Is Regenerative Tourism the Future of Tourism?
Aim and Scope
Journal of Sustainability and Resilience (ISSN: 2744-3620) is an online open-access biannual journal. The aim of the journal is threefold. First, to debate on current issues related to sustainability and resilience concerning changing global shocks and trends and their impact on communities and businesses. Second, to develop theory and practice with a particular focus on marketing and tourism, and always in the framework of the UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals. Third, to build a permanent bridge and dialogue between academics and practitioners. Journal of Sustainability and Resilience charges neither authors nor readers.

Author Guidelines
Journal of Sustainability and Resilience (JSR) publishes papers in the form of research notes of a maximum of 1,500 words (including references) and full papers. A short abstract of up to 200 words and up to 6 keywords must be included. The journal encourages the incorporation of visual materials.

Manuscripts should be written using single-spaced, Times New Roman font and size 12, and manuscript pages should be numbered. References must be cited using APA format. All papers must outline why ‘academia’ and ‘industry’ should look at each other as part of the implications of the paper. Journal of Sustainability and Resilience (JSR) accepts two types of papers:

From academia: These are both conceptual and empirical papers and must include references.

From the industry: These are both examples of best practices and perspective papers and must include an introductory background of the study case.

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Submissions must be prepared in English and sent to the email jsr@sustainabilityandresilience.co.nz as a Microsoft Word attachment. The first page must include all the authors’ details (name, affiliation, and contact). All manuscripts must be original work and not previously published or submitted to any other publication. All submissions go through a double-blind peer-review process, meaning neither authors nor reviewers know each other’s names.
Regenerative tourism understands that visitors and destinations are part of a living system embedded in the natural environment, and it operates under nature rules and principles. This transformative term is starting to change the understanding of tourism. The concept acknowledges the interconnectedness of various natural and social environments and is designed to give back to the land and the people. The newly coined concept includes the aspects of sustainable tourism niches.

After the first wave of the global health crisis (Covid-19), we started to think about post-pandemic tourism. Now, we need to discuss post-pandemic tourism. Because of the pandemic, long haul travel is becoming harder and expensive. Restrictions on international travel and the absence of international tourism have provided us with an opportunity to rethink the future of tourism. It is argued that regenerative tourism offers much more and is moving beyond sustainable tourism.

Because of the advancement of transport systems and their growing affordability, the frequency of travel increased and the twenty-first century has witnessed mass tourism globally. Tourism only exists when people travel, which was linked to fossil fuels, resulting in global warming and climate change from a mass tourism perspective.

Hence, niche tourism such as eco-tourism, responsible tourism, social tourism, ethical tourism, volunteer tourism and community-based tourism emerged to negotiate a sustainable future of tourism. In parallel, other forms of tourism, such as slow tourism, were developed to mitigate mass tourism and contributed to economic development and global wellbeing. Many examples of slow and fast drivers of change have led to the emergence and evolution of both tourism production and consumption, and regenerative tourism is one of the many forms.

The question is whether ‘Regenerative Tourism’ is the future of tourism or another slogan which rhymes well with the current global crisis? How it reflects the needs of tour operators and other tourism stakeholders in the long run? How it ensures long term sustainability and resilience of local communities? This volume invites authors and readers to discuss both academia and the industry, the expected impacts of new forms of tourism on people, places and processes at local and global scales.
Acknowledgments

Journal of Sustainability and Resilience (JSR) is pleased to thank all the reviewers and colleagues at Lincoln University, University of Canterbury, and the University of Girona for their support and encouragement. The publication of the first issue would not have been possible without their contribution. The journal is also grateful to the industry sector on Banks Peninsula and their contribution towards the first issue and fulfilling the journal’s objective of bridging academics and the industry. Finally, the JSR is grateful to the National Library of New Zealand | Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa for their guidance during the journal’s publication processes.

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A future of tourism industry: conscious travel, destination recovery and regenerative tourism

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Received: 01/12/2020 Revised: 09/01/2021 Accepted: 11/01/2021 Published: 20/01/2021


Abstract: The tourism industry is a complex network of millions of suppliers and consumers who trade experiences and services. The traditional tourism model revolves around increasing the number of visitors to ensure economic return. The conventional tourism models often ignore the real cost of the travel industry’s health and the cost per tourist. Covid-19 has shown us the extent to which the travel industry can be affected. The tourism and hospitality industries is the worst affected industries globally and the continuous waves of the virus, and new variants, are forcing governments to impose strict lockdowns. Misinformation and disinformation are making it harder for governments to implement strategies to contain the virus. This paper argues that the world needs a positive psychology movement to ensure a deeper understanding of the tourism industry and its impacts on destinations and hosts, both in the short-term and the long-term. The decisions made regarding destination development and the tourists need to be mindful to reduce tourism’s adverse effects. Conscious travel habits and positive psychology can be seen in the emerging concept of regenerative tourism. The idea has some challenges, but it offers a holistic approach to make destinations more adaptable, creative and resilient, and ensures improved wellbeing and improves conscious level. Simultaneously, the concept provides a foundation to mindful decisions made by travellers which creates awareness about how, when and where to travel. Three scenarios are discussed based on the human conscious levels advocated by Sigmund Freud’s iceberg analogy and Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

Keywords: tourism recovery, conscious travel, regenerative tourism, destination recovery.

