
The effects of COVID-19 in the tourist society: an anthropological insight of the trivialisation of death and life

Raoni Borges Barbosa

Department of Sociology,
State University of Rio Grande do Norte,
Natal, 59610210, Brazil
Email: raoniborges@uern.br

Jean Henrique Costa

Department of Tourism,
State University of Rio Grande do Norte,
Natal, 59610210, Brazil
Email: prof.jeanhenriquecosta@gmail.com

Bintang Handayani

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness.
University of Malasia Kelatan,
Kelatan Malasia, 16100, Malaysia
Email: bintang.handayani@gmail.com

Maximiliano E. Korstanje*

Department of Economics,
University of Palermo,
Buenos Aires, 1175, Argentina
Email: mkorst@palermo.edu
*Corresponding author

Abstract: In the present essay review, we bring some sociological reflections about the durable effects of the lockdown not only in tourism behaviour but also in society. In so doing, we pose some central questions oriented to understand the sense of new normality, where the social distancing marks human relations. We coin the term trivialisation of death to discuss the ideological dispositions revolving around the domestication of death. In parallel, a new debate around the idea of the tourist-gaze is amounted in the section to follow. In the pre-pandemic world, tourists were valorised as ambassadors of the civilised order, but now they appear to be demonised as potential carriers of a lethal disease, if not potential terrorists who lurk to attack anytime. To some extent, COVID19 –far from being a foundational event- reaffirms a logic that starts with 9/11 and the so-called War on Terror.

Keywords: new normal; COVID-19; industrial genocide; trivialisation of life; naturalisation of death; risk; pandemic; globalisation; hospitality; fear.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Barbosa, R.B., Costa, J.H., Handayani, B. and Korstanje, M.E. (2021) 'The effects of COVID-19 in the tourist society: an anthropological insight of the trivialisation of death and life', *Int. J. Tourism Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp.179–192.

Biographical notes: Raoni Borges Barbosa is a Visiting Professor of the Department of Social and Political Sciences and the Post-graduation Program in Social and human sciences at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte. He received his PhD in Anthropology at University of Pernambuco. He received his Master Degree in Anthropology (State University of Paraiba, Brazil). He completed a post doctoral internship about theory of emotions and symbolic interactionism. Professor Borges Barbosa is vice-leader of the Leisure, Tourism and Work research Group (Geplat) and co editor of *Tourism, Studies and Practices*.

Jean Henrique Costa is a Professor at the Department of Tourism and at the Post Graduation Program in Social and Human Sciences – State University of Rio Grande do Norte. He received his PhD in Social Sciences, and Master degree in Geography. He completed a Post-doctoral internship at the University Autonoma of Ciudad de Juarez, Mexico, where he studied the problems of tourism and urban violence. He is founder of the Leisure tourism and Work Research Group (GEPLAT) and Editor-in-Chief of *Tourism Studies and Practices Academic Journal* (RTEP).

Bintang Handayani is a theorist of tourism who works as Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Hospitality, tourism and wellness, University Malasia Kelatan. Her focus of study associates to visitor attraction management, inanimate travellers, solo dining experience scape, technology in dark tourism and special interest tourism. She is co-author of the books *Special Interest in Tourism in Southeast Asia: Emerging Research and Opportunities* (2019) and *Gazing at Death: Dark Tourism as an Emergent Horizon of Research* (2017) published by IGI Global, US.

Maximiliano E. Korstanje is a leading global cultural theorist specialising in terrorism, mobilities and tourism. He serves as a Senior Researcher at the University of Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina and Editor in Chief of the *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism and Hospitality*. In 2015, he was a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS) at the University of Leeds, UK; TIDES at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain in 2017, and the University of La Habana, Cuba in 2018. In 2018, his biography was selected to be part of the roster of Alfred Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award (Marquis Who's Who). He edits two book series, *Advances in Hospitality, Tourism and Service Sector* (IGI Global US) and *Tourism, Security Safety and Post-Disaster Destinations* (Emerald Group Publishing, UK).

1 Introduction

The recent virus outbreak known as COVID-19 has devastated the prosperity of developed economies, leading the global trade as well as the tourism industry into an unparalleled crisis. Of course, this pandemic places the industry in a philosophical dilemma. Paradoxically, the tourism industry is the main carrier of the virus but at the same time its victim (Korstanje, 2016, 2020). As Baum & Hai put it, the pandemic

obliges many governments to adopt measures, which are restrictive for free circulation, while affecting the tourism industry. The problem lies that without these travel bans its devastating effects would be worse. The right of traveling or enjoying hospitality services has been curtailed by the state of emergency that revolves around the COVID-19 (Baum and Hai, 2020). Having said this, governments introduce restrictive measures which include not only the closure of borders and cancellations of international arrivals and departures but also a strict lockdown to undermine the internal circulation. In consequence, countless tourist companies and destinations fall into a financial collapse as never before (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020; Aruga et al., 2020).

