

Green Marble 2023

ESTUDOS SOBRE O ANTROPOCENO E ECOCRÍTICA / STUDIES ON
THE ANTHROPOCENE AND ECOCRITICISM

Editores

*João Ribeiro Mendes, Isabel Ponce de Leão,
Maria do Carmo Mendes, Rui Paes Mendes*

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ÍNDICE

INTRODUÇÃO/INTRODUCTION	i
☰ CONFERÊNCIAS	1
TURISMO SUSTENTÁVEL. A DOCTRINA E A SUA CONSECUÇÃO, NA ÓTICA DA UNIÃO EUROPEIA.....	3
VENTOS CRUZADOS EM <i>SUÃO</i> DE ANTUNES DA SILVA	17
CAN ECOCLIMATIC SUSTAINABILITY BE PROMOTED IN VIRTUAL TOURISM WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE?.....	27
DIGITAL NOMADISM IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: PHILOSOPHICAL- ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONTRADICTIONS AND LIMITS OF THIS PHENOMENON.	41
“A PERFEIÇÃO DO UNIVERSO”: UMA ECOVIAGEM	61
IS ECOTOURISM ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE IN THE CLIMATE, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND POLITICAL REGIME OF THE ANTHROPOCENE?	73
O ENVOLVIMENTO DA COMUNIDADE LOCAL EM PROJETOS DE ECOTURISMO À LUZ DA RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL	89
A TAXA TURÍSTICA COMO INSTRUMENTO DE QUALIDADE NO DESTINO TURÍSTICO	105
ARTE E ALTERAÇÕES CLIMÁTICAS	117
PROGRAMA DO EVENTO	125
CARTAZES DO EVENTO	129
FOTOS DO EVENTO	133

IS ECOTOURISM ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE IN THE CLIMATE, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND POLITICAL REGIME OF THE ANTHROPOCENE?

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the socio-economic trends that significantly contributes to the shift of the planetary system into the Anthropocene regime. At the same time, it is also a socio-cultural practice characteristic of the imperial mode of living, or consumerism. Thus, it is a form of commodification of nature, also a way of deepening social inequalities between a privileged minority of the global population and an exploited majority providing services to those whose socio-economic status allows them to travel for fun and commoditised "experience". This is not an inevitable activity, an activity in which environmental costs (carbon footprint, water footprint, energy consumption, and waste production) are necessary to ensure the basic resources of life. Tourism is therefore a form of luxury consumption. For any tourism model to be, not only, environmentally sustainable but also socially just, or at least acceptable, it would have to be accessible to all people. Ecotourism should also have to meet the criterion of a solidarity mode of living referred to as sufficiency. This is hardly conceivable in the climatic, demographic, and political regime of the Anthropocene. The latter is likely to be characterized by, among other things, mass migration of climate or environmental refugees on the one hand and climate apartheid of the states of the global North on the other. Ecotourism, accessible to an even smaller proportion of the world's population than the current mass tourism, will thus be more likely to accentuate the social and environmental inequalities of which it is already a significant manifestation. Therefore, the question is whether the concept of ecotourism is not just another manifestation of greenwashing, i.e. an attempt to legitimize economic, social, and cultural activities that devastate the social and environmental environment.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Environmental Political Philosophy, Imperial Mode of Living, Solidarity Mode of Living, Greenwashing

Resumo

O turismo é uma das tendências socioeconômicas que contribuem significativamente para a transição do sistema planetário para o regime do Antropoceno. Ao mesmo tempo, é também uma prática sociocultural característica do modo imperial de viver, ou consumismo. Assim, é uma forma de mercantilização da natureza, também uma maneira de aprofundar as desigualdades sociais entre uma minoria privilegiada da população global e uma maioria explorada que fornece serviços àqueles cujo status socioeconômico lhes permite viajar por diversão e experiências mercantilizadas. Esta não é uma atividade inevitável, uma atividade na qual os custos ambientais (pegada de carbono, pegada hídrica, consumo de energia e produção de resíduos) são necessários para garantir os recursos básicos da vida. O turismo é, portanto, uma forma de consumo de luxo. Para que qualquer modelo de turismo seja, não apenas ambientalmente sustentável, mas também socialmente justo, ou pelo menos aceitável, teria que ser acessível a todas as pessoas. O ecoturismo também teria que atender ao critério de um modo de vida solidário referido como suficiência. Isso é difícil de conceber no regime climático, demográfico e político do Antropoceno. Este último provavelmente será caracterizado, entre outras coisas, pela migração em massa de refugiados climáticos ou ambientais de um lado e