Author profile
Asif Hussain, PhD, is the founding director of Sustainability and Resilience Institute New Zealand. He specialised in tourism and infrastructure development, focusing on the consequences of infrastructure development on sustainability and resilience. Asif is a dedicated entrepreneur, social worker, philanthropist, and has developed innovative solutions and facilitated numerous community projects that have led to life-changing outcomes. He demonstrated history of working in the higher education industry, sustainable development and resilience.
Introduction

The crisis of Covid-19 has raised questions and concerns about the future of the tourism industry as a result of strict mobility regulations and new rules such as social distancing. The world is in some form of restrictions, and it is time to make some radical decisions to avoid the breakdown of the tourism industry. The question is, how? For over three decades, international development agencies have been advocating sustainability as an avenue to cope with and mitigate the impacts of changing trends and shocks. The severity and the economic and social implications of the global pandemic were not on their radar as we experience today (World Economic Forum, 2020). Despite technological advancements, we are unable to contain Covid-19, and the only useful measures are centuries-old non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) such as isolation and social distancing (Baldwin & Mauro, 2020).

Improvement in means of global mobility can be blamed for spreading the virus worldwide (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; Lapointe, 2020). If there had been no movement of people from one part of the world to the other, the virus could have been contained. Although vaccine development has experienced impressive progress, there are significant logistic constraints in its decimation (World Health Organization, 2020). Lack of trust of people on governments worldwide is a significant factor (Gilmore, 2020) that will play a vital role in the coming months and years. While most international borders remained closed, people ‘entertain’ themselves within their country. In the off-season, the domestic tourism boom in New Zealand is a typical example (TVNZ, 2020).

Tourism transformation

Under a global pandemic, it isn’t easy to anticipate the future of tourism. However, the study of global trends shows that tourism is transforming more rapidly than we thought. Tourism must lead the global shift towards a real responsible world – sustainable production and consumption of tourism. New Zealand government is officially focussing on high-end premium international tourists (Tourism New Zealand, 2020). Therefore, various means are being implemented to discourage low-end tourism. It is important to note that, although Covid-19 triggered the decision, the negative impacts of tourism were acknowledged early on (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2019; Pollock, 2015, 2019a, 2019b).

Technological advancements have improved global connectivity and visibility of destinations (Hussain, 2019), and tourism has become an extractive economy which sells an experience (Pollock, 2019b). The fight for online visibility and competition to sell packages has been the significant factor in attracting and turning a place into a ‘must-visit destination’. In this context, residents of the said place have no authority in controlling the imagery of the place they call home. Once visitors start coming, others follow (Hussain, 2019). Early adopters in a destination diversify and start tourism enterprises while others resist and alienate themselves from the tourism industry.

The global tourism disruption has arrived at our doorstep uninvitedly, and this is a test for tourism industry resilience. The tourism industry was not ready for a worldwide cataclysm of movements at such scale. The question is, what is the future of the tourism industry? In this paper, three possible scenarios are discussed to highlight the possible options for tourism recovery. They are: back to normal, a new normal or a holistic normal.

Scenario One: Back to normal

The world before Covid-19 has had many issues and concerns such as environmental
distress (Staupe-Delgado, Kruke, Ross, & Glantz, 2018), economic instability (Berg, Ostry, Tsangarides, & Yakshilikov, 2018; Schiller, 2015), socio-political unrest (Houle, 2019), and over-tourism (Pollock, 2019a, 2019b). Humanity has been extracting resources which resulted in numerous negative externalities. Tourism, which acted as a benefactor of improved livelihood, became a burden on the natural environment, resulting in socio-cultural changes (Epler Wood, Milstein, & Ahamed-Broadhurst, 2019). Tourists needed to travel to a destination and transport infrastructure played a crucial role. Before covid, air travel was expected to double every 15 years until 2035 at a growth rate of between 4% and 5% a year (BBC, 2019).

Mass-tourism remained a significant challenge for destination development and management, and the tourism costs kept rising globally (Epler Wood et al., 2019). Tourism is an extractive and secondary economy which depends on limited resources. The tourism industry has virtually no barrier to entry which competes on the product’s cost, and the return diminishes because of competition and seasonality factor (Pollock, 2019a). Each tourist’s actual cost is yet to be known as destination health’s economic measure focuses on an incomplete set of indicators (Epler Wood et al., 2019). While tourism continues to grow globally, the policies to address its social, economic and environmental impacts, continue to lag. According to the World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme report, only 11% of the governments have implemented sustainable tourism measures in their National Tourism Administrations (NRA) (UNWTO-UN Environment, 2019).

Despite the acknowledgement of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) at the international levels, tourism’s hidden costs are not fully acknowledged in developing tourism products, management, and consumption. The movement for better tourism was already underway before Covid-19. High profile movements on climate change at the global level (such as Greta Thunberg) have helped create awareness about climate change. The Swedish concept ‘flygskam’ (flight shame) is spreading and gaining popularity to minimise aeroplanes’ greenhouse gasses. According to a survey, one in five participants (21%) had cut their flights last year because of climate change (BBC, 2019). This will have a significant impact on international long-haul tourism destinations in the long-run. The question remains whether post-covid concerns be put pushed and the unsustainable paths of traditional tourism restored as soon as the pandemic is under control.

Scenario Two: A new normal

There has been a significant decrease in human movement worldwide (UNWTO, 2020a, 2020b). Today, we live in a world where uncertainty is the only certainty, and travel confidence has diminished during the pandemic. In a live poll conducted by the University of South Florida, between 40% and 60% (out of 5000 plus participants) affirmed travel confidence has decreased (Cobanoglu, 2020). Similar results were found in a survey conducted by the American Travel Confidence Index which showed that only two out of three people were optimistic about travelling between July and November 2020 (Cobanoglu, 2020). According to Skift Research (2020), global travel index was 44% at the time of writing this paper, compared to over 90% pre-covid or under normal conditions.