Based on Gailbraith's theory on predatory capitalism, the main argument in this paper holds that COVID-19 – far from creating a crisis- accelerates a state of emergency resulted from the previous material asymmetries and inequalities which are characteristics of the neoliberal order. The term predatory capitalism signals to those antisocial metabolic practices articulated to stimulate mass consumption without taking care of the collateral damages. As Galbraith alerts, predatory capitalism disposes and commoditises people, cultures and landscapes to oil the machine of capital, but at the same time, it paves the ways for the rise of an industrial collapse (Galbraith, 2006). Galbraith starts from the premise that any action has direct consequences in the system. The accumulation process works insofar as a productive means to transform resources into commoditised products. Whenever the accumulation process goes like a run-a-away train, the productive machine needs further resources. Ideology –far from resolving the negative effects of predatory capitalism- perpetuates the notion of destruction dubbed as the naturalisation of death. The philosophical quandary this paper intends to decipher associates to the right of traveling and its implication in predatory capitalism.

As the previous backdrop, Section 1 dissects the meaning of what specialists dub new normality. Tourism research, which was historically marked by tourist-centricity (Franklin, 2007), faces now a crisis because tourism is not the rule but the exception. The discipline devotes time and efforts to explaining how to study tourism precisely in a world without tourists. The socio-anthropological effects of the social distancing, as well as the lifestyles, are placed under the critical lens of scrutiny. In so doing, the legacy of the founding parents of sociology is carefully reviewed. Section 2 gives some reflection on the sacred role of home and the dilemma of the stay safe at home. The untrammelled expansion of capitalism has certainly re-drawn the national (shared) borders effacing the co-presence of the 'Other' in the public space. Under the lemma of stay home, there is a much deeper moral decomposition that marks a manifest apathy for public life: the fear of the stranger. Complementarily, the third and more polemic section focuses on the impacts of COVID19 in the modern cosmology of society as well as the archetype of the 'Otherness'. Whereas the COVID19 ignites a process what these authors call the banalisation of life the restrictive measures adopted by governments lead directly to the trivialisation of death. The point is well-developed through Section 4 when the problem of the Otherness is decoded.

Last but not least, the current essay-review explores the legacy of John Urry and his conception of the tourist-gaze. Interested in constructing a bridge between cultural theory and classic Marxism, Urry laid the foundations towards new sociology where 'the gaze' plays a leading role in allowing a global commodity-exchange process. The tourist-gaze denotes a spirit of globalism and multiculturalism that has withered away. Unfortunately, the term today sets the pace to a wicked-gaze in a dystopian world, where tourists are treated as undesired guests. The word wicked –applied here- connotes to a widely-spread

panic for welcoming tourists who are the carriers of COVID19. This happens simply because tourists are now undesired guests!

2 Introduction to a new normality: socio-anthropological insights

Over the recent years, some studies alerted on the risks for the tourism industry the expansion of new viruses and the multiplication of global pandemics (Baker, 2015; Jensen, 2020). Viruses like many other micro-organisms devastate the image and advertising of tourist destinations (Larsen et al., 2011). Although the tourism industry seems certain resiliency to risk perception, no less true is that pandemics introducing an invisible guest -which cannot be controlled- wreaks havoc in the tourist system. There are fresh reminders in the social imaginary of SARS, Swine Flu or even Ebola arriving through international airplanes to Europe and the US. The so-called Spanish flu took months to become a pandemic but the modern tourism industry rapidly disseminates lethal virus in the four continents in the question of days (McKercher and Chon, 2004; Cooper, 2006; Page et al., 2012). The current technological breakthroughs changed forever the human geographies accelerating the travel timeframes as well as the number of international flights. Lay-citizens -moved by the use of digital platforms- access now to cheaper rates to make over-seas journeys. Technology revolutionises the tourism industry automatising the role of the tour operator while mediating between the consumer and the capital. As state in the introduction, more demands equate to the multiplication of flights (Hall et al., 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2004). What is equally important, many long-distanced cities are very well connected in hours transforming the daily lifestyle (Novelli et al., 2018; Rosselló et al., 2017). In this respect, tourist travels request the adoption of surveillance technology to improve security and safety at airports or bus stations. It is assumed that the act of traveling should be considered a social (fundamental) right of modern democracies (Baum and Hai, 2020). The industry situates as the tug of war of the capitalist order denoting prosperity, liberality and political stability (Honey, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Professional politicians recur to the employment rate generated by the tourism industry to claim social recognition for their administrations. Beyond this climate of economic development, as Baum and Hai (2020) lament, there is no rational basis to justify why tourism should be a universal right. Baum & Hai acknowledge that millions of citizens are impeded to move freely in the world or what are worse people who remain unemployed. Whether we assume that the right to travel equates to the reward to keep a job, many others are debarred from such a privileged position. Doubtless, first-class consumers have been denied access to tourism consumption in fact that the state of emergency urges governments to close the borders while implementing countless travel restrictions. At the balance, the fundamental right of saving lives outweighs the so-called right to travel. This debate -far from being closed- remains open in the tourism fields.

