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Welcome

The **Sport and Culture Group** (SCG) is a collaborative group of scholars based in the School of Sport and Exercise Science at Victoria University. The unifying aim of the Group is its desire to advance the critical understanding of sport through individual and collaborative research projects that explore the role of sport in local and global communities. The work of Group members is multi and cross-disciplinary, with the base disciplines being economics, history, philosophy, management and sociology. These disciplines not only drive the operation of many of the School's research projects, but also underpin areas of postgraduate supervision.

SCG hosts international conferences and local seminars, and promotes informed discussion on sport issues and policies. SCG also provides forums for commentary and debate through its ***Bulletin of Sport and Culture*** and its ***SCG Research Digest***.

The SCG Research Digest contains succinct reviews of scholarly journal articles that examine aspects of sport, leisure and recreation. The reviews address research that adds new and valuable knowledge to the field, and covers both theoretical and empirical studies. Special attention is given to: career development in sport and recreation, community sport, participation and social inclusion, football studies, global sport, nation building and the Olympic movement, identity, sexuality, and gender studies in sport and recreation, corporate sport, policy and regulation, sport and consumption, disadvantage and social justice in sport and recreation, and sustainability. Welcome to volume 1: issue 1.

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Editor's note

Each issue of the ***SCG Research Digest*** has themed sections that focus on specific aspects of sport, leisure and recreation research. In this issue, two themes are represented, which are (1) social class and sport participation, and (2) climate change, sustainability and sport. We welcome reader feedback, and will be delighted to receive reviews and commentaries for publication. The next issue of the ***SCG Research Digest*** is scheduled for late April 2010. The editor can be contacted at bob.stewart@vu.edu.au or phone 9919 4350.

Social class and sport participation

Introductory note

The five articles reviewed below first appeared in the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* between 1999 and 2005. They set the scene for a vigorous debate about the class-based nature of sport, and to what the extent the dominant classes use sport to (1) signal their cultural differences from the working classes, and (2) assert their social superiority. While each of these studies shows that the upper and middle classes participate in more sports more often than do the working classes, there are only a few sports that are exclusively bound to one class or another.

Review 1:

Phillip White and Brian Wilson (1999) *Distinctions in the Stands: An investigation of Bourdieu's habitus, socioeconomic status and sport spectatorship in Canada*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 34 (3) 245-264.

Phillip White and Brian Wilson examined sport spectatorship in Canada with the intent of finding out not just how popular it was across society, but to also find out any inter-class differences. Their data set comprised the 1992 General Social Survey of Canada, which covered just over 9800 informants. The survey included questions on attendance at both amateur and professional sport events, but did not distinguish between different forms of sports. The survey also included data on the incomes of informants and their level of education.

White and Wilson used this data to see if there was any relationship between frequency of sport attendance and social class, with class being divided on the basis of income and education. White and Wilson noted that previous studies had shown that young to middle aged white males were the most frequent attendees at games, and this led them to suppose that attendance might also be related to their social status. That is, having the money, time and the inclination would lead to higher levels of attendance. In addition, they wanted to test out Pierre Bourdieu's theories about economic capital, cultural capital and class habitus, and how habitus - which is colloquially called lifestyle - is apparently used to confirm one's status and position by guiding its members into forms of consumption that signal their superior social status, and that distances them from members of perceived inferior class habitus. In short, White and Wilson were interested to find out if, in fact, "lifestyle choices relate to class position" (248).

They found a clear and positive relationship between (1) income levels - that is, economic capital - and professional sport attendance, and (2) education attainments - that is, cultural capital - and professional sport attendance (260). In other words, well educated people on high incomes attended sport events more frequently than people with lower educational attainment and less take-home pay. This result supported Bourdieu's view that one's habitus, which is the repository of a person's past experiences, socialisation, values, beliefs, dispositions and tastes, has a crucial role to play in sport consumption, since it found that sport was used, in part, to further distinguish one class-habitus from another. The results for amateur sport were similar, but the relationship between education and spectatorship was not quite as strong in this instance.

Prepared by Bob Stewart

Review 2

Christer Thrane (2001) Sport spectatorship in Scandinavia: A class phenomena, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 36 (2) 149-163.