pelo apartheid climático dos estados do Norte global por outro. O ecoturismo, acessível a uma proporção ainda menor da população mundial do que o atual turismo em massa, terá assim mais probabilidade de acentuar as desigualdades sociais e ambientais das quais já é uma manifestação significativa. Portanto, a questão é se o conceito de ecoturismo não é apenas mais uma manifestação de “greenwashing”, ou seja, uma tentativa de legitimar atividades econômicas, sociais e culturais que devastam o ambiente social e ambiental.

Palavras-chave: Antropoceno; Filosofia Política Ambiental; Modo de vida imperial; Modo de vida solidário; Lavagem verde

Introduction

The concept of the Anthropocene¹ is based on the knowledge of the extent of humanity's influence on the geological, evolutionary and climatic processes of the planetary system. Although it originated in geology and Earth System Sciences, it has also stimulated a very wide range of philosophical research in the last two decades. However, this concept can also be understood as a paradigmatic change, which is necessary to grasp the extremely complex relationships forming the system of the planet Earth, enabling the emergence and survival of humans as animal species. This paradigmatic change is largely related to the fact that the concept of the Anthropocene is, purposefully, trying to overcome the fragmentation of science into several specializations that hardly cooperate with each other. It is precisely this state of science that contributed significantly to the fact that, from the amount of knowledge of individual sciences, it was not possible to create an overall picture of the functioning of the system of planet Earth, its fragility and the ambiguity of its state in the last 12 thousand years or so, enabling the emergence of civilization. This has also contributed to the failure to recognize the severity of human-initiated, mostly devastating changes to this system. The transdisciplinary approach, emphasized by the concept of the Anthropocene, then to a large extent enabled the understanding of the complex changes taking place on the planet and how these

¹ The term Anthropocene refers to a new geological-climatic epoch in the history of the Earth, in which man became the dominant force affecting all components of the system of the planet Earth (biosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, cryosphere, geosphere and technosphere or man-made anthroposphere), or humanity. The term is composed of the Greek words *anthropos* (man) and *kainos* (new), which indicates that humanity as a collective subject has become a geophysical or biogeophysical force, i.e. a force that rivals natural geological forces in its consequences. The author of the term Anthropocene is considered to be the ecologist Eugene F. Stoermer, but the atmospheric chemist and Nobel Prize winner Paul J. Crutzen contributed significantly to its popularization at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. For the origin and development of the concept of the Anthropocene, see (Steffen et al., 2005); (Zalasiewicz, Williams, Steffen & Crutzen, 2010); (Zalasiewicz, Williams, Haywood & Ellis, 2011).

processes threaten the basic prerequisites necessary for the survival of mankind.²

With the claim that since the end of the last ice age, the activities of humanity with its growing numbers and increased, per capita, consumption escalated until it became a significant geological and morphological force of the planet, Crutzen and Stoermer came already in 2000 (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). Considering that humanity will remain one of the main geological forces during the next millennia and the consequences of its activities will be identifiable in sediments all over the planet after millions of years, it is no longer appropriate to refer to the current geological epoch with the term Pleistocene. They consider the term “Anthropocene” more appropriate. This enables them «to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology» (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000: 17) of the planet.

Already in 2002, however, Crutzen emphasized that «these effects have largely been caused by only 25% of the world population» (Crutzen, 2002: 23). He thus pointed to the fact that humanity, as a planetary biogeophysical force, is socially very significantly differentiated. The share of all nations and individuals in the global environmental devastation is therefore not the same, and even the ongoing changes in the climate and other planetary systems do not affect all people equally. At the beginning of the discussion on the Anthropocene, Crutzen also indirectly addressed the issue of environmental, or more precisely, social-environmental (in)justice, or inequality. However, these questions have resonated in social and political ecology for several decades.³ Research initiated by the main theses of the Anthropocene concept have contributed to the quantification of social-environmental injustices and deepening inequality⁴.

