

Foreword

Destinations have always been at the forefront of tourism development as it is within such “places” that tourism takes place. The extent to which destinations have been at the vanguard of academic scrutiny is less so, however, albeit with more recent debates on climate change and overtourism and their respective impacts on tourist “places” placing the spotlight of much research activity on the concept of the tourism destination. With so much disruption over the past two decades, be it human-caused or natural, the time is right to re-examine the foundations of the destination, those competitive forces for change, be they internal or external, and those agendas most likely to shape the future development, funding, management and marketing of destinations. Underpinning the need for, and our ability to understand, change is the ability to ask piercing questions that engage all destination stakeholders to think deeply about their collective future. The need to question changing travel trends, environmental, economic and political forces, and the dynamic nature of the tourism industry are critical if we are to successfully navigate the next two decades and develop more competitive, sustainable and resilient destinations that are truly available to all. This new and critical text endeavours to shed light on many issues and trends that will shape the future of destinations, whether it be the need for more accessible destinations, more resident-friendly and less impactful destinations on the environment, or more resilient and regenerative forms of destination development. Underpinning all of these are the digital transformations that remain ongoing with the emergence and exponential growth and impact of AI providing a disruptive shock to the entire tourism ecosystem, well beyond destinations. The search for a future-proofed destination is thus a highly laudable goal of this engaging and rich text, albeit one that may prove elusive in light of the considerable forces at play.

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