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# THE POST-PANDEMIC CHANGES OF DARK TOURISM INDUSTRY

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## **ABSTRACT**

Dark tourism is a segment of tourism that has been growing in recent decades and is strongly associated with tragedy and mystery. As a result, 2020 was strongly marked by the pandemic of the new coronavirus (COVID-19). This paper presents a reflection on the role of dark tourism in the pandemic and post-pandemic period and analyses impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism industry. The paper discusses the global context of the pandemic situation that has an important impact on re-directing and tracing eventually new tourism trajectories of the (post)pandemic time. The shift that occurred in pandemic time are like catalysts for re-enforcement and raised interest into slow movements and 'new normal' tourism. Instead of seeking to 'go back to business as usual', the author argues to reconsider the trajectories that emerged during the time of the pandemic and to envisage other approaches towards more sustainable tourism.

**KEYWORDS:** Post-pandemic tourism, 'New Normal', Dark Tourism, Tourism Management, Sustainable development.

## **Introduction**

Tourism is a phenomenon responsible for activities that people engage in for less than a year. These persons are tourists or visitors, whether they are staying overnight at the place of destination or travelling to a place outside their place of residence, for any reason related to leisure or recreation, if they are not engaged in a paid activity. There are several segments that make up this sector, and dark tourism is the one highlighted in this article. This is defined as the emergence and consumption of places associated with intimidating events that are a tourist attraction and/or entertainment.

In 2020, the global tourism sector has shrunk sharply as COVID-19 has entered the lives of the world's population. The aim of this article is to analyse and understand the impact of COVID-19 on current and future tourism. The concept of dark tourism was first examined, followed by a detailed analysis of the concept of the industry and its various parameters. The other two sections reflect the two possible changes facing the tourism industry (aka 'New Normal' and 'Back to Normal') today and the post-pandemic tourism trends brought about by Covid-19.

Finally, these topics were considered to gain a future perspective on the development of dark tourism after the pandemic. There is a need to better understand how this pandemic has affected tourism in general and the dark tourism industry, and how this type of tourism could be developed in the future. The purpose of this paper is to recognize how the industry will respond to the changes taking place around the world. This was a mono-methodological study of academic literature and the latest scientific research to obtain an overview of dark tourism and Covid-19 and its effects. In addition, customer behaviour will change, and over the next few years we will see many changes in this niche, such as the introduction of the online industry/sector, which will affect supply and demand, so companies will need to keep up with all these changes. The findings of this article can be used for future research, which is the basis of empirical research.

### **1. Dark tourism**

Recalling the gladiatorial battles in Ancient Rome and public executions in the 17th century in London, individuals have always been attracted to frightening shows. However, in the modern world, dark tourism has received an even stronger impetus to development in the face of pop culture. Horror movies, mystical comics, or science fiction books attract a vast audience, which indicates that people still enjoy tourism experiences related to death (Shustova, 2021). Visiting sites that are connected to death in some ways is a significant part of tourist experiences in many societies (Lennon and Foley, 2000).

The Institute for Dark Tourism Research (United Kingdom) provides the following concept of research: visiting death and disaster-related or macabre-looking locations. As Korstanje (2015) states, dark tourism is characterized by a strange fascination or at least curiosity for what specialists call “death spaces”. The term refers to sites where the death of others is commoditized as a tourist product (Korstanje, 2015). The conception of dark tourism is evaluated in mixed ways. Lennon and Foley (2000) point out that increased tourists’ interest in death-related objects was noticed and started to be analysed at the end of the 20th century – beginning of the 21st century. They point out that dark tourism is an evident intimation of post-modernity related to consumption of certain and recreated places of death and disasters as well as their specific presentation for the consumer. This death and disaster consumption culture could have emerged only in the contemporary society (Lennon, 2005; Foley, 2000).

Sharpley (2009) and Stone (2006) analyse dark tourism from different points of view. On the one hand, Sharpley claims that this branch of tourism must be developed due to educational purposes and is not less important than visiting monuments, churches and other historically important places, on the other hand, Stone points out that dark tourism cannot be developed for educational purposes because it is related to violence and death. He points out that dark tourism can be analysed from a social point of view.