One of the most visible manifestations of this inequality is tourism. It is an activity that is directly linked to socio-economic status, which means that it is available only to a small part of the world's population – the global middle and upper class. At the same time, tourism is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and many other forms of pollution or direct environmental devastation.

Climate extremes as a new normal

Recent years have been rich in the occurrence of climatic extremes. At the beginning of the year 2022, a several-week heat wave with air temperatures of

² For a brief overview of the concept of the Anthropocene, its origins and consequences for humanity, see Elis (2018). Changes in the key cycles of the planetary system caused by human activities also change the starting points of philosophical anthropology. For that see Podušelová (2022).

³ See, for example, Gorz (1980) or Bookchin (2005) and Bookchin (2006).

⁴ See Hickel (2020) and Hickel at al. (2022).

around 50 °C hit India and Pakistan. Umair Haque described the consequences of this wave as they could be observed in the streets of Indian cities:

My friends in the Indian Subcontinent tell me stories, these days, that seem like science fiction. The heatwave there is pushing the boundaries of survivability. My other sister says that in the old, beautiful city of artists and poets, eagles are falling dead from the sky. They are just dropping dead and landing on houses, monuments, shops. *They can't fly anymore.*

The streets, she says, are lined with dead things. Dogs. Cats. Cows. Animals of all kinds are just there, *dead*. They've perished in the killing heat. *They can't survive.*

People, too, try to flee. They run indoors, spend all day in canals and rivers and lakes, and those who can't, too, line the streets, passed out, pushed to the edge. They're poor countries. We won't know how many this heatwave has killed for some time to come. Many won't even be counted. (Haque, 2022)

During this wave, the limits of survival were exceeded in many places.

Subsequently, a heat wave hit China. The longest and worst heat wave ever recorded in Chinese history lasted from August to October 2022. For more than 70 days, temperatures in the most densely populated areas of China exceeded 40 °C. Many factories were shut down due to heat and power outages. Many rivers, including the largest, have practically dried up, which has limited shipping, electricity generation, field irrigation, and water supply to industry, agriculture and the population. All this happened in a situation where the increase in global temperature compared to the pre-industrial era did not even reach the level of 1,3 °C.

India and China are not only the most populous countries in the world, but also sought-after tourist destinations visited by a large part of the global middle and upper class. They are thus an example of mass tourism in areas where, as a result of climatic extremes, the local population faces not only the lack of the basic resources of life, but also its acute threat, due to high temperatures incompatible with human life. The risk of frequent occurrence of long-term heat waves due to climate change in these areas of the world was already pointed out by a study published in 2017 (Im et al., 2017). However, this study also proved to be too optimistic. Such heat waves were supposed to occur in South Asia later in this century. The year 2022 can therefore also be understood as a preview or a sample of what the climate and demographic regime of the Anthropocene could look like.

However, there are many indications that the process of climate change is accelerating. Since March 2023 the global oceans have been running at record high levels of average temperatures. (Flis, 2023) During the summer of 2023, the

Is ecotourism environmentally and socially acceptable in the climate...

warmest period since the beginning of measurements was recorded, and not only the air temperatures were record high, but also the global sea surface temperatures were unprecedentedly high (WMO, 2023). Mark Maslin, professor of Earth system science at University College London, for the *The Guardian* said:

Climate scientists were shocked by the extreme weather events in 2021. Many hoped this was just an extreme year. But they continued into 2022 and now they are occurring in 2023. It seems we have moved to a warmer climate system with frequent extreme climate events and record-breaking temperatures that are the new normal. It is difficult to see how anyone can deny climate change is happening and having devastating effects around the world.» (Harvey, 2023)

At the same time, fossil fuel consumption is not decreasing, nor are greenhouse gas emissions. It is therefore more than likely that climate extremes as a result of accelerating anthropogenic change in the planetary system (not only climate) are becoming the new normal. So, the Anthropocene regime will be very probably characterized by, among other things, mass migration of climate or environmental refugees on the one hand and climate apartheid of the states of the global North on the other. The result will also be an increase in social, political and armed conflicts over access to the basic resources of life.

