

# Stories of Practice: Tourism Policy and Planning

*Edited by*  
**Dianne Dredge and John Jenkins**

STORIES OF PRACTICE:  
TOURISM POLICY AND PLANNING

# New Directions in Tourism Analysis

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Although tourism is becoming increasingly popular as both a taught subject and an area for empirical investigation, the theoretical underpinnings of many approaches have tended to be eclectic and somewhat underdeveloped. However, recent developments indicate that the field of tourism studies is beginning to develop in a more theoretically informed manner, but this has not yet been matched by current publications.

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# Stories of Practice: Tourism Policy and Planning

Edited by

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ASHGATE

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**Richard W. Butler** is Emeritus Professor in the Strathclyde Business School at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. He trained as a geographer at Nottingham and Glasgow Universities, and for 30 years taught tourism and recreation at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, where he was Chair of the Department of Geography. He moved to the University of Surrey in 1997 as Professor of Tourism and Deputy Head (Research) of the School of Management, and then to Strathclyde University in 2005 as Professor in the former Hospitality and Tourism Management Department (originally the Scottish Hotel School). Dick is a former President of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism, and a past President of the Canadian Association for Leisure Studies. He has published 15 books on tourism, many articles in journals and chapters in books, and serves on the editorial boards of several tourism journals. In retirement he is living in St Andrews, where he is helping accidentally to remodel some of the golf courses.

**Alan Clarke** works at the University of Pannonia in Veszprém, Hungary. He began his long association with tourism as a travel representative in Greece, before investing in a bar and a restaurant in Corfu. He subsequently worked for South Yorkshire County Council and once again found himself involved in tourism when the county was omitted from an English Tourism publication (unjustly). The resultant tourism audit demonstrated just what South Yorkshire can offer! He has developed Masters programmes at the Universities of Sheffield, North London and Derby and successfully guided 25 PhD students to complete their doctorates. He has conducted research and consultancy projects in over 20 countries and values the challenge of understanding how others perform tourism. He championed the importance of culture in the original sustainable tourism debates and still maintains this commitment to peoples and their cultures. His research interests span the areas of tourism policy and planning, cultural tourism and partnership development.

This is currently focused in a benchmarking project for the Assembly of European Regions – which will encompass 270 regions from 33 countries and 13 interregional organisations. He is currently enjoying his second fatherhood – but doubts his ability to introduce cricket to Hungary despite the natural (inherited) talents of his two sons.

**Dianne Dredge** is Associate Professor in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Southern Cross University. Dianne has 20 years experience as a tourism planner in Queensland, New South Wales, Canada, Mexico and China. Her work has included conceptual design and site analysis of large-scale integrated resort proposals; integration of tourism considerations in strategic and local area plans; comparative analyses of competitive destinations; studies into the re-imagining of destinations in crisis; and the assessment of the environmental impacts of tourism. Dianne has also been involved in tourism capacity building activities in local governments and tourism organisations, including stakeholder audits and community consultation. Dianne's key research interests are in local government tourism management, place-based planning and management of tourism places, tourism organisations, tourism planning and policy. Dianne also co-authored *Tourism Policy and Planning* (John Wiley & Sons, 2007) with John Jenkins.

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**Robert Haworth** has taught Geography and Planning at the University of New England, Australia, for the last 25 years. Though recently retired, he continues research in geomorphology and environmental history, including the part folklore and non-official histories play in developing the place identities likely to be marketed as eco- and cultural tourism. His work also includes the history of the fluctuations of sea levels on the Indo-Pacific coasts, and how coastal communities have adapted on decadal, centennial and millennial scales. Currently he divides his time and residence between the high altitude, conservative pastoral districts of the New England Tablelands, and the nearby coastal resort of Byron Bay, a centre of international tourism and specialist gourmet-driven plantation agriculture.

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**John S. Hull** is an Associate Professor at Thompson Rivers University, British Columbia, Canada, visiting researcher at the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre and member of the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute. His present research addresses sustainable tourism in peripheral regions, strategic tourism planning and destination development, and community-based tourism development. John has worked on tourism projects in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Past clients include the UNWTO, UNCBD, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank, Nordic Council, Office of North Atlantic Agreement (NORA), European Tourism Research Institute, Greenland Tourism and Business Council, Canadian Tourism Commission and Parks Canada.

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**Simon Milne** is Professor of Tourism at Auckland University of Technology, where he directs the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute ([www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org)). Simon completed his PhD in geography at Cambridge in 1989 and then taught at McGill University, Montreal until 1998. Simon's current research focuses on the links between tourism, IT and sustainable development. Simon has worked as a consultant to a number of international organisations including UNESCAP, UNDP, the European Union and the Organisation of American States.

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mother of two significant stakeholders in her life, Dan and Alex – the two little boys who hold the key to her heart.

**Michael C. Shone** is a PhD Candidate in tourism management at Lincoln University, New Zealand. His PhD research is centred on investigating the global–local nexus of tourism development rhetoric and action in regional locations, with specific reference to the Hurunui District, New Zealand. His additional research interests include core–periphery tourism geographies, public policy, tourism planning and regional development. Michael also holds a position as a research associate in Lincoln University’s Tourism Recreation Research and Education Centre (TRREC). He has been involved in a number of research programmes aimed at better understanding the host–guest tourism encounter, and has contributed to the development of a tourism planning tool kit for local government in New Zealand.

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*Spaces* (Sage, 2004, with G. Shaw) and *Tourism and Innovation* (Routledge, 2008, with C.M. Hall).

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# Preface

Tourism planning and policy is a fascinating field of research and practice. It presents scholars, practitioners and students with an array of issues, cases, concepts, theories and methods so widely varied that there is an endless supply of teaching, learning and research opportunities. Nevertheless, the politics of tourism, and the processes of tourism planning and policy making are areas of serious neglect. Interestingly, the concept of sustainable tourism development was being promoted and incorporated in plans and policies by academics, practitioners and governments well before the processes of planning and policy making had been widely studied with much rigour, and before ideas about impact indicators had been adequately explored in tourism studies. This suggests that practice has led tourism planning and policy research. The study of tourism politics and planning practice can unlock important insights, highlight deficits in our knowledge and identify areas where skill development is needed.

Fascinated by the tensions, struggles, complexities and significance of public policy, planning and politics, for about two decades prior to publication of this current book, we (the editors) have worked independently and collaboratively on a range of tourism planning and policy projects. This book is as much a reflection of these journeys, the lessons learned and the understandings gained as it is about the future of tourism policy and planning. We remain convinced, more than ever, that there is a need to build deeper insights into the everyday minutiae of tourism planning and policy, the way that these details intersect with macro and meso level influences, and how they play out in increasingly diverse political forums.

We believe this book fills a significant gap in approaches and methods used in tourism policy and planning analysis. As the political landscape of and around tourism continues to change, we hope this book continues to give valuable insights into how a social constructivist perspective can be used to explore policy and planning issues at a range of scales and in a range of settings over time. In brief, the stories here are all very different. They reveal part of the 'art' in the science of studying planning and policy. The book reveals how differently our own world views and engagement with an issue can significantly shape our understandings and knowledge. Indeed, if we consider tourism as an important aspect of contemporary life and an inherently valuable element in many people's lives, it would be fair to say that studies of tourism planning and policy firmly grounded in the social sciences can tell us as much about contemporary life and governance as that of similar research in the fields of health, environment and technology. In fact, tourism (and indeed the leisure and business aspects of

tourism) is fundamentally linked to these fields. The politics of technology, health and the environment impact on tourism and vice versa.

The first three chapters provide an overview, which helps explain the positioning of the chapters and establishes the significance of storytelling and adopting a social constructivist perspective. The case studies themselves are international in scope, addressing a range of topics in markedly different settings. Hence the case studies can be read in any order.

We hope that readers find the storytelling approach to policy making and planning a rewarding learning experience. We also hope that this book encourages students, academics and practitioners to challenge existing research and question existing ‘wisdoms’ and paradigms, to try to understand how power is exercised and why. We also hope that readers find the courage and inspiration to engage in research where voices are genuinely heard and listened to, and to reflect upon and engage with their own knowledge development in the process. Only through such research can the boosterism and the exercise of powerful interests be revealed for what they truly are.

Dianne Dredge and John Jenkins  
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# Chapter 1

## New Spaces of Tourism Planning and Policy

Dianne Dredge and John Jenkins

### Introduction

Was I to believe him in earnest in his intention to penetrate to the centre of this massive globe? Had I been listening to the mad speculations of a lunatic, or to the scientific conclusions of a lofty genius? Where did truth stop? Where did error begin? I was all adrift amongst a thousand contradictory hypotheses, but I could not lay hold of one (Axel, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, Jules Verne, originally published 1864).

This book is about not one, but many journeys of exploration into tourism policy and planning. The journey commenced with the editors, who were interested in the power of storytelling to help explain tourism planning and policy making processes. However, upon realising the depth and scope of the project, and the value of other people's stories, lenses and world views, the editors enlisted the help of a number of other researchers. Equipped with a range of conceptual tools, methodologies, frameworks and pre-existing understandings, each author who participated in the project looked for new spaces of tourism planning and policy and new ways of understanding the complex social world in which issues are identified, options are evaluated, decisions are made and actions are taken.

Our inspiration was, in part, drawn from authors such as Jules Verne, a master storyteller who, at the height of modern scientific rationalism, wove scientific theories and fiction together to create plausible and imaginative explanations of a journey to the centre of the earth. In doing so Verne introduced to a popular audience ideas that, until that point, had remained locked in scientific dialogues. In much the same way that his character Professor Otto Leidenbrock applied the lens of science to explain and guide his extraordinary journey, a range of understandings generated in a variety of social science disciplines helps us to explain and better understand tourism planning and policy.

In this volume, we seek to apply storytelling to enhance understandings of the complex world in which tourism planning and policy takes place. Each story seeks to interpret events, develop practical understandings and sharpen critical insights into tourism planning and policy theory and practice. They also expose complicated webs of relationships, ambiguous goals and objectives, the myriad of policy spaces in which tourism policy making and planning takes place, and the skills and practices of individuals and agencies. In engaging with and reflecting



upon these stories, and in triangulating the insights with personal experience, it is hoped that readers find new ways of understanding the messy world of tourism planning and policy.

Planning and policy research is a relatively new line of research within tourism, but it has developed significantly since the turn of the century. Key influences on the way the field has developed can be attributed to many factors. First, the growing influence of critical, social constructionist research approaches has focused attention on explanations of how and why tourism planning and policy making happens (e.g. Dredge and Jenkins 2007a, Stevenson, Airey and Miller 2008). Second, the increasing uptake of post-disciplinary perspectives has broken down barriers to understanding planning and policy making processes, enabling researchers to draw from a broader range of theoretical concepts, including those in other disciplines, in order to assemble the complex elements of planning and policy systems (e.g. Coles, Hall and Duval 2006, Tribe 2004). For instance, in this book, the influence of economics, geography, politics and sociology are particularly evident. Third, the knowledge gained from reflective practice and attention to ethics and values has stimulated critical, interpretive theoretical development (e.g. Jamal 2004, Tribe 2002).

These influences reinforce the notion that tourism planning and policy is a result of the thoughts, ideas, actions, collusions and collaborations of diverse actors, agencies and institutions. Exploring these social spaces of tourism planning and policy making and learning from stories of practice are the focus of this book. Such explorations are fundamental to the development of reflective practice, cumulative knowledge building and theoretical development.

Tourism planning and policy making is as much a social process as it is a critical and analytical process, and may be greatly affected by personal and/or group values, interests and ideology (e.g. Dredge and Jenkins 2007b, Stevenson et al. 2008). It may be that one individual's personal goals and passion, leadership and preferences drive an issue onto the agenda, or it may be that robust planning techniques and rational processes successfully mediate these and ensure planning agendas and decisions are the results of collaborative exercises. Whatever the origins or drivers of the issue, the social and relational characteristics of government, business and community have a profound influence on tourism planning and policy development. Put simply, issues are identified, information is collected and exchanged, alternatives are discussed and even discarded and actions are all taken in a social world. Theoretical and analytical tools, ideologies and principles might guide the process, but the knowledge generated must percolate through layers of communication, information sharing, collaboration and even political intrigue before outputs emerge and actions are taken. These exchanges take place in a variety of formal and informal settings, inside and outside official government processes and they transcend public–private sector divides. Government, business and community actors involved in the activities associated with tourism planning and policy will all respond differently to these settings, communications and relationships.

For many researchers and practitioners, active involvement in tourism planning and policy processes will contribute very nuanced insights into the social worlds in which tourism planning and policy happens. Such experiences are usually highly contextualised and the knowledge generated is often particular to the problems at hand. Over time, one can draw from these multiple experiences, testing, critically analysing and triangulating with other cases and previous experience to build deep understandings of tourism planning and policy. Encounters with interesting people and confronting vexed problems enable one to move beyond rule-bound, process-based knowledge to become better, if not fluid and expert, performers in their field:

Common to all experts ... is that they operate on the basis of intimate knowledge of several thousand concrete cases in their area of expertise. Context dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of the expert activity. Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the center of the case study as a research and teaching method (Flyvbjerg 2006: 222).

### **Ideological Influences on Tourism Planning and Policy Making**

In western developed economies, approaches to tourism planning and policy are very tightly linked to profound changes in ideological and socio-political landscapes. Sustained commitment by western governments and political parties to neoliberal economic management and globalisation in the latter part of the twentieth century has focused on boosting growth and yield to improve economic well being (Giddens 1998, King and Kendall 2004). During the 1980s, governments around the world restructured their tourism departments, reduced their emphasis on tourism research that focused public interest in favour of market research, outsourced their marketing operations, and offset their responsibilities through the creation of statutory corporations or commercial agreements with external providers. In the process, further and very direct means for business to influence public policy making were opened up (Dredge and Jenkins 2007b). Corporate interests with financial power and expertise began to influence the direction and content of policy; boundaries delimiting corporate interests and the state began to blur; relationships between government and business became ever closer; and government representatives and bureaucrats became important conduits for corporate influence (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, Ladeur 2004).

The notion of sustainability well and truly infiltrated tourism studies and practice in the late 1980s (although we recognise the concept has been around for much longer). From its earliest conception it provided a unifying discourse for tourism planning and policy – that is, it was hard to argue against the logic of balancing economic, social and environmental goals. However, although tourism agencies and stakeholders grappled with what sustainable tourism actually was, and how it could be operationalised and with what effects, it has

remained a slippery and highly contested concept (e.g. Sharpley 2009). The phrase 'sustainable tourism development' is never far from any discussion of tourism planning and policy, but our own view is that it is used more often as a rhetorical device rather than a set of clearly defined guiding principles and actions. Moreover, rarely is it associated with any clear measurable criteria that indicate how economic, physical, social and other goals can be married.

From the late 1990s onwards sustained criticisms of neoliberalism, including concerns over increasing disparities in power and wealth and associated risks such as social and economic marginalisation, poverty and terrorist activity, stimulated the reassertion of local issues, values and agendas (e.g. Beck 1992, Giddens 1998, King and Kendall 2004). These concerns are captured in a set of theories loosely referred to under the umbrella term 'political modernisation' which seeks to explain changes in how governments govern, particularly in terms of the diffusion of power away from the central state and new forms of coordination amongst a wide range of actors such as politicians and their political parties, bureaucrats and the bureaucracy, diverse corporate interests and civil society (Arts, Leroy and van Tatenhove 2006).

Approaches to public administration have also changed dramatically. The 'new public management' has placed emphasis on facilitating and enabling tourism development by mobilising the resources of others rather than direct government action and physical planning. With respect to tourism, there is no shortage of dialogue about the macro-shifts that have influenced the way that governments support or intervene in tourism (e.g. Dredge and Jenkins 2007a, Dredge and Pforr 2008, Milne and Ateljevic 2001). Without limiting the contributions of this literature, a breaking down of barriers to travel, closer working relationships between government and industry and an emphasis on policies that stimulate demand (e.g. marketing and promotion) have been identified as the key responses to tourism by many western governments since the 1980s (Dredge and Jenkins 2007b). However, McCracken (2003) and others above observed, questions are now appearing about neoliberal public management and the almost blind faith that governments have in the capacity of markets to address the economic, social and environmental problems that emerge from the pursuit of growth.

There is evidence that this neoliberal project and the processes of political modernisation that have fed new socio-political organisational structures, have turned upon themselves (e.g. Arts et al. 2006, Klijn and Skelcher 2007, McCracken 2003). Industry bodies and corporate interests have become integrated into policy making processes so seamlessly in some cases that industry interests have been responsible for substantially writing and informing policy (Dredge and Jenkins 2009). Governments justify this increased alignment with the commercial world in terms of increased efficiency and effectiveness of policy. At a practical level, it reduces political tensions and improves the chances of policy being supported by industry and criticised less. Issues of public interest, social justice, equity, transparency and accountability, while

certainly drawing increased critical interest in academic circles, remain outside the focus (or interest) of planning and policy practice in many cases. Put bluntly, under processes of political modernisation, which have included collaborative governance, third way politics and networks and partnerships, the corporate capture of tourism planning and policy making has strengthened, and broader community interests and common pool problems appear to be increasingly sidelined (e.g. Dredge 2010, Dredge and Pforr 2008).

As a result of these changes and increasing recognition that tourism planning and policy no longer takes place only within the institutions of government, rational planning and policy making has given way to an emerging emphasis on understanding and managing the social world in which government interventions – direct or indirect – take place. Developing these understandings and the capacity to become reflexive practitioners requires a new social consciousness on the part of the actors involved in tourism, and an appreciation of historical drivers and contemporary ideologies influencing public administration, planning and policy making. Such a project also requires new forms of socio-political organisations to address increasing demands for access to and involvement in planning and policy making (Gibson-Graham 2006, Giddens 1998). Public–private partnerships, networks and governance have emerged in response to this call for new forms of socio-political organisations.

### **New Spaces of Tourism Policy and Planning**

These ideological and public management shifts have stimulated the emergence of ‘new spaces’ in which tourism planning and policy development take place. The term ‘new spaces’ is used in a metaphoric sense to denote a range of non-traditional, and sometimes not very explicit, spaces in which discussion takes place, information is exchanged and decisions are made. These new spaces exist between public and private sectors; between levels of government; and in government corporations and statutory corporations created by government but held at arms length from public scrutiny. Increasingly too, policy decisions and actions are taken in policy spaces other than tourism, such as urban planning.

New liminal spaces of understanding are also emerging, driven predominantly by post-disciplinary approaches to how tourism planning and policy are studied (see Chapter 2). This post-disciplinary research activity and the reflective approaches and methods of practicing planners and policy makers in the field have led individuals to conceptual gateways or portals through which new or previously constrained ways of thinking about tourism problems and issues emerge. Over time, we move beyond the ‘stuck places’ of our old ways of knowing and, as we do, barriers to new alternative understandings in our own disciplines or fields of study fall away (Meyer and Land 2005). In essence then, liminality is variously achieved at the level of the individual and the field via iterative processes of reflection, theorisation and the socialisation of this new

knowledge. In this context, stories provide a useful approach to synthesising, communicating and explaining policy making and planning practice and contribute to the social construction of tourism knowledge (e.g. Sandercock 2003, Schon and Rein 1994, van Hulst 2008).

### **Sense Making and Stories**

Stories are case studies that adopt a range of methods from thick description, narrative, historical accounts and hermeneutics to explore and explain the unfolding of events and actions and how individuals have interpreted and given meaning to concepts within their daily lives. As a form of case study, stories investigate the particular; they often approach complexities and conundrums, ethical issues and dilemmas, and they can also use a wide range of social theories and concepts to interrogate events, decisions and actions. In doing so, authors are often engaged in giving meaningful form to the complex experiences they have become part of, witness to and/or perhaps even embroiled within. In doing so, the story is given meaning: ‘each story selects and names different features and relations which become the “things” of the story – what the story is about’ (Schon and Rein 1994: 26). Readers will find their own pathway through the story, exploring it, and testing it against their own practical knowledge, theoretical dispositions and world views. As a learning device then, stories can make a valuable contribution.

But there is also a range of criticisms of stories, just as there are criticisms with regard to the case study approach (e.g. see Flyvbjerg 2006, Gerring 2007, Ruddin 2006, Verschuren 2003). Most notably for our purposes, stories (and case studies more generally) have been accused of being over-generalised, and vague in terms of their theoretical grounding and propositions. Case studies tend to de-emphasise structural contexts such as power in relation to class, race, gender and cultural hegemony in favour of disentangling the peculiarities of the case (Forester 2001). Conclusions are often drawn in isolation with limited attempts to recognise similarities across cases. Moreover, authors themselves have been accused of being an instrument of power by manipulating the way that information and knowledge about the case is framed (Forester 2001). In any field, there are discourses involving debate and argument about approaches, the relevance and usefulness of particular theories and the value of particular methods. Notwithstanding the criticisms of case studies and thus storytelling, which are explored further in Chapter 3, we believe that stories offer an important and very worthwhile tool for learning, reflection and the building of better knowledge for tourism planning and policy practice.

