

Book Review

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**International Case Studies on Tourism Destination Management
and COVID-19 – Impacts and Responses**

by: Simon Hudson

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The world is facing an unprecedented health, social and economic challenge in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, one that humankind will arguably have to learn to live with in the future. Given this background, the tourism industry is one of the sectors most directly affected by the crisis, especially due to the fact that international air traffic came to a virtual standstill in 2020 and 2021. It was not until 2022 that we entered an initial recovery phase, albeit with an uncertain outcome. Moreover, with the onset of the pandemic, points of interest and attractions were closed, festivals and events of local or transregional importance were cancelled or postponed, and public gatherings involving large numbers of people were prohibited. As a result, the impact of COVID-19 on the global tourism economy was, and for the most part still is, exorbitant and immediate. Travel and touristic routines familiar to us from the period before COVID-19 effectively ceased altogether.

“International Case Studies on Tourism Destination Management and COVID-19 – Impacts and Responses” by Simon Hudson is a textbook that presents 34 international case studies illustrating how destinations and local stakeholders have dealt with the complex challenges and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. The array of destinations presented is extremely diversified and ranges from Aruba to Italy and New Zealand, to name just three examples. The individual case studies are structured according to a common principle: impacts, focusing on the different effects in their varying degrees of intensity upon the respective tourism economy for each destination; responses – addressing the respective coping measures taking various forms; and outcomes, which ultimately represent the results as they currently stand.

Of particular note in this context is Chapter 1, “Ten Key Highlights from the Case Studies”, which pursues a generalising approach i.e. where, in Hudson’s view, key insights lie that apply equally to all the destinations discussed. These include topics such as the call for the improved resilience of destinations – a topic that is receiving considerable hype from the scientific community, much like overtourism. Furthermore,

the fact that cooperation between different stakeholders constitutes a critical success factor for the enhanced coordination, exchange or planning of concerted actions.

The book is not only compelling in terms of content, but also from a didactical point of view, with transfer questions being raised at the end of each chapter, allowing for a meaningful reflection on the content that has been covered. Additionally, readers are provided with video links that offer a valuable change of perspective time and again. By way of example, it is worth mentioning an interview conducted by the renowned investigative journalist and former CNN chief reporter Christiane Amanpour who talks to the Prime Minister of Barbados about the implications of COVID-19 in the Caribbean. Last but not least, striking images invite readers on a stimulating world tour through destinations as diverse as Italy, Iran or Singapore. Given this background, this book serves as an ideal companion within the scope of study programmes in the field of tourism research seeking to heighten awareness of the complex challenges of an increasingly transnational tourism beyond the classic clichés of a growth industry free of boundaries.

There is no book that is so good that it leaves no room for improvement. The following two aspects in particular merit mention by way of example: Ultimately, the discussions concentrate on best-practice examples, which act as benchmarks to a certain extent. However, as reviewers we firmly believe that it is possible to learn from mistakes and from failed strategies – in the sense of lessons learned. Of course, this is in addition to the fact that the socio-economic, political and destination-specific conditions in the selected destinations differ significantly: A city state like Singapore has to contend with very different structures, processes and challenges than a territorial state such as Canada. Especially since COVID-19 policies in autocratic states like China are usually very different from those in plural democracies such as Italy. Regrettably, no indication is given concerning the criteria according to which the destinations were selected. Hence, it is somewhat surprising that “tourism heavyweights” such as France or Spain were not included as case studies.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has been raging since late 2019, continues to pose a paradigm shift for the international tourism industry. Viewed from a global perspective, the pandemic also stands for intensifying competition between political systems: Liberal-democratic societies contrast with autocratic-dictatorial systems, all of which significantly shape the framework conditions of the respective national tourism industry. Contrary to the opinion of some academics, the pandemic has not yet passed, even though it currently seems to be abating and less dangerous virus variants are circulating, hopefully leading to milder disease progressions. In this context, the central question ought to be what the tourism industry and those responsible for decision-making have learned from the experience for the future and what part will hygiene, infection and health protection take in the destinations in the future. For the readership of the *International Journal of Tourism Policy* in particular, it would have been interesting to learn more about the influence of the respective tourism industry on national tourism policy and the responsible decision-makers. After all, it is the elected officials at various political levels who determine the framework conditions for the industry. In this context, the questions that come to the fore are, for example, what role do the individual sub-sectors play, such as the hotel and hospitality industry or the cultural sector? What status does the tourism industry enjoy from the local to the regional to the national level? To what extent was lobbying in tourism or tourism lobbying successful, and when was it not? Where did tourism policy mandate holders act as gate-openers or as industry

advocates? Given the pandemic with its far-reaching implications for the tourism industry, can there even be a tourism policy that deserves to be taken seriously? These and similar questions should be addressed in more depth in a second edition, which we would very much welcome. All in all, this is a book that is eminently worth reading and one that we hope will find a wide readership.