Tourism as a socio-economic trend and the socio-cultural practice

How can we talk about tourism in this situation? Countries that are not only the most populated and densely populated, but also popular tourist destinations were affected by heat waves. It is very likely that such heat waves will be repeated, perhaps even every year, and that they will be longer than before. However, if in these and many other countries climate change brings heat waves or other climatic extremes that threaten the lives of people and animals living there, is it still reasonable to consider them as tourist destinations? Is it even moral?

Maybe it will help to start with the question, what is tourism from the perspective of the Anthropocene concept. Steffen et al. (2015) consider tourism as one of the twelve socio-economic trends, that significantly contributes to the shift of the planetary system into the Anthropocene regime. Moreover, it is an activity that is not necessary, an activity in which environmental costs (carbon footprint, water footprint, energy consumption, and waste production) are not necessary to ensure the basic resources or preconditions of life. Tourism is therefore a form of luxury consumption; it is thus one of the most visible manifestations of consumerism.

The carbon footprint of global tourism is not negligible. According to Lenzen et al. (2018) is the tourism industry responsible for up to 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the tourism industry is the sector of the global economy with the fastest-growing greenhouse gas emissions. It is also associated with various forms of environmental devastation and often a social disruption in areas that have become a destination for mass tourism. Thus, it is a form of commodification of nature, also a way of deepening social inequalities between a privileged minority of the global population and an exploited majority providing services to those whose socio-economic status allows them to travel for fun and experience. It means, that it presupposes and at the same time deepens social inequality.

The basic parameters of this structure, as well as the idea of tourism itself, originated in the colonial era⁵ and is an integral part of the system of relationships and everyday practices that Brand and Wissen refer to as the imperial mode of living. According to Brand and Wissen: «The mode of living of the global North is 'imperial' inasmuch it is based on a principally unlimited appropriation of resources, space, labour capacity, and sinks⁶ elsewhere—secured politically, legally, and/or by means of violence.» (Brand & Wissen, 2012: 550) Part of this mode of living is therefore the assumption that the socially higher-ranking part of the population can have a much higher carbon or overall environmental footprint than members of the lower classes. The economic-political premise of the imperial mode of living is that commodity availability is organized through the world market, supported by military force, and/or asymmetric power relations formalized in international institutions. But the specific production conditions are mostly "invisible". All these characteristics are fully applicable to the socio-cultural practice of tourism.

According to Brand and Wissen, the imperial mode of living, the dominant modes of production, distribution, and consumption (and the resulting notions of society and self-identity) are deeply embedded in the daily routines of the middle and upper classes of societies in the global North. These daily routines cause a series of crises phenomena that affect (so far) primarily the countries of the global South, but, at the same time, they are globally attractive (and promoted). So, the imperial mode of living, as well as the daily routines and consumption patterns associated with it, is adopted by the growing middle class of the countries of the global South (Brand & Wissen, 2021).

An integral part of the imperial mode of living is the availability of cheap labour at home, but above all abroad, especially in former colonies or in countries

⁵ Travel for sightseeing and pleasure was long the privilege of the nobility, later the bourgeoisie and colonial officials and officers. Only after the Second World War was this practice made available to the middle class and was part of the post-war class or Fordist compromise.

⁶ A sink refers to an ecosystem that is capable of absorbing emissions, such as forests or oceans in the case of CO₂.

on the periphery. For example, in Slovakia, working in services connected with the tourist industry is one of the lowest-paid job positions. However, the price of these services is so high that it is practically unaffordable for the Slovak middle class. The prosperity of the tourism industry in Slovakia is thus dependent primarily on wealthier clients from Western Europe or the Middle East.

Tourism is a form of status display; it can even be considered a determining criterion of social status. With the expansion of the middle class in the countries of the global South, which adopts the practices of the imperial mode of living, the interest in tourism as a leisure but also a status activity is growing. It can even be argued that tourism is one of the most visible activities associated with the imperial mode of living. Even in the relatively rich countries of the global North, tourism-related services are available only to the upper middle class. So even so-called mass tourism is only available to a small part of the world's population. Also, ecotourism is thus a part and at the same time a manifestation of the sociocultural practice of the imperial mode of living.