It is important in this context to frame case studies appropriately, to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, and place them in a context for learning, reflection and the building of expertise. Our approach in this book is

to frame case studies as stories of tourism planning and policy practice as this is how we give meaning to the world. Stories have gained credibility in the social sciences, particularly over the last 20 years as a result of shifts away from positivism, but they continue to be criticised as being more art than research (e.g. for a discussion of strengths and weaknesses of stories see Lieblish, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilbar 1998). These criticisms are born out of disputes about 'truth' and 'knowledge' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998) and can be traced back to the tensions between the natural and social sciences, between quantitative and qualitative research and between modernism and postmodernism (see Chapter 3).

In adopting a storytelling approach in this book, authors make sense of tourism planning and policy using a constructivist-interpretive lens. The content and form of the story reflects the authors' personal identities, worldviews, theoretical frames and ideological positions. Clearly, the stories are subjective and the value of each story is not in its claims to 'telling the truth'. Instead, the value of the chapters, individually and collectively, is in their impact upon the identity, self-awareness and understandings of readers and how and whether, over time, as the story is read and reread, it creates new insights and new questions. In this context, readers are encouraged not only to critically engage with the stories as they unfold, but to also triangulate them with their own knowledge and experiences whilst recognising the subjectivities of both author and reader. In the final chapter, we seek to give our own meaning to the journeys of the authors herein, and to triangulate these with our own understandings of the field.

This book contains a collection of stories by authors who explore tourism planning and policy making in a wide range of settings and contexts. Authors were asked by the editors to embrace the role of storyteller, to situate themselves within and frame their stories of practice using literary devices such as plot, characters, setting, moral tensions and conundrums (e.g. see Sandercock 2003, van Hulst 2008). They were also directed to adhere to good academic practice in terms of the conduct of their research, the use of literature and the structuring of stories using standard protocols such as a literature review, methods, analysis and findings. As you will see, the authors embrace the role of storyteller differently; some are active participants in their stories (see Chapters 9, 10, 13 and 15) and others are observers (see Chapters 4, 7 and 8). Some authors chose to examine an episode or story of how policy was made (see Chapters 5, 6 and 9), or how governing happened (see Chapters 4 and 7), whereas others chose to explore how particular concepts or concrete actions were given meaning (see Chapters 14 and 16). Putting aside for now the differences in the central focus of each story, what is common among them is that they all convey the complex and dynamic social construction of tourism planning and policy making. Such similarities across cases are discussed in the concluding chapter.

## **Aim of this Book**

Our aim in this current volume is to build on the previous works of the editors (e.g. see Dredge 2001, 2005, Dredge and Jenkins 2003, 2007a, Hall and Jenkins 1995, Jenkins 2000, 2001, Jenkins and Sorensen 1996) by providing a set of theoretically informed stories of tourism planning and policy making. These stories seek to:

- Expand readers' practical and applied knowledge about how tourism planning and policy making takes place and why plans and policies take the forms they do.
- Provide critical insights and applications of planning and public policy theories, concepts and frameworks as they are applied in tourism studies.
- Actively engage readers in the moral and ethical issues that often surround tourism policy making and planning.
- Reveal the socially constructed nature of tourism planning and public policy.
- Highlight the variety of spaces in which tourism planning and policy takes place.
- Summarise the key challenges facing individuals, businesses, governments and other institutions.

## **Approach**

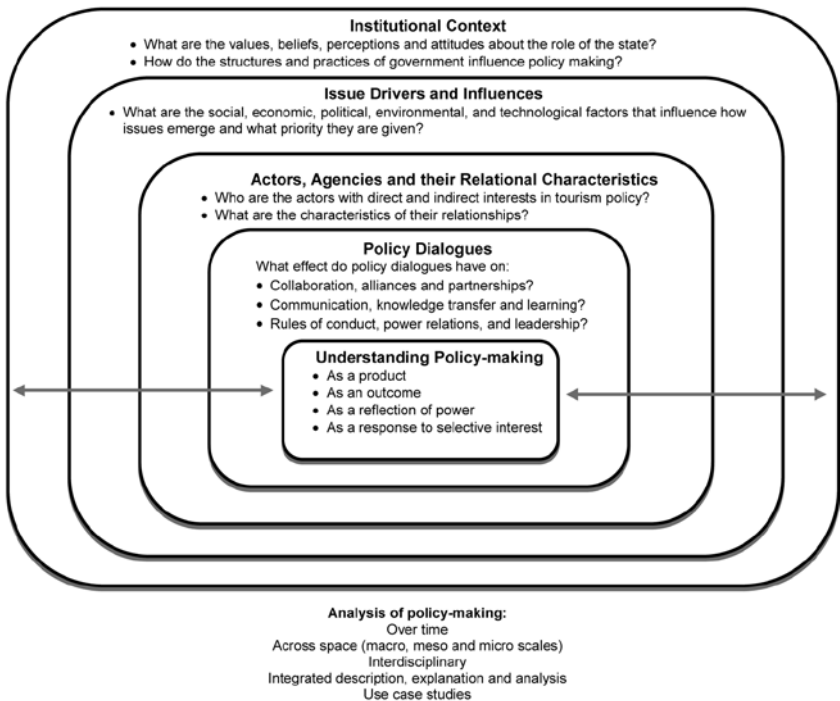
The approach to the development of this book is a story in itself, and reflects the process adopted and the choices made by the editors and their collaborators. These choices shape both the content and structure of the book, how the stories are presented, and how they inevitably influence the meanings and knowledge about tourism planning and policy that can be extracted by readers. The editors draw heavily from their own experience in tourism planning and policy practice and from their own disciplinary and professional backgrounds. Dianne Dredge draws from a background in urban and environmental planning and public policy, while John Jenkins draws from a background in geography, leisure studies and public policy. Both found an interest in tourism later in their working careers and thus bring to the study of tourism broad disciplinary foundations and theoretical understandings. In looking back over their working careers, both authors can identify different liminal thresholds in their understanding of tourism policy and planning, but they cannot pinpoint such moments with accuracy; they are interwoven into the experiences of research, the socialisation of those experiences in academic networks, and practical engagement with policy communities. Their collaborative efforts in working together, and within wider practice and academic communities, has made them confront their own 'stuck places' and has brought new liminal spaces of understanding. Moreover, the journey involved



in writing this book has also opened up liminalities that will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

But before we launch into the stories that follow, we think it is important to set up a framework to help readers unravel the chapters in a way that reveals what we have long considered critical issues in tourism planning and policy making. We draw specifically from our previous work and the following figure originally presented in *Tourism Planning and Policy* (Dredge and Jenkins 2007a).

Figure 1.1 presents a conceptual framework for the analysis of tourism planning and public policy making that includes and acknowledges the principles identified by Hall and Jenkins (1995: 95). In this framework the process of developing knowledge of tourism policy and planning is an iterative process. It involves moving generally towards the centre of the diagram, but occasionally moving outwards to reflect upon previous understandings, to compare with other literature and cases, and to incorporate new and emerging information. An understanding of planning and policy making processes necessarily requires an understanding of the institutional context; the issue drivers and influences that push issues onto the political agenda; the full range of actors and agencies directly and indirectly involved in tourism; and the characteristics of the policy dialogues



**Figure 1.1 Framework for understanding tourism policy and planning**



that take place. Moreover, events and circumstances change over time, so the influence of historical decisions and actions must also be considered. Researchers also need to appreciate that micro, meso or macro scales are interrelated, and that events occurring at one level are likely to affect what happens at other levels. In this way, tourism planning and policy research is necessarily dynamic, iterative and reflective.

In the preceding sections of this introductory chapter, we have sought to outline the complex setting in which tourism planning and policy takes place, and to justify our social constructionist-interpretive approach. In the following two chapters we provide further, more detailed justifications. In Chapter 2, the ideological currents underpinning tourism planning and policy are further explored. We examine the historical development and contemporary challenges associated with tourism planning and policy research and practice, highlighting the twists and turns in the field and the corresponding liminal thresholds in knowledge development. In Chapter 3, we explore a range of issues associated with the role of stories in tourism planning and policy research, and argue for greater engagement in stories and storytelling. Following on from this, 14 stories of practice provide all the controversies, debates and conundrums necessary to stimulate readers' interest in tourism policy and planning. They often (but not always) involve ethical issues, political intrigue, leadership, manipulations of knowledge, power imbalances and money. These stories seek to capture the critical elements relevant to the social world in which the tourism planning exercise takes place. In doing so, they inevitably raise questions about the strengths and weaknesses of literature, identify ambiguities and silences and promote engaged and critical reflection upon the relationships within, and the consequences of, policy making. We hope you enjoy the journey.

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## Chapter 2

# Tourism Planning and Policy: Historical Development and Contemporary Challenges

Dianne Dredge, John Jenkins and Michelle Whitford

### Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the broader theoretical landscape of planning and policy studies and links this to tourism policy and planning research. The chapter first makes important observations about the interdisciplinary, historical and social dimensions of tourism planning and policy as a field of study. Then, drawing from studies in the social sciences in particular, it gives a concise overview of, among other things, key concepts, theories, issues and ideological shifts that have punctuated tourism planning and policy studies. First though, we wish to make a few brief statements to clarify our approaches introduced in Chapter 1.

Tourism planning and policy research draws from many disciplines and fields, including politics, policy studies, public administration, organisational studies, sociology, economics, geography, history, law and psychology. Tourism planning and policy, like town planning, can be likened to a magpie profession, picking relevance from a variety of disciplines (Hague 1997, cited in Thompson 2000). This interdisciplinary flavour and diversity in conceptual, theoretical and applied research does not mean that the field lacks cohesion or theoretical and conceptual strength. Quite the contrary! Diversity and breadth in a field of study provides many opportunities for collaborative work, encourages researchers and practitioners to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries and liminalities, and through conceptual, theoretical and applied advances contributes to knowledge and practice not only in tourism but also in other fields.

Concomitantly, the focus of tourism planning and policy research and practice since the middle of last century can be broadly organised into five streams or traditions reflecting transcendental shifts in social sciences thought:

1. The normative/prescriptive tradition, which seeks to provide guidance on the content of policy for the development and management of tourism.
2. The predictive tradition, which seeks to make predictions about the possible causes and consequences of various policy actions on tourism.
3. The procedural tradition, which seeks to provide advice on how to plan and manage tourism.

4. The descriptive/explanatory tradition, which seeks to understand and develop knowledge about how policy is made and explain how certain outcomes emerge.
5. The evaluative tradition, which seeks to evaluate the dimensions of policy, including content, delivery, process, outcomes and impacts.

Each of these traditions offers something useful in the mix of knowledge, methods, approaches and analytical tools that inform tourism planning and policy. Importantly, in practice, much research in these traditions is not mutually exclusive and actually requires a mix of these foci, and indeed a blending of approaches. All traditions also require historical knowledge of policy and policy related issues. Historical accounts of the development of tourism planning and policy, however, are rare and tend to adopt linear explanations, starting with modernity, then transitioning to postmodernism to discuss various epochs in social science thinking and the way they have influenced the field (e.g. see Costa 2001, Dredge and Jenkins 2007b). While there is nothing particularly wrong with such an approach, and one which we have adopted in the past, care should be taken not to interpret this evolution as a series of paradigm shifts wherein old understandings are discarded in favour of new explanations. In tourism planning and policy there are seminal texts from a positivist tradition that sit alongside current offerings and continue to make important contributions to the field including Gunn (1972, 1988) and others. In this sense, old information is not discarded but rather becomes a part of a professional's tool kit of knowledge and understanding and means of inquiry, and so continues to inform thinking, sometimes in powerful ways. As the stories of practice in this book will illustrate, the ideas, theories, practical concepts and frameworks that are drawn upon in practice, are a bricolage of historical and contemporary knowledge.

Tourism planning and policy knowledge is socially constructed and this has profound implications for the way ideas and explanations of tourism planning and policy are produced and why some ideas become dominant, others have a short shelf life, and still others are never published. That is, the development of tourism policy and planning as a field of research and practice is derived at a meta-level in the collective works from a variety of disciplines and from practitioners working in diverse fields who share their stories. But how this research and practice enters into thinking, changes worldviews and influences action, in many ways occurs at the level of the individual. Each researcher and practitioner draws from practical experience and broad knowledge in a process of life-long learning, but will be bounded or constrained by cultural and societal norms and relative freedom to access and produce knowledge. The growth and development of the field of tourism planning and policy depends as much on the development and uptake of knowledge and understandings at an individual level as it does on the broader, collective body of work and people's abilities to contribute.

In this chapter, instead of recounting a linear or chronological history of the field, we have refocused our historical context to explore how threshold concepts

have influenced the production of knowledge and shaped understandings of tourism planning and policy over time. In this context, this overview is not intended to be an overarching or authoritative explanation of how tourism planning and policy theory has evolved (e.g. see Dredge and Jenkins 2007a). Rather, it is an informed, but nevertheless contextualised attempt to explain tourism planning and public policy derived from the authors' particular views and liminal experiences which arise from extensive research and engagement in predominantly western democratic models of tourism planning, policy and governance.

### **Liminality and Threshold Concepts in Planning and Policy**

The contemporary notion of 'thresholds' is derived from studies of liminality in anthropology. The Latin 'limen' means threshold and the use of the word liminal was first applied by Arnold van Gennep (1960) in his studies of rites of passage, in which he identified stages in religious and ritualised processes that led to some new state of being. Victor Turner (1969) took this work further, examining how these thresholds were experienced by different participants, and the characteristics of the 'liminal' state of mind one reaches in moving through the process. Of course, the concept is not new and can even be aligned with the Enlightenment philosophers who argued that the courage to think and to reason was the key to overcoming intellectual immaturity (e.g. see original essay by Kant 1784).

Liminality, and the associated concept of thresholds, provides rich potential as a heuristic device in many areas of study. Meyer and Land (2005) contend that in most disciplines and fields of study there are 'conceptual gateways' or 'portals', the investigation of which leads to a previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. According to pioneers in the field of educational sociology, we need to pass through these conceptual gateways or thresholds in order to be able to transform our thinking, to move beyond stuck places of our own epistemological frames, and to grow understandings beyond what was previously possible (Meyer and Land 2003). Threshold concepts in various disciplines have been put forward, but these may change over time. A good example of this in tourism studies is the way in which the life cycle model (LCM) was applied to help aid description and understanding of the evolution of tourism destinations (Butler 1980). The LCM was taken up by many researchers and applied in interesting but sometimes questionable ways. Interestingly, Cooper (1993) for example, observed that the tourism life cycle model did not aid prescription but could aid description of a resort's evolution. While the model, with respect to planning and policy making, has been criticised for lacking applied, descriptive, predictive or procedural power, it has some evaluative power. The LCM gained currency through the 1980s and 1990s mainly when the field of tourism studies was in its infancy and it was one of few destination development related models with relevance to planning, psychology and marketing. We have no time now to debate this further

but see Butler (2009) for a review of the LCM and for a more comprehensive understanding of this particular threshold concept.

Understanding threshold concepts helps us identify and engage with ‘troublesome knowledge’ that may at first seem counter-intuitive, alien or incoherent (Meyer and Land 2005). By engaging with this troublesome knowledge, it is possible to explore a liminal space, a space of thinking and understanding that may have both transformative and irreversible effects on the learner. Liminality is variously achieved via an iterative process of reflection on planning and policy making practice and engaging with theoretical perspectives. The process is grounded, communicated and tested mainly in the academic community but also through collaborative work with various public and private sector entities. Working in this liminal space sheds light on unexplored angles, and produces new frames of understanding or applies existing frames in new contexts and settings. Where this understanding is shared within and across practitioner and academic groupings, opportunities for advancing through a disciplinary threshold emerge. Importantly, liminality occurs in an environment best described as messy complexity. That is, liminality occurs in a complex, messy environment where more often than not, the researcher adopts a non-linear process of thinking and learning which may involve a cluster of related, intersecting works that when combined, can provide the researcher with a liminal experience.

Diverse liminal experiences are both an individual construction as well as a group state, and are characterised by varying degrees of intellectual intensity, academic rigour, levels of acceptance and uptake. They are influenced not only by the context in which a problem or issue is encountered and the opportunities and barriers addressing that problem, but also, they may often depend upon key people and the nature and influence of their persuasive communications or gate keeping activities. Therefore, liminal moments are not initially universally experienced but rather occur sporadically. Consequently they are unpredictable, occurring at different moments and places in time. Arguably it is such diversity and unpredictability that give credence to the liminal experience and its influence on ensuing tourism threshold concepts. For instance, as researchers experience individual and/or group liminal experiences, verbal and written tourism knowledge and understanding are communicated on a global scale and researchers unearth commonalities in liminal experiences and begin to cross the tourism threshold portal towards new tourism concepts. Arguably, it is not until liminal experiences gain universality that we can claim the emergence of a new tourism concept that will, to varying degrees, dominate fields of research until the iterative process begins again.

On this basis, it is important to reiterate that liminality exists in both individuals and groups, including communities, associations, bureaucracies and governments, and its potential to significantly influence planning and policy making. Thus liminality and threshold concepts are defined subjectively at both individual and group levels, and are intimately tied to how knowledge is created and given meaning through processes of socialisation. In other words, individuals, whether



they are academics, industry researchers or practitioners, carry out their activities within a sphere of understanding, and employ theories, concepts, explanations and rules that they are able to apply based on their approaches to learning, perceptions of the world, knowledge, willingness to embrace or test new ideas, past practice and reflective experience. How this knowledge is communicated, shared and valued or jettisoned by academic or practitioner groups or gatekeepers will affect the emergence of new understandings, concepts and approaches. Although legislation and laws have often prescribed what can be communicated in different nation states and socio-political and religious arenas (Atherton and Atherton 2003, Goodall, Pottinger, Dixon and Russell 2004, Karste 2007, Haase, Lamers and Amelung 2009), increasingly communication technologies and changing attitudes to what is appropriate information for various media will significantly impact the dissemination of information and knowledge and hence the development and maturity of a field.

Knowledge, therefore, is socially constructed within a context. How researchers and practitioners accept, respond, use and disseminate knowledge is crucial to understanding the evolution of knowledge in any given field. It is important to remember here the seminal work by Thomas Kuhn (1970) on scientific revolutions and paradigmatic change and Bruno Latour (1987, 2005) on the sociology of knowledge and epistemic communities among others, who demonstrate that knowledge is socially constructed and valued. Certain ways of knowing and understanding can come to dominate and constrain fields of research and practice. When dominant theories, concepts and rules become increasingly questioned and are replaced by new set of ideas, Kuhn (1970) argues that paradigmatic change takes place. A shift takes place when individuals are able to effectively share this knowledge and, at a collective level, new ways of knowing and understanding problems are generated and become embedded in research and lifeworlds of practitioners. Here, operating within liminal spaces and moving through threshold concepts are linked to paradigmatic shifts in research and practice.

Various criticisms of paradigmatic change and the structure of scientific revolutions have emerged since Kuhn's seminal work. Most notably, in the humanities and social sciences, knowledge is cumulative. Theories and concepts are not necessarily discarded in favour of new approaches but add to the cumulative diversity of knowledge from which practitioners and researchers can draw. Moreover, competing views and multiple framings of a problem can co-exist. The capacity of individuals and/or groups to identify and dominate threshold concepts and then move beyond them to apply different ways of knowing and understanding is the essence of professional development. Therefore, a capacity for informed and reflective practice and life-long learning underpin such professional growth. Within this context, liminality (and the related concept of thresholds) provides a valuable lens highlighting how understandings of tourism planning and policy have evolved. Such an exploration of the historical development of tourism planning and policy, and the thresholds that have emerged in the field, is an important precursor that sets the context for the case studies that follow later in the book.



*The 'Stuck Places' of Modernity*

By the middle of the twentieth century, modernist views about planning and policy making were well established within the institutions of government. Planning and policy making were thought to take place predominantly within the bureaucracy, initiated and controlled to a large extent by public servants. Frederick Taylor's rational scientific principles for public administration, developed in the early part of the century, were well established within most western systems of government (Dredge and Jenkins 2007a). Put simply, Taylorism was based on the idea that public servants, who enjoyed long careers in the public service, possessed a higher order of knowledge and expertise about public issues. Public servants were supposedly able to employ a level of rationality and objectivity about public issues and the public interest to inform planning and policy making activities. By the mid- to late-1970s, however, a regimented public service had become highly politicised through the appointment of senior bureaucrats aligned to party political ideologies (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003).

