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Reflections and discussions: tourism matters in the new normal post COVID-19

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The large number of commentaries in this special issue reflect the need that so many people have to express themselves as a way of releasing the anxieties and integrating the hopes that the COVID-19 pandemic has engendered in individuals and groups around the world. The guest editors of this special issue provide the following comments in reflecting on the major themes that are envisioned for travel and tourism in a COVID-19 world. Comments from the guest editors are individually identified in this conclusion editorial.

Importance of the local

Jessica Mei Pung: In relation to **Benjamin, Dillette and Alderman's** paper, overtourism may correspond to more than just people visiting renowned destinations that are already crowded and far from where they reside. I interviewed restaurateurs who worked in a small tourism destination with only 7000 residents. They faced competition from 60 other restaurants, and almost exclusively relied on revenue from tourists, even if the majority only visited the destination on a day trip. When considering locals as potential customers, restaurateurs complained that their restaurant was not appealing because of its perceived high prices. Regarding regional travel, hopefully the pandemic will make people more aware of their nearby lesser known destinations and increase their support for local businesses when safety measures are in place.

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Dominic Lapointe: Tourism in the context of COVID-19 reveals how the local is a locus of change. As tourism grinds to a halt and social distancing measures are enforced, the micro mobilities at the local level become highly impaired. It is at this scale that the post COVID-19 world may be redefined through tension between a desire to "go back to normal" and a rejection of what could be called the new normal (**Benjamin, Dillette & Alderman**). Local communities in the spring of 2020 are severely impacted in large part by the loss of livelihoods. Yet, from within this loss, the opportunity exists to rebuild tourism with a triple bottom line which will secure a more resilient and sustainable local economy (**Cooper & Alderman; Romagosa**). This rebuilding has the potential to regenerate short circuit economies (**Ateljevic**), reinvigorate environmental hope and remediation (**Crossley**) and promote institutional innovation (**Brouder**). The tourism industry could take this path with local communities, but this path would need leadership and creativity from academics as well as researchers and educators (Benjamin, Dillette & Alderman; **Edelheim; Pernecky**).

This possible transformation at the local level is also an occasion to contest capitalism as the main narrative and replace neocolonial and neoliberal subjectivities (**Everhingham; Tremblay-Huet; Renaud**). On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that degrowth and slow tourism might benefit developed countries while impacting developing countries more negatively (**Tomassini & Cavagnaro**). This shows the asymmetrical power relations in tourism development, especially when negotiated through the lens of North-South relationships (Tremblay-Huet).

Tomassini and Cavagnaro similarly expose the relational nature of tourism space where an industrial structuring of tourism activities creates a symbolic "wall" between local resident and tourism functions of the cities, which is also described by **Lapointe** as a paradoxical twofold alterity. Both commentaries suggest that a refocus of tourism business towards local needs might become more permanent than a quick on the surface adaptation to the crisis. While this local scale perspective present throughout the special issue is important for thinking about the future of tourism, **Hall, Scott and Gössling** warn of selfish nationalism as an infringement of global sustainability which stresses the importance of scale in our analyses.

Helene Balslev Clausen: Following the thinking of several papers, questions for resetting tourism circulate around whether such proposals can be sustainable forms that will translate into equitable development. One of the vast challenges seems to be that tourism often places a focus on the individual and innovations rather than on collectives and communal-owned transactions. Even though tourism redirects and seeks to integrate "communities" in decision-making processes, what often fails is the unpacking of complexities of the historical- and sociopolitical context of societies, regions, or localities. The consequences typically strengthen existing power asymmetries in the decision-making process instead of embedding an inclusive approach. These asymmetries often determine the tensions or conflicts arising during the collaborative process we seek to enhance.

