13 The Demise of Tourism?

Introduction

This chapter investigates the possibility that the tourism industry will significantly change in the future. Some issues are presented in the realm of plausible futures, meaning that they may not happen, however they are a possibility and in the event they do occur, the tourism industry should be prepared. Topics discussed include understanding the reliance on natural resources in the travel, hospitality and event sectors, global population growth, food security and the moral considerations associated with certain tourist experiences. Pandemics, including COVID-19 are mentioned in Chapters 2, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 14, so will not be discussed further in this chapter. The case study focuses on war and the effects relating to tourism.

Plausible futures

Plausible futures fit within the realm of future studies and are considered an under-researched area in tourism (Sousa *et al.*, 2024). Authors such as Amelung and Viner (2006), Walton (2008), Bergman *et al.* (2010), Yeoman (2013) and Postma *et al.* (2017) have all undertaken research in this area and advocate plausible futures theory. Walton (2008) suggested the plausible futures concept is the possibility of something occurring, but which may not happen. Strickland (2012) and Yeoman (2012) described it as a plurality of futures, which is not necessarily a predicted trend, making it an ideal structure for discussing global events and concepts of the future. This approach gives structure to the discussion and allows the authors the ability to explore ideas that seem possible; however, they may be rejected in the future. The reasons for not coming to fruition may be due to cost, changing technologies, an absolute need to find other solutions, changes in best practices, changes in public opinion, government intervention and environmental concerns. Although, deliberately, no solutions are given here, the direction of future research is suggested for scenario planning as discussed in Chapter 14.