and as the key guiding principle for the development of tourism” (DEAT iv, §3.4) The Responsible Tourism guidelines developed and published in 2002 have stood the test of time and been influential in India. In Kerala in 2008 the guidelines informed and shaped the approach which Kerala took with the development of Village Life Experiences, drawing on South African township tourism and producer groups drawing on the Gambian, Gambia is Good, experience of small farmers banding together to supply the hotels and resorts.

India is presently the world’s leading destination for Responsible Tourism. First, Kerala and then Madhya Pradesh adopted the principles of Responsible Tourism and adapted them to address local issues in order to make tourism better and, in particular, to ensure that economically poor and marginalised local communities benefit from tourism, creating additional livelihoods, a sense of pride in their culture and helping to stem the flow of young people away from the communities in which they were born.

In Kerala, the Responsible Tourism Mission has demonstrated what can be achieved when all levels of government, from state to village panchayat, work together with businesses and empower local communities to shape their tourism offer to meet the experiential interests of tourists, developing meaningful connection ensuring respect between host and guest, and managing negative impacts to a very low level. Tourism provides additional livelihood incomes at the household level, avoiding tourism dependency. Madhya Pradesh has built on the experience gained in Kerala. Madhya Pradesh

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is developing homestays, rural tourism, responsible souvenirs, solid and liquid waste management, access for the differently abled, skills training and making safer destinations for women.

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.” (Goodwin, 2017 1) It is the opposite of Responsible Tourism. By 2007, there was increasing anger about tourism development in Kerala villages; development which was exploiting the natural and cultural environment of the villagers, but from which they were not benefiting. In 2015, overtourism became an issue in the city elections in Barcelona (Goodwin, 2019). Overtourism is as diverse as Responsible Tourism; only when the causes of the irritation being experienced by hosts and guests have been determined is it possible to begin to manage tourism to reduce the negative impacts. This generally requires a “whole of government approach”: spatial and transport planners and regulators, the housing department to tack unregistered and unregulated tourism lets, tax collectors and the tourism sector.

Covid reminded communities of what their city or village had been like before their home place, was subjected to “excessive growth in tourism supply and demand.” (Shikida, 94) The loss of local control of tourism was threatening to burn the house down, fuelled by the desire for “revenge tourism” and directed by social media influencers.

Research Needs

- In 2022 81% of travellers confirmed that sustainable travel is important to them, up 10% in a year) with 50% saying that recent news about climate change has influenced them to make more sustainable travel choices. In 2023 more than three-quarters (76%) of travellers say they want to travel more sustainably, but the rising cost of living is impacting their spending plans. There is an urgent need to use an interdisciplinary approach to understand the “intention gap”, the difference between stated intentions and preferences and the purchase choice made. (Tang *et al*)
- Journal papers and academic case studies rarely provide the means to evaluate potential solutions and to determine the one(s) most likely to be effective in a particular place. We need to do better. Diversity both drives demand for tourism and bedevils efforts to manage it.
- There is increasing awareness in destinations of the importance of “choice editing” (Font *et al*) in subtly managing the choices and behaviours of tourists and the collective impacts as tourism.
- Continue to critique certification and develop better ways of transparently reporting positive and negative impacts and the efficacy of particular solutions in particular circumstances and places.
- Critically evaluate Responsible Tourism practices in businesses and destinations. from a solution and impact perspective; be concerned less with theory and more with practice.
- Continue to work on the business case to demonstrate the benefits of taking responsibility.
- Research and prove the ways in which SMMEs can safely claim credit for the increased positive impacts and reduced negative impacts in the context of new legislative frameworks like the EU’s Green Claims Directive,

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