Christer Thrane focused his research project on what he labels “sport consumption” (149). According to Thrane, sport consumption can be experienced through (1) direct participation, which in fact means playing, (2) attending a game as a spectator, or (3) watching or reading about the game through the media. Thrane wanted to explore the relationship between class and sport consumption, and to test the proposition that people from so-called dominant classes will consume more sport than people from subordinate classes. This proposition is built into Pierre Bourdieu’s theories about class habitus, and how sport is used to not only consolidate class arrangements, but also distinguish one class from another. That is, sport can be used as a point of social “distinction” and a social “marker” of class (159).

Thrane’s study examined the sport consumption behaviours of people in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, with the data comprising survey output from market research undertaken by AC Nielson Inc. in 1996 and 1997. Just over 2500 adults completed the survey. In keeping with the Bourdieu approach to class analysis, income was used as an indicator of economic capital, and education attainment was used as an indicator of cultural capital. Levels of cultural capital were also measured by the response to a question which asked informants to how often they attended a theatre performance, a classical concert, an art exhibition, or visited a museum.

The result showed that people on high incomes were more likely to attend sport event than those on low incomes, thereby confirming the view that people with the money and time went to more sport events. However this study did not show a positive relationship between education and sport event attendance, which meant that sport attendance was not apparently used as a social marker by the well educated section of society. Even more surprisingly, people who were regular attendees at so-called arts events- that is, they had the highest levels of cultural capital – actually attended more sport events as well (159). This suggests that not only do people use the arts to mark their class, but they also seem to do the same with sport. This finding negates the proposition that sport is a working class phenomenon, and that people who identify as socially sophisticated will shy away from sport attendance. Thrane also found that people who played more sport watched more sport, that men did it more than women, and that young men did it more than older men.

Thrane was not prepared to say that sport was mainly class based. He did, however, suggest that the results indicated that sport had cut across classes in many instances, and that the eclectic sport consumption of the dominant class was an indicator of an emerging culture of “omnivorousness” (160). This refers to the growing tendency in hyper-modern societies for members of the dominant class to engage in a “wide spectrum of leisure and consumption activities: (160). In other words, the dominant class tend to “like more of everything”, and frequently cross over into sports that may once have been seen to be the preserve of the working classes. Thrane tentatively suggested that there is a growing erosion of the barriers between what are often called high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow sports (161).

Prepared by Bob Stewart

Review 3

Thomas Wilson (2002) *The Paradox of Social Class and Sports Involvement: The roles of cultural and economic capital*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 37 (1) 5-16.

In this research study, Thomas Wilson aimed to disentangle two conflicting, or what he called paradoxical findings about sports consumption in the USA. The first is that the “higher one’s social class, the more likely one is to be involved in sports” (5). The second is that “the higher one’s class, the less likely one is to be involved in certain sports that ... are... associated with the lower classes” (5). To assist in his quest to make sense of these findings he revisits data contained in the 1993 NORC General Social Survey.

Wilson wanted to see if there were any class differences in sport spectatorship and event attendance. He selected a two bundle of sports, with one seen to be stereotypically middle to upper class, and the other stereotypically lower or working class. The higher status sports were listed as basketball, bowling, golf, softball, skiing, swimming and tennis, while the lower status sports were listed as auto racing, motor cycle racing and stock-car racing. In keeping with Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of class habitus, cultural transmission, economic capital, and cultural capital, people’s income levels were operationalised as economic capital, and education levels were operationalised as cultural capital (7).

Wilson’s initial assumption was that since cultural capital can serve as a “marker and legitimator of social difference” (6), and that America’s upper classes have traditionally avoided sports that are violent, like boxing, or based on manual labour, like wood-chopping and rodeo, then inter-sport differences in spectator preferences will occur. In fact, the results supported these assumptions, since less educated men – that is men with lower levels of cultural capital – had a much higher preference for auto and cycle races compared to educated men (11). Whereas 33% of high-school graduates attended motor sport events, just under 7% of men with graduate degree were likely to attend (11). The same differences applied to women, with just over 14% of those without high school diplomas likely to attend, but only 2% of those with a graduate degree turning up to a motor sport event (11).

In general terms Wilson found the possession of economic and cultural capital did, in fact, “promote attendance at sporting events” (13). At the same time, he noted that cultural capital had the stronger impact when explaining the different attendance patterns for motor sport. Indeed, economic capital explained very little, since around the middle band, men on higher incomes actually spent more time at motor sport events than lower income earners (13).

