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ATLAS Tourism and Leisure Review
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Tourism and the Corona crisis: Some ATLAS reflections

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Introduction

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On the 19th of March, Yuval Noah Harari wrote in the Financial Times:

> *Humankind is now facing a global crisis. Perhaps the biggest crisis of our generation. The decisions people and governments take in the next few weeks will probably shape the world for years to come. They will shape not just our healthcare systems but also our economy, politics and culture. We must act quickly and decisively. We should also take into account the long-term consequences of our actions. When choosing between alternatives, we should ask ourselves not only how to overcome the immediate threat, but also what kind of world we will inhabit once the storm passes. Yes, the storm will pass, humankind will survive, most of us will still be alive — but we will inhabit a different world.* [1]

Not only our healthcare systems, economy, politics and culture will change, but also tourism. But how and in which directions? What kind of world will we inhabit once the storm passes? Which forms of tourism fit in this world, and which forms do not?

To start answering this question, in May 2020 we invited 12 tourism scholars to each write an essay in which they were asked to answer these pertinent questions, inspired by Harari's reflection. We have now collected these essays in this special issue of ATLAS Review available free to all ATLAS members.

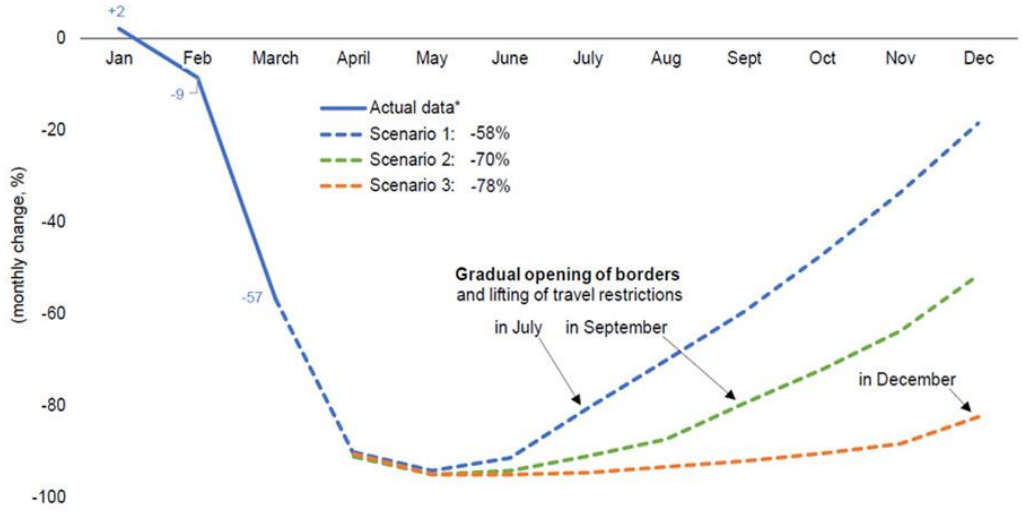
Tourism and COVID-19

Already in April 2020, Gossling, Scott and Hall (2020) – in one of the first published articles on tourism and COVID-19 - noted that there is much evidence that the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be unprecedented. The latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) of May 7th, 2020 show that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a 22% fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020. According to the UNWTO, the crisis could lead to

[1] https://www.ft.com/content/19d90308-6858-11ea-a3c9-1fe6fedcca75

an annual decline of between 60% and 80% when compared with 2019 figures.[2] Clearly, UNWTO prospects for the year have been downgraded several times since the outbreak and uncertainty continues to dominate. Current UNWTO scenarios (see Figure 1 below) point to possible declines in arrivals of 58% to 78% for the year. These depend on the speed of containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders. In Europe and Asia, we have recently seen a gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions, as reflected in the first scenario. This is all very much in contrast to the first half of 2019 when international tourist arrivals grew by 4% between January and June 2019 compared to the same period in 2018. Destinations worldwide received 671 million international tourist arrivals over these six months, about 29 million more than in the same period of 2018.[3]

Figure 1: UNWTO tourism scenarios



Source: UNWTO, 2020

Obviously, this has great impacts on people and destinations. By the end of April 2020, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) predicted a staggering 100 million jobs losses for the tourism & travel sector due to the coronavirus pandemic.[4] These impacts are not only felt in mainstream tourism destinations such as the Mediterranean, Canary Islands or Bahamas, but also in, for example, destinations focusing on wildlife and nature tourism. In a recent editorial essay on COVID-19 and protected and conserved areas, Hockings et al. (2020: 9) note that:

> "wildlife and nature tourism are major contributors to economic activity around the world. Before the pandemic, researchers estimated that the world's protected areas received roughly eight billion visits per year, generating approximately USD 600 billion per year in direct in-country expenditure and USD 250 billion per year in consumer surplus (Balmford et al., 2015). A 2019 estimate puts the direct value of wildlife tourism at USD 120 billion or USD 346 billion when multiplier effects

[2] https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020
[3] https://www.unwto.org/global/global-tourism-keeps-growing-during-first-half-2019
[4] https://wttc.org/News-Article/WTTC-now-estimates-over-100-million-jobs-losses-in-the-Travel-&-Tourism-sector-and-alerts-G20-countries-to-the-scale-of-the-crisis

> are accounted for, and it generated 21.8 million jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). This income has virtually stopped as a result of COVID-19: a recent survey of African safari tour operators found that over 90 per cent of them had experienced declines of greater than 75 per cent in bookings and many indicated they had no bookings at all, thus affecting local employment. With more than 16 million people directly or indirectly employed in tourism within the African region, the impact is immense".

Based on this analysis Hockings et al. propose three potential scenarios for how the pandemic will impact protected and conserved areas and the role they could play in society's recovery. In the first scenario ('a return to normal'), "the world learns to adapt to COVID-19 and strives to return to the old model of economic growth. There are scientific breakthroughs in the treatment of the virus and an effective vaccine is developed and shared globally. Although there is an economic recession of 1–3 years, there is a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of tourism and government support for protected and conserved areas" (Hockings et al., 2020: 14). In a second scenario, especially focusing on economic depression, "the global pandemic lasts longer, or is more deadly than forecast. High levels of unemployment and shuttered businesses mean lower taxes for governments. There is a global economic depression, which results in a dramatic decline in all sources of conservation funding. Many people in urban areas lose their jobs and return to their rural home communities, thereby increasing pressure on natural resources. Tourism continues to be dramatically reduced and those protected and conserved areas and communities that rely on tourism revenues are starved of funds" (ibid: 9). Under the third scenario, "the pandemic results in significant changes in humanity's perception of our planet and our relationship to nature. Nations share a dramatic pandemic experience together, resulting in a shared bond with the planet and with each other. There is a new appreciation that the global pandemic is a result of the way consumer-driven societies are degrading and misusing nature" (ibid: 9).

Whereas the first two scenarios focus on a return to 'business-as-usual' or a 'business-as-unusual', the latter scenario directs the discussion to a more fundamental reorientation of the way we have been travelling and have organized tourism. On April 19, Andrew Evans opinioned on NBS news[5] "that the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted so many unsustainable aspects of our globalized world, and everyone — hotels, airlines, amusement parks, resorts, destinations, cruise ships and travelers — must take stock of our role in this. Governments must be accountable to us, and we must be accountable to the greater good".

Other expert commentators, like Dimitros Buhalis, have been active to give guidance and recommendations in the wake of the chaotic outlook faced by the travel industry. In an April 1st blog piece,[6] he advises to 'BRACE BRACE BRACE' to prepare for a hard crash, and concludes:

> There are no magic solutions and each stakeholder may experience the crisis differently. It all depends on location, type of product, organizational structures and finance, marketing strategies, expertise, resilience and

[5] https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/coronavirus-will-change-how-we-travel-will-probably-be-good-ncna1186681

[6] https://buhalis.blogspot.com/2020/04/TourismGroundZero1April20.html

> business continuity planning. Some business or regions may even benefit from the situation. I predict that domestic destinations that are within two hours' drive/train from key markets, such as Bournemouth, the New Forest and Brighton in the UK may benefit from the expected staycation. We need to be alert, observe all information, use smart methodologies and apply agility as we find a new normal in the tourism industry.

These recommendations make a lot of sense for the industry and workers, or more generally for destination regions whose economy is strongly tied to tourism and international travel, and are of course valuable when orientating short-term policy responses. However, as social scientists, we are also led to question how the current blockage and the uncertain perspectives of recovery will influence the future of tourism and human mobilities in a broader sense. Even more fundamentally, we may want to address the future of a 'society on the move' which has grown to take mobility and leisure (far) out of home for granted, and is now temporarily stranded.

Needless to say, scholarly activity has been hectic since the start of the crisis. We are counting dozens of papers, special issues, reflection pieces in academic journals published between April and June 2020. In a way, this surge of publications reads a bit like 'instant books' – one feels that we should mull over what is happening a bit longer, and with more complete information. Yet, some of the most conceptual and enquiring papers do not come from out of nowhere. They are bringing forward and addressing – in the light of COVID-19 – topics that have long needed addressing such as expanding mobilities and the urgent need to tackle the climate crisis, the ethical implications of uneven systems of mobility that facilitate some and hinder others, or even the enduring agency and agenda-setting power of the industry in the face of collective interest.

With the aim of contributing further to this debate, and doing it in a timely way – which we will to follow up with aa virtual debate in the first instance - this Special Issue of ATLAS Review has been launched. The authors in this Special issue combine those who have a close relationship with ATLAS as well wider members of the ATLAS family. We asked them to address what we consider relevant questions, inspired by Harari's reflection at the top of this introduction, such as:

- COVID-19 as a breakthrough turning point in tourism and mobility regimes;
- COVID-19 and the employment slump: the urgency of recovery vs the quest for reconstruction;
- 'After overtourism': better or worse?;
- The societal implications of immobility and immobilization: towards new stratifications?;
- 'Distanced tourism': towards a revision of business and management models?;
- 'Closer to home' as the new legitimacy?

This Volume collects the immediate response that we obtained. It is roughly divided in three parts, which group papers respectively to 1) reflections on and analyses of the current impact and implications of the 'immobilization' we are facing; 2) the future outlooks for a 'less mobile' society and 3) the politics and prospects of post-COVID recovery.

The first essay is a personal travel account by Marina Novelli who started her travel from the UK to Italy on the 23th of May. Her personal experiences – including a 14 day quarantine - made her conclude that the future of travel will rest more than ever on a set of principles, personal values and individual responsibilities of all those that make the travel and tourism jigsaw. In the second paper, Kevin Hannam and Dennis Zuev discuss the consequences of the pandemic for the casino economy in Macau. They suggest a simple yet not always easy answer to the question of how tourism could emerge stronger and thrive in the 'new normal' after COVID-19: nurture the local to be a tourist at home and look beyond a homogenous tourism cultural economy. Similarly to Marina Novelli, Edward Huijbens discusses the customer journey of a – this time more imaginary - (post)Corona trip, concluding that the promises of tourism for growth, albeit misguided and unsustainable, will be maintained, whilst the promises of tourism as a worldmaking force of conviviality and global citizenship may be compromised even further at the same time. Jim Butcher also discusses the notion of conviviality. In his essay he is not making an argument for or against social distancing rules, or what they should look like, but argues that in considering this, the value of tourism and hospitality in facilitating sociability, associational life and conviviality needs to be emphasised. It is not a dispensable luxury, but is vital to life itself. According to Jim we need a post-COVID 'convivial revolution'. We will need to cultivate and celebrate convivial life more than ever. If there is to be a 'new normal', it should be bold, confident, trusting and have an expansive sense of the human and economic possibilities inherent in sociability. In the fourth essay Anna Carr, moving between the academic, the personal and the practical, discusses the potential for a nature-centric future that has arisen from the pandemic. According to Anna there will be a multitude of approaches to restoring and regenerating our relationships to nature and wilderness places in a post-COVID world. The human-nature binary is altering as the virus has led more people to question the old ways and consider humanity's survival and future wellbeing as being interdependent with the natural environment.

In Part Two, we consider various outlooks and perspectives. The section starts with an essay by Carina Ren. Carina reflects on imaginaries and their performative potential and offers examples of how digital platforms can serve a purpose in the development of more responsible post-corona tourism. In their essay Robert Fletcher, Bram Büscher, Kate Massarella and Stasja Koot explore the relationship between ecotourism, biodiversity conservation and the COVID-19 crisis. They highlight the significant challenges posed by the pandemic to a dominant model of global conservation finance heavily reliant on revenue from ecotourism among other so-called 'market-based instruments'. These challenges, they suggest, are unlikely to be met by business-as-usual approaches, emphasizing a need to transform ecotourism development as a component of conservation programming more generally in a radically different direction. They suggest that shifting policy and practice towards 'convivial conservation', an approach that foregrounds concerns for social-ecological justice and equity, offers a hopeful way through and out of the current crisis. Melanie Smith's essay again takes a personal perspective. In her essay, Melanie reflects on a list of *10 Good Things about Quarantine,* which she wrote down at the start of the lockdown period, in an attempt to lift her spirits at the thought of the impending incarceration. For Melanie, it is reassuring to believe that travel will resume – and soon! Melanie highlights what we have learnt in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and other crises in recent years: that tourism and travellers are thankfully more resilient than we thought. It is one of the

paradoxes of life that threats to health and happiness are sometimes the very factors that encourage us to go forth, appreciate and celebrate our lives even more on this rather fragile planet. In the final essay in this section, Greg Richards and Wendy Morrill analyse the initial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on global youth travel. A survey in early March 2020 showed youth tourism businesses were already negatively impacted, with a 26% drop in business volume in Quarter 1 of 2020, and an expected 30% decline in the following 12 months. More than 80% of businesses expected their business prospects to worsen over the rest of the year. The global nature of the effects of the pandemic are reflected in significant declines in business in all world regions and across almost all industry sectors. This situation has significant implications for the youth travel sector, which is highly dependent on the social dimension of travel and collective experiences.

The Review concludes with Part Three which considers the politics of post-COVID tourism. The section starts with an essay by Freya Higgins-Desbiolles who discusses that to address the pandemic crisis, most states have had to close their borders, shut down whole industries and order people to stay at home for lengthy periods of time. This disruption to normal business operations has inspired some to envision radical transformations in tourism to address some of the injustices and unsustainability that characterizes corporatized forms of tourism. According to Freya, the renewal of social bonds and social capacities in the pandemic reminds us of earlier agendas for tourism that have seen 'tourism as a social force'. Such an approach may allow us to 'socialize tourism' and thereby evolve it to be of wider benefit to more people and less damaging to societies and ecologies than has been the case of the corporatized model of tourism. In the next essay, Antonio Paolo Russo starts from the debate on overtourism as policy issue and its conceptual and empirical underpinnings, to fathom whether the scenarios of recovery from the COVID-19 are not just bringing back another type of structural crisis we may have a unique opportunity to turn around. His essay is proposing that destinations and tourism-dependent economies are very careful to reabsorb the current loss of jobs however not lose from sight of the fact that resilience in the face of tourism mobilities is as needed now as it was a few months ago. In the same vein, in the final essay of this Volume, Raoul Bianchi looks as the pandemic crisis as disruption – inscribed in the tensions and paradoxes of the dominant neoliberal capitalist context – which may be a catalyst for the affirmation of more sustainable alternatives.

With these 12 essays ATLAS aims to contribute to the intense debates in and outside academic circles about the consequences of COVID-19 for tourism and society more generally. Clearly, the pandemic has devastated global tourism and provoked powerful discussions about its future. As we begin to see signs of recovery, as Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand start talking of tourist corridors and as global organisations such as the WTTC start issuing guidelines for safe and seamless travel in a 'new normal'[7], it is increasingly important that academics have a voice in what happens next for tourism. As many of the articles in this Volume suggest, going 'back' to the previous status quo is no longer an option. In the coming year ATLAS will continue these debates through a number of webinars, engaging industry professionals and academics to discuss, debate and share their views on what tourism currently is and what it will look like into the

[7] https://wttc.org/COVID-19/Safe-Travels-Global-Protocols-Stamp

future. In early July 2020, a webinar organized around this Special Issues will allow wider discussion of the papers included here. In September 2020 we will offer a series of webinars in lieu of our Annual Conference in Prague, which we have postponed until 2021. We hope that we can reunite and engage in valuable dialogue with each other, the tourism industry, policy makers and other stakeholders during the next ATLAS conference in Prague in September 2021.

A very special thank you must go to the authors who have contributed to this Special Issue. The positive response and willingness to work to a short deadline illustrates the significance of this topic and perhaps more importantly, the collegiality of tourism scholars across the globe.

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Part One: Impacts of Lockdown

Travel at the time of COVID 19 – get ready for it!

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Travel and tourism are invariably associated with the spread of infectious diseases, both as a potential vector and a victim. Over the past 3 months, as a tourism professional and academic and seasoned traveller, I have been monitoring the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector so that I could have the required basis to contribute to a number of webinars, task forces and e-meetings on how to navigate such an unprecedented storm. We witnessed a general consensus over the need to 'prioritise health over wealth', and we have been gradually coming to terms with the impact of this pandemic on the global economy and on humanity, and indeed on our much loved and hated tourism sector. Few weeks before the global shut down, we had been engaging in critical debates about tourism de-growth, the rampant overtourism phenomenon, campaigns inviting customers to go on 'fight diets' associated with the climate emergency and indeed the problems with single use plastic.

That the COVID-19 induced tourism crisis is placing millions of livelihoods at risk is a proved fact now, with the lockdown driving the entire tourism sector to a 'ground zero', primarily associated with 96% travel destinations imposing

restrictions with around 90 destinations completely or partially closing their borders to tourists, while a further 44 closing to certain tourists depending on country of origin. Entire fleets have been grounded, cruise ships docked, most hospitality establishments ceased operations, tour operators have faced widespread cancellations, small businesses have been "closed till further notice" and workers have lost their jobs.

With the holiday season fast approaching in much of Europe, a number of initiatives are being launched to attempt the reignition of tourism in various part of the world. For example, as planned, Italy reopened its international and regional borders on the 3rd June, but the Italian government will retain the ability to reimpose lockdown measures nationally is there is a spike in COVID-19 cases. There are plans in the Balkans and the Mediterranean to reignite their tourism industry and rescue their 2020 summer season through the creation of 'travel bubbles' and 'corridors'. Though, reality is that nobody really knows if and when we will be able to have some level of normality or what a 'new normal' will look like. Travellers are left pretty much on their own to work out their way around new measures and restrictions and decide whether they should at all consider a holiday abroad any time soon. In the meantime, the UNWTO has launched a number of initiatives aimed at restarting tourism.

As a travel and tourism professional and academic, I have been monitoring the situation from the comfort of my home-office while on smart working mode, and although the picture was already generally pretty grim, on Saturday 23rd May 2020, I was to face a reality check (not that I needed one), while travelling to Italy for necessity rather than choice. This piece is a personal reflection on my own experience, as a mere attempt to make others thinks of what travelling at time of COVID-19 looks like and how it may be in the near future. I include points related to my journey from the UK to Italy and conclude with few conclusive remarks linked to my own experience of being quarantined on my arrival, till the 7th June 2020 and my slow return to normality. What follows is an extract from my own travel diary.

> "It is Sunday (24th May) and I have just arrived at my quarantine location after an epic journey. A trip which normally would last about 6 hours door to door (Eastbourne in the UK to Bari in Italy) and would cost approximately £300 on a return ticket basis (including taxi transfers to and from the airport), took 24 hours, involved an overnight stay in an airport hotel and costed me 3 times the usual. It was all accompanied by compulsory face mask throughout the journey, hand sanitising gel used regularly and multiple copies of self-certification documents to justify why I was travelling. I had not slept well for few nights. I worried about developing a fever and not being able to travel and indeed the uncertainty of what my trip would be like and of course whether I would be able to eventually return."

