

**Tradition, opportunity, and
viral illness: how the onset
of COVID-19 reshaped
coastal tourism in New
England**

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Presentation Outline

I. Context

II. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Questions and Methods

IV. Case Study Setting

V. Results and Discussion

Conclusion

References

I. Context

Coastal Recreation and Tourism Attractions

**Beach and Maritime
Attractions**

**Cultural and Historic
Attractions**

Market Based Attractions

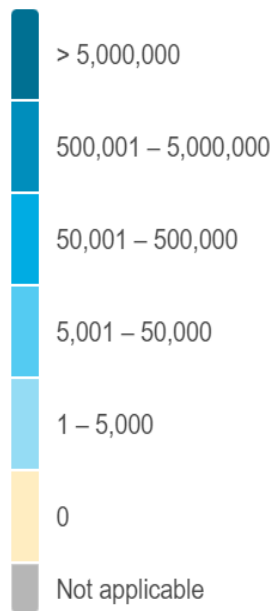
**Nature Based
Attractions**

I. Context

COVID-19 and Global Diffusion

Cases - Total

x



761,402,282

cumulative
cases

6,887,000

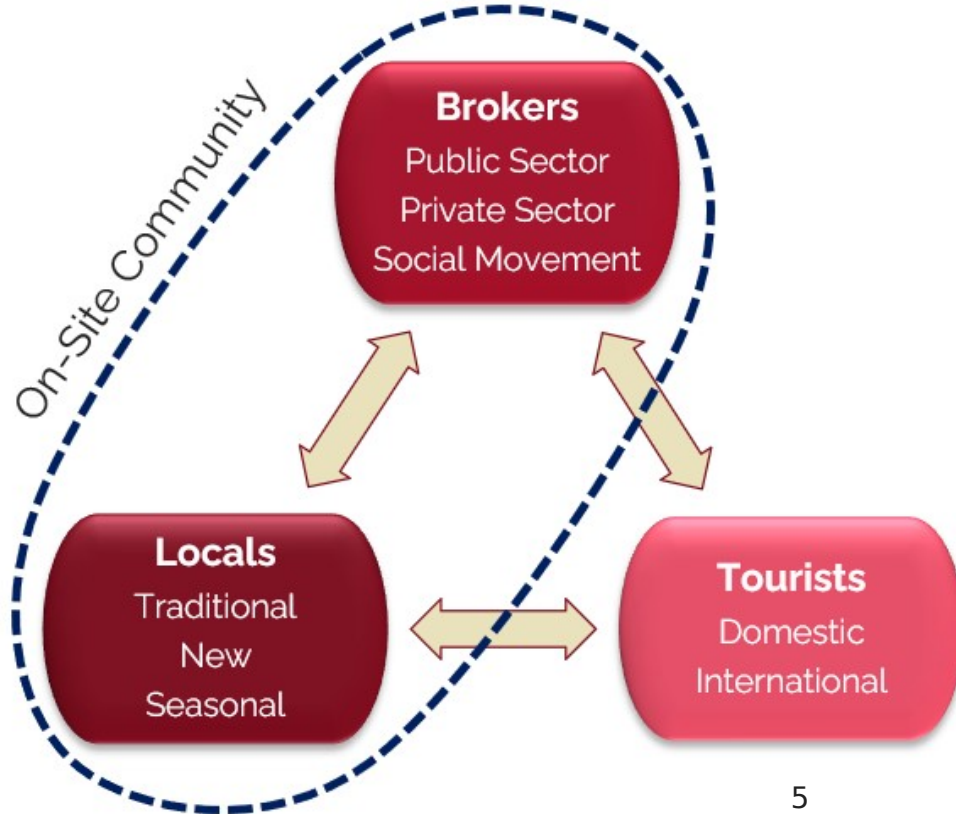
cumulative
deaths

13+ billion
vaccine
doses

administere

II. Conceptual Framework

The Broker/Local/Tourist (BLT) Model



Brokers

- Public Sector
- Private Sector
- Social Movement

Locals

- Traditional
- New
- Seasonal

Tourists

- Domestic
- International

Adapted from Miller and Auyong,
1991, 1998

III. Research Questions and Methods

How did the onset of COVID-19 reshape tourism and recreation in coastal New

Research Question	Methods
How did tourism and recreation systems change during the onset of the pandemic?	Document and Archival Research and Interviews
In what ways did COVID-19 disrupt or reinforce social dynamics amongst tourism stakeholders?	Interviews, Limited Participant Observation

III. Research Questions and Methods

Mixed Qualitative Methodologies

INTERVIEWING

- Elite and Specialized
- Semi-structured

LIMITED PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- Field Notes
- Inductive

ARCHIVAL AND DOCUMENT RESEARCH

- Historic
- Public Data
- Grey Literature

CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Thematic
- Comparative
- Ad Hoc

IV: Case Study Setting

Newburyport, Massachusetts



“Stroll through downtown and admire the history, architecture, window boxes and beauty that fill this picturesque city.”

(Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce & Industry, 'Official Visitor and Resource Guide', 2021-2022. P. 2)

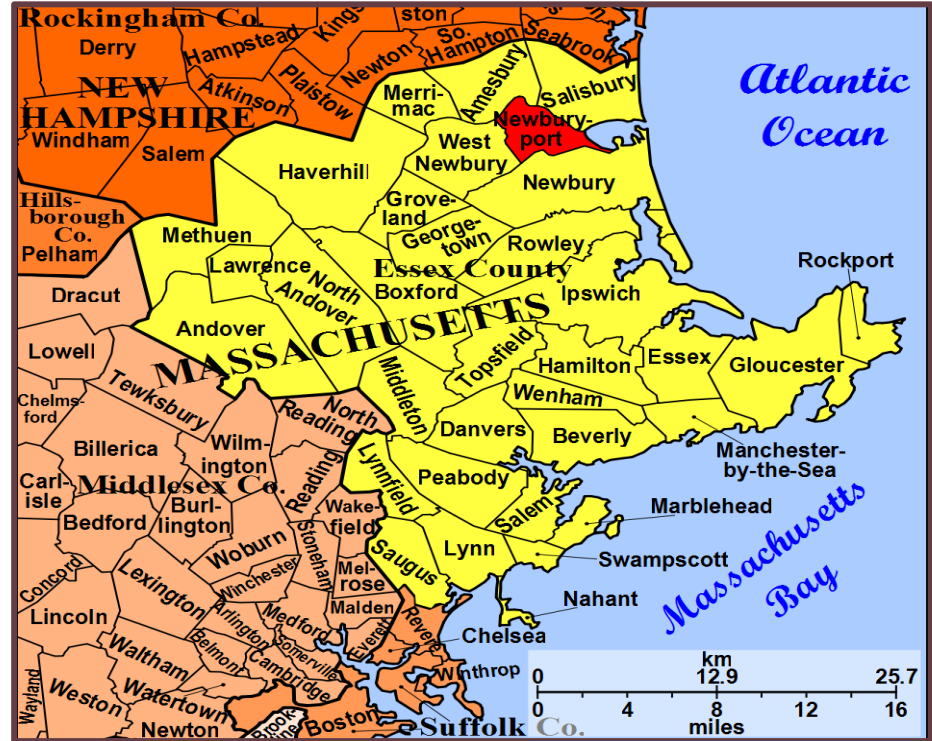
IV: Case Study Setting

Geographic, Natural, and Social Setting

Topography

Geography

Demography



History of Tourism in NEWBURYPORT

Downtown Fire of 1811



Newburyport by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Historic Revival of 1960s



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Major Tourism Destinations and Attractions



**Downtown
Walkability**

Historic Sites

Dining and Shopping

Parks, Beaches, and Nature



**Seasonal
Programming
Highlight:
YANKEE
HOMECOMING**

Custom House Maritime Museum by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

V. Results and Discussion

Overview of Collected Data

BROKER

INTERVIEWS

PUBLIC SECTOR

1. The Mayor
2. The Police Chief
3. The Harbormaster
4. The Park Ranger

PRIVATE SECTOR

1. The Baker
2. The Travel Agent
3. The Boat Captain
4. The City Councilor

SOCIAL MOVEMENT

1. The Librarian
2. The Historian
3. The Actor

LOCAL INTERVIEWS

1. The Professor
2. The Dog Walker
3. The Businessman

TOURIST INTERVIEWS

1. The Boating Tourist (1)
2. The Boating Tourist (2)
3. The Summer Tourist

V. Results and Discussion

Overview of Results

RQ1: How did tourism and recreation systems change during the onset of the pandemic?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | COVID-19 as Catalyst for Tourism Change |
| 2 | Economic and Social Impact |
| 3 | Positive Outcomes and Opportunities |
| 4 | New Usages of Space |
| 5 | Shifting Travel Dynamics |
| 6 | Upsurge in Recreational Boating |

V. Results and Discussion

Overview of Results

RQ2: In what ways did COVID-19 challenge or strengthen BLT stakeholder dynamics?

- | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Community and Government Support |
| 2 | Precautionary Policy Disagreements |
| 3 | Broker-Local Tensions |
| 4 | Access to Outdoor Spaces |
| 5 | Mask Conflicts |

Conclusion

- Tourism and recreation industries struggled through the initial period of COVID-19 BUT the pandemic's impact was not unilaterally negative
- Offered a 'reset' period for brokers, chance to implement structural changes with government and community support
- Certain brokers and industries experienced a surge in business as traditional activities were disrupted
- COVID-19 largely exacerbated pre-existing tensions and dynamics within tourism systems



Photo from [Boat Names by the Boat Name Guy](#) used with permission from the owner

Thank you!

QUESTIONS



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Presentation template adapted from SlidesCarnival

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Appendix A

RQ1: How did tourism and recreation systems change during the onset of the pandemic?

1. COVID-19 as Catalyst for Tourism Change

“COVID has been a reset. We’ve had to rethink the way we’ve been doing things, implementing changes we didn’t have time for... People had been thinking that tourism would change for a while. It had already started before COVID, and now even more so. If COVID taught us anything, it’s to always have backup.” (The Travel Agent, July 19, 2021)

2. Economic and Social Impact

“Businesses lost so much revenue, and right now, everyone is struggling with staffing. It’s a real concern. We had a lot of business turnover. But people need to be patient. It takes longer to recover from these things.” (The Mayor, July 28, 2021)

3. Positive Outcomes and Opportunities

“People used businesses differently during this time...we had an adapting mindset, trying to be smarter. We stopped trying to get back to where we were before. You go in a straight line for a while, and then realize you need to zig and zag.” (The Baker, August 2, 2021)

Appendix A

RQ1: How did tourism and recreation systems change during the onset of the pandemic?

4. New Usages of Space

“We loved getting to eat outside. I don’t remember being able to do that before COVID but it’s been very pleasant.” (Tourist, August 2, 2021)

5. Shifting Travel Dynamics

“FITs are more common and are willing to pay more for a customized private itinerary with more free time. Groups are smaller. Organizations are changing their minimum pricing packages. It costs more but people know they’re getting improved experiences.” (The Travel Agent, July 19, 2021).

6. Upsurge in Recreational Boating

“When COVID hit, everyone had to social distance, and a bunch of people went out and bought a boat. And everyone that bought a boat did not have a captain’s license and had not ever been on the water before. They were pretty clueless, and they didn’t know the proper channels or etiquette. Many of them don’t have a chart plotter or a depth finder, so they can’t even tell where it’s shallow and where it’s not. We’ve witnessed all kinds of incidents over the past 18 months—boats running aground, hitting docks, people hitting the gas instead of the brakes...it’s been unbelievable.” (Boating Tourist, July 13, 2022)

Appendix B

RQ2: In what ways did COVID-19 disrupt or reinforce social dynamics amongst tourism stakeholders?

1. Community and Government Support

“I had to use PPP loans to pay last month’s rent. We got the money, but it wasn’t for the bank, it was for the bills.” (The City Councilor, August 9, 2021)

2. Precautionary Policy Disagreements

“When we were first told by the health director to shut the park, I fought it. The best place for kids to be is outside, in the fresh air, spread apart. They said no, CDC recommends closing it, that’s what we think is right. That’s just part of working in a corporation. You sometimes have to toe the line.” (The Park Ranger, July 27, 2021)

3. Broker-Local Tensions

“I know some people would prefer to not have all these tourists coming to the city right now, but that’s how it goes” (The Mayor, July 28, 2021)

“Those first few months of COVID were very nice, in way. We got to have NBPT to ourselves. There was less traffic, things were quiet. It would have been nice if it stayed that way” (Local, July 14, 2021).

Appendix B

RQ2: In what ways did COVID-19 disrupt or reinforce social dynamics amongst tourism stakeholders?

4. Access to Outdoor Spaces

“When COVID hit, we saw crowds coming to parks. More people started using these spaces...I’m sure there are people from out of town using our parks. We just don’t have the manpower to track that. We’ve had locals, longtime dogwalkers and stuff, complain because they can’t use the parks anymore. They’re too crowded.” (The Park Ranger, July 27, 2021)

5. Mask Conflicts

“The conflict over masks was everywhere. I got calls about mask irresponsibility [outdoors in public] or other places. Even got some calls from the other side, of people who weren’t wearing their masks outside and felt harassed by the glares they were receiving.” (The Professor, July 31, 2021).

“We’ve had some disputes in the last year about people not wearing masks in businesses that require it, or conflicts otherwise stemming from COVID. We try not to get involved and keep the peace, but if a business wants to have a mask rule and customers don’t want to wear them, they need to leave. We’re not going to get into a back and forth. It’s the business’ right.” (The Police Chief, August 28, 2021)