Wilson’s results suggested that the upper classes exhibited a “cosmopolitan and eclectic” taste in sport, and that this supported the view that elites had become a type of cultural omnivore by expanding their interests into the middle-brow realm of leisure pursuits (14). However, Wilson also noted that as with their musical tastes, the upper classes balked when confronted by what they saw to be banal and low-brow activities. In other words, those people with the greatest levels of cultural capital had the broadest tastes and preferences, but they were also the ones most likely to reject markedly low-status music genres and low-brow sport competitions (14). Paradox sorted!

Prepared by Bob Stewart

Review 4

Carl Stempel (2005) Adult participation in sports as cultural capital: A test of Bourdieu's theory of the field of sports, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40 (4) 411-432.

Carl Stempel used survey data from the 1998 USA National Health Interview Study (NHIS) to see if there was any relationship between people's direct participation in sport as players and their (1) income levels, and (2) educational attainments. In keeping with the principles underlying Pierre Bourdieu's notions of economic and cultural capital, income was used as a proxy for economic capital, and educational attainment was used as a proxy for cultural capital. Stempel was interested in finding out the extent to which sports were used by the upper, or dominant classes, to secure a distinctive difference between themselves and the lower, or oppositional, classes. According to Stempel, previous research had shown a slight but significant difference, with the upper classes being over-represented in aerobics and endurance running, but under-represented in motor sports.

The survey data listed 15 different sports, so Stempel was able to examine participation rates for each of the sports, and then identify the rates of participation for each of the upper and lower classes. The first and most surprising finding was that the upper classes were more likely to participate in 14 of the 15 listed sports than were the lower class, which ranged from basketball and bicycling to soccer and volleyball. The only sport that the lower classes were more likely to play was American football, and this was only at the margin. According to Stempel, the wide participation base of the upper classes was due to the increasing pressure on them to democratise their behaviour in response to claims that they were "elitist snobs" (416). As a result they developed more 'cosmopolitan tastes' (416) and in the case of sports, increasingly engaged in more "middlebrow" activities (417). According to Stempel, this self-consciously eclectic behaviour can be described as an "amnivore strategy" (417), which interestingly had already been noted in two previous studies reviewed here.

At the same time, there were significant inter-sport differences. For example, the dominant classes were just over 10 times more likely to play golf, go running, and engage in an aerobics class (422). The differences were even more pronounced when the high intensity activities like aerobics, endurance running, swimming and competitive cycling were aggregated. The dominant classes were 22 times more likely to involve themselves in these so-called "vigorous fitness index" activities than the lower classes (422). However, Stempel was unable to identify any sport which was played mainly by the lower classes. This was an interesting observation, since it went against previous studies which suggested that some sports were indeed the province of the so-called working-classes, where the upper classes feared to tread, and which were labelled "proletarian" (411).

Prepared by Bob Stewart

Review 5

Ingar Mehus (2005) *Distinction through Sport Consumption: Spectators of soccer, basketball and ski-jumping*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40 (3) 321-333.

Ingar Mehus undertook an investigation of sport consumption in Norway. He was especially interested in seeing if there was any relationship between people's stock of cultural capital and their propensity to either attend sport events or engage in sport as players. Data was collected from spectators attending different sport events. Just over 200 informants had attended a professional soccer game, a fraction more than 160 had attended a ski-jumping competition, while 210 had attended a basketball match. As a proxy for cultural capital, Mehus used level of education, which meant that people with higher levels of educational attainment had a greater stock of cultural capital than people with fewer educational and training credentials.

He found a negative relationship between cultural capital and sport consumption. Specifically, those with a lower level of education attended more sport events than those people with a higher level of education (330). While these results went against some earlier studies, they appeared to support Pierre Bourdieu's claim that leisure experiences like sport and the arts is used to provide social markers which the dominant class use to confirm their distinctive qualities and superior social position. In this instance, Mehus assumed that sport was a marker of social status in the sense that non-attendance may in fact have the greater cultural cache, and that low sport attendance implied high arts-event attendance. Mehus also found evidence of a spread of classes between all three of the events he studied, and suggested that this spread of attendance, even if it was uneven, demonstrated the proof of the "omnivore thesis". As already noted, this refers to the tendency of the dominant class to "like more of everything", and to attend a "more diverse range" of cultural and sporting activities (330).

Mehus also found a direct relationship between active participation as players, and watching others play as spectators. He concluded that when the three different sports of soccer, basketball and ski-jumping are compared, there is a spread of class attendance, and that as a result it was not possible to conclude that any one of them was the preserve of either the professional classes on one hand, or the working classes on the other (332).

