

# **International Case Studies in the Management of Disasters**

# Tourism Security-Safety and Post Conflict Destinations

Series editors: Maximiliano E. Korstanje and Hugues Seraphin

Since the turn of the century, the international rules surrounding security and safety have significantly changed, specifically within the tourism industry. In the age of globalization, terrorism and conflict have moved beyond individual high-profile targets; instead, tourists, travellers and journalists are at risk. In response to this shift, the series invites authors and scholars to contribute to the conversation surrounding tourism security and post-conflict destinations.

The series features monographs and edited collections to create a critical platform which not only explores the dichotomies of tourism from the theory of mobilities, but also provides an insightful guide for policy makers, specialists and social scientists interested in the future of tourism in a society where uncertainty, anxiety and fear prevail.

*Tourism Security-Safety and Post Conflict Destinations* explores research approaches and perspectives from a wide range of ideological backgrounds to discuss topics such as:

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- Innovative quantitative/qualitative methods for the study of risk and security issues in tourism and hospitality
- Virus outbreaks and tourism mobility
- Disasters, trauma and tourism
- Apocalyptic theories and tourism as a form of entertainment

# **International Case Studies in the Management of Disasters: Natural - Manmade Calamities and Pandemics**

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# Table of Contents

About the Contributors	vii
Foreword	xiii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Analyzing Site Security Design Principles in a Built Environment and Implication for Disaster Preparedness: The Case of Istanbul Sultanahmet Square, Turkey</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Ali Akbulut and Gökçen Firdevs Yücel Caymaz</i>	
<b>Chapter 2 Local Knowledge in Russian Flood-prone Communities: A Case Study on Living with the Treacherous Waters</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>Kseniia Puzyreva and Nikita Basov</i>	
<b>Chapter 3 Financial Implications of Natural Disasters: A Case Study of Floods in Pakistan</b>	<b>61</b>
<i>Vivake Anand, Kinza Yousfani and Jianhua Zhang</i>	
<b>Chapter 4 Microcase Studies on Managing Tourism Destinations in the Aftermath of Disasters</b>	<b>99</b>
<i>Frank Haas, Jerome Agrusa and Joseph Lema</i>	
<b>Chapter 5 Comparing the Experiences of African States in Managing Ebola Outbreaks from 2014 into 2020</b>	<b>111</b>
<i>Peter Mameli and Darryl Bobb</i>	
<b>Chapter 6 Kerala Nipah Virus Outbreak 2018: The Need for Global Surveillance of Zoonotic Diseases</b>	<b>131</b>
<i>Smarty P. Mukundan, Ananthi Rajayya and Zakkariya K. A.</i>	

<b>Chapter 7 Managing Visiting Scholars’ Program during the COVID-19 Pandemic</b>	143
<i>Miguel Cordova, Karla Maria Nava-Aguirre and Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez</i>	
<b>Chapter 8 Managing E-commerce During a Pandemic: Lessons from GrubHub During COVID-19</b>	155
<i>Anil Yasin Ar</i>	
<b>Chapter 9 The Role of Communications in Managing a Disaster: The Case of COVID-19 in Vietnam</b>	169
<i>Lena Bucatariu</i>	
<b>Chapter 10 Passage from the Tourist Gaze to the Wicked Gaze: A Case Study on COVID-19 with Special Reference to Argentina</b>	197
<i>Maximiliano E. Korstanje</i>	
<b>Chapter 11 COVID-19 Outbreak in Finland: Case Study on the Management of Pandemics</b>	213
<i>Sajal Kabiraj and Filip Lestan</i>	
<b>Chapter 12 The COVID-19 Crisis Management in the Republic of Korea</b>	231
<i>Sahrok Kim, K. Praveen Parboteeah and John B. Cullen</i>	
<b>Chapter 13 Empowering Patients through Social Media and Implications for Crisis Management: The Case of the Gulf Cooperation Council</b>	251
<i>Manoj Menon and Babu George</i>	
<b>Chapter 14 Technology in Medicine: COVID-19 and the “Coming of Age” of Telehealth</b>	271
<i>Babu George, Lena Bucatariu and Tony L. Henthorne</i>	
Index	281

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# Foreword

We live under the constant spell of disasters and they seem to be outpace our abilities to predict them. We were no more cognizant about the emergence of COVID-19 hitting us than the previous generation knew about the devastating arrival of the Spanish flu. Does this mean, the study of disasters is of no practical use? The answer is a resounding “no”. For one thing, certain disasters are truly outlier events and our incapacity to predict them need not be overblown. What matters is whether we are better prepared to deal with it when something of a similar kind hits us. We did learn about managing pandemics from the previous outbreaks and this knowledge is currently being used. Of course, management, even as we term it a scientific process, is also muddled with the compulsions of our political and public administration leadership. These complex equations make it difficult to fully leverage the accumulated knowledge from previous crises with emerging crises.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is a current worldwide pandemic mentioned in the same breath as the plague of the seventeenth century in Europe, and the outbreak of influenza in 1918–1919, I have experienced the disastrous wrath of nature in the form of hurricanes. Three remain vividly etched in my memory. While going through the chapters of this book, my own memories of living through those disasters quickly came to mind. I had a scholar’s understanding of these calamities but that alone was insufficient.

