

Global tourism in crisis: conceptual frameworks for research and practice

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Received 12 August 2021
Accepted 12 August 2021

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Abstract

Purpose – The aims of this Editorial are twofold: (i) synthesise emergent themes from the special issue (ii) develop four theoretical frameworks from which to examine crises in tourism.

Design/methodology/approach – The thematic analysis of papers highlights a diversity of COVID-19 related crises contexts and research approaches. The need for robust theoretical interventions is highlighted through the four proposed conceptual frameworks.

Findings – Crises provides a valuable seam from which to draw new empirical and theoretical insights. Papers in this special issue address the unfolding of crises in tourism and demonstrate how its theorization demands multi and cross-disciplinary entreaties. This special issue is an invitation to examine how global crises in tourism can be more clearly appraised and theorised. The nature of crisis, and the extent to which the global tourism community can continue to adapt remains in question, as dialogues juxtapose the contradictions between tourism growth and tourism sustainability, and between building back better and returning to normal.

Originality/value – The appraisal of four conceptual frameworks, little used in tourism research provides markers of the theoretical rigour and novelty. Beck's risk society reconceptualises risk and the extent to which risk is the result of structural change. Biopolitics refers to power over the production and reproduction of life itself. The political ecology of crisis denaturalises so-called "natural" disasters and their subsequent crises. Justice complements an ethic of care and values like conative empathy to advance social justice and well-being.

Keywords Biopolitics, Risk society, Political ecology, COVID-19, Tourism recovery, Tourism justice

Paper type Guest editorial

Introduction

There is little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic is an exemplar of contemporary crises, unparalleled in its magnitude, bringing global tourism flows to a halt throughout 2020 and well into 2021. From a record high of 1.5 billion international arrivals at the end of 2019, the entire global travel supply chain has taken a massive battering with ripple effects biting deep into community and individual livelihoods and nation state economies. For many, the crisis raises a timely query regarding the extent to which tourism has come to dominate present-day lifestyles and raises a clarion call for how tourism must be refashioned to address the looming climate emergency and the assemblages that coalesce around it (Hall *et al.*, 2020; Jamal and Budke, 2020; Lapointe, 2020; Lew *et al.*, 2020; Mostafanezhad, 2020; Mostafanezhad *et al.*, 2020). For others, the concerns are very much practical and focused on recovery, resilience building and risk mitigation, among other exigencies (Brouder, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Crossley, 2020; Ioannides *et al.*, 2020). The intersection between crises and global tourism has been brought into stark relief, emphasizing the way in which vulnerability to exogenous and endogenous shocks leaves

a discomfoting precarity for those reliant on and impacted by the sector (Gibson, 2019, 2021; Lew *et al.*, 2020; Hall *et al.*, 2020).

At the time of writing in the second half of 2021, COVID-19 continues to impact everyday life. With airplanes grounded, millions of people in quarantine, isolation or lockdown and travel bans and border closures in place, global tourism has been brought to its knees (Jamal and Budke, 2020). As tourism focused scholars, the pandemic reveals how little we really know about how to deal with such extraordinary crises and its aftershocks. COVID-19 is an unprecedented crisis that has unraveled much of what we once knew about social inequality, environmental sustainability and host-guest encounters, among other exigencies. Indeed, it has shocked the very core of global tourism.

Crises and the way they underline global tourism have proven to be temporarily troublesome and instead, have tended to induce short and medium-term disruption. The 9/11 bombing of New York's twin towers in 2001, the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 and the Ebola virus outbreak beginning in 2013, among others, testify that while such crises can induce short-term pain for stakeholders, the tourism sector has tended to adapt and bounce back. This obviously elides the unprecedented climate crisis as the most impactful and damaging predicament that will be felt by generations to come. The 1987 Brundtland Report spotlighted the rapidly growing risks of environmental degradation and appropriately spawned wider sustainable development discourses, advocating for intergenerational equity. Yet, after nearly four decades since Brundtland and now, the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021), the tipping points whereupon the climate crisis becomes fully blown has come ever more clearly into view.

It may be that COVID-19 is a precursor for environmentally derived crises that will be more intense, longer running and more onerous for global communities to contend with. For tourism stakeholders, this is ominous because global travel mobilities rely on ecological integrity, economic stability, unhindered mobilities, open borders and a traveling public comfortable with levels of inherent risk. This collection sets out to reconcile with global threats to sustainable tourism futures, a formidable task that cannot be accorded full justice given the plethora of threats, known and unknown, and others that are characterized by slow unfolding change. Accordingly, this curated collection is global and multidisciplinary in its orientation, and with contributions delving into the status quo in Northern and Latin American, Asian and Oceanian contexts. Additionally, reflexive and conceptual approaches to understanding the spaces where tourism unfolds, and tourism imaginaries in the glare of enduring crises-riven contexts are tendered.

Four conceptual frameworks for analyzing and theorizing crises in global tourism are presented that provide markers for how global threats to sustainable tourism futures might be conceived of, unpacked and rethought. The first of these relate to Ulrich Beck's risk society that broadly countenances that the "consequences of scientific and industrial development are a set of risks and hazards, the likes of which we have never previously faced" (Lash and Wynne, 1992, p. 2). The second draws on biopolitics and the processes of power that are exercised in the everyday, and seen most obviously in attempts to deal with crisis situations. Thirdly, the political ecology of crisis and the extent to which their occurrence are natural or are as a result of a series of decisions that foster crisis situations. Finally, the question of justice is appraised because crises expose fault lines that showcase how long-established and enduring inequities shape abilities to respond and adapt to underlying shifts.