Prepared by Bob Stewart

Climate change, sustainability and sport

Introductory note

The following two articles highlight the ways in which the policy, commercial, and regulatory goalposts of the sport management game are changing. Since 2008, Australia has had its own legislation overseen by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change (DCC) requiring big energy users and big GHG polluters to quantify their emissions and report them to government. This data is published on the DCC's website and is collected under the provisions of the National Greenhouse & Energy Reporting (NGER) Act. Whilst the NGER data (see www.climatechange.gov.au) does not show any sport organisations in the nation's top 20 energy users or GHG polluters, some big sport facilities are caught by the thresholds of the legislation and so are already reporting. The requirement to report under the NGER Act is, in part, related to two key factors:

1. the way we produce electricity in Australia with over 90% generated by very carbon-intensive, coal-fired power plants;
2. the amount of electricity we need to stage sport events. For example, sport events held at night require high quality lighting which, in turn, requires significant amounts of electrical energy.

Also looming on the horizon is either some form of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) – previously known as Australia's ETS – or, the prospect of carbon taxes. Whilst the detail of either approach to GHG reduction cannot be forecast at this time, what seems clear is that either would increase the operating costs for any sport organisation with carbon-intensive inputs. Such inputs may include *coal* (for electricity), *oil* (for transport and the manufacture of plastic sporting goods or IT equipment) or *gas* (for heating buildings or public facilities such as swimming pools). So, at the very least, the need for a basic understanding of the 'carbon discourse' is emerging, even for managers of sport organisations. And of course, knowing where to buy the computer software that measures the NGER data may also be helpful.

The articles by Wittneben and Dagmar, and Lash and Wellington, remind us that modern sport managers need to be able to (1) conceptualise their carbon-inputs and outputs - requiring at least an elementary grasp of the Input-Output organisational model –, (2) Identify their climate risks as an addition to any SWOT analysis, (3) identify their climate opportunities – including possibilities for greener supply chains and commercial partnerships - that lead to competitive advantage, (4) measure then reduce their GHG emissions, and (5) train and motivate their workforce to be able to manage in a climate-friendly manner. Both papers suggest that not only are the rules of the sport management game slowly but inevitably changing, but that we also ignore these changing rules at our peril.

Review 1

B. B. F. Wittneben and K. Dagmar (2009) Climate change basics for managers, in *Management Decision*, 47 (7) 1122-1132.

Written by German environmental management academics, Bettina Wittneben from the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University and, Dagmar Kiyar of the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, this paper is an impressive scholarly inquiry into the implications of climate change for the management of organisations. As such, it is part of a small but growing body of management literature pertaining to what climate change means for business, and is reflective of the international debate about climate change amongst management academics that dates back to the early 1990s. This body of work has canvassed a variety of implications for organisations of climate change including *climate policy* (Christoff, 2008; Hoffman, 2002), *environmental markets* (Haigh, 2008b); *the impact on institutional governance systems* (Griffiths, Haigh and Rassias, 2007), *organisational strategies* (Wittneben and Dagmar, 2009; Hoffman, 2008; Sussman and Freed, 2008; Porter and Reinhardt, 2007; Jones and Levy, 2007; Hoffman, 2005; Kolk and Pinske, 2005; Levy and Kolk, 2002), *competitive advantage* (Lash and Wellington, 2007); *stakeholders* (Haigh and Griffiths, 2007); *risk management* (Busch and Hoffman, 2006), *greenhouse gas emissions trading* (Kolk and Hoffman, 2007), *emissions regulation* (Hoffman, 2007), and; the *pace of academic publications in response to climate change* (Goodall, 2008).

This discussion of climate change is situated within a broader body of literature about the management implications of the natural environment more generally. This began with the work of Michael E. Porter (1991) – the father of competitive advantage theory - who according to Orsato (2006: 127), sparked ‘heated’ academic debate about whether it ‘pays to be green’ for organisations. Stuart L. Hart’s ‘Natural-Resource-Based View of the Firm’ (1995), is another pivotal example from the 1990’s of the gradual shift in attitudes toward the natural environment among management scholars. His article extended Porter’s work by offering a, ‘theory of competitive advantage based upon the firm’s relationship to the natural environment’, and proposed three ‘interconnected strategies’: 1) pollution prevention; 2) product stewardship, and; 3) sustainable development.