Nevertheless, such highly structured procedural models of planning and policy development sat well within the dominant modernist paradigms of the times (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). Such conceptions of policy making commenced with the setting of goals, information was then collected, different scenarios were considered, and one was selected for implementation that would achieve the predetermined goals. In other words, the world was simple and ordered. Universal truths and explanations of cause and consequence could be constructed. Elected representatives (i.e. the decision makers) received advice and recommendations from the bureaucracy. The notion of public interest was simple and uncomplicated, dominated by the frames of predominantly middle class, ethnically homogenous public officials. Participation was considered unproblematic and consultation was relegated to a single step in the public policy process that would be conducted with key interest groups and individuals. In these conceptions of planning and policy making, power remained locked within the bureaucracy, elected representatives and selected interest groups. This model was broadly conceived as the 'iron triangle' (Hecl 1978) of policy making.

From the 1960s onwards, increasing scrutiny on the politics of planning and policy making contributed to growing criticism of the rational scientific models of planning and public policy. Critics maintained that the iron triangle metaphor was too limiting in that it only included institutional actors and was essentially a static model of policy making (Milward and Wamsley 1984). It became increasingly clear that stubborn, complex (i.e. wicked) policy issues or problems could not be easily solved by the use of set solutions (Ham and Hill 1984). Moreover, goals were a moving target and chosen solutions were, more often than not, imperfect due to a decision 'makersatisficing' approach to policy making (i.e. simplifying the problem to get a good enough result although not necessarily the best result) (Simon 1957). According to Williamson (1996: 179), 'it is now generally agreed that the satisficing approach has not been broadly applicable', therefore more

nanced understandings of policy problems, and how various actors and agencies framed policy problems, have become essential for complex problem solving (Schon and Rein 1994).

### *Becoming Unstuck: The Role of Power and Politics*

By the middle of the twentieth century, studies of power and how it was manifested in the politics of decision-making and government action also began to challenge existing conceptions of planning and policy (e.g. Dahl 1961, Held 1989, Lasswell 1948). Harold Lasswell went further to consider the role of political psychology and individual behaviour within the policy making process, arguing that bureaucrats needed to engage in the hotbed of politics in order to advocate democratic interests (Farr, Hacker and Kazee 2006, Lasswell 1948). These works highlighted that planning and policy took place within both formal and informal arenas, inside and outside government, and included actors and agencies situated inside and outside the traditional iron triangle. Moreover, bureaucrats were not value-neutral but had an important role and an active interest in Lasswell's (1951) vision for a 'policy science of democracy' in which the democratic process of policy making involved the views of those who were affected by proposed public policies.

Issues pertaining to the implementation of such policies were addressed by Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) ground breaking research into the implementation of federal economic development programs in the United States. The research illustrated that implementation, especially where chains of relationships were involved, was outside the immediate control of government. Different types of power were vested in individuals within these chains of command, and expectations of top federal officials who wished for large accomplishments from small resources in a short time were often mismatched with those of career bureaucrats and local participants who were characterised by high needs and low cohesion (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). As a result, a view consolidated in the literature from the 1970s onwards that policy issues did not conform with established political arenas and traditional administrative structures (Healey 2007). Attention turned to advocacy coalitions, policy communities and networked governance and their impact on how policy was made (Rhodes 1997a, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, Sabatier 1988).

At the same time, traditional research methods in the policy sciences were increasingly questioned. Positivists continued to advocate quantitative methodologies to study the effects of policy on a particular problem. However, it soon became apparent from the growing body of evaluation studies that the way in which a problem is defined determines policy design and the identification of possible solutions to deal with the problem. Therefore, quantitative studies could only reveal that a policy failed but could not reveal the reasons why (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). What was lacking was an understanding of how knowledge infiltrates politics and policy making, and how various types of knowledge (often distributed unevenly among participants) influences problem identification and

solution choices. Indeed, this is often illustrated in tourism where static visitor numbers or even declining visitation is met by policy that seeks to rework market-based interventions such as promotional campaigns and branding strategies. For instance, the 2006 Queensland Tourism Strategy 'is a \$48 million Queensland Government commitment to tourism marketing and development' (Tourism Queensland 2006: 5), the implementation of which will 'maintain our aggressive approach to the marketing of Queensland and its many regions and experiences' and will '... convince international and interstate travellers that Queensland is the tourism destination of choice' (Tourism Queensland 2006: 4). Policy directions such as these are often based on particular framings of the problem by steering committees and directors of statutory corporations (see Jenkins and Stolk 2003) who are also business operators and entrepreneurs in tourism.

While positivist approaches to policy studies have been, and will always be, useful in particular circumstances, there was increasing recognition that policy was more complex than simple modernist conceptions. This notion spawned a critical and interpretive turn in planning and policy research. This line of thinking shifted attention away from a quantitative, positivist focus towards qualitative, post-positivist approaches that focused on exploratory and descriptive accounts of policy (de Leon 1998). Inspired by critical readings of Foucault (1970) and Foucault and Gordon (1980) with respect to power and knowledge, and Habermas (1973, 1984) with respect to subjective rationality and communicative action, planning and policy analysts began to disassemble the structures and frameworks that had shaped their thinking up to that point. By the late 1980s and early 1990s pockets of literature started to emerge that explored aspects such as policy as discourse (e.g. Dryzek 1993, Forester 1989), policy as collaboration and communicative action (e.g. Healey 1993, 1998), and the relationship between knowledge and action (e.g. Freidmann 1987). Of course, in tourism studies more generally, there was Richter's (1989) *The Politics of Tourism in Asia* (which involved interviews with more than 250 people) as well as sociologically inspired qualitative, post-positivist research with a policy slant well underway through the important work of people such as Erik Cohen (1979, 1984).

This growth in what can broadly be described as post-structural and postmodern policy analysis signalled that a threshold in the development of knowledge had been reached. The dominance of structures and frameworks gave way to complexity and acceptance that policy was many things to many people (e.g. Considine 1994, Fischer 1998, Schon and Rein 1994). The idea that policy is dependent upon a complex chain of relationships, shared and contested understandings about problems, and multiple and often competing goals and reciprocal action from participants inside and outside government is now well established. However, these developments have not meant that modernist positivist notions of planning and policy processes have been replaced with alternatives. Rather, simple constructs such as the policy cycle (Bridgman and Davis 2004) continue to be used in both research and practice and form a diverse tool kit of ideas, concepts, theories and knowledge.

*Entering Liminal Space: From Government to Governance*

The view that the world is messy, dynamic and complex is widely reflected in broader shifts occurring in the social sciences. In particular, the shift from modernity to postmodernity (or whether indeed there is a shift at all, but an evolution of modernity) has been discussed at length by others (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994, Featherstone 1995, Rosenau 1992). At the risk of oversimplifying such discussions, it is important to note that what is known as postmodernity signals a rejection of sets of rules and relationships that were embedded in modernist thought and the acceptance of a more disaggregated, individualised order shaped by technological and scientific advances, and increasing choice and mobility. In the views of Beck et al. (1994), this shift represents a re-invention and re-conceptualisation of society; the evolution of modernity into a 'late modernity' rather than a new epoch.

Within these discussions, the role of governments has come under increasing scrutiny. Under traditional modernist notions of government, the state was both funder and provider for a wide range of policy actions. However, since the 1990s neoliberal ideologies embraced by many western democratic states saw a roll back of state functions, with the state replacing direct intervention with enabler and facilitator roles (Keating and Weller 2000). In line with this change, Beck (1994) observes that within the period of late modernity, there has been a transfer of social, political and individual risk away from the state. That is, governments have sought to divest themselves of responsibility for addressing market failures, transferring responsibility back to individuals and non-government interests. This logic has often been justified by arguments that policy innovation and the mobilisation of resources occur more readily in sites outside the institutions of government (Amin and Thrift 1994, Rydin 1998). In tourism, for example, the establishment of statutory corporations and business entities set up and funded by government, but managed at arms length through industry boards, has distanced governments from taking responsibility for ailing tourism industries and ineffective policy (Dredge and Jenkins 2009, Jenkins 2000).

Against this background, strong interest emerged in the study of governance and the related concepts of policy communities and networks (e.g. Atkinson and Coleman 1992, Klijn 1996, Rhodes 1997b, Van Waarden 1992). Governance refers to the relationships between the state, civil society and economic interests through which decisions are made that 'steer' a society (Börzel and Risse 2005). In this sense, governance represents a departure from the more formal studies into the roles, responsibilities and activities of governments, to a more fluid sphere of interaction between the state, civil society and business interests. In the first wave of theoretical interest on governance, there was a strong normative undercurrent wherein governance was conceptualised as a tool to improve transparency and accountability in policy making. Much of the literature was applied to global issues requiring cooperation and joint action, such as international aid (Santiso 2001). A large body of prescriptive literature on 'good governance' emerged as

international donor aid agencies sought to promote sustainable democratic reforms in less developed countries. The ideas within this literature soon infiltrated other areas of policy making where responsibility for problems was shared across a range of interdependent, multi-scalar government and non-government agencies. As a result, a range of advice was produced on 'good governance' at a variety of levels and in different policy domains (e.g. Colebatch 2002, Commission of the European Communities 2001, Good Governance Advisory Group 2004, Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services [(UK)] 2004, Thompson and Pforr 2005).

The shift in focus from government to governance is one element of the broader processes of political modernisation and the profound restructuring of relations between governments, business and community interests commencing in the mid to latter part of the twentieth century (e.g. Giddens 1990, Ladeur 2004, Madanipour, Healey and Hull 2001, Pierre 2000, Rhodes 1997b). Passing through this threshold to rethink these relations has had important implications for both theoretical understandings of planning and policy practices. In essence, the concept of governance reflects the increasingly blurred boundaries between government and the range of business and community interests that contributed to policy making. Government is no longer conceptualised as a separate sphere of activity; public administration is not separate to politics; and bureaucrats are not independent arbitrators of public interest and 'good' policy. The breaking down of these ideas has led to the realisation that private interests infiltrate and are not separate to processes of policy making. Exactly how these interests play out, the relationships between actors and agencies, the quality of their communication and characteristics of their relationships have spawned a wave of research into governance. In this sense, governance is 'driven by and performed through a nexus of complex interactions, linking the spheres of the state, the economy and civil society in diverse, if typically highly uneven, ways' (Healey 2007: 17).

This breakdown of collective interests into subsets of interests and values has challenged governments to find new ways of governing. In this context, Saul (1997) argues that there has been a devaluation in traditional notions of public interest, a fundamental tenet of public policy in democratic systems of government, in favour of individual and private self interests. However, Saul's critique of the contemporary neoliberal state and his concern over what he sees as the rampant infiltration of private sector interests into policy making is balanced against the optimism encapsulated in Giddens' (1998) 'third way' politics.

### *A Crisis in Democracy*

In the third way politics, Giddens (1998) acknowledges that there is a crisis in democracy; that it is not democratic enough and that there is a third way (after government orientation characterised by modernity and business-orientation demonstrated under neoliberalism). He argues that third way politics should reinforce social justice, equality and freedom and acknowledges that collectivism

and overarching definitions of public interest encapsulated under modernity are problematic. Moreover, the freedom to take control of one's life is paramount to creativity, innovation and societal improvement. New relationships between individuals, communities and governments are needed that embody the rights of individuals and communities to engage in decision-making. These calls herald a 'post-liberal' form of democracy that can accommodate new forms of governance (Sorensen and Torfing 2005).

This renewed emphasis on social justice, equality and freedom transfers authority to individuals and communities to make decisions, but Giddens argues this authority should be exercised in the context of inclusive participation. This re-democratisation project acknowledges the contribution of small groups and voluntary associations in getting things done, but that civic engagement has traditionally involved 'the more affluent strata' of civil society (1998: 84). To counter the emphasis on elite and corporate interests under neoliberalism, Giddens calls for governments to repair the imbalance, and to encourage bottom-up decision-making and new forms of local autonomy.

The term 'good governance' is used to denote more democratic, transparent and legitimate ways of governing. It requires an effective political framework conducive to achieving shared goals and joint ownership over decision-making. It requires an efficient state administration and a strong civil society with the capacity to engage in constructive dialogue and problem-solving (Hirst 2000). As a concept, it is closely aligned with the objectives of the third way politics because it embodies new relationships and organisational structures between civil society, business and government (Pierre 2000, White 2001). Moreover, it involves multiple interest groups engaging with a more open and transparent government than has traditionally been the case in centralised bureaucracies. In an ideal situation, policy networks, as a new form of governance, will be democratic if all members of the network are afforded equal opportunities to participate in, and influence political decisions.

More recently, a second generation of governance and networks literature has emerged, stimulated by observations that networked governance may not promote democratic ideals but may indeed reinforce exclusionary and anti-democratic policy making practices. The need to investigate and understand the influence of networks on the democratic nature of policy making and the impact of governance on aspects such as accountability and transparency has stimulated a range of critical analyses of governance (e.g. Klijn and Skelcher 2007, Pierre 2000, Sorensen and Torfing 2005). While the studies that are emanating from this critical perspective are still emerging, they nevertheless reveal that governance processes tend to be performed via routine processes and practices, such as within a regional tourism board, and it is often the case that these contexts are embedded with power relations and cultural perspectives that tend to reproduce similar discourses and outcomes.



## Liminality and Progress in Tourism Planning and Policy

Thresholds of understanding punctuate the historical development of tourism planning and policy research and practice. The various stages in the development of tourism planning and policy in terms of broader shifts in the social sciences have been discussed elsewhere (Dredge and Jenkins 2007a, b). That previous discussion attempts to capture broad-scale changes in thinking about fundamental issues such as the role of government and public administration, and relationships between economy, politics and government and the impact of these changes on tourism planning and policy research and practice. It is a history predominantly drawn from English language literature and from the perspective of developed western economies and democratic political systems. It therefore reflects one version of history that may or may not be experienced in other contexts, but it nevertheless provides important groundwork on which this present chapter builds.

Discussions within the field illustrate how difficult it is to identify seminal or influential works in tourism in general, let alone particular subfields. In February 2010, a *Tourism Research Information Network* (TRINet) posting called for subscribers to identify the most influential texts in tourism. It prompted a number of postings with suggested readings. Significantly, however, the request drew proportionally more postings commenting on the difficulty of answering such a question. The difficulties in attempting to identify seminal or influential readings for tourism included that ‘influence’ could not be defined using citation data as this was not necessarily a measure of influence nor quality; that such debates tend to focus on influence *within* the tourism field, and that contributions that influence *external* fields are often not acknowledged; that ‘influence’ is a dynamic concept akin to hitting a moving target; and that more recent research tended to be highly contextualised and whilst it may be highly influential in a specific context, overall ‘influence’ on the field was difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

Despite the difficulty of identifying key influential papers in the broader field, there are nevertheless various texts and papers that, when put together, signal liminality in tourism planning and policy. Table 2.1 identifies a number of papers that the authors identify as having a collective influence in their own understandings of tourism policy and planning. The table starts in the 1960s when tourism planning and policy began to receive greater attention from governments and when tourism scholarship also started to emerge. To be clear, we do not claim that these works are inclusive, definitive or universal; we are aware that our own subjectivities influence selection. However, when put together, it is possible to see a shift in thinking about tourism planning and policy.

Table 2.1 illustrates that from the 1960s to the 1980s modernist views about planning and policy also influenced tourism. The seminal works of Gunn offered structured planning approaches resembling the rational comprehensive approaches found in the broader fields of planning and policy, and spatial models for the planning of destination regions. These model planning processes were reiterated by Mill and Morrison (1985), who suggested five steps for tourism planning:

**Table 2.1 Important works in tourism planning and policy and their contributions**

<b>Seminal work</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Liminal contributions</b>
<i>Vacationscape</i>	Gunn, C.	1965 1988	Spatial planning designing destination regions
<i>The Politics of Tourism in Asia</i>	Richter, G.	1989	The political dimensions of tourism
<i>Tourism: A Community Approach</i>	Murphy, P.E.	1985	Ecological approach to tourism planning that balances community, environment and economic issues to enhance long-term success and survival (p. xvi) Systems planning approach
<i>Tourism Planning</i>	Gunn, C. with Turgut Var	1979 1988 1994 2002	Rational comprehensive systems approach to tourism planning with a focus on the destination level
<i>The Tourism System</i>	Mill, R. and Morrison, A.	1984 2002	The tourism system
<i>Tourism Planning</i>	Inskeep, E.	1991	Comprehensive integrated sustainable approach' that reflect a modernist, rational-scientific approach
<i>The Politics of Tourism</i>	Hall, C.M.	1994	Tourism and Politics: Policy, Power and Place
<i>Tourism and Public Policy</i>	Hall, C.M. and Jenkins, J.	1995	Policy making processes, role of government, values in policy, roles and power of interest groups
<i>Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships</i>	Hall, C.M.	2000	Sustainable tourism
<i>Tourism Collaboration and Partnerships: Politics, Practice and Sustainability</i>	Bramwell, B. and Lane, B. (eds)	2000	Theoretical and practical explorations of collaboration and partnerships building (from a special issue of <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> 1999)

background analysis phase; detailed research and analysis phase; synthesis phase; goal-setting, strategy selection and objective-setting phase; and the plan development phase. According to Mill and Morrison:

The first phase in the tourism planning process could be classified as being a situational analysis that produces the basic direction for the succeeding phases ... The final phase of the tourism planning process is the development of the plan itself ... Once it has been laid out in this detail, the tourism plan is then written up in formal reports, either by a private tourism consulting firm or by public sector tourism officials (1985: 292, 309, 312).



Around the same time, Murphy (1985) published the renowned *Tourism: A Community Approach*. In it, Murphy described the evolution of approaches to tourism planning noting that early tourism planning approaches tended to be isolated and site-specific. By the time Murphy wrote his book, he had observed a shift towards a more integrated approach whereby external ramifications and influences were incorporated into tourism planning processes (1985: 159–63). Murphy also noted the politics involved in master planning, and called for ‘more balanced goal formation and planning within a community setting’ (1985: 163). Indeed, and despite not using the term ‘sustainable’, because his book predated the seminal *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), Murphy called for an ecological approach to tourism planning and policy.

Even this brief overview suggests that the technical, process-driven tourism master planning approach that dominated throughout the 1960s and 1970s was becoming unstuck, as the role of power and politics increasingly captured the attention of tourism planning and policy researchers. In the broader literature, by the mid-1970s, planning and policy scholars were well aware of the nature of planning processes as a technical exercise within a political setting, yet widely published tourism planning and policy models were largely ‘rational comprehensive’, with few exceptions. According to Inskeep (1991: 11), ‘The process for preparing tourism plans at the national and regional levels – based on the sustainable, integrated and implementable approaches ... can be described as a step-by-step procedure’. Interestingly, despite already detailed discussions arising about tourism systems in tourism journals and books, Inskeep’s work failed to encapsulate the politics of planning and policy making and made only limited reference to selected texts.

Curiously, attachment to a rational, technical planning process continued despite criticism that the political nature of tourism planning made this process somewhat difficult to implement. Hall and Page (2000: 111), for example, argued:

The process of tourism planning should follow a logical procedure that addresses relevant development opportunities and problems. It should propose future scenarios that meet the objectives of interest groups ... Typically, planning commences with the delineation of the planning parameters and objectives. A systematic procedure then follows a step-by-step process resulting in a set of recommendations that are endorsed by the client.

Yet Hall (e.g. 1994, 1995, 2000) in particular, had previously described the complexity and politics of tourism policy and planning and denounced rational approaches.

Outside the tourism studies field, it was widely acknowledged that being comprehensive was an important ideal, but it was, in reality, unachievable. Planning and policy making were necessarily bounded by a range of factors, such as what was feasible within the limitations of the process, the nature of the information available and the expertise of the personnel involved. Indeed, by the

1980s critiques of modernity and positivism had gained considerable momentum. Notions that there were overarching solutions were increasingly dismantled, and in their place researchers started to appreciate that tourism planning and policy development took place in a politically charged and often highly volatile environment. The stuck place of modernity – and the adherence to rational comprehensive tourism planning processes – was gradually being dismantled. Richter's (1989) work was particularly important in this regard, exploring the politics behind tourism planning and development in Asia. Moreover, tourism planners and policy analysts became increasingly aware of their own values and interests in framing issues and in identifying solutions (e.g. Hall and Jenkins 1995). There was a shift away from developing model processes towards an examination of the way tourism planning and policy actually happened.

This shift in the tourism literature is best demonstrated in the work of Bramwell (2004), Bramwell and Lane (2000) and Jamal and Getz (1995, 1999) among others. Using case studies, these authors demonstrated that collaboration is a difficult process; power varies among individuals and groups; there are different frames or ways of understanding any issue; and barriers to knowledge, learning and conflict enhance and empower some interests over others. The role of planners and policy makers is to be aware of these nuances, to manage the process and to ensure as far as possible that their decisions and actions are reflective and proactive. Another liminal space had been entered; a shift from government to governance was reflected in the way tourism planning was conceptualised.