This collection is a timely call to action – action in research as well as *praxis*. It advances the knowledge base regarding the crises and threats that are shaping the 21st century landscape of travel from the local to the global. At the time of writing in the second half of 2021, COVID-19 still looms large on the global stage, and the future is expected to bring with it more crises and shocks, many of them unparalleled in terms of their nature, scope

and reach (Norum *et al.*, 2020). These crises, as Naomi Klein (2020) recently pointed out, also have the potential to reveal the internal contradictions of capital accumulation. And, as states prepare for the economic fallout, we are witnessing political utility of crises (Masco, 2021). Contributions in this special issue offer vignettes from diversified crisis contexts, inviting closer inspection of how the global tourism community might be able to build toward a new normal – phraseology that has become entwined in anachronistic, oversimplified and panicked policy narratives in the shadow of COVID-19.

Emergent theoretical frameworks for crisis in tourism research

On risk society

That risk and crisis are inextricably linked is a truism. The extent of risk and the opportunity costs of being unable to plan for or manage crises adequately, shows up in retrospect, and usually after the costs of disaster are manifest (Lew and Cheer, 2017). In practice, risk by its very nature, exists on a continuum and is either smoothed or amplified by risk mitigation initiatives and is shaped by the sociopolitical, environmental and economic backdrop (Cheer and Lew, 2017; Lew and Cheer, 2017). COVID-19 as risk personified is *de rigueur* when it comes to crisis discourses, with the rapid, deep and stifling effects driving policymaker and wider society action (or inaction) – vaccinations, travel restrictions and social distancing (Wilson and Chen, 2020). Yet a crisis with far greater and lasting impacts, climate change, remains mired in sociopolitical and scientific jousting, as well as denial for those inclined to resist. All the while, the greater frequency of extreme weather events and slowly changing climatic patterns, with impacts most redolent in rising sea levels, receding polar icecaps and intensification of summer wildfires (IPCC, 2021), among others, pale in comparison to the attention given to COVID-19.

To theorize the myriad complexities and contradictions referred to throughout this special issue, Ulrich Beck's "risk society" framework resonates and is an ideal theoretical framework that considers risk as a function of modernity and the assemblages that undergird it and that when it comes to crises, risk situations and catastrophes linked to them are self-imposed. For Beck (1989, p. 87), in conceptualizing the risk society, the question that arises is: "How can the risks and dangers, which are systematically produced in the process of advanced modernization, be prevented, made harmless, dramatized and directed, channelled away?" In tendering risk society thinking, Beck (2008, pp. 7–8) asserts that "the dynamic of risk society rests less on the assumption that now and in future we must live in a world of unprecedented dangers; rather, we live in a world that has to make decisions concerning its future under the conditions of manufactured, self-inflicted insecurity." Beck's (2006, p. 326) argumentation rests on what he asserts is "Fatal irony, into which scientific-technical society plunges us is, as a consequence of its perfection." In extrapolating risk society and considering its application to tourism and crisis, the inference is that society is unable to come to terms with risks given the structural inertia and bottlenecks evidenced in sociopolitical and economic domains.

Risk society as a framework summons consideration that crises are preventable and can be mitigated, yet it is modernity and its predilections that risk society framing argues, that is central to the proliferation of risk. Risk society posits that "Risk is ambivalence. Being at risk is the way of being and ruling in the world of modernity; being at global risk is the human condition at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (Beck, 2006, p. 330). In Beck's (2006, p. 332) terms, "Modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that it itself has produced." Indeed, as Beck (2006, p. 332) points out, "Although human intervention may not stop earthquakes or volcanic eruptions, they can be predicted with reasonable accuracy. We anticipate them in terms of structural arrangements as well as of emergency planning."

What then do we make of the crisis prone nature of global tourism where exogenous drivers are usually seen as laying outside of the *locus* of control of destination policymakers and host communities? Can risks that propel crises in tourism be alleviated and managed, or does the expansion of the sector nurture the very conditions that accentuate and amplify crises? Risk as a social construction, according to Beck (2006, p. 332), is made up of a “hidden politics, ethics and morality,” and are “Janus faced consequences of human decisions and interventions.” Distinguishing between risk and catastrophe is prosecuted in risk society thinking where risks are seen as the “anticipation of catastrophe” (Beck, 2006, p. 332). How then do we take the so-called anticipation of catastrophe and parlay that into thinking about crises in global tourism? Tourism, as a microcosm of contemporary life in Beckian vernacular, nurtures its own vulnerability to risk and if so, how can such theorizing inform crisis in tourism research? Perhaps as Mythen (2004, p. 14) exclaims in regards to risk society, “By unloading the composite features of probability, uncertainty and futurity we can begin to get a taste for the meaning of risk.” Probability, uncertainty, futurity and risk are all intertwined, and in discourses concerning crisis in global tourism, risk remains ubiquitous and “Until answers are available, it is impossible to make truly informed decisions about whether those previously infected can safely travel and resume work and other activities without masks, physical distancing and other precautions” (Wilson and Chen, 2020, p. 4).