The main reason for the decrease in travel confidence is that people do not feel safe to travel. Tourism and hospitality industries have been innovative in winning people’s confidence. In this regard, innovative investment in hospitality and tourism sector has become a crucial factor in giving people
relevant information and multiple options to decide and motivate them to travel. Travel companies that promote destinations with packages are now providing relevant information about safe travel and precautionary measures related to Covid-19. For instance, airline companies show air condition systems and air filtrations’ effectiveness (Norwegian Airlines, 2020). Customers are being offered contactless booking, contactless check-in’s, self-service, digital boarding card, social distancing, and enhanced cleaning onboard (Norwegian, 2020). Some other services include rapid on-site Covid-19 tests conducted by airlines such as Emirates and United Airlines (Emirates Airlines, 2020; United Airlines, 2020). Also, thermal cameras are being used to detect people’s temperature in airports and destinations (Schulz, 2020).

Similarly, the event industry offers an option of hybrid meetings, where some people are in a venue, and the rest of the participants are online. Besides, examples of experience economy such as augmented and virtual reality tours, robot (e.g. Kiwibot) delivery, drone delivery and robotic kitchen are being experimented to provide contactless options (Cobanoglu, 2020). These steps are taken to market contactless and remote economy and promote social distancing in the hospitality sector to increase travel confidence and motivate people to travel. In the past, cleanliness was discreet, but now it has become part of the marketing strategy (Cobanoglu, 2020). These actions are fear-driven, which also have repercussions on mental health (Kreienkamp, Agostini, Krause, & Leander, 2020).

This paper argues that this current status so-called new normal is a transitional phase, and we are moving to a holistic normal. Despite colossal focus and investment at national and international levels, the new way of living is neither sustainable nor resilient. One way or the other we will get out of this current situation as noted by Fusté-Forné and Hussain (2021) in an attempt to understand pandemic crisis management in the restaurant industry. Do we want to go back to the usual way of living that we were used to, or a new and holistic state of living that ensures long-term sustainability and resilience? The next scenario highlights the holistic normal proposed for hospitality and tourism recovery.

**Scenario Three: A holistic normal**

According to the Association for Psychological Science (2020), Covid-19 has raised awareness among the masses about the social and psychological factors that influence and help us understand the impacts of Covid-19. The psychological implications of Covid-19 are vast and vary across cultures and contexts (Kreienkamp et al., 2020). These impacts are determined by individual and communities psychological and sociological development, respectively. According to Freud (1920), human psychology grows and evolves at certain levels of consciousness that determine the individual and community level of development. Freud (1920) explained the human mind is categorised as conscious, preconscious and unconscious. He described the level of human consciousness (conscious mind) as the mental processes we are aware of, using an iceberg analogy. The preconscious mind can be brought into conscious whereas the unconscious mind is inaccessible but influences judgements, feelings, and behaviours (Wilson, 2004). Based on the level of consciousness, both wants, needs and actions are formed.

As discussed above, in a tourism context, we have witnessed alarming negative externalities of tourism. Responses have differed based on individuals, communities and organisations level of consciousness. The movement of conscious travel rose even before Covid-19 pandemic (Epler
Motivation in decision making, attitude and personal satisfaction are the central themes linked to personal growth directly coupled to individual travel decisions. This is why various tourism niches emerged such as ecotourism, green tourism, responsible tourism, and slow tourism. Whether the decision is based on self-actualisation in terms of human need, as noted by Maslow (McLeod, 2007), or maybe on a diversity of motives (Pearce & Packer, 2013). Maslow’s five levels of hierarchy can be seen as a motivational factor and play a vital role in determining travel motivation (Hsu & Huang, 2008; Pearce, 2011). Mass tourism’s aftermath resulted in individually conscious travel habits and positive psychology (Pollock, 2019a, 2019b). This notion has resulted in many publications that recommend a holistic approach beyond sustainability (Epler Wood et al., 2019; Pollock, 2015, 2019b). The emerging concept which claims a holistic tourism approach is termed regenerative tourism.

According to Hutchins and Storm (2019) ‘regenerative’ means “creating the conditions for life to continuously renew itself, to transcend into new forms, and to flourish amid ever-changing life-conditions”. Owen (2007a, 2007b) used the term ‘regenerative’ for the first time in a tourism context. The concept of regenerative tourism works in the same principle where conditions are provided for the industry to reborn and continuously renew itself and transcend into a new form without much human intervention (Pollock, 2019b). Regenerative tourism understands that visitors and destinations are part of a living system embedded in the natural environment, and operate under nature’s rules and principles. The concept acknowledges the interconnectedness of various natural and social environments and is designed to give back to the land and the people. While this transformative term is starting to change the tourism industry’s understanding, it brings significant challenge because tourism is not a set alone industry and overlaps with other industries. The crucial challenge will be the extent of human intervention, organisational and service development which may hinder the logic of life – let nature do its job by just providing conditions for life. The significant challenge for regenerative tourism is going to be destination management and marketing, and tourism product development, which will intervene in the natural tourism recovery processes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The tourism industry is very complex. Tourism product is intangible, cannot be stored or preserved, must be consumed now, or perished. Every tourism model before Covid-19 tried to increase visitor numbers in a set time and destination (Pollock, 2019b). More visitors will bring more spending, which will expand the number of businesses, which will lead to more jobs, and governments generate revenue through taxes. Gross domestic product is the measure of economic growth, it does not account for its negative impact on society’s general wellbeing (Pollock, 2019b). A destinations economic activity may go up, but it may negatively influence social cohesion (Andrews & Stronach, 2020; Akaroa Voice, 2020). This is why the increase in visitor numbers can be devastating when visitor numbers exceed destination capacity, which often has limited infrastructure.