Cave and Dredge's paper offers fascinating frameworks for the reshaping of tourism business models. The complexities of tourism require more profound insights into multiple world perspectives to break down the dichotomies we work with and within. How can we incorporate knowledge produced in other languages and cultures

without using Western concepts to identify sustainable development? Cave and Dredge's lens of alternative economies brings critical understanding to how to create resilience in communities using tourism as a tool. The COVID-19 context provides a space to rethink how we might redefine, represent, and enact the tourism economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, experiences of solidarity have emerged with, for example, residents supporting social enterprises to sustain these businesses in their communities. These exchanges strengthen resilience and are values-based. These types of transactions create a value not accounted for in traditional economic models. Nevertheless, they are essential to build on to support community resilience in tourism.

These transactions underpin communities and make it possible to cope with future vulnerabilities. A notable example is the Zapatista Movement in Chiapas (Mexico) that believes in a world where many worlds fit. Through exploiting the tourism toolbox, the Zapatista Movement and linked communities have generated benefits to the residents in the communities. These varied dimensions of transactions of modes and practices have consequences for our understanding of sustainable-oriented, sociocultural, and political development. They challenge us to think about sustainability considering new contexts, new questions, and maybe new modes of research.

Inequalities

Jessica Mei Pung: Regarding **Benjamin, Dillette and Alderman's** commentary, tourists should reconsider their travel patterns and be aware of how beneficial their vacation would be to the destination they intend to visit, especially when engaging in air travel. Local and regional tourism is a great practice that should be encouraged to benefit all stakeholders. However, the stigmatization of air (and long-haul) travel is an argument that seems to be persistent among people with a certain degree of privilege because they have already travelled around the world, built their travel experience, and can now rely on their memories of famous landmarks and picturesque or exotic places.

What about young people or people from developing countries that either were not born yet or could not afford to travel across the globe when this was glamourized and appreciated by the West? What about families and loved ones who want to visit each other but are separated by oceans because of work? For the latter, travel is a necessity, but travel is also a leisure activity that should not be unequal.

While we as travelers are called to adjust our priorities (**Hall, Scott & Gössling**), travel operations should also adapt to the necessities of travelers as people. To survive, air travel should be made safer by changing the logic of profit maximization which favors overcrowded airport queues and planes and prioritizing the safety and hygiene of air travel procedures.

To still benefit destinations, long-haul travel should consist of trips that last longer. In my studies, I found that long stays are especially transformative for tourists, in terms of opportunities for reflection in the destination and for positive encounters with fellow travelers and local residents, which in turn translate to long-term positive changes in behavior. It is also true that tourist transformation is especially facilitated

by challenges and cultural differences which are probably not faced when visiting a familiar destination.

On a different note but still linked to travel and inequality, while air travel is condemned, during the pandemic more and more people are travelling by car, which is considered the "safest" means of transport, when compared to crowded trains and buses. If this is still the case after lockdowns around the world are eased, not only would it make the reduction of air travel vain in terms of carbon footprint, but disincentivizing public transport would also create inequalities for those who do not own or cannot afford a car. Therefore, we should not give up on public transport, but we should still encourage it and make sure that measures are put in place for people to safely use trains and buses.

Also, I agree that hospitality workers are too vulnerable to these uncertain times, even when working in established workplaces and long-standing businesses. With many restaurants closed during the lockdown, what can we practically do about it? In the case of restaurants, should we as consumers encourage food deliveries, but still support the riders' right to work in safety? What should restaurant owners do about their employees? What should governments do about the current sector vulnerability? What kind of revolution should take place to make sure that hospitality workers are not so vulnerable to crises? **Higgins-Desbiolles** proposes some relevant actions in her agenda.

Noel Salazar: **Galvani, Lew and Sotelo Perez** reflect on how tourism may help to solve some of the challenges our planet is currently facing. One of the underlying ideas is that tourism (and, by extension, travel in general) can be transformational, particularly at the level of the individual tourist. However, while tourism certainly has transformational potential, not every tourist is interested in change and not everybody looking for transformation (through tourism or other means) will find it.

This raises multiple questions. At what cost should we maintain a system (or install a new one) that only "transforms" some? Do the authors imply that even more people should travel (so that the number of potential transformers can multiply)? How should we treat the people necessary to enable the travels and, thus, transformations of others (the so-called service providers)? It would, of course, be much easier if we would all be equal at the start of rethinking the organization of our planetary life. The problem is that we are not (and most likely never will be).