Discourses on crises in global tourism are necessarily interwoven into risk society thinking and vice versa, where the performance of socially constructed mobility comes with risk and the potential for crisis is axiomatically pervasive. Apropos, this ushers in what Lin and Yeoh (2021) refer to as pathological mobilities or the “threat of disease” and “Concealed within these two sensibilities of pathological mobilities – one of a literal, epidemiological nature, and the other a more figurative, social-moral one – is an inexorable question of risk” (Lin and Yeoh, 2021, p. 99). Border closures, travel restrictions, social distancing, sanitization and vaccine passports are technological responses to managing for crises in tourism, yet as Lin and Yeoh (2021, p. 108) argue, “While viruses certainly place new impositions on how people live and move, they acquire their greatest power through latching onto and upsetting, previous calculations of risks in movement and stasis.” And, as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates, crises morph and take the shape of hitherto unforeseen versions of itself, or radically divergent paths, rendering futures planning and scenario building mostly redundant.

As Tooze (2020, n.p) posits in evoking risk society thinking, “If climate change was the result of carbon emissions, the emergence of viruses such as HIV, and the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 could be traced to the intrusion of humans into delicate forest ecosystems and the vast animal incubators of the agro-industrial complex.” The social construction of risk, and the ensuing assemblages tied to crisis and catastrophe resonate in tourism with the pervasive refrain “loving places to death” – reverberating. Not only the places we visit directly, but via the aggregate impacts of global tourism on carbon consumption, commodification, gentrification, overcrowding, acculturation, water stress, community displacements and the more conceptually amorphous effects not seen in the everyday and tied to impacts above and beyond tourism’s contributions – rising sea levels, receding polar icecaps, intense wildfires and devastating flooding, among others (IPCC, 2021). Beck’s risk society affords a chance to reappraise crisis in global tourism and the many inflection points that are generated. The 9/11 World Trade Centre crisis of 2001 was a game changer in many respects for global mobilities, ushering in security protocols that were considered extreme, but now accepted in the everyday travel encounter. Central to Beck’s lamentations is that mitigation of socially constructed risks fuels the growth mindset that underlines neoliberalism.

In stimulating risk society thinking, Beck is less than sanguine arguing: “in the future we must live and research in a world of unprecedented danger, but certainly in a world which has to make decisions under the conditions of manufactured uncertainty and in

which the institutionalized mechanisms for coping with uncertainty can no longer meet these challenges” (Beck, 2009, p. 298). Moreover, “In risk societies, the consequences and successes of modernization become an issue with the speed and radicality of processes of modernization” (Beck, 2008, p. 6). The wider implications of the risk society framework for examining crises in global tourism include; giving heft to theorizing crisis in tourism, distinguishing between risk, crisis and catastrophe and weighing up crisis as man-made, beyond notions of crises as uncontrollable and exogenous.

On biopolitics and tourism crisis: immunization, exception and imaginaries

While the contemporary spotlight on health and sanitation has seen both become intrinsically associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, life, death and the human body have been at the very heart of the biopolitical turn in society (Agamben, 1998; Esposito, 2011; Hardt and Negri, 2000) where tourism is no exception (Ek and Hultman, 2008; Lapointe and Coulter, 2020; Minca, 2010; Roelofsen and Minca, 2018). Hardt and Negri (2000) advocate that the world is now more than ever biopolitical in its production of social life. Biopolitics regulates life from the interior, through internalized processes of control including language, subjectivity, affect and desire (Mills, 2018: 86). Biopolitics refers to the power over the production and reproduction of life itself, where the political stake corresponds to power over society, the power to organize life, its conditions, its rules, and the power to let die (Rose, 2020). Biopower is aimed at bodies, those of individuals, but also of all people in a given place, to protect, strengthen and reproduce them through the neoliberal ethos in the economic and political interests of the state, and private economic interests who have a stake in power (Brown, 2015). This reflection on the regulation of life and death is central to the constraints on daily mobility and the widespread cessation of tourist mobilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a situation where bare-life (Agamben, 1998) represents a threat of contagion. Global threats are posing a double bind articulation with tourism, on one hand fueling the threat, while conversely, falling to the threat, and alluding to the notion that, we are always in the middle of events (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980).

Crisis seems endemic in tourism, yet it maintains its position on a pedestal, a strong marker of the symbolic status of tourism mobility, maintaining robust alterity within hosting spaces, and with its political disentanglement as a paradigmatic subject (Ek and Tesfahuney, 2016), becoming one of the loci of self-realization. The brutal rupture of the pandemic on tourism has seen the rise of a discursive field focused on the immunization of tourism. Following, Lapointe, Sarrasin, and Lagueux (2020), the body touristic, akin to the body politic, has encountered crisis within immunity strategies (Esposito, 2011). Previous crises have managed to inject elements of crisis within tourism itself, through memorials and dark tourism, as fascination with death is inherently constitutive of tourism (Korstanje, 2016). Post-hurricane New Orleans is an archetype (Pezzullo, 2009), bringing tourism into rebuilding discourses, while enabling it to fuel the intersecting social and climate crisis. As for the COVID-19 pandemic, there is the will to maintain tourism mobility, even if it means partaking in it dressed up with personal protection equipment (Folinas, Duquenne, and Metaxas, 2020) and social distancing (Lapointe, 2020), challenging and undermining the close encounters that are central to hospitality (Derrida, 1999) and tourism.