In their analysis of the nature of dark tourism management, Lennon and Foley (2000) distinguish six criteria that attract potential visitors. These criteria are provided in Figure 1.

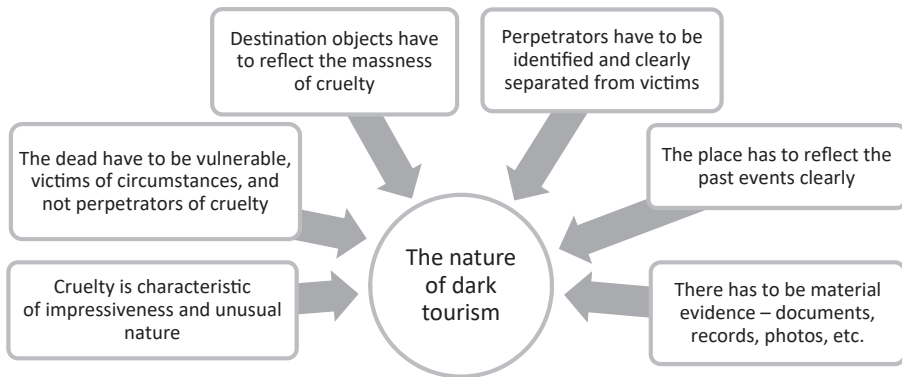


Figure 1. **The nature of dark tourism**

Source: Foley, M., Lennon, J., (2000). *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. London: Continuum

As the Figure shows, not all forms of dark tourism are limited by visiting objects that represent real death. The existing variety of dark tourism forms shows that dark tourism is also attributed objects that reveal economic rather than physical pain (Johanson, 2012) and macabre places that point to anticipated inevitable but not necessarily human (e.g., live environment, certain intangible, spiritual aspects) death (Shackley, 2001).

Due to its great diversity, dark tourism attractions are not and cannot be equivalent. The subject of a recent large-scale catastrophe will always be far more sensitively valued by society than by a mythologized millennial-linked object linked to death, the application of which to tourism seems so natural and understandable that it no longer raises ethical debates. Therefore, some clarity is needed when assessing this direction of tourism, both from an ethical and an economic perspective.

In order to achieve this clarity in the field of dark tourism, many experts propose to divide a wide range of objects belonging to this tourism direction into certain (lighter-darker / lighter-brighter) categories of dark tourism, distinguishing their characteristic features (Stone, 2006; Sharpley, 2009; Foley and Lennon, 2000). Although the naming of such a thing as 'darker' or 'lighter' dark tourism is contradictory, in the absence of other alternatives, the scientific literature so far refers to this division of dark tourism products by Miles (2002) and Stone (2006) as it is shown in Figure 2.

The spectrum of dark tourism formed by Miles (2002) and Stone (2006), which is presented in Figure 2, shows that dark tourism products are not qualitatively equivalent, resulting in different experiences for consumers and different degrees of empathy for victims. According to the author, the local authenticity has a decisive influence on the perception of the scale of the tragedy, which manifests itself through the empathy of the