Liminality does not necessarily involve a linear process of thinking and learning. The increasing postdisciplinarity of tourism as a field of study means that there are an increasing variety of contributions from different disciplines that enrich holistic understandings, and when combined, these can have a liminal effect on the reader. Tourism policy and planning benefits enormously from these varied contributions. Provocative questions are beginning to emerge about who wins and loses in tourism, and how tourism planning and policy development can influence these outcomes. Issues of ethics, public interest, social justice and democracy all intersect with tourism planning and policy development. These issues are generating another wave of tourism planning literature and herald that other episodes of liminality are to come.

### **Trouble in the Field?**

Despite enthusiasm for this second generation of research from which a sizeable body of research has already started to emerge, there are some concerns over the departure from some ongoing and fundamental concerns of planning and policy. Arts and van Tatenhove (2004) voice such concerns acknowledging that this research has introduced a new vocabulary but at the same time an important focus has been lost:

... the new vocabulary does indeed capture current developments in policy practices, [but] it also – in our view – tends to overlook phenomena that were so well analysed by the old vocabulary. One example is power, often neglected in the governance literature (see also Hewson and Sinclair, 1999). However, as Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 75) note, ‘the concept of power is perhaps the most fundamental in the whole of political science: the political process is the shaping, distribution, and exercise of power’ (Arts and van Tatenhove 2004: 340).

Indeed, in addition to power, we would also add that the role of government, constructions of rationality and public interest, and the role of knowledge in policy making are all aspects deserving of greater attention. However, most contemporary research is anchored in the neoliberal dogma of public–private partnerships, outsourcing, collaboration and joined-up government. Uncritical (and often unacknowledged) acceptance of these neoliberal values tended to dominate research in the early 2000s, however a second wave of interest is emerging in questions such as: What is the role of government? What can government do? What is the public interest? In whose interests is policy made?

Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) also raise questions over the practical significance of some explanatory research, observing that some have taken it as an opportunity to offer a counter narrative but that little direction for practice has emerged. That is, while providing some useful description of how things are, the frameworks and concepts that have emerged have not provided insights into which institutional structures and governance arrangements work best in certain situations, nor how policy makers can achieve active citizenship and democracy (Klijn and Skelcher 2007, Pielke 2004).

In our view, the new vocabulary of planning and policy research is rich with metaphors, heuristic devices and dialectical concepts that help to frame research. However, terms such as networks, policy communities, collaboration and governance are dialectical concepts and cannot be tightly defined. They are open to interpretation, determined by the researchers’ ontological and epistemological preferences. This gives rise to a rich and creative landscape for research, but at the same time, there are risks that the body of research will become self-indulgent case studies with little opportunity to extract meaningful insights for practice. Moreover, such concepts also appear to be underpinned by critiques of bureaucracy, government and rational-technical versions of policy making. We believe they can offer more.

### **Concluding Remarks: Entering a Liminal Space for Research and Practice**

So far, this chapter has been dedicated to developing an appreciation for the evolution of planning and policy, and in doing so, policy making has been cast as value-laden and complex, taking place in a variety of fluid spaces. Policy making takes place within government and on the edges of organisations; it takes

place at rallies and in restaurants, boardrooms and cabinets (Hajer 2003). And according to Healey (2007: 17) policy is made ‘not necessarily in the cauldron of ideological politics, but in the evolution of knowledge and frames of interpretation that develop within policy communities’. As a result, there has also been a move away from universal explanations and grand theories towards interpretive and social constructionist explanations of small policy stories, discourses, frames and multiple social constructions of knowledge (Arts and van Tatenhove 2004). These ‘small’ spaces are where knowledge about policy issues are created and communicated, accepted and promulgated. Studies of multi-scalar governance remind us that policy is also made in the fluid spaces of opportunity that exist between governments at global, national and local scales.

Interpretive, social constructionist accounts of planning and policy making provide an important avenue for understanding planning and policy practices, and how formal and informal actors, agents and arenas interact, and how knowledge is produced, debated and acculturated. The aim, in this sense, is not to produce overarching theories, ‘truths’ or predictive models of policy making (and associated caveats as to their applicability in other contexts), but to reflect upon the world of practice and provide coherent explanations of complex events (Fischer 2003, Sharp and Richardson 2001). Such explanations provide insights into the social experience of planning and policy making, and these meanings and explanations can then, in turn, be assessed in terms of their position in larger patterns or a social system.

The use of language and approaches to stories and story telling, which we discuss in Chapter 3, are important tools in exploring the liminal spaces of tourism planning and policy. Stories expose aspects and relationships not previously considered, and they can shed light on the relevance of other frames of knowing. Stories that use and explain theoretical concepts help to contextualise understandings by allowing readers to draw connections between concepts and practice. They highlight variations in the application of those concepts as a result of different contexts and institutional arrangements, and at the same time, promote a critical and reflective capacity within individuals. Stories also help to shed light on the theatre of tourism planning and policy and the skills and capacities of individuals working within these arenas. In short, stories offer a much needed device to assemble, disassemble and reassemble understandings of the messy world of practice and to unpack threshold concepts. Along the way, theories and concepts can be explained and developed reiteratively. Individuals, whether they are involved in the practice of tourism planning and policy making, or researching its messiness, will draw insights, apply lessons and formulate their own understandings, and in the process, stuck places will become unstuck.

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# Chapter 3

## Stories of Practice

Dianne Dredge, John Jenkins and Michelle Whitford

### **Introduction**

In this chapter we posit that stories of practice – stories that provide insights and encourage reflection and learning – can assist readers in reaching thresholds of understanding. Stories of tourism planning and policy practice that are critically scaffolded with concepts and theories from the literature can illustrate how complex problems come to be and what might be done about them. Stories also have the capacity to provide researchers with a dose of realism and a grounding in how seemingly irrational and unorganised planning and policy can lead to good outcomes; but also how apparently rational, scientific policy making can also end in unintended negative impacts. Of course such stories reflect the ‘entanglements’ of the authors in terms of the influences, ideologies and positioning that shape their choices. Where clearly articulated, these entanglements can be the springboard for reflection, critical engagement and learning (e.g. Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson and Collins 2005, Harris, Wilson and Ateljevic 2007), all of which underpin liminal thresholds of knowledge building.

In Chapter 2, the evolution of tourism policy and planning and the concept of liminal thresholds of knowledge were discussed. From this overview, it is evident that knowledge about what tourism planning and policy is (i.e. ontologies of tourism planning and policy) and our ways of knowing about it (i.e. epistemologies of tourism planning and policy) are not only interrelated but also go hand in hand with our choice of research approach and methods. In this chapter, detailed consideration of storytelling approaches, the methods used, the choice of literary devices, style of presentation and how to make sense and bridge the theory–practice divide are key considerations. But before proceeding, it is useful to background this discussion with an overview of the debates about research approaches in the social sciences more generally, and which have had important flow-on effects in tourism research.

### **The Battlelines between Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

The shifts in thinking about how the world really is (i.e. ontological questions) over the course of the twentieth century (see Chapter 2) promoted considerable discussion about how we should approach knowing about the world (i.e. questions

about epistemology) and what sort of research methods were appropriate (i.e. questions of methodology). The idea that science was somehow pure, value-free and able to provide some higher-order knowledge finds its roots in the ideas of Plato, who argued that contemplative thinking was superior to practical action. But it was during the Enlightenment, when science, neutrality and rationality were bundled together as an alternative to blind faith in the Church, that this idea was consolidated (Proctor 1991). The epoch of modernity followed. This period was characterised by a belief that scientific methods and positivism could reveal a higher order of truth and pure knowledge. The focus was on the natural sciences, where rational, value-free, scientific approaches dominated over alternative forms of knowledge and knowledge making.

The modern social sciences, as an attempt to understand moral aspects of society, started to emerge as a separate field in the eighteenth century, although origins can be found in the works of classical Greek philosophers in the areas of art, poetry and politics. By the turn of the twentieth century modern social sciences had diversified to the point that a range of disciplines, characterised by distinct objectives and methods, had emerged (e.g. sociology, philosophy, history, political science and so on). Under the influences of scientific reasoning, quantitative research methods came to dominate most social science disciplines. There is evidence that those trained in such techniques became gatekeepers policing their respective fields as they progressed through their academic careers (Becher and Trowler 2001). The consolidation of quantitative methods as the dominant paradigm had been achieved. In many areas of the social sciences, the dominance of the large N sampling techniques to describe and characterise issues, build universal cause and consequence explanations and evaluate actions and outcomes illustrates the point (de Leon 1998).

Tourism studies was a late arrival in the social sciences. Bourgeoning growth in tourism from the 1960s onwards was a result of economic growth and investment, technological developments that improved transport capabilities, and increased interest and connectedness of the world. Travel and tourism became big business and governments were eager to create employment opportunities and attract export income. Principally born out of a perceived need to increase professionalism and address industry needs, tourism programs gained momentum from the 1970s (Riley and Love 2000). Early researchers in the field came from a variety of disciplines and fields of study (but predominantly anthropology, geography, leisure and recreation) and they brought with them the particular theories, techniques, methods, concepts and approaches of their fields. In general, positivist paradigms characterised by quantitative approaches and techniques prevailed in early tourism studies. However, there was little sophistication in methodologies or statistical analyses in this early period (Dann, Nash and Pearce 1988, Reid and Andereck 1989). The seminal contributions of sociologists such as Erik Cohen (e.g. 1974, 1979, 1984) and anthropologists such as Valene L. Smith (1978) and Dennison Nash (1977, 1981) stand apart in terms of the qualitative research methods adopted (e.g. ethnography, participant observation, interviews and so on which are common in those disciplines).

In an analysis of the field, Riley and Love (2000) observe that interpretive qualitative research has lagged behind. They argued that three key factors impeded qualitative research: editors and reviewers were not familiar with qualitative techniques and treated such work 'with suspicion'; few qualitative researchers exposed their methods so it was difficult to evaluate the quality of the research; and qualitative research results were difficult to translate into improved practices (Riley and Love 2000).

In the broader social sciences, and largely as a result of the dominance of positivism, the scientific community had been chiding qualitative researchers for being insufficiently rigorous and not adhering to scientific methods and standards with regard to the predictive capacity and generalisability of research findings (e.g. see Bailey, White and Pain 1999, Decrop 2004, Denzin and Lincoln 2003 for a discussion of these debates). According to quantitative researchers, research needed to be value-neutral for it to have scientific status and reach a higher order of knowing; the researcher needed to remove their values and exercise a kind of rationality over the methods chosen in order to disclose a higher truth. They argued that qualitative research was nothing more than anecdotes, incapable of providing universal truths and predictive capabilities (e.g. see Long, White, Friedman and Brazeal 2000). Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, are more likely to embrace their values, entanglements and the situatedness of their research: no one is value neutral or objective and research is produced within a landscape of macro and micro influences that shape how the research takes form, is expressed and disseminated (or not).

The main argument amongst qualitative researchers is founded in observations that quantitative research does not reveal insights into how and why things happen (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). More recently, other researchers have drawn attention to the cultural politics of producing tourism knowledge arguing that the dominance of positivism and narrowly defined disciplinary boundaries have limited the development of tourism research (e.g. Ateljevic et al. 2005, Botterill 2001, Hollinshead and Jamal 2007, Jamal and Hollinshead 2001). Such understandings are fundamental to improving action; and thus qualitative research into the nature, complexity and interrelatedness of the social world is necessary:

Contemporary social science is overly quantitative, obsessed with abstract models that have few real-life applications, too limited in scope – leaving out normative questions, questions that cannot be quantified, questions that hinge on human agency and cultural meaning – and steeped in an arcane ('scientific') rhetoric. It reads poorly and does not satisfy (Gerring 2001: xiii).

Responding to these calls, during the 1980s and 1990s a body of research began to emerge that vigorously and systematically defended qualitative research as playing an important liminal role in the social sciences (e.g. Gerring 2001, Ragin 1994, Taylor and Bogdan 1984, Yin 2003). It is not the objective of this chapter to synthesise these arguments and justifications here; suffice to say that, over the last 30 years there has been a strengthening of the debate around the aims of the

social sciences and the basis for how things are known. Dogmatic claims that the social sciences should emulate the natural sciences and produce results that can be replicated, predict consequences and be representative of larger populations have given way to the view that no single research approach can reveal a higher order of knowledge, a more rigorous explanation, or an ultimate truth about the social world. The softening of these battlelines has allowed creative and innovative thinking about methodological pluralism to flourish.

## The Production of Knowledge

Contemporary debates over the basis of knowledge and its foundations in values, politics and morality can be traced back to Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979). Lyotard's report is a review on the state of scientific knowledge in the late twentieth century (commissioned by Conseil des Universités du Québec), but has become an influential treatise on the postmodern production and legitimisation of knowledge. For Lyotard, scientific knowledge was a discourse which was produced and consumed and, in which, values and agendas were embedded. Knowledge was not an end in itself; it was produced with a particular objective in mind, within institutions that had agendas, and by researchers who were influenced by a range of factors beyond the pursuit of knowledge itself. In other words, a mix of values, rules and protocols that have institutional, disciplinary and individual dimensions shape the production of knowledge. Scientists have no more of a claim to truth than philosophers or historians and scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge. In making this claim, Lyotard called for a move to counter grand narratives or meta-narratives – the sort of universal truths that quantitative rational scientists were looking for – with an appreciation of micro-narratives and alternative forms of knowledge production.

Lyotard has himself been accused of producing a meta-narrative, and helping to unleash a movement which has turned upon itself and achieved the reverse of what it hoped to achieve (i.e. polyphony of voices, participation, hybridity in the corporate machine). Nevertheless, his influence has been profound (Boje 2006). Lyotard helped to empower an interpretative and constructionist research agenda, and within this, narrative and storytelling have become increasingly accepted approaches to knowledge creation. According to Lyotard (1979), all science is a type of narrative, a form of storytelling that employs language, terminology, rules, protocols and procedures. Scientists are simply storytellers relating stories and plying the tools of their trade – the theories, concepts and frameworks of their fields – in order to maintain their privileged status as possessing a higher form of knowledge:

For science to maintain its privileged status, it has usually tried to deny its own involvement in storytelling, denigrating storytelling as the epitome of the unscientific, the very thing that science must fight against, and expel from civilised discourse and education systems (Denning 2009).

These broad debates in the social sciences have fuelled calls for more reflective considerations of the language game that researchers bring to tourism research and the values embedded in the production and consumption of research. Hollinshead and Jamal (2007) herald an ever expanding portfolio of qualitative approaches available to researchers, but at the same time implore qualitative researchers to employ ‘a third ear’ to actively, critically and reflectively sense the field in which they engage. They argue that researchers themselves are perceptual, diagnostic and inferential resources; they are implicated in the research, so how they deploy themselves within the field has important implications for the understandings that emerge. They call for explicit attention to matters of voice, reflexivity, audience and text by qualitative researchers. Similarly, Ateljevic et al. (2005: 10) identify four (but by no means the only) entanglements that influence the production of knowledge:

[T]he ‘ideologies and legitimacies’ which govern and guide our tourism research outputs; the ‘research accountability’ environment which decides what is acceptable as tourism research; our ‘positionality’ as embodied researchers whose lives, experiences and worldviews impact on our studies, and our ‘intersectionality with the researched’ as we carry out our research relationships with the people that we profess to study.

Following this vein, Tribe (2006: 361) draws attention to the way knowledge is constructed arguing for a ‘critical stance towards [tourism research] that emphasises the fact that research is conducted in a world where language, concepts, and well-formed disciplinary rules already exist’. Echoing Jamal and Hollinshead’s (2001) observation, Tribe argues that factors are at work that lead researchers to make choices that work to legitimise certain views and voices; not all aspects of tourism have ‘equal opportunity to be established in the canon of knowledge’ (2006: 376). Tribe invokes a metaphorical ‘knowledge force-field’ to explain how the phenomenon of tourism is translated into tourism knowledge. Five factors operate in this knowledge force-field: person, rules, position, ends and ideology, to mediate how knowledge is produced and consumed. These discussions in the social sciences in general, and tourism studies in particular, have contributed to an increasingly critical and reflective awareness of how tourism knowledge is created in some quarters. This discussion highlights the need for the authors of the stories that follow to be mindful of the range of macro and micro forces that shape their case study research and the way it is presented.

### **Softening of the Battlelines**

Interest in maintaining these battlelines between quantitative and qualitative research waned from the early 2000s. Researchers began to realise that the debate between what had effectively been conceptualised as polar opposites – quantitative and qualitative research – was taking attention away from more important



issues. Both quantitative research and qualitative research were embedded with peculiarities, values, regimes of knowledge and power. Neither promised a higher order of truth, just a different one. It was time to move on.

Similar debates have characterised tourism with several important contributions fuelling interest and adding legitimacy to qualitative approaches (e.g. see Etchner and Jamal 1997, Phillimore and Goodson 2004). Jamal and Hollinshead (2001: 70) argue that misconceptions and limitations in the way that we have viewed tourism in the past, and interrelatedly, how we conceptualise the task of tourism research, have served ‘to ensnare qualitative inquiry into a “forbidden zone” of under-served possibilities’. The very nature of tourism and the inter- and multidisciplinary influences upon it mean that it is not a distinct social practice; research questions cannot be easily isolated nor simply aligned with quantitative or qualitative methodologies; and the drive for ‘scientific’ research that seeks out truth only limits fuller understandings of the situatedness of tourism as a phenomenon. On the basis of this critique, Jamal and Hollinshead (2001: 78) call for a dialogue in travel and tourism research which includes ‘multiple approaches, theories, practices, methods, techniques that can assist those of us in tourism studies to do justice to the research topic and research questions we formulate and pursue’.

Building on the observations of the above researchers, here the notion of liminality finds resonance. What matters is how research and knowledge are given meaning within the lives and actions of those that read and reflect; what matters is how research is socialised and dominant ways of understanding emerge; what matters is how knowledge generated in research is translated into human intelligence and then action; and how this action in turn shapes tourism. In other words, the research process and the values and decisions embedded along the way generate certain bounded understandings. How this knowledge is gathered and translated both at individual and group levels provides the opportunity for liminal moments to emerge. But such creativity in tourism research practice remains on the margins of funded tourism research. The relationship and influence of industry conceptions of tourism, and the values and priorities reflected in industry-driven research remain important but little-acknowledged factors shaping research approaches and methodologies in tourism studies (Dredge and Jenkins 2009, Harris et al. 2007).

### **Industry Influences on Tourism Planning and Policy Research**

As previously noted, tourism planning and policy, as a subfield within tourism studies, emerged out of a variety of industry-driven needs such as the need to increase professionalism; the need to improve management of tourism operations; the need to improve economic and employment benefits; the need to improve operational efficiencies; and the need to improve marketing and product development. As the wider field of tourism studies has matured, methodological sophistication and greater

critical reflection and awareness have emerged (Tribe 2004). However, in tourism planning and policy there remains a struggle between industry's utilitarian focus and scholarly research that seeks to better understand how policy is made, what influences policy and who wins and loses. This struggle is exacerbated by research funding regimes that have tended to promote industry research needs and research entities that are dominated by industry board members.

The Australian case of the Co-operative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism (CRC-ST) is a case in point. The CRC-ST, by its own claims, was the largest tourism research entity in the world but was unsuccessful in securing additional funding and ceased operation in July 2010. The Cooperative Research Centre program, under which the CRC-ST was funded, is a federal government program designed 'to enhance Australia's industrial, commercial and economic growth through the development of sustained, user-driven, cooperative public-private research centres that achieve high levels of outcomes in adoption and commercialisation' (Commonwealth of Australia 2008: xiv). Put simply, the Australian government's cooperative research centre program does not call for funded entities to improve the scholarly stock of knowledge; and it has often tended to summarise existing knowledge without advancing the field in any applied, conceptual or theoretical terms. Thus, a division exists between the academic research community seeking to meet research performance ends under the impending Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) initiatives and CRC industry-ends based research. The CRC-ST contracted research on the basis that it fulfilled an industry need. However, despite efforts to improve knowledge management and better match research with industry needs, there is little or no publically available evidence to suggest that it was able to feed innovation in tourism practices. Moreover, tourism indicators have remained stagnant over the last ten years and the industry is as fragmented as ever. CRC-ST outputs have rarely advanced theory in the tourism studies field and much of the research (i.e. research that provides snapshots of market segments, visitor characteristics, management tools and frameworks) will date rapidly.