Another biopolitical dimension of global threats and crisis is the setting and perpetuation of a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005) that allows government and stakeholders in power to suspend rights, change laws and rules, under the guise of exercising urgency and promoting safety, and therefore creating new norms that end up comprising the new normal, often leading to erosion of rights. The security apparatus of airports ushered in after September 11, 2001, is exemplary of Agamben’s state of exception, increasingly considered to be normal (Adey, 2009), even if it means the suspension of some rights in what has become itself a

space of exception, from the state of exception. When global threats become acute and morph into crisis, the state of exception reorders people and place, and in the process reinforces preexisting inequalities. [Rose \(2020\)](#) exposes the reordering of the workforce as “essential labor” – allowing some the privilege of working from home, while others on the frontline face contagion and death to keep society afloat. Reordering is layered over existing lines of inequality and violence across gender, race and sexuality, among others. Apropos, national tourism destinations face a similar reordering – some keeping their borders shut, subsidizing the domestic visitor economy, while others maintain open borders, risking an upsurge of COVID-19 cases to capture tourist expenditure ([Tremblay-Huet and Lapointe, 2021](#)). The pandemic crisis of 2020-2021 is reconnecting tourism to place-based roots, as [Tomassini et al. \(2021\)](#) argue, leaving the paradigmatic tourist behind and reinscribing the tourist within citizenship and political responsibility – joining the body touristic with the body politic.

Another revealing act of crisis is the enduring power of tourism imaginaries as a “technology of the self.” Technology of the self refers to apparatus used by the subject to assert itself, and compete in the “neoliberal economy of meanings” ([Foucault, Martin, Gutman, and Hutton, 1988](#)). Tourism as a status-creating praxis is based on the biopolitical process of using the body strategically for accumulation of experience and status ([Lapointe and Coulter, 2020](#)). The body of research on transformative tourism, focused on the abilities of tourism to transform individuals and their life path, is evidence of this ([Müller et al., 2020](#)). Perhaps, this is why tourism’s exposure may potentially be part of the solution, even in the face of crisis that it directly fuels, like the climate crisis. Neoliberal apparatus and subjects are not foregoing the process of accumulation and investment in the self that tourism is, even if it is with the capture of (in)voluntary emotional labor of workers and host communities, as well as salvaging of environmental processes like climate change mitigation. In return, crises and threats transform imaginaries, sometimes in conflicting ways as [Tzanelli \(2021\)](#) exposes, and in the process, reappraising destination images and reshaping tourists’ desires and behaviors.

On the political ecology of crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated in no uncertain terms the extraordinary role of crisis to reveal structural inequality. The uneven effects of the pandemic as well as its patchy response continues to be the topic of conversation among both academic and popular media authors globally. The tourism industry has been particularly disproportionately affected. By summer of 2021, it became clear that while that some regions were poised for recovery, others were less willing and prepared to welcome visitors. For instance, the European Union opened its borders to vaccinated travelers, while India and Indonesia experienced the highest daily mortality rates since the beginning of the pandemic.

Disasters are often triggered by accumulated vulnerabilities over time, rather than single, “natural” events. Barry [Turner \(1978\)](#), describes the “disaster incubation period” in which hazards proliferate due to a range of socio-political drivers. Scholarship on the political ecology of crisis builds on this framing to denaturalize “natural” disasters and their subsequent crises ([Barnes and Dove, 2015](#); [McElwee, 2016](#); [Orr, Lansing, and Dove, 2015](#); [Pidgeon and O’Leary, 2000](#)). Political ecologists often view crises as the result of historical processes that cultivate environmental and social vulnerabilities ([Barrios, 2017](#)). In this vein, Anthony Bebbington asks us to consider, not why some people are poor, but rather, why some societies tolerate poverty and massive inequality ([Bebbington, 2007](#)). The answer, of course, is rooted in the historical and contemporary structural inequalities through which poor and rich people and places operate. This understanding of inequality as historically rooted, placed based and multi-scalar is relevant to political ecology understandings of disaster and crisis. To this end, David Harvey (2020) notes that “There is [...] no such thing as a truly natural disaster,” because “Capital modifies the

environmental conditions of its own reproduction but does so in a context of unintended consequences.”

Scholarship on the political ecology of crisis demonstrates the need to not only acknowledge the deep roots of structural inequality but provide more than just band-aids as the antidote (Mostafanezhad, 2020). Crises can offer opportunities to initiate critique of a given social condition (Masco, 2021; Mbembe and Roitman, 1995; Roitman, 2013). Alternatively, the judgment of crisis can also frame problems as “error” or “malfunction” and divert attention to the crisis itself rather than its structural roots. The risk is that crisis can enable the concealment of deteriorating conditions of production and its corollary social structures by stabilizing the conditions through which it is produced (Barrios, 2017; Solway, 1994). Sahlins (1972), for instance, refers to disasters as “revelatory crises” through which the structural contradictions of the mode of production are revealed by interruptions to socio-economic life that can no longer be ignored.