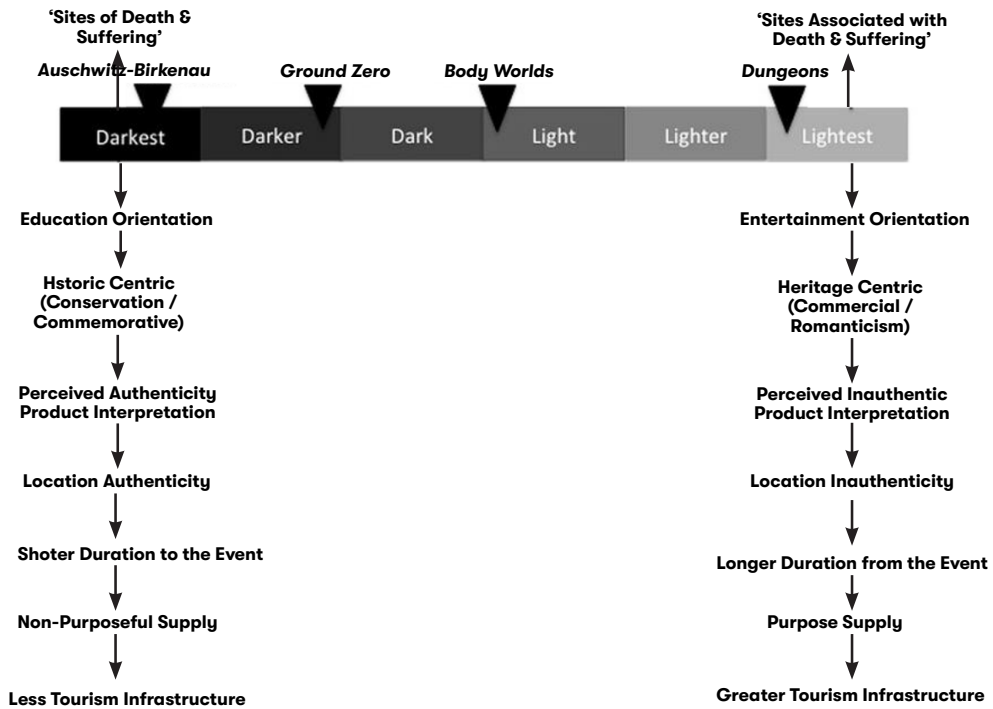


Figure 2. **The Spectrum of Dark Tourism**

Source: Stone P. 2006. A Dark Tourism spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions.

visitors. Miles (2002, p. 1176) argues that the present dimension of any dark touristic “attraction” is “engender a degree of empathy between the sightseer and the past victim”, and therefore the importance of how a product is perceived, produced, and ultimately consumed. More recent tragic events that can be traced back to “living memories” through the stories of survivors or witnesses are more memorable (according to the scale presented by Miles – “darker”, see Figure 2) dark tourism products than those presented from the distant past.

To successfully adapt dark tourism heritage for cultural tourism, first, the existence of the events cannot be doubted, and second, it should be relevant to the society or its part. And third, according to Sharpley (2009), one should remember the main goals of heritage preservation, i.e., transfer of the past.

Seaton (2002) distinguished the following five forms of dark tourism:

- Visiting places of mass killings;
- Visiting places of executions;
- Visiting of memorial or historical places, i.e., places where the dead are buried like war memorials, crypts, etc.;
- Visiting places that include torture devices, holocaust, war, weapon, former prison, etc. museums;
- Imitation of well-known historical battles, fights, organization of performances with elements of death.

When applying the heritage object for dark tourism, there is a need to create opportunity for its respective interpretation that would not interfere with the main principles of social morale. When visiting dark heritage objects, visitors should not only satisfy their curiosity, but also feel the events and history of the period presented. When preparing the heritage object itself, it should be changed as little as possible to preserve its authenticity and so that it invokes strong emotions.

Increase in demand evidently promotes the supply of dark tourism services and variety of forms. One of the reasons for making dark tourism popular is curiosity as the main motif that encourages searching for not only what would create good emotions, but also morbid images of death that make the levels of adrenalin rise and are inseparable from the desire of novelty. In this age of information, people want to not only know, but also feel historical events more and more by taking a walk-through place of disaster, listening to guide stories about executions and other cruel events, looking at remaining photos and objects. Curiosity as the main motif that encourages looking for morbid death images is inseparable from the desire for novelty. In general, seeking for novelty and adventure motivates people for any kind of travel, which is usually contrasted against routine. For people living in today's urbanized, routine world, especially westerners, it is natural to look for ways to decrease the boredom created by their daily routine (Walter, 2009). When looking for different experiences and novelty, tourists choose an environment that is socially and physically different from their usual residential environment (Yuill, 2003). The environment of death naturally resists the living environment. In order to feel excited, tourists are determined to try even dangerous novelties, travel to unknown and unexpected environment (for instance, the war tourism case).

To sum up, it can be said that cultural heritage is constantly being refreshed through cultural tourism by creating tourism products, which creates an opportunity to create links to the past, present and future.