Much of the research from the CRC-ST adopted a modern industrial worldview, which sits uneasily against current theoretical developments that are being increasingly adopted in the social sciences more generally. In other words, the tourism industrial system that underpins much of the CRC-ST research is a conceptual frame embedded with assumptions about tourism production and consumption, products and markets, and supply and demand relationships. It is a conceptual framework that is increasingly questioned (e.g. see Higgins-Desboilles 2006, Leiper 2008). The CRC-ST and its Board of Directors (derived from industry) set the language game and shaped the cultural politics for the majority of funded Australian tourism research since its inception. In doing so, it appears to have fostered increased publication outputs by particular researchers and networks of researchers all with similar research approaches and worldviews (i.e. an analysis of Australian and New Zealand authorship networks between 1999 and 2005 certainly suggests this conclusion is plausible (see Benckendorff 2010). Further detailed analysis of the CRC-ST would likely ascertain the effectiveness of the

CRC as a policy initiative. In the meantime, it is clear that through the CRC-ST some individuals had the opportunity to consolidate their role as gatekeepers and promote certain types and approaches to tourism research and, arguably, inhibit the production of alternative forms of tourism knowledge creation.

### **Tourism Planning and Policy in a Post-Disciplinary Context**

The discussion thus far has outlined the divisions, tensions and agendas within the social sciences with respect to how tourism planning and policy knowledge is produced and consumed. By now, readers will have developed an appreciation for the historical tensions between qualitative and quantitative research, insights into the influences upon the production of knowledge, and the structures, processes and values that influence how knowledge is created and for what end purpose. In this context, it is also useful to consider the power of disciplinary structures and associated modes of thinking that shape our knowledge production in tourism planning and policy.

For centuries, the traditional lines that divide up the social sciences into disciplines, sub-disciplines and fields of study have been institutionalised in universities via organisational structures and, more recently, performance measures. These structures have been likened to ‘tunnels of inquiry’ where problems have been investigated using fixed structures and disciplinary frameworks (Hellstrom, Jacob and Barlebo Wenneberg 2003). According to Gerring (2001), these traditional divisions create academic cubbyholes in which writing, publishing and conference attendance has reinforced academic territoriality and narrow disciplinary engagement. Methodological preferences and biases within disciplines have only reinforced these divisions leading to a type of social science that reduces knowledge production into ‘information bites’, or excerpts of information about broader phenomena.

The conceptualisation of tourism as an industry and as a tool for economic development is a case in point. A liminal moment in the development of the field emerged around the 1980s when this business or industry framing gained momentum. Originally conceptualised as a subset of leisure studies in early definitions (e.g. see Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987, Smith and Goodbey 1991), tourism became separated from these early origins. A business focus meant that tourism was increasingly (but not always) housed within business schools and faculties, and business research approaches and methods began to dominate. Arguably, these shifts have forever shaped the trajectory of tourism studies and have heavily influenced the way research is undertaken, the methods and approaches used, and how ‘legitimate’ tourism research is defined.

This tunnelled approach has been found to be inadequate in understanding complex problems such as those encountered in tourism planning and policy. Law (2004) argues that, in trying to describe and analyse things in a coherent way, the social sciences have made a mess of trying to make sense of things that are messy,

diffuse and complex; the methods, rules and frameworks that we employ (and derived from disciplinary foundations) have in fact helped to produce the reality that we understand, but this is not necessarily helping us understand better. Law calls upon researchers to explore other realities and understandings by drawing upon the rich hinterland of pre-existing social and material realities to bundle and reassemble in different ways. These views have been increasingly supported by those seeking a post-disciplinary science; an approach that adopts a creative and flexible approach to investigating problems and that embodies interdisciplinarity and a greater scholarly tolerance for different views and methods (e.g. Latour 2005). These currents, when taken hand-in-hand with the rejection of universalism and grand narratives, have stimulated a surge in empirical, contextualised research and a focus on demonstrating the practical relevance of theory (Flyvbjerg 2006). Seidman and Alexander (2001) liken this to a kind of 'up-shifting' in the relevance and legitimacy of contextualised, grounded, empirical research such as case studies.

Tourism, as a multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary phenomenon, has struggled to carve out its scholarly territory and produce a coherent body of scholarly work that might correspond with disciplinary status (Etchner and Jamal 1997, Tribe 1997, 2004). Indeed, on the basis of the present discussion this may even be an antiquated project. However, if contemporary arguments are given weight, then the possibilities of post-disciplinary tourism studies becomes an interesting prospect. The call for post-disciplinary is borne out of a need to transcend disciplinary boundaries, but does not imply the granting of academic free rein or a dismissal of previous disciplinary-based knowledge. It allows researchers to draw academic insights, ideas and connections from other areas, and the freedom to pursue these and not be shackled by contrived disciplinary boundaries (Coles, Hall and Duval 2006).

The possibility of post-disciplinary studies of tourism is explored by Coles et al. (2006). These researchers note that the field is becoming increasingly complex; tourism, leisure and recreation overlap and intersect and are part of much larger social, economic, environmental and political systems. Tourism is not easily isolated from social and economic lives; changing policy or redirecting resources to one part of the tourism system inevitably affects other parts of the broader social system. In other words, in order to understand complex problems, researchers are increasingly required to cross disciplinary boundaries, draw from a range of research methods and approaches, and appreciate different language games. These discussions have empowered post-disciplinary forms of enquiry that are built around investigations of complex, empirical problems embedded in rich contexts. The definition of such problems is fluid, transcending both disciplinary boundaries and traditional methodologies.

Further, the way issues are perceived, constructed and socialised across different sectors means that tourism, and its constituent research problems, has also become part of a broader range of questions that go well beyond business and industry concerns to underpin much contemporary social science research. For

example, questions about the role of government, relationships between corporate interests, government and community, and who produces and is responsible for managing the impacts of neoliberalism, globalisation and political modernisation, are all questions that tourism planning and policy researchers grapple with. But these are also the 'big questions' being addressed by researchers in a range of other social science disciplines and fields of study. Accordingly, research focusing on empirical real-world problems incorporating practitioners' and researchers' knowledge and understandings can result in the blurring of research problem boundaries as much as they blur disciplinary and sectoral boundaries.

Post-disciplinarity and methodological pluralism are especially appealing in empirical studies as they represent opportunities to explore complex problems. Breaking down the barriers between disciplines and choosing research approaches and techniques suitable to the issue at hand provide opportunities for innovation and creativity in how questions are framed, how theory is applied, and how research is presented. In this sense, research becomes not only post-disciplinary but also post-academic (Hellstrom et al. 2003).

### **From Tourism Planning and Policy Case Studies to Stories of Practice**

We now turn to consider the role of case studies, stories and storytelling. Case studies have been the subject of much discussion in the research methods literature. We need not recount the influence of positivism and its search for universal truths, generalisability and meta-theory discussed earlier in this chapter. It is sufficient to say that case studies, and particularly single case studies, as a form of empirical, context-driven research have received strong criticism over the years. Flyvbjerg (2006: 221) summarises these concerns as:

1. General theoretical (context-independent knowledge) has been seen to be more valuable than concrete practical (context dependent knowledge).
2. One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case; therefore, individual case studies have been criticised as not contributing to 'scientific' knowledge.
3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, i.e. it's the first stage of a total research process but is not useful in explaining relationships.
4. The case study contains bias; it tends to confirm the researcher's preconceived ideas.
5. It is difficult to summarise and develop general propositions from case studies.

These myths have been debated many times over and case study research has been systematically and vigorously defended in the broader research methods literature. In a study examining the way that case studies have been used in tourism research, Xiao and Smith (2006) concluded that the perception of case studies as atheoretical,

area-specific, one-time and not following methodological procedures was unfair and not justified:

... the majority of these instances [i.e. case studies] have followed scientific research procedures with sound analytic techniques. A substantial proportion of work relied on longitudinal and/or triangulated observations for the published report. Some have come up with moderate to extensive discussions in the literature or theoretical contexts ... (Xiao and Smith 2006: 747).

Our view is that the real value of case studies is highlighted when taken in the context of human learning and the development of intellectual capital. Drawing from the works of Bourdieu (1977) and Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986) on human learning and the development of expertise, there is a developmental leap between the rule-bound knowledge and the fluid and dynamic performance of knowledge demonstrated by experts. Reaching the liminal world that experts inhabit requires the development of and fluency in a range of knowledges that can be called upon dynamically to describe, explore, analyse, communicate and formulate actions.

Flyvbjerg (2006: 222) argues that case studies, and particularly stories of practice, empower readers to develop a type of reflective and fluid knowledge that is prevalent amongst experts:

Common to all experts ... is that they operate on the basis of intimate knowledge of several thousand concrete cases in their areas of expertise. Context-dependent knowledge and expertise and knowledge are at the very heart of expert activity. Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the center of the case study as a research and teaching method ... If people were exclusively trained in context-independent knowledge and rules ... they would remain at the beginner's level in the learning process.

If we take as a basis that all science is a form of storytelling (see Lyotard's contribution discussed earlier in this chapter), which is shaped by the entanglements of the storyteller (see contributions by Hollinshead and Jamal 2007, Ateljevic et al. 2005, Tribe 2006 and others), then case study research is a form of storytelling. In the context of this book, 'stories of practice' is the term adopted because stories acknowledge the researchers' values, ideas, motivations and agendas; and stories engender choice in the ways in which the plot unfolds, the characters are foregrounded or backgrounded, the literary devices are used, and how theory is called upon. The range of interrelated approaches used in reporting include thick description, historical accounts, narratives and stories, grounded theory, ethnography, textual analysis, content analysis and hermeneutics research. Our argument is that case studies are transformed into stories when authors embrace the choices available and clarify their entanglements.

In other words, case studies transformed into stories make powerful learning tools (Hall and Jenkins 1995). The learning experience takes place when readers

intersect with stories at different levels – social, cultural, organizational and personal – eliciting a learning experience that can be transformative (Williams 2006). But for this transformational learning experience to take place, how the case study is built, and how information is structured and articulated into knowledge becomes important. Stories of practice, in this sense, may not be just case studies; they are narratives, constructed out of material events and achievements; they are contextualised in place, in time, in institutional structures and problem domains; and they are directed at a particular community of practice. So what makes a good story?

### **How to Tell a Story: Building Knowledge and Meaning**

Denning (2006), a strong advocate of storytelling in business studies, has identified eight ways in which stories are used to focus learning in business: to spark action; to communicate who you are; to transmit values; to communicate who the firm is; to foster true collaboration; to tame the grapevine; to share knowledge; and to lead people in the future. Sandercock (2003) identifies similar uses in planning, observing that stories can be used: to describe a process; as a catalyst for change; as a foundation; in policy making; in pedagogy; in explanation and justifications; as moral exemplars. In these fields, a good story captures practice, it is told in a way the readers can relate to, and it is told to prompt a reaction or outcome.

The case study approach is ideal for exploring the complex social world in which tourism planning and policy takes place. Tourism planning and policy is performed in practice, it can be explained through stories wherein process of planning, conflict resolution, community protest, resource management and policy evaluation help us understand what planning and policy involves, how it is conducted, who wins and who loses, who holds the power and why policy works or doesn't work. Stories should elicit reader reflection, and they can contribute to reflexive practice in the future. According to Flyvbjerg (2001), good case studies that use, reflect upon and contribute to literature can provide invaluable opportunities for learning and reflection. Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) and Sandercock (2003) argue that good case studies involve interpretation; they expand practical understandings and sharpen critical judgement. Critical, reflective case studies are also useful in questioning hidden assumptions and identifying silent voices, and they cause people and institutions to think and to be reflexive (Considine 2005, Swan 2008).

In the stories contained within this volume, authors tell their stories differently; they employ different research approaches and methods; they call upon different theoretical frameworks and concepts; and they use their story to achieve different ends. Our position is that good case studies require good stories; they involve controversy and conundrums. Good stories also capture critical elements, raise questions about the strengths and weaknesses of literature, and promote engaged and critical reflection upon causal relationships and the outcomes and consequences of policy making. The storyteller has a profoundly important role in the process.



The storyteller is faced with multiple paths, dead ends and sub-plots; they make decisions on who the main characters are, and those in the supporting cast. At times they are required to make decisions about how to translate abstract theories and concepts into practice and how to interpret colloquial knowledge, making it accessible to others. It is a process mediated by their own values, knowledge and end goals. None of the authors in this book would deny that they are complicit in creating their own realities. But these stories also represent a journey of understanding for each of the authors, and the sharing of these journeys is intended to produce understanding. Such an approach encourages deep and reflective learning about the complexities of planning and policy making, and forces us to confront our own personal thresholds of knowledge.

### **Approach to the Stories in this Book**

Having declared in the first chapter our justification for an interpretive and social constructionist approach to knowing and understanding tourism planning and policy, this sets the scene for the way in which the case studies unfold, the research methods used and the way understandings are constructed. The chapter authors had considerable freedom in the type of data and evidence collected, the manner in which data was analysed, the type of theoretical constructs that were used, and the way in which understandings were presented. The only caveat was that authors should feel an alignment to interpretive, social constructionist accounts of tourism planning and policy. They should be willing to tell a story of practice, and in doing so, embrace a complex view of the world. Guidance on the literary devices appropriate to storytelling was provided (e.g. Forester 1993, Sandercock 2003, Stone 1989). While the editorial journey of each chapter was different, it was generally the case that after the first round of drafts, advice was provided with respect to theoretical frameworks and concepts that may be useful in further developing the stories and their explanatory power.

Not surprisingly, most authors embraced mixed methods data collection. Primary sources of data included interviews, surveys, statistics, archival searches, participant observation and GIS mapping. Authors engaged in the stories in different ways. In some cases, authors were active participants in the episode of tourism policy and planning that played out and had an influence over the policy outcomes (e.g. chapters by Grybovych, Hafermann and Mazzoni, Vargas Sánchez and Dredge, and Hull and Huijbens). In other stories, researchers engaged with participants using ethnographic techniques (e.g. chapters by Clarke and Raffay, Theerapapisit, Dutra, Haworth and Taboada) using their own values, histories and experiences to infiltrate the communities of interest involved in tourism planning and policy practice. Others observed from afar and had the opportunity to reflect over time on the implications (e.g. chapters by Hall and Wilson, Higgins-Desboilles and Pearce).



In Chapter 2 we identified a range of themes that ran through the case studies in this book, and which might be used to organise readers' understandings and generate the intellectual capital to reach liminal understandings in tourism planning and policy. These themes included:

- The spaces of policy and planning as demonstrated in episodes of governance (e.g. Pearce, Hall and Wilson, Higgins-Desboilles, Shone, Bhat and Milne).
- The increased deliberative capacity of actors and agencies and the roles they play in interpreting and framing policy issues (e.g. Grybovych, Hafermann and Mazzoni, Vargas Sánchez and Dredge).
- The way in which knowledge is claimed, asserted, presented and manipulated by different actors and agencies to empower certain agendas and outcomes (e.g. Vargas Sánchez and Dredge, Hull and Huijbens, Wegner and Macbeth, Theerapappisit).
- The role of knowledge and the value and meanings attached to it (Vargas Sánchez and Dredge, Wegner and Macbeth).
- The value pluralism embedded in policy discourses, competing agendas, ambiguous objectives (e.g. Shone, Pearce, Wegner and Macbeth, Hull and Huijbens, Dutra, Haworth and Toaboda, Shone).
- The heightened awareness of key concepts such as certainty/uncertainty, risk, transparency, accountability, public interest, social justice, networks, governance, democracy and so on (all chapters).

In this chapter we would like to challenge readers to think differently about the themes that run through the case studies that follow, not to undermine our previous thematic organisation, but to illustrate that the way we learn is dependent upon how we make sense of the stories that are presented to us. Each reader, in seeking a liminal place in tourism planning and policy is entitled to revisit the themes that run through these case studies in terms of the way the stories are presented drawing out different links, similarities and learning opportunities as a result of the stories' characteristics. On this basis, we suggest that alternative themes used to understand tourism planning and policy are derived from the underlying objectives of the case studies. These might be:

- Tourism planning and policy as springboard to achieve an objective (e.g. Pearce, Vargas Sánchez and Dredge).
- Understanding process (e.g. Pearce, Higgins-Desboilles).
- Transmitting values (e.g. Grybovych, Hafermann and Mazzoni, Wegner and Macbeth, Theerapappisit).
- Cross-cultural communication (e.g. Bhat and Milne, Theerapappisit, Derrett).
- Fostering collaboration (e.g. Hull and Huijbens, Wegner and Macbeth).
- Evaluating impacts (e.g. Dutra, Haworth and Taboada, Theerapappisit).

- Sharing knowledge (e.g. Vargas Sánchez and Dredge, Theerapappisit).
- Understanding concepts in practice (e.g. Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams, Wegner and Macbeth).

## Conclusions

Dynamic, socially constructed landscapes underpin tourism planning and policy development, and their exploration provides the focus of the following chapters. However, the case studies that follow are not cast as alternatives to positivist, rational conceptions of policy making. Rather, the contributions of rational comprehensive planning and policy are recognised as important and continue to have salience in many organisations and policy spaces. Positivist and rational comprehensive planning processes are embedded in the way governments have worked and continue to work. These practices reflect an attitude or a system of values about the way the world works, which we have no desire to challenge or destroy. We do, though, seek to contribute a socially constructionist, interpretive dimension to understandings of tourism planning and policy.

Finally, in this chapter it has become clear that all research is storytelling; and storytelling provides learning opportunities when readers' values, understandings and experiences intersect with the story. A knowledge force-field operates at both individual and disciplinary levels to shape the story, how it is told and what might be learned. Choices are made about what information to include and not include. For example, information about the disciplinary origins of the authors was only partial, but the information was sufficient to illustrate that different language games, preferences about methods and research-ends were at play. The choices that authors make can create the opportunity for reflection and learning. In the chapters that follow, we hope that readers draw lessons and insights beyond what we could imagine in order to experience their own liminal space in a post-disciplinary understanding of tourism planning and policy.

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# Chapter 4

## Tourism, Trams and Local Government Policy Making in Christchurch: A Longitudinal Perspective

Douglas G. Pearce

After an absence of 40 years, trams returned to the streets of Christchurch, New Zealand, on 4 February 1995 with the opening of a new 2.5 kilometres tourist tramway. In 2009 a two-stage 2.7 kilometres extension was incorporated into the city plan after new tracks had begun to be laid the previous year. More a saga than a story, the process by which this urban tourist attraction came to be developed and extended is a long and involved one, unfolding over more than two decades. Taking a longitudinal approach to examining this case provides very useful insights into the underlying policy making process and is necessary to fully understand how and why the tramway was developed and then extended.

This analysis is set within the context of a review of several interrelated literatures, for multiple perspectives are needed to appreciate and interpret the development and policy processes involved. Contextualizing the Christchurch tramway in this way also raises a number of more general questions regarding tourism policy making and the involvement of local government in urban tourism, which transcend the immediate case study. The setting in which policy is made is also important and the case study context is briefly outlined. A narrative account of the development of the tramway is then followed by an interpretative analysis of key themes. This provides the basis for a more general discussion of the broader issues and enables conclusions to be drawn.

The chapter is based on a detailed analysis of archival material and interviews with key players. The development phase draws on an earlier study (Pearce 2001a), which reports the methodology in more detail and gives a more comprehensive account of the pattern of development. More recent events that have led to the extension to the tramway were examined in a similar fashion but with a greater reliance on documentation. The approach is thus consistent with Stevenson, Airey and Miller's (2008: 747) view that 'understanding of complex policy issues can be improved by building rich context specific studies that have a resonance with one another'.



## Literature Review

Even a relatively specific project such as the development of an urban tourist tramway project can be considered from several perspectives. It is necessary to go beyond the policy making literature to consider the context in which that policy is being made. In this case account must also be taken of urban tourism, urban development and local government as well as the reintroduction of historic transport, the particular topic in question. Each of these areas tends to be underpinned by its own specific literature and only occasionally are they brought together, for example in some of the work on tourism and local government. A more comprehensive approach is attempted here, with the Christchurch case being set in the context of key points and themes distilled from different literatures drawing on both the international and New Zealand dimensions of these.

Hall and Jenkins (1995: 24) argue that ‘the majority of studies of tourism policy have been analysis for policy rather than analysis of policy ... they are prescriptive studies of what government should do rather than what happened and why’. This is particularly the case at local government level. Most studies that have been carried out on local government tourism policies (Charlton and Essex 1996, Dymond 1997, Long 1994, Page and Thorn 1997) are essentially surveys of what is being done, rather than in-depth analyses of how and why such policies have been developed and what effect they have had (Stevenson et al. 2008). In discussing the politics of tourism at the local state level, Hall (1995: 172) stresses the need for a fuller understanding of policy making asserting ‘[u]rban policies designed to provide economic growth and employment cannot be divorced from the interests, values and power of those who formulate them’. Understanding how policies are made and implemented is central to understanding local government involvement in tourism.

Bush (1995a), following Gray (1993), presents a very useful model of how local government in New Zealand works. This is based on four formal premises:

1. Ultimate authority is vested in the council.
2. The province of elected members is policy making, monitoring and interfacing with the public.
3. Officers are there to implement and advise.
4. Councillors must and should refrain from involvement in management and delivery of services.