Klein (2020) has been particularly influential in her assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic and its triggering of age old tricks directly out of the “disaster capitalist playbook.” Powerful actors are best able to profit from disaster through a range of shock tactics that follow the pattern of: “wait for a crisis [. . .], declare a moment of what is sometimes called “extraordinary politics,” suspend some or all democratic norms – and then ram the corporate wish list through as quickly as possible” (Klein, 2020). This experience has been demonstrated in myriad contexts globally and continues to reveal the internal contradictions of capital accumulation. As states prepare for the economic fallout, we also bear witness to how crisis can be used as a political tool to stabilize existing structures and diminish the possibility of collective mobilization (Masco, 2021).

COVID-19 has become an unprecedented crisis. It is not the first pandemic the world has experienced. However, it is the first pandemic during what we might describe as a hypermobile age. In this sense, the pandemic has challenged existing structures of social inequality, environmental sustainability and host-guest encounters in ways that have shocked the very core of global tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified geopolitical anxiety *en masse*. These geopolitical shifts have contributed to the uneven effects of the crisis in ways that challenge easy simplifications as “natural disasters.” Political ecologists have long worked to denaturalize so-called natural disasters by calling attention to the uneven effects of disasters. For instance, the destruction of earthquakes of a similar magnitude in Japan and Haiti or floods of comparable volumes in Germany and Laos reveal the role of infrastructural investment and the uneven effects of environmental disasters. Likewise, emerging scholarship on the political ecology of health addresses the political economic and cultural drivers of disease. As evidenced in this special issue, the work of critical tourism scholars is to deconstruct crises as “errors” and demonstrate their productive potential to overcome the festering wounds of structural inequality.

On justice and tourism

We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.
– Albert Einstein

The above quote, commonly attributed to Albert Einstein remains highly relevant in the present where new understandings and novel approaches to comprehending and addressing the increasingly challenging landscape of travel and tourism in the 21st century. Paramount here is a spatial-temporal and *relational* perspective, i.e., to be able to identify, understand and address the interrelatedness with other ecological, social-cultural, political and economic systems, places and the things within them. Consider, for instance, the following:

- Activities and processes at the micro-level are interrelated with the macro-level in the local–global tourism system, which itself is interrelated with other systems and processes (social, environmental, political, economic, etc.). Tourist services and experiences are enacted in complex social-ecological systems that raises critical questions of responsibility, control, governance and use of the local and global commons and related issues of planetary sustainability and well-being of human and non-human others. What constitutes corporate social responsibility with respect to continued global emissions from tourism related services, including the impacts of long-haul air travel and impacts on small island developing states and other destinations in the Global South (Healey and Weis, 2019)?
- The multiple stakeholders and different interests at play create a complex, fragmented tourism domain in which planning and coordination of tourism development is immensely difficult, particularly due to the mobility of key stakeholders like transnational hotel chains and cruise ships flying flags of convenience that absolve them of direct local accountability to the many destinations they operate in (Wood, 2000). Disruptive technologies and rapidly evolving information and communication technologies present both challenges and opportunities to manage the impacts of future pandemics, as expressed in this collection.
- Increasing socio-ecological risks and impacts from global challenges like climate change, pandemics, international terrorism, biodiversity and species loss, among others. Additionally, neoliberal globalization as a dominant global discourse has advanced some benefits but rather than nurture inclusiveness and equity, it has resulted in concentrating power in the hands of transnational corporations who have little accountability and largely intent on transforming aspects of everyday, into globally tradable commodities (Mosedale, 2016). As ecofeminist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva expresses:

The impact of globalization is to take resources that have been under women's control, and the control of Third World communities to generate sustenance and survival, and put them at the service of global trade and commerce to generate profits. (Shiva, 1997, p. 22)

However, hope is ever-present for as Shiva and other critical scholars point out, these are contested spaces where disempowering acts and injustices are resisted through local actions and practices that facilitate local autonomy and control to enable more just and fairer outcomes. Structural injustices, explains political philosopher Young (2003, p. 7), “are harms that come to people as a result of structural processes in which many people participate. These participants may well be aware that their actions contribute to the processes that produce the outcomes, but for many it is not possible to trace the specific causal relation between their particular actions and some particular part of the outcome.” It is immensely difficult to assign moral responsibility for injustices such as the exploitation of workers in sweatshops (this is one of Young's examples, but think of unsuspecting tourists buying souvenirs made in such locations) or the lack of decent wages and livelihoods that help facilitate lives of dignity and in global service and hospitality sectors (Bianchi and de Man, 2021). Consider also structural injustices that are systemically and historically entrenched. Whose responsibility are systemic injustices (that are often hardly visible to tourists), such as socially and institutionally embedded racism against ethnic minorities and religious groups, oppression and exploitation of women and children, or historical injustices and dispossession from traditional lands due to imperialism or colonialism? “Justice Tourism” puts the onus on a few to act politically, but such efforts are often driven by humanitarian (moral) principles and disguise other issues and challenges (Guia, 2020; Tomassini *et al.*, 2021).

