



Research note

Denying bogus skepticism in climate change and tourism research



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H I G H L I G H T S

- Final Response to claims of Shani and Arad (2014, 2015).
- Extent of scientific consensus on climate change indicated.
- Evidence for climate change is observational and predictive.
- Extent of tourism related emissions indicated.
- Concern over climate denial for scientific debate and communication.

A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This final response to the two climate change denial papers by Shani and Arad further highlights the inaccuracies, misinformation and errors in their commentaries. The obfuscation of scientific research and the consensus on anthropogenic climate change may have significant long-term negative consequences for better understanding the implications of climate change and climate policy for tourism and create confusion and delay in developing and implementing tourism sector responses.

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Skepticism is integral to scientific endeavour. However, the commentaries by [Shani and Arad \(2014, 2015\)](#) reflect what [Wilson \(2008\)](#) has described as “pseudo” or “bogus” skepticism in which the language of rational inquiry is appropriated for an otherwise irrational analysis. As [Wilson \(2008\)](#) notes ‘there is a meaningful difference between being a “sceptic” and being in denial. The genuine sceptic forms his [sic] beliefs through a balanced evaluation of the evidence. The sceptic of the bogus variety cherry-picks evidence on the basis of a pre-existing belief, seizing on data, however tenuous, that supports his position, and yet declaring himself “sceptical” of any evidence, however compelling, that undermines it’. Such an approach has become typical of those who deny the scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change and devolve quickly into conspiracies instead ([Dunlap, 2013](#); [Friel, 2010](#); [Hoggan, 2009](#); [Hulme, 2009](#); [Manne, 2012](#); [Oreskes & Conway, 2010](#)). We cannot deny evidence of anthropogenic climate change just because we do not like it, with the disingenuous claims of an ‘academic witch-hunt’ ([Shani & Arad, 2015](#)), though of course we can debate vehemently about what to do about it.

There is not enough space available to cover all the inaccuracies, misinformation and errors in Shani and Arad’s commentaries (see [Hall et al., 2015, 2014](#)). In addition to the utter lack of balanced representation of climate change science and tourism-related research we identified a least 19 misrepresentations of the

literature in our initial response to [Shani and Arad \(2014\)](#). None of these misrepresentations or errors are addressed in their reply. Instead, their response has mostly devolved into a litany of conspiracy, derogatory innuendo and reconstruction of textual content. We therefore assume they agree to have made these errors. This reply emphasises a number of key points. First, with respect to the Shani and Arad commentaries and our response. Second, in relation to some of the new arguments presented in [Shani and Arad \(2015\)](#).

The initial reply by [Hall et al. \(2015\)](#) was not a ‘petition’. It was an appropriate scientifically grounded response by many of the researchers on climate change in tourism studies whose work, together with others who study climate change, has been maligned and misrepresented by Shani and Arad. The number of authors also reflects the strength of the scientific consensus with respect to anthropogenic climate change and its seriousness, as assessed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC, 2013](#)) and endorsed by every country in the world and every relevant major national and disciplinary scientific organization ([AAAS, 2014](#); [Anderegg, Prall, Harold, & Schneider, 2010](#); [Science, 2001](#)).

We contend that Shani and Arad’s commentaries should not have been published because to engage in this exchange may be seen to give them scientific credence where it is not warranted. Their commentaries are based on a highly selective reading of limited scientific and other literature including some lobby group and pseudo-scientific papers (some of which are identified in

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