

1 Introduction

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Overtourism is a phenomenon in many popular tourist destinations around the world. In the affected destinations, the excessive number of tourists is causing infrastructure overload, becoming a major burden on the environment, and impacting the quality of life of local people. Against this background, Harald Pechlaner and Elisa Innerhofer, together with Greta Erschbamer, published an edited volume in 2020 that shows a series of possible solutions and management strategies for dealing with overtourism and the various issues overtourism can impose. The success of the book and the developments of recent years have prompted the publisher and the editors of this volume to publish this new edition on the subject.

Recent developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, geopolitical conflicts and inflation have impacts on travel behaviour and tourism. Of these, one of the most significant developments in recent years has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a profound impact on the tourism sector worldwide and hit the industry hard. The considerable growth rates of the years prior to the pandemic ended abruptly. The pandemic-related measures led to an unprecedented decline in international travel. The world came to a standstill, and overtourism was no longer an issue. The impact was devastating as tourism, a major source of income, disappeared in many countries. The pandemic forced the travel industry to adapt and develop new strategies in the short term. Virtual tourism and digital platforms have seen increased use to offer travellers an away-from-home experience. In addition, strict hygiene measures and safety protocols were introduced to regain travellers' confidence.

But this unexpected standstill also allowed destinations to think about and reflect on their future development, their sustainability, their dependence on mass tourism and even the kind of target groups they want to attract.

Sustainability has become a central challenge in today's fast-living world. Discussions on the topic encompass the unprecedented rate of acceleration of the climate crisis and environmental change, pollution and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, tourism as a globally impactful industry has been at the forefront of discussions. In particular, topics such as overtourism, overcrowding and mass tourism developments have received increasing attention recently, amplified by the COVID-19 crisis. What is needed are holistic approaches

and modern, innovative strategies for establishing sustainable and resilient tourism futures. Despite its momentous impacts on the global tourism industry, COVID-19 as a global health crisis represents an opportunity to rethink tourism completely.

The first impression usually is that overtourism is a negative extremity of increasing masses of tourists at particular places. This makes sense, as overcrowded places, overloaded infrastructures or exceeded capacities are not among the implications or effects that destination managers and tourism development strategies aim for. Overtourism certainly needs to be tackled, but the solutions and strategies to deal with overtourism are varied, and there is no “one size fits all” approach or blueprint as every region, destination or attraction has different characteristics, surroundings and stakeholders. Therefore, we argue that overtourism can be a starting point and an engine for transformation processes. In a certain way, all those destinations which are more or less affected by overcrowding and overtourism tendencies should interpret this as a chance to change the circumstances of their tourism model. Integration, collaboration and consensus among stakeholders and decision-makers are vital components of any discussion on more sustainable practices and strategies in the tourism industry. To find a balance between growth and sustainability and to focus on responsible, accountable, reliable and ethical practices, sustainability governance is needed.

About the Book

The volume includes original contributions from renowned authors and scholars in the field. The volume is interdisciplinary in coverage and international in scope. It includes three sections that describe the transition from overtourism to sustainability governance and elaborate perspectives for developing resilient destinations. Each section (Part I, Part II, Part III) will include Excursus (case studies) to show applications of the topics and issues discussed.

The chapters in Part I provide an overview of the current academic discussion on overtourism, outline the developments related to overtourism, present theoretical concepts such as carrying capacities, and illustrate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism as well as the development from overtourism to no-tourism. The section excursus presents two case studies that strengthen the understanding of overtourism.

Part II discusses approaches towards a new sustainability, including a possible new understanding of tourism in a post COVID-19 world. Sustainability is discussed in the context of various aspects, covering current research as well as future trends. The section excursus presents two case studies that describe destinations and their measures and efforts on the pathway to sustainable tourism.

The book continues with a section on strategies to deal with overtourism (Part III). This section goes more deeply into management strategies and governance theories. A wide range of examples taken from various countries explore the interface between tourism, overtourism and sustainability. The section excursus presents a case study focusing on the concept of destination resilience.

The book targets academics and researchers in the fields of tourism, over- and mass-tourism, as well as sustainability governance. It will also be of interest for practitioners. The aim is to give practitioners insights into how tourism flows and how perceived overtourism may be managed to design sustainable and resilient destinations and to avoid negatively impacting the attitudes of residents towards tourists. The book is intended to help make the entire industry more sustainable and resilient and less vulnerable to crises.