

CfP: POLLEN 2022 conference, 28-30 June, Durban, South Africa

“From Overtourism to Undertourism...and Back Again? Confronting Post-Pandemic Tourism ‘Regrowth’ with Postcapitalist Pathways”

Organised by:

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ABSTRACT:

The ongoing COVID pandemic has dramatically impacted tourism in nearly every destination worldwide. One of the most striking of these impacts can be the way it quickly and decisively ended growing complaints about “overtourism” in many popular destinations in the years prior to the pandemic, instead replacing these with newfound concerns about the negative economic consequences of the resulting “undertourism” produced by pandemic travel restrictions. Most tourism planners are now strategizing to manage the tourism regrowth already beginning or projected to begin once the pandemic further recedes. Yet these responses take very different forms in different locations: while some places aim merely to restimulate tourism to pre-pandemic levels or beyond, even further liberalizing regulation to achieve this, others appear to be taking the pandemic as an opportunity to proactively manage or limit tourism regrowth to forestall a return of overtourism and its discontents. But a less analyzed option is degrowth, through a reorientation the activity in the Global North in favor of improvements in equity, justice and collective well-being. Starting from the basis that tourism does not have to be a capitalist activity, it is proposed that sustainable tourism requires the acceptance of limits based on the commons and promoting them through post-capitalist forms of production and exchange.

In this panel, we explore how a range of prominent tourism destinations previously experiencing overtourism are situated within this spectrum. Taking documentation of the pre-COVID debates concerning overtourism as a baseline, we explore how these discussions and associated policy measures have transformed in the time since in preparation for a post-pandemic future. We ask how new measures introduced or proposed promise to address the pre- or mid-pandemic tourism impacts to which they are directed and what the likely outcomes of such interventions will therefore be in years to come. We also explore more radical proposals to reform tourism more dramatically away from the growth-oriented model long dominating the global tourism industry. The purpose of this call for contributions is therefore, on the one hand, to diagnose re-growth trends and, on the other, to explore alternative ‘spaces of hope’ to develop a roadmap of pathways towards post-capitalist tourism.

The aim is to develop a programme comprising multiple sessions addressing these different yet interconnected themes, and then to use these discussions to develop, within the next year, two new proposals for journal special theme collections: one focused on current proposals to address post-pandemic regrowth in destinations previously experiencing overtourism; the other focused on possibilities (both conceptual and theoretical) for more dramatic post-capitalist transformation. So in responding to this call, please also indicate whether you are

interested to have your contribution considered for either of these collections (and if so which).

Please send a title and abstract (max. 250 words) to asuncion.blanco@uab.cat, mblazquez@uib.cat and robert.fletcher@wur.nl by **Friday 29 October**.

We will let you know soon after whether we can include you in the programme for official submission before the **15 November deadline**.