## **2. The shift in tourism industry: the 'new normal' vs 'back to normal'**

The first thing that obviously changed after the pandemic are outdoor activities. The increase in walking, hiking, cycling and other outdoor activities has meant a (re)appreciation and (re)perception of environmental values in order to maintain and sustain our

well-being (Schulz and Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2021). Such a new focus on mobility, facilitated by movement and slow movement in space, means immersion in the environment and a new type of connection with the environment. Here, participants also become physically part of the experience itself (Pileri and Moscarelli, 2021). It is part of the “slowness” movement as a conscious and alternative approach. The concept of slowness is a reaction to the “cult of speed” (Pileri and Moscarelli, 2021) and to the daily pressures of the modern Western world. Thus, rejecting speed as the predominant social norm and way of life, along with the daily life and constraints of modern society (Cohen, 2010), the concept of slowness is closely related to the concept of escapism. Escapism consists of two directions: the process of escaping from or avoiding and seeking (Cohen, 2010). Therefore, the movement and travel in the world of Covid-19 fits both things. In addition to the need to escape the hustle and bustle of the crowd and strive to achieve slowness in everyday life in search of isolated places as places for comfort and respite, the Covid-19 takes on a new dimension.

Slow movement is loved by specific trails. Every slow movement follows a planned and set route, such as hiking or walking trails, cycling routes, and so on (Pileri and Moscarelli, 2021). Some of them, e.g. Via Adriatica<sup>1</sup> in Croatia especially promotes pure nature and the desert as its core value. Hiking trails have become very popular around the world in recent years and seem to have benefited from the pandemic. Good examples of the rapid growth of hikers are the world-famous long-distance trails, e.g. Camino de Santiago in Europe, which will run from 2014 until 2019, increased by 46% over the period, increasing by 9% annually (Schulz and Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2021).

The choice of destinations and preference for a particular type of tourism (if available) has changed significantly. We cannot (yet) talk about the post-Covid world as we are in the middle of it, but we can trace some new emerging trends, orientations or trajectories that have been started, born and evolving or intensifying and can also be recognized by the limited SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in the world.

The pandemic has highlighted the detrimental effects of tourism and mass industry on the planet and the natural environment in which we live. Smaller views of cities from air and water pollution or the re-emergence of wildlife in previously abandoned natural spaces spoke for themselves. The general message has been and is that people need to take more care of the planet. This will undoubtedly affect decisions about post-coronavirus travel. The disgust for mass tourism will force the industry to move to sustainable, environmentally friendly travel that will not affect the local community. Travellers will choose an experience that promotes the health and well-being of people and the planet.

In fact, the pandemic has shifted the debate from over-tourism, a relatively recent phenomenon of over-crowding and tourism-related development in specific locations

1 Via Adriatica, a long distance walking coastal mountaineering trail in Adriatic Croatia.

(Butler, 2019) to the need to rethink cities from a destination resilience perspective (Haywood, 2020; López-Gay et al., 2021). Cities that were previously at the centre of the debate over the growing pressure of tourism and the negative socio-economic consequences in the neighbourhood have found themselves free from unwanted tourists and day-trippers.

The literature on dynamic capabilities emphasizes a firm's ability to "integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to meet a rapidly changing environment" (Teece et al., 1997), perceiving opportunities and threats in customers' predicament, exploitation, and transformation (Teece, 2018). Baden-Fuller and Teece (2020) reminded us of the "cognitive and perhaps even emotional dimensions" of dynamic possibilities. This is achieved by understanding market developments and creating a narrative that includes hypotheses about the expected and/or desired future outcome, which is ultimately critical to making the final decision and mobilizing the resources needed to implement consistent action.

Thus, following the concept proposed by Baden-Fuller and Teece (2020), Bellini (2021) identifies two ideal paths, which are summarized in Figure 3 (see p. 51). Of course, they are more likely to be different models, and often individual actors confuse the arguments of the two discourses. However, as we will try to show, they are appropriate to describe and better understand the current stage and can help interpret different (and possibly conflicting) positions within organizations, such as stakeholder destination or between different destination typologies.

Both pathways are driven by the identification of threats and opportunities associated with the recovery phase. This seems to be largely due to a change in consumer behaviour, but there is no entirely new trend. In 2019, "conscious, responsible, ecological" has already become a new keyword that allows us to identify emerging travel trends. Many agreed that tourists were increasingly paying attention to the impact of their travels, preferring sustainable tourism offers and clearly preferring the "slower" holiday fashion. This has led to the emergence of important market niches that have been attracted by travel experiences that better meet their needs for physical and psychological well-being or, by definition, "transformative" (Pung et al., 2020).

