Over the last two years, overtourism has gained relevance and importance as subject of study. On the one hand, the impacts of overcrowded destinations and poor tourism planning have brought back the attention of researchers on the implications of tourism development for the local community. On the other hand, the adoption of conjunctural solutions to manage tourism pressure at the destination level suggest that there are still challenges in effectively mitigating social and environmental impacts of tourism.

*Overtourism: Issues, Realities and Solutions* is a timely publication that acknowledges global, regional and local trends in contemporary tourism. The array of conceptual insights and range of case studies provided in this edited contribution provide a much-needed international perspective, with insights from established mature destinations as well as emerging ones. The editors and the chapter authors shed light on the redefinition of overtourism in light of the existing body of knowledge and provide empirical evidence on challenges and solutions adopted at destination level. The book also attempts to shift the argument of destination planning beyond the hegemonic pro-growth rhetoric. Nevertheless, the solutions provided reiterate established literature on tourism public policy and the importance of collaborative planning (Hall, 2008).

There are at least three important aspects worth addressing about this edited book. First, the authors tend to rely too much on the existing body of knowledge to conceptualize overtourism. This reinforces the argument of Dredge (2017, n.p.) of overtourism being “old wine in new bottles” and “the need to think twice about how we engage in the ‘overtourism’ debate” (emphasis in the original). More importantly, it leaves important questions on neighbourhood and local community counter-action unanswered. Arguably, the field of tourism should seek to look back again at other disciplines and theorize overtourism from a postdisciplinary inquiry.
Second, the empirical evidence in the case studies section of the book is wide but appears to be built upon different notions of overtourism. This leads to a series of conceptual shortcomings that can be partly justified by the novelty of the phenomenon and the need to think beyond the field of tourism. That being said, there are chapters that overlook the importance of defining embedded stakeholder relations between visitors, residents and the destination. This, in turn, makes some parts of the book rather descriptive, without a proper analytical appraisal of overtourism as a complex phenomenon.

Third, and more importantly for the readership of this journal, the relationship between overtourism and heritage tourism is limited to the issues of tourist commodification and loss of authenticity. Undeniably, the scope of this edited book is beyond the sub-field of heritage tourism, yet empirical evidence on the degree of destination vulnerability and overtourism from a heritage perspective is not fully addressed. In particular, the evidence from historic city areas in the case studies section acknowledges overcrowding as an issue from a tourist perspective, but it does not corroborate the mounting evidence of overtourism being perceived as a threat to heritage among residents, particularly in European destinations.

There are different points of convergence between the chapters of this edited contributions and the emerging debates on limits of acceptable change and tourism degrowth. The book acknowledges the dominance of growth-focused mentality within Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and calls for a stronger shift towards destination management and long-term planning. In addition, it emphasizes on overtourism being a predominantly political issue, with destination governance representing a highly significant challenge. Moreover, it raises awareness of overtourism exacerbating the power imbalance between tourists and communities. Finally, yet more importantly, the authors stress the likely inaction in addressing overtourism at destination level, with local authorities being more concerned about the economic benefits of tourism than the environmental and social repercussions of market-driven growth.

Overall, Overtourism: Issues, Realities and Solutions is an ideal reading for undergraduate and professionals in tourism planning and destination management who are interested to know more about the topic. However, the ultimate solution to the emerging problem of overtourism is not fully provided. The book provides established and emerging insights from the theory to enhance an alternative thinking, yet it falls short in giving actual guidance for the case studies. That being said, the final remarks on the need of empowering the local community and enhancing responsible tourism behaviour through education are much welcome and should be at the centre of current and future debates on overtourism.
References
