To cite this article: Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. and van Zyl, C. (2025), “Urban tourism research – the future is interdisciplinary”, *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 11(1), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20565607.2025.2520670>

**Urban tourism research – the future is interdisciplinary**

Professor J. Andres Coca-Stefaniak

Editor-in-chief

International Journal of Tourism Cities

School of Business, Operations and Strategy

University of Greenwich

United Kingdom

a.coca-stefaniak@gre.ac.uk

Professor Cinà van Zyl

President

International Tourism Studies Association

Department of Applied Management

University of South Africa

South Africa

vzylc@unisa.ac.za

The first half of 2025 has been rather eventful in geopolitical terms. Tourism has not been spared. In March, Professor Alastair M. Morrison, one of the most renown scholars in tourism and hospitality, died unexpectedly. Professor Morrison was the founding editor of this journal, the *International Journal of Tourism Cities* (IJTC) in 2016 and the co-founder of the International Tourism Studies Association (ITSA) in 2006. As a scholar, a study by Ioannidis et al. (2019) ranked Professor Morrison in the top 2% of scientists globally with an earlier study (Ryan, 2005) placing Professor Morrison among the world’s five most prolific contributors to the academic journals in tourism and hospitality management. More than 200 scholarly articles, conference proceedings, numerous books and over 50 research monographs, testify to this with a lasting legacy continuing to shape generations of students, scholars and practitioners across continents. The impact of Professor Morrison’s research is reflected in 30,000 citations to date, an h-index of 91, and an i10-index of 279. Beyond his scholarly achievements, Professor Morrison was a wonderful colleague, a generous and insightful mentor, and a visionary who believed passionately in connecting scholars and practitioners in tourism and hospitality around the world through impactful research and innovative practical solutions to global issues. This vision, which continues with ITSA today, also permeates the editorial philosophy of this journal.

This issue of the *International Journal of Tourism Cities* marks a new chapter in our journal’s history. Following on from a six-year period under the auspices of Emerald Publishing, where IJTC rose to an Scimago Journal Ranking of 0.77 at Q1 and a CiteScore (Scopus) value of 5.9 at Q1 in 2023, IJTC moved in 2025 to the Taylor & Francis (T&F) Group, which includes the Routledge brand, with ambitious plans for a long-term publishing partnership and opportunities for IJTC to capitalise on synergies within T&F’s family of leading tourism and urban management journals, which include, in no particular order, *Regional Studies*; *Current Issues in Tourism*; *Tourism Geographies*; the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*; the *Journal of Tourism and Travel Marketing*; the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*; *European Planning Studies; Urban Geography; Cities & Health,* and many others.

Although the *International Journal of Tourism Cities* has experienced a steady and rather admirable rise in the rankings over a relatively short time, it remains a relative newcomer to the world of tourism research publishing. It is also the only Scopus-listed peer-reviewed journal in the world focusing on urban tourism. However, in spite of this niche focus on one form of tourism, the *International Journal of Tourism Cities* remains committed to an inclusive view of the complexities faced by urban tourism destinations. This philosophical stance on how tourism cities should be understood is reflected in the publications on urban tourism that key members of IJTC’s editorial team have contributed since the journal’s launch (see, for instance, Maxim et al., 2024; Morrison and Coca-Stefaniak, 2022; Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison, 2022; or Morrison and Maxim, 2021).

Urban tourism research has reached a stage of maturity, ideally placed to embark on a journey from being merely multidisciplinary to becoming increasingly interdisciplinary in nature. This would capitalise not only on a new paradigm percolating the strategic priorities of public research funding, but also a growing commitment from world-class universities to interdisciplinarity as an approach to scholarly enquiry that may deliver truly global solutions (Gerrard, 2025). Tourism has traditionally built on theory generated by other academic disciplines (Tribe, 2010) to deliver further advancements in knowledge and continues to do so today (Buckley et al., 2025). On a parallel front, there is the exciting complexity of urban environments, which have been often studied adopting single-discipline perspectives, with novel approaches such as living lab research attempting to deliver more integrative interdisciplinary solutions (see, for instance, Rizzo et al., 2021). ITSA and the *International Journal of Tourism Cities* seek to embrace, nurture and provide academic leadership for an interdisciplinary view of tourism cities, the local-global challenges they face, and the unique opportunities urban tourism destinations offer for collaboration across research disciplines as well as geographical boundaries. In the spirit of the original Agora of Ancient Greece, this journal seeks to provide bridges in a world where walls and polarisation appear to increasingly prevail. It also provides a global forum for researchers and key decision makers from different countries to meet as equals to discuss, innovate and develop new knowledge with tourism and cities as catalysts for a new vision of the world for future generations to thrive.

**References**

Buckley, R., Kozak, M., Wen, J. & Cooper, M.A. (2025), “Revitalizing tourism research”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *112*, p.103946, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2025.103946>

Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. & Morrison, A.M. (2022), Cities. In: D. Buhalis (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*. Edward Elgar Publ., Cheltenham and Massachusetts. ISBN 9781800377479, pp. 493-496, <https://doi:10.4337/9781800377486>

Gerrard, C. (2025), *Is an interdisciplinary research approach key to tackling global challenges?*, <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2025-02-25-expert-comment-interdisciplinary-research-approach-key-tackling-global-challenges>

Ioannidis, J.P.A., Baas, J., Klavans, R. & Boyack K.W. (2019), “A standardized citation metrics author database annotated for scientific field”, PLoS Biol 17(8): e3000384. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000384>

Maxim, A.M., Morrison, A.M., Day J. & Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. (eds.) (2024), *Handbook of Sustainable Urban Tourism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar (publ.), <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803926742>

Morrison, A.M. & Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. (eds.) (2022), *Routledge Handbook of Tourism Cities*, London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-12-2021-290>

Morrison, A.M. & Maxim, C. (2021), *World Tourism Cities: a systematic approach to urban tourism*, London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003111412>

Rizzo, A., Habibipour, A. & Ståhlbröst, A. (2021), “Transformative thinking and urban living labs in planning practice: a critical review and ongoing case studies in Europe”, *European Planning Studies*, *29*(10), pp.1739-1757, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2021.1911955>

Ryan, C. (2005), “The ranking and rating of academics and journals in tourism research”, *Tourism Management*, *26*(5), pp.657-662, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.05.001>

Tribe, J. (2010), “Tribes, territories and networks in the tourism academy”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(1), pp.7-33, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.05.001>