Since the first COVID-19 survey of travel intentions, new priorities have been agreed for the reception of declining tourists (due to the experience of congestion in the city, as well as widespread belief in the potential link between pandemics and pollution and mistrust) (Bellini, 2021). The focus on health is also expected to become almost intrusive (because the virus has been fatal, especially in people whose physical condition is affected by age and previous illnesses). Some of the new motivations to travel will not be short-lived, such as the desire to escape the high stress associated with anxiety and fear of infection, new patterns of social life (distance, masks, etc.) and other, not necessarily relaxing, working conditions (smart work, telecommuting) (Globetrender, 2020). In the important business tourism market, the threat posed by video conferencing technology

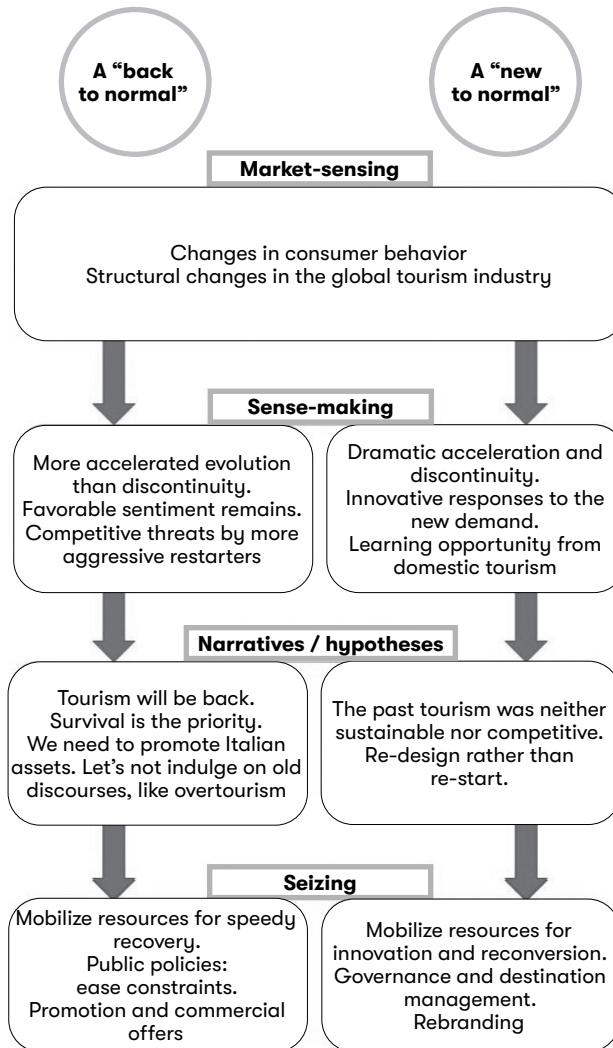


Figure 3. **Discourses on Tourism Recovery**

Source: Bellini, N. (2021). "Back to Normal" vs. "New Normal": the Post-pandemic Recovery of Italian Tourism. *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management*, Vol. 2, pp. 26-37.

has long been known, but it has been difficult to change deep-rooted practices and work styles. From now on, however, the experience of recent months and new acquaintances with venture capital platforms will make an impact, so travel decisions will be selected much more at both the individual and company level.



All this is taking place against the background of the structural changes already taking place in global tourism, i.e., on the one hand, the process of integration and concentration of market power and the possible evolution from the current *duopoly*. *online brokerage* (Booking, Expedia) for a wider range of scenarios (including Google, Airbnb, Trip, Amazon and possibly a new role for regional platforms) (Bellini, 2021). In general, these trends do not appear to be affected (and some experts may even reinforce or accelerate) the conditions of the recovery phase that could confirm their motives.

Many practitioners believe that setting post-pandemic scenarios as a radical “new normality” is overestimated and warns of the dangers of a common desire in the future. They see less continuity than accelerated development, such as the use of digital technology or consumer preferences. On the one hand, they are very comforted by surveys, which, mainly through online searches, confirm “sentiments” about Italy as a favourite dream vacation spot. On the other hand, they know that competition will be fierce as more dynamic and aggressive competitors may lose market share during the recovery phase.

