The rise of political instability and terrorism necessitates a reassessment of various tourism policy issues. This special issue focuses upon evaluating the impact of terrorism political conflicts and other types of instability on the tourism sector and considers the practical implications for countries of being adversely affected by these episodes.

Over the last decades, tourism has been adversely affected by a wide range of problems such as economic crises, social conflicts, political instability, terrorism and wars. The US 9/11 terrorist attack, the Arab Spring, the rise of Islamic State, political instability in Eastern Europe are examples of events that are seriously affecting international tourism flows. Each of these, and their consequences on tourism, confirm the need to understand more about potential mitigating policy interventions in different contexts.

As others have noted, political stability is extremely important in determining the image of destinations in tourist generating regions (Hall, 1996). Indeed, safety is one of the priorities when consumers make travel decisions; if they perceive a risk of injury or death, or a highly stressful situation, they will avoid that destination. When violence becomes widespread and prolonged, governments in tourist origin countries will advise against travelling to those destinations and commercial operators will cancel tours because of insufficient bookings and for fear of liability suits, and will promote other destinations instead (Neumayer, 2014). A further problem is that terrorist attacks and political disruption can damage infrastructure relevant to the tourism industry (Llorca-Vivero, 2008) and may damage or destroy national treasures (Yapsahay, 2013).

In spite of its relevance, the effects of instability on tourism is still under researched. This special issue provides examples of different approaches to understanding and
addressing the impacts of this phenomenon on tourism. The articles contribute to, and draw upon, tourism economics, tourism management and leisure studies policy frameworks reflecting the holistic nature of the effect of instability on tourism. Additionally, the articles provide discussion of the policy implications and evaluate the impact of policies undertaken to deal with instability. Finally the articles encourage further research and identify potentially fruitful areas of enquiry.

Elshaer and Saad in “Political instability and tourism in Egypt: exploring survivors’ attitudes after downsizing” explore the impact of job insecurity on the attitudes of survivors in downsized hotels and tourism companies in Egypt after the instability generated by the Arab Spring in 2011. Moreover, the article provides relevant discussion of the implications of their findings. Farajat, Liu and Pennington-Gray in “Addressing travel writers’ role as risk brokers: the case of Jordan” analyse the role of travel writers as risk brokers during unstable times, considering Jordan as the case study. The article reveals that safety emerges as one of the major issues that contemporary travel articles were concerned about, and they also discuss the importance for tourism policy-makers of risk management. Basnyat, Lovelock and Carr in “Political instability and trade union practices in Nepalese hotels” collect data through interviews to study the effect of instability on trade union practices in the Nepalese tourism industry by examining how the roles of trade unions alter after changes caused by political instability.

Afonso-Rodríguez in “Evaluating the dynamics and impact of terrorist attacks on tourism and economic growth for Turkey” provides an up-to-date analysis of the Tourism Led Growth Hypothesis (TLGH) in Turkey but with the value added of considering information on terrorist attacks. The author uses different econometric specifications of cointegrating regressions to quantify the impact of terrorism on the relationship between tourism demand and economic growth, including the novelty approach of a threshold cointegrating regression. Deep and Johnston in “Travel advisories—destabilising diplomacy in disguise” present an interesting conceptual paper to create a destabilisation-to-re-stabilisation sequence on the use of travel advisory as an attempt to politically and/or economically destabilise the developing-nation destination through disruption of tourism. Finally, Ivanov, Gavrilina, Webster and Ralko in “Impacts of political instability on the tourism industry in Ukraine” collect questionnaires completed by hotel managers and travel agency managers to learn about how the tourism industry in Ukraine has been hit by the political instability in the country and how it has reacted to mitigate its negative consequences.

To sum up, the special issue includes six papers exploring a wide range of themes related to instability and tourism using innovative approaches and considering different countries for their research. Precisely, countries such as Turkey, Ukraine, Jordan, Egypt and Nepal are under analysis. The articles published in this special issue reveal that the authors for this special issue are affiliated with universities in the USA, New Zealand, Spain, Egypt, Jordan and Bulgaria. All selected papers underwent a rigorous double-blind review process before final revision and acceptance.
References:


Yap, G. & Saha S. (2013). Do political instability, terrorism and corruption have deterring effects on tourism development even in the presence of UNESCO heritage? A cross-country panel estimate, Tourism Analysis, 18, 587—599.