If there is one thing a crisis like the one at hand teaches us, it is that we cannot solve complex challenges alone and that we need to collaborate. As this contribution convincingly argues, such collaboration can and should lead to an expanded global consciousness. Whether tourism will play a leading role in this effort will depend on the sustained efforts by many stakeholders, some who are already transformed and some who are in "happy expectancy".

Michael Hall: While scholars have called for a 'Transformative Turn' in post COVID-19 tourism, this "turn" may indeed become an addition to the fashion stakes of the contemporary social sciences. Like all the other critical, resilient, and sustainable tourisms [and which are often not] the desire for transformative tourism highlights this ongoing, sometimes desperate, search for something other, an alternative tourism that does not melt into air and which provides meaning to those who seek it. Yet the

promise of such meaning has usually been transitory if not illusory as tourism studies moves on to another turn, always travelling never arriving. Is the potential catalyst of COVID-19 going to change tourism at a global scale or will it be 'Business as Usual'? Despairingly, there is reason to believe that it will be the latter. This is not to say that greater justice is not possible in all its forms, nor that enlightened individuals cannot create their own transformative spaces for those around them, nor that an ecologically rich future cannot be. We desperately do want all these things - but the signs are not good.

Mary Mostafanezhad: Crossley's article is a fascinating description of a collective feeling of ecogrief that has been triggered by the pandemic. This is an important psychological framing of what might drive post COVID-19 tourism behavior. Of course, as noted above in the context of flight shaming, not everyone will feel ecofatigue equally and in rural areas, we may find that people that transitioned from ecologically destructive livelihoods will return to those livelihoods because tourism is no longer viable. **Niewiadomski**, for instance, offers a sort of cautious hope when he describes how "the path of re-development and transformation which the global tourism production system will follow once the COVID-19 crisis has been resolved is yet to be determined." Moreover, it will be important to frame this kind of reaction in class terms. Thus, whether framing the local or global dynamics, neither is a homogeneous whole. This framing points to how a political ecology framework adds a bit of nuance to what we might call the "politics of hope" in post COVID-19 tourism, especially around ideas of what it means to "collectively" hope. Who, for instance, is the collective?

This framing is echoed in several papers in this issue. For example, **Hall, Scott and Gössling** describe how the response to "planetary limits and sustainable tourism requires a global approach. Despite clear evidence of this necessity, the possibility for a comprehensive transformation of the tourism system remains extremely limited without a fundamental transformation of the entire planet". In a similar vein, **Mostafanezhad** describes how the consequences of so-called "natural" disasters are unevenly distributed. Drawing on Doreen Massey, **Tomassini and Cavagnaro** describe disentangling the local and global. They write: "While the global dimension seems more broken than ever, the urgency of belonging to the local is more and more evident".

Complex globalizations

Jessica Mei Pung: Mostafanezhad sheds a light on how tourists are great when they generate profit, and are immediately thrown under the bus when it comes to geopolitical issues. We should not forget how this pandemic unfolded from a geopolitical perspective. When COVID-19 first spread in Wuhan, several national governments stopped travel connections to and from China. Other countries, while previously promoting themselves as welcoming and warm tourism destinations, also closed their borders as a primary measure against COVID-19, ordering travelers to quarantine, and threatening them with deportation in case of disobedience.

At the same time, citizens were invited to travel back home, almost as if foreign travelers were the only probable carriers of COVID-19. In Italy, for example, stopping travel connections with China was the primary measure taken by the government on January 31st to prevent COVID-19 from reaching its population. However, this decision backfired because no additional limitations or checks were made, and people travelling from China still managed to reach Italy through indirect routes.

While Italian media outlets focused on two Chinese tourists who became infected in Rome, an outbreak of COVID-19 was taking place in Lombardy in northern Italy, initiated by Italian citizens who had come back from overseas. When developing a strategy to prevent COVID-19, closing borders or stopping connections with selected countries were considered by governments as a panacea, which mostly ended up perpetuating geopolitical anxieties and sometimes the illusion of "the foreigner" as sole plague spreader. Instead, governments should have directed their energies to funding and equipping their health system to proactively fight COVID-19.

