



Research note

No time for smokescreen skepticism: A rejoinder to Shani and Arad



C. Michael Hall^{a, b, c, d, *}, Bas Amelung^e, Scott Cohen^f, Eke Eijgelaar^g, Stefan Gössling^h, James Highamⁱ, Rik Leemans^e, Paul Peeters^g, Yael Ram^j, Daniel Scott^k, Carlo Aall^l, Bruno Abegg^m, Jorge E. Arañaⁿ, Stewart Barr^o, Susanne Becken^p, Ralf Buckley^p, Peter Burns^q, Tim Coles^{ap}, Jackie Dawson^r, Rouven Doran^s, Ghislain Dubois^t, David Timothy Duval^u, David Fennell^v, Alison M. Gill^w, Martin Gren^c, Werner Gronau^x, Jo Guiver^y, Debbie Hopkins^z, Edward H. Huijbens^{aa}, Ko Koens^g, Machiel Lamers^e, Christopher Lemieux^{ab}, Alan Lew^{ac}, Patrick Long^{ad}, Frans W. Melissen^g, Jeroen Nawijn^g, Sarah Nicholls^{ae}, Jan-Henrik Nilsson^h, Robin Nunkoo^{af}, Alan Pomeroy^{ag}, Arianne C. Reis^{ah}, Dirk Reiser^{ai}, Robert B. Richardson^{ae}, Christian M. Rogerson^d, Jarkko Saarinen^{b, d}, Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir^{aj}, Robert Steiger^{ak}, Paul Upham^{al}, Sander van der Linden^{am, an}, Gustav Visser^{ao}, Geoffrey Wall^k, David Weaver^p

^a Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

^b Department of Geography, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland

^c School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden

^d School of Tourism & Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

^e Environmental Sciences, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands

^f School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom

^g NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, Breda, The Netherlands

^h Department of Service Management, Lund University, Helsingborg, Sweden

ⁱ Department of Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

^j Ashkelon Academic College, Ashkelon, Israel

^k Department of Geography and Environmental Management, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

^l Vestlandsforskning, Sogndal, Norway

^m Institute of Geography, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

ⁿ Instituto de Turismo y Desarrollo Económico Sostenible, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

^o Geography, College of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

^p Griffith University, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

^q University of Bedfordshire, Luton, UK

^r Département de Géographie, Institut de Recherche sur la Science, la Société et la Politique, Université d'Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

^s Department of Psychosocial Science, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

^t Conseil et Recherche en Politiques Climatiques, Marseille, France

^u University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

^v Tourism and Environment, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

^w Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada

^x Fachhochschule Stralsund, Stralsund, Germany

^y Institute of Transport and Tourism, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK

^z Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

* Corresponding author. Rm221 Business & Law Building, Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. Tel.: +64 3 364 2606.

E-mail addresses: michael.hall@canterbury.ac.nz (C.M. Hall), bas.amelung@wur.nl (B. Amelung), s.cohen@surrey.ac.uk (S. Cohen), Eijgelaar.E@nhtv.nl (E. Eijgelaar), stefan.gossling@ism.lu.se (S. Gössling), james.higham@otago.ac.nz (J. Higham), rik.leemans@wur.nl (R. Leemans), paul.peeters1000@gmail.com (P. Peeters), yaelram@gmail.com (Y. Ram), daniel.scott@uwaterloo.ca (D. Scott), caa@vestforsk.no (C. Aall), bruno.abegg@uibk.ac.at (B. Abegg), jarana_tides@ulpgc.es (J.E. Araña), S.W.Barr@exeter.ac.uk (S. Barr), s.becken@griffith.edu.au (S. Becken), r.buckley@griffith.edu.au (R. Buckley), professorpeterburns@gmail.com (P. Burns), t.e.coles@exeter.ac.uk (T. Coles), Jackie Dawson@uottawa.ca (J. Dawson), rouven.doran@psysp.uib.no (R. Doran), dubois.ghislain@tec-conseil.com (G. Dubois), dtduval@gmail.com (D.T. Duval), dfennell@brocku.ca (D. Fennell), agill@sfu.ca (A.M. Gill), martin.gren@lnu.se (M. Gren), werner.gronau@fh-stralsund.de (W. Gronau), jwguiver@uclan.ac.uk (J. Guiver), debbie.hopkins@otago.ac.nz (D. Hopkins), edward@unakis (E.H. Huijbens), koens.k@nhtv.nl (K. Koens), machiel.lamers@wur.nl (M. Lamers), christopher.lemieux@wlu.ca (C. Lemieux), alan.lew@nau.edu (A. Lew), LONGP@ecu.edu (P. Long), Melissen.F@nhtv.nl (F.W. Melissen), nawijn.j@nhtv.nl (J. Nawijn), nicho210@anr.msu.edu (S. Nicholls), jan-henrik.nilsson@ism.lu.se (J.-H. Nilsson), r.nunkoo@uom.ac.mu (R. Nunkoo), alamp@uow.edu.au (A. Pomeroy), arianne.reis@scu.edu.au (A.C. Reis), d.reiser@cbs.de (D. Reiser), rbr@msu.edu (R.B. Richardson), crogerson@uj.ac.za (C.M. Rogerson), jarkko.saarinen@oulu.fi (J. Saarinen), annadora@hi.is (A.D. Sæþórsdóttir), robert.steiger@mci.edu (R. Steiger), P.Upham@leeds.ac.uk (P. Upham), sander.vanderlinden@yale.edu (S. van der Linden), visserge@ufs.ac.za (G. Visser), gwall@uwaterloo.ca (G. Wall), d.weaver@griffith.edu.au (D. Weaver).