As the previous argument is given, tourism is part of the problem but at the same time part of the solution. As a growing industry, it serves as a perfect vehicle for the virus but it very well represents a good opportunity to re-birth in a post-pandemic context. With the benefits of hindsight, one might speculate that COVID19 (SARSCoV2) began radical transformations in the tourism and hospitality industries affecting seriously cruise and transport sub-sectors (Brouder, 2020). These changes allow the inscription of new sustainable practices and consumption which is energetically applauded by the supporters

of sustainability. The notion of mass-tourism or over-tourism should be at least revisited according to new foundational cultural values (Gössling et al., 2020; Korstanje, 2020; Renaud, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). As David Harvey eloquently observes, global capitalism rests on the application of emptying practices that marks the dynamic of daily life. These mechanisations work in the logic of business as usual. The COVID19 changes the concept of normal life introducing social distancing, the lockdown mediating between the opportunity to live –whether citizens follow the instructions- and the possibility to die (if the lockdown is violated). Social conformity plays a leading role in the configuration of the social ethos.

The point of conformity was widely addressed by one of the parents of modern sociology, Professor Emile Durkheim. He argued convincingly that human experiences, fear and hopes are systematically legitimated by the orchestration of reciprocal actions which reify in the shared circulating practices. What a person simply believes is real in his cosmology (Durkheim, 2013). The sense of reality is shared by countless shared preconceptions about life which are disposed to understand the surrounding environment (Merton, 1936). Disasters often break the notion of normality subverting the daily rules and procedures. As Stephanie Buus adheres, ranging from epidemic outbreaks to terrorism the sense of reality is often interrogated by the outside risks. Each disaster taking hit suddenly accelerates profound changes in society which includes the legislation, if not a criticism on questions on authorities, and the ways the state of emergency is managed (Buus, 2011). In normal conditions, the concept of normality is never questioned, it remains closed, inexpugnable to the human eye, but once the disaster takes hit, there lies a process of re-assembly that confronts our constructed world. The notion of emotional culture plays a leading role in the configuration of philosophers called ontological security (Velho, 1987; Barbosa, 2019). Disasters interrogate our dogmatism testing our sense of reality (Thomas and Thomas, 1928). Applied to the global pandemic, the idea of new normality speaks us that something (a very important thing) has been lost, or at the least society passed to a new stage. Western epistemology, as well as education, went through various crises in the pastime. But COVID19 ignites radical shifts that not only erode the social institution but the relational nature of trust. Anthony Giddens (2003, 2013) realises that the erosion of trust results as a consequence of globalisation as well as the rise of reflexive modernity, which operates in a world where knowledge production is not monopolised by the net of experts any longer. In the global world, the decision-making process is subject to high levels of uncertainty, lack of information and risk (Giddens and Pierson, 1998). Risk society is, at best, something more complex than the sum of the parts. Any subtle change in one part resonates heavily in the rest of the system (i.e., Butterfly effect) (Beck, 1992; Lorenz, 2000). As Cass Sunstein remarks, the laws of fear rest not only in a society marked by higher levels of uncertainty but also in the lack of information that make bad decisions. Even for experts, some emotional distortions lead them to make the incorrect way. The agent's decisions are mainly based on emotional dynamics, not rational choices. The disaster takes a hit because of the sum of bad decisions by the side of authorities. At the time we feel fear we run the risks to replicate the same protocols and standardised behaviour that may lead us to disaster (Sunstein, 2005). In the same way, both, Sunstein and Giddens understand that lay-people do not imagine often the effects of their decision. Hence, citizens trust in the net of experts who advise for the best options. This net of experts not only helps in reducing the anxieties but connects presences with absences, in a process normally known as the disembedding process (Edwards, 2018). In reflexive modernity, people

know further –while dealing with more information- than their ancestors. However, complexity prompts lay-citizens to make incorrect decisions. Citizens sacrifice their freedom in the doors of modern science. As Giddens say, the net of experts mediates between citizens and political institution in the risk society. All violent historical events end at a museum. Tourism commoditises bloody events in form of a cultural spectacle. At a closer look, the law, the market and scientific knowledge are based in colonial narratives orchestrated to domesticate the ‘non-Western Other’. Their legitimacy is given because of the impossibility of the agent to scrutinise their so-called objectivity. Covid19 is re-configuring society in many ways, but for the sake of clarity, we analyse the problem in a grid of three axioms: the loss of the sacredness of home, the banality of life, and the normalisation of death. A detail of these concepts is as follows:

3 The home and the outsider: hospitality?

It is tempting to say that society experiences a gradual loss of sacredness in the private sphere while the citizen recedes to the security of home. In this respect, the idea of home opposes an outside landscape (public life) where western rationality widely governs. One of the sociologists who were originally interested by this point was Norbert Elias, who jointly Eric Dunning, explored violence and hostility as the negative drives of the capitalist society. Capitalism expands according to its ability to domesticate our bodies while placating our negative drives. In so doing, capitalism successfully regulates public and private spheres. Emotions can be expressed only at home, at the same time, rationality is the common tongue of public life. Those who exhibit their emotions in public are seen as maniacs. For Elias, the Western rationality associated with masculinity dominates in both spheres but particularly people are often discouraged to express their emotions at a bus or the work. The control of emotionality occupies a central position in the Western discourse, as well as in modern science (Elias and Dunning, 2008). In consequence, the home was seen as a sacred-space inexpugnable to outsiders, who -of course- need an invitation to enter. The founding parents of sociology ascribed to the idea that the figure of invitation and hospitality are inextricably intertwined. As Jacques Derrida notes, since hospitality can be offered or not the decision is always made by the host. At the time the guest is accepted by the host, the relationship places an asymmetrical position. The guest interrogates furtherly on the reign of the host’s dogmatism subverting his rules and customs. It is not surprising to see how hospitality and hostility share the same etymological origin. The Xenos (foreigner) is domesticated through the use of violence when he does not abide the law (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). In Derrida’s terms, hospitality is offered only to those who can pay for that (conditioned hospitality). Hence, migrants, asylum seekers or refugee are persecuted by the police and finally trialled or exiled. This leads some voices to claim that hospitality – at least as it was imagined in the West- is in crisis. The lack of tolerance to the stranger, associated with separatist or racist discourses without mentioning the travel bans imposed on Muslim tourists seems to be part of what some scholars dubbed as the end of hospitality (Korstanje, 2017; Ritzer, 2019; Selwyn, 2019).

In an earlier book, entitled *Terrorism, tourism and the end of hospitality in the West* M. Korstanje (2017) punctuates that terrorism and the war on Terror declared by Bush’s administration accelerated not only a crisis of sense in the Western civilisation but also closed the national borders to the presence of the undesired guest, so to speak an

outsider who asks for hospitality. In this way, thousands of international tourists were mistreated or migrants jailed when they crossed the borders of Western nations. This closure has inevitably devastating effects for the Social Imaginary in the threshold of time. Chauvinist expressions, discourse, as well as the triumph of populist leaders resulted from what Korstanje dubbed as “the end of hospitality at least as we know it”. Today, the COVID19 far from being a founding event re-affirms such a trend packaging the ‘Other’ as an object of suspicion and fear. The question of whether the War on Terror declared overtly a fight for protecting democracies towards terrorism, now the West declared the war against a virus. For the popular parlance, the home was not only the only safe place to live, it marked the difference between being a potential terrorist or a good citizen. Terrorists were portrayed by journalists as demoniac persons who look like us, even they would be a relative, a neighbour or simply a friend. This discourse activated a securitisation process that stressed that anyone will be safe anytime and anywhere. In the same vein, the war on terror sets the pace to a new war, where all of us are potential terrorists, silent killers who carry a lethal virus which very well places the social order in danger (Korstanje, 2017, 2018, 2020; Korstanje and Olsen, 2011). Is social distancing part of the solution or the problem?

3.1 The social distancing

The trivialisation of life exhibits a tension between the needs to keep the economy open – avoiding social restrictions to stop the virus, and the urgency of the lemma stay at home. In their speech, authorities said health or economy is this the prerogative?

This pseudo-dilemma resolves in the collective experience of mourning, a rite organised to venerate life through the ‘Other’s death’. The value of lost lives is contrasted to the value of the economy. Having said this, the trivialisation of life inscribes to the political strategies of segmenting society according to their purchasing power or consuming capacity. This (banalisation) trivialisation of life is a very well palpable issue observable in the normalisation of death. It embodies the incapacity of relatives to bury their loved ones because of the lockdown and other restrictions. The funeral rites are of vital importance for the cultural reproduction of society. The act of neglecting these rites coincide with the normalisation of death, which means the idea that casualties are depersonalised to take part in mere numbers, or statistical reports. After all, each victim is an exhausted biography covered in the dust of oblivion. What is equally important, death is equated to the needs of the economy working while life is associated with social distancing and the lockdown. In public life, the sense of terror paves the ways for creating a gap between us and them, the good or the evilness. This point marks an ideological narrative that inscribes in a new rebirth. The binomial construe of life and death serves to draw the archetype of an outsider to blame for the own frustrations or incapacities to cope with the COVID19. This outsider feeds a lot of counterfeit narratives and conspiracy plots that endorse legitimacy to the governments (Said, 1979, 1997). This seems to be the case of Asian tourists well-documented by Mostafanezhad et al. (2020) in a recent publication. Authors eloquently show the rise of racist expressions against Asian tourist because of the fear instilled by the global pandemic. In these ethnocentric discourses, Asian tourists are labelled as potential dangers for society who need to be isolated and carefully monitored up. The ‘Non-Western Other’ becomes an undesired guest in the post COVID19 context (Korstanje, 2020; Korstanje and George, 2016).

In private life, subjects are obliged to perform mechanised tasks –enclosed at their homes- where negative emotions as tiredness or fear mediate between the sense of security and freedom. Like Plato’s Tavern, we have the option to live here safe or launch to leave the Cavern to meet with liberty. Stay at home crystallises an economic condition of great inequality between those who have access to digital technologies and those impeded for the exercise from such a right. It is important to note that the concept of new normality exhibits a clear global frustration to coordinate efforts to stop the contagion. Beyond the individual voluntarism, the net of experts failed to give lay-people clear communication about the steps and protocols to follow. In a hyper-globalised and technologised society, nobody knows what to do or in what direction going. The new normality is a new epoch marked by a climate of fear and distrust (in the ‘Other’). A neighbour is now an object of mistrust that should be avoided. Such a crisis becomes more acute because of the excess of technology which leads us to create fake-news, so to speak a distortion of reality (Arendt, 2006). The crisis in trusting in the ‘Other’ is a clear sign of the death of hospitality (Korstanje, 2017). As Žizek points out, “[...] the current spread of the Coronavirus epidemic has, in turn, unleashed vast epidemics of ideological viruses that have lain dormant in our societies: false news, paranoid conspiracy theories, outbreaks of racism, etc.” (Žizek, 2020, p.43).