Is ecotourism even possible?

So, what is, or, more precisely, what should, ecotourism, be? Theoretically, ecotourism could be defined as an environmentally sustainable and socially just model of tourism. If tourism, especially ecotourism, is not to remain a privilege, it must be available to all people. This means that ecotourism as a socio-cultural practice would have to be available to practically the entire human population. The consequence would be a huge increase in people traveling the world and using the services of the tourism industry. Even if they only used ecological modes of transport such as cycling or rail transport⁷, which is unlikely⁸, it would mean a huge increase in the burden on ecosystems, but also on the existing transport or urban infrastructure. However, the reality is that any model of tourism increases the demand for resources and services, often even those that are unavailable to the local population. Therefore, even ecotourism cannot be separated from the basic structure of relations of inequality, or socio-economic

⁷ Tourism relates to travel, but current transport technologies, especially over long distances, are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, but also of other pollution, not least noise. An essential aspect of ecotourism there would have to be traveling only for short distances, by means with minimal environmental impact. Transport by bicycle or train can be considered environmentally sustainable, or their combination.

⁸ Limiting tourism connected with air transport would significantly contribute to reducing the production of greenhouse gases and also the direct heating of the atmosphere by the exhaust gases of aircraft engines. Trends in air transport – orders for the purchase of hundreds of new commercial aircraft, as well as the still high support of the aviation industry and air transport from public sources – at least indicate that a reduction in mass air travel of tourists cannot be expected.

superiority of the tourist to the country and the population that provides him with services.

Therefore, if tourism should be ecological, meaning, environmentally and socially, sustainable, and not part of the process of socio-environmental destruction as in the current situation, it should meet the criterion of a solidary mode of living. A solidary mode of living can be, according to Brand and Wissen, understood as the goal of socio-ecological transformation or, at least, as a normative horizon, a positive visualization of an environmentally, and socially, sustainable society. In this context, the term "solidarity" means «not to live at the cost of others and at the cost of nature, that is, to overcome a mode of production that essentially rests on the exploitation of human labour power and the destruction of the bio-physical foundation of life on Earth» (Brand, 2022: 31). The solidary mode of living can be characterized by five principles – democratization, communing, re-production, dependency, and sufficiency. In general, it should be about such a set of relations within society and relations with nature that will enable the satisfaction of the basic needs of the whole population.

In the context of tourism, the principle of sufficiency is crucial, demanding enough for everyone instead of more for the few, or in other words a "good life for all within planetary boundaries⁹". However, at least some planetary boundaries have been crossed for several years¹⁰ and a good life can only be talked about in connection with a small part of the world's population that does not suffer from a lack of water, food, energy or at least satisfactory housing. Most of the world's population lives in a situation of potential, or acute, lack of one or more of these basic prerequisites for a good life. This situation can be described by two opposing trends that are related to the deepening of socio-environmental inequality. On the one hand, the number of people threatened by the consequences of crossing planetary boundaries is growing, on the other hand, the consumption expectations of the growing global middle and upper class are growing too. One of these expectations is the ability to travel virtually anywhere. Traveling, mostly by air, to distant tourist destinations is one of the main manifestations of the imperial mode of living and the self-affirmation of the middle class, whose members often save for the whole year, or even take out a loan to be able to take such a vacation at least once a year. In the countries of

⁹ The concept of planetary boundaries was formulated in an extremely influential paper published in 2009 (Rockström et al., 2009). This paper identified nine planetary boundaries – the parameters of the subsystems of the planetary system necessary for the preservation of the environmental prerequisites for the existence of complex human societies – with the understanding that crossing one or more planetary boundaries can have catastrophic consequences. This is because it can trigger non-linear, leap changes in continental to planetary scale systems. However, the concept points out that planetary boundaries are interdependent, so that crossing one, or even more, can change the extent of safe operation within other boundaries or cause them to be crossed.

¹⁰ See Steffen et al. (2015), Rockström et al. (2023) and Richardson et al. (2023).

the former Eastern bloc, the possibility of such travel is even one of the pillars of the legitimacy of the so-called post-socialist, but, actually, neoliberal, regimes.

