

COVID-19 in tourism: Anthropological insight to the trivialization of death and life

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Many of the effects of national lockdowns in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic will be enduring across society. Work published in the *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology* looks at one aspect of those effects and their impact on a vast and important industry, tourism.

Raoni Borges Barbosa and Jean Henrique Costa of the State University of Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, Brazil, Bintang Handayani of the University of Malasia Kelatan, Malaysia, and Maximiliano Korstanje of the University of Palermo in Buenos Aires, Argentina, pose some central questions regarding our sense of the "new normal" with regard to measures such as social distancing and how it affects human relation and activities. They also consider the domestication and perhaps trivialisation of death as the [pandemic](#) continues.

"In the pre-pandemic world, tourists were valorised as ambassadors of the civilized order, but now they appear to be demonized as potential carriers of a lethal disease," the team writes. They liken the perception of disease-carrying tourists to our perception of the terrorist threat where life for many is lived in fear of threats that may well be hiding in plain sight. The team adds that the unparalleled effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with the closure of borders, travelers stranded for months away from home, geopolitical conflict between nations, as well as a rising chauvinist and separatist world view that demonizes the once positive notion of the so-called global village. Moreover, they suggest, "The new normal symbolically equates to the banality of life and the normalization of death."

One day this pandemic will pass into history as all previous pandemics have done, our descendants may, to paraphrase poet Neil Peart, "read of us with sadness for the seeds that we let grow."

More information: Raoni Borges Barbosa et al, The effects of COVID-19 in the tourist society: an anthropological insight of the trivialisation of death and life, *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1504/IJTA.2021.116094](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTA.2021.116094)

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