Anthropologically speaking, the notion of contagion speaks us furtherly on the danger of impurity, which symbolically associates with the corruption of the body. The jargon of expertise (in this case the medical expertise) attempts to domesticate the pace of the time. As Ulrich Beck puts it, in the risk society the same technology which is disposed to make the world a safer place becomes the generators of global risks which threaten mankind. Because of this, the net of experts plays a leading role in the communicative process that characterises the risk society (Beck, 1992). These paradoxical situations are based on the standardised protocols and bureaucratic practices of modernity. To put the same in bluntly, the idea of new normality not only expresses the idea something has changed but the triumph of the medical gaze over other voices. The logic of mass-regulation and the political domestication of the ‘Other’ are inextricably intertwined. Echoing Beck, in a society of complexity we simply move to ignore the global risks, emulating to be safe in the simulacrum of the disaster. In this token, the new normality sublimates in the losses, deaths and destruction the COVID19 brought into the foreground. The new normality exorcises the imminent presence of the contingency while naturalising death (DaMatta, 1997).

4 The tourist gaze reconsidered

Let’s remind readers that John Richard Urry was a British sociologist, who does not need a previous presentation. He has brilliantly innovated in the fields of mobilities theory, sociology of tourism and the globalisation process (only to name a few). He coined the term tourist-gaze to describe a new tendency oriented to consume landscapes, geographies and customs through the articulation of leisure travels. Urry acknowledges that tourism would be never feasible than in the fields of modernity and industrialism. The tourist gaze, of course, speaks to us of a much preceding cultural matrix which marks what can be gazed at or not. Needless to say, the mobilities theory has gained recognition and traction over the recent years shedding light not only on the impact of mobilities on daily lifestyle but also the expansion of the global trade worldwide (Cresswell, 2011).

As Urry eloquently observes, the multiplication of leisure travels associate with a new infrastructure mounted to simulate the technological breakthrough that finally marked the 20th century (Urry, 2016). Postmodern society is, doubtless, a society of movement.

“Movement became significant in the contemporary world- indeed the freedom of movement, as represented in popular media, politics and the public sphere, is the ideology and utopia of the twenty-first century. The UN and the UE both enshrine rights to movement in their constitutions. More than knowledge, more than celebrity, more than economic success itself, it is the infinity of promised and assumed consumption of possibilities arising from multiple movements that characterise the neoliberal dream. Also, many people have mobility thrust upon them as the number of refugees, asylum seekers and slaves hit records of levels in the early twenty-first century.” (Urry, 2016, p.4)

Having said this, the term tourist gaze comes from the Foucaultian term the medical gaze which interrogates furtherly on the disciplinary instrument of control orchestrated by the Western Science to regulate the bio-politics. As Urry & Larsen clarify, the tourist gaze has little in common with the medical gaze. It, rather, aims to the needs of maximising pleasure while traveling. The self manifests a powerful desire to gaze at anything while possessing what it gazes. Tourists often gaze through a previous filter which is formed of experiences, fears, stereotypes and emotions all of them demarcated by nationality (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

“We elaborate on process by which the gaze is constructed and reinforced, and consider who or what authorises it, what its consequences are for the places which are its objects and how it interrelates with other social practices. The tourist gaze is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned and learnt ways of seeing.” (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.2).

At the time the means of production of society changes, the tourist gaze reflects that change. Centered on transactional environmentalism Urry toys with the belief that capitalism is mutating to more abstract versions that mark a new epoch of a more decentralised form of organisation. Because of this, Urry strongly believes that though Marx merits some recognition for his discoveries his materialist theories should be at least forgotten. In a seminal book entitled the economies of signs and spaces, Urry jointly economist Scott Lash alert that global capitalism is next to suffer radical shifts; our obsession for experiencing unique moments are organised according to a cultural matrix which regulates the global economy. The capitalist world is paving the ways for the creation of new decentralised capitalism based on high-mobilities. In this world, the market cannibalises not only cultures but also peoples and their economies. The free trade leads economies to produce abstract products whose values are bestowed by the aesthetics of signs (Lash and Urry, 1993). Once global capitalism successfully expanded, the man has been commoditised as a tourist attraction, ready to be consumed by others (gazers). Travels were finally drawn by the hegemony of experts (tour operators) who advice to tourists what are the civilised destination and the wild-zones (Lash and Urry, 1993; Urry, 1992, 2001, 2002, 2016). Conceptually Urry tries to make a bridge between cultural theory and classic Marxism. He elicits a caustic critique on the fact that the notion of class, at least as it was originally imagined by classic Marxists has no direct connection with ideology but to civil society. The agency –far from adopting passively- the mandates of ideology starts certain negotiation with the rules and the structure. To some extent, global capitalism is experiencing radical transformations passing from a mass scale –in the Fordist times- to a new decentralised (disorganised) capitalism. It is

