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# 16 Conclusions

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## Introduction

The focus of this volume, as its predecessor (Butler and Suntikul, 2010), has been the effects on tourism arising from political changes. Clearly tourism is not the only element of a society or economy that is affected by such changes, indeed, tourism may avoid impacts from many political decisions. However, one can argue that tourism is often affected by political change in ways apparently not envisaged by those bringing about such changes, which may reflect either ignorance about the way in which tourism responds to political change or a willingness to ignore such impacts on tourism and dismiss them as insignificant. The chapters here focus mostly upon identifying and interpreting impacts on tourism of specific political changes, recognising that the impacts may take a variety of forms, positive and negative, and may, in turn, result in further political response and change. The impacts of indigenisation involvement in planning noted by Gill and Williams may have long term political effects throughout much of Canada, and changes in political control and ideology, as Sofield and Suntikul note in their chapters dealing with China and its neighbours, may affect tourism as well as political attitudes at a global scale. The way in which global political ideology has changed over the past half century or longer is discussed by Simmons, who traces the emergence of the 'neo-liberal' viewpoint which has dominated political thought during that period. He notes how this philosophy or ideology relates to the paradigm of sustainability that in turn has dominated tourism policies and planning for the past thirty years. It is made clear in his discussion that the effect of transformations in global attitudes may emerge gradually rather than in a revolutionary fashion but have significant impacts upon many aspects of state economies as well as on the social realities of their communities. Tourism has become integrated ever further into the globalisation process and tied inextricably with currency exchange rates, transportation infrastructure, political trade agreements and the migration of people. As the implications of a neo-liberal viewpoint become even more widely adopted, the continuing effects on tourism will become even more important and dominant. Thus change in the dominant political ideology at the global level can have as significant effects on tourism as dramatic and sometimes violent change at the national or local level.

The first volume on this topic covered political changes and their ramifications for tourism over a considerably longer period than this volume, and included some

global events of major significance such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the associated disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the USSR, and the end of Apartheid in South Africa. The shorter period, which is the focus of this volume, nevertheless also has witnessed some events of major political importance as discussed in the preceding chapters. The Arab Spring and the rise of ISIS in the Arab World has had major repercussions for global security and peace, let alone implications for tourism in particular. Major areas in the Middle East and North Africa especially, have seen tourist numbers and their associated expenditures decline, if not disappear entirely, with severe ramifications for affected communities and economies. On the other hand, in a positive vein, violence has ended in other areas such as Ireland and Timor Leste, and tourism has begun to reappear or to be redeveloped in such places. There have been changes in the way that various populations have become involved in tourism and the appearance of new destinations in the form of new countries, and as yet undetermined effects on tourism of referenda in the United Kingdom and Europe.

It is, perhaps, appropriate initially to examine the differing circumstances in which political change has taken place and the ways in which these have affected tourism, using the chapters in this volume as examples of the various changes that can and have taken place. In recent years the phrase 'regime change' has frequently resounded throughout the media, following conflicts in Iraq, Libya and Syria in particular, but there are many more forms of political change, some that receive far less attention but which may be of equal significance in terms of their impacts on tourism. Tourism, like many forms of human behaviour, tends to take place primarily when security is guaranteed. There are a myriad of opportunities and different destinations for tourists to visit throughout the world and few potential visitors are likely to visit locations in which their physical safety is potentially at risk, even more so when their families are involved. Thus a peaceful and conflict-free destination is almost taken for granted when potential tourists are considering the options available to them for their holidays. While settings that have experienced war and conflict but are now at peace provide attractive venues for tourists as we have noted elsewhere (Butler and Suntikul, 2013), visitation for holiday purposes to places that are experiencing conflict is rare and confined to a very small number of individuals with particular traits and desires for thrills and risk. This volume has been concerned with the aftermath of such events and the more peaceful re-arrangements of political control, as these circumstances often create new destinations and new experiences for tourists, although that result may have been far from the minds of those involved in the new arrangements at the time.

## Types of political change

### Violent regime change

We have already mentioned regime change as one manifestation of political change, and while that may be the end result, the process by which such circumstances come into being can take many forms. Conflict and violence, as discussed by Tomazos in the case of Egypt, is the form which attracts most media attention and which