Bush notes the need for trust and mutual interdependence – ‘the councillors should decide and the officers execute’. He also observes (1995a: 230) that in practice:

the application of this rounded model is disrupted by a number of inconvenient realities. First, the dividing line between policy formulation and implementation is inherently fuzzy; second, by virtue of their experience, expertise and command of resources, executive officers cannot avoid helping shape policy; third, elected

members cannot be indifferent to the means by which the content of policy is delivered; fourth, the pervasive committee system throws officers and councillors together close to the workplace; and fifth, much 'policy' is an amalgam of a series of 'bottom-up' decisions made by officers exercising delegated authority in the normal performance of their duties.

The setting in which policy is made is also critical and the Christchurch tram project might also be set in the literature on urban tourism (Pearce 2001b). Tourism in urban areas tends to be more complex and its analysis correspondingly less straightforward than in many other settings. This complexity results from the multifunctional nature of cities, the multidimensional character of urban tourism and the multipurpose motivation of much urban-oriented travel. Both tourists and residents share many services and spaces. A wide range of agents may be drawn, directly or indirectly, into the development process. Public and private sector collaboration is common. Tourism is commonly a part, sometimes not a very explicit one, of broader urban policies or plans rather than a separate and distinct sectoral strategy. These policies and plans tend to be of two main types, either being a reactive response to the problems of coping with increased visitation or, conversely, a proactive means for the economic revitalization and physical regeneration of postindustrial cities.

In this latter regard, tourism in cities is clearly subject to broader patterns and processes of urban change. Many of the features of this vast field are summarized in Hall and Hubbard's (1996) insightful review of the entrepreneurial city. Hall and Hubbard examine the extent to which urban governance has become increasingly entrepreneurial, as manifested in a shift away from 'the local provision of welfare and services to a more outward-orientated stance designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development'. This shift has a number of dimensions. Firstly, it incorporates changing modes of urban governance characterized by the promotion of local economic development, typically in alliance with private capital, and the formation of coalitions of interest whose often ephemeral nature may result in a piecemeal approach to urban development. Secondly, the rise of entrepreneurial modes of urban governance is frequently associated with more fundamental processes of economic and social restructuring – broadly termed globalization – whereby the fortunes of individual cities are inextricably linked to global economic trends. Thirdly, as a result of increasing inter-city competition and the transformation of cities from places of production to places of consumption, urban entrepreneurialism has been accompanied by a growing emphasis on place marketing and the commodification of cities. In reviewing these arguments, Hall and Hubbard (1996) contend that the extent of these changes should not be overstated. City governments, they argue, have in varying degrees always pursued local economic development strategies; local forces continue to play a major role as 'cities are not the helpless pawns of international capital'; and the promotion of place has a long history.

These issues are being progressively addressed in studies on urban tourism though the degree to which they are contextualized in the broader debate does vary (Chang 1999, Fainstein and Judd 1999, Thorns 1997). Chang, for example, vigorously asserts the role of local factors and processes, arguing (1999: 93) that 'both globalization and localization are occurring simultaneously with the outcome being a conflation of homogenizing and localizing influences in places'. The nature, pattern and outcomes of this global-local interaction have been variously portrayed. Thorns (1997: 206) for example, suggests that New Zealand's three main cities – Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch – have each 'sought to develop their distinctiveness within the gambit of the international tourism agenda' by embarking on different urban tourism development programmes. It is in this context that Thorns cites the Christchurch tramway as an addition to the reconstruction of the tourist gaze within the city.

In the case of New Zealand, Hall and Hubbard's (1996) more cautious view on the extent to which aspects of entrepreneurialism are new is reinforced by Bush's (1995a: 145) observation that Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) there 'have always had a loose power to promote the general wellbeing of their district and further the community's "health and welfare"'. The bounds of such a role resist definition'. Tourism is included here along with community, land and local economic development and sister city bonding. Bush (1995b) noted that TLA attention to tourism had sharpened in recent years and that the 'Christchurch City Council has gone the furthest', citing the nearly \$6 million investment in the tramway. However, in an opinion piece elsewhere, Bush (1995b: 13) argued: 'while it is relatively easy to carry the populace over matters like upgrading or extending the capacity of water supply or sewerage infrastructure ... successful promotion of "adornments" rather than "essential basic services" requires a mixture of foresight, tenacity and political skill'. Again, the tramway is cited as an example of this.

Local governments may stimulate tourism development at the local level through their enabling, informational, promotional and coordination functions and through investment in and provision of public utilities and amenities. Duncan (1995: 7) notes that 'direct local body investment in tourism is usually confined to public sector amenities which are primarily provided for the benefit of residents, but which are also expected to generate increased visitors'. TLAs also have various regulatory functions that may control the externalities of tourism and encourage sustainable development practices (Dymond 1997, Page and Thorn 1997). In these respects the New Zealand situation is not dissimilar to that in the United Kingdom (Charlton and Essex 1996, Long 1994). These latter writers also emphasize the prominence of partnerships and collaborative initiatives. Charlton and Essex also observe (1996: 178) that 'previous studies have indicated that many authorities have based their policies on an inadequate research base ... which might call into question the appropriateness of their tourism involvement'. Long (1994: 22) stresses that 'it is important for local authorities to be quite clear about why they are going to be involved in the development and promotion of tourism'.

Lessons might also be learned from studies that have examined the reintroduction of historic trams elsewhere, such as in the United States where they are referred to as Vintage Trolleys (VTs) (Benson 1992, Farnsworth and Schumann 1992, Gaddis 1992, Graebner 1992, Harris and Masberg 1997, Phraner 1992, Schutz and McCall 1992). Several key recurring points emerge from these studies:

1. While VTs can serve various purposes, such as acting as a tourist attraction or catalyst for urban redevelopment, the transportation function has been fundamental in most American cities where they generally form part of a light rail transit system.
2. The American experience invariably shows that VTs are not financially self-supporting and will inevitably require some degree of subsidy. Schutz and McCall (1992: 354) conclude: 'VT must be recognized as both a political and managerial activity that transcends running obsolete trolleys along restored trackage through interesting locations'.
3. The reintroduction of trams is not a straightforward process and may be long and costly.
4. Political support and strong leadership are required if such projects are to come to fruition. Not infrequently, the initiative and leadership come from trolley enthusiasts.
5. Given the poor financial balance sheets of VT operations, less tangible features are commonly invoked in terms of rationalizing such projects, notably their role as 'cultural icons' and in generating city pride and their oft claimed but unsubstantiated popularity with visitors and residents alike.

Bringing these perspectives together provides a series of lenses through which the tramway project can be viewed.

### *Christchurch*

With a population of around 350,000, Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island of New Zealand. Central government restructuring of local government in 1989 resulted in the amalgamation of several TLAs into the present Christchurch City Council. In the nine years after amalgamation, Christchurch had a three-term independent mayor, Vicki Buck, who led a big-spending, interventionist council (Brett 1996). Tourism-oriented projects were a major feature of local development initiatives in the 1990s. These included both council-led projects, such as the convention centre (opened in 1996) and the entertainment and sports centre (opened in 1999), and private sector initiatives, for example the Mount Cavendish gondola (1992), the Antarctic Centre (1992) and the casino (1994). Significant expansion in the city's accommodation capacity also occurred during the 1990s. In 1995–96, an estimated 600,000 international visitors spent a night in Christchurch. Christchurch is also a major centre for domestic tourism.

**Table 4.1**     **Timeline of Christchurch tramway development and extension**

1983	Tramways Historical Society proposes reintroduction of trams in central city to Bishop's Committee.
1987	February: officer team proposes Worcester Boulevard as civic project. March: first meeting of Tourist Transport Committee.
1989	June: Report on the potential of a tramway between Cathedral Square and Mona Vale. December: Tourist Transport Committee re-established as Tourist Transport Sub-Committee under amalgamated city council.
1990	May: calls for submissions to operate transport on Worcester Boulevard. June: Worcester Boulevard Concept Plan presented.
1991	Construction of Worcester Boulevard underway, first stage of tram tracks laid. August: First report on some options for extensions to Worcester Boulevard tramway. September: Worcester Boulevard opened.
1992	August: Second Armagh Street Loop report adopted in principle.
1993	February: economic and marketing report presented. May: debate on operation of tram – council or private sector. October: Cathedral Junction shopping complex proposed.
1994	October: Shotover Jets Ltd obtains ten-year lease to operate tram.
1995	February: Tramway operations begin. September: Developer of Cathedral Junction dies and work on complex stops.
1996	April: Proposed extension of tramway to Cashel Street and City Mall declined. July: Tramway contract renegotiated, annual licence reduced.
1998	June: Tramway contract renegotiated, annual licence reduced.
2001	February: Christchurch Central City Strategy prepared.
2002	December: THS proposal to extend tramway east along Worcester Street to Latimer Square is declined.
2006	September/October: Support for an extension to the tramway emerges in consultations to refurbish the City Mall. December: Council requests a study into the viability of expanding the tram in the central city.
2007	September: Following consideration of the viability study, Council acknowledges potential to extend tram route.
2008	March: Council allocates \$550,000 in its Annual Plan to install tram rails as part of City Mall upgrade project. June: Council agrees extended route would run through City Mall and requests options for further extensions. September: Tracks begin to be laid.
2009	March/April: Consultations on extension of route as far as Manchester St as part of preparation of Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) (2009–2019). July: Council adopts LTCCP, which makes provision for a five-year 2.7 kilometres extension.
<b>Projected</b>	
2009–10	Complete City Mall tracks.
1010–11	Complete tracks and wiring to include Oxford Terrace, Colombo St/Cathedral Square and High Street (two blocks) in time for the Rugby World Cup.
2011–12	Commence further extension along High St towards Barbadoes St.
2012–13	Continue extension of route to Barbadoes St to enable tram to be operating by November.

An ambitious new visitor strategy prepared in 2007 set out a vision for tourism in the city in these terms (Christchurch City Council [CCC] 2007: 9):

In 2017, Christchurch is the leading destination for both domestic and international visitors in New Zealand. Visitors are drawn by our Garden City identity, unique stories, cultures, landscape and world-class facilities. We are the world's gateway to the South Island and New Zealand. Our visitor industry is a vibrant and robust sector that provides a sustainable flow of benefits for residents and businesses.

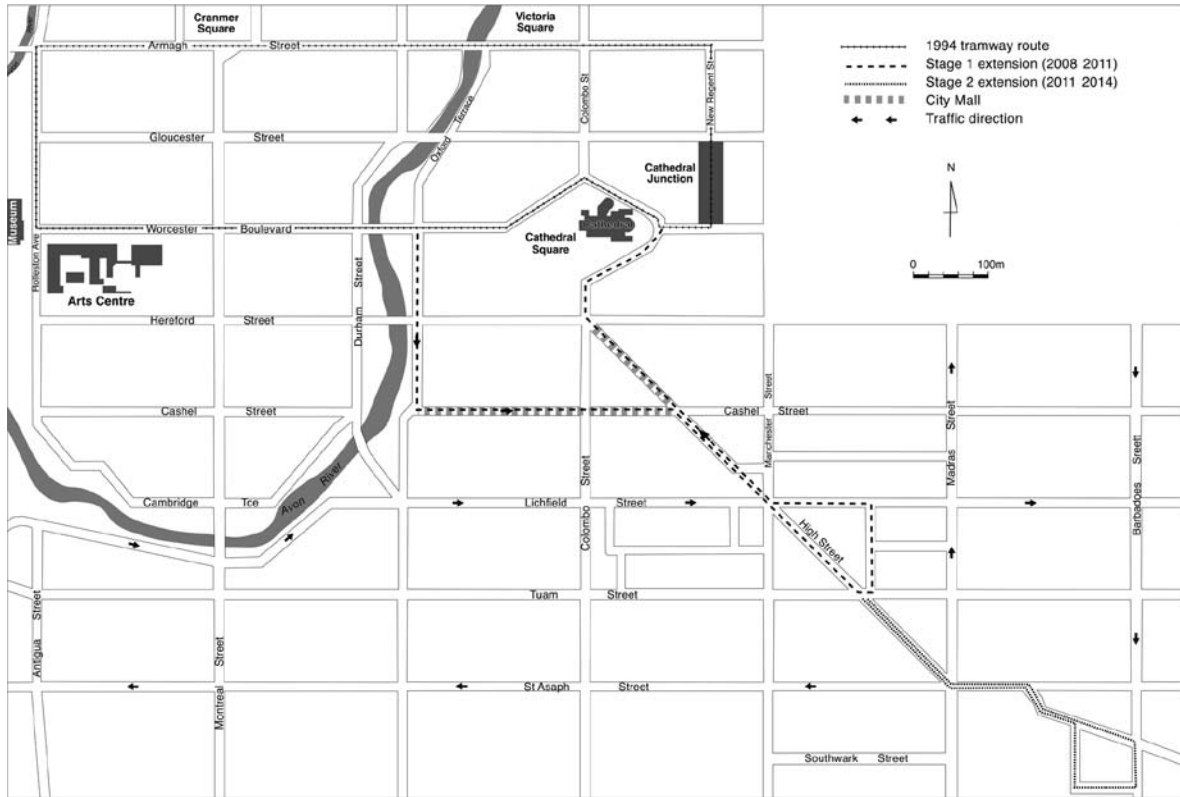
It is in this context that the development of the tramway must be set.

### *The Development Process*

The rather long and complex process by which the Christchurch tourist tramway has been developed and extended is summarized in Table 4.1. The first proposal to reintroduce trams in Christchurch appears to have been that made in 1983 by the Tramways Historical Society (THS) to the Bishop's Committee formed to examine possibilities for the redevelopment of Cathedral Square in the city centre. Although the idea was well received nothing came of it. The first meeting of a 'Tourist Transport Committee' was held the same year but little was accomplished and it soon lapsed. These events, however, may have sowed the seeds for two sets of converging and mutually reinforcing forces that emerged in early 1987 and eventually resulted in the development of the present tramway.

The first of these was a more general proposal that originated from a group of city council staff in February 1987 for the development of Worcester Street as a civic project for the city to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (CCC 1987). The proposal envisaged the coordination of various amenity and infrastructural projects and the development of an 'amenity linkage' between Cathedral Square and the museum (Figure 4.1), to create 'an attractive and interesting "Boulevard" to link the major tourist activities of the City' (CCC 1987). A tram running the length of Worcester Street was an integral part of the proposal from the outset (Figure 4.1). In June 1990 the Worcester Boulevard Concept Plan was produced (CCC 1990a), agreed to by the council and work began on recreating an historic boulevard, an 'Old Christchurch Street'. This included the laying of tram tracks as the Environmental Committee had recommended that 'because the historic trams are an important part of the Boulevard concept, construction of the track foundations be included in Stage 1' (CCC 1990b: 4). Worcester Boulevard was officially 'opened' in September 1991 but construction was not completed until December 1993.

Parallel to these developments, but initially separate from them, an active Tourist Transport Committee (TTC) had been established in 1987. The TTC included representatives of local government, public transport, tourism, the Ferrymead Trust and vintage transport interests, all of whom were 'movers and



**Figure 4.1 Christchurch tramway route and extensions**

*Source:* Drawn by Marney Brosnan



shakers' according to the councillor who had convened the initial meeting. The TTC saw itself as 'an ad-hoc group of people sharing a common interest', a group whose 'best prospects for creativity lie in remaining outside the heavy hand of commonly experienced bureaucratic processes' (TTC 1987).

The TTC was to function initially as an independent sub-committee reporting to the Christchurch Transport Board. Early on it considered a tourist trolley-bus link from Cathedral Square to Ferrymead and also examined the feasibility of extending the tramline to Mona Vale but from 1990 onwards the TTC was more directly involved in decisions related to the development of the tramway in the central city. Following local government reform, the TTC was re-established in December 1989 as the Tourist Transport Sub-Committee (TTSC) of the Operations Committee of the newly enlarged Christchurch City Council. In May 1990 the TTSC recommended calling for submissions to provide and operate transport on Worcester Boulevard and in due course concluded that 'to be a complete tourist attraction the historic nature of the vehicle is essential' and that it should be 'tied' to the boulevard (CCC 1990b: 8). In other words, the operation of an historic tram, the THS proposal, was strongly preferred to others, which included the running of rubber tyred replicas. This outcome might appear almost inevitable, as the decision had already been made to include tram tracks in the boulevard proposal. The THS was invited to develop its operational proposal but did not have the resources to run such a commercial operation on a full-time basis, especially in view of the financial risks attached. Its interests were more as a provider of restoration services.

A report outlining options to extend the tramway beyond Worcester Boulevard was requested at the July 1991 meeting of the TTSC (TTSC 1991). In addition to technical considerations potential operators had expressed concern that the line was too short to encourage riders and to be viable. After two reports were prepared and various options considered a TTSC working party and officer project team recommended the construction of an Armagh Street Loop running from Rolleston Avenue to Colombo Street (Figure 4.1). An economic and marketing feasibility report for presentation to potential investors was then called for as it was suggested that private enterprise investment be sought not just to operate the tram but also to contribute to the construction of the tramline extensions.

The consultant's report completed in February 1993 included patronage projections based on the results of surveys of businesses and residents that indicated very strong support for the project (Rodwell 1993). The projections were not made public at the time due to commercial sensitivity but the council was satisfied that the project was viable and in April 1993 made provision for the full Armagh Loop in its draft 1993–94 Annual Plan and Budget which was approved two months later (CCC 1993).

In mid-1993 debate shifted to how the tram would be operated, by private parties or a council-owned company. Agreement was reached for the successful tenderer to make a substantial upfront payment for the tramway concession plus



an annual fee. Restored trams would be leased by the council from the THS and onleased to the concessionaire.

October 1993 saw a further extension proposed to the Armagh Loop track as the result of a project by a Christchurch property investor, Brittco, to develop a \$4 million shopping precinct, to be known as Cathedral Junction, between Gloucester and Worcester Streets (Figure 4.1). The council agreed to extend the loop through New Regent Street and the new complex, with the developer contributing \$190,000 of the additional \$900,000 cost. Work on the construction of Cathedral Junction began in July 1994.

Meanwhile, public consultation had been underway with residents along the Armagh Loop route and some opposition to the tram project was emerging, both in terms of cost to the ratepayer and the impact on residential areas. The sub-committee that heard the submissions recommended the council reconfirm its previous approval of the Armagh Loop and endorse the Brittco alternative.

Tenders to operate the tramway were called for the following year (CCC 1994) and in October 1994 a Queenstown-based tourism operator, Shotover Jets Ltd, secured a ten-year lease to run the tram. According to one prominent councillor, the deal would provide an annual return to the city council of 13 per cent on its investment (*The Press* 19 October 1994). *The Press* (18 January 1995) editorialized that 'The city council has done remarkably well in protecting ratepayers from possible failure of the \$5.45 million project by leasing the tramway for 10 years to a commercial tourism company'.

Commercial operations of the tram began with much fanfare on 4 February 1994. However, initial local interest was not sustained as the novelty wore off and the tram reportedly made a profit only in its first 55 days and in its first year returned just \$200,000 to the council instead of the forecast \$490,000. The cost of servicing the capital cost of the tramway had been estimated at about \$575,000 in the council's annual plan, making the net cost about \$375,000 (*The Press* 22 April 1998). In its second year of operation, patronage on the tram dropped from about 300,000 (the first year peak) to 260,000 (*Star* 19 September 1997).

### *Extending the Tramway*

Following the 1994 opening, proposals were periodically made to extend the tramway. A 1996 proposal for a \$2 million extension of the tramway to Cashel Street and the City Mall did not go ahead as the Central City Committee (CCC) of the council decided not to pursue a detailed investigation unless the retailers funded it; they were not prepared to do so. In 2002 the THS unsuccessfully pushed for a \$4–5 million extension east along Worcester St to Latimer Square.

However, support for extending the tramway into the City Mall did emerge in September and October 2006 during consultations over the revitalization of the inner city. Although not included in the mall project budget, a question was incorporated in the public consultation about the desirability of extending the tram through the City Mall. This drew a generally positive response and

subsequent events moved relatively quickly. By the end of the year the council had commissioned a study into the viability of expanding the tram in the central city to serve both tourists and local residents. The resultant report completed in August 2007 identified a number of economic benefits and recommended a single loop route along Oxford Terrace, Cashel Street and High Street to rejoin the existing track in Cathedral Square. On 27 September 2007 the council acknowledged potential for the expansion in the inner city, called for further route details and cost estimates and decided to ‘future proof’ the extension of the tram by confirming the general route and approving the strengthened concrete base for the later stages of the mall reconstruction. In March 2008 the council adopted the proposed tram extension for consultation, consulted to vary the bylaw to allow trams to operate through the pedestrian mall and budgeted to include the tram rails in the City Mall redevelopment. By June the bylaw had been varied, agreement was reached on installing rails in the mall and the Oxford Terrace and Cathedral Square alignments were confirmed subject to funding. In September new tracks were being laid.