safe to say that capital escapes to the control of nation-states transcending the limits of national borders. At the time globalisation expands, capitalism turns more disorganised (Lash and Urry, 1987). In this vein, Urry develops his notion of the tourist gaze. As above mentioned, he distinguishes the tourist-gaze from the medical-gaze. While the former is an invocation to the western rationalisation which abruptly intervenes in the body, the latter signals to complex interplays of signs, discourses and allegories organised to possess the ‘Other’ through the gaze. The medical gaze is explained by the introduction of western discipline which separates the sickness from the healthy body. The authority of science emanates from its efficiency in elaborating a correct diagnosis (on the sickness). This has invariably led the West to flesh out an uncanny fascination by the Oculacentrism. Urry feels this is a motive enough to extirpate the term gaze from the original Foucaultian text but he goes further giving to a new meaning. The tourist gaze subordinates to a cultural matrix that indicates what landscapes can be consumed or not. Having said this, gazers are organised according to different subtypes: romantic, privacy and solitary (Urry, 2002).

“I call the romantic gaze, solicitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze are emphasised. In such a case, tourists expect to look at the object privately or at least only with significant others.”
(Urry, 2002, p.150)

Desert areas abandoned to the reign of civilised society inspire a much deeper sentiment of terror, as Urry adheres. Empires launch to the colonisation of the ‘Other’ commoditising these spaces of fear, indexing them to a powerful imperial matrix. In so doing, a gap between gazers and gazed is created and filled by the imperial authority. Hence, Oculacentrism seems to be the key factor that revitalises the authority of European colonialism in the past centuries. In the threshold of time, Europeans were bestowed with the right to travel everywhere consecrating a new capitalist division of labour. Through tourism consumption, lay workers give back to the system the money they freely earned. The massification of tourism opens the doors to the contradiction of modernity which dissociates the privileged tourists who are legally authorised to travel across the globe from migrants who are systematically persecuted and exiled. This recreates the conditions to a bipolar world the safe and the unsafe places (Urry, 2002; Lash and Urry, 1993). In a nutshell, the concept of security occupies a central role in the configuration of capitalist geographies which separate the safe from the unsafe destinations (Bianchi, 2006).

As the previous backdrop, Urry masterfully illustrates the intersection of reflective modernity to understand (if not domesticate) the ‘Otherness’, above all when this ‘Other’ does not match with the stereotypes orchestrated by the capitalist cultural matrix. This begs a more than a vexed question: what are the new morphologies of mobilities in a world without travels? Of course, Urry wrote his books in a moment where capitalism was in the ongoing expansion. He never imagined the effects of the COVID19 on global trade. The power of capital was fluidly circulating beyond the authority of nations. As Korstanje (2020) holds, the pandemic not only subverts the order of nation-state creating a climate of separatism, conflict and feudalism in some regions but also suspends the global right of citizens to travel. The tourist who has been historically considered an ambassador of the Western civilisation was re-labelled as a potential risk, a carrier of an internal enemy to eradicate. This anti-tourist sentiment was reinforced by a veil of distrust overall tourists who were considered now as ‘potential terrorists!’. The question

whether terrorists –just after 9/11- were portrayed as maniacs who looks like us, now all we are potential terrorists (or carriers of a lethal virus). In this way, the tourist-phobia inscribes in a post 9/11 context. In cities like Barcelona or Venetia one might see graffiti as ‘tourists: you are the real terrorist!’ or ‘tourists go home!’ With the benefit of hindsight, COVID19 –far from being a foundational event- forecloses a process initiated after 9/11: the decline of hospitality as least as we know it. After 9/11 Western governments struggled against an invisible enemy who may attack anytime and anywhere. The idea of a lone-wolf refers to a Western citizen who has been educated within Western cultural values. He looks and behaves like us, going to the same pubs, restaurants or malls. In the post COVID19 days, all we are potential terrorists who should be in constant follow-up. The lockdown and the isolation process mark the sign of a new epoch where globalisation perishes. A new process of feudalisation has come to stay. Last but not least, we adopted a new enemy passing from the War on Terror to the War against a virus; a world –so to say- where tourists have become undesired guests (Korstanje, 2020).

5 Conclusions

In the present essay-review, we discussed the durable and negative effects of the pandemic in the industry of tourism as well as the opportunities and challenges for the years to come. This leads to thinking that COVID19 not only stopped the planet but also changed our cosmologies and travel behaviour. In this respect, John Urry coined the term Tourist gaze to connote a new cosmology that characterised the inception of a new stage of capitalism. This disorganised capitalism was based on the abstract consumption of signs. The COVID19 shows the beginning of new feudal capitalism where the nation-states close to what we have dubbed as ‘the undesired guest’. The figure of the tourist who has been admired in the past is now the target of our hostilities. Death is today the unique spectacle that keeps the audience under control. Doubtless, we passed from the tourist to the wicked gaze. Here the term wicked embodies the archetype of an evil person, who threatens civil society. COVID19 had innumerable unparalleled effects which range from the closure of borders, people stranded for months abroad, or the geopolitical conflict among nations, without mentioning the chauvinist and separatist discourses of some counties, provinces or states. What is still clear, the pandemic stripped out the veil of globalisation from its sainthood. To put the same in bluntly, the new normality symbolically equates to the banality of life and the normalisation of death.