Betsy hit Louisiana the day I arrived in Baton Rouge in September 1965. I was born and raised in Michigan but had transferred universities. I had no idea what hurricanes were like but found out that night as Betsy tracked through and hammered the state capital. I was holed up in a hotel and can still hear the fury and howling of the storm. The next morning, I went to the top of the state capital and surveyed the damage. Uprooted trees, damage to buildings, and many other reminders left in the storm’s wake. What a reception to my new home!

Camille hit the Gulf Coast in August 1969 with the highest windspeed at landfall ever recorded – worldwide. 190 miles per hour. Devastation on the coast, only an hour’s drive, was horrendous but what really got my attention was the flooding, about three feet of water in my in-law’s home. That water also brought in snakes and swarms of fire ants riding on the water, two critters I can do without.

Katrina in August 2005 flooded about 80% of New Orleans. Thousands sought refuge in the Superdome. Category 4 and 5 hurricanes cause so much damage,

displacement, and death. Official hurricane season is June 1 to November 30 but peak activity occurs from mid-August to late October.

Living in the Pine Belt of Mississippi just an hour's drive from the Gulf Coast provided no escape from Katrina's fury. A few personal examples: tree limbs from towering pines punched through the roof and into my living room and bedroom. Electric power was out for three weeks (thankfully, I had purchased a generator specifically for such purpose) as was phone service. It took two full days and several eighteen-wheeler truckloads to clear my subdivision's main street. The physical and social constraints on living are enormous when a hurricane pummels an area. Every crisis is different but, in the end, all people want and need it to be over. As I write, hurricane season has officially opened and there is a tropical depression whose projected cone has Baton Rouge in the center. Although it is not certain whether this will develop into a hurricane, it is predicted to bring large amounts of rain. Its counterclockwise motion will assuredly bring much precipitation to south Mississippi where I reside.

Residents living near the Gulf Coast are accustomed to standard hurricane warnings and instructions. Tracking maps are widely available and contain information on safe places if needed. Based on studies and experiences with many previous hurricanes, protocols have been developed for precrisis, crisis, and postcrisis circumstances. Steady PSAs on radio and television advise on a storm's progress, direction, and strength. As is the case with any disaster, information is key in reducing losses and returning to normalcy.

COVID-19 has killed hundreds of thousands of people and put many more in hospitals and other medical settings. The final total is far from being determined. Social distancing, wearing of masks, and self-quarantining are among the coping measures until a vaccine can be developed. Each measure must be closely followed because, contrary to the visible havoc a hurricane can wreak, the coronavirus like the plague, influenza, and other medical afflictions is invisible and does not leave readily observable scars on the landscape. However, the fear of contracting the virus exerts immense psychological pressure. In the end, its "costs" (social, economic, etc.) can be just as great or even more devastating than the physical forces of our world. Our understanding of disasters and coping methodologies is enhanced by studies such as those contained in this book.

General, universally valid theories of disasters or their management are neither possible nor feasible. For the best possible practical impact, there is need for developing nuance-laden case studies that touch upon specific disasters, yet presented in a manner as to integrate these with the wider body of literature on disaster management. It is refreshing to see this compendium of case studies taking shape at a time when it most needed. To reassert its timeliness, a substantial number of contributions in it connect with topics related to COVID-19. Case studies on other topics, drawn from a diverse mix of international contexts, make the book worthy of reading for a greater cross section of readership.

I am impressed that the contributions in this volume have impacts far beyond academia attributable, in part, to the nature of the topics and also because of the credentials of the contributors. The contributors come from a diverse range of

disciplinary and practice areas, offering a wide variety of perspectives upon disaster management. They include sociologists, economists, psychologists, geologists, ecologists, technocrats, and business management consultants, among others. This book is significantly interdisciplinary in nature, with management studies as its interlinking element.

The disaster preparedness aspect of the case studies will be of most interest to planners and public policy makers. While case studies in rehabilitation part will be of greatest interest to psychologists, those focusing on the economic impacts of disasters will be of more interest to economists. All the case studies, in one way or another, showcase real-world disaster management practices that will be of immense use in planning for and mitigating impacts.

I earnestly hope this book will be a valuable reference guide for disaster management practitioners and a supplementary educational resource in the graduate courses in related areas.

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