All this may seem utterly meaningless in the great scheme of the 'human crisis' determined by the COVID19 pandemic, but for somebody with the necessity to travel for an urgent family matter rather than pleasure, it was not an easy endeavour.

> "Three days before travel, I had to confirm my flight, a new normal for most flights, and I recall my 29 endless minutes waiting on the line. It was a breath-

taking pre-journey experience, because having had 5 previous cancellation by another carrier between March and May, there was the risk of a cancellation and no feasible alternative options."

The level of uncertainty that pervaded my pre-journey experience was nothing I had ever experienced before, but I had no choice but to get packing.

"So, finally at midday of Saturday (23rd May), face mask on, I embarked on my pre-booked taxi to reach Heathrow Terminal 2 - a minibus to guarantee social distancing. A sense of fear to catch the virus during the trip had pervaded my trip planning phase, mixed with some anxiety of what to expect and excitement as I reached the airport, after a very unusual 5 months of no flying. As I entered the terminal, I had a taste of a set of new airports measures including an only passengers entry rule and a new one-way system in place to guarantee social distancing and progressed to check in. At that point, I was asked to fill a paper-based self-certification to justify my travel. The printed versions I had diligently prepared at home were of no use"

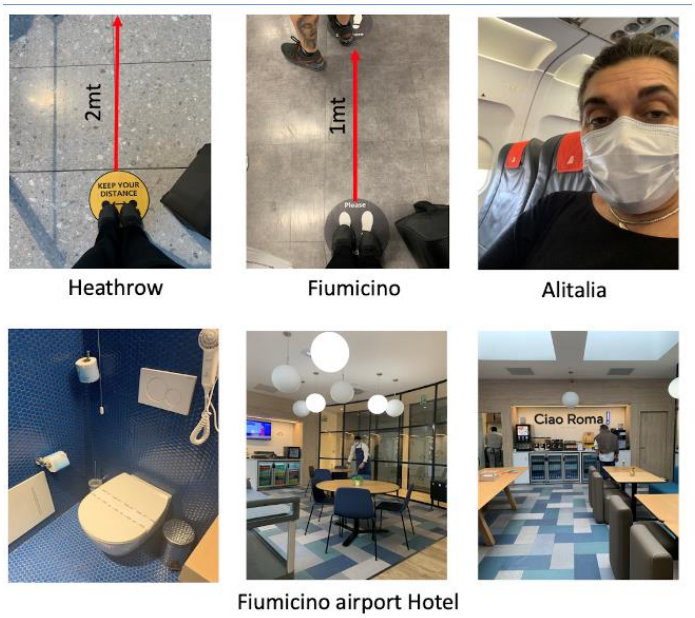
Despite being in the era of smart technology, and every single webinar I had attended to date had spoken about digitalisation and suggested ways to track and trace passengers, but there was no piloting of any smart monitoring systems. One would expect that at a time of such a limited demand, when travel to most parts of the world is restricted to essential business, medical reasons or absolute urgency, piloting innovative smart technologies would have been ideal.

"As I ventured into the departure lounge, I was faced with an unprecedented sense of emptiness characterised by the closure of all retail units, bar and restaurants (a part from Boots), the listing of only 13 flights on the three large departures boards (normally there would be ten times that rolling over every few minutes), silence, no sound of happy people preparing for their holiday and a palpable anxiety and discomfort by all waiting. Airports are a

microcosm of what travel and tourism are all about and that emptiness, caused by global immobility of these times, translated into a feeling of disbelief and sadness. Having read about, participated in numerous webinars and task forces on the socio-economic impact of COVID19 on tourism over the past few months, I quick reality check of what the new normal may look like was just before me. As a seasoned traveller was not prepared for that!"

Besides the compulsory face mask and using precautions, such as washing your hands or using hands sanitisers regularly, there is still a lot that is needed to educate travellers about the 'new travel normal', and further challenges are posed by the inconsistency of the newly introduced protocols and measures, hindering the effectiveness of a much needed seamless post-COVOD19 global experience.

"To put it simply at Heathrow the recommended social distance is 2 meters, in Italy is 1 meter. Furthermore, while Alitalia stood to its promises of guaranteeing on-board social distancing, by placing passengers on their own in a 3 seats row and operating at reduced capacity, my overnight stay in a Fiumicino airport hotel was short of any expectations, particularly about the level of sanitation required at this point in time. My doubts were confirmed when this morning at breakfast, a waiter serviced three tables which had just been left by customers, by simply wiping them with the same dump cloth and no sanitiser. Indeed, this is bad practice in the best of times, when lack of service standards or training may be the cause, but such a sloppy implementation of protocols is far more serious (if not criminal) than they may appear at such unprecedented times."



Heathrow Fiumicino Alitalia

Fiumicino airport Hotel

On arrival to my final destination – Bari in Puglia, Italy, I was picked up by a friend in a private vehicle. I had to sit in the back seat with my mask on and taken to my flat where I was expected to spend the following 14 days in quarantine. Local authorities came and checked on me four times over that period in self-isolation and once free on the 7th June, I was able to visit my mother and meet a couple of friends. It took a while to readjust to the 'new normal' of walking in streets filled with people, shops open and cars stuck in traffic, besides the mandatory mask in public places such as shops, bars and restaurants, life seems to be returning pretty much back to the 'old normal'. It seems to me that suddenly economic interests and desire for normality is overriding the fear of the virus, and while many diligently still follow the rules, many more have almost certainly resigned to the fate.

On Saturday 13th June, I ventured to the beach side not far from Bari, and besides the row of beach establishments and a mix of seasonal retail outlets still closed, the beach was filled with people, no mask, precarious social distancing and a lot of desire for normality.

So, while regional tourism organisations, attractions and operators may be losing sleep over ways to rethink their offerings and their pricing, my recent experience of travel made me reach a bitter sweet conclusion. Protocols may be developed, measures may be put in place, travellers may be encouraged to stay alert, new products may emerge, but ultimately, if we are to make our sector great again, today more than ever we should also take into account the long-term consequences of our actions. The future of travel and tourism rests on a set of principles, personal values and individual responsibilities of all those – hosts and guests - that make the travel and tourism jigsaw. The storm is passing, humankind is adapting, many will suffer, other will thrive, but will we inhabit a different world? I am not convinced!

Revisiting the Local in Macau under COVID-19

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Introduction

In their text *Reinventing the Local in Tourism*, Russo and Richards (2016) discussed the relationship between tourism and society in the context of new forms of 'shared' experiences and the move towards the co-production of place meanings by hosts and guests. Cheaper travel, virtual travel learning environments such as Tripadvisor, and destination hospitality platforms such as Airbnb and Couchsurfing had arguably led to a renewed focus on experiencing tourism 'like a local' in a more authentic and sustainable manner. Conversely, many locals had increasingly begun to react to such phenomena in terms of too many tourists wanting to live like locals. In this essay we wish to suggest that some destinations, such as Macau, are uniquely dependent on a particular kind of tourism and have thus developed a more homogenous tourism culture geared towards tourists who are largely disengaged with the local (Paris and Hannam, 2016).

In January 2020, Macau was one of the first regions where the pandemic of coronavirus or COVID-19 affected the totality of social and economic life leading to increased anxieties over movement and distance – the first two consecutive weeks in February all the businesses and most importantly, the main "factories" of Macau – the casinos were completely shut down but only for two weeks. Macau occupies a unique position in being the only place where it is legal to gamble in China, with around 100,000 people crossing the borders into Macau every day in 2019 (MGTO Statistics 2019). The six major casinos in Macau are not just places of gambling, however, rather they are massive integrated resort complexes boasting large high end shopping arcades, Michelin starred restaurants as well as food courts, entertainment facilities such as swimming pools and cinemas and conference and events facilities. On reopening, the gambling part of the resort complexes reopened along with most of the shops, however many of the restaurants in the complexes have remained closed.

The problem for Macau during the pandemic was that it has become a "monocrop tourism destination", geared towards mainland tourists, who were coming to the casinos and largely ignoring the local heritage except for particular photo spots such as the Ruins of St Paul's. The tourism industry was primarily focused on the needs of the Chinese mainland tourist in terms of the shops, the services and the food. In the end most of the small businesses had become intimately connected and largely dependent on the large casinos. For instance, starting up as a local entrepreneur such as a musician or an artist only 'works' if he or she performs or participates in the casino economy, which in its turn caters primarily to the mainland Chinese tourists.

Locals Become the New Tourists

With the borders shut down for many months the supply of Chinese mainland tourists and even those from neighbouring Hong Kong completely dried up. Local businesses had to readapt themselves, indeed in some cases they quickly came to realize that the only income they could get was from the locals. Like Hong Kong, Macau has always had a strong food culture and has even been designated by UNESCO as a Creative City of Gastronomy. Due to the premium on space in apartments, kitchen space is generally fairly limited and this, along with the stronger communal food culture, has led to a greater preponderance to 'eat out'. As a consequence, when the pandemic took hold the Macau government did not rush to close down eating establishments, although bars were initially closed.

Restaurants and services now needed to attract, cater for and care more about the locals, making them "tourists at home". It is known that for the many food and beverage businesses the regulars are often the most cared for and thus 'important' customers. However, in the tourist-driven economy of Macau, the tourists had become more important than local regulars to a large extent in some renowned local restaurants. Some of these restaurants failed to re-orientate to the local customer base or negotiate lower rents from their landlords and rapidly closed down permanently or have looked to relocate. Conversely, other local restaurateurs that have managed to survive the pandemic closure months were those with a more diverse customer base that catered to both locals and tourists. Indeed, some of these restaurants have emphasized that their regular local customers have even extended their networks and brought in new local customers, particularly younger millennials. Other restaurants have used the time to refurbish their environments and reinvent their menus, and still others have begun to work together in order to survive by creating mini-networks to cross refer local customers to each other. Some new restaurants serving pizza and aimed at the younger millennial market have even opened and have reported doing good business.

The taxi drivers who have been largely catering to the mainland tourists who were ready to splash out cash during their casino tours and often employed taxi-drivers as informal guides on a daily basis also saw their business dry up. For locals in Macau getting a taxi during peak periods has always been a source of frustration as they would not even stop if they thought you were a local wanting a short distance. Now there are seemingly taxis queues everywhere in Macau and locals have noted that the drivers now seem much more helpful and friendly.

One of the main non-casino attractions in Macau is the Macau Tower which offers a range of vertical tourism activities: a skywalk around the tower, a bungee jump or a climb up the tele-mast. These three core activities are run by AJ Hackett international, a New Zealand adventure tourism entrepreneur who commercialized bungee jumping across the world. To attract local tourists – for two months in March and April AJ Hackett attracted locals with a significant price cut with a package of food coupon, T-shirt, tower visit and an activity. The amount of local tourists has been staggering over the past three months. Despite a slow price increase for all activities,[1] local people families have never stopped flowing in with queues demanding a wait of several hours.

[1] The bungee jump price went from 4188MOP before crisis to 688MOP in April and 988MOP in June. With the highest number of participants in April-May.

Locals also comment on the fact that with the lack of the regular hustle and bustle Macau actually seems more charming. As the “overtourism” subsided the streets were quieter, less congested for locals to shop and more atmospheric. However, locals also commented that they were surprised that there was no entrepreneurial attempt by the Macau authorities to organize new locally focused tourism activities in Macau. Frictions have emerged, however, between two different groups of ‘locals’ – the permanent residents (white card holders) and the temporary workers (blue card holders) as the former were given special e-vouchers by the Macau government to spend in local restaurants and on local services.

Conclusions

The coronavirus pandemic in Macau has shown that the place, regardless of its size in times of disaster would rely primarily on the local population. Thus cities should care about their own residents as they can be tourists in their own ‘homes’ and they will be the consumers for the initial recovery. This theoretically can be grounded on the idea of “staycation” (Germann-Molz, 2009). In this time of forced staycations, we pose the question of how tourism could emerge stronger and thrive in the new normal after COVID-19. We suggest a simple yet not always easy answer – nurture the local to be a tourist at home and look beyond a homogenous tourism cultural economy. People living in the city should be welcomed in their own city and should be able to explore their own heritage tourism.

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Social distancing and the promise of tourism

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International tourism as practiced and promoted globally in the post-war era is all about growth. The staple image of the UNWTO is the projected continued growth of international inbound tourism which can be easily overlain and adopted by the GDP growth imperative of national economic policy worldwide. Peripheral areas and regions suffering economic decline, outmigration or employment challenges due to economic or industrial restructuring by and large latch on to this promise of prosperity captured in the infallible growth image of tourism. At the same time, those most successful in securing their share of the compound growth rate have started to recognise signs of 'overtourism' (Peeters et al. 2018). This catchphrase for many of the long since recognised socio-cultural and economic malaise of too much inbound tourism in particular spaces and/or at specific times, captures in a grounded way why the growth paradigm prevailing in tourism rhetoric is fundamentally unstainable. Moreover from a global environmental perspective, carbon fuelled modes of transport are contributing to our current global climate emergency, aviation in particular. Those suffering from overtourism saw a degree of relief when the Corona crisis put all but a complete halt to travel and tourism. Whilst remaining inhabitants of overcrowded destinations started to rediscover their homes, skies started clearing and hitherto pollution obscured mountains and vistas started to appear. So not only was there a sigh of relief from those suffering overtourism, but nature and our environments seem to be getting a breather from the looming catastrophes of locally articulated climate emergencies and environmental degradation.

In this context of crisis representing opportunity, I have been one to point out the opportunities for rethinking tourism away from the growth paradigm (Huijbens, 2020). In the context of the current crises we can identify the opportunities that reside in staycations and local travel. Rediscovering the places we call home and that which is close at hand to satisfy our needs for rest, relaxation, diversification and aspirations for adventure. Thereby modes of travel can be reconsidered, as being a tourist at home or nearby does not require long-haul flights or extensive journey times. Bikes, walks and bus trips become options if you are only going to your backyard or the neighbouring community. Thus by transforming the way we travel if Corona measures persist, will curtail tourism's contribution to global climate change. But this all hinges on the current Corona travel restrictions persisting. Indications are that they will not as East Asia, followed by Europe, is opening borders and resuming flights, both internationally and domestically. So it seems that if this wave of infections is the only one we will get, tourism and travel business will very quickly revert to its unstainable compound growth model. Thereby tourism as we know it with its identified problems and challenges seems set to persist.

However, despite the persistence of tourism as business as usual, I would like to predict a slight change. This is not a qualitative change, but more of an acceleration of what has already been occurring in tourism. This may be thereby a subtle and

meaningless change to most practicing tourism as usual, but relevant nonetheless. This has to do with how we enact the tourism encounter and this I fear might undermine the real promise of international tourism; which is about cultivating conviviality, a global sense of belonging and citizenry. As Hermann, Weeden and Karin (2019: 4) pointed out in a recent theme issue of *Hospitality and Society*.

Tourism, in this respect [global citizenship], is no less than a worldmaking force (Hollinshead, 2008). On the one hand, it brings people together by offering spaces for encounters, and in doing so potentially fostering understanding and peace. On the other, in reality encounters between hosts and guests can go terribly wrong as, too often, locals feel disrespected by those who visit their spaces and disregarded by policy-makers and destination managers who often show little concern for the local culture or the environment. Instead, we must aim to establish a 'democracy without frontiers' by recognizing the worth of all people – residents, tourists and workers in the industry – and their right to self-determination. When we accept that a global industry requires global ethics and a common effort to work together across borders (instead of between barriers) we will be able to lay the foundations for a truly sustainable approach to tourism.

To me, this democracy without frontiers is the real promise of tourism and one that we need to aspire to cultivate and maintain. Indeed 'connectivity is the platform for fuller societal development.' (Khanna, 2016, p. 341). But more than integrating societies, travelling affords us ways in which to relate to each other and make our meaning matter in each and every encounter. Focusing on relating allows us to recognise the value of connectivity, thereby underpinning a truly sustainable approach to tourism. Recognising that everything is related to everything else and thereby space is fundamentally the 'togetherness' of all phenomena, to borrow a term from Massey (2005, p. 195), is the essence of this promise. Resuming tourism as business as usual, but adding and accelerating elements of social distancing in the absence of functioning vaccines for Corona viruses, will undermine this promise present in every possible relation.

The current Corona pandemic is merely one in a regular series of outbreaks of Corona viruses we have seen in the last few decades. This one is special as we failed as a global society to contain it. The failure of global leadership is most certainly to blame as pointed out by Harari (2020). This failure is compounded by the fact that prevalent reactionary nationalistic entrenchment on behalf of former global superpowers is seeking to destroy and discredit the platforms of global citizenry provided by existing liberal institutions, such as the UN and its WHO. Not wanting to delve further into the self-serving agenda of the world's loosely defined elites captured for Bruno Latour (2018) in the image of Donald Trump, I see this failure primarily at the root of the lasting impact of the pandemic. Now we all know that out there, invisible in the air, are things that can kill us and topple our civil rights and economies overnight. We now all know that we are all harbingers of these invisible menaces. But what is most troubling is that we cannot seek comfort or protection from some powerful concerted global action. Much like any sense of social cohesion and public welfare has been systematically eroded globally with the prevalence of neoliberal dogma, a pandemic is now for each of us to worry about. Furthering thereby the already on-going process of individualism and social atomisation (see Putnam, 2000), this pandemic will add weight to the perception that we all need to look out for number one as the saying goes.

The implication is that as post Corona travel resumes under the hallowed frame of Western consumerism, wrapped with enlightenment ideals of progress and growth, we will witness even more self-centred tourists. We will see tourism that beyond simply aspiring to capture the experience of the place and people through the 'tourist gaze' (Urry and Larsen, 2011), will also demand a greater degree of social distancing in the name of health and safety. The small, everyday practices we have already adopted of subtly evading interactions, we will start to see more pronounced in hotels, airlines, restaurants and catering when it comes to some of the most intimate acts of societal cohesion and conviviality. How we transform these intimate practices of dining, sleeping and socialising in new places will have ramification upon how we make sense of the other and our opportunities to cultivate conviviality. These are to me signs of changes that will last and transform our world for the long run. Going through the steps of post Corona travel we can thus see;

- We avoid public transport in the destination and on the way to the airport and thereby any opportunity for serendipitous occurrences or interactions.
- At the airport, we are screened and checked by security staff wearing some aesthetically pleasing versions of a hazmat suit before idling around, nose down in our smart device prior to boarding.
- In the flight we will be attended to in a range of ways that before February 2020 would have seemed odd if not downright rude and callous.
- Upon arrival we use private means of transport, most likely a taxi that is possibly self-driven or with a driver thoroughly shielded with plexiglass.
- In the hotel we will do a self-check in and in reality not interact with any staff at the hotel as it will be completely unnecessary. All services and catering at the accommodation is online order and delivered without any personal interaction. You then either dine alone or in a small group far from others and anything brought to you will be in the mannerism of the air stewards, what we would have called a few months ago odd at best.
- Same goes for entertainment and recreation. We will be alone or with our family or very small group catered to what we are meant to experience at first by people in pleasing hazmat suits keeping their distance, to be slowly but surely replaced by robots or digital information delivered to your device or on screens.
- If we would need to be in close quarters to anyone we would have masks, gloves and even protective plastic screens avoiding all touching and performing the stilted communication dictated by our protective measures.
- After all this we go home and arrange our digital imagery and share via social media and Zoom chats with people around the globe that we have by now gotten used to having virtually in our living room.