The trickle-down effects of the economy are not as practical as were anticipated (Schiller, 2015). Sustainable tourism development is mainly linked with economic benefits, which does not ensure the Gross National Happiness as an example of non-economic aspects of wellbeing which are not given equal weight. The new tourism model needs a holistic approach and requires a significant change at a deeper level, not just changing the terminologies. The change has to come.
from positive psychology, where inspirational stories, motivational actions, and adaptation ingenuities need to lead the tourism industry. Tourism is not just a quick and easy job creation tool, rather a ‘vector of positive change’. Tourism can offer holistic understanding of diverse cultures, bridge cultural gaps and encourage dialogue between civilisations to promote peace and harmony.

Positive psychology has understood the deeper conditions that help people live to their fullest, develop and evolve consciously. In similar fashion destinations and hosts need to evolve consciously and make fundamental decisions so that the tourism industry can move up a level in the framework of consciousness as shown in Figure 1 below. Actions taken by destinations/hosts and tourist/guests can be based on a conscious decision and awareness of the tourism industry at a deeper level. Tourism’s sustainable practices are essential, but not necessary. Therefore, destinations need to become adaptable, creative and resilient to ensure improved wellbeing. This can be done by making conscious and mindful tourism marketing, product development and policy formulation regarding tourist generation and management decision to create awareness about how, when and where to travel. The key is the motivation to do so, and there is a significant challenge for management and marketing development without interfering much in the natural process of tourist dispersion. The status and condition of transport infrastructure will play a vital role in funnelling tourists from one destination to another. Therefore, a tourist/guest’s impact on a destination/host is a crucial factor that motivates destinations and hosts to keep welcoming tourism and regenerate tourism industry. A nice place to live is often a nice place to visit. The health of the tourism industry will ultimately be determined by the health of destinations and the tolerance and level of welcoming of the host community.

Achieving a truly regenerative tourism model requires a shift in our conscious travel paradigm, with creative, adaptive, and resilient destinations.

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Hussain, Asif  
Journal of Sustainability and Resilience  
Volume 1, Issue 1

Figure 1. Conscious Travel Paradigm: between Destinations/Hosts and Travellers/Guests

**Unconscious Level**
- Scenario One: Back to normal
  - Destinations are overflooded with mass tourism, negative social impacts, economic instability, host-guest conflicts

**Subconscious Level**
- Scenario Two: New normal
  - Destinations are at a state of fear of losing control over the situation

**Conscious Level**
- Scenario Three: Holistic normal
  - Destinations need to become more creative, adaptable, and resilient to ensure improved wellbeing

**Tourists/Guests**
- Conscious and mindful when traveling
- Awareness: Making informed decision and knowing about the impacts of travel
- Motivated to make a difference and doing things differently (at individual and society level)

**Tourists/Guests**
- Travelers are in constant state of fear
- Some take risks as they resist change – rebellious

**Tourists/Guests**
- Business as usual
- Tourism policy only focuses on increasing visitors’ number
- Some people want to make a difference, but actions are not organised
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The Most Important Thing, The People!

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Received: 20/12/2020 Revised: 03/01/2021 Accepted: 06/01/2021 Published: 20/01/2021


Abstract: This paper looks at indigenous concepts from New Zealand Maori and American Indians that offer philosophy for long term resilience and human-centred decision making. For true resilience, individuals, businesses and governments need to be adaptable, decisive and make long term changes. Operational changes need to come from a change of mindset and cannot return to old systems. Covid-19 has highlighted placing humans at the centre of decision making. This paper looks at the case study of The Seventh Generation Tours, in Akaroa New Zealand and the indigenous concepts of turangawaewae, knowing our connection to place and environment, manaakitanga, hospitality and kaitiakitanga, guardianship. This paper argue that for resilience, a system must have a strong mauri (lifeforce) and look at resilience planning on a multi-generational timescale.

Keywords: Covid-19, indigenous knowledge, kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, resilience, turangawaewae.

Author profile
Marie Haley is the founder and guide of The Seventh Generation. She was born and raised on Banks Peninsula, a seventh-generation direct decedent of Akaroa’s first French settler. She grew up on the family farm following her Grandfather’s footsteps and his Grandfather before. From the age of six, she knew that she would devote her life to the conservation of native species and protect the incredible beauty of New Zealand. In her work as a wildlife ranger and Wildside coordinator, this dream has become a reality. With The Seventh Generation, she wants to share her passion and knowledge with other people to provide a deeper understanding and local connection to her special place’s history and nature.
Introduction

He aha te mea nui o tea o?

What is the most important thing in the world? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata. It is the people, it is the people, it is the people. This Māori proverb or Whakatauki is commonly used in New Zealand, especially in reference to looking after the environment. These words hold true today in a world facing the pandemic of Covid-19. What is the most important thing in facing this crisis? It is the people and how we care for each other, our leaders decisiveness and compassion, and our scientists’ clarity in communication, and it is the public being able to trust in their government.

Human-centred Decision Making

It is only when we genuinely place people first that we can build a better world. In New Zealand, we placed the wellness of people first and shut down our economy fully, with one of the strictest lockdowns in the world, we ‘went hard and we went early’, resulting in the elimination policy of Covid-19 and economic recovery that defied expectations. What was good for the people was good for the economy. However, we have seen around the world that this does not hold true in reverse, for an example the UK worst hit oeecd economy with a contraction of 20.4% in the second quarter, this came after a delayed and at times incoherent response with aspects of the economy and travel remaining open (OECD, 2020).

Mauri or lifeforce remains strong when a system is resilient, adaptable to change and able to withstand shocks and survive, perhaps in an altered but still healthy state. An example of this is a strong and healthy river with native vegetation supporting the banks and filtering the waters with good insect and fish life and an abundance of predators such as nesting birds. A river such as this can withstand an earthquake rockfall that blocks the flow and diverts the water, it will find a new path and continue. A river that is polluted, denuded of plant life, where the water becomes hot and lifeless, loses its mauri and when disaster strikes this dead river will gouge out sediment from exposed land, causing larger landslides, have a high sediment load and the flow will dam and then flood causing increased impact downstream, on the farmland and settlements below. The whole river system has mauri, and this lifeforce continues hundreds of miles out to sea.