However, if “my freedom ends where the freedom of another begins” should apply, then the freedom to travel for fun and experience should be limited by environmental limits so that it is not realized at the expense of others.¹¹ The principle of freedom would thus come into balance with the principle of equality. This means that personal consumer freedom (including the freedom to travel, consume goods and services, or do business) must respect the fact of the finiteness of natural resources and the ability of the planetary system to absorb pollution. I consider this approach not only a prerequisite for real ecotourism, but also for environmental democracy¹² preferring the imperative of sustainability¹³ over the imperative of growth.

Ecotourism in the age of mass climate migration?

However, exactly the opposite trends can be observed in, the economic and political, reality. Climate change and other consequences of environmental devastation affect more and more people and many regions of the world become uninhabitable for at least part of the year. Even in the best-case scenario of a 1.5°C temperature increase by 2100, extreme temperatures in many regions will leave disadvantaged populations food insecure, with fewer incomes and worsening health. The current acceleration of climate change will very likely mean that the average global temperature will rise by 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial era average much earlier than in 2100.¹⁴

According to the report of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in 2018, up to 2.8 billion people lived under water stress and 3.6 billion did not have adequate access to water, while by 2050 they will be in such a situation up to 5 billion people (WMO 2021, 5). Water is a basic source of life and its lack is

¹¹ On the need to reduce the space for personal freedoms due to the growing world population and the need to take into account the basic human needs of all the inhabitants of the planet, see Stáhel (2016). For the related concept of environmental citizenship, see Mravcová (2023).

¹² The concept of environmental democracy Stáhel (2023) is part of environmental political philosophy Horyna (2022). It follows the concepts of authors like A. Gorz (1980), M. Bookchin (2005 and 2005) and R. Morrison (1995).

¹³ I formulate the imperative of sustainability as one of the basic prerequisites of environmental democracy as follows: «Act so that your overall ecological footprint becomes a universally applicable standard, i.e. so that your total material, water and carbon footprint (consumption of all kinds of resources and production of all kinds of waste, not just personal waste), produced by each individual as part of territorially defined political units (states) and their administrative and power apparatuses (consumption and emissions of public administrations and armed forces), can become a standard that every person on the planet can follow – without compromising the stability of the planetary system.» (Stáhel, 2023: 124)

¹⁴ The year 2023 even has a 55% chance that the warming threshold of 1.5 °C will be exceeded (Richardson et al., 2023).

already causing several armed conflicts, mainly in the countries of the Global South. UNICEF (2021) in turn states that, in connection with the consequences of climate change and environmental pollution, up to a billion children are already exposed to an “extraordinarily high risk”. In diplomatic language, the report says that many of these children do not have a chance to live to adulthood. In turn, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report states, that level of warming rapidly increases the odds of widespread droughts that could wipe out food production in key global crop areas at the same time, as well as severe water shortages and fierce heat waves that would displace millions of people. The combined physical and social impacts would destabilize some regions and possibly stir up conflicts over food and water supplies. (IPCC, 2023).

The study “Future of the human climate niche” (Xu et al., 2020) published in 2020 outlines an even worse scenario. Unless there is a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions soon, it is very likely that by 2070 the climatic conditions that have allowed agriculture and civilization to emerge over the last 6,000 years may change in a large part of the currently inhabited areas. More than 3 billion people would be exposed to climatic conditions that do not allow food production or even directly endanger human life. Considering the regions which are most at risk from such developments are still among the poorest and the possibility of mitigating the negative effects of climate change in these areas through technological measures is very unlikely. Migration is thus practically the only way for the population from these regions to react to the loss of their habitability. (Xu et al., 2020) However, the migration of several billion people would likely disrupt the system of political and economic relations that allow for the existence of a global industrial civilization. However, the governments of the countries of the Global North focus more on building border fences than on helping environmental refugees. UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Philip Alston warned against this kind of policy already in 2019, when expressed concern that the current approach of the countries of the Global North to environmental refugees leads to «(...) risk a “climate apartheid” scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer.» (UN, 2019) However, this risk affects not only the majority of the population of the Global South, but also the expanding underclass of the Global North. This class is also affected not only by its social decline or direct exclusion, but more and more often by the consequences of climatic extremes such as heat waves, large-scale fires or hurricanes and floods. The mere effort to eliminate poverty will mean a further increase in the production of greenhouse gases (Bruckner et al., 2022), if it is not accompanied by a radical reduction in the consumption of the current global middle and upper class. The idea of maintaining the current scale of the tourist industry or even expanding it in this situation is as absurd as it is cynical.