At its meeting on 25 June 2008 the council also requested staff to examine other options which would take the tram further along High Street beyond the City Mall, with costings to be reported back by the end of the year for potential inclusion in the city-wide 2009–19 Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). Further consultations on these route options followed in March and April 2009. The proposal subsequently included in the LTCCP, approved in July 2009, is to extend the current central city tramway in two stages: firstly, via Oxford Terrace and the



**Figure 4.2** Extension of the tramway has been closely tied to the redevelopment of the City Mall

*Source:* Photo by Douglas Pearce

City Mall to reach the intersection of High and Tuam Streets in time for the Rugby World Cup in 2011; and secondly, to continue along High Street and Ferry Road to Barbadoes Street, reaching the Catholic cathedral, music centre and polytechnic by the summer of 2013 (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). A five-year, \$11.5 million funding package to achieve this was also outlined in the plan. Completion of this would result in the tramway being extended by 2.7 kilometres; 1.6 kilometres in Stage 1 and 1.1 kilometres in Stage 2.

### *The Policy Making Process*

The events outlined above clearly indicate the reintroduction of the tram in Christchurch and the subsequent extension of the tramway was not a simple, straightforward process of the city council developing a major urban tourist attraction. Rather, the process was a long, drawn-out one of incremental, often ad hoc policy making, which resulted in the construction of a much larger tramway than was originally envisaged and more recent plans for a significant extension. Tourism was seemingly often used as a public rationale for the pursuit of other objectives. Closer scrutiny of key factors and events, of the tourism rationale and of the process and players involved is therefore called for. Comparisons and parallels between the initial development and the later extension are also instructive.

### *Key Factors and Events*

A critical early factor was the incorporation of a tram in the initial Worcester Street Boulevard proposal put forward by the council officer team in 1987. It has not been possible to establish how the tram came to be included in the boulevard proposal, but unlike the TTC enthusiasts who were explicitly seeking to reintroduce various forms of vintage transport in Christchurch there is nothing to suggest it was anything more than one aspect of a proposal to develop a themed heritage street as a civic project. The chair of the TTC confirmed that his committee was working independently on their ideas but that the inclusion of a tram in the Worcester Boulevard project was the achievement of one of their goals: ‘When we realised the tram had been slotted in [to the boulevard project], it dropped in place by itself. There was no need for deliberate action’. Incorporation of the tram in Worcester Boulevard made it all politically possible.

This was especially the case in terms of financing the project. The TTSC was to argue early on (CCC 1990c: 47) that:

... in the case of the Worcester Street Boulevard tram, it seems likely that the tram can be included as part of the upgrading of this street and it should not be required to justify running at a profit, any more than the Boulevard itself has to face such a test. *Provided the Council approves the project in toto, then the tram can be seen as an integral element of this exciting proposal ...* [emphasis added].

Likewise in the boulevard concept plan (CCC1990a: 13) the case was made that:

The return on investment in the tram operations should be viewed with respect to the primary opportunity to promote the Boulevard, Cathedral Square and the City. The transport aspect and full recoveries on operations and capital could be regarded as a secondary issue in this instance.

Having authentic historic vehicles ‘tied’ to the boulevard as the preferred means of transport on Worcester Boulevard was also an essential factor as this left little option other than to run restored local trams. The only supplier of these, in terms of expertise and vehicles, could have been the THS, which counted amongst its more active members council officers and members of the TTC and TTSC. The interests of the THS were later expressed in the formal request for proposals to operate the tramway (CCC 1994: 12) in these terms:

... income from the lease of the vehicles will accelerate its capacity to restore more historic passenger transport vehicles ... the public’s exposure to the trams will be significantly greater than at Ferrymead.

Or, in the words of a member of the THS, the council would become ‘a valuable customer’ for the provision of restored trams. There can be little doubt too that many of the members, given their own enthusiasm, genuinely believed that trams would ‘greatly grace the city’.

The actual laying of tram tracks in the first stage of the construction of Worcester Boulevard in 1991 was another decisive factor. After this very public commitment to the tramway it would have been very difficult for the council not to continue. To have laid new tracks and then have had no tram operating would have been extremely embarrassing. As one of its members observed, the TTC ‘relaxed when the tram tracks were laid’. Likewise, a member of the THS expressed the view that the society ‘was pleasantly surprised at the laying of the tram tracks. The council was hooked’. When the Worcester Boulevard line itself was found to be too short to be viable there was little option but to pursue other alternatives, namely an extended tramway which subsequently took the form of the Armagh Street Loop.

Faced with the additional costs of the loop extension, some public opposition to the tramway and the decision to seek a private concessionaire to run the tram, there was a mounting need to establish the viability of the extended tramway. In this context the findings of the 1993 economic and marketing report (Rodwell 1993) appear to have been very critical in capturing councillor support (*The Press* 1 August 1996, *Star* 1 July 1998). According to one senior councillor, on the basis of the report the tramway ‘was presented as a free project. There were revenue streams showing return on capital. Here was a great project, not going to cost us anything’. He also conceded, however, that the survey was ‘very flawed’.

The extension of the Armagh Street Loop to encompass New Regent Street and the proposed Cathedral Junction complex can be readily understood as a pragmatic

response to a private sector initiative. Not only was the property developer to contribute to the additional infrastructural costs but also the new complex had ready appeal as an economic revitalization project in a declining part of the inner city. The laying of the tram tracks in New Regent Street (a small narrow street with distinctive mock Spanish facades) and its consequent closure to motor vehicles was facilitated by the revival of a 1981 planning provision to create a pedestrian mall there.

Similar factors are found with the recent extension. In particular, linking it to the inner city revitalization project has parallels with the way in which the tramway began as part of the Worcester Street Boulevard concept. The key factor here appears to be the support which emerged for the tramway during the consultations over the City Mall revitalization project in September and October 2006. It should be noted that no mention of a tramway extension had appeared in the inner city revitalization plans which led to the redevelopment of the mall, whether in the initial strategy that arose from the Central City Mayoral Forum (2001) or in Stage 2 of the strategy which had been adopted as recently as 7 September 2006 (CCC 2006). In particular, during the mall consultation led by a city council project team, the following question was asked: 'The extension of the tram is not funded as part of this project, however, do you think that the tram route should be extended through City Mall?' Almost two-thirds of those who responded supported the proposal, especially local retailers (CCC 2008). This support in turn led to the commissioning of the impact study. The study was much more conservative than the earlier Rodwell report but provided further impetus for the extension to go ahead.

## **The Tourism Rationale**

At all stages of its development, the tramway has been closely and explicitly linked with tourism. The nature of the tourism case, however, has evolved over time. From the outset, the prime lobbyists for the reintroduction of a tramway in Christchurch were known as the 'Tourist Transport Committee'. Vintage transport enthusiasts appear to have been the most prominent in the group but the committee's case was always made in terms of 'tourist related projects' (TTC 1987). Many on the TTC may have honestly believed that others, especially visitors to the city, shared their enthusiasm for such travel but it is difficult not to conclude that the emphasis on serving tourists may have made the case for obtaining support for the reintroduction of vintage transport a somewhat easier one to make.

Tourism arguments appear continuously, if not consistently, in the council documents and decisions. In the original Worcester Boulevard proposal, for example, much is made of the 'amenity linkage' between two major tourist foci, Cathedral Square and the museum and botanical gardens and the benefits it would bring to tourism in Christchurch: '... redevelopment of this part of Worcester Street along the lines suggested will greatly enhance the amenities of the city centre,

complement the large investment now taking place in new buildings, and make the city more attractive to visitors and tourists ...' (CCC 1988: 4). The tourism argument was again developed when the choice of the tram as the preferred means of transport along the boulevard was made (CCC 1990b: 5): 'The tram was seen primarily as an attraction and integral part of the Boulevard rather than as a means of general transport'. Similar points were put forward in the reports proposing extensions to the tramline. That in August 1991 began (CCC 1991: 1):

... it has also been assumed that the prime purpose of the tramway is to provide a tourism experience and a link between major tourist facilities/attractions within the central city. *It is not seen as being the basis for a commuter service, for 'park and ride' or as a shuttle service linking retail or other business areas* [emphasis added].

Thus it is not surprising that when the council eventually called for bids to operate the tram it should be as the Christchurch Tourist Tramway (CCC 1994). However, in the projected patronage figures contained in this document, based largely on the Rodwell report, tourists constituted only a small share of the forecast demand. In other words, while the project had been heavily promoted as a tourist attraction its viability was now seen to rest heavily on very optimistic levels of patronage from local residents. Given the overall importance of the marketing and economic report in the sequence of events outlined above, the inability of the tourism argument alone to sustain the tramway project at this crucial point is particularly significant.

It is also not surprising in this context that when the overall patronage and financial expectations were not met, that some modifications to the tourism rationale underpinning the tramway would begin to emerge. The tramway was now seen to bring indirect benefits. The council's property manager, for example, defended the tram as an integral city attraction, providing an unquantifiable return by attracting visitors and keeping them there longer. Like the convention centre and sports and entertainment centre, the tram was not necessarily built to be viable: 'It has an over-all impact on the city's amenity value – it was about the council encouraging development and redevelopment. A financial return would have been just the icing on the cake' (*The Press* 14 July 1998). These points came to the fore in the renegotiations for the tram licence where broader but often less tangible benefits were identified such as encouraging economic development and providing 'wider public benefit' (CCC 1998).

Again, throughout all of this the underlying assumption was clearly that a tram would be good for tourism in Christchurch. Certainly on occasions some market research was undertaken and support from the local industry was sought (CCC 1990b, Rodwell 1993). However, the tourism dimension of the tram was never seen in terms of whether or not this was the best way for the council to support tourism in the city, especially to the tune of \$5.45 million. At no stage was an explicit choice made by the council to actively develop tourism and then



decide that investment in a tramway was the best way to proceed. Nor was there much questioning of the tourism case being made. To what extent could the short boulevard tram trip, or even the full 2.5 kilometres loop, be realistically expected to lengthen visits to the city to the extent of adding significantly to the average length of stay? Rather, the tourism argument was incorporated initially in a broader civic project, the proposal for Worcester Boulevard, and then used to rationalize the Armagh Street extension when the original project was shown not to be viable.

Tourism was again a major part of the rationale to extend the tramway, not so much in terms of its impact on the growth in visitor numbers but more in the way tourism might benefit inner city revitalization. The 2008 impact study found that a tramway extension would create a limited amount of additional demand through the perceived value of an extended trip and access to attractions south of the square and concluded that the most significant economic benefit would be to the new area that would be served by the tram, with up to 150,000 more people visiting the area each year. The 150,000 existing users are primarily visitors to the city. However, this figure is significantly less than in the first couple of years of operation and represents only a small percentage of all visitors to the city. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the tramway is not mentioned explicitly in the Christchurch Visitor Strategy 2007–17, that is, a recent major review of tourism in the city did not identify extending the tramway as a priority. Once again it is the iconic argument that is brought to the fore: ‘The tram is now an internationally recognized icon of Christchurch. The new areas that would be served would benefit from the associated publicity’ (CCC 2008: 7).

In the LTCCP the tramway extension proposal is presented in similar terms: ‘The tram has become an integral part of the central city, but is currently limited to north of Cathedral Square. Successive Councils have supported the tram concept and have acknowledged the benefits to the city and in particular to the revitalization of the central city that the extension of the current route would bring’ (CCC 2009a: 211). In response to submissions raising financial concerns such as using the funding for other public transport modes rather than tourism, council staff commented that: ‘The Council’s capital programme needs to balance a wide variety of city-wide needs and the tram is being funded to meet central city (revitalization) and economic development objective’ (CCC 2009b: 15). Creating movement through the inner city and bringing in more visitors may benefit retailers in the mall but the tramway’s ability to revitalize the area appears to be largely based on faith. There is no evidence in the project documentation reviewed that the impact of the tramway on land use and activities along the existing route was assessed or taken into account. However, in a before and after study, this author concluded that the tramway’s impact on land use change was limited and that its contribution to urban redevelopment in Christchurch should be viewed cautiously, with most change occurring in New Regent Street where a trend to more visitor-oriented shops and services (cafes and gift shops) was observed (Pearce 2001c).

### *The Players and the Process*

The sequence of events outlined illustrates well some of the realities of the broader characteristics of local government policy making discussed by Bush (1995a), notably the fuzzy dividing line between policy formulation and implementation, the shaping of policy by council officers and the coming together of officers and councillors close to the workface. An additional dimension in this case was the overlapping of interests of key individuals, particularly of some council officers who were also members of the THS and openly recognized as keen tram enthusiasts. Such a situation was popular grist to the mill of writers of letters to the editor such as N. Barret who argued (*The Press* 1 August 1996) that ‘this loss-making juggernaut’ was ‘the influence of over-enthusiastic council staff tram-buffs pushing their own agenda beyond their advisory role’. Earlier, Cr Close had expressed concern that some of the advocates of the tram extension ‘were “too close” to the project and “getting carried away”’ (*The Press* 12 August 1992).

Parallels in the roles of tram enthusiasts are noted between the development of historic tramways overseas and the Christchurch situation in the 1993 economic and marketing report (Rodwell 1993: 32–3):

The development of these [overseas] tramways has often a lot to do with the enthusiasm of an historic tramway group coupled with the need for the development of inner city tourist attractions which are both unique and interesting. The development of this tramway project has evolved from much the same background.

In this case, the Tramway Historical Society has seen an opportunity of incorporating a tramway into the Council’s Worcester Boulevard concept. Conversely, the City Council in the development of the Worcester Boulevard concept has seen the opportunity of developing a unique and interesting attraction.

Discussions with those involved in the early stages of the project indicate a lot of enthusiasm and concerted effort went into making a case for the development of a tramway. The initial chairman of the TTC observed that they did their work thoroughly, wrote reports, kept organizations informed, briefed councillors before amalgamation and generally lobbied senior staff and councillors on the merits of a tramway. The process outlined above is certainly characterized by the abundance of well prepared reports which had input from the TTC, TTSC, THS and/or council officers active in the society (e.g. City Works and Planning Department and Tourist Transport Committee 1989, CCC 1990a, 1992). Considerable effort was also put into ensuring the new city council following amalgamation picked up the ad hoc TTC and re-established it more formally as the TTSC.

At the same time, discussions with other councillors and council staff suggest the influence of these enthusiasts should not be overstated. As one long-serving



councillor noted: ‘You can’t capture the system without putting a fair argument forward. There are a number of filters. Pet projects can get pushed if they don’t cost too much or go against major policy. The encouragement of an enthusiastic chairman does not do any harm’. The same councillor also noted that one of the key officers involved with the tramway development was a ‘known enthusiast and not sufficiently senior to carry the day’. Another senior councillor observed that to allocate new resources and to advance new projects there ‘has to be widespread conviction amongst staff and elected members. Popular wisdom is that members [of council] decide and staff implement. In practice, lots of ideas come from staff’. And later, the tramway ‘would never have been proposed by the staff on their own. They captured the enthusiasm of a small group of councillors’. This councillor also noted that the development of the tramway in the early 1990s has to be seen in the context of the new post-amalgamation council: ‘When the new city council was elected [in late 1989] there was a general will to move forward and do things to develop Christchurch. There was an expectation that the city council would do more’.

A council officer not directly involved with the tramway development but also a member of the THS commented:

There were some very articulate staff [supporting the tram]. In a council, staff can kill a project dead if unenthusiastic. They can also enthusiastically pick up and run with one, give advice and information. Councillors have to feel they are getting good advice; officers have to feel they are being listened to. Councillors can’t be brainwashed. The majority of councillors believed it [the tram] was good for Christchurch.

In the end, of course, a majority of councillors have to vote for a project for funding to be approved. This officer believed the tram came about due to ‘[t]he happy juxtaposition of the right people and the right skills and a sympathetic council’. This would appear to be a fair summation of the process by which the tramway was developed.

Similarities and differences are seen with the recent extension. Once the tramway was incorporated in the inner city revitalization project there was extensive public consultation and preparation of reports, council was regularly briefed by project staff and the public was kept well informed through media releases, leaflets and material on the council website. The THS has had a much lower profile in this recent phase and although one of its members and a keen tram enthusiast was a key council officer involved with the project this did not attract attention as it did in earlier years. Much of the lobbying and submissions in favour of the tramway have come from the inner city retailers. The council, with a new mayor, has also been very supportive, with the 25 June 2009 decision to adopt the proposal to extend the tramway being passed with an 11 to 2 vote. Inclusion of the tramway extension in the LTCCP in this way also means that it is now part of a much broader, long-term planning process, a marked departure

from the more ad hoc incremental process that characterized the development phase.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Considered in isolation, the development of the Christchurch tourist tramway might at first sight appear to involve a fairly novel and unusual set of conditions and events. Set against the distinct but interrelated literatures reviewed earlier, however, the Christchurch case exhibits a number of features common to similar projects elsewhere. Compared to the vintage trolley projects in the United States, the Christchurch case differs only in the emphasis on tourism rather than on public transport. In other respects the experience is almost identical: the returns to the council in Christchurch cover operating costs only not the infrastructural investment; the development process was complex (though in this case few technical problems were experienced); political support and strong leadership were important; the presence of tram enthusiasts evident and the tram's role in image making and as a city icon were invoked in the face of poor financial returns. These factors might well be borne in mind by those contemplating the reintroduction of vintage transport in other cities.

Although tourism was used as a rationale throughout, the development of the tramway, as with other urban tourism projects, was inextricably linked to broader urban projects and processes, particularly the civic project to redevelop Worcester Boulevard and the revitalization of New Regent Street and Cathedral Junction and then later the City Mall. The tramway was developed incrementally and in an ad hoc fashion rather than as a distinct, well-planned tourism development strategy. Indeed, the tramway extension does not feature in the current city tourism strategy (CCC 2007), which was being formulated contemporaneously, but rather the extension was developed completely independently of it. The process and the outcome point to the generality of the issues raised by Long (1994) and Charlton and Essex (1996) about local government involvement in tourism. In particular, the Christchurch case underscores Long's recommendation for local government to be 'quite clear about why they are going to be involved in the development and promotion of tourism' and highlights Charlton and Essex's call for an adequate research base before becoming involved in tourism. Parallels are also found with the findings and implications of Stevenson et al.'s (2008) study of tourism policy making in Leeds, for example the key role of negotiation and communication between people in the process and the issue that tourism policy does not have clear boundaries but is closely linked to other policy areas. As reference to Bush's (1995a and b) work has shown, the process that occurred in Christchurch reflects many of the broader characteristics of how local government in New Zealand works.

At the same time, the Christchurch case can be interpreted in the light of the broader urban literature. On closer examination, the development of the tramway

cannot be convincingly seen as a concerted or even unconscious response to globalization, as a form of commodification and of place marketing. While the latter argument – the tram as city icon – was used as a justification once the tram failed to live up to expectations, local interests rather than global forces were what drove the process throughout. And while local economic development through tourism was an argument that was advanced, the simple desire to see trams running once more on the streets of Christchurch appears to be what sustained the promoters of the tramway. But while the motives may have differed, the process is not too dissimilar to Hall and Hubbard's (1996) formation of an ephemeral coalition of interest resulting in a piecemeal approach to urban development.

Finally, in terms of understanding both urban tourism and urban development, this study echoes Hall and Jenkins (1995) and Stevenson et al. (2008) in underlining the importance of looking not just at what policy should be but also at how policy is made and implemented. In this respect, this study has illustrated the value of building up a detailed chronology of the development in question, of focusing on key factors and events and of seeking explanation through the use of multiple data sources and in terms of diverse frames of reference.

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## Chapter 5

# Tourism Planning, Community Engagement and Policy Innovation in Ucluelet, British Columbia

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The case study we are about to explore provides an example of how proactive and creative actions of planners and policy makers can help address critical issues facing rural communities in transition. It illustrates how a small community on Vancouver Island (province of British Columbia, Canada) addressed threats of uncontrolled tourism development by designing an integrative policy framework. The level of public engagement in planning and creativity in utilizing already existing policies that were exhibited in Ucluelet provide a fresh look at practices of public decision making and serve as a guide for other communities embarking on tourism development projects and facing similar challenges.

Arguments and assertions of this chapter are supported by a number of sources including review of pertinent literature, personal experiences, interviews and observations. The authors' engagement with the planning process has been in various capacities – as a planner and public official, directly engaged with all the parties involved, and as researchers, trying to interpret and understand the process through the eyes of its participants. Our personal and professional backgrounds therefore find place in judgements and interpretations we make throughout the text.