This is just one of nature’s examples of interconnectedness, life flows and all aspects in a system are connected (Hussain, 2019). In fact, it is impossible to ignore or remove one aspect of a system without changing the whole. Humans have psychologically removed themselves from nature, placing themselves above or beyond it, but we cannot remove ourselves from the natural world in which we live and depend upon. Humans need to become conscious again of our place within natural systems, so that we can improve the mauri/lifeforce of humans, and of the nature as a whole.

When we view the world this way, we see that to place humans first, we must consider the environment we live within. For human resilience we need system resilience in our environment. In the first wave of Covid-19 the highest death rates occurred in populations that were not as healthy, living in highly polluted manufacturing centres
such as Lombardy in Italy (Stewart, 2021). Or, from groups that have high rates of diabetes and heart disease such as African Americans, often stemming from lack of access to healthy natural foods, healthcare, exercise and education (referred to as food poverty and food deserts) as reported by Bleasdale et al. (2011). These populations were not as resilient to Covid-19 as the environments they live had a diminished maori.

This pandemic has increased our awareness of the need for clear and open scientific communication, decisive human-centred leadership, kindness and tolerance, universal support systems (economically and vaccine distribution), environmentally conscious decision making adaptability of all aspects of working life, and the need for resilience (Hussain, 2021). It is likely that when we look back, we will see that Covid-19 was a change point in history, where changes that were already arising were accelerated. Where old systems and old ways of doing things could no longer be maintained. New systems must be more resilient to survive future shocks.

In New Zealand domestic tourism has surged, in the example of Akaroa, a small seaside town an hour’s drive away from the second largest city of Christchurch, accommodation suppliers have had their best winter ever, attractions, restaurants and shops have done well (TVNZ, 2020). But domestic tourists spend 17 times less than international tourists on holiday (RNZ, 2020), and tour operators are hurting with a collapse of bookings. While there is government funding to support businesses to adapt, there is not a network of support to help operators face this financially and mentally difficult situation. The question on many operators’ minds is how long will this last and can my business survive until the return of tourism. It is this that ultimately will put the greatest pressure on a return to normal tourism model, the need to get old tourism back at the same numbers or greater as soon as possible, those businesses that adapt most readily and rapidly are likely to be resilient in the long term.

However, suppose we can take Covid-19 as an opportunity to contemplate and alter our philosophy so that our business models are also permanently altered. In that case, we can look to indigenous knowledge to understand long-term resilience and cultures that have survived and adapted for centuries or millennia. An American Indian concept is for seven generations, “when you sit in council for the welfare of the people, you must not think of yourself or of your family, not even of your generation… make your decisions on behalf of the seven generations coming, so that they may enjoy what you have today” (Oren Lyons, Seneca Nation), or better than we have today!

**Case Study**

The Seventh Generation is a tour company based in Akaroa, New Zealand. The tours focus on natural and cultural history and the natural environment and operate on three indigenous concepts. First, turangawaewae; knowing our place to stand, where we feel powerfully connected. Second, manaakitanga; hospitality, the sharing of kai (food) and the powerful oratory of storytelling that connects people to place and culture. Finally, kaitiakitanga or guardianship that arises out of knowing your place and your connections in place, to family, to community, to land, water, air and all our brothers and sisters; the creatures that are now, that were and that will come. Gifted to us from our ancestors, protected by us and improved for the seventh generations after us.

This is digging deep into a new resilience level, with one central tenant running through these three concepts: connection to place. Turangawaewae literally means to dig in your toes, ensuring that your toes (your roots) are in deep enough to weather a storm, so that you can stand tall and remain, despite short term difficulties or economic hardship. Knowing your connection to place can ground you and
provide a sense of permanence despite the strongest storm of change. Ultimately, this is a reconnection of your lifeforce with nature, a becoming whole. Manaakitanga is the sharing of these stories of place, it’s history, people, natural environment and future, and grounded in the sharing of the kai/food that comes from that place, it is a communion, an act of sharing. From a deep sense of connection to the whole, or reconnection to our place within the natural system, understanding arises often as love and a natural sense of guardianship or kaitiakitanga, wanting to protect what is an extension of yourself.

Building resilience needs to be a long-term mindset for constant adaptability, with deep centred groundness to the permanent. Thus, we anchor ourselves to the unchanging so that we can rapidly change, for this we need to find what is always true; our connections in story to place. This deep connection brings change across a culture, and ultimately across the world.

**Conclusion**

Indigenous cultures around the world have lived in landscapes for centuries, millennia to tens of thousands of years. Over these expanses of time, many changes have occurred, cultures have changed but internally there is resilience and adaptability that allows the population to learn philosophies of sustainability that allow them to survive with limited resources and without the vast imported wealth that we rely on in our ‘developed’ economic models today. Our way of living has hit a crisis point with Covid-19, and we expect greater crisis points to come in the foreseeable future largely because our philosophies and values are cast adrift from the natural systems that support us.

If we look to natural systems and indigenous ways of knowing, we can see that a resilient system has a strong vitality or lifeforce (mauri), it is healthy and humans that live in that system are healthy. When we know where we are from and build strong connections to place (turangawaewae), we are able to share this knowledge with others (manaakitanga), and developing a strong sense of guardianship (kaitiakitanga) for this place and culture, making decisions that will sustain it for many generations into the future.