The internet and automation revolution in tourism has already precipitated many of these changes (see Ivanov, 2019). Much like the rest of the world, the post Corona world of travel will see a rapid rolling out of digital communication technologies and a range of innovations. The 'digital transformation' is indeed at current being fast tracked into circulation to ease and facilitate social distancing (Evans, 2020) and these will have their tourism and hospitality manifestations as well. The above description of an imaginary trip involving aviation might seem overly exaggerated for effect and that is indeed the intention. Yet my imagination limits what gadgets, techniques and platforms might be emerging to transform our tourism encounters.

At the same time it needs to be recognised that we have seen travel behaviours compartmentalising, distancing and othering people for reasons of health and safety. What I argue is that this effect will become more prevalent and visible in the post Corona travel world. So whilst it seems as the promises of tourism for growth, albeit misguided and unsustainable, will be maintained, the promises of tourism as a worldmaking force of conviviality and global citizenship may be compromised even further at the same time.

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Let the good times Roll (as soon as possible): Why we need a post COVID Convivial revolution

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It is widely recognised that the tourism and hospitality industries are currently the hardest hit sector of the global economy. Millions of jobs have been lost, millions of employees furloughed and untold businesses have an uncertain future.

This is not, narrowly, just a hit for 'the economy' that will save 'people's lives' as some arguing for stricter or more prolonged lockdown or social distancing suggest. The tourism and hospitality industries comprise the places and times for eating and drinking, meeting and talking, falling in and out of love, for hatching schemes and drowning sorrows if they don't work out. Conviviality adds immeasurably to our lives in all cultures.

We also know that the impact of a pandemic comes not just from the virus, but is mediated through a cultural script shaped by a society's values and orientation towards risk.[1] So I want to argue that we should not underestimate what we've given up for the past few months, and what we need to celebrate and cultivate, culturally as well as economically, as society emerges from this disaster. We need nothing short of a post-COVID convivial revolution.

'Convivial' comes from *convivium*, a Latin word meaning 'banquet'. Food and drink are intrinsic to conviviality, and many writers have written of its importance for human flourishing. The gastrophilosopher Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote about it in his book *Physiologie du goût* in 1825 – he understood the importance of the conversations that take place when people come together over a long meal.

Charles Dickens captures it in his novel *David Copperfield*:

> 'We had a beautiful little dinner. Quite an elegant dish of fish; the kidney-end of a loin of veal, roasted; fried sausage-meat; a partridge, and a pudding. There was wine, and there was strong ale.... Mr. Micawber was uncommonly convivial. I never saw him such good company. He made his face shine with the punch, so that it looked as if it had been varnished all over. He got cheerfully sentimental about the town, and proposed success to it.'

Shakespeare's character Falstaff is loved for being the epitome of the convivial loose cannon. In this exchange, he and Henry exemplify a jolly convivial banter that will be familiar – even if the language is not - to generations of merry drinkers since:

[1] Furedi, F. (2019) How Fear Works: Culture of Fear in the Twenty-First Century. London: Continuum

> Henry V. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horseback-breaker, this huge hill of flesh,— Falstaff. 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish! for breath to utter what is like thee! You tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bowcase; you vile standing-tuck,— Henry V. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again,

Where else but in the bar or pub?

Conviviality is not just happy banter and enjoyable company, vital as that is. People check each other out, form opinions and friendships, make alliances and deals. In John Braine's Room at the Top – a book and film adaptation in the post-World War Two British angry young man genre, the main character Joe Lampton is a young working class man in the 1950s determined to make his name and act as he pleases in bourgeois society. He spends his time drinking with his buddies, sizing them up, observing and challenging social class etiquette, discussing company position, salary and relationships with local women.

Conviviality is life. It's the alchemy of sociability, with alcohol often a catalyst - and the lockdown has destroyed it.

Of course conviviality does not need to involve the pub or alcohol, although many of us are longing to visit one, or a tavern, beerhall, bar ….. All manner of everyday encounters reflect the impulse to be friendly, to make connections and to get to know people: the water fountain in the office, the dinner party, the café, the football changing room, meet ups in town, the hairdressers … all of these examples become problematic in our COVID affected times.

In similar fashion, much of the pleasure in tourism is in the freedom to enjoy the company of new people or that of family and friends under a warm sun, in an exciting city or away from the rhythms of urban, working life. Social distancing diminishes the pleasure of a holiday to the extent that many may choose to stay home. Recapturing conviviality is a task for the tourism and hospitality industry, one that could prove difficult even in the longer term if social distancing becomes in any way internalised as a cultural norm restraining our impulse for relaxed sociability.

Writers have linked conviviality to social and even political life too. Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas recognised the role of the eighteenth coffee house and salon in the establishment of a modern public sphere – a place where people meet to discuss public affairs and new ideas.[2] For Arendt, the public realm is a precondition for the possibility of a 'world in common'. It is notable that she uses a shared table with people sitting around it as a metaphor for a healthy polity. Paul Gilroy, author of *Their Ain't no black in the Union Jack*, refers to *conviviality* in the city to discuss the everyday cultural overlapping that provides possibilities for ethnic differences to become ordinary, unremarkable and with less social

[2] Habermas, J. (1999) Structural transformations of the public sphere. London: Polity / Arendt, H. (1958) The Human Condition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

consequence.[3] He has a point very prescient for our current times. Lived multicultural reality can provide a reality check against prejudice.

Degrowth theorist Serge Latouche writes of 'the ideal of a convivial utopia' as an advantage of and intrinsic to a downshift in economy and economic life.[4] Educationalist Ivan Illich sees a sort of conviviality as key to opposing what he regards as technocratic, alienating social relationships in the workplace and in education.[5] Philosopher Michael Polonyi saw the importance of conviviality in his novel understanding of epistemology, in which it involves 'empathetic involvement with both the community and the yet to be known'.[6]

George Simmel viewed conviviality as democratic and playful, where an individual's pleasure is contingent on the joy of others.[7] This is an appealing view that will chime with many people's family holidays with children and young people. Simmel refers to sociability as a distinct social form that distils 'out of the realities of social life the pure essence of association'.[8] This essence comprises 'togetherness', the sheer pleasure of the company of others.

Karl Mannheim's writing on generations seems relevant in this context too.[9] It seems to me that the family holiday, extended family meal and attendance at the pub, sporting or cultural events plays a role in the passing on of culture, folk wisdom and values (none of these uncontested) from one generation to the next. Arguments between parents and kids, family tales, light vignettes or weighty monologues all play a part here.

Robert Putnam's notion of social capital - both in its bonding (the glue holding community together) and bridging (the oil that enables an individual, with and through others, to get on in life) forms is hard to imagine without the convivial encounters such as the bowling leagues, card schools and dinner invitations that he shows have declined in his classic study of community life in New York, *Bowling Alone*.[10] COVID social distancing rules have literally outlawed developing offline social capital. There will undoubtedly be an economic and a social cost to pay for that.

Affirmation of our sense of self and of the associations we have with community, along with possibilities for personal and social change, are all there in convivial life. This is what we have lost in lockdown and must regain.

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[8] Ibid. p.255
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Currently, many countries, resorts and companies – small and large – are looking at innovative ways to reopen whilst staying within the relevant social distancing guidelines. Italy – hit early by the virus – is desperate to inject a little foreign currency into its failing economy by enabling some tourism. Proposals include spacing people on the beach, reducing the covers in restaurants and limiting admissions to events and attractions. If it brings tourists it will be worth it. But there are still big questions over whether tourists will come when the convivial and free atmosphere they value may not be allowed.

South of Italy, on the island of Malta, authorities are looking to space holidaymakers further apart, and facilitate this by allowing cafes and restaurants to move tables out onto the street. That might work in parts of Malta's wonderful capital, Valletta, but as Maltaphiles will know, restaurants in Sliema and elsewhere already spill out over pavements. Even if deemed desirable, is social distancing possible in crowded, convivial resorts?

In the UK a 2 metre social distancing rule and a hotly contested quarantine for inbound travellers makes recovery in the sector all but impossible, and conviviality an increasingly distant memory.

I am not making an argument for or against social distancing rules, or what they should look like. I am arguing that in considering this, the value of tourism and hospitality in facilitating sociability, associational life and conviviality needs to be emphasised. It is not a dispensable luxury, but is vital to life itself.

There is also the possibility that the experience of COVID may have a longer term impact on our culture. Social distancing may outlive COVID as a new fear induced cultural norm, a point tentatively explored by writer Ralph Leonard.[11] If so, this would impact the tourism and hospitality industries long term too. It would also be a tragedy.

We need a post-COVID convivial revolution. A society confident to socialise freely, to travel and interact without fear, isn't a luxury. It's essential for human flourishing. We need to factor that into tourism and hospitality's reaction to the pandemic. Post COVID we will need to cultivate and celebrate convivial life more than ever. If there is to be a 'new normal', it should be bold, confident, trusting and have an expansive sense of the human and economic possibilities inherent in sociability. These are issues for tourism and hospitality, and for society in general. We need a convivial revolution. To the barricades, comrades! To the bar!

[11] Leonard, R. (2020) The coronavirus and social interaction. Areo. At https://areomagazine.com/2020/04/21/coronavirus-and-social-interaction/

AOTEAROA: A post-COVID nature-centric world

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Introduction

COVID-19 has transformed human relationships on a global scale and seems to be accompanied by human desires to reconnect with, and rediscover nature. This essay focusses on Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) from the perspective of a latecomer to academia, who has mixed pākeha Māori ancestry. My connections with the natural world arose from living in national parks and I am often a 'duck out of water' uncomfortable with western philosophies or theories about human-nature binaries or divides (yet I fall into expressing my thoughts that way). Several papers resonated with me during lockdown. Firstly, an essay on COVID-19 and protected and conserved areas (Hockings et al., 2020); being careful what we wish for with the transformations arising from the pandemic (Hall et al. 2020); and an article on rewilding of urban areas (wildlife returning to Venice) and how ecological grief generates environmental healing (Crossley, 2020) touched me. This essay is a cultural and stylistic mash-up; moving between the academic, the personal and the practical - I have written about the Indigenous consequences and Māori responses to COVID-19 elsewhere.

The global context of pandemic recovery

Internationally, the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to re-envision our economies, possibly accelerating governments' responses to environmental practices that have negatively impacted nature. Moving towards resilient, low-carbon, nature/ecocentric economies is desirable. Not all governments are proactive and pro-nature. [1]

Hockings et al. (2020) express concerns that natural places and conservation efforts could suffer negative irreversible impacts in the post-COVID world (noting that COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease – nature striking back). Their paper confirms worldwide reports of communities threatened by the loss of economic benefits through participating in nature tourism; perhaps reconsidering conservation efforts and returning to traditional ways which may have negative consequences such as poaching protected wildlife. The paper has a '*Call for Action for the rescue recovery, rebuilding and expansion of the global network of protected and conserved areas'* (Hockings et al., 2020: 7). From a governance perspective Hall, Scott and Gosling (2020) noted that governments might not undertake genuine transformation of economies; instead the parking of carbon assets and drop in carbon emissions will be short-term with a return to 'more of the same' 'business-as-usual (Hall et al., 2020: 15). This essay contemplates a more positive recovery for Aotearoa New Zealand. Early success in managing the pandemic (so far) may seem disconnected from other countries' realities and NZ is fortunate that

[1] (https://www.npca.org/articles/2171-the-undoing-of-our-public-lands-and-national-parks).

conservation of our natural environments, native species, protected areas of wilderness and national parks are a central force that can contribute to our future wellbeing.

Pre-COVID NZ

The popular image of New Zealanders is a people closely aligned with nature. The great outdoors is our backyard. International perceptions of us as 'Kiwis' is influenced by our most famous New Zealander - Sir Edmund Hilary - and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay's first ascent of Sagarmatha/Chomolungma/Mt Everest in 1953. Natural resources have been at the heart of NZ's economy and there has been an increasingly eco or green movement in society prior to the pandemic. Living a green, environmentally aware, lifestyle connected with nature has been embraced by ecocentric Kiwis. The National Parks and Great Walks system are complemented by the efforts of partnerships between government, land-owners, communities, recreation and conservation groups to create the Te Araroa Trail, Ngā Haerenga Cycleways, Conservation Parks, Marine Protected Areas, mainland fenced and unfenced ecosanctuaries. All are destinations experienced by international and domestic visitors. Academics advocate regenerative solutions and environmentally-minded members of the public embrace sustainable, resilient approaches in their daily lives. Environmental politics, permaculture, organics, composting, recycling, nature conservation, the recent adoption of E-bikes and E-Cars, and growing public concerns about climate change and pollution typify the green (often economically secure) groups of NZ society. Furthermore the business sector has embraced green philosophies with endeavours such as the Aotearoa Circle's advocacy for nature-restorative approaches to business and financing.[2]

NZ's GDP has been bolstered by tourism, with the natural world being the prime drawcard. It is a country portrayed in marketing brand images as being adventurous, wild, 'eco'-green, natural. Tourism NZ's promotional images in international marketing efforts depict scenic landscapes creating the expectation of experiences of '100% Pure" nature. Globally acclaimed tourism activities have been sparked by entrepreneurs developing nature tourism businesses such as A J Hackett Bungy, Real Journeys (formerly Fiordland Travel) or Whale Watch Kaikoura. Much of Aotearoa's landscape (approximately a 1/3rd of the country) is uninhabited, undeveloped native forest, coastal, alpine or wilderness. Managed by the Department of Conservation (DoC). The Conservation Act 1987 and National Parks Act 1980 underpin conservation efforts through an ethos of "preservation in perpetuity" and "public access and enjoyment", allowing for recreation and tourism. DoC manages 965 huts, 11,000 km of walking tracks and the Great Walks (see: http://www.doc.govt.nz), complemented by a range of private and club owned recreational resources.

Previous government's 'conservation economy' growth policies aligned with increasing international visitation over the past decade, resulting in increased tourism consumption of the landscape. Heavy visitation in many front-country areas compromised natural and wilderness values that had motivated visitors seeking solitude or natural quiet - raising the ire of many NZ outdoor enthusiasts and tourists. Mountains, lakes, rivers, coastal and forest areas contain resources

[2] (https://www.theaotearoacircle.nz/sustainablefinance).

and features that are considered to be *taonga* by Māori, including *wāhi tapu* (sacred places). Many such places have been negatively impacted by tourism activities, for instance poor waste management practices at camping sites or scenic flight landings on sacred *maunga* (mountains). Commercial demand increased infrastructure development (build another car park attitudes) and aviation/land transport access pressures (yet burning fossil fuels contributed to climate change). Locals' dissatisfaction with overtourism were amplified by general concerns for rapid landscape changes caused by extreme weather and climate change events. For instance, the retreat and erosion of the Tasman, Fox and Franz Josef glaciers meant foot access became impossible and increasing visitor numbers created demand for aircraft access for snow landings (a wicked problem). Tensions grew as providing a high quality visitor experience was at odds with conservation.

During lockdown

Global geo-politics have magnified the equity of the virus (no one is immune) and worldwide there are welfare inequities when managing the pandemic. The pandemic's socioeconomic cost immediately affected this country. International visitor arrivals stopped overnight as global transport systems stuttered. Transiting airports and borders closed whilst in NZ clusters of unwell victims were traced and treated.

Adventurers and outdoor recreationists made their way into a different form of solitude - getting away from it all in the lockdown 'bubbles' of Alert Levels 4 and 3 (see: https://uniteforrecovery.govt.nz/). We couldn't travel beyond our immediate home environments for recreation - we were house-bound. People reported increased birdsong and sightings within urban environments in NZ – the sounds of natural quiet. In the early stages from late March to early-April 2020 trampers (hikers), sailors, climbers and other recreationists on outdoor trips or expeditions emerged into a world of eerie silence, expecting human sounds. Reconnecting to society at road ends and marinas was not normal – the usual hospitality and transportation networks and public services were closed. Unaware that the country was going into lockdown Level Four, some were 'overwhelmed' and taken aback by the lack of human activity, including the absence of people, tourism activities, retail opportunities, transport connections, cafes and the like (Ainge-Roy, 2020).

Those who did flout the lockdown and continued to surf, mountain-bike, tramp, hunt and so on were reprimanded, and sent home in shame (including the occasional politician!). One incident had the nation transfixed. In level 3 lockdown media attention was diverted from the pandemic to the search and rescue (SAR) for two trampers missing in northwest Nelson Kahurangi National Park. The search was controversial as the trampers defied the country's Level 3 lockdown, heading out from their bubble into the great outdoors. Perhaps they were responding to the call of the wild. Maybe they felt at home in nature - it was a normal place and typical way of being for them. In short both trampers, to the delight of many but criticism by some, survived after 19 days lost in the wild. They did not have Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) which are expensive; both trampers were young, low wage, tourism employees, possibly explaining the lack of this equipment. They were not prosecuted.

By lockdown Level 2 social spacing still impacted on the choice of recreation activities. Team sports were discouraged whilst walking, cycling and socially-spaced activities were encouraged. People could travel to undertake nature based activities. A hunger for getting back out into nature saw Kiwis venturing outdoors for surfing, hunting, boating, fishing and so on, as soon as lockdown levels allowed. People seemed to become more attuned to the natural world in lockdown – the silence accompanying lockdown meant birds and wildlife emerged in urban areas and marine life entered waters normally disturbed by noise and congestion from industrial marine activity. The internet as an interface with nature had its place (ref. Crossley), with people sharing experiences of natural phenomena online. In NZ human-nature encounters included 'euphoric' fishermen off the Otago coast filming the antics of a humpback whale.[3]

Post-lockdown nature re-connection

In post-lockdown NZ there appears to be increased desire for experiences of nature, including new experiences with some Kiwis embracing the Japanese past-time of forest bathing. This search for human-nature connections extends skywards with rediscovering the night sky wilderness. International Dark Sky areas are popular with NZ visitors viewing the Milky Way, planets, the June 'strawberry' moon and a lunar eclipse - all have been welcome diversions in the past month. Simply walking or being within nature - seeing, listening, smelling and feeling nature – is having a rejuvenating and recuperative effect. This natural ecosystem service is taking on more significant values during the pandemic recover period than had been previously recognised (Roberts et al., 2015).

In 2019 the NZ government released a 'wellbeing budget', which has added significance in the post-COVID NZ. When NZ moved to Alert Level 1 a local newspaper published a cartoon of the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern standing alone on a mountain peak, in solitude, holding the national flag high (evoking the Hillary spirit). NZ was 100% Pure COVID-19 free! Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield and the Prime Minister have been regarded as successful global leaders in flattening the infection curve of COVID-19. The 2020 Budget introduced COVID-19 Conservation Jobs - a government rescue package contributes over $1 Billion NZD employing approximately 6,000 people on conservation biodiversity projects aligning with the Predator Free NZ 2050 vision (https://predatorfreenz.org/). The implementation of the programme has seen tourism workers, amongst others, redeployed into work such as wilding pine and predator control. An investment into conservation and wildlife biodiversity that may increase the future visitor appeal of wild places in a more indigenous state!