Noel Salazar: Geologists have suggested that we currently live in the Anthropocene, an era during which human activity is the dominant influence on climate and the environment. As a result, disasters are increasingly anthropogenic.

Although some have described the coronavirus crisis as an equalizer, this may not be accurate. While international travel, for instance, has been reduced, it certainly has not stopped. A simple analysis of flight tracking websites and apps confirms this. Much of this is deemed "essential transport" (e.g. of food and medical supplies), but some people still manage to travel for leisure. This situation, as **Niewiadomski** points out, is quite dramatic with COVID-19 causing a reduction in global connectedness. European Union dynamics show nicely how the national and the supranational each play their role and how a crisis may (temporarily) alter the assigned roles. It is not always clear what role those involved in tourism—at various levels— can play. What is clear is that we are paying a high price to deal with the containment of the coronavirus, but the crucial question is who the "we" are in this whole story.

Freya Higgins-Desbiolles: On the issue of global-local views, COVID-19 is a critical moment on the pathway to implementing some form of globalization. Tourism has certainly benefited from a globalized world (as per Pete Burns's classic analysis). While there is a branch of tourism management scholarship that seeks to depoliticize tourism, there are important reasons to repoliticize tourism within the current context. Significantly, tourism scholars did not extensively address anti-Islam rhetoric and actions after "9/11", racism against certain groups including Asians in the West or human rights in tourism realms. One possible outcome after COVID-19 is travel becomes localized or regionalized (this is applauded in **Higgins-Desbiolles** and in **Tomassini and Cavagnaro**) because of nationalistic thinking, distrust, fear, and hatred; do we hold a view on that? Are we cosmopolitan in our stance by nature or not?

A new normal?

Simon Teoh: COVID-19 presents an opportunity for the tourism industry to pause and consider what we want out of a post COVID-19 tourism landscape. It presents an opportunity to not only focus on the economic, but also the socio-cultural and

environmental aspects of the industry. It is, for example, important for industry to act as stewards towards Mother Earth. In this context we may ask how in a post-lockdown world, tourism will be reestablished in a crippled global economy? Two issues come to mind: first, the economic imbalance and hence power between tourism in the Global North (richer, developed countries) vs. Global South (poorer, developing countries); and second, each jurisdiction's own tourism agenda. Whilst tourists from the richer countries will most likely continue to want to take their holidays in the Global South, tourism stakeholders in the poorer countries would likely also want them to, because of their economic needs and their government's need for the tourism dollar.

However, this might transform post COVID-19, at least in the next two to four years. Those richer countries will need to recover themselves first and will most likely look to domestic or 'proximity tourism' (**Romagosa**). The call for a post COVID-19 evolutionary reset with new tourism pathways (**Brouder**) would most likely dominate in Global South tourism, given the realization that their ability to rely on the tourism dollar has now vanished. This will require looking for fresh sources of alternative revenue to the tourism dollar. Sufficiency economy or regenerative economy (**Alteljevic**) will most likely play an important role here.

Jessica Mei Pung: In the context of animals and tourism, **Crossley's** paper made me think about the pandas who mated for the first time in the Hong Kong zoo while visitors were absent due to the lockdown (Watts, 2020). Apart from making for "cute" headlines on media outlets, will this make certain zoo operators more aware of the fact that they are prioritizing profit over the preservation of species, or will they go back to "business as usual"?

Patrick Brouder: The temporary break in tourist activity shows some possibility of institutional innovation towards 'socializing' tourism but the challenge will be in embedding the new normal for the long-term and for the greater good (Brouder, 2019). As **Ateljevic** points to in her opening quote, there never was a 'normal' but rather a 'normalized' way of doing things. **Crossley** and **Higgins-Desbiolles** both suggest that for true transformation to occur, entrenched ways of doing things need to be broken. The call for a move towards 'regenerative tourism' addresses the important question of how we can embed change in the aftermath of the present crisis.