^{aa} Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, Akureyri, Iceland

^{ab} Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

^{ac} Department of Geography and Planning, North Arizona University, Arizona, USA

^{ad} Center for Sustainable Tourism, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, USA

^{ae} Department of Community Sustainability, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

^{af} Department of Management, University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius

^{ag} School of Management, Operations and Marketing, University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia

^{ah} School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour, NSW, Australia

^{ai} Cologne Business School, Köln, Germany

^{aj} Faculty of Life and Environmental Science, University of Iceland, Vesturbær, Reykjavik, Iceland

^{ak} MCI Management Center Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria

^{al} Centre for Integrated Energy Research and Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

^{am} Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

^{an} Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change, Department of Geography and the Environment, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

^{ao} Department of Geography, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

^{ap} University of Exeter Business School, Streatham Court, Exeter, UK

HIGHLIGHTS

- Rejoinder to claims of [Shani and Arad \(2014\)](#).
- Extent of scientific consensus on climate change indicated.
- Evidence for climate change is observational and predictive.
- Extent of tourism related emissions indicated.
- Concern of climate denial for scientific debate and communication.

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ABSTRACT

[Shani and Arad \(2014\)](#) claimed that tourism scholars tend to endorse the most pessimistic assessments regarding climate change, and that anthropogenic climate change was a “fashionable” and “highly controversial scientific topic”. This brief rejoinder provides the balance that is missing from such climate change denial and skepticism studies on climate change and tourism. Recent research provides substantial evidence that reports on anthropogenic climate change are accurate, and that human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, including from the tourism industry, play a significant role in climate change. Some positive net effects may be experienced by some destinations in the short-term, but in the long-term all elements of the tourism system will be impacted. The expansion of tourism emissions at a rate greater than efficiency gains means that it is increasingly urgent that the tourism sector acknowledge, accept and respond to climate change. Debate on tourism-related adaptation and mitigation measures is to be encouraged and welcomed. Climate change denial is not.

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1. Introduction

Climate change is one of the most contentious areas of public debate of science. However, in scientific terms it is not, what [Shani and Arad \(2014, p. 82\)](#) incorrectly refer to as, “highly controversial”. Anthropogenic climate change is now clearly accepted within the scientific community ([Anderegg, Prall, Harold, & Schneider, 2010](#); [Cook et al., 2013](#); [Doran & Zimmerman, 2009](#); [Oreskes, 2004](#)). As with all areas of scientific knowledge there is systematic interrogation and debate of knowledge claims, results, models, methods, and procedures. However, to dismiss scientific knowledge claims by discrediting climate change science is to deliberately misrepresent both the scientific literature and scientific consensus on the subject. The recent ‘research’ paper in *Tourism Management* on it being a “time for environmental skepticism” on climate change and tourism ([Shani & Arad, 2014](#)), or to what they refer as “climate change hype” ([Shani & Arad, 2014, p. 83](#)) is such a misrepresentation.

[Shani and Arad \(2014\)](#) claim that.

- “virtually all” [“tourism scholars and researchers”] “ignore the critical debate on the accurateness and implications of the

theory of anthropogenic global warming (AGW), which in actual fact is far from being conclusive” (p. 82);

- “the theory of AGW is, in fact, under intense scientific dispute” (p. 83);
- “there are shaky scientific foundations to the hypothesis that CO₂ concentration in the earth’s atmosphere accounts for significant temperature fluctuations, empirical evidence indicates that the sun activity is a more plausible cause for climate variation” (as well as “natural factors” including “changes in the galactic environment”) (p. 83);
- “no definitive evidence exists to verify that climate is driven by the concentration of CO₂ in the earth’s atmosphere” (p. 83); and
- “the theory of AGW is highly controversial among climate scientists” (p. 84).

This paper provides a brief response to these statements and to their litany of climate change denial and misrepresentation. Throughout the paper the terms climate change and anthropogenic climate change (ACC) are preferred to AGW given that increases in globally averaged atmospheric and ocean temperatures are one

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