The tourism infrastructure built up in the country pre-COVID has taken a socioeconomic hit with many tourism businesses being mothballed or closing permanently. Nevertheless, on a positive note, Kiwis who have the time and funds can enjoy the infrastructure that the previous 20 years tourism boom has developed. An opportunity to experience world-class quality at the 'bottom of the world'. Nationwide, Kiwis are being encouraged to explore their own 'back yards' and venture into areas normally frequented by international visitors who are guided. With the loss of international markets, domestic demand is being promoted

[3] (https://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/back-your-backyard/300024610/dunedin-fishermen-capture-euphoric-moment-as-whale-breaches-near-boat).

by regional tourism authorities and destinations, such as ski areas opening for the winter. Visitation and recreation within nature is gaining momentum as people are free to move around the country. In post-COVID NZ the Great Walks booking system for the 2020-21 season has opened for Kiwis who are being encouraged to venture into national parks and wild places without the tourist hordes. The resurgence in tramping has locals and visitors seeking wilderness walks and natural locations discovering what nature has to offer in terms of emotional and physical healing, post-pandemic (evoking Crossley's observation of environmental healing). New Zealanders who would normally travel to pursue wilderness, wildlife or nature based adventures overseas are turning to the NZ outdoors (rather than going on safari in Africa or climbing one of the Seven Summits).

Many of NZ's outdoor adventure guiding community traditionally had international careers, with seasonal contracts guiding international expeditions or activities worldwide. Alternating northern-southern hemisphere climbing, skiing, kayaking, rafting or surfing seasons provided full time employment opportunities to those with international qualifications. This work life mobility disappeared overnight owing to travel restrictions. Many guides were stranded overseas whilst on expeditions. Some fell ill to COVID-19 whilst working on cruise ships (for instance guides on the polar cruise ship Greg Mortimer experienced the pandemic first-hand - in floating isolation - the ultimate wild experience with a touch of luxury). Returning to NZ they are either being redeployed or adjusting to guiding Kiwis with different expectations of pricing, packaging and delivery of experiences.

Another domestic travel activity associated with wild, natural areas - the outdoor education sector – has been relatively neglected in the discourses around post-COVID recovery. Providers such as Outward Bound, YMCA and Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Centres were threatened with the reality of closure having been hard-hit with the cost of maintaining such establishments during lockdown. A return to school camps and family outdoor learning holidays could rejuvenate outdoor centres as youth connect to nature. The 'wilderness' experience, the name of which evokes thoughts of the wild's potential dangers and unknown outcomes, has fears allayed through experiences built from togetherness.

Even not-for-profits are voicing post-COVID relationships involving traveling into and experiencing nature. The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (founded 1923) is the country's largest conservation organisation. Its latest Winter 2020 magazine issue discusses a 'Green Recovery' – 'to rebuild a better world for nature'; promoting local nature walk; advertising ecotourism experiences 'Adventures Closer to Home' (Antarctica or the UNESCO World Heritage Subantarctic Islands with Heritage Expeditions); and future-oriented advertisements for superannuation schemes that 'care for our environment'.

Conclusion

Writing about post-COVID scenarios whilst the world is in the midst of the COVID pandemic is challenging. I may be too optimistic when considering the potential benefits from re-engagement with nature and the great outdoors. World-wide, media continues to document the negative and positive impacts of the pandemic i.e. unemployment, reduced industrial pollution (cleaner air to breath and views of landscapes) and reduced artificial lighting and atmospheric clarity (enjoyment of

the darkness of the night skies). Reconnecting with nature is symbolic of a hopeful recovery for all. The potential for a nature-centric future has arisen from the pandemic in other countries, not just NZ, where the negative pressures from overtourism have disappeared and wilderness and the wild comfort stressed lives. Nevertheless, communities worldwide suffer with the loss of tourism – both social contact and also essential income vital for funding peoples' lifestyles, community conservation initiatives, health, education and food security. A balanced future where we can recognise the positive potential of nature/eco-tourism is needed.

By mid-June 2020, New Zealanders are the lucky ones. The country is no longer under the restrictions of lockdown Alert Levels 4, 3 and 2. Border restrictions remain in Alert Level 1. We are in a COVID-19 free national bubble at the time of writing. We can focus on the environmental and economic wellbeing of society. We are in a space where many of us (those who are employed and have an income) can enjoy participation in domestic travel, socially connected work places and leisure – including recreating in nature again.

Many are speaking of adopting a green recovery approach to the pandemic. Hockings et al. provide the Call for Action that can take conservation of protected areas and species forward. We can go further by linking conservation and tourism with community wellbeing. In NZ there is a public appetite for participation in humanely managed pest/predator control, revegetation schemes or endangered species work alongside practical sustainability initiatives in urban areas. Contemplating our relationship with nature in a post-COVID world through an integrated, planned, approach to economic regeneration that puts nature first (ensuring nature is prioritised, respected and enhanced) aligns with NZ's environmental image and conservation aspirations. There may be a continued need for de-growth in some sectors – or adaptation of regenerative and ecologically sympathetic, managements strategies. Habitat conservation initiatives such as the government's funding for conservation jobs serves long-term ecological and economic community needs, whilst counteracting climate and human-induced changes to wilderness and natural landscapes.

Should stranger-avoidance, a trait of Coronavirus anxiety, emerge amongst nature recreation settings there may be a move to self-containment or solo experiences. Trampers or climbers may take their own tents/shelters if unwilling to share hut spaces or cooking equipment (already occurring in some circles). Hygiene standards and hut etiquette can gain in importance in tramping and alpine huts, and the author had first-hand experiences of increased sanitation measures and formal registration with a recent Level 1 hut stay). DoC has erected COVID-19 signage to guide behaviour at public facilities, managing track and trace through hut intentions and bookings systems. Technologies (for instance GIS) and digital data sets have potential for mapping of visitor movements and behaviours to inform recreation management decisions. These technologies can complement methodologies to determine carrying capacity (CC), limits of acceptable change (LAC) and other actions to reduce negative impacts in outdoor tourism/recreational spaces. Adapting technologies such as PLBs can enhance safety in the post-COVID wilderness by enabling track and trace.

Perhaps the pressure is off for demarketing natural sites that had been regarded as 'hotspots', suffering from over-visitation and over-tourism pre-COVID, but this

could return as an issue with increased domestic visitor demands. Researching carrying capacities and limits now to pre-empt the negative impacts that typified pre-COVID 'overtourism' in sensitive natural areas and communities would revision the future for the better. Valuing tangible and intangible values for nature including indigenous biodiversity, natural quiet, dark skies, and reducing our fossil-fuel dependency or carbon footprints is occurring through practical efforts such as Predator Free NZ. All New Zealanders (and international visitors) who want to should, ideally, be able to enjoy nature and our protected areas equally. Putting nature first and including local communities in planning processes should be core to decision-making. There will be a multitude of approaches to restoring and regenerating our relationships to nature and wilderness places in a post-COVID world. The human-nature binary is altering as the virus has led more people to question the old ways and consider humanity's survival and future wellbeing as being interdependent with the natural environment.

Postscript: Sadly, shortly after this reflection was submitted NZ reports new Coronavirus cases – Lockdown level 1 remains for now.

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Part Two: Outlooks and Perspectives

”What if”? Imaginaries and the role of the digital in post-corona tourism futuring

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> *‘Unless we take it upon ourselves purposefully to grapple with the future, there won't be one’. (Röling 2000: 34)*
>
> *“It matters what stories tell stories, what thoughts think thoughts, what worlds world worlds.” (Haraway 2018)*

In early 2020, my work and leisure travel itinerary was starting to fill for the upcoming year. From my home town of Copenhagen, I was planning a one-day trip to Oslo for a start-up project meeting, field trips to Northern Finland in early summer and later of course, the annual ATLAS conference set in Prague as well as conferences in Iceland and Greenland. For summer, reservations had already been made for a stay in the Italian part of Tyrol and many weekend trips to our cabin in Sweden had been reserved in the calendar until then.

Needless to say that all of these travels have subsequently been cancelled. The example offers a glance into the abrupt mobility stop of a knowledge worker in the Northwestern parts of Europe and serves as a situated example of how COVID-19 utterly disrupted the tourism and travel industry as it swept across the globe. As COVID-19 struck on a massive, global scale, tourism mobility was brought to a standstill.

While the impacts of COVID-19 are still unfolding and longer-lasting effects remain unclear, the virus has shown itself as multiple. The COVID-19 is enacted as many things, to different people, in different places. For some, it has meant minor everyday challenges in dealing with unexpected (im)mobilities as initially described or in our reorganization as families, communities, consumers, travelers, colleagues and employees. To others, it has had much more radical and tragic consequences: death, confinement and lay-offs as borders closed, institutions shut down and businesses turned bankrupt.

Regardless of the scope and magnitude of the changes to daily lives across the globe, what we see is that reality surpassed our imagination. The speed, range and intensity of the pandemic came unexpectedly to most: families and communities, health organizations, businesses and politicians. And not only did it come unexpectedly, consequences and impacts were unimaginable.

Imaginaries and futuring

The identified 'deficit' of our collective imagination on the repercussion of COVID-19 offers an occasion to re-inspect the concept. What do or may we potentially imagine about tourism in the wake of COVID-19? And what purpose could new imaginaries serve in futuring tourism as a more responsible practice and industry?

Imaginaries in tourism have predominantly been addressed as part of a discursive or representational process, for instance as described by Salazar, as "the creative use of seductive, as well as restrictive, imaginaries about peoples and places" (2012: 863). In that context, imaginaries draw on the human capacity to imagine the other and the elsewhere, something which is seen as exploitable for instance in the imagery of tourism marketing.

Donna Haraway is a thinker who has approached imaginaries in a different way by celebrating its performative power and exercising "historically situated relational worldings" (2018: 62) through the sharing of seriously playful speculative futures. This performative conceptualizing sees imaginaries as suggested by Jasanoff as "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures" (2015: 4). In these imaginaries, the future is not 'out there' awaiting us for the taking, but subject to present crafting and enrolment.

Enacting the future is not a simple procedure, but rather a set of complex and controversy-ridden 'futuring acts' in which it is envisioned, acted upon and tinkered with through meticulous arrangements by human actors, organizations and political interest groups by drawing in various discourses, procedures and technologies (Ren, 2016). As a consequence of this, the future should not be seen as a passive noun, but as a verb and as a process, a process of *futuring*.

To draw on a heavy cliché, the future is now. How we currently think about, represent and create it has repercussions. The acknowledgement of how futuring is intrinsically connected to the present – and how it should be tended to accordingly – holds implication for tourism studies. Because of the performative potential of future visions, a sustained research interest in exploring the multiple accomplishments that are part of the enactment of tourism futures - in particular ways rather than others - is essential. Since things are not already given or predictable, a lot remains to be done in tying together new relations, in attributing new kinds of value to entangled activities, things and places.

What if? On tourism futures and the role of the digital

While COVID-19 continues its trajectory on the American and African continents, the virus is slowly loosening its grip on Europe. Communities and businesses are starting to address its aftermath and to spark a post-pandemic everyday back to life. In the months to come, many initiatives will be taken to restart tourism. In recent comments, some researchers have addressed the need for a swift recovery allowing millions of workers and entrepreneurs to resume business as usual, while others plea for re-setting or developing alternative path for tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020, Ioannides & Gyimóthy 2020).

In this context of uncertainty, hope and despair, Gössling recently argued that efforts made in relation to sustainability goals and climate change alleviation were threatened in the process of recovery (Gössling et.al., 2020), while at the same time pointing out that the current crisis opens up a possibility to strengthen sustainability efforts. Constantly, these contributions ask how we can think tourism in new, more responsible, more sustainable ways.

Long before COVID-19 but in the context of our primary, but currently muzzled, crisis of climate change, Urry proposed a range of scenarios for imagining alternative mobility futures (see Urry, 2008 a.o.). Unlike Urry, who is not afraid to sketch out grueling (post-)apocalyptic scenarios, Haraway inspires us to shy from infernal accounts. To Haraway, "the established disorder is not necessary; another world is not only urgently needed, it is possible, but not if we are ensorcelled in despair, cynicism, or optimism, and the belief/disbelief discourse of Progress."(Haraway 2018: 62). Instead, Haraway insists on "other ways to reworld, reimagine, relive, and reconnect with each other" (2018: 62).

But what would such on-the-ground collectives look like in between gloom and the lure of Progress? And how could they potentially, tentatively, deploy imagination to re-invent new practices of repair and of mourning, of resistance and of revolt, beyond tourism as we knew it before the virus, after tourism of the world of yesterday?

Tourism From Zero – imagining change

Going back to Jasanoff's definition of imaginaries as "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures", a suggestion of a modest tourism future is the Tourism from zero initiative (TFZ). The initiative took its beginning as a digital crowd-sourced mapping action concerned with collecting, visualizing and sharing the concerns and ideas among a wide range of tourism actors: business entrepreneurs, locals, students and educators.

As the process grew, a new idea emerged out of the conversations on the platform. This is how it is explained on the website: "We have already collected more than 200 ideas on how to move tourism from zero to hero. In April 2020, several students submitted ideas with a common focus on local "from zero" experiences. We invited these students to join the TFZ team".

As a second step, and based on some of the feedback from locals and students, the TFZ initiative is now launching a digital platform, #TourismFromZero with locals together with the students. Here, small tourism entrepreneurs can tell about and gain visibility for their tourism product. On the website, the initiative state:

> *All these often invisible or somehow overlooked local actors contribute greatly to the preservation of their traditions, culture and environment. #TourismFromZero with locals takes care of their prudent involvement in the global tourism market. The frequent reasons for the invisibility of such stakeholders are lack of resources in advertising, digitization, bureaucracy, etc. That is why we are here to find them and help them show their inspiring skills and experiences to the world. Be curious and*

prudent yourself - and visit them for additional authentic and memorable experiences of the regions you travel through!

Contrasting examples of sharing platforms as merely serving capitalist interests, the TFZ initiative heralds a potentiality of digital platforms to spark and distribute collaborative becoming and futuring agency through and around digital platforms (Ren & Jóhannesson 2017). The platform reflects a situated and response-able proposition to imagine and enact tourism practices through the digitally mediated sharing of concerns and future propositions in the wake of COVID-19.

In developing and promoting tourism in such a way, TFZ offers alternative ways to imagine tourism as de-centrally organized. As proposed by Haraway, TFZ highlights tourism as an ongoing, careful and collaborative process of 'becoming with many' (Haraway, 2008), thus challenging usual understanding of tourism innovation as solitary and stable accomplishment.

Tourism SF? Concluding remarks

How can we enact tourism imaginaries as locally grounded, contested and as a cooperative effort by engaging with post-corona futures? As argued by Haraway, "Alone, in our separate kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little, and so we succumb to despair or to hope, and neither is a sensible attitude." (2016: 4). The collaborative and speculative crafting of tourism imaginaries and futures invites us to think-with each other in relentlessly situated and risky practices, treading carefully in between catastrophic and salvatory futures.

To this aim, tourism researchers can contribute to researching the production of futures and whether and how some versions of the future exclude or rule out others. Following Brown et al, this includes asking question such as how "some futures come to prevail over others, why once seemingly certain futures happened to fail, how other futures are marginalized as a consequence of the dominant metaphors and motifs used in everyday life , and the consequences of particular framings of the future" (2000: 4). This allows following processes of how futuring is distributed and where future-oriented agency is or might be located.

While the future of the TFZ initiative is still uncertain, it shows us also a relevant role for researchers choosing to partake in the co-production of imaginaries and possible future to inspire, engage or raise concern of what is (made) to come and how. Lastly, it displays in all of its openness and uncertainty, the ability of the platform to digitally draw together a tourism collective and to co-develop alternative stories and tourism products, inspiring local entrepreneurs, communities, researchers, platform developers and students to thinking of new "what if's", of new speculative futures, for tourism.

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Ecotourism and Conservation under COVID-19 and Beyond[1]

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Introduction

Among the many sweeping consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is its dramatic impact on the global tourism industry. Depending on how one defines it, tourism can be considered the largest industry in the world. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) claims, indeed, that tourism accounts for 10% of global GDP and hence 1 out of every 10 jobs worldwide.[1] At the time of writing (June 2020), every tourist destination in the world has implemented significant travel restrictions and many have shut down completely. While some places are already beginning or planning to reopen, tourism arrivals – and hence revenue – are likely to remain severely restricted for the near future; hence the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that global visitations in 2020 may drop 60-80% overall due to the lockdown.[2] Ultimately, the COVID-19 crisis could thus potentially eliminate 50 million tourism jobs worldwide,[3] resulting in losses of hundreds of billions of euros to tourism operators and workers.[4]

Among the various subsectors affected by this situation is ecotourism – travel to experience "natural" spaces that is intended to support both environmental protection and community development (see Honey, 2008). Ecotourism was, until the crisis, one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism industry (Fletcher 2014) and an important source of financing for biodiversity conservation in many places. Consequently, the COVID-19 tourism contraction has important implications for the future of the global effort to preserve endangered species and ecosystems throughout the world.

In this short article we explore these implications for the future of ecotourism and its function as a key conservation (financing) strategy. We begin by outlining the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for conservation and its relation to ecotourism. We then focus on how the crisis has impacted ecotourism specifically and how policymakers have proposed to address these impacts. We finish by outlining our own proposal for "convivial conservation" as a hopeful way through and out of the current crisis.

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[1] https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152
[2] https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020
[3] https://wttc.org/About/About-Us/media-centre/press-releases/press-releases/2020/coronavirus-puts-up-to-50-million-travel-and-tourism-jobs-at-risk-says-wttc
[4] https://www.unwto.org/news/covid-19-international-tourist-numbers-could-fall-60-80-in-2020

Ecotourism, Conservation, and COVID-19

When 2020 was declared a "super year" for biodiversity conservation, no one suspected that a particular form of this biodiversity would proliferate to such an extent as to bring all of the anticipated activity to a screeching halt.[5] With current species and ecosystems in dangerous decline the world over (IPBES, 2019), there is growing recognition that such previous conservation strategies focused on the market have been largely inadequate to tackle the challenges they face, and hence that something radically different is needed (Kareiva et al. 2012; Wuerthner et al., 2015). A series of global meetings to address this deficiency were scheduled to take place throughout 2020, including the IUCN's quadrennial World Conservation Congress,[6] the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention of Biological Diversity,[7] (OECD, 2019) and the 26th COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to plan for the future of climate change intervention,[8] upon which biodiversity conservation crucially depends (Harvey, 2020).

These global meetings have all now been postponed, cancelled or pared back due to the pandemic. This means that the future of global biodiversity conservation has been left even more uncertain than before. This uncertainty is compounded by COVID-19's impacts on the ecotourism industry, as over the past decade ecotourism has become one of the main sources of support and revenue for conservation worldwide (Hockings et al, 2020).

In some situations, the ecotourism contraction is impacting wildlife directly. For instance, animals inhabiting conservation areas who have come to depend on tourists for food have been threatened by the sudden withdrawal of this sustenance (Roth, 2020). Fears that endangered mountain gorillas might contract the virus from human visitors, meanwhile, has resulted in a suspension of highly lucrative tourism activities in Sub-Saharan Africa.[9]

On the other hand, the global lockdown has also provoked massive human withdrawal from many spaces that have now largely been left to nonhuman species.[10] The result has been a widely documented proliferation of wildlife in national parks and other conservation areas.[11]

In some places with less stringent restrictions, by contrast, people have been flocking to conservation areas, as well as to nearby rural communities, as a potential refuge from the virus and to escape the drudgery of home-bound lockdowns (McGivney, 2020; Petersen, 2020). In a variant of this trend, some indigenous groups, in Brazil, Canada and elsewhere, are also retreating to remote

[5] https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/news/2020-super-year-nature-and-biodiversity
[6] https://www.iucncongress2020.org/
[7] https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/event/2020-un-biodiversity-conference
[8] https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference-to-be-postponed
[9] https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/virus-which-causes-covid-19-threatens-great-ape-conservation
[10] https://dailyhive.com/mapped/yosemite-national-park-animals-video
[11] http://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20200330-wild-animals-wander-through-deserted-cities-under-covid-19-lockdown-ducks-paris-puma-santiago-civet-kerala

areas to protect themselves from infection and access alternate food supplies (Fellet, 2020; Morin, 2020).