How then to approach post-pandemic recovery with approaches for healing and regenerative tourism (Dredge, 2021; Jamal, 2021)? How best to temper the profit and growth

driven agendas of global market capitalism that continues to exacerbate inequality and exclusion, biodiversity loss and resource depletion and far too slow actions to address global warming and extreme weather events such as the wildfires in Australia (Willson, 2021)? Do global threats not require global solutions? Take the example of climate change. In *Climate Leviathan*, Wainwright and Mann (2018) argue that current political structures and processes are inadequate to handle climate change and redress the inequities intrinsic to global market capitalism. They propose four archetypes as potential responses to the current global order: “Climate Leviathan,” an entity akin to a world government that has full sovereignty to regulate and manage climate change; “Climate Behemoth,” a nationalistic response driven by moneyed and capitalist interests intent on preserving economic control over resources and workers to drive capital market growth and technological solutions to climate change that would permit ongoing fossil fuel extraction); “Climate Mao,” an anti-capitalist, authoritarian, state-led structure that regulates greenhouse gas emissions and related measures; and “Climate X,” non-capitalist, local solidarity and social movements to address carbon emissions, such as Indigenous approaches that promote inclusivity, justice, equity, dignity and communal well-being. While the authors appear to favor Climate X, it would seem that this may be unattainable and some form of Leviathan like structure may yet arise, especially given the rapid rate of climate change progression.

Various scholars and political theorists have pointed out that forms of world governance such as a “federation of states” as Kant (1975/1996) forwarded in *Perpetual Peace*, transnational alliances and quasi-governmental neoliberal organizations like the United Nations (UN), have simply not responded effectively to global threats like the current COVID-19 pandemic and climate change (think of the slow response of the UN World Tourism Organization and the cruise industry, as cruise ships continued their port of call visits in the Pacific even after Wuhan had shut down on the eve of Chinese New Year, January, 2020). Jamal and Guia (2021) eschew Climate Leviathan in favor of a more situated Deleuzian posthumanism and a non-dualist, relational approach that some might argue would be sympathetic to Climate X (Gibson, 2021). Good governance and active, democratic participation, pluralistic knowledge systems and inclusive worldviews, are integral to addressing global threats and structural injustices related to climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as historically embedded exploitation and cultural appropriation (Santafe-Troncoso and Loring, 2021). A tourist elsewhere is a resident *somewhere*, and the “tourist” of the future is by necessity a responsible and transformative visitor – an active participant in facilitating ecological and cultural flourishing, community resilience, and the well-being of human and non-human inhabitants. Here, justice complements an ethic of care and values like conative empathy – actively being able to understand the world of the “other” and together (collaboratively) engaging to advance social justice and well-being (Jamal *et al.*, 2021).

What then is “just” and “sustainable” tourism in an Anthropocene where climate change and pandemics are interwoven with other global threats and challenges ranging from large-scale migrations and climate refugees, refugees from war and conflict zones, economic migrants from the postcolonies, to terrorism, water scarcity and food crises that exacerbate food security and sovereignty over local to global commons? The *World Social Report 2020* describes the deep inequalities made evident by the COVID-19 pandemic (United Nations, 2020). Disruptive technologies, automation, robotization and smart tourism, along with virtual and augmented reality and smart tourism portend new normals, as well as opportunities for service providers, visitors and residents to co-create equitable, inclusive experiences and smart democracy to co-govern the virtual commons (Fusté-Forné and Jamal, 2021). Meanwhile, local-global responses such as that of Cuba’s pandemic response to distant others (Wylie, 2021), local resistance to appropriation and misrecognition (Nguyen *et al.*, 2021) and the rise of the informed resident-tourist, offer interesting possibilities for new hybrid archetypes to reclaim the local and help re-configure Climate Leviathan in the context of global travel and tourism.

Special issue roundup

This special issue collection predicated on the theme of global tourism in crisis, predictably coalesced around the COVID-19 pandemic that reached its zenith in 2020, and well into 2021. As successive waves continue, the crisis remains top of mind. Insofar as crisis goes, COVID-19 has stamped itself as an unprecedented disruption to global mobilities. The ripple effects on international tourist arrivals will likely be felt for years to come. The pandemic has had myriad manifestations in destinations and some of the most evocative images were the way wildlife reclaimed spaces that were usually occupied by touristic activity (Crossley, 2020). For many, this was an indication of how the balance between humans and nature had become lopsided, and that the crisis offered a silver lining. As Newsome (2020, p. 1) posits, COVID-19 enabled the development of “a new awareness of the vulnerability of species and the tourism upon which it is dependent on for survival.” For others, the disruption to tourism was a body blow for conservation efforts that had become dependent on revenues generated from tourism. This bifurcation in the way tourism is impacted in the midst of crisis is emblematic of the variegated impacts that usually ensue. Newsome (2020, p. 2) outlines that “A lot of iconic wildlife tourism experiences, already impacted and at risk of further damage by wildlife trafficking and bush meat consumption, could be put in danger because of the wider impacts of COVID-19 such as job losses in tourism and inadequate protected area management.”

The extent to which technology can help mitigate the adverse impacts of crises is a pressing concern in tourism, particularly given the extent to which a crisis event such as a pandemic, proliferates as contagion via human-to-human contact. Social distancing and sanitation measures hastened, highlighting the necessity to help limit human exposure to risk. Automation services and service robots as a strategy for risk mitigation in tourism and hospitality and the shift from “high-touch” to “high-tech” in service encounters is considered a *fait accompli*, although the risk of introducing an “anti-hospitality context derived from the implementation of robotics” remains a concern (Fusté-Forné and Ivanov, 2021, p. 4). One of the key questions that remain unanswered is the issue of “what constitutes fair and ethical human-robot interactions in service delivery and visitor experience in the hospitality and tourism context” (Fusté-Forné and Ivanov, 2021, p. 4).