He aha te mea nui o tea o? What is the most important thing in the world? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata. It is the people, it is the people, it is the people. People must be at the centre of our decision making. Not for this generation only, but far into the future and with a mind far into the past. It is our ancestors who give us strength, for us to know who we are, to know where we are from and to know how far we have progressed as a society. When we know where we are grounded and know who we are, we build a deep connection to the landscape and community around us, we become part of the natural world and

![Figure 1. Akaroa in lockdown in summer season when cruise ships would normally bring up to 6000 passengers](image-url)
guardians of place and stories. When we hold humans at the centre, what is good for the people is good for the land and the economy. Only then we can choose that which creates the most good and the least harm.

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Food producers and pandemics: a mystery shopping analysis

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Received: 01/12/2020 Revised: 01/01/2021 Accepted: 03/01/2021 Published: 20/01/2021


Abstract: Recent research has widely analysed the significance of food in tourism. Departing from the understanding of ‘cheese’ as part of the food tourism system of a destination, this paper aims to analyse cheese factory tours as a tourism service provided by food producers. A mystery shopping approach is used to study the 75 cheese producers under the Manchego quality cheese. Results show the response behaviour of Spanish Manchego cheese producers to an email sent by a ‘tourist’ who asks for a visit during pandemic times. As a segment of food tourism, cheese tourism is gathering a growing attention by academics and practitioners, and some cheeses became international tourist attractions. While the majority of cheese producers have not stopped their operations, the current health crisis has led to a suspension of cheese-based tourism experiences. The paper informs the development of cheese-based tourism in pandemic times.

Keywords: cheese tourism, gastronomy, regional development, Spain.

Author profile
Francesc Fusté-Forné, PhD, is a professor and researcher at the University of Girona, Spain. He specialises in rural food tourism and communication and marketing. He studied food tourism phenomenon in different geographical contexts and at local, regional and national levels. Francesc is particularly interested in analysing media’s role on the socio-cultural understanding of business and communities in the face of changing, challenging and evolving global trends.
Introduction

The health crisis has led to temporary closures of tourism services worldwide (Gössling, Scott and Hall, 2020). Spain is facing a complex situation with more than 2 million cases confirmed (Spanish Government - Ministerio de Sanidad, 2020). The country experienced a state of alarm between March 14 and June 21 (Spanish Government - Presidencia del Gobierno, 2020) and, after that, a progressive reopening of tourism has resulted in a slow recovery of domestic tourism. The gradual lifting of travel restrictions resulted in a growing demand by international tourists, starting from early July, however international arrivals have been limited because of the second wave of cases that happened in Europe in autumn.

The relationships between food and tourism have been vastly investigated during the last decade, and food tourism studies have approached the processes of planning, developing and marketing of food tourism experiences (see, for example, Ellis et al., 2018; Hall, 2020; Rachão et al., 2019). Food and gastronomy heavily contribute to tourism (see Rousta and Jamshidi, 2020). As an example of food tourism, cheese tourism is described as the process of attributing tourism value to cheese. Cheese tourism is a type of tourism which includes the journey to regions where milk production and cheesemaking are a significant part of local heritage and traditions (Fusté-Forné, 2015; 2020). As a consequence, visits to cheesemaking facilities and dairy landscapes have emerged as a meaningful cheese-based tourism practice.

Cheese is an identity marker of Spanish (food) culture (Fusté-Forné, 2018). There are up to 28 kinds of cheese in Spain that count on a quality label (26 Protected Designations of Origin, PDO, and 2 Protected Geographical Indications, PGI). Among them, PDO Manchego cheese includes the largest production area (Spanish Government - Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 2020) and represents the Spanish cheese with the highest economic impact (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, 2018). Manchego cheese, which is named after La Mancha’s region where it is made, provides a relevant understanding of Spanish cheeses.

This research, which is particularly framed on the relationships between farming and tourism, analyses how Spanish food producers are facing the Covid-19 crisis. While previous research has explored how cheese producers may find solace in tourism (see Fusté-Forné, 2016), this paper further investigates how cheese tourism is managed in a pandemic context. Drawing from a mystery shopping approach, it aims to explore the service quality of cheese producers and whether or not they organise visits to their facilities in pandemic times. Results are built on their response behaviour to an electronic message.

Study method

This research applies a mystery shopping and participant observation analysis (Miller, Hudson and Turner, 2005). A mystery shopping method aims to delve into service provision quality (Van der Wiele, Hesselink and Van Iwaarden, 2005). A mystery shopper refers to a person who acts as a customer in order “to monitor the processes and procedures used in the delivery of a service” (Wilson, 1998, p.148). Visits to cheese factories and workshops are understood as activities provided in the context of cheese tourism, a niche food tourism (Fusté-Forné, 2015). In this case, the researcher as a mystery
shopper contacted by email all the 75 cheese producers listed under the PDO Manchego cheese, in Spain. Each of the producers was contacted individually on Monday, August 3, 2020. The emails were previously programmed in order to assure they were sent at the same scheduled time.

The email content mentioned that ‘in mid-August, we will be in La Mancha, and we would like to visit your facilities and learn about the cheese-making process. Is it possible to schedule a visit? I would appreciate if you could inform us’. Previous research acknowledged that both “the speed of response and breadth of information” are crucial service quality indicators (Zehrer and Pechlaner, 2006). The recorded data included: if cheese producers replied or not; the exact time when they replied and the number of minutes it took them to respond to the email; if a visit to the facilities was possible or not; price of the visit; and any additional information provided by cheese producers. Data collection was finalised on Monday, August 10, 2020. The next section discusses the results of the study.