Ecotourism and Conservation Finance

One of the most significant and potentially damaging implications of the COVID-19 - ecotourism contraction concerns the loss of revenue to communities living in or near conservation-critical areas. Generation of income through participation in ecotourism has become one of the main strategies to enrol local people within conservation programming over the past several decades. This campaign is grounded in what Martha Honey calls the 'stakeholder theory' asserting that 'people will protect what they receive value from' (2008: 14). Such 'stakeholder' enrolment is one manifestation of an increasingly popular strategy for championing conservation more generally, consistent with paradigmatically neoliberal understandings of human reasoning and motivation, that aims to harness "market-based instruments" like ecotourism to offer economic incentives sufficient to make conservation more lucrative than other more destructive land use options (Fletcher, 2010).

This stakeholder strategy has always been a dangerous gamble, since basing conservation support on such 'extrinsic' motivation (rather than an 'intrinsic' sense of care for biodiversity) could obviate this support were the revenue fuelling this motivation to disappear (Serhadli 2020). And considering the instability of the tourism industry due to its dependence on an inherently volatile global economy, it was never really a question *if* this would happen, but *when*. As Dickson Kaelo, CEO of the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, thus worries:

> Members of these communities may lose faith in wildlife conservation if there is no money forthcoming. In addition, people who live around these wildlife havens and looked forward to selling artefacts to tourists may resort to other income-generating activities such as farming, fuelling the never-ending human-wildlife conflicts as animals invade and destroy their new farms. (in Greenfield, 2020)

This is precisely what seems to be occurring right now, with instances of poaching and encroachment on the rise within many conservation spaces worldwide (Greenfield, 2020). Yet is this ostensive connection really so clear-cut? Some question the assertion that conservation depends so heavily on tourism revenue, pointing out that implicit in this stance is the assumption that (usually foreign) tourists and conservationists are the main actors valuing and nurturing biodiversity. Kenyan conservationist Mordecai Ogada thus asserts, "Let's not pretend at any point that tourists are the ones that look after our wildlife. Our wildlife is looked after by our people, our wildlife rangers, and those mandated by government to care for them."[12]

What next?

Given all of this, what is likely to happen next? There is much uncertainty at the moment and different possibilities exist. In the short term, it is probable that forms

[12] https://www.theelephant.info/videos/2020/04/20/dr-mordecai-ogada-conservation-in-the-age-of-coronavirus/#.Xp29Aznzfw0.facebook

of coercive conservation enforcement will intensify – as they already have in certain places – as 'softer' options, such as the inclusion of local communities in conservation through ecotourism, dry up. Yet others assert that the precarity of ecotourism finance exposed by the COVID-19 crisis signals the need for a deeper rethinking of how conservation is funded more generally (Greenfield, 2020; Robinson, 2020). This is compounded by acknowledgment that even before the current crisis global conservation efforts already experienced a substantial financial shortfall estimated at 200-300 billion euros per annum (Credit Suisse and McKinsey, 2016).

Thus *Johan Robinson, Chief of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)*, contends, "If the international community is serious about conserving biodiversity as part of a just and sustainable world, we must get serious about funding conservation" (Robinson, 2020). To achieve this, Robinson calls for development of "a new class of financial asset, ripe for sustainable investment. Success would depend on investments that simultaneously reinforce the impact of conservation; providing capital preservation and/or returns on investments and generating cashflows through sustainable use of nature by local communities."

Creation of a financial asset class for conservation has been a widespread aspiration of many for some time now. Several years ago, for instance, Credit Suisse and McKinsey (2016) advanced a similar call in a widely circulated report entitled *Conservation Finance From Niche to Mainstream: The Building of an Institutional Asset Class*. This report helped to inspire creation of a Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation, organized by IUCN and including Credit Suisse as well as bankers JP Morgan Chase along with UNEP, GEF, Conservation International and the World Bank, among many others, to put this plan into action.[13] However, Dempsey and Suarez (2016: 654) demonstrate that efforts to tap economic markets for conservation finance globally to date have fallen far short of intended aims, producing only "slivers of slivers of slivers" of envisioned funding. Meanwhile, global programmes like payment for ecosystem services (PES) and the reduced emissions from avoided deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) mechanism have largely morphed from their original design as "market-based instruments" (MBIs) for conservation finance into dependence on state-based taxation and other forms of redistributive funding (Fletcher et al., 2016; Fletcher and Büscher, 2017).

There is little to suggest that this situation will reverse in the future. On the contrary, there are serious questions whether it is possible for MBIs to ever achieve their aim to reconcile conservation and sustainable local livelihoods with profitable return on investment at a significant scale (Fletcher et al., 2016). In fact, it is apparent that most MBIs paradoxically depend on expansion of destructive extractive industries as the basis of their economic model (ibid.).

A growth-dependent economic model is also the foundation for ecotourism's role in funding conservation efforts. Current calls to *recover* the overarching tourism industry post-crisis often deny the industry's dependence on this economic model demanding ever-increasing resource consumption as the basis for tourism

[13] http://cpicfinance.com/

expansion.[14] The UNWTO's programme for post-COVID-19 tourism recovery (released in May 2020 when many countries were still in full lockdown), for instance, is focused entirely on restimulating maximum tourism growth. This programme builds on three pillars - "**economic recovery**, marketing and **promotion** and institutional strengthening and **resilience building**" – none of which aim to substantially reform the sector or to decrease its dependency on the current unsustainable economic model.[15] A variety of other tourism organizations and professionals also emphasize the importance of increasing tourism flows again, scarcely acknowledging the industry's contribution to climate change and other environmental problems (Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2020).

Rather than presenting opportunities for increased conservation finance through market expansion, or to simply regrow the tourism industry to its former unsustainable state, the current crisis will likely intensify pressures on already vulnerable conservation areas as governments and capitalists look to previously restricted natural resources as new sources of accumulation in a by-now familiar disaster capitalism playbook.[16] The global economy is already in deep recession and will likely sink further in the months to come (Elliot, 2020). After the 2008 recession, capitalists turned to intensified resource extraction to recapture lost growth (Arsel et al., 2016), at great expense to ongoing conservation efforts. It is likely that this same pattern will be repeated. At the same time, the growing recession will certainly further impoverish countless residents of rural communities close to biodiversity hotspots (Elliot ,2020) who may be forced to turn to exploitation of conserved resources if other survival options dry up. In the realm of tourism, meanwhile, disaster capitalism entails pushing through further privatization and corporate consolidation of the type that occurred, for instance, in tourism reconstruction throughout Asia following the 2004 tsunami (Swamy, 2011). We are already seeing signs of this in the rush by airline, hotel and restaurant operators to capture the bulk of proposed state bailout packages in the US and elsewhere.[17]

Conclusion: Towards convivial ecotourism

All of this suggests the need for a more profound rethinking of conservation finance, and ecotourism's role within this, than either Robinson or the UNWTO propose. As Serhadli (2020) asserts, "If we promote conditions where local people are completely dependent on external market forces, and the motivation behind conservation is money-based, then conservation will always be dependent on a stable global economy, which is highly uncertain as we are witnessing right now."[18] Rather than doubling down on efforts to fund conservation through economic markets that have proven quite miserly thus far, we may instead need to double-step in the opposite direction. That is, we may need to "begin taking the market out of conservation altogether" and "instead experiment with providing subsidies (state supported or otherwise) to resource-dependent communities based on direct taxation of extractive activities of the type that are already in some cases covertly

[14] See e.g. https://www.spiked-online.com/2020/05/04/the-war-on-tourism/
[15] https://www.unwto.org/news/unwto-releases-a-covid-19-technical-assistance-package-for-tourism-recovery
[16] https://theintercept.com/2020/03/16/coronavirus-capitalism/
[17] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/20/coronavirus-washington-lobbyists-bailout
[18] https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/market-based-solutions-cannot-solely-fund-community-level-conservation-commentary/

supplied through MBIs" (Fletcher et al. 2016: 675). This makes it crucial that post-COVID-19 tourism recovery in particular remains focused on social and ecological justice rather than falling for conventional 'responsible' tourism solutions (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

All of this, finally, must be embedded within a different approach to pursuing conservation more generally. One that allows humans and nonhumans to live side-by-side in meaningful coexistence rather than shallow commodified encounter. And one that supports and subsidizes the livelihoods of people living intimately with wildlife beyond providing precarious tourism employment – for instance, through redistributive mechanisms like a conservation basic income (Fletcher and Büscher, 2020). Such an approach, termed "convivial conservation (Büscher and Fletcher, 2020), is currently being debated and tested in a number of places by various actors. Aspects of it are already being practiced in many indigenous and community conservation projects worldwide,[19] while measures to redirect tourism development specifically in a more sustainable direction have also been proposed[20] and in some cases implemented.[21]

The time is now ripe to expand and scale up such initiatives. Calls for radical or "transformational" change in conservation and other arenas have been gaining momentum over the last decade (e.g. IPBES, 201; Adams, 2017; Lorimer, 2015) and the COVID-19 crisis has added urgency to these calls. If transformational change is indeed most likely to happen at 'times of crisis, when enough stakeholders agree that the current system is dysfunctional' (Olsson et al., 2010, 280), then the current conjuncture may present an opportunity to find a new way forward that may not have seemed possible before.

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[19] https://www.iccaconsortium.org/
[20] https://politicalecologynetwork.org/2020/03/24/tourism-degrowth-and-the-covid-19-crisis/
[21] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/28/khonoma-indias-first-green-village-adapts-to-coronavirus-life-without-tourists-aoe#maincontent

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Well-being and Tourism in a Time of COVID-19

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There have been as many plagues as wars in history; yet always plagues and wars take people equally by surprise.

Albert Camus, The Plague

Surely having to stay quietly in one's room must be the start of a particularly evolved kind of psychological torture? What could be more opposed to the human spirit than to have to inhabit four walls when, potentially, there would be a whole planet to explore?

Alain de Botton, How to travel from your sofa

We are living in unprecedented times and the current 'plague' indeed took people by surprise. One minute, tourism experts were desperately seeking solutions to chronic overtourism in St Mark's Square in Venice and the next, they were watching (albeit fake) online videos of dolphins frolicking in the undisturbed canals! Proponents of sustainable tourism breathed a temporary sigh of relief as previously over-burdened destinations had the chance to replenish, while economists stood anxiously by as many businesses hurtled towards bankruptcy. In the middle of all of this, vast swathes of society have self-quarantined voluntarily or by law and they have also been forced to examine their health, wellbeing and everyday behaviour, including travel.

At the start of the lockdown period, I wrote a list of *10 Good Things about Quarantine* in an attempt to lift my spirits at the thought of the impending incarceration:

- Realising that health matters more than we realised and doing what we can to preserve it
- Having time to slow down and think about what is really important
- Becoming more mindful and appreciating the everyday activities that we sometimes forgot to enjoy
- Spending more quality time with husbands, wives and children. We always complained that we did not have enough!
- Shopping and eating more sensibly and less wastefully
- Thinking of creative ways to spend the long days indoors
- Watching Spring flowers bloom and birds nest on solitary walks
- Developing new skills like online communication and teaching
- Thinking of ways to be helpful and kind to the community around us (e.g. by delivering supplies, providing an income for others where we can and keeping small businesses running)
- Experiencing what it means to be human. The whole world is in the same boat!

- Eleven weeks later, I would like to reflect on this list and to turn my attention to tourism while doing so.

As a tourism academic who focuses partly on health and wellness tourism, partly on culture and creativity and partly on sustainability and overtourism, this list has considerable resonance in my fields of interest.

Starting with the last point, the common human experience is fundamentally an existential one based on our survival as a species but also our ability to navigate our way through life and to create the best life we can. Research on tourism and wellbeing often refers to both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions (e.g. McCabe, Joldersma and Li, 2010; Pyke et al., 2016) with the latter being less focused on pleasure and more on meaningful activities and the fulfilment of human potential. COVID-19 has arguably forced us to consider what is truly meaningful and valuable, to be more socially responsible, at the same time as ensuring basic survival. However, a certain degree of existential anxiety has affected most people too. Some may find comfort in religion or spirituality, but those who have read or re-read Albert Camus's novel *The Plague* recently will remember that such times can also be a significant test of faith. On the other hand, practices like yoga, meditation and mindfulness (especially living for the day) can help to get us through hard times. In would not surprising if people continue to do these activities once they are free again, including on holiday.

Preoccupations with health are clearly inescapable at the present time. Health tourism is frequently described as a niche form of tourism constituting only around 3-10% of tourism as a primary motivation. This includes spas, wellness resorts and medical tourism. Probably the percentage of tourists specifically travelling for these reasons will not change, but tourism will become a health challenge for all of us in terms of sanitation and self-protection. We may even ask ourselves, as many of us will be doing right now with summer holidays approaching, is it worth the risk to travel when I will have to go through so much to protect my health? Hedonistic spas certainly may not be our first choice of destination as tiny saunas crammed with sweaty bodies will not appeal in this phase of social distancing! Holistic retreat centres may fare better as they tend to attract smaller numbers of tourists to remote rural locations who are seeking more eudaimonic forms of experience in the form of self-help and self-development (Heintzmann, 2013; Fu, Tanyatanaboon & Lehto, 2015; Kelly and Smith, 2017). The aforementioned yoga and meditation are often the most popular activities in such retreats.

Numerous articles have abounded during the lockdown about how people have been or should have been spending their time. There is no question that everyone has spent more time if not all of the time online, from work meetings to fitness videos to Zoom classes to Skype socializing. The desire to spend time OFFLINE in this next phase of opening up, may intensify with the search for digital detox retreats or WiFi-free zones. On the other hand, online activities have become such a lifeline, will we choose to abandon them when they have served us so well?

The social media pressure to develop new creative hobbies like learning to play the guitar, painting or dancing has been an inspiration to some but an anxiety-inducing distraction for others. Homeschooling and full-time jobs have not left much free time for many parents. On the other hand, some people have re-kindled their

creative flame and may feel motivated to book a creative tourism holiday next time they get the chance to indulge their new-found passion (the work of Greg Richards and the Creative Tourism Network provide numerous examples of creative tourism activities and destinations). In addition to psychological comfort, holistic holiday companies like Skyros in Greece or Cortijo Romero in Spain offer interesting opportunities to undertake small group activities of a creative nature (Kelly and Smith, 2017; Glouberman and Cloutier, 2017).

In many countries, one bout of exercise per day felt like an escape from imprisonment and for those lucky enough to be living near green spaces, it was a chance to marvel at the wonders of nature which they had missed in their busy lives. How many people will choose to spend their next holidays in quiet, remote natural areas, not only because it facilitates social distancing, but because it brings them closer to nature again? The research shows that those who lived in busy, polluted cities had a greater propensity to suffer from the virus, another reason for fleeing to the countryside. Richard Louv (2005, 2011) has argued for years that Nature Deficit Disorder is a serious problem in modern, especially urban societies and the research on the benefits of contact with nature for wellbeing is extensive (e.g. Maller et al., 2008; Brymer, Cuddihy and Sharma-Brymer, 2010; Abraham, Sommerhalder and Abel, 2010; Little, 2015). Rural wellbeing holidays in countries like Finland (as defined by Pesonen and Komppula, 2010 and Konu, Tuohino and Björk, 2013) may become even more popular. It is also fairly well documented that engaging with nature encourages greater environmental stewardship and sustainable and greener behaviour. Hopfully, we will emerge with a more prominent regard for nature and a desire to protect it more than ever before.

One of the striking aspects of lockdown for many people was to realise how little we actually need to lead a pleasant and fulfilling life. Slowing down and simplifying life may have been on many peoples' 'list of things to do' for years but COVID-19 certainly forced the issue! The slow movement (as promoted by Carl Honoré, 2005) has arguably been under-promoted, even within the wellness industry and slow tourism may become a more popular choice for many people. Fears of food shortages and limited shopping trips encouraged people to bulk buy, to experiment with home-cooking, to bake their own bread or to return to the comfort foods that Granny used to make (maybe a subconscious clinging to cultural continuity in the face of a threat that affects older generations more seriously?). This has perhaps led to a new appreciation of simple foods and gastronomy which is not only restaurant-based. Our future trips may involve more gastronomic experiences that engage with local, slow and sustainable foods, especially as the desire to support small and struggling businesses is very much in the consciousness of anyone who has been affected by the economic downside of COVID-19.

Some studies suggest that divorce rates increased under lockdown! Others suggest that people re-engaged with their immediate families and desperately started to miss family and friends who could not be visited because of quarantine laws. This is not surprising, as a longterm Harvard study of wellbeing spanning 80 years revealed that human relationships are even more important than health (Mineo, 2017). A resurgence of VFR tourism is guaranteed once borders open and quarantine rules no longer apply.

It seems therefore, that an immediate future of slower, more sustainable, creative forms of tourism in natural environments is likely, at least for those who choose to travel. Domestic tourism may flourish this summer. On the other hand, even the smallest release of lockdown and a glimpse of sunny weather saw the masses thronging to the coasts in the UK. There is no doubt that these tourists would travel further afield to the usual mass tourism beaches of Europe if they had the chance. It is hard to imagine that life and tourism will not go on as usual to a certain extent. Release of lockdown is cause for celebration, so how long before party tourism resumes in the 'overtourism' cities of the world?

On the other hand, many people will feel changed by this experience and existential questions will have crossed the minds of most citizens affected by COVID-19 in the past few weeks. Many people will emerge feeling more cautious and travel may actually increase rather than decrease anxiety depending on the levels of protection needed to travel and the quarantine required on return. On the other hand, more eudaimonic forms of travel may not always induce feelings of pure happiness anyway. Plague or no plague, Albert Camus (1962) argued against the idea that people travel mainly for pleasure, but instead as an occasion for testing the spirit. Some researchers have argued that wellbeing is not simply about happiness or self-fulfillment, it can also be about acknowledging challenges and hardship which lead to longer term strength (Knobloch et al., 2016). Kirillova and Lehto (2015) explore the relationship between vacations, existential authenticity, anxiety and wellbeing and Nawijn and Filep (2016) suggest that even dark tourism can be meaningful in the context of wellbeing (a summary of many of these ideas is provided in Smith and Diekmann, 2017).

Some may realise that home is better (and safer) than they thought, thereby encouraging staycations. In a recent article in the *Financial Times,* Alain de Botton suggests that we can reflect on past trips and immerse ourselves in travel memories from the comfort of our sofas instead. His previous work had lamented the fact that travel experiences are often marred by the personal baggage that we take with us on holidays anyway, acting as a barrier to true escapism. Happiness 'guru' Gretchen Rubin (2012) also emphasized the joys of staycations in her book *Happier at Home*, while admitting that she is not a natural traveller. However, for those who ARE natural travellers or in the business of tourism, it is more reassuring to believe that travel will resume – and soon! We have learnt in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and other crises in recent years that tourism and travellers are thankfully more resilient than we thought. It is one of the paradoxes of life that threats to health and happiness are sometimes the very factors that encourage us to go forth, appreciate and celebrate our lives even more on this rather fragile planet.