Book Review

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Festival and Event Tourism: Building Resilience and Promoting Sustainability

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In the field of event management and tourism, an increasing number of researchers during the last decade have focused on issues related to sustainable practices that can result in more positive and less negative impacts on host destinations. Moreover, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of event resilience through times of crisis has attracted research interest. The current book sets the above agenda and presents different approaches by various contributions that are either based on secondary or primary data and relevant literature. The book is divided into four parts, which are briefly analysed in the following section.

Chapter 1 raises security issues, travel restrictions/barriers and technology related to the goal of achieving destination and event resilience. Through a literature review ranging from the early 2000s to the present, the chapter highlights the importance of proper risk management in various categories (physiological, physical, performance and economic risks) as a tool to achieve sustainability for destinations. Chapter 2 presents interesting secondary data to highlight the need to place sustainability and resilience at the centre of future strategies and a respective framework is proposed. The aim of this framework is to strike a balance between the growth of the event industry and safety and security concerns. Chapter 3 contains an analysis of a case study from Trinidad and Tobago and illustrates the possible exploitation of a cultural music festival for rural development. Subsequently, Chapter 4 presents a comparison of mega-and small-scale events to examine the potential of the latter for promoting the sustainability of host destinations. The authors then analyse a wide range of positive and negative impacts of small-scale events through an examination of the relevant literature. Finally, they suggest that small-scale events have the potential to promote sustainability. However, there is a necessity for holistic approaches in the long term, especially when festivals increase in number. The term 'cultural sustainability' is discussed in Chapter 5, where the authors conduct research using semi-structured interviews with tourist guides who have relevant experience with festivals. Despite the respective limitations, their research reveals the potential of festivals for promoting the preservation of cultures. In addition, as stated by

the authors, festivals have not been fully exploited by destinations in terms of cultural sustainability.

Overall, Part 2 presents a discussion on green events and festivals, including relevant sustainability policies and practices. Specifically, Chapter 6 includes well-documented research analysis related to sustainability and respective strategies for a music festival in Iceland. The authors propose a range of strategies that can lead to resilience and sustainability, including increased ticket costs to address the carbon footprint, guidance of the audience in terms of festival environmental policies, less plastic products, and effective waste management. Another large music festival, 'Rock in Rio' in Brazil, provides the case study discussed in Chapter 7, including its policies and actions based on the triple bottom line (economy, society, and environment) made by the organisational team. The authors conclude that the current approach is quite successful for both the festival and the destination and is welcomed by the audience. The last chapter of Part 2 (Chapter 8) contains a discussion on the interesting term 'green absorptive capacity'. This is presented through an analysis of a case study of Malaysia and Singapore. The authors argue that there is a positive relationship between green absorptive capacity and green innovative performance at event management-based SMEs.

The first chapter of Part 3 (Chapter 9) presents a case study of an event that aims to develop an inclusive community. Extensive information is presented about practices and lessons learned from 'Casual Day with Persons with Disabilities', which is a philanthropic event located in South Africa. The authors propose a conceptual framework for inclusive community development that includes involvement, inclusion and empowerment awareness, and participation. In Chapter 10 data from two different periods of the 'Boom Festival', which is a cultural festival located in the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova are presented. Using a quantitative research approach and statistical analyses, the authors compare the perception of inhabitants in two different periods (2009 and 2021), revealing several differences. As a result, the issues of festival evolution and the perspective of relevant impacts are derived. Chapter 11 highlights the potential of events in terms of increasing tourism flows to rural areas. By analysing secondary data from three different festivals in South Africa, the authors argue that community events can evolve into Hallmark annual events that attract a large number of tourists and contribute significantly to local economies. The final chapter of Part 3 contains a discussion on the links between sports events and heritage tourism. The focus is on the 'Kirkpinar Oil Wrestling Festival' in Turkey, which has been approved as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The analysis of the main elements of the event culminates in the statement that events can be exploited as a tool for the preservation of traditions and elements of ancestors' everyday life.

The final part of the book begins with a focus on women and festivals in Chapter 13. In this chapter, the author states that women are placed at the centre of Indian festivals and religion, following the presentation of qualitative data and content analysis gathered from several festivals and social media. In Chapter 14, the contribution of festivals and events to destination branding is analysed. Relevant literature is presented by the authors about factors such as brand, awareness, destination branding, and brand value. The authors argue that annual events are more likely to support destination branding because of their repetitiveness. The final chapter of the book presents a discussion on the use of technology for managing crowds more effectively during a religious festival in India. The authors present five ICT-based solutions that can be used to manage festival

crowds and argue that these practices can have a positive contribution toward more effective management of large audiences.

Overall, *'Festival and Event Tourism: Building Resilience and Promoting Sustainability'* is a useful learning resource for event management professionals, tourism practitioners, students, and respective stakeholders. The book is consistent with its main goal of focusing on sustainable practices in event tourism and destinations. As stated by the editors of the book (and revealed by the chapters), the book highlights practices and strategies for recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, both for events and tourism destinations that implement event tourism. Additional emphasis on the use of technologies in practices for recovering from COVID-19 and on further use of primary data would have contributed better to the core subject. However, the issues discussed and the reviewed literature in this book set the necessary research and implementation agendas for the post-pandemic period.