While market developments undoubtedly reflect the trends that have characterized tourism for many years, the acceleration caused by the pandemic is dramatic and it is right to think of the future as a ‘new normality’. The market will be characterized by different demands from tourists seeking prosperity, wildlife, isolation, sustainability and new experiences. The temporary replacement of foreign flows by local tourism should make it possible to learn how tourism products can develop. The ability to innovate and respond to this new demand will be a key factor in identifying new geographies of flows within and between countries, leading to the emergence of alternative destinations.

“We will see the light at the end of the tunnel” tourism – as an essential feature of modern society and economy in a globalized world – will return. In other words, in an uncertain scenario and with limited financial resources, radical innovation needs to be approached with caution. It is not time to take an interest in old discourses such as ‘over-tourism’ and related policies to regulate or restrict flows. External tourism is a problem of the past, we are now facing a shortage of tourism and need rapid growth.

Prior to COVID-19, global tourism was largely based on tourism development models that were already unsustainable in the broadest sense of the term and had serious problems with environmental sustainability and over-tourism. Venice is an example of this problem. This city has become a global benchmark for the degeneration of the extreme tourism phenomenon. This situation was a serious challenge as tourists increasingly returned from some trips feeling frustrated, disrupted, as well as turned into places of goods and loss of identity (Bellini, 2021). Therefore, not only it is necessary to renew demand, but also to transform tourism in a more sustainable and competitive way. This means avoiding the rapid emergence of over-tourism and creatively offering new itineraries and locations locally and regionally.

Businesses and destinations need to mobilize resources to recover quickly. It is highly dependent on public policy action. On the supply side, it is important to support the ability of companies to cope with operating and management costs and to innovate in a way that does not create any additional constraints, such as new constraints, in line with health rules, spaces. It is also important that demand is maintained through advertising and commercial offers. Resources must be focused on supporting innovation and sending a clear message to customers about a renewed and sincere focus on quality. Management is needed and travel destinations need to be 'managed', not just 'promoted', following a logic of collective action, in active collaboration with local stakeholders (d'Angella and De Carlo, 2017).

In addition, policy interventions should focus, rather than occasionally supporting domestic demand, on investments in line with the innovation logic and the rebuilding of the national tourism system, including the 'scrapping' of old structures (Bellini, 2021). This restructuring also necessarily means a net reduction in tourist flows to congested areas, a reduction in the supply and quality of tourists and the associated market objectives. According to a previous example from Venice, "the type of people you attract to Venice depends on what you offer" (Horowitz, 2020).

In terms of communication, rebranding is an opportunity to pursue, for example, in cities where a new focus on sustainability is possible "not only through narratives leading tourists to choose alternative urban structures, but also by creating the necessary tangible and intangible connections between the city-centre and the periphery" (Pasquinelli et al., 2021).

### **3. The trends of post-pandemic tourism**

All the transformations caused by COVID-19 will force the industry to offer a different kind of tourism after the pandemic. While it is impossible to predict exactly what the future will bring, these trends are related to how people will want to travel the world. The main trends in the development of post-pandemic tourism, which obviously affect the dark tourism industry, are explained below.

**Local travel.** Due to international travel bans and the sense of insecurity associated with flights and airports, tourism opportunities will be market-oriented. In addition, the consequences of the crisis already have and will have serious economic consequences, people are more cautious with the budget or can not afford the travel they had in the pre-pandemic period (Popescu, 2021). But they will still want to travel. While personal budgets will become tighter, the desire to go out and explore will only increase. For this reason, many travel enthusiasts will look for directions closer to home, choosing trips that will allow them to stay with the money in their wallet. More people are expected to embark on real journeys in their countries of origin, supporting the local economy by exploring their cities (Stefan et al., 2014). Thus, areas in unknown areas may increase their coverage, and less visited tourist destinations may benefit from demand, given the preference for less congested areas (Soare and Chiruciu, 2017).