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The impact and future implications of COVID-19 in the youth travel sector

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As the UNWTO (2020) stated recently, “The outbreak of Coronavirus COVID-19 presents the tourism sector with a major and evolving challenge.” The fast-moving nature of the COVID-19 outbreak makes it very hard to monitor and predict the effects on the economy, society and culture. It is clear that the effects on tourism are severe, with countries closing their borders and airlines scaling back their operations, or even going out of business. As with previous crises, including SARS, Ebola and the global economic downturn, it is almost certain that recovery will follow. However, the question at the time of writing is how long will the effects last, and when will the eventual recovery begin? These kinds of questions highlight the need for research on the effects of such events, and the attitudes of those effected. The ability to relate the current crisis to previous events can also help to put the situation into perspective. Some commentators are already calling this the worst crisis in a generation.

The novel coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China in November 2019, although its existence was not confirmed until January 2020, when the number of cases began to increase rapidly and also spread beyond China. During February 2020 cases in China climbed steeply to reach 80,000 by the end of month, and cases outside China rose to 7,000. By March 18th cases in other countries (132,000) had far surpassed those in China, where the spread of the virus had been slowed by rigorous containment measures. The introduction of travel restrictions and bans had a progressively severe impact on travel, particularly after the World Health Organisation pronouncement of a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

It is obviously too early to assess the full effects of a crisis that is still unfolding. Initial academic responses to the COVID-19 crisis are already emerging (Jamal and Budke, 2020), although these are based largely on news reports and general data from international organisations. It is therefore useful to assess the early impacts of the crisis on tourism businesses, particularly as reactions to earlier crises have been viewed as exaggerated (Wang, 2009). This paper presents data from the WYSE Travel Confederation research programme, which has been monitoring the performance of the youth travel industry since 2002 (UNWTO/WYSE 2007). This research programme enables us to take the pulse of the global travel industry at this crucial moment, and also to compare the current crisis with previous events that have been the subject of research.

The forecast by the UNWTO (2020) on 16 March estimated that “global international tourist arrivals could decline between 1% to 3%, down from an estimated growth of 3% to 4% forecast in early January 2020”, with an estimated loss of US$ 30 to 50 billion in spending. The Asia and Pacific region was expected to be the most affected, with a decrease of 9% to 12% in international tourist arrivals.

This seems to be a relatively optimistic view, in the light of the current situation. By surveying travel industry representatives directly, we hope to generate a picture of the effects on the tourism industry, and how these effects are manifested in different sectors and world regions. The research questions addressed in this paper are therefore: 1) What are the current and potential future impacts of COVID-19 on the travel industry? 2) How are these impacts distributed by tourism industry sector and world region? This research is based on a survey of travel industry organisations undertaken in March 2020.

In order to put the results of this research into perspective, the literature review concentrates on previous comparable events in tourism in general and world health in particular.

Literature review

According to the UNWTO (2020) “International tourism has only experienced declines in 2003 following SARS and the Iraq war and in 2009 amid the economic and financial crisis, with strong and rapid recovery the following years.” The hope of a rapid rebound is probably behind the UNWTO expectation that global travel will only decline by a maximum of 3% in 2020. A similar rebound after a sharp decline was seen in 2003, when pent-up travel demand after the crisis ensured that the drop in international travel was only 2% in 2003, and there was a sharp increase of 10% in 2004. However, the response to COVID-19 has not only included travel restrictions and cancellations, but also extensive controls on personal movement and the closure of public services and businesses in many countries around the world. This also comes on top of a weakening global economy, and COVID-19 has already had major impacts in China, one of the powerhouses of economic and tourism growth.

Analysis of previous crises shows that tourism can be severely impacted by a range of factors, including terrorist attacks (Araña and León, 2008), natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and extreme weather, financial crises (Sheldon and Dwyer, 2010) and outbreaks of disease. It can be argued that such crises are likely to increase, given the effects of climate change on extreme weather events and the increase in global travel as a conduit for the spread of infectious diseases. However, Novelli, Burgess, Jones and Ritchie (2018), analysing the effects of Ebola, argued that the effect of infectious disease on tourism was particularly under-researched. However, Wang’s (2009) review of different crises indicated that inbound tourism to Taiwan declined the most during the SARS outbreak in 2003, followed by the September 21 earthquake in 1999 and the September 11 attacks in 2001, whereas the impact of the Asian financial crisis in 1997 was relatively mild.

The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in Asia in 2003 probably has the most parallels with the COVID-19 case. SARS caused ‘global panic’ in 2003, although drastic containment measures limited the spread of the disease to 8096 infections, almost exclusively in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan Province, Singapore, and Canada (Henderson and Ng, 2004; McKercher and Chon, 2004). The outbreak triggered a World Health Organisation ‘general travel advisory’, with dramatic declines in arrivals to affected countries. International tourism to China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vietnam declined by 58% in the first quarter of 2003

(Henderson and Ng, 2004). In three months, 774 people died, indicating a mortality rate of around 10%, significantly higher than the 1-2% currently indicated for COVID-19. Even so, McKercher and Chon (2004) argued that the tourism collapse was due more to government reactions to SARS than the disease itself, which they indicated "had no more impact on global tourism than any other seasonal influenza outbreak." This is an interesting argument at a time when governments are adopting different types of measures to contain COVID-19, many of which have severe implications for travel. The eventual impact of SARS and the Iraq War on international tourism arrivals were a 2% drop relative to 2002, when an increase of around 4% might have been expected. This indicates a relatively minor impact globally, in contrast to the sharp declines in affected regions.

Other disease-related crises have also had a significant impact on tourism. For example, Page, Song and Wu (2012) analysed the impact of H1N1 influenza virus—or swine flu, on international arrivals to the UK in 2009. Using econometric modelling they found that swine flu was responsible for an estimated loss of 1.6 million visitors in the second quarter of 2009 or 18% decline in international tourism arrivals. Novelli et al. (2018) in their study of the Ebola outbreak in Africa in 2013 and 2014 indicated the effect of sensational reporting by the media, so that even unaffected countries, such as the Gambia, suffered dramatic falls in tourism.

The current study cannot provide an overall evaluation of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, given the relatively early point of measurement. However, this study has the benefit of reflecting the reactions of the travel industry to the first impacts of the crisis. This in turn will provide an interesting perspective to later examine whether, as Wang suggests, the early reactions to such events tends to be exaggerated.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected between March 3 – 9, 2020 from a convenience sample of respondents who have links with WYSE Travel Confederation (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2020). As a global trade association WYSE is well placed to disseminate the survey to travel industry representatives in different sectors of tourism around the world. The survey was distributed as a web-based questionnaire, and because of the fast-moving nature of the crisis the aim was to collect a large number of responses in a short time period. The survey attracted responses from 73 countries, with 421 completed surveys being retained for analysis. Respondents included organisations specialised in youth travel products as well as those representing mainstream travel products. Most major sectors of the travel industry were represented among the respondents (see Table 1). Not surprisingly, a large proportion of the respondents had youth travel as their main focus of business. Youth travel is defined here as travellers aged 15 to 29, following the recommendations of the UNWTO/WYSE industry review (2007). Youth travel is estimated to account for around 23% of international tourism arrivals (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2018).

Table 1: Respondents by youth tourism industry sector

Tourism sectors	**n**	**%**
Accommodation	116	28
Activities, tours, attractions	91	22
Educational travel	41	10
Language travel	56	13
Volunteering, internships	47	11
Other	70	17
Total	421	100

All respondents were asked about the impact that the global COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak has had on their core business. Specific questions also related to the change in business demand experienced in Q1 2020 vs the same period in 2019, the business outlook for the coming calendar year, top concerns for the immediate and long term, actions taken in response to COVID-19, and the impact of COVID-19 on group travel business.

Analysis of results

The survey respondents expressed a high level of concern about the effects of COVID-19 on their business. More than 80% of businesses believe that their business prospects will be worse over the coming year. On average, respondents reported a 26% drop in demand for business in Q1 2020 compared to the same period last year. There was no significant difference between business sectors, but youth travel specialists reported a slightly lower decrease in demand (24%) for Q1 2020 than non-youth travel specialists (30%). (Table 2). Looking ahead to the rest of the calendar year, on average respondents anticipated a 30% drop in total business volume. Again, there was no significant difference between businesses specialised in youth travel and other travel businesses in terms of business outlook for the rest of the calendar year.

Table 2: Reported actual and expected changes in business volume

	n	Actual % change in business volume Q1 2020	Expected % change in business volume next calendar year
Business sectors			
Accommodation	116	-27,62	-28,70
Activities, tours, attractions	91	-33,74	-32,11
Educational travel	41	-23,83	-16,51
Language travel	56	-39,32	-33,78
Volunteering, internships	47	-25,06	-20,28
Other	63	-24,89	-15,76
F		2,778	3,752
Sig.		0,018	0,002
World region			
Africa	21	-19,81	-11,86
Asia	34	-36,18	-34,94
Europe	222	-32,60	-30,99
North America	83	-25,06	-15,57
Central and South America	26	-21,88	-18,19
Oceania	25	-28,28	-26,72
F		3,047	3,869
Sig.		0,006	0,001
Survey period			
March 3-4	318	-27,91	-23,62
March 5-9	96	-34,61	-33,87
F		4,116	7,343
Sig.		0,043	0,007
All respondents	414	-29,47	-26,00

There was a significant drop in both reported change in business volume for Q1 2020 and expected business for the next calendar year between the responses recorded in the first two days of the survey (3-4 March) and the other days (5-9 March). This underlines the fast-moving nature of the crisis, as more businesses began to appreciate the scale of the outbreak and its consequences.

When asked about their immediate concerns regarding COVID-19, respondents ranked economic uncertainty and travel restrictions as their primary issues. Such macro-economic and political issues were ranked much higher than those that might be considered within the control of the organisation, such as pricing and marketing. There was relatively little difference in the ranking of these concerns for the short term and the long term, showing the significant impact that the respondents felt that external events were having on their business.

In terms of the reaction of respondents to the crisis, the most frequently reported action was, by far, the modification of cancellation policies (36%). Reducing prices and capacity were also actions being taken by a large proportion of respondents. More strategic actions, such as improving quality, forming new partnerships and adjusting marketing and product offering seem to have lower priority for businesses right now. In particular, several respondents mentioned a shift in marketing to local or regional domestic markets. Not surprisingly, increasing prices and/or capacity were not seen as options by many respondents.

Analysing the responses on different dates gives an impression of the fast-moving nature of the crisis. Respondents completing the survey in the period 3-4 March reported an average decrease in business in Q1 2020 of 28%, while those reporting from 5-9 March had significantly higher estimates, averaging almost 35% decline (Table 2). Similarly, those reporting in the first period were expecting a drop in business for the following calendar year of almost 24%, but by 5-9 March the expected reduction was almost 34%. The rise in reported cases outside China from 17,500 to 32,800 (Johns Hopkins University, 2020) over this period was no doubt a major contributor to increased pessimism. The expansion of the coronavirus quarantine zone to cover much of northern Italy on 8 March might also have increased perception of the serious implications of the outbreak for the travel industry.

The responses from different world regions in general reflected the spread of the outbreak at the time of the survey. The biggest declines in business volume were reported in Asia, followed by Europe, Oceania and North America. Respondents in Africa reported smaller business decline, and the Middle East was the only region to report an increase in Q1 2020. In the following 12 months all regions expected significant declines, with Asia and Europe again being most pessimistic.

Looking at specific tourism sectors, all reported drops in demand for Q1 2020 in comparison to the same period in 2019. The largest decreases were seen in the language travel sector (almost 34%), followed by activities, tours and attractions (-32%) and accommodation (-28%). The language travel sector is likely to have been impacted by a dramatic drop in outbound Chinese travel, as the Chinese market is crucial for many language travel destinations, including the UK, Australia, and Canada. The effect of a reduction in travel is also likely to be keenly felt by accommodation providers and attractions, who rely on a steady flow of visitors. For the educational travel and volunteering and internship programmes the immediate effects were less obvious because of the seasonal nature of much of this business. The expected fall in business over the next 12 months in general reflected the short-term reduction in demand across the different sectors.

The only businesses reporting an upturn were those in the insurance sector, who reported a 2% average increase in demand during Q1 of 2020. Insurance providers were also optimistic about their prospects for the rest of the calendar year, anticipating, on average, a 5% increase in business volume.

Discussion and conclusions

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has already had a significant impact on global travel. The results of this initial survey indicate that businesses in almost all travel sectors and world regions have already experienced a downturn in demand, and that they are also expecting this to continue over the following 12 months.

Perhaps more significant than the immediate downturn in travel caused many by travel bans, the youth travel industry faces considerable challenges in adapting to the 'new normal' in the post-crisis period. Youth travel accommodation in particular is likely to have to adapt radically, because hostels are characterised by the use of dormitories, which typically sleep between 4 and 12 people in one room. Hostels also have significant areas for socialising, and collective kitchens, which arguably set them apart from budget hotels. Implementing social distancing in these facilities will be challenging, particularly as the business model depends on a fairly small floor area per guest. The consequences of this could be seen in the closure of a number of hostels in the city of Lisbon, which had been re-purposed for housing migrants during the lockdown. Residents quickly became infected and the facilities had to be cleared. It seems that in the future hostels in particular will have to re-visit their business model, and probably prioritise the provision of private rooms for the foreseeable future.

In response to our research questions, firstly it seems that the business impacts of COVID-19 are already significant, and that the travel industry is expecting these effects to last for at least the next 12 months. Increasing pessimism during the course of the survey period also indicates that the crisis will continue to deepen, and comparisons with the effects of previous crises (such as SARS) suggests that COVID-19 will have considerably greater impact on the travel industry. Secondly, the negative impacts of COVID-19 are already being felt in all sectors of the travel industry (with the possible exception of insurance companies), and in all world regions.

In addition to the immediate challenges posed by travel bans, research by WYSE Travel Confederation (2018) has already indicated a growing concern with epidemics, with the proportion of youth travel plans affected by such health issues doubling from 6% in 2007 to 12% in 2017.

Optimists will point to the significant rebounds in travel to Asia following the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the global economic downturn in 2009. The presentations on the recovery of Asian tourism to the ATLAS webinar in May 2020 indicated that a number of countries that acted quickly on COVID-19 as a result of their experience with SARS are already looking to bounce back. But commentators have already warned of a possible 'second wave' of COVID-19, and it seems that Henderson and Ng's (2004) warning that "Other unknown viruses are also predicted to emerge in the 21st century, and the prevailing forces of globalisation will facilitate their spread" was very prescient. As they said, such events are beyond the control of

the tourism industry, “which has few options beyond strict cost cutting, an exhaustive search for and exploitation of revenue-generating possibilities and calls for government aid.” It seems that even though the scale of the crisis may be greater than those experienced before, we are still in familiar territory as far as tourism industry response is concerned.

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Part Three: The Politics of Post-COVID Tourism

COVID-19 and tourism: Reclaiming tourism as a social force?

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Introduction

Yuval Noah Harari's analysis of COVID-19 in the Financial Times opened with: "This storm will pass. But the choices we make now could change our lives for years to come" (Harari, 2020). Writers in the special issue have been tasked with considering our sphere of scholarship and asking in what ways the future of tourism might be shaped by these events. COVID-19 has been recognised as a possible game-changer for globalisation as well as for global tourism; but the critical questions are in what ways and to whose benefit? This analysis will critically examine the state of tourism pre-COVID and during COVID as a way of understanding what may occur post-COVID. This follows an Indigenous approach of seeing the past, present and future as interconnected and flowing. It opens us up to thinking through connections rather than expecting abrupt changes. A critical social theory approach is taken here. Such work:

> […] is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class, and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 288).

COVID-19 up-ended taken for granted flows of people and goods as it spread through the channels of airports, cruise ships and trains that enabled these flows. Faced with a stark choice between public health requirements and the need to keep service industries operating, governments around the world shut down borders, blocked tourists and told people to shelter in place at home.

As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis was devastating in its impacts on travel and tourism, as well as the hospitality, arts and events affiliated sectors. The United Nations World Tourism Organization has estimated: up to an 80% decline in international tourism in 2020; a possible US$1.2 trillion loss in tourism export revenues; and a risk to up to 120 million direct tourism jobs (UNWTO, 2020). But more importantly, hundreds of thousands of people have died, numerous others incapacitated and health systems over-whelmed. In addressing the crisis, we also have found that care workers and service workers, including nurses, teachers, grocery store clerks and gig economy delivery drivers, were the ones whose work was declared essential as we relied on them to help us shelter from the pandemic. It is not a small point to note that women and People of Colour are the ones that

predominate in these jobs, that not coincidentally are also frequently low-paid, precarious and subject to poor working conditions. Such a momentous event as COVID-19 has opened up the possibility of this new consciousness leading to profound transformations.

COVID-19 crisis as a moment of transformation?

From early 2020, the COVID-19 crisis was widely seen as a potential moment of transformation (e.g. Roy, 2020). One articulation from the media explained: "Now, one form of unregulated, free-market globalization with its propensity for crises and pandemics is certainly dying. But another form that recognizes interdependence and the primacy of evidence-based collective action is being born" (Hutton, 2020). Because travel and tourism were arguably the hardest hit sectors globally in the crisis, transformational thinking was particularly evident in sections of tourism academia (see Lew, 2020).

While recognising the devastation of the pandemic, many in tourism studies looked to the COVID-19 crisis as a potential catalyst to essential transformation (e.g. Ateljevic, 2020; Crossley, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a). The Editor of the journal Tourism Geographies, Professor Alan Lew, responded quickly to the challenge of COVID-19 by developing an extraordinary special issue of the journal focused on "visions of how the events of 2020 will transform our planet in potentially positive ways, with travel and tourism being among the most significant areas to be impacts [sic] (Lew, 2020). In another case, a group of tourism scholars argued that the crisis called into question the pro-growth approach to tourism:

> The COVID-19 crisis should thus be seen as an opportunity to critically reconsider tourism's growth trajectory, and to question the logic of more arrivals implying greater benefits. This may begin with a review of the positive outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gossling, Scott & Hall, 2020, p. 13-4).

In contrast, the focus of most tourism industry leaders was recovery and returning to "business as usual" as soon as possible. Leaders of airlines, cruise industry and tourism corporations were looking for their share of large government bailout packages (Keating, 2020) or access to government funds allocated for small businesses and workers' safety nets (Martin & Remeikis, 2020). In industry media responses and press releases, there was a clear emphasis on getting back to normal quickly. For instance, Roger Dow of the US Travel Association stated: "Over the long term we will return and come back to business as usual. People have short memories and there will be a pent up desire to travel" (Becker, 2020).

However, the critical point to understand is that pre-COVID, the industry operated largely under free-market capitalism which has worked to hollow out society, privatise public goods and services and to cede extensive power to the corporate sector. COVID-19 has revealed how this fails to support greater fairness, sustainability and well-being both in tourism and beyond to the larger society. Returning to business as usual is returning to the market values that dominated pre-COVID societies and moving away from the social solidarity that COVID-19 inspired. For in the crisis of COVID-19, we re-learned: that community and solidarity matters; that caring and service work sustains us; and that we are only

as well and secure as the most vulnerable amongst us. This is why suddenly we could shelter the homeless in our empty hotels when before it seemed we had no solution to pervasive homelessness caused by neoliberal policies (e.g. Cohen & Mitchell, 2020). This article tries to understand: the way tourism has worked before the crisis: how the crisis shutdown exposed dynamics we had so normalised that we took them as the natural order of things; and then imagine the possibilities of what we might do with tourism post-COVID.