The factors that determine whether crisis management succeeds is subject to a conflict of logics, “between, on the one hand, entrepreneurial firms’ sudden requests for public support and, on the other, how public support albeit intended to support business life, would not necessarily help individual entrepreneurs” (Öberg, 2021, p. 1). The tendency for diversion between private sector priorities and public sector interests can be amplified in crisis situations, as evidenced by COVID-19 where the struggle to maintain viability collides with grassroots employment security and well-being, alongside intense private sector appeals for government support. In drawing on Sweden’s approach to COVID-19, Öberg (2021) highlights the importance of reconciling competing logics when the country’s government decided to keep businesses open at the height of the pandemic, resulting in adverse public health outcomes. In the midst of crisis, “conflicts may appear for certain types of private firms and not for others, and there is the suggested partial bridging of logics between public sector initiatives and large, locally operating firms at the expense of small firms that depend on income from their high- season business activities” (Öberg, 2021, p. 8).

Evidently, policy responses that control international tourist mobility have been a key plank of attempts to stave off the proliferation of coronavirus. However, like any policy measure that restricts personal freedoms, the social acceptance of such measures determine policy efficacy. As Jones and Nguyen (2021, p. 2) highlight, “A concurrent trade-off has occurred due to the *de facto* prioritization of human health over human rights” emphasizing the pressing need to understand social acceptance predictors. Across the globe, policy responses tend to vary from the adoption of scientific solutions to low tech measures and authoritarian countermeasures, and contestation between “prioritization of the common good

over the protection of individual rights or autonomy” (Jones and Nguyen, 2021, p. 9). Evidently, as Jones and Nguyen (2021, p. 10) found, “respondents’ level of agreement with selective restrictions on foreigners from high-risk countries or areas with many cases of infection exceeded their acceptance to change or even cancel their own plans.” Competing variables that help determine social acceptance of policy in crisis situations, must account for the extent of public concern, media visibility and cultural and gender effects (Jones and Nguyen, 2021).

Crisis situations drive reflection and prompts consideration of what must change. Tomassini *et al.* (2021) query the role of tourists as actors, disconnected from citizenry that inhabits destinations and suggests that the Greek notion of hubris might help come to terms with adverse tourist-host interactions. The so-called disconnectedness of tourists from the “space of citizenship” is resultant of the “shift to neoliberal capitalism” that diminishes the sense of “local-global responsibility” (Tomassini *et al.*, 2021, p. 4). Via a content analysis of Italian online media, the “representation of tourists as subjects taking over the space of local residents; as invaders consuming and abusing that space” is evidently pervasive (Tomassini *et al.*, 2021, p. 8). Acknowledging that in crisis, shifting to “embrace the sociological space of local communities and inhabitants, as well as their well-being and security” is vital in overcoming tourist hubris.

Communications and the portrayal of crisis events is doubtless vital in ensuring that timely and accurate commentary emerges. Social media sentiment analysis, and in this case, Twitter commentary of the Australian bushfires and the implications for tourism is appraised, with Willson *et al.* (2021, p. 4) arguing that “bushfires and wildlife devastation illustrates the strong emotional connection many people have with Australian wildlife.” Importantly, discourses beyond traditional media may be a more accurate reflection of sentiments (Willson *et al.*, 2021) – “Results evidence how global threats to sustainable tourism, such as the climate crisis are seen by many Twitter users to be inextricably linked with the wildlife tragedy associated with Australia’s bushfires.” Clearly, social media has come to play a key role in the broadcasting of disaster situations, at times far quicker than traditional media, and something that planners and policymakers can make better use of (Willson *et al.*, 2021).

How Cuba negotiated the pandemic in 2019–2020 is an exemplar for when tourism crisis and medical capacities at a destination collide. As Wylie (2021, p. 2) argues, “despite simultaneously undergoing the most devastating economic recession in decades, Cuba’s pandemic response offers important lessons for the worldwide handling of disease outbreaks and the management of health systems.” Cuba’s act of medical diplomacy where its medical infrastructure saw it come to terms with COVID-19, also included the dispatch of medical teams abroad to assist in combatting the pandemic and treatment of infected patients (Wylie, 2021). Cuba shows that through medical diplomacy, “a state’s response during crisis can moderate the global inequities and injustices such as unequal access to care that often accompany disease outbreaks such as COVID-19” (Wylie, 2021, p. 6).

The generation of post-crisis futures has taken on new meaning in the wake of COVID-19 with destinations now heavily engaged in scenario setting as a means of planning for future catastrophes. The enforcement of social distancing and curtailment of mass gatherings has had a considerable impact on entertainment dependent cities with ripple effects across the tourism and hospitality sectors. In generating four criteria of futures for entertainment-dependent cities (EDD), Show must go on, Lights-Out, Less is more and Bigger is better, Dubois and Dimanche (2021) argue that it should not take a crisis to explore possible futures as an impact mitigating measure. That entertainment-dependent cities “should continue to implement recovery measures while also preparing for similar reoccurrences and for a range of potential future outcomes,” is now received wisdom (Dubois and Dimanche, 2021, p. 10). Crises are important inflection points from

which learning can be drawn and “Whatever the “new normal” looks like, EDDs will inevitably have to borrow strategies from each of the four alternate futures” (Dubois and Dimanche, 2021, p. 10).