References

- Arendt, H. (2006) *Between Past and Future*, Penguin, London.
- Aruga, K., Islam, M. and Jannat, A. (2020) ‘Effects of COVID-19 on Indian energy consumption’, *Sustainability*, Vol. 12, No. 14, pp.5616.
- Baker, D.M.A. (2015) ‘Tourism and the health effects of infectious diseases: are there potential risks for tourists?’, *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism and Hospitality*, Vol. 1, No. 12, pp.1–15.
- Barbosa, R.B. (2019) *Emoções, Lugares e Memórias: Um Estudo Sobre as Apropriações Morais Da Chacina Do Rangel [Emotions, Places and Memories: An Study on Moral Approaches in Da Chacina Do Rangel]*, Edições UERN, Mossoró.

- Baum, T. and Hai, N.T.T. (2020) 'Hospitality, tourism, human rights and the impact of COVID-19', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32, No. 7, pp.2397–2407.
- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity (Vol. 17)*, Sage, London.
- Bianchi, R. (2006) 'Tourism and the globalisation of fear: analysing the politics of risk and (in) security in global travel', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp.64–74.
- Brouder, P. (2020) 'Reset redux: possible evolutionary pathways towards the transformation of tourism in a COVID-19 world', *Tourism Geographies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp.484–490.
- Buus, S. (2011) 'The people home goes Gulliver: Sweden and the 2004 Tsunami crisis', *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, Vol. 1, Nos. 3–4, pp.293–303.
- Cooper, M. (2006) 'Japanese tourism and the SARS epidemic of 2003', *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 19, Nos. 2–3, pp.117–131.
- Cresswell, T. (2011) 'Mobilities I: catching up', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp.550–558.
- DaMatta, R. (1997) *A Casa e a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e a Morte No Brasil [The House of the Road: Citizenship, Womanship and Death in Brazil]*, Rocco, Rio de Janeiro.
- Derrida, J. and Dufourmantelle, A. (2000) *Of Hospitality*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Donthu, N. and Gustafsson, A. (2020) 'Effects of COVID-19 on business and research', *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 117, pp.284–290.
- Durkheim, E. (2013) *Durkheim: The Rules of Sociological Method: and Selected Texts on Sociology and Its Method*, Macmillan International Higher Education, London.
- Edwards, S. (2018) 'A policy cul-de-sac: student disengagement and political intervention', *Re-Engaging Young People with Education*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp.23–50.
- Elias, N. and Dunning, E. (2008) *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process*, University College Dublin Press, Dublin.
- Franklin, A. (2007) 'The problem with tourism theory', in Altejvic I., Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (Eds.): *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*, Elsevier, Oxford, pp.131–148.
- Galbraith, J.K. (2006) 'Taming predatory capitalism', *Unbearable Cost: Bush, Greenspan and the Economics of Empire*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp.219–220.
- Giddens, A. (2003) *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives*, Taylor & Francis, London.
- Giddens, A. (2013) *The Consequences of Modernity*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.
- Giddens, A. and Pierson, C. (1998) *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Gössling, S., Scott, D. and Hall, C.M. (2020) 'Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp.1–20.
- Hall, C.M., Williams, A.M. and Lew, A.A. (2004) 'Tourism: conceptualizations, institutions, and issues', *A Companion to Tourism*, Blackwell, New York, pp.3–21.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2006) 'More than an 'industry': the forgotten power of tourism as a social force', *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27, No. 6, pp.1192–1208.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2020) 'The 'war over tourism': challenges to sustainable tourism in the tourism academy after COVID-19', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp.551–569.
- Honey, M. (2009) *Tourism in the Developing World: Promoting Peace and Reducing Poverty (Vol. 233)*, United States Institute of Peace, New York.
- Jensen, M.T. (2020) 'Partigraphy: a new ethnographic approach to study pandemics in tourism', *Current Issues in Tourism*, ahead of print, pp.1–4.