Wittneben and Kiyar’s paper seeks to ‘tackle the issue of climate change from a business perspective. It discusses why it is important to take climate change considerations into account in business decisions, how this can be done and what further action is required from managers and business scholars’ (1122). The paper focuses on *data* from a single non-sport case study, the German electricity ‘giant’ Rheinisch-Westfälisches Elektrizitätswerk Aktiengesellschaft (RWE). The organisation is claimed to be, ‘one of Europe’s largest electric power companies with a total power plant capacity of 44,533 megawatts (MW)’, which is largely generated from fossil fuels, especially coal. The paper uses this case study to make a number of conclusions which have implications for the management of organisations generally, and by extension, the way sport organisations perceive and manage themselves in an era of anthropogenic -i.e. human-caused - climate change. The major findings are:

- There are four key reasons why climate change must be factored into the decision making of business. They are:
 1. *Political reasons* – businesses, especially fossil fuel-intensive ones, now have to consider in their strategy national and international [greenhouse gas] GHG reduction targets set in national and international political forums;
 2. *Economic opportunities* – whilst ‘climate risks’ are posed to some businesses (e.g. natural disasters, shortages of water, share price downgrading by ratings agencies, etc.), there is also money to be made. The authors also note that assessments by ‘ratings agencies, working for large investment funds’, reward those businesses who develop answers to the challenge of climate change;
 3. *Public relations reasons* - Wittneben and Dagmar claim that, ‘the general public expects answers to the climate change question from business leaders’. ‘Companies are reporting GHG emissions in sustainability reports’, and, having climate measures in place can, ‘positively shape brand image and may attract new customers’;
 4. *Competitive advantage factors* – this means that companies may be able to secure a competitive edge by the early introduction of new climate-safe ‘goods or methods of production’. Such companies have identified:
 - Regulatory frameworks posed by GHG Emissions Trading Schemes (ETS);
 - How to measure GHG’s;
 - Their ‘carbon inventory’;
 - How to reduce their ‘carbon footprint’;
 - ‘clean, sustainable, alternative or zero emissions technologies’;
 - The advantages and disadvantages of ETS’s compared with Carbon Taxes (CT).
- ‘new ways have to be found’ in order to achieve more ‘ambitious’ GHG emissions reductions that stem directly (or indirectly) from organisations;
- Such measures include altering the patterns of production and consumption of goods and services;
- Reducing emissions is, ‘always preferable to [carbon] offsetting, because the integrity of the activities [reductions] can be ensured’.

However there are also some soft-spots in this paper that need to be noted. First and foremost, the reliance on a single case represents a major limitation of the paper. However, the limited scope of the data should be balanced against the illustrative power of a single case study which simultaneously allows for a quick read and, makes the paper amenable to readers who are more interested in the *practical* measures for managers than scholarly considerations. At the same time, the paper has many strengths, one being its capacity to draw upon a range of peer-reviewed management literature, and to examine a diverse array of assumptions about climate change as an environmental issue originating in the peer-reviewed reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC’s reports on the science of climate change, the accuracy of which are a matter of a heated debate in recent months in the media in ‘email-gate’, are published every four years with the last one published in 2007 and the next expected in 2011. The paper also takes a somewhat Euro-centric perspective of climate change as a problem for business with references to the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS). Nevertheless, this does not diminish its relevance to managers and management scholars in Australia, with the now well documented risks posed by climate change for Australia’s economy and infrastructure.

Wittneben and Dagmar eschew reference to any particular theoretical perspective or methodology in the paper. However, it is part of a stream of peer-reviewed management literature that examines how organisations change their strategic outlook and *internal* structures in response to *external* environmental problems. This is implicit in their discussion of the widely discussed policy responses of nations to climate change: 1) mitigation, and; 2) adaptation, and the author's extension of mitigation and adaptation responses to operational-level measures for organisations. The paper concludes by calling for a, 'systemic approach' to theorising about lowering GHG emissions.

Prepared by Greg Dingle

Review 2

J. Lash and F Wellington (2007) Competitive advantage on a warming planet, in *Harvard Business Review*, 85 (3) March 94-102.