In the wake of crises, Tzanelli (2021, p. 2) sets out to “interrogate how COVID-19 might have actually worked miracles in reinforcing repertoires of practical action implicated in the management of life and death by centers of economic power.” Echoes of hope versus prognostications of despair and looming end days often punctuate crisis discourses and with this in mind, Tzanelli (2021, p. 8) posits that “conflicting imaginaries of tourism recovery and regrowth (or degrowth)” are queried. Tourism as a site of cultural production is advocated and in the post viral milieu “where and if human activity imposed by the lockdown has changed behaviours toward the environment durably and for the better, tourist imaginaries will become more post-human and environmentally friendly” (Tzanelli, 2021, p. 9).

The final article in this collection highlights an issue of pressing urgency in the wake of crisis events – how can a destination overcome adverse destination images that disasters are responsible for shaping. As Nguyen *et al.* (2021) demonstrate, cohesion among stakeholders toward formulating crisis destination marketing is vital. In this case, the sake industry in Fukushima Japan “used disaster marketing campaigns to negate the effects of the economic crises caused by the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Powerplant” (Nguyen *et al.*, 2021, p. 11). Crisis predictably saps traveler confidence as the coronavirus pandemic has shown, and unless this is reversed promptly, fear and misinformation can endure, and any recovery will encounter stubborn barriers to visitation.

Conclusion

The ripple effects of global crises have rarely left tourism spared and the COVID-19 pandemic joins the long line of crisis events that have constrained the sector. In the aftermath of crisis, immediate concerns are usually centered on how recovery can take place. However, in a world where unfolding crises have had a greater tendency to be labeled as unprecedented, or a once in a lifetime or so-called black swan event, to use the ubiquitous and politicized vernacular, policymakers, planners and communities are scrambling to adapt. The COVID-19 pandemic represents a “perfect storm” with the confluence of events buffeting the sector like never before, but most importantly, in accentuating the links between tourism and global threats and crisis, it goes beyond the pandemic and signals the need for broader considerations of the state of international mobilities. However, if we consider the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (2021), talk of tourism recovery is akin to “fiddling while Rome burns.” In IPCC (2021, p. 36) terms, “From a physical science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO2 emissions, reaching at least net zero CO2 emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions.” Moreover, “It is *virtually certain* that hot extremes (including heatwaves) have become more frequent and more intense across most land regions since the 1950s, while cold extremes (including cold waves) have become less frequent and less severe, with *high confidence* that human-induced climate change is the main driver of these changes” (IPCC, 2021, p. 10). Ultimately, whether tourism makes a recovery or not might be a moot point given the climate emergency at hand.

Crises tend to expose the social, economic and environment fault lines that in good times, although appearing in plain sight, are conveniently and idly overlooked. As the contributions to this special issue demonstrate, tourism assumes a considerable place in contemporary lifestyles and within the economies and communities that sustain them. As the OECD (2020, p. 5), an organisation focused on economic development laments, “While flexible policy solutions are needed to enable the tourism economy to live alongside the virus in the short to medium term, it is important to look beyond this and take steps to learn from the crisis, which has revealed gaps in government and industry preparedness and response capacity.” While

acknowledging the frailties inherent in the global tourism system, a subset of the global economic system, the overwhelming refrain is about capturing lost demand – recapturing the status quo more or less (OECD, 2020).

However, as authors have implored, the “new normal” for tourism, must engender radically different thinking about what a reshaped tourism system might look like, and how it can continue to offer succor for those reliant on it, while not compromising intergenerational equity or ignoring the IPCC’s stark warnings about the climate emergency. Resilience has become fashionable in crisis discourses, yet for all the rhetoric and promises, if tourism returned to its pre-pandemic manifestations, resilience (or lack of) makes this matter irrelevant. Evidently, the special issue highlights that crisis turns the spotlight on the structural inequalities and violent social reproduction of subalternities, and the many related questions that must be asked, while elsewhere, the debate about what the new normal should look like rages.

For, researchers and practitioners, the inflection points that crises raise and their implications for tourism, provides food for thought and guidance for post-crisis development. However, as Lew *et al.* (2020) posit, “ultimately, transformation requires solutions and actions that are not only tolerable and viable, but have the capacity to puncture the policymaker and practitioner bubbles, and also entice the traveling public to embrace the pandemic’s lessons to shift their past values to better align with those of planet.” Additionally, the development of theoretical frameworks that allow for new approaches to analyzing crises in global tourism are pressing – these must move beyond hackneyed theorizing about supply and demand, sustainable tourism and rudimentary economic justifications, among others, and toward deeper and more critical multidisciplinary engagements that take into account nuanced social, ecological and political viewpoints. For all stakeholders, the challenge is in understanding the transition away from the current growth oriented models of tourism toward modes that strive for what is often termed, triple bottom line impacts – social, economic and environmental. In the end, as Gibson (2019, p. 675) argues, it is clear that “Tourism’s Anthropocenic excesses and volatilities warrant urgent and compelling responses.” And as Beck (2006, p. 332) has broadcast in risk society framing, “Modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that it itself has produced.”

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