**Results**

The production of Spanish Manchego cheese is regulated by the quality label Protected Designation of Origin *Queso Manchego* (Manchego cheese), which was recognised at the European level in 1996 (FAO, 2018). There are up to 75 cheese producers certified by the PDO Manchego cheese (*Queso Manchego*, 2020) which are divided into four provinces (15 in Albacete, 28 in Ciudad Real, 13 in Cuenca, and 19 in Toledo) in the region of Castilla-La Mancha, south-east of Madrid. Among the 75 producers listed on the official website of Manchego cheese, 39 are industrial cheese factories, 30 are artisanal cheese workshops, and 6 are cheese cellars.

While the mystery shopper’s email was sent to 75 producers, only 32 have replied (42.67%). Among them, 17 are artisanal, and 15 are industrial cheese factories. The average response time was twenty hours. 25 of the 32 cheese factories (almost 80%) responded in day one, in less than four hours (240 minutes) as observed in Figure 1 below. Moreover, five cheese producers responded after day one (three on Tuesday, one on Wednesday and one on Thursday). Finally, two cheese producers replied the following Monday morning, after a week of sending the email. If these two cheese factories were not considered, the average response time would have only been eight hours and forty-five minutes.

In relation to the 25 cheese businesses that responded quickly, six replied to the query in less than an hour, eight in less than two hours, eight in less than three hours and three in less than four hours. Figure 1 showcases the timeline of the responses, where the fastest only took six minutes. In Figure 1, the two cheese factories that responded a week later do not appear to facilitate graph comprehension (a week means 10,080 minutes).

Among the 32 cheese factories that responded, only 15 reported that it was possible to visit their facilities (46.88%). Eight are artisanal and seven industrial cheese factories. While 60% of them (nine cheese producers) reported that tours are provided for free, three cheese businesses set a price (5 €, 12 € and 25 €), and another three did not report the cost of the activity. They were contacted again, but no response was obtained. Most of the cheesemakers highlighted that their tours are complemented with cheese tasting, and, in some cases, with wine and olive oil tasting. Specifically, one of the producers indicated that tourists could experience “a commented cheese tasting, see the
facilities, the livestock, the store and a short explanation about the work in the farm and the cheese factory”. This is the complete tour, which lasts around 90 minutes and offers a range of opportunities to build, implement and promote cheese tourism in destinations.

Figure 1. Speed of response of cheese producers

If we analyse the service quality beyond the response time, almost a third of the cheese producers (nine of them) informed that they do not arrange visits because of the situation derived from Covid-19. Some of them have also indicated that they do not provide organised tours and visitors must only “say the day you want to come, if it is in the morning or in the afternoon because we need to organize ourselves and do not manufacture that day”. This reveals one of the difficulties of the integration between farming and tourism. Thus, some cheese businesses that do not offer tours have invited to visit the store and buy the product, and one of them informed that a small free tasting would be provided.

Conclusion and implications

This research has revealed preliminary insights into the service quality of cheese producers in Spain by analysing their response behaviour to an electronic visitor message. This analysis informs food tourism management in pandemics. Departing from a mystery shopping study and drawing on Manchego cheese producers, the research has showcased that almost half of them replied to the query. However, only 20% of cheese businesses who produce under the PDO Manchego cheese are open for tours in summer 2020. This demonstrates the difficult situation of cheesemakers in terms of recovering its relation with tourism and tourists, and how an experience focused on local production and consumption is framed during the coronavirus crisis. For example, promising results confirm that some producers offer a combined tour with other products representing Spanish food landscapes such as olive oil and wine. This cooperation may be critical to the recovery of food tourism experiences that contribute to the territory’s economic well-being.

This paper has approached cheese as part of food tourism, both from an industrial (Ermolaev, Yashalova and Ruban, 2019) and artisanal (Fusté-Forné, 2015) perspective. However, it should be considered that data collection was carried out in an uncertain period, thus its replication at another time (or another setting) could provide different results, for example, a higher response rate or a more significant number of tours. This study contributes to the emerging literature on the relationships between tourism and crisis (see Sigala, 2020). Specifically, it provides exploratory data on a tourism service at the first stage of Spain’s tourism recovery. This research also offers an innovative analysis of food tourism through ‘cheese’. It is one of the first studies that focus on food tourism in the context of Covid-19 with primary data (see Kim and Lee, 2020).

The research analyses a food tourism activity (a cheese tour) during the crisis at a practical level. Results assess the service quality from a food tourist perspective to
critically describe cheese producers’ response behaviour (the speed and the information provided). This investigation incorporates a timely understanding of cheese tourism in pandemic times. It may lead to further empirical research on food tourism that informs academics and practitioners about the configuration of ‘new’ food tourism experiences.

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Thoughts on how New Zealand could progress as a more regenerative tourism host

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Received: 20/12/2020   Revised: 03/01/2021   Accepted: 10/01/2021   Published: 20/01/2021

How to cite: Bradley, Stephen (2021). Thoughts on how New Zealand could progress as a more regenerative tourism host. Journal of Sustainability and Resilience, Volume 1, Issue 1, Pages 22-25.

Abstract: New Zealand has a chance to reset the way we view and manage tourism. We must take this chance to make some changes that will ensure that we have a clean green country to promote as a high-quality tourism destination in the future. This perspective advocates that measures such as a high visitor levy, educating tourists and better management of the way tourists travel around the country, can lead to achieving more sustainable tourism industry.

Keywords: camping, Covid-19, environment, regenerative tourism, New Zealand.