Jonathon Lash and Fred Wellington, in their paper published in the March 2007 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, focus their claims around the idea of *competitive advantage* that arises for firms as a result of climate change. They begin with the claim that climate change affects businesses, 'no matter what industry you're in'. The central idea of the paper is their four-step framework for 'mitigating climate-related risks and seizing new opportunities for competitive advantage' (1). Lash and Wellington cast the general problem of climate change as one of *risk*, and as a consequence, *risk management*. Citing data from insurance industry reports that document significant increases in 'weather-related disasters' such as droughts, famines, wildfires and floods, the authors identify six categories of risk facing businesses as a result of climate change. They are:

1. **Regulatory risk** - the risk posed by complying with emissions related government regulations;
2. **Supply chain risk** - the vulnerability of suppliers to climate change leading to 'higher component and energy costs';
3. **Product and technology risk** - companies that identify opportunities for new climate-friendly products and technologies will fare better in a 'carbon-constrained' world;
4. **Litigation risk** - 'companies that generate significant carbon emissions face the threat of lawsuits similar to those common to the tobacco, pharmaceutical and, asbestos industries';
5. **Reputation risk** - 'companies can face judgement in the court of public opinion, where they can be found guilty of selling or using products, processes or products that have a negative impact on climate';
6. **Physical risk** - 'there is a direct risk posed by the changing climate itself: physical effects such as droughts, floods, storms, and rising sea levels'.

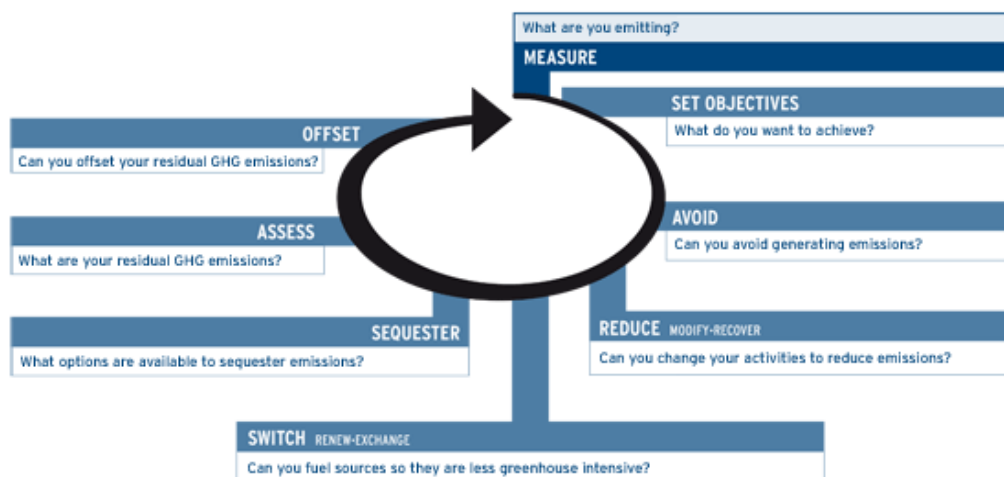
Based on their survey of organisations that have developed 'climate strategies', Lash and Wellington then suggest that the most successful have included **four key steps**, each of which requires, 'strong leadership at the top and involves significant learning across the organisations' (p. 6):

1. **Quantify** your carbon footprint. Using 'available reporting standards (such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol), prepare an inventory' of your companies GHG emissions;

2. **Assess** your carbon-related risks and opportunities. Consider how the six categories of risk could ‘hurt – or present opportunities to help – your business’;
3. **Adapt** your business in response to risks and opportunities. ‘Develop and implement strategies for reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions’;
4. **Do it better** than your competitors. Doing well is not good enough. Organisations need to develop a competitive advantage by beating their competitors at [A] ‘reducing exposure to climate-related risks and [B] finding business opportunities within those risks’ (p. 9).

Interestingly, Lash and Wellington’s model for competitive advantage in an era of climate change resembles Victoria’s Environment Protection Authority (EPA) eight-step model of *carbon management*, which summarised below (see www.epa.vic.gov.au):

1. **Measure** GHG emissions
2. Set **objectives**
3. **Avoid** emissions
4. **Reduce** emissions
5. **Switch** to less GHG-intensive fuel sources
6. **Sequester** emissions
7. **Assess** your residual emissions
8. **Offset** residual emissions.



Source of image: <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/climate-change/carbon-management/>

Lash and Wellington’s article cites a number of cases of large corporations companies seeking competitive advantage using climate strategies, to support their claims. These include General Electric, Wal Mart, Goldman Sachs, Caterpillar, Pfizer, Toyota and Honda. The paper is a good illustration of how management thinking is changing in relation to the natural environment, and highlights some practical measures that organisations can adopt to pursue advantage in an era of climate change.