Romagosa notes the potential 'regionalization of tourism' as tourists start to 'think local and act local'. This would favor destination regions which already have advantages of infrastructure, population, and income. It would also undermine two of the traditional rationales for tourism development: (1) tourism as a path to regional economic development (rural, peripheral, and remote destinations may well be left behind even though many are dependent on tourism, and (2) tourism as a source of foreign currency and contributor to GDP (a regional approach would see an increasing share of gains made within the same currency regime or within the same nation state).

In a similar vein, **Hall, Scott and Gössling** demonstrate that a regional reset is as likely to bolster selfish regionalism based on pre-existing power dynamics and growth-focused development as it is to lead to regional reorientation towards sustainable practices. They further describe how the potential of the present transformative

moment will likely be swept aside in many regions as governments urgently pursue job growth to mitigate the increased unemployment. Hall, Scott and Gössling conclude with a classic geographical phrasing: "Changes to tourism as a result of COVID-19 will be uneven in space and time" so while we may see a new regionalism, it will likely be a patchwork of old and new approaches to tourism.

Dominic Lapointe: With large cities being identified as hotspots of the COVID-19 contagion and social distancing measures creating challenges in densely populated areas, we could see a movement to the countryside by the higher economic class, just as when, at the beginning of the 19th century aristocrats would escape dirty and polluted cities for the seaside for health and hygiene to *prendre les eaux* (take to the waters) or the sanatorium to "cure" tuberculosis which is still an important health issue of our time.

Freya Higgins-Desbiolles: **Crossley's** paper makes an important contribution to understanding our ecological imaginations. She asks us to consider what it means when we collectively hope nature is rapidly repairing itself in our absence under lockdown. In this context, are we willing to transform our choices and actions so that ecology can survive and thrive? Can we as academics foster tourism in these many ways (whether we are aware we are doing it or not) and yet hope for a world with less tourism? Are we able to reconcile the needs of the environment with the demands of the industry? In other words, what potential do these sentimental scenes have for transformative sustained action? This connects back to what I tried to get at in my paper on the false promise.

Simon Teoh: **Lapointe's** notion of the '6 foot tourism world' sanity safety scenario, can be very real in the immediate post COVID-19 tourism. Domestic tourists' movements may be restricted to those who are immune and those who are not. Would post COVID-19 jurisdictions impose a health passport, like the olden days of the yellow colored health passport that travelers needed to carry?

Ateljevic's notion of 'conscious citizens', much likened to **Cheers's** notion of 'human flourishing', is the basis for transforming tourism, one that deserves more attention post COVID-19, as does **Higgins-Desbiolles'** call for tourism benefits to recenter on the public good. For instance, Higgins-Desbiolles's example of the cruise industry echoes **Renaud's** call for smaller size cruise ship operations to combat the impacts of seasonality in the aftermath of COVID-19.

There is also much 'ecological grief' (**Crossley**), which the tourism Industry must face and deal with. There will be much soul searching within the tourism Industry. However, to transform tourism post COVID-19, a 'philosophical reset' (**Benjamin, Dillette & Alderman**) is necessary. The important question of the value of tourism will most likely dominate the tourism industry discourse in the future, as the consensus as to what tourism post COVID-19 will look like will still be up for discussion for some time to come.

Helene Balslev Clausen: One of the underlying issues in most of the papers is the importance of the state. Tourism scholarship would benefit from political geographers' analyses of the state. Perhaps it is time to bring the state back, as Evans et al. (1985) reminded us several decades ago. Indeed, the tourism industry is dependent on states and the way they regulate. However, COVID-19 also reveals the state's vulnerability

and tight bonds to the industry. The state should support and secure the "clean industries"; the living world, and "bail out the living world not its destroyers" although European governments have been quick to provide loans to airlines (Monbiot, 2020).