Such a description of the situation and the resulting prediction of the highly probable development of the planetary system and the socio-economic, demographic and political system of the global industrial civilization determined by it may raise the objection of alarmism or catastrophism. I would like to respond to this objection in advance with the metaphor of a doctor, for example a traumatologist or an oncologist, who, after establishing a diagnosis and considering the available treatment options, states that the affected organ or limb cannot be saved. If the patient is to survive, the doctor must proceed with extraction or amputation. However, a doctor who makes such a diagnosis and proposes the mentioned solution, which means a significant limitation of the quality of life, is rarely labelled as an alarmist or a catastrophist. And not even in those cases when the doctor states that the patient is in the terminal stage of the disease, or that the injuries are so extensive and devastating that only palliative treatment is possible. It is also not appropriate to describe as alarmists or catastrophists climatologists and ecologists, but also social scientists or philosophers, who, after considering all available knowledge about the state of the planetary system and the available technological, organizational and political tools of humanity, state a serious threat to the prospects of global industrial civilization for survival, at least in its territorial extent or the amount of consumption of all goods and services, i.e. the resources necessary to meet the consumption expectations of the world population, but primarily of its privileged minority. It should also not be forgotten that the purpose of a negative prognosis – both in medicine and in climatology or ecology – is not to cause fear, but to identify risks that must be faced. Only in this way is it possible to determine the correct therapy or formulate appropriate policies that would at least help mitigate the predictable consequences. Messengers of bad news were and sometimes still are punished, or at least verbally attacked and at least questioned. They may be wrong, but they often give their community time to prepare, thereby allowing the threat to be averted, if not completely, at least to minimize loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure. Although it may mean the necessity of leaving a certain way of life, some practice, or even the territory.

To give up tourism as a socio-economic trend, one of the branches of global industry and, at the same time, a culturally, and politically, conditioned practice would be a relatively small loss, for increasing humanity's prospects of preserving the environmental and social conditions necessary for the survival of organized human civilisation. Just as a person after a serious injury or diagnosis of a serious illness has to give up many of his activities and consumption habits, knowing that this is the price he has to pay for extending his life. Ecotourism in this situation, accessible to an even smaller proportion of the world's population than the current mass tourism, would be more likely to accentuate the social and environmental inequalities of which it is already a significant manifestation.

Conclusion

It is difficult to imagine a model of tourism that would in the climate and demographic regime of the Anthropocene meet a normative horizon satisfying the solidary mode of living. The current forms of tourism are in conflict, not only, with the imperative of sustainability, but also with the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, which was declared as a basic human right by the resolution of the UN General Assembly in 2022 (UN, 2022). Many activities associated with tourism directly damage the environment, while the devastation caused in this way mostly damages those who are not involved in these activities in any way. Mass tourism, as well as ecotourism, additionally increases the consumption of resources, including basic ones such as water, food or shelter, often even in areas where these resources are not enough even for the local population. In essence, tourism is therefore a practice associated with several privileges, the realization of which is possible only at the expense of the non-privileged majority population. Therefore, if tourism were to fulfill the requirement of the principle of sufficiency – i.e. its availability for everyone at least to a limited extent – it would have devastating consequences for the planetary system.

In a situation where an increasingly large part of the world's population faces climate risks, which, may, turn them into climate, or environmental, refugees, traveling for fun or just to confirm social status hardly becomes an acceptable activity. This should result in an effort to limit tourism as a leisure and status activity, or in a state of, *de facto*, global climate emergency, its complete limitation. However, not only, investments in new transport, accommodation and catering capacities designed for the needs of the tourism industry, but also extensive marketing activities promoting both individual tourist destinations and a lifestyle that considers tourism as a matter of course, are continuing. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether the concept of ecotourism is not just another manifestation of greenwashing, an attempt to legitimize economic, social, and cultural relations and activities that devastate the social and natural environment.

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