Tourism and Hospitality pre-COVID-19

Modern tourism began with Thomas Cook in England of the 1800s with a social purpose as its base (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). These roots of tourism in visions of social purpose have largely been forgotten with tourism under neoliberalism. Analysts have been calling out the exploitation and damages of growth-focused forms of tourism which have been fostered under neoliberalism (Bianchi & de Man, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Overtourism was one symptom of the problem; places including Venice, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Dubrovnik and Reykjavik suffered social, cultural, environmental and economic problems from this phenomenon. This occurred because the tourism industry was under the influence of "pro-industry boosters" that set agendas on pushing through greater volumes of tourists in order to secure profits and meet growth targets. Local communities, so called "host communities", were left with the negative impacts and some began protesting, politically activating and building a different approach (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a).

The tourism and hospitality industries are too frequently characterised by low wages, casualisation, precarity and seasonality. Workers and their unions have had to resort to protests and strikes to try to address deteriorating labour conditions. For instance, in 2018 Unite Here represented some 7,700 workers in their strike against Marriott Hotel chain in their demands for:

1. Wages high enough so that workers do not have to work multiple jobs to earn a living wage;
2. A voice in determining how much automation and what kind of automation makes its way into the hotel industry; and
3. Better measures for workplace safety (Ting, 2018).

This raises a critical question: why has it been tolerated that tourism and hospitality workers often must hold down multiple jobs in order to eke out survival? Additionally, scandals concerning wage theft (through underpayment and unpaid overtime) and abusive working conditions have been exposed in countries such as Australia recently (Dick, 2019).

The cruise industry stands out as an icon of the damages of this corporatised form of tourism and hospitality. It has been indicted for its use of flags of convenience to avoid paying sufficient taxes, as well as to avoid rigorous environmental, labour and social regulations (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020b). The way in which cruise ships have contributed to overtourism in cities such as Venice, Barcelona and other places is also indicative of how this has worked against the interests of local communities that have found their homes made into tourism destinations

sometimes against their interests. This has sparked protests and opposition which has demonstrated the tolerance for the tourism status quo was under pressure…

The critics of these practices who come from academia, non-governmental organisations and the communities themselves have been left in a reactive state. Sometimes, they have found a seat at the table through corporate social responsibility and sustainability initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; however, they have been unable to get to the heart of the structures that cause the damages they protest. As a result, grave ecological damages result from tourism, including climate change. Social, cultural and spiritual damages also occur through relentless commodification and imposition of tourism on communities in forms that they do not control and receive insufficient benefit from. This seemed to be an unstoppable trajectory until COVID-19 upended these practices.

Tourism and Hospitality During COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed the way our world works completely from when it was declared a global pandemic on the 12th of March, 2020. Borders have been shut, travel has been banned, social activities have been curtailed, and people have been told to stay in their homes. In undertaking these actions, governments around the world have been trying to strike a balance between keeping jobs and economies going while trying to implement public health measures that protect societies and their public health systems.

As a result, all facets of hospitality, tourism, arts, culture, entertainment and events have been forced to shut down, and/or go online or in other modes that reduce interpersonal contact. Additionally, the tourism industry and its facilities have been implicated as a factor in spreading the virus, with cruise ships becoming iconic of the crisis as they were denied entry and their passengers and crew temporarily stranded (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020b). Because of these multiple and complex factors, conversations have been reinvigorated concerning the relationships between society and economy and as a result marked a challenge to the market models that dominated pre-COVID (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a).

The crisis also illuminated how polarised neoliberal societies have become, starkly illuminating the haves, the have-nots and the uber-elite who have actually profited during this global disaster (Rogers, 2020). Some have noted that in the crisis, not everyone had a home to shelter in and not everyone could work from home. Thus, the crisis caused a moment of critical questioning as public health requirements reminded us that we are not in fact individual consumers but rather members of communities that depend on social bonds and considerations of the common good.

However, writing this in the middle of the crisis, it is clear that this revival of the social is not uncontested. For instance, historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz analysed the industry push to re-open the economy quickly as a way to prevent demands for social change:

> The capitalist class, those who benefit most from the unequal system, they know it's not sustainable. They're desperate not to stay locked down too

> long, so people get used to fresh air, breathing air without carbon in it. People might get ideas of a different kind of world (cited in Beckett, 2020).

In addition to these reimaginings of the social, the human relationship with nature was also brought into stark relief. Reports featured in social media of how animals returned to cities, the lagoons of Venice ran clean and nature restored itself in multiple ways in the absence of humans under COVID lockdowns. In fact, Visit Auckland authorities used these facts in their communications campaign with a short video "Papatūānuku (our earth mother) is breathing" (Visit Auckland, 2020). Krishnamurthi noted:

> A video that celebrates the silence of our biggest city in the Covid-19 lockdown has become the biggest ever global hit on the Visit Auckland YouTube channel – 218,940 view at last count.
>
> Papatūānuku is breathing, narrated by 11-year-old Manawanui Maniapoto Mills, pans across Auckland's natural landscapes as human activity almost stops during the lockdown.
>
> "Stop, listen, Papatūānuku, the earth mother, is breathing, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is still," it begins (2020).

Crossley (2020) has explored these phenomena as an expression of ecological grief among many people in our global community. Her analysis suggested this can be viewed as "[…] a motif of environmental hope that symbolises life, regeneration and resilience, the understanding of which may contribute to the project of hopeful tourism in the post-COVID-19 era" (2020, p. 1).

Thus, we see that despite all of the struggles and negativities of the global pandemic crisis, the seeds of possibilities of doing tourism differently have emerged in a more forceful and realistic way. As Harari (2020) foreshadows, it is the choices that we make in this moment still in the crisis that will determine the future we enter into as we move to a post-crisis era.

Tourism and Hospitality Post-COVID-19?

The premise of this article is that the past, present and future are interconnected. However, those committed to transformative thinking for tourism futures as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis do seem to be looking for a break with the past and a break with business as usual (e.g. Lew, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a; Ateljevic, 2020; Crossley, 2020). Considering an intervention by Butcher (2020) championing a recovery of the industry and a swift return to business as usual, it is also clear there is a struggle for the hegemony of ideas for the future of tourism.

However, as Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) explained, before tourism became the marketised industry that we now have accepted as a fact, tourism was viewed as an important social force and tasked with achieving important social goals. The marketisation and corporatisation of tourism have served the interests of the powerful players in the tourism industry, governments that have decided to support their profit-making agendas and privileged tourists desirous of frequent and

inexpensive holidays in the beautiful and exotic locations of the global community. Those exploited in this tourism formula are the many workers and members of the local community who have subsidised the holidays of the tourists and the profits of the tourism corporates. There are also the multitude of people who are unable to travel and be tourists for a variety of reasons and also those who seek to travel for urgent reasons of needing safety and asylum. The latter are set to become even more numerous with the looming threat of climate change which will increase the numbers of environmental refugees, who to date do not have recognised claims for refugee status.

COVID-19 offers a chance to turn away from the hegemony asserted by market forces for their profit and return to an earlier vision of tourism as a social force, connecting people, building greater well-being and fulfilling wider promises beyond only market exchange (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). We have a chance to return to the true values of hospitality and see vital bridges between tourists and local communities that might help eradicate the animosity that has appeared in recent years, particularly in sites of extreme overtourism. Additionally, we need to reform tourism so that it no longer perpetuates dispossession, exploitation, inequities and injustices. The contributors to the special issue of Tourism Geographies entitled "Visions of Travel and Tourism after the Global COVID-19 Transformation of 2020" offer diverse insights into the multiple possibilities that have opened up before us. There are those that oppose such agendas because of a "pro-industry" orientation which they determine requires all energies to go into rapid recovery rather than reform (see Butcher, 2020).

I will conclude this section to argue that the proponents of reform or even total reset are not adequately positioned as "anti-industry" in contrast to those of the "pro-industry" mindset such as Butcher. The cruise sector can be turned to for an illustrative case once again in order to accomplish this. The Peace Boat, a Japanese peace organisation, has used the tool of the cruise ship in its efforts to spread a global message of peace (Peace Boat, n.d.). It is committed to building its own ecoship, which it envisions will be the "planet's most environmentally sustainable cruise ship" (Ecoship, n.d.). This underscores that the phenomenon of tourism is by no means limited to the corporate sector with its profit motivations that we have been recently attuned to focus on; it is much more than that as the Peace Boat demonstrates. The dominance of pro-industry advocates has worked to make us inattentive to these essential facets of tourism. The transformative moment opened up by the COVID-19 crisis in fact may be an important moment to return to earlier understandings of the value of tourism and thereby ensure that we reclaim it for greater diversity, much wider benefit and much better and more sustainable outcomes.

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy (2020) stated:

> Whatever it is, coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday

> machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality.

It can be argued that tourism under free-market capitalism has been a significant facet of what Roy calls a “doomsday machine”. This is in part why a number of scholars were quick to act on a call to contemplate transforming tourism in the COVID-19 moment. Tourism has been the subject of criticism from academia, NGOs and communities for decades for the reasons outlined here. The recent phenomenon of overtourism has suggested that the time was overripe to address tourism’s deficiencies and rethink it (Higgins-Desbiolles, Carnicelli, Krolikowski, Wijesinghe & Boluk, 2019).

In the wake of COVID-19, we have a moment in which to consider what future we want to work towards, as Hariri suggested. Business as usual in tourism has been marked by the dominance of the industry to the detriment of earlier visions of tourism that were engaged with the social capacities of tourism. The social solidarity and community bonds that societies around the world have relied on to address the pandemic point to a possible future where we revive this earlier vision. Higgins-Desbiolles (2020a, p. 9) recently conceptualised this as “socialising tourism” which she described as “ […] a call to place tourism in the context of the society in which it occurs and to harness it for the empowerment and wellbeing of local communities”.

COVID-19’s global disruption has brought us to a moment when we can envision what was previously thought to be impossible. It is certainly not a given that such a transformation will occur in the face of industry advocates who seek a rapid recovery and return to business as usual. Tourism’s almost forgotten past may offer some inspiration for evolving tourism to be of wider benefit to more people and less damaging to societies and ecologies than has been the case of the corporatised model of tourism. As Harari (2020) told us, “the storm will pass” but it is we who will decide whether we embrace the social connectedness and responsibility that the pandemic fomented or whether we abandon these again to re-embrace market values in a desire to return to “normality”. If our goal is greater social and ecological sustainability for more equitable and just futures, COVID-19’s interruption invites us to look to tourism’s past to help us in our imaginings to create a better future.

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After Overtourism? Discursive lock-ins and the future of (tourist) places

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This short paper presents some reflections on the phenomenon known as 'overtourism', on the abrupt immobilisation of travel contextual to the COVID-19 crisis, and on the repercussions a stage of 'recovery' might have for places that were until a few months ago 'overtouristed'. Ultimately, it aims at tackling the question of whether the global sanitary crisis and its long tail could be working as a watershed moment in the handling of the structural drivers that produce overtourism.

Since no more than a half decade, overtourism has become an object of inquiry and debate. I believe the first use of this term appears in a text by Harold Goodwin (2017); it has thus been taken to next level by a group of (mostly young) authors, including Claudio Milano, Ko Koens, Hugues Seraphin (see Milano, 2018; Milano et al., 2019; Koens et al, 2018; Aall & Koens, 2019; Seraphin, 2018; Seraphin et al., 2019). These authors have pushed further the inquiry into the dimensions and analytics of overtourism, the management of overtourism, and the critical enquiry over its epistemology and problematisation. Their main works are also collected in two edited books with many other contributors (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Milano et al., 2019), providing systematisation to the research on overtourism and related issues; and have been followed by a great many others. Since 2018 only, I count 70 journal papers indexed in JCR with 'overtourism' in the title.

Most notably, overtourism has made the public and policy debate big way. Not only many of the authors cited above have contributed to the first policy report commissioned by the European Commission (Peeters et al., 2018), a work that lays down a substantial methodological approach for research on overtourism and identification of critical issues, towards disposing of a straightforward policy approach at European level. The real deal is that the media has picked up the phenomenon, and even before the term itself made the academic frontlines, global papers such as the New York Times, the Guardian, Wired or Vice, have covered extensively the tourist excesses registered in many destinations around the world and the new critical positionings around that issue. The national and local media have followed suit, and, as noted in Russo & Scarnato (2018), the discourses on tourism which they would deliver especially to their middle-class readerships have changed substantially around the globe.

An important part of the debate (academic and societal) on overtourism has regarded its epistemological connotations and the relation between drivers and effects. When does tourism become 'overtourism'? is there a special reason why so much attention has been given to this phenomenon – that of the externalities generated by an excess of tourism over capacity thresholds – in recent years? Is it just because the sheer number of places interested by 'an excess of tourists' has swelled with natural growth rates of the travelling population? Or has it mutated,

and if not for the effects that it produces on places and communities, for the public perceptions on this topic? And how does that matter in terms of policy agendas?

While overtourism is observed in a wide range of places (whole countries, like Iceland; small islands, like Santorini or Formentera; heritage towns like Venice or Mont St. Michel; rural areas, like the Chianti wine region; natural areas like natural parks, mountain slopes and beaches; etc.), it is in large urban tourism destinations – and especially their historical cores – that its effects are more widely analysed and have become an object of widespread societal contestation (Colomb & Novy, 2019). In cities, tourism is tightly enmeshed and transversal to many other constituting elements of their physical, economic, social, and cultural landscape. It stands out as one form of mobility among (and nesting) many others, human and nonhuman, constituting a constellation of force-fields continuously shaping, negotiating and transforming what any city is and means; for instance, in relation to its population and social capital, when the issue of different forms of 'dwelling' is taken into consideration (McFarlane, 2011).

This has important derivates in terms of policing overtourism: as noted by Dredge (2017),

> *(….) the crisis that many cities now face is not simply a tourism crisis. Nor can it be understood or addressed from a tourism-centred lens. Focusing on overtourism as a new and urgent concern downplays important knowledge we already have about the issues driving overcrowding, congestion, resource and community exploitation and so on. It is narrow in focus and is resetting the clock on well-established concerns in urban tourism. It is old wine in new bottles, and we need to think twice about how we engage in the overtourism debate.*

I agree completely with Dredge's statement. Overtourism is definitely not something new in terms of how tourism unfolds as a transformative force of space and places. However, it has three distinctive characteristics which nuance it as a new epistemological paradigm. First, it is something than instead of regarding 'tourism places' exclusively, could happen anywhere: any place could be interested by an intermeshed agency of tourism and related human and nonhuman mobilities, fuelled by key transformations in technology and mobility regimes (e.g. migrants at both ends of the skills map, vehicles, capital), ones driving others, to the point that local structures and interests of 'sedentary' agencies are unsettled in the process.

Secondly, it is related to drivers that have not been traditionally associated with tourism development, such as the digitalisation of the tourism mobility system and of the accommodation marketplace. For instance, the appearance of p2p platforms that have boosted the 'tourismification of housing'), or digital apps that abate the cognitive barriers between a mobile population place users and the 'unfamiliar' everyday life environments of the locals.

And thirdly, it is noted as such because there's a public opinion that having been affected directly (by increased housing costs, public space and services of a declining quality, longer commuting time to work, etc.), positions itself critically and as constituency starts shifting policy agendas. In this sense, overtourism is something new because it has started to affect middle class interests sensibly and

this has triggered some type of discursive reaction. In fact, in a paper in the process of publication (Russo, Soro & Scarnato, 2020) we propose that overtourism has emerged in Barcelona as a policy issue because after the 2008 crisis, tourism-related externalities in Barcelona started to affect not just the usual underdogs (low paid workers and other vulnerable collectives), crowding them out of the city, but also a sizeable slice of the middle classes that were increasingly unable to cope with the pressure of the visitor economy especially in the housing market and for access to services of general interests (see also Novy, 2019).

Come March 2020, for a few weeks all that seemed to have gone away. COVID19 has – in many countries – immobilised the resident population and fenced off a big part of their mobilities. The media started diffusing surreal images of empty streets and squares in places that before lockdown where the epitome of overtourism, and one could be partly relieved from the misery of confinement from knowing that air quality in Barcelona went back at levels of 20 years ago or that dolphins have been spotted in the Venice lagoon. Yet concerns started to mount on the future of tourism once the emergency will be over (and it ain't yet, at the time of writing this piece) – the loss of jobs, of course, but also the foreseeable fallback of tourism mobility as a dimension of democratic freedom. I myself have been faced with the sudden irrelevance of the overtourism debate: in early March, presenting a research report of the danger that growing cruise tourism could become a threat to the quality of public space in my city, Tarragona, and doing so from a City Hall facing a totally empty main square, under the doubtful eyes of the commissioning municipal officer; and as the coordinator of a H2020 project on tourism mobilities and social exclusion, started two months before the lockdown, which obviously demanded a big change in focus to be taken seriously by all the stakeholders we are going to have to talk to.

I am not citing here the zillion sources, debate fora and industry projections that are trying to dissect the post COVID-19 tourism world, the chances of early or slow recovery of the sector, or the impact on our economies and our lives of a 'less tourist world'. I am following, but with more than a grain of scepticism: things taken for granted two weeks ago are contested today, new scenarios open up continuously, and of course politics – which should ultimately determine the near future – is in a state of utter turbulence.

What I'm concerned about instead is the debate on whether the postCOVID-19 tourism world will look like in the framework of the insights on overtourism we had until three months ago. Or maybe the apparent lack of such debate and the depoliticization of overtourism (Gössling et al, 2020) under the pressure of the 'recovery machine': there have been voices – the usual suspects – proposing that a transition to greener, slower, more resilient tourism places, which had not yet been initiated systematically even in the dramatic landscape of the urgency of energy transitions and fight to climate change, was maybe possible now that long-haul mobility systems are paralysed (see for instance Cave & Dredge, 2020). However, after a brief 'looking around' moment, the dominant opinion seems to be that we need a fast recovery of tourism – especially in the most tourism-dependent regional economies (all the most formerly overtouristed places) – to mitigate the awful economics impacts that the current blockage will presumably have. And this from inside the academia, with carefully crafted arguments; and from most policy and public opinion circles, in the usual much more thick-cut manners.

Yes, we do badly need a way out for the thousands, millions of workers, small entrepreneurs and autonomous workers whose medium-term perspectives in this moment are dire. We can only have a faint idea of the impact of all that in social security systems in countries like Spain or Italy that were close to collapse even after this slump.

However, we should consider the harsh fact that people for a certain period of time won't travel long-haul as much as before, that attractions need functioning with new operational parameters, that certain social rituals that are part and parcel of lives on the move will no longer be permitted or be considered ethically acceptable (UNWTO, 2020), and turn all this in an opportunity for a transition in which many destinations work. Do more with less is my mantra, and I'm quite surprised that there seem to be little consensus on that even among my fellow scholars. 'Have back more and more', whatever it costs seems instead the winning tune.

The debate on overtourism has been ground-breaking at least in one sense: it has turned for good tourism into a recognised transversal policy issue. Not any longer a sectoral fact, or the object of mere quantitative growth estimates. But something that matters – in good or bad – for health, culture, and democracy, nuancing a clash of rights: freedom of movement and entrepreneurship (stipulated by national constitutions and international agreements) vs capacity to maintain your life support system (written basically nowhere), and whose 'metrics' are highly heterogeneous, subjective, and fluid.