**Nature tourism and wildlife tourism.** Tourists will choose natural destinations, as this form of tourism will allow them to maintain social distance and the opportunity to discover and connect with nature, which has not been useful in recent months (Foris, 2014). The controversial emergence of coronavirus in China has drawn public attention to the way wild animals are treated. As a result, travellers tend to distance themselves from the wildlife experience. An Instagram photo of a tourist riding an elephant will no longer be considered “cool”. On the contrary, in the future, tourism is expected to focus on supporting accredited initiatives to conserve the natural environment, flora and fauna to the same extent, in an ethical and sustainable way, as monitoring penguin colonies from a safe distance.

**The virtual journey.** As the world entered a pandemic, emerged solutions for interconnection, travel, or participation in technology events emerged. Live shows, video conferencing and virtual tours are universally accepted as a new trend. There are already impressive examples of this in the travel industry and it will continue to grow in this post-pandemic era. The virtual initiatives could also have a positive impact on sustainability, given that the population is increasingly aware of the fragmentation of the ecosystem.

**Micro-holidays.** The concept of micro-vacation will probably also be common. Given the dangers associated with long-distance travel, the typical large annual journey will be replaced by the smaller ones, closer to home, throughout the year.

**Experience tourism.** During the long period of isolation, people had time for self-defence. Now they have decided to slow down or pursue long-forgotten passions. So, cycling holidays, sailing, hiking, fishing, a lot of simple pleasures can occur as a reason for an exceptional holiday. Places with wellness programs, resorts, authentic villages, nature are travel options.

**Travel by road, not by plane.** Whether it is travelling by car, motorcycle or other land vehicle, getting to know the country fully autonomously and flexibly can be a growing choice. Travelling in your own vehicle or rented car can also be more attractive, as air travel increases the risk of getting sick, and airports are a crossroads for all travellers around the world. Travelling by land can also be a cheaper alternative to air travel.

**Priority for renting private property.** Given that coronavirus outbreaks are concentrated in major cities and on cruise ships, the types of accommodation people are looking for are likely to change. Potential guests are expected to rent private villas with access to their own facilities. Travellers could look at beach huts, mountain lodges, apartments or holiday homes to maintain social distance from others.

**“Untact” tourism.** *Untact* is a new term created by combining English elements – the prefix “un” and the word “contact” – to describe social isolation. The term, one of the most popular buzzwords, has become popular due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19, indicating a significant change in people’s reluctance to communicate with

others (i.e., contactless society) due to infections (Park, 2020). This phenomenon is strongly related to the changed perception of people about spatial attitudes and may have a long-term impact on the tourism industry even after a pandemic. Richter (2003) argued that travel is a major cause of infectious diseases and is fatal to public health. People avoid crowded places and no longer want to share things with others. In addition, they do not visit crowded beaches or dine at popular restaurants. When travelling, tourists also preferred delivery and takeaway from local restaurants and prepared meals because they did not want to visit restaurants (Sohn and Alakshendra, 2021). Thus, face-to-face contact has become a major concern for travellers when considering travel directions.

#### **4. Dark tourism in post-pandemic times**

As far as the future of tourism is concerned, all restrictions on COVID-19 international travel in the world will be reduced. According to Ioannides and Gyimóthy (2020), air transport will be very limited and will have to comply with all established rules to avoid pollution, as well as other transport such as trains and buses. Tourism policy will focus on sustainability, promoting tourism growth, events and attractions will have to comply with sanitation and disinfection rules, and the focus will be on the local and internal market. In addition, consumer behaviour will change as consumers will not be as confident about the cleaning that needs to be done (Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020).

At present, people want to travel in smaller and smaller groups and opt for personalized services, as well as distance themselves from crowded places such as beaches, seeking refuge in quieter places (Veiga et al., 2021). In addition, the same authors argue that plane tickets will be harder to get, they will be more frustrating and more expensive because now every flight needs to be cleaned and sterilized, so each of these moments is a price to pay. Finally, the same authors point out that virtual tourism is a way to use technology to improve or recreate a tourist experience.

At the end of any disaster, it is normal to erect a park or memorial area, a statue or a building that reflects the horrific stories that have taken place in the area. New York is famous for Ground Zero, built after 9/11. China, on the other hand, is expected to be famous in the Wuhan Bazaar, where the virus began to spread. The hospital most likely ever built may also be another sacred place, the start of this huge struggle. Even the cemeteries and graves of COVID-19 victims around the world will be visited so that family members can properly bury their loved ones according to their traditional customs and religion, which was not possible during the pandemic. Although the memorial has not yet been built, tourism is expected to be included on the government's agenda to overcome the huge post-pandemic recession (Ariawan and Ahmat, 2020).