Author profile

Stephen Bradley has been working in both the tourism and hospitality industry for over 20 years both in New Zealand and overseas and owned his restaurant on the famous tourist town of Akaroa for ten years. He has also worked on several research and conservation projects around the country. Having grown up in rural New Zealand, he has a strong connection to the land and the environment and has seen the detrimental impacts of over-tourism and budget tourism first hand.
Introduction

Before New Zealander boarders closed as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic a growing number of New Zealanders were dissatisfied with the impacts of tourism and were expressing visitor fatigue. In 2018 a record of forty percent of New Zealanders surveyed were worried about the effects of the growing number of tourists upon the infrastructure, way of life of New Zealanders, and the environment (Cropp, 2017, 2018). As our culture and natural environment are the biggest attractions that lure tourists to New Zealand, this dissatisfaction shows we were not on a sustainable path.

In 2019 the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment released a report on the impacts of tourism on the natural environment that clearly stated that despite a long standing emphasis on sustainability, the existing policy mix is unlikely to prevent a worsening of tourism’s environmental burden (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, 2019). The report was a clear signal that we could no longer be complacent and needed to change our tourism management. Any return to a business-as-usual approach post-Covid and to the return of the high and growing tourism numbers would have devastating consequences for the natural environment which is the major drawcard for our tourists.

New Zealand has attracted the admiration of the world through our Covid-19 response, with coverage in outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and CNN (The New York Times, 2020). From this international attention it is likely the demand for travel to New Zealand will remain high once borders open, so we must be ready for tourism to return and have the plans and systems in place to earn the right to market ourselves under the Tourism New Zealand longterm campaign ‘100% Pure’. But there is a lot of regeneration to be done before we deserve that label. Of course, tourism must be a balancing act between looking after our environment (this is our product we are trying to sell after all) and generating income for the country and the tourism operators. Suppose we are going to reduce the number of tourists that visit New Zealand every year. In that case, we need to think carefully about what kind of tourist brings the most value to our economy with less impact on our environment.

Rethinking of tourism in New Zealand

It would be easy to assume that aiming for the highest end of the tourism market would be the best way to go, but this is a little bit of a misguided assumption. Very often the high-end tourist only visits for a very short time, often staying in only one or two high end resorts. Off-shore investors often own the places they stay in and even the activities they get involved in, so very little of what they spend ends up helping the country’s grassroots economy.

It is the middle to high wealth bracket, that is, people that have time to spend a month or more exploring our country and spending time and money in the smaller centers that benefit the country the most. The kind of tourist that will spend a number of days in numerous small towns around the country, utilising restaurants and cafes and tourist attractions in the area as well as staying in local B&Bs or camping grounds, shortly this helps the country and economy more than people staying large of shore owned hotels, or international cruise ships.

New Zealand tourism minister Steve Nash has clearly stated his goal to target the global 1% of wealth as the key tourism market for New Zealand in the post-pandemic market (The Guardian, 2020). On a global scale, an individual must have upwards of one million New Zealand
dollars to be considered in the top 1% of the world’s wealthiest individuals (Credit Suisse, 2020).

One of the problems with this though is we do not have a transport system that encourages this kind of travel unless the visitors hire a camper van. Consequently, we need to look at solutions for both managing the number of camper vans on the roads and in the camping grounds, and be much stricter with the quality of the vans and investing in the infrastructure facilities for them. So that we do not go back to having every spot along the road you can park a car scattered with human waste. Self-contained campervan stickers are just too easy to get and are meaningless if the inhabitants of the van have no intention of using their self-contained facilities.

New Zealand has a regional approach to managing visitors, with each regional or local council responsible for providing facilities and enforcing local rules. This creates an area of confusion for the tourist with the need to constantly check the local rules and availability of free ‘freedom camping’ parks. With this obscurity market forces filled the gaps in legislation by providing online apps such as CamperMate.

This problem can probably be solved as much by education as it can be by legislation. Maybe we need to educate our visitors upon arrival of what to expect in New Zealand and what we expect of them in return. The Air New Zealand safety videos (2020) are well received, something along those lines shown to all arriving passengers to New Zealand, welcoming people to tell them a little about what to expect here culturally and environmentally.

If we are going to continue with freedom camping as an option for our visitors there must be much stricter regulations on what standards the camper van must meet to be considered suitable for freedom camping. And maybe regular visits to these sites by some sort of freedom camping ranger, with some nationally standardised camping rules.

As far as public transport is concerned, we would like to have fewer vehicles on the roads but still have people visiting and spending, which needs to develop some transport solutions. Currently, it is difficult to comfortably and enjoyably travel New Zealand on public transport. This will not be an easy problem to solve and will also require a simultaneously tackling of environmental and climate change issues. Establishing national transport networks could be offset by visitor levies.

One way we could ensure that we are appealing more to the end of the market that is happy to spend more money on high-quality tourism would be to significantly increase the visitor levy on arrival from the current $35 to something like $500. This could be promoted as payment for arrival and amount towards our national parks or freedom camping sites, rather than charging people to enter National Parks as they do in parts of Australia. That way we would have a significant budget for improving and maintaining our facilities, and improving our product (or a clean green New Zealand) so we continue to be seen as a premium destination, well worth the cost involved in visiting.

One of the issues with charging a high levy is that it may put off the working holiday travelers who are important to supplementing the workforce in many of the smaller centres or rural areas of the country and add to the country’s diversity. But there could be an incentive scheme in that they get a proportion of the levy back for working in high need areas such as fruit picking or hospitality. That way, we would limit the number of young people who just come from working
holiday visas to bum around and increase that number that come in the working holiday scheme’s true spirit.

**Conclusion**

For New Zealand to reduce and manage the host community’s visitor fatigue, to reduce and manage tourism’s environmental impacts, there must be a reset to a more regenerative tourism model. With higher wealth tourists to New Zealand that travel for longer and spend more during their stay that will increase the benefit that the host community receives. A visitor levy and educating tourists would ensure the provision of better facilities and ultimately result in a better visitor experience.

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**References**


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