Let's not lose sight from that. If the post COVID-19 recovery will be just another echelon of the race for privatising profits (through in the mix the new 'diagonal ally' of the tourism value chain, the security/sanitation operators) and commoning social costs, this is going to be a tremendous lost opportunity. If instead destinations all over the world (and the policy-industry-citizen-research quadruple helix conglomerates at multiple scales that define their governance system) take a deep breath, think out of the box for a time, and try to reach consensus on these few simple assumptions:

1. that the physical connectivity infrastructure for long-haul travel and goods does not need expanding, but they could invest instead in more efficient and inclusive management of mobility from the proximity;
2. that a tourist marketplace based on 'controlled' high service quality, to be given leeway through a smart system of regulation and taxation at local level, can produce as much added value and better-paid – though possibly less – jobs than one based on large volumes, but eliminating the perverse side effects on resource use;
3. that dependence on a vulnerable sector like tourism is not overcome through revamping tourism promotion, but instead pointing on other resilient sectors like the social and green economy, and helping workers expelled from the tourism sector to achieve the skills needed for those other sectors;
4. that houses are for living, not for speculative economic activities, and have that stipulated in ordnances and fiscal policies; and there is a chance now to incentivize now reconversion of the idle 'Airbnb-like' stock to the resident market;

5. and that tourism is instrumental to producing widespread welfare, both to hosts and guests, but cannot prescind from the retention of local inhabitants as the ultimate ‘place producers’ of attractive destinations;

then, maybe, they will show that the future of tourism postCOVID-19 has a real change to recover the value of tourism as a democratising force for the world community.

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COVID-19 and the potential for a radical transformation of tourism?[1]

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In contrast to previous disruptions, whether brought about by terrorism, natural disasters, financial crises or indeed previous pandemics, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated an unprecedented shutdown of travel and tourist destinations on a truly global scale. However, such was the uncompromising belief in tourism's resilience that in late January the UNWTO was predicting 3 to 4 per cent growth in tourism for 2020 while the Secretary-General stressed that "in these times of uncertainty and volatility, tourism remains a reliable economic sector".

The pandemic has not only highlighted the magnitude and scope of tourisms' global importcnee it has also underscored the manner in which the interconnected global architecture of tourism and associated flows of mobility act as a vector for the transmission of such pathogens, nowhere more so than on densely-crowded cruise ships that act as floating petri-dishes of incubation. The UNWTO has updated its forecast for the expected downturn in international arrivals of up to 80 per cent relative to 2019 which could translate into a potential fall of eye-watering magnitude of US$1.2 trillion in global revenues.

That this constitutes a profound crisis and major turning point for global tourism is beyond doubt. However, where the 2008 financial crisis was a crisis of financialized capitalism, the COVID-19 pandemic has catastrophically disrupted consumer demand and supply chains at the same time, leading to a "fundamental shift in the very nature of the global economy" (Milanovic, 2020). It nevertheless remains vital that we resist calls to merely restore tourism growth (Butcher, 2020), in order to both undertake an effective analysis of the precise manner and magnitude of tourism's undoing as a result of the pandemic with a view to building an effective strategic response to those who might take advantage of the crisis as an opportunity to reinforce corporate-managed growth-led tourism in the name of 'sustainable growth' and economic development.

While it is too early for a comprehensive analysis of the pandemic's repercussions for the political-economic structure of tourism going forward, it has already been suggested by some that the pandemic presents an "unprecedented opportunity for a reboot" of the tourism industry (Niewiadomski, 2020). Many are optimistic that the abrupt collapse of tourism will enable destinations to take stock and to 'rethink' tourism. Other more cautious assessments regard this as critical juncture and a moment to challenge the current growth trajectory of tourism and re-align it with social and ecological limits (Gössling, et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a).

[1] An earlier version of the article appears in ALBASUD on-line: http://www.albasud.org/noticia/es/1219/el-covid-19-y-las-perspectivas-para-una-transformaci-n-radical-del-turismo (22-05-20)

Certain destinations have in fact already begun to rethink how to rebuild their tourism sectors in line with sustainability goals. For some, such as Hawaii, this involves limiting visitor numbers and redirecting marketing towards smaller groups of higher-paying tourists seeking cultural and natural experiences. Amsterdam meanwhile has embraced Raworth's (2017) regenerative model of doughnut economics in order to realign the urban economy with social and environmental goals.

However, many of the commentaries and responses thus far fail to fully consider both the deeper structural contexts within which such transformations take place along with the political logics of the impending struggles to shape the structural and organisational contours of the global tourism industries in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This brief reflection will consider some of the challenges for a radical, transformative break with growth-led, corporate-managed, resource-intensive models of tourism development, in the light of the current and emerging political-economic configurations of tourism.

The great disruption and political-economic restructuring of tourism

Despite scattered signs of progress, a systemic paradigm shift towards more sustainable and equitable forms of tourism remains inconsistent and hindered by the relentless pursuit of growth and tourism's integral role in the continuous expansion of capitalism (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017), a fact recognised even by many in the mainstream media. Prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, global sustainable tourism dialogues had begun to pivot increasingly around the UNWTO's 2015-2030 sustainable tourism development agenda - framed by the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - the central premise of which is that the transition to inclusive and sustainable tourism can be engineered through the managed growth of tourism (UNWTO, 2017). Despite having previously acknowledged the problems associated with overtourism in its response to the pandemic the UNWTO has renewed its commitment to the limited horizons of "sustainable growth" (see Bianchi & de Man, 2020).

That said, the pandemic has hastened the decline of the neoliberal economic orthodoxies that have fuelled three decades of hyper-globalisation and market-led growth, as states have stepped in to prevent the collapse of businesses and mitigate the effects of spiralling unemployment . As a result of the suspension of travel and related 'lockdowns' the WTTC has forecast an unprecedented loss of 100 million tourism jobs worldwide together alongside a 30 per cent decrease (US$2.7 billion) in tourism's contribution to GDP. Further to the immediate cost in terms of bankruptcies, unemployment and lost livelihoods the precise structure and power coordinates of the global political economy of tourism that will emerge in the pandemic's wake is difficult to predict. This fact is further complicated by the hybrid and composite nature of the tourism 'industries' characterised as they are by manifold inter-connections between firms of different size and capitals organised across globally-differentiated regions in an unequal division of tourism labour.

The pandemic has also laid bare vulnerabilities where tourism comprises higher than average proportions of GDP and employment, not least in Spain and Italy whose industries typically comprise a multitude of small to medium-sized, often family-owned businesses, particularly the latter. Even as travel restarts, domestic

markets cannot easily compensate for lost international demand, although an increased emphasis on domestic tourism is likely in the short term. Tourism supply is by its very nature perishable, nor can tourism and hospitality infrastructures be easily repurposed for alternative economic usage with the exception perhaps of hotel real estate assets that can potentially be sold to release liquidity. Although commercial real estate activity has also slowed considerably.

It is estimated that global hotel supply will contract by two per cent. Particularly hard hit are the thousands of small to medium sized firms which make up around 80 per cent of global tourism who have struggled to access emergency government assistance. Despite sizeable cash reserves and access to finance many of the corporate digital platforms which had been driving significant market concentration in recent years have announced major restructuring plans and job losses, the dominance of a few major corporate digital-tech companies is likely to intensify.

The crisis has also laid bare the tensions between the interests of global capital and transnational corporations on the one hand and those of states on the other. Companies that have consistently preached the virtues of low tax-regulatory regimes have been amongst the most fervent proponents of state aid, not least the airline industry which faces global revenue losses of US$250 billion and a loss of 750,000 jobs in the US alone. Aggressive lobbying has enabled airlines to secure vital state aid to stay afloat. While there is a clear rationale and urgent need to provide support for laid-off workers in industries that employs tens of millions of workers, low pay, precarity and poor working conditions are rife while growth in air travel has been a major contributor to carbon emissions.

The crisis nevertheless provides an opportunity for states to orchestrate a transition to sustainable transport systems aligned with improved working conditions and binding emissions targets. Indeed, Air France-KLM has been granted a combined French-Dutch state aid package of around €10 billion in return for a commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and suspend dividend payments. US airlines in contrast have merely been encouraged to “refrain” from using bailouts for share buy backs or dividend payments until September 2021, and to limit executive pay until late March 2022. Meanwhile, the cruise industry – in which three nominally US companies account for 75 per cent of the global cruise market – was excluded from the US$500 billion corporate bail-out fund, by virtue of systematic tax avoidance and circumvention of labour and environmental standards by sailing under overseas ‘flags of convenience’, with some predicting troubled times ahead (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020b).

There are signs too that the pandemic may hasten geo-political and economic power shifts that were already apparent prior to the outbreak While weaker states may suffer as foreign investment moves out of emerging markets, non-Western sovereign wealth funds have moved to purchase equity across range of aviation, hotel, cruise and entertainment companies. Prior to the pandemic Chinese investors had already been busily acquiring Western tourism, hotel and property assets prior to the pandemic, including iconic European tourism brands Club Mediterranée and Thomas Cook. Thanks to sizeable foreign currency reserves and demand for domestic travel, well-capitalized state-backed Chinese enterprises and other sovereign wealth funds are well placed to withstand the economic fallout and

to step up investments into major tourism, hospitality, aviation and real estate assets.

Those most severely impacted by the pandemic are the millions of vulnerable workers and small enterprises in small islands and other low-income tourism destinations across the Global South. Without international financial assistance these states will be hard pressed to keep local tourism businesses afloat and furlough workers and are likely see their public debt burdens rise. A major proportion of global tourism and hospitality workers comprise women and/or migrants often working in the informal sector with little or no recourse to state support and social protection. Notwithstanding greater access to state support, tourism and hospitality workers in wealthy states too have not been spared. In the US 98 per cent of Unite Here trade union members have lost their jobs while trades unions in Europe estimate that almost the entire 12m strong hospitality workforce has either been furloughed, or been made redundant. Meanwhile a significant number of low-paid cruise ship workers, many of whom hail from developing countries, remain stranded at sea and unable to return home.

Towards democratic, equitable and sustainable tourism?

In her critically acclaimed analysis of "disaster capitalism" The Shock Doctrine, Naomi Klein cites noted free market thinker Milton Friedman to underscore how crises serve to catalyse sharp transitions towards new political-economic orders:

> "Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas lying around".

The COVID19 pandemic has all the attributes of just such a crisis but whose repercussions are global in scale and of potentially greater severity than the 1930s depression. Much has been made of the fact that the pandemic potentially will provide an opportunity to rebuild tourism in line with the principles of 'regenerative' economics (Cave & Dredge, 2020). The pandemic may well prove to be a catalyst for a number of positive shifts, not least in relation to the 'greening' of transport as the cost of renewables plummet in relation to fossil fuels. However, the restructuring of post-pandemic tourism economies will entail a much more robust challenge to concentrations of corporate power than is often acknowledged much less appeals to morality or simply for tourism to "grow back better", as proposed by the UNWTO.

To paraphrase climate activist Bill McKibben, progressive voices in tourism may have begun to win the argument but we are far from *winning* the struggle to catalyse the transformation towards a just, sustainable and democratically-controlled tourism political economy. Further, the fragmented structure and organization of tourism and hospitality labour regimes has hampered the ability of workers to achieve material gains through collective struggle and accentuated exploitative labour practices throughout many areas of the tourism 'industries'**.** Historically, collective bargaining in tourism and hospitality sectors has been weak perhaps with the exception perhaps of airlines, corporate-managed resort and hotel sectors where unions have made significant gains (ILO, 2010), together with the marginalisation of civil society voices in inter-governmental fora (Bianchi & de Man, 2020).

Further to the challenges posed by the complex structure and organisation of the tourism 'industries', without a coordinated transnational programme of action to neutralize the grip of markets and capital on tourism governance, it will be hard for states to resist commercial pressures to restore growth and profitability and to push back against corporate lobbying demanding the loosening of fiscal 'burdens' and restrictive social and environmental regulations.

Building robust and effective coalitions to advance democratic and sustainable tourism is also hindered by the lack of an agreed consensus regarding the precise form equitable and sustainable post-pandemic models of tourism might take. These range from scattered micro-alternatives to 'mass' tourism capitalism, modest innovations and market remedies to more radical proposals for degrowth. What many proposed solutions have in common is a disconnection from political economy and the invisibility of the contested class relations that shape and determine distributive outcomes (Selwyn, 2015). Such conceptual blindness is not restricted to pluralist framings of sustainable tourism alone. The idea that "capitalist, alternative capitalist and non-capitalist practices" might coexist (Cave & Dredge, 2020), fails to acknowledge the expansive nature of capitalism and the continual imperative to expand and to "internalise all social relations to its logic" that drives tourism growth (Chibber, 2014: 13). Moreover, such putative 'alternatives' offer little prospect of over-turning the precarious and exploitative conditions in which a major part of the global tourism and hospitality workforce labours, whether in fully capitalist firms or in a variety firms across destinations whose local economies are subject to the disciplinary forces of the capitalist free market system and coercive trade regimes.

There are signs also that in seeking a quick fix to the dramatic collapse of tourism along with continued public health anxieties in the absence of a vaccine/treatment for COVID-19, that governments will seek to harness the expertise of digital tech companies in order to deploy data analytics and 'smart' technologies in the management of tourist mobility and border crossings in the interests of 'public safety'. Such responses promote technical solutions abstracted from politics. As such they risk accentuating an expanding architecture of corporate-managed, algorithmic surveillance capitalism that undermines principles and structures of democratic participation. Added to the spike in xenophobic incidents as a result of the pandemic, digital tracking and bordering technologies could further accentuate discriminatory profiling and policing of foreigners in the name of public health.

The precise pathways to rebuilding and transformation will vary according to the variable structures of destination capitalism and attendant diversity of labour regimes. Nevertheless, the prevailing structures of corporate-managed and controlled tourism will continue to present considerable challenges for any kind of coordinated response from labour and civil society as renewed struggles to control and exploit strategically located 'tourism assets' intensify in anticipation of renewed growth post-pandemic.

There have been promising proposals ranging from localizing destination value-chains to fostering the further inclusion of women in decision-making. However, a radical shift to an equitable-green model of tourism will require more than greater 'inclusivity' into the existing institutional structures of tourism which does little to challenge prevailing power relations. Rather it will entail a multi-scalar, democratic

and robust politics of intervention that can challenge the nexus of commercial-financial-political interests that have abetted the relentless growth of tourism and expansion of capital accumulation (Murray Mas, et al., 2017).

The resurgence of the state as a critical economic actor provides a vital channel through which we may begin to decouple tourism development decision-making from speculative capital flows and short-term profiteering. However, this too will depend upon the nature and scale of the state in question and the prevailing logics and ideologies of power that operate within it. A number of promising ideas and models have been proposed that may guide the transition towards more equitable, resilient and ecologically sustainable forms of tourism based on diverse economic practices and business models. It may also be the case that tourism's unique production/consumption characteristics make it are uniquely placed to explore and scale-up such alternatives. However systemic change towards the democratic-civic management and socialisation of the assets and resources upon which tourism and associated human livelihoods depend will not come about through appeals to morality and/or the simple merits of proposed alternatives alone. Rather it will require the identification of a logics of struggle and programme of action underpinned by rigorous analysis and understanding of emerging post-pandemic tourism political economies.

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What is ATLAS

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) was established in 1991 to develop transnational educational initiatives in tourism and leisure.

ATLAS provides a forum to promote staff and student exchange, transnational research and to facilitate curriculum and professional development. It currently has 161 members in 56 countries worldwide.

What are the objectives of ATLAS?

- To promote the teaching of tourism, leisure and related subjects.
- To encourage academic exchange between member institutions.
- To promote links between professional bodies in tourism, leisure and associated subjects and to liaise on educational issues, curriculum development and professional recognition of courses.
- To promote transnational research which helps to underpin the development of appropriate curricula for transnational education.

What does ATLAS do?

ATLAS promotes links between member institutions through regular meetings, publications and information exchange. The main activities of ATLAS currently are:

- Organising conferences on issues in tourism and leisure education and research. International conferences have been held in Canterbury, UK (September 2016), in Viana do Castelo, Portugal (2017),Copenhagen, Denmark (2018) and Girona, Spain (2019). Regional conferences are also held in Africa, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region.
- Information services and publications, including the ATLAS website and members' portal, the annual ATLAS Reflections, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Running international courses, such as the ATLAS Winter University in Europe and the Summer Course in Asia.
- Organisation of and participation in transnational research projects, for example on cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, and information technology. ATLAS is participating in two major European projects. The Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG) for implementing a new strategic blueprint approach to sectoral cooperation on skills and the INCOME Tourism project to develop soft skills into higher education curricula and to strongly cooperate with businesses.
- Research publications and reports.

What are the benefits of the ATLAS membership?

- Regular mailings of information, updates on ATLAS conferences, meetings, projects, publications and other activities.
- Access to the members' portal on Internet with exclusive access code.
- Participation in the ATLAS information lists for everyone within ATLAS member institutions, as well as for the different Special Interest Groups.
- The annual ATLAS international conference, which provides an opportunity to network with other members.
- Conferences organised by regional sections.
- ATLAS members can participate in a wide range of projects run by ATLAS in the areas of tourism and leisure education and research.
- Members have access to research information gathered through ATLAS
- International projects.
- ATLAS members are listed on the ATLAS website, giving teachers and students easy access to information about member institutions via Internet.
- Distribution of information about member events, programmes, projects and products via the ATLAS mailing list and ATLAS website.
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- Contacts and lobbying through ATLAS links with other international organisations.
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ATLAS Special Interest Groups

Members of ATLAS can form and join Special Interest Groups related to specific education and research topics or for specific geographical areas. Special Interest Groups run research programmes and can organise special events and publications related to their area of interest. The current Special Interest Groups are:

- Cultural Tourism Research Group
- Gastronomy and Tourism Research Group
- Business Tourism Research Group
- Cities and National Capital Tourism Research Group
- Volunteer Tourism Research Group
- Events Research Group
- Dark Tourism Research Group
- Heritage Tourism and Education Research Group
- Space, place, mobilities in Tourism Research Group

ATLAS Regional Sections

ATLAS is also represented at regional and local level by sections such as ATLAS Europe, ATLAS Asia-Pacific, ATLAS Africa and ATLAS Latin Americas. The regional sections of ATLAS have developed their own programme of activities and publications to respond more closely to the specific needs of members located in these regions and those with related research interests. Membership of ATLAS regional sections and Special Interest Groups of ATLAS is open to all ATLAS members at no extra costs.

The ATLAS publication series
As a networking organisation, one of the main tasks of ATLAS is to disseminate information on developments in tourism and leisure as widely as possible. The ATLAS publication series contains volumes of selected papers from ATLAS conferences and reports from ATLAS research projects. The ATLAS Tourism and Leisure Review gives ATLAS members and participants of the ATLAS conferences and meetings a platform to publish the papers they have presented. The editing will be carried out by an editorial board / field editors. All publications can be found and ordered in the online ATLAS bookshop at: shop.atlas-euro.org.

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ATLAS membership is open to bona-fide educational institutions and professional bodies with educational, research or professional interests in tourism, leisure and related areas. If your institution is interested, complete the application form on the ATLAS homepage at www.atlas-euro.org.

How much does the ATLAS membership cost?
The annual institutional membership fee for ATLAS is € 325. For organisations located in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America the fee is € 200 per year.

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Tourism and the Corona crisis: Some ATLAS reflections
Tuesday 7 July, 2020 at 10.00 CEST

ATLAS Webinar
September 9-11, 2020

ATLAS will organisise this webinar as an alternative for the ATLAS annual conferences which is postponed to September 2021. The conference will be free of charge for ATLAS members and non-members.

In this webinar two keynote speakers will reflect on the summer of 2020 and how COVID-19 influenced tourism and pre-consider and discuss next year conference theme "Tourism as a driver of regional development and collaboration". Furthermore we invited a number of CEO's of DMO's, from different European destinations, to reflect on the summer of 2020. Finaly a few special track will take place online.

The different events will be spread over the three days of the webinar. More information will follow shortly!

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ONLINE
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Girona, Spain
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ATLAS Annual conference 2021
Tourism as a driver of regional development and collaboration
Prague, Czech Republic
7-10 September, 2021

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