The concept of dark tourism has changed over the years and today is in a more pronounced phase of development and can now be considered a real niche market. The long history of this type of tourism and its various aspects is evidenced not only by the current objects of worship, but also by the many places in this market around the world

that have existed for many years, including emerging as new disasters, and dark events take place on the planet (Veiga et al., 2021). Tourists have many and varied motives to visit these places and despite the many ethical and moral issues raised, such tourism attracts more and more followers every day looking for an interesting and unusual experience, which encourages stakeholders to increasingly advertise this niche in the best way.

On the other hand, given the current panorama and the fact that we live in the midst of technology, the transition from such tourism to the online world is becoming inevitable, as are other similar things. This factor only proves once again how modern certain players in the sector are and how far they want to keep up with the world in the 21st century.

Since the appearance of COVID-19, the tourism sector has had to adapt quickly to this new reality so that the virus is not penalized so much. This adaptation has faced several challenges (Veiga et al., 2021). As in all sectors, the main challenges have been adapting to the frequent use of alcoholic gels, the use of masks, as well as social isolation, capacity constraints and the transposition of respiratory etiquette rules. These companies also had to adapt digitally, often moving the essence of their business into this new world, which allowed some to profit from this service. Dark tourism was no exception to the rule, as it also had to meet the standards offered by healthcare providers, and some companies specializing in this niche have moved their businesses into the world of technology.

### **Conclusions**

The pandemic crisis has opened “transformation opportunities” for tourism, but the consequences of these processes are still unclear (Hall et al., 2020). Faced with the dramatic innovations of a pandemic crisis, tourism is once again raising many hopes, an unspoken fear of possible new waves and unresolved issues that could lead to potential conflict between social groups and stakeholders (Jiang and Ritchie, 2017).

The ideal typical methods presented in this paper can help identify these conflicting methods. To the extent that tourism management and policy fail to balance the arguments for restoring competition and sustainable renovation, these pathways could shape potential conflict in the field of future tourism. On the one hand, stakeholders who are vigorously calling for a resumption of the process as soon as possible are currently particularly strong, and reform can recover, even if over-tourism is not seen as a “problem of the past” and is not relaxed, as well as a greater focus on niche tourism than on dark tourism.

On the other hand, the consensus on new tourist demand (expected focus on nature, isolation, and physical well-being) provides new support for sustainable tourism strategies (Bataglia, 2017) that politically legitimizes sustainability-oriented voters in local communities. This legitimacy can be further strengthened by enabling border areas (such as inland areas) to participate in new and more sustainable tourism development, as well as increasing the profitability of green business projects compared to traditional ones.

## SANTRAUKA

Tamsusis turizmas yra turizmo industrijos sektorius, kuriam priskiriamos lankytinos vietos, kultūros paveldo objektai ir pramogų vietos, stipriai susiję su tragedija, paslaptimis, mirtimi, ir kuris pastaruosius pora dešimtmečių labia stipriai augo. Tačiau 2020-aisiais prasidėjusi COVID-19 pandemija smarkiai paveikė ir šią turizmo nišą. Šiame straipsnyje apžvelgiamas tamsiojo turizmo situacija pandemijos ir popandeminiu laikotarpiu bei analizuojamas COVID-19 nulemtų pokyčių poveikis šiai turizmo kryptčiai. Straipsnyje aptariamas pasaulinis situacijos kontekstas, kuris turėjo didelę įtaką perorientuojant ir galiausiai atsekant naujas popandemines turizmo plėtros trajektorijas. Pandemijos metu įvykę poslinkiai turizmo vartotojų tarpe yra tarsi katalizatorius, skatinantis padidėjusį susidomėjimą lėtojo turizmo judėjimu bei *new normal* turizmu. Užuoat siekus grįžti į įprastą veiklą, autorius teigimu, derėtų persvarstyti pandemijos metu atsiradusias turizmo plėtros trajektorijas ir numatyti kitus, tvaresnio turizmo link vedančius plėtros būdus.

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