One of the extraordinary responses to COVID-19 has been how communities mobilized the commons. In Copenhagen, people supported older people by delivering food to their doorsteps; in Mexico, self-organized groups provided aid packages to people without savings, and in Johannesburg, young people have on a massive scale handed out hand sanitizer, bottled water, and food in informal settlements. Might this be a potential eye-opener for context-based co-creation with the communities (that are not homogenous either) for tourism enterprises? These transactions are all sensible but the transformations they represent will be far from easy to scale up. The underlying causes of poverty and the unsustainable tourism system need to be addressed.

Mary Mostafanezhad: **Rowen** describes the annual Burning Man festival in Nevada, USA, as a model of an "alter- or anti-tourism, tourism". Originally developed as an anti-capitalist festival, it continues to serve as an alternative space for non- or not-fully capitalist forms of exchange. There are numerous critiques against its ongoing corporatization both in popular and academic literature. Yet, the concept of thinking differently about economic exchange is an important way forward in a post COVID-19 tourism landscape.

Higgins-Desbiolles' paper addresses related themes in her call for socialized tourism that is "recentred on the public good". While the tourism industry is dependent on monetary exchanges, there is potential to incorporate other forms of non or not fully capitalist exchange. In this way, Rowen's framing of Burning Man as a metaphor for the potentiality of tourism is apt: both tourism and Burning Man have the potential to both depend on capitalist exchange but also offer opportunities for non or not fully capitalist exchange. These forms of exchange also depend on mutual trust and solidarity.

In a post COVID-19 tourism recovery, these sentiments are going to be necessary. Trust that people have washed their hands, do not travel when they feel sick, and will be cared for if they become ill. Trust also depends on mutual respect between hosts and guests who see each other not as consumers and producers but rather as equal partners in the exchange. In this sense, the entire notion of hospitality will require a new kind of trust between hosts and guests.

Michael Hall: While there are pockets of action and resistance, the bailouts for airlines and carbon emitters are already happening. The race to the bottom of special offers and discounts has begun. Government funded holidays in Sicily at half price? Sure.

While tourism is founded on the promise of mobility and freedom, COVID-19 has only reinforced the systems of surveillance and control in many countries, including in some cases on research and publication on COVID-19 itself. The selfish nationalism and leadership of many countries only serves to reflect the selfish individualism that characterizes much tourism and, perhaps in the drive for research assessment and impact, the tourism academy as well.

Utopias are, just like the newspeak of critical, resilient, sustainable, and transformative tourisms, illusory, and, in the wrong hands, with an inherently contradictory,

rather than emancipatory, nature. It is almost as if the more you repeat something the less power, explanatory or otherwise, it has – the entropy of meaning.

Transformations lie somewhere in the eddies in the multiple scales between structure and agency. But structure is not fashionable in the tourism world where the consumptive agent is king. We remain in search of common ground even as the commons are eroded away while we muddle through and talk too much, or perhaps not talk enough at all.

My mutable self can no longer tell as it becomes commodified on a commercial transformational journey – Eat, Love, Prey. If the best path to utopia to hope for is local or individual transformative tourisms – whatever they might be – without living within the limits of the ecosystems of which we are a part, then what future is there for our pale blue dot that we travel round let alone for our children? Ontological shifts as well as more practical turns are needed. I despair.

Mary Mostafanezhad: The papers in this issue highlight the tension among tourism industry practitioners to, on the one hand, "return to normal" and by tourism academics to recreate a "new normal". **Nepal's** paper brings this to the fore when he describes how "The tourism industry in Nepal has always worked under the assumption that things will be normal, and that tourists would continue to flock to Nepal, as long as there is growth in international travel." While he may hope that the present crisis affords the "global adventure tourism industry an opportunity to reset," recently unemployed Sherpas may be hoping for things to quickly get "back to normal" so they can feed their families.

There are many examples of local governments now realizing that putting all their eggs in the tourism basket was a vulnerability and mistake that they do not want to repeat. For instance, headlines in Hawaii state newspapers describe the urgent need to diversify the economy and move away from the state's heavy reliance on tourism. **Nepal** makes this point in his conclusion when he writes: "There is a fundamental disconnect between what the UNWTO preaches (sustainability), and what it practices (growth expansion). This disconnect must be fixed first before we can consider the future of tourism."