- Korstanje, M. and George, B.P. (2016) 'Craving for the consumption of suffering and commoditization of death: the evolving facets of Thana-capitalism', *Terrorism in the Global Village: How Terrorism Affects our Daily Lives*, Hauppauge, Nova Science, pp.65–74.
- Korstanje, M.E. (2016) *The Rise of Thana-Capitalism and Tourism*, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Korstanje, M.E. (2017) *Terrorism, Tourism and the End of Hospitality in the West*, Palgrave-Macmillan, Cham.
- Korstanje, M.E. (2018) *The Challenges of Democracy in the War on Terror: The Liberal State before the Advance of Terrorism*, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Korstanje, M.E. (2020) 'Passage from the tourist gaze to the wicked gaze: a case study on COVID-19 with special reference to Argentina', in George, B. and Mahar, Q. (Eds.): *International Case Studies in the Management of Disasters*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Wagonlane, pp.197–212.
- Korstanje, M.E. and Olsen, D.H. (2011) 'The discourse of risk in horror movies post 9/11: hospitality and hostility in perspective', *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, Vol. 1, Nos. 3–4, pp.304–317.
- Korstanje, M.E. and Skoll, G. (2015) *Disasters, ethnocentrism and mobilities, exploring the Film Contagion 2011*, *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism and Hospitality*, Vol. 1, No. 12, pp.1–15.
- Larsen, S., Ning, S.Z., Wang, J., Ogaard, T., Li, X. and Brun, W. (2011) 'Are Asian tourists more apprehensive about food risks?', *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, Vol. 1, Nos–4, pp.226–238.
- Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1987) *The End of Organized Capitalism*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin.
- Lash, S.M. and Urry, J. (1993) *Economies of Signs and Space*, Vol. 26, Sage, London.
- Lorenz, E. (2000) 'The butterfly effect', *World Scientific Series on Nonlinear Science Series*, Vol. 32, No. 39, pp.91–94.
- McKercher, B. and Chon, K. (2004) 'The over-reaction to SARS and the collapse of Asian tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp.716–725.
- Merton, R.K. (1936) 'The unanticipated consequences of purposive social action', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp.894–904.
- Mostafanezhad, M., Cheer, J.M. and Sin, H.L. (2020) 'Geopolitical anxieties of tourism:(Im) mobilities of the COVID-19 pandemic', *Dialogues in Human Geography*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp.182–186.
- Novelli, M., Burgess, L.G., Jones, A. and Ritchie, B.W. (2018) 'No Ebola... still doomed'—The Ebola-induced tourism crisis', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 70, pp.76–87.
- Page, S., Song, H. and Wu, D.C. (2012) 'Assessing the impacts of the global economic crisis and swine flu on inbound tourism demand in the United Kingdom', *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp.142–153.
- Renaud, L. (2020) 'Reconsidering global mobility—distancing from mass cruise tourism in the aftermath of COVID-19', *Tourism Geographies*, ahead in press, pp.1–11.
- Ritzer, G. (2019) 'Inhospitable hospitality?', in Rowson, B. and Lashley, C. (Eds.): *Experiencing Hospitality*, Nova Science Publishers, Hauppauge, pp.73–90.
- Rosselló, J., Santana-Gallego, M. and Awan, W. (2017) 'Infectious disease risk and international tourism demand', *Health Policy and Planning*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp.538–548.
- Said, E. (1997) 'Orientalism reconsidered', *Postcolonial Criticism*, Vol. 1, pp.126–144.
- Said, E.W. (1979) *Orientalism*, Vintage, London.
- Selwyn, T. (2019) 'Hostility and hospitality: connecting Brexit, Grenfell and Windrush', in Rowson B and Lashley, C. (Eds.): *Experiencing Hospitality*, Nova Science Publishers, Hauppauge, pp.51–72.
- Sheller, M. and Urry, J. (2004) 'Places to play, places in play', *Tourism Mobilities*, Routledge, London, pp.13–22.

- Sunstein, C.R. (2005) *Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle (Vol. 6)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Thomas, W.I. and Thomas, D.S. (1928) *The Child in America: Behavior, Problems and Programs*, Knopf, New York.
- Urry, J. (1992) 'The tourist gaze 'revisited'', *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp.172–186.
- Urry, J. (2001) 'Globalising the tourist gaze', in Suteeshna, B., SitiKantha, M. and Bivraj, B. (Eds.): *Tourism Development Revisited: Concepts, Issues and Paradigms*, Sage, London, pp.150–160.
- Urry, J. (2002) *The Tourist Gaze*, Sage, London.
- Urry, J. (2016) 'Does mobilities have a future?', in Grieco, M. and Urry, J. (Eds.): *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp.3–20.
- Urry, J. and Larsen, J. (2011) *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, Sage, London.
- Velho, G. (Ed.) (1987) 'Projeto, emoção e orientação em sociedades complexas [Project, emotions, and guidance in complex societies]', *Individualismo e Cultura*, Jorge Zahar, Rio de Janeiro, pp.13–37.
- Žižek, S. (2020) 'Slavoj Zizek: coronavirus is 'Kill Bill'-Esque blow to capitalism and could lead to reinvention of communism, *Íkaro*, Retrieved 31 March, 2020.

Bibliography

- DaMatta, R. (1986) *O Que Faz o Brasil? [What Happens with Brazil?]*, Rocco, Rio de Janeiro.
- Durkheim, E. (2008) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Courier Corporation, New York.
- Harvey, D. (2020) *Anti-Capitalist Politics in the Time of COVID-19*, Jacobin, 20 March.
- Honneth, A. (2008) *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Standing, G. (2010) *Work after Globalization: Building Occupational Citizenship*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Thomas, W.I. (1923) *The Unadjusted Girl: With Cases and Standpoint for Behavior Analyses*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston.
- Tzanelli, R. and Korstanje, M.E. (2019) 'On killing the 'toured object': anti-terrorist fantasy, touristic edgework and morbid consumption in the illegal settlements in West Bank, Palestine', *Tourism and Hospitality in Conflict-Ridden Destinations*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp.71–83.