Book review

Smart Cities and Tourism: Co-creating experiences, challenges and opportunities

In recent years, cities have been used as real-life laboratories to observe and manage urban processes like traffic movement, tourist spatio-temporal behavior or emissions using connected digital technologies. Such smart cities aim to make them cleaner, more efficient, safer and more sustainable for residents and visitors alike. Tourism is frequently overlooked in discussions about smart cities, typically being mentioned only as a facet of urban mobility. However, urban planning and development, as well as tourism destination management, have much to learn from each other. In a concept derived from smart cities, smart tourism can be understood as a form of tourism that aggregates data from various sources and analyzes it to enhance economic efficiency, sustainability and the quality of experiences (Gretzel *et al*., 2015). But smart tourism destinations are not just soulless, networked agglomerations of technological infrastructure trimmed for efficiency. Apart from the necessary technological components, it is critical that involved actors have a smart tourism mindset. Without intelligent governance of cities with enthusiastic stakeholders and a participatory design of the smart city, the concept cannot work. Boes *et al*. (2016) coined the term soft smartness, which must exist alongside hard smartness to achieve smartness at the destination level. With the book "Smart Cities and Tourism: Co-creating experiences, challenges and opportunities" by Buhalis, Taheri and Rahimi, there is finally a companion that comprehensively addresses this nexus between smart cities and smart tourism from various perspectives and through numerous examples. Overall, this book contains 12 chapters subdivided into three parts: (1) Smart Cities: Concept and Issues, (2) Smart Tourism and Smart Tourists and (3) Smart Cities and Smart Tourism Destinations, which is also the biggest part of the book.

This first part addresses the concepts and principles of smart cities. Glebova and Lewicki offer a theoretical framework for smart cities, emphasizing digital transformation in urban areas, their main drivers and their impacts in Chapter 1. Dubai is examined here in more detail in a case study. In the second chapter, Çeltek provides a comprehensive overview of smart technologies in tourism and hospitality, discussing current trends such as IoT, recognition technology, AR and VR, robotics and blockchain. Chapter 3, by Correia and Teixeira, presents an overview of the evolution of the concept of smart cities, offering an insightful tabular perspective on the development from Smart City 1.0 to Smart City 3.0. Glebova and Desbordes, in Chapter 4, focus on a niche as they delve into smart sports in smart cities, categorizing participants as active users, athletes and fans. They analyze the interaction between various sports and urban infrastructures within this context.

The second part of the book delves into smart tourism and smart tourists. Romero-Dexeus *et al*. concentrate on the role of governance in an innovative ecosystem, providing insights with the Spanish project example of DIGITUR on how urban governments can create value for residents and local organizations. In Chapter 6, smart tourism expert Tomáš Gajdošík explores

the role of the demand by addressing smart tourists and their behavior in cities. Using empirical data, he demonstrates how tourists use or do not use digital technologies, their data-sharing habits and the role of sustainability. Chapter 7 by Volcek, Buhalis and Law discusses the central role of smart infrastructure and personalization in designing tourist experiences, resulting in a conceptual framework for co-created or co-destructed tourism experiences based on smart city infrastructure.

The third part showcases various case studies worldwide, starting with chapter 8 on Ljubljana by Johnson and Rickly, focusing particularly on stakeholder collaboration. In Chapter 9, Amore *et al*. use Milan, Italy, as a case study to illustrate the long-term perspective on understanding smart city governance. They detail the different phases of meta governance and smart governance over several decades. Chapter 10 by Machado and Martins de Almeida, using Madeira Island as an example, provides empirical data and proposes Key Performance Indicators for measuring a smart island. Chapter 11 by Regalado-Pezúa *et al*. uses the Barranco district in Lima as a case study for a smart city strategy to improve residents' quality of life. Finally, Çakar in the concluding chapter compares the cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Vienna and London using the six A's (attractions, access, amenities, available packages, activities and ancillary services), examining the innovativeness and smartness of services and facilities in these four European cities for residents and visitors. The book is framed and rounded off with an introduction and conclusion by the curators.

The collection provides a comprehensive overview of the interplay between smart cities and smart tourism destinations. It is noteworthy that it incorporates both technical and human perspectives, illustrated through various examples from cities around the globe. The second part of the book, in particular, contains highly recommended contributions. Although the case studies are presented in gray boxes in some chapters, the audience of teachers and students, as mentioned in the introduction, could be better catered to. This might be achieved through additional resources or a digital supplement, which would be particularly fitting for this subject matter. The overall legibility of the illustrations and print in this book could benefit from improvement. Consequently, this book is primarily highly recommended for researchers who are focused on the intersection of smart cities and smart tourism, as it provides an extensive exploration of definitions and connections within this field and is a must-read for everyone involved in the topic.

The nexus of smart cities and smart tourism destinations, as explored in this collection, highlights a major trend for the future of tourism. By emphasizing the crucial role of rapid technological advances without forgetting the human-centric perspective, it helps to reshape travel experiences worldwide.

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References

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