Other authors make similar points. For example, **Ioannides and Gyimóthy** describe how, "although policymakers seek to strengthen the resilience of post-pandemic tourism, their subsidies and other initiatives serve to maintain a fundamentally flawed market logic". In a fascinating description of the potential role of robotics in post COVID-19 tourism, **Zeng, Chen and Lew** call for a radical normalization of "robotic applications that enhance tourist experiences, the protection of natural and cultural resources, and the emergence of new 'high-touch' employment opportunities for travel, tourism and hospitality workers".

Ateljevic similarly grapples with what a new normal may engender, writing: "New ways of being, knowing and doing in the world are emerging as conscious citizens, consumers, producers, travelers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders are calling and acting upon the necessary transformation towards the regenerative paradigm and regenerative economic systems." This is all to say the current set of papers offers multiple pathways forward for dealing with the trouble with "normal".

What really matters

Michael Haywood: The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as it plays out in the travel and tourism industry will reveal the importance of tourism (community-by-community) through its absence. It's revival is not in doubt, but if it is to serve "purpose" (the why of tourism determined by individual communities-as-destinations) then consideration definitely has to be given to what Arjun Appadurai refers to as the "ethics of probability" to which I would add, the "ethics of possibility", which has to be revealed through thought, behavior and action associated with those in leadership positions.

Freya Higgins-Desbiolles: I think it says something that so many people, including tourism academics, were looking for something that could catalyze change. We have all responded rapidly as we draw on the values, training, and knowledge that we have been accumulating to try to make sense of the possibilities this moment may hold. I note there are a few blind spots that I see, and I think they are telling:

- This is a moment of life and death for many so what is the value of a journal article and particularly on tourism?
- Our own discipline risks being on the scrap heap as does the university sector, but we said nothing of that.
- There is immense ugliness sitting in this moment including anti-Asian sentiment and violence and we have failed to relate this to the rapid rise in dependency on Chinese tourists in many regions. That is underpinned by racism that has been there all along.
- Geo-politics is totally changing in this crisis and the world on the other side will be totally different. Tourism will be shaped by those realities and we as academics have no influence on that.

Yet the crisis has shown that tourism matters in our societies and that, in the impacts of quarantine measures, this fact has been brought into sharp relief. Given that tourism scholars have never agreed on what tourism is, we have been especially challenged to agree on why it matters. It is perhaps in this moment that we may come together to think otherwise as the industry rebuilds itself from the ground up.

Michael Haywood: As I read through these comments I cannot help but wonder what the average person involved within tourism-related enterprises might be thinking or how they may be reacting to what is being said (how it is being said … use of language) about post COVID-19 change or transformation; it's all rather obtuse to all but the contributors! Yet, the day-to-day struggle that is going on right now within all types of enterprises is immense. Not only is adaptation on the minds of everyone, but so is survival (survival in the short-term in which cash is, and will remain, king). Strategy and policy changes will have to wait until operational adjustments are made (all tactical decisions) and a degree of stability returns. Everything that is happening now is experimental; moreover, the actual learning that is taking place is occurring only through the actual acts of doing, seeing what works and what does not, what resonates and what does not.

It is perhaps telling that so few of the papers and comments in this conclusion acknowledge where the groundswell of actual change (demand- and supply-related) is occurring and will continue to occur.

Patrick Brouder: As the natural environment exhibits hope through the short-term change of behavior of animals there may be a change in the perceptions of would-be tourists. Increased environmental sensitivity is a precursor to behavior change. As **Crossley** and **Pernecky** each note, the question remains how to transform the hope of this moment into changed behavior as we begin to adapt the tourism sector to the new reality. The fact that the return of tourism activities will be gradual means there is a chance that positive change can be slowly embedded in a temporarily protected tourism system and that, given time, as temporary tourism restrictions are lifted a more enlightened tourism may have had time to flourish.

Michael Hall: Fundamentally, the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces how it is not tourism that matters. Rather, tourism is a means to an end. What really matters is planet, people, and our families. *He mea nui. Ko te papaorangarewa, ko te taangata, he whanau.*

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