### **Setting the Context: Vancouver Island and the District of Ucluelet**

Once dependent on resource extraction, today the province of British Columbia on the Pacific Coast of Canada is undergoing the transition to a more diverse economy with increased emphasis on service sectors and economic development (Siemens 2006, Vaugeois and Rollins 2007). While this transformation has been relatively smooth in urban areas with already established infrastructure, it has been problematic in many of the rural areas (Giele and Vaugeois 2006). Those communities attempting to diversify into tourism have often found themselves unable to accommodate increasing numbers of visitors. At the same time, for many rural destinations the promise of employment and increased resident income from

nature-based, sport, cultural and indigenous tourism appear to largely outweigh the everyday reality of the economic havoc brought by modern day uncertainties.

The importance of tourism development in British Columbia has been recognized at the highest level – *Tourism British Columbia Corporation* under the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development has been extensively working on maximizing the long-term benefits of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, and the premier of the province publicly announced his support of achieving the goal of doubling tourism revenues by the year 2015 (Tourism British Columbia 2007, Office of the Premier 2006). This rather aggressive plan will significantly boost an already strong industry that generated \$9.8 billion in revenues and accounted for more than 117,500 direct jobs in the province in 2005. When indirect tourism employment is included, this number swells to 266,000, accounting for almost one out of every eight jobs in British Columbia (Go2 2006).

The story of tourism development on Vancouver Island – the largest island in the province – has been one of struggles and successes. While economic uncertainty brought high unemployment rates to communities of Youbou, Caycuse, Port Hardy and Gold River, the districts of Tofino, Ucluelet and Chemainus have often been used as illustrations of a successful transition from logging and fishing into tourism (Vaugeois and Rollins 2007). Among these latter communities, the District of Ucluelet has been especially spotlighted for its sustainable and innovative planning and community development efforts. It is a story of these initiatives that we will now turn to.

The District of Ucluelet (pronounced ‘you-clue-let’, meaning ‘safe harbour’) is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island and is a gateway community to the world-renowned Pacific Rim National Park and Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. In 2006, the direct population of the District was estimated at 1,487 (BC Stats 2007); the surrounding region totalled about 3,000 additional residents (District of Ucluelet 2005). Traditionally a resource-based village dependant on forestry and fishing, today the economy of Ucluelet is shifting to include other value added and service industries such as tourism, real estate, retail, construction and development, and fish processing. The District attracts over a million visitors a year and is in the middle of a multi-million dollar tourism development boom (Robinson and Mazzoni 2005).

Over the past 50 years, the District has undergone major economic and social changes. Increasing pressure from competing international markets, as well as depleting fishing resources stimulated decline in demand for both logging and fishing industries. Tensions between the resource extraction industries and the environmental groups peaked in 1993 when over 12,000 protestors congregated in the Clayoquot Sound area with the intent to stop Ucluelet’s major employer – multinational logging company MacMillan Bloedel Ltd – from clearcutting the old-growth rainforest (Eggertson 2007). This largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history put the region in the spotlight of the international media and eventually pushed many logging companies (including MacMillan Bloedel Ltd)



out. With the massive exodus of its residents, Ucluelet's economy was left at the edge of collapse.

A stagnant economy and shrinking tax base forced the town into a 'development at any cost' scenario, attracting many 'fly-by-night' and high risk developers into the area. With its major employers laying off workers and the population decreasing, the District found itself with a decreasing tax base, struggling to find resources needed for infrastructure or community projects. It was then when it turned its attention to the rainforest area of 800 acres within the District boundaries, owned at that time by MacMillan Bloedel Ltd (company later bought by Weyerhaeuser) under the Tree Farm Licence TFL44 (licence to harvest the forest). In 2004, after lengthy negotiations with the Government of British Columbia, the TFL44 was removed. The decision had to be made as to what would be the best use of the released Weyerhaeuser lands, and that decision had to be incorporated in District zoning bylaw as a part of the Official Community Plan.

The Local Government Act of British Columbia (Chapter 323, Part 26) defines an Official Community Plan (OCP) as a 'statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government' (Government of British Columbia 1996). It requires an OCP to include:

[S]tatements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the areas' residential development, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses, location and type of public facilities, location and phasing of major road, sewer and water systems ... as well as other matters that may be required or authorized by the minister (Government of British Columbia 1996).

Plans for zoning, land use designations and infrastructure are only declared in the OCP – practically they are implemented through ancillary documents (Hanna 2005).

The town planning office initiated and completed an OCP in 1998, knowing that the economy was turning around, tourism was picking up and the town would see more vibrant economic activity. The process largely resembled a visioning process: the Town Council appointed an OCP Steering Committee from a broad spectrum of community representatives and industry stakeholders, and the public input was gathered through a series of open houses (public hearings). The final document introduced a series of important policy changes and served as a turning point that brought confidence to developers and encouraged all kinds of new development in the town. These first developments took Ucluelet out of the 'high risk' scenario and put it into more of an enviable position for getting development financing. With more interest in Ucluelet, the town started to see economic activity and began to climb the ladder of steep land and property prices.

In 2003, the District appointed another OCP Steering Committee and initiated review of its OCP. While the previous document provided guidance for potential



developers, it lacked Smart Growth principles<sup>1</sup> and environmental standards to offer protection for the community. Following a series of public consultations and zoning rewrites, Weyerhaeuser lands were designated as ‘comprehensive development’ allowing for a number of different types of uses including single- and multi-family residential areas, affordable housing, parks, trails and community amenities. The holding zone on the lands meant that a future developer would have to apply for a rezoning, and there would be another public process.

In 2004, it became public knowledge that Weyerhaeuser lands were released from the forest land reserve, suddenly opening a huge land mass (more than the size of the town) for development. The lands were to be sold to the Amadon Group – a real estate development group from the capital city of Victoria, specializing in the development of resort and residential planned communities. Within a short time the Amadon Group applied for rezoning and with minimal public input put forward a mixed-use plan for development of 800 acres of rainforest lands. Even though the plan met few of the OCP policies and raised quite an opposition in the community, the developer insisted on proceeding with the ‘high-end’ tourism project, only to be unanimously rejected by the Town Council. The small town took a risk of turning down a large development project to protect its vision.

Watching the Amadon Group leave, Weyerhaeuser decided not to look for another developer but to design and rezone the lands itself, and having learnt from Amadon’s mistakes initiated an intense process of public consultation. The community responded – it was an opportunity to provide input and ensure that their voices were heard. After a series of public workshops, coffee house meetings, picnics and community events, the final plan for Weyerhaeuser lands was approved by the Town Council. The zoning not only adhered to the policies set forth in the OCP, but also reflected a mixed use the community had hoped for. In addition, Weyerhaeuser agreed to ensure public access to the waterfront by constructing a part of the Wild Pacific Trail and donated over CA\$2.5 million for community amenities, setting the standard for future developers. The final Official Community Plan and Weyerhaeuser Master Development Agreement were recognized by a number of national and international awards.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Environmentally sensitive land development with the goals of minimizing dependence on auto transportation, reducing air pollution and making infrastructure investments more efficient.

2 The District’s Official Community Plan and Weyerhaeuser Master Development Agreement were both recognized by a number of awards including the Sustainable Community Planning Award by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Transport Canada, and CH2M Canada Ltd for the ‘walk the talk’ OCP, an Award of Excellence in the ‘Comprehensive & Policy Plans Division’ by the Planning Institute of British Columbia for Weyerhaeuser Lands rezoning plan, a Community Excellence Award for Leadership and Innovation by the District Council Union of British Columbia Municipalities for Ucluelet’s policies, and several awards from the United Nations endorsed International Awards for Liveable Communities including a Gold Award for the OCP, a Silver Award

Both the Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands provide an example of increasingly complex value-based processes that require enormous amount of effort from the planners, local governments and communities (adapted from Krumholz 1996). These processes naturally reflect new realities with their complex set of problems that call upon unconventional planning and policy approaches to their solution (Nelkin 1981, Fischer 1993). In the case of Ucluelet, the complexity of planning and policy making was embedded in an intricate web of intersections between the local administrative bodies and interest groups, community and developers, tourism planning and land use, and further intensified by power dynamics and political struggles. Tourism planning in Ucluelet took a form of community development and land use planning, and even though tourism was not at the forefront of either, it played a major role in the policy formation for the municipality.

In order to better understand the innovative nature of planning and policy making in Ucluelet, we will examine these processes through the critical lens of the academic literature. After reviewing existing and emerging models of tourism planning and integrating them in broader planning literature, we will turn to the fields of political philosophy and democratic theory and review the framework of deliberative democracy for further insight. Finally, we will address weaknesses of practical implication of deliberative democracy by answering the four value-rational questions of phronetic planning research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Participatory Tourism Planning*

The importance of tourism planning has been widely addressed in the academic literature. Planning is needed in new destinations charting their development, as well as in older destinations attempting to innovate and attract new markets (Harrill 2004). Until recently, however, the main focus of tourism planning has been on marketing, promotion and regional boosterism (Reid 2003, Fuller and Reid 1998, Marcouiller 1997, Butler 1991, Murphy 1985, Loukissas 1983). Single-focused on attracting businesses and visitors to the destination, tourism planners and regional developers have often neglected the fact that tourism might not even fit in the vision of the regional development (Marcouiller 1997). In some cases this caused organized protests, litigation processes and host community attempts to ensure that tourism projects were not implemented. In others, dependency on tourism as a source of economic revenue placed communities in a position of being unable to reject or oppose tourism development projects due to the threat of losing economic benefits (Tosun 2000).

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for 'Most Liveable Community' under population of 20,000, and the overall award for Community Sustainability.

Throughout its evolution over the past few decades, tourism planning has drawn heavily on urban and regional planning practices (Hall 2000). In a similar manner, it is carried out at international/intraregional, national, regional and local levels (World Tourism Organization with Inskip 1994, Inskip 1991, Pearce 1989) and is often embedded within/overlaps with other policy fields such as transportation, conservation, rural development and others (Heeley 1981 in Pearce 1989). As such, planning is more than setting the preferred course of action as it frequently incorporates decision and policy making (Hall 2000). At the local level, tourism planning has traditionally been associated with land use planning, physical planning (planning of specific areas and sites, resort planning) and development planning (Hall 2000, Rosenow and Pulsipher 1979).

Planning and tourism literature has long discussed shortfalls of traditional planning approaches, and an interested reader will have no difficulties identifying a myriad of problems attributed to the traditional planning practice. Leaving the criticism aside, let us rather focus on what has been suggested in order to improve this practice. Among a number of arguments several stand out. In 1997, Bonilla pointed out that the best plans are not the ones of the highest technical quality, but rather those that ensure commitment to implementation. While this commitment depends on a number of factors, it is community input during the planning process that ensures development of plans that are more responsive to local needs; such plans also have a far better chance of community acceptance. In the words of Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979: 81):

[T]he best of plans will not do the job if the people affected are not involved in the entire planning process ... plans sometimes fail because they are poorly conceived, but more often they fail because they are not understood or appreciated ... and such plans most often are never implemented.

This call for creating opportunities for communities to provide input, review and feedback on tourism plans and development programs has been addressed by a number of academics and practitioners. As Marien and Pizam (1997) argued, in order to implement sustainable tourism initiatives, direct support and involvement of those affected by it are a must. It has therefore become critical to develop a model to engage those directly affected by tourism.

In response to this call, a variety of tourism planning models have been developed over the years, among them – integrated and integrative tourism planning (e.g. Pearce and Moscardo 1999, Marcouiller 1997, Ioannides 1995, Gunn 1988, 1994, Butler 1991, Inskip 1988, 1991, Pearce 1989), responsible and responsive tourism planning (e.g. Ritchie 1993, Haywood 1988), comprehensive and balanced tourism planning (e.g. Madrigal 1993, Murphy 1985), collaborative tourism planning (e.g. Hall 2000, Reed 1997, 2000, Sautter and Leisen 1999, Williams, Penrose and Hawkes 1998, Jamal and Getz 1995), participatory tourism planning (Timothy 1999), inclusive tourism planning (Costa 2001, Madrigal 1995, Prentice 1993) and dialogic tourism planning (Jamal, Stein and Harper 2002). Reflecting broader

trends in urban and regional planning, tourism planning literature has also shifted the focus to sustainability, citizen involvement and community-led development. Programs emphasizing inclusive, ongoing dialogue throughout the public decision making process have proliferated under various names – ‘sustainable communities’, ‘livable communities’, ‘collaborative communities’, ‘safe communities’, ‘healthy communities’, ‘smart growth communities’, ‘competent communities’, and ‘empowered communities’, to name a few (Wolff 2003). Addressing these models, the tourism planning literature has pointed out the challenge of designing authentic and meaningful participatory planning processes – what Lane (1994) termed ‘the community route to development’. In order for these programs to work and lead to long-term sustainability, a number of prerequisites have been identified, among them dialogue, cooperation and collaboration among the various stakeholders (Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher 2005, Mitchell and Reid 2001, Tosun 2000), as well as integration, cooperation and collaboration (Tosun and Timothy 2001, Hall 2000, Bramwell and Lane 1999, Selin 1999, Timothy 1999, Wearing.).

### *Deliberative Democracy*

For a planning or policy making process to satisfy criteria of effective and meaningful citizen participation, it has to go beyond simply encouraging ‘citizen discourse’ or ‘good communication’ to include deeply engaged civic dialogue (Reed 2000). Such a process should be clear and open, inclusive and inviting, representative, with the constant information flow and elements of social learning. In other words, it has to satisfy two core democratic values – representativeness and deliberation (Fishkin, Rosell, Shepherd and Amsler 2004). Habermas (1984, 1987) defines deliberation as a process of seeking consensus and persuasion of one’s opponents by civil argumentation rather than force or coercion. His theory of communicative rationality implies an uncoerced and undistorted interaction among competent individuals – an ideal process that aspires to perfection of an ‘ideal speech situation’ (Habermas 1984). Conditions of this genuine participatory process form the core characteristics of deliberative democratic processes.

Weeks (2000) defines deliberative democracy as an informed participation by citizens in the deliberative process of community decision making. He further argues that a sound deliberative democratic process must meet the following requirements:

1. Broad and representative public participation.
2. Informed public judgement.
3. Deliberative public participation.
4. Highly credible and methodologically sound outcomes/results.

In a similar manner, Hartz-Karp (2005) outlines the following prerequisite ‘building blocks’ for successful deliberations:

1. Participants are representative of the population.
2. A focus on thoroughly understanding the issues and their implications.
3. Serious consideration of differing viewpoints and values.
4. A search for consensus or common ground.
5. The capacity to influence policy and decision-making.

The complexity of tourism planning and development projects, their vulnerability to the cultural, social and economic differences of host communities and tourists, uncertainty of the future outcomes, the failure of traditional practices to deal with the intricate moral and ethical issues, as well as the need to make ‘moral choices and not just statistical calculations’ call for broad, representative, inclusive and informed ‘non-expert’ involvement in community tourism planning and development (adapted from Durant 2001). This new framework, in turn, requires a solid theoretical ground on which the new normative model of public participation in tourism planning could be built (adapted from Webler 1995). The framework of deliberative democracy and planning as communicative action is believed to offer the greatest potential in guiding development of such a model. Not only does this framework offer a fresh way of engaging citizens in deciding upon the matters that directly affect their lives, but by doing so it shifts the dominant bureaucratic ideology with the roots in instrumental and objectivist rationality, to a more democratic form of governance with the roots in Habermasian communicative rationality. Emphasizing public involvement through communicative action, the theory of communicative rationality emphasizes the role of dialogue, communication and understanding, and therefore directly feeds into the promise of deliberative democracy.

### *Phronetic Planning Research*

Deliberative democratic processes rest upon two main theories of learning – reflective pragmatism of John Dewey (1930) and relationships of knowledge and power of Paulo Freire (1970, 1985). The latter reference to power has been the point of criticism of much of democratic thinking – including Habermasian communicative rationality and planning studies. In reference to Habermas, Flyvbjerg (2002: 2) argues that his theory of communicative rationality fails to depart from being normative and procedural, and therefore does not bring about understanding of what he calls ‘*Realpolitik* and real rationality’ that characterizes studies of power. He further adds:

Modernity relies on rationality as the main means for making democracy and planning work. But if the interrelations between rationality and power are even remotely close to the asymmetrical relationship depicted ... which the tradition from Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Nietzsche tells us they are – then rationality is such a weak form of power that democracy and planning built on rationality will be weak, too (Flyvbjerg 2002: 15).

The argument Flyvbjerg (2002: 15) is putting forth is clear – for democratic planning to become reality, we need to accept a ‘blind spot’ in communicative planning theory and ‘tie back democratic thinking ... to power, conflict, and partisanship’. He suggests we do this by practising *phronetic planning research*.

The concept of *phronesis* (practical reason/practical wisdom) is known from the works of Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC), and is distinctly different from the concepts of *praxis* (politics), *episteme* (scientific knowledge) and *techné* (technical knowledge) in that it is grounded in the collective life and involves persuasion, reflection upon values, prudential judgement and free disclosure of ideas. Those practicing *phronetic planning research* examine current practices in order to improve *praxis*. By exploring and deliberating about the opportunities and risks of planning, phronetic planning researchers seek answers to how things could be done differently (Flyvbjerg 2004). In doing so they ask themselves four value-rational questions that lie at the core of *phronesis*, namely:

1. Where are we going with planning?
2. Who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?
3. Is this development desirable?
4. What, if anything, should we do about it? (Flyvbjerg 2008).

It is these questions we will focus on as we examine Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands. Before we do that, let us first look at the methodological aspect of the study.

## **Methodology**

As the nature of the research problem – understanding and interpreting the social and human action (planning process) – called for qualitative/interpretive work, it was important to clarify assumptions of the study methodology. We recognized that the reality of community tourism planning did not exist out there but was rather (re)constructed by its participants, that each of them interpreted the process according to their historical, cultural and social background, experiences and social interactions, and that the researcher could not stand neutral above the context and observe the facts, but rather co-created interpretations together with research participants, learnt with and from them, built relationships and inevitably made moral and ethical judgements (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). This study assumed the role of researcher as meaning maker, interpreter and learner who was socially situated in a context and engaged in a value-laden inquiry process. In search for meanings and interpretations, this study adhered to interpretivism, constructivism and hermeneutics. By doing so it took on the challenge of Gadamer’s (1975) ‘philosophical hermeneutics’ emphasizing understanding as the pathway to meaning.

Three main methods of data collection were utilized, including (1) extensive review of historical, administrative, planning and legal documents and records, as well as census data, media reports and others; (2) in-depth phone and face-to-face interviews (both formal and informal) with a broad range of participants, and (3) observations to support/improve interpretations of the interview findings. Data collection process began with review of planning documents in summer and fall of 2007 followed by a number of phone interviews over the same period of time. In addition, a series of formal and informal interviews were conducted with a broad range of community members during the site visit to the community in November 2007. Initial contacts were established through Vancouver Island University (formerly known as Malaspina University-College) and the planning department of the District of Ucluelet. In total, 26 individuals were interviewed (this excludes a number of informal interviews); many were interviewed several times with interviews lasting from half an hour to several hours. Most of the interviews were recorded (later transcribed) and documented with extensive and detailed notes. In addition, post-interview and observational notes were taken following a number of informal conversations about the project.

In general, conversations were initiated by asking broad questions about the nature of changes in the community, social and economic context of the process and participants' background and role in the process. They took place in residential homes and offices, cafes and in the outdoors. All conversations were open-ended and unconstrained, even though an interview guide was used. Study participants represented diverse and at times conflicting interests. They were researchers, students, elected officials, business owners, developers and real estate agents, environmental and advocacy group members, community volunteers, as well as citizens – all of them had first-hand experience in the development of the Official Community Plan and Ucluelet/Weyerhaeuser Comprehensive Development Plan. Those who agreed to be interviewed were ensured of complete anonymity and confidentiality; assurance that none of the information would be quoted in a way that would lead to person's identification was necessary to get people to speak freely. To this end, all of the names used in this text are pseudonyms and there are no references as to respondents' occupation, status, length of residence, or role in the community or in the process.

With regard to data interpretation and assertions, we considered triangulation (specifically, investigator and methodological triangulation) as additional tools for inquiry (adding another perspective to consider), not as pathways to understanding. To avoid potential biases, interview notes were compared with observational notes taken during the interviews and throughout the site visit, and other researchers were consulted with regard to their perceptions of the processes. Assertions drawn from interviews were supported by observations, while analysis of documents and public records provided a better understanding of the context in which planning and policy making processes occurred. We



nevertheless recognized that the very nature of case study research led us to making moral and ethical judgements and inadvertently engaging in co-creating interpretations while seeking to understand the (re)constructed reality of the processes we examined. While most of assertions made in the remainder of the text are substantiated by the secondary references, one will also find interpretations we made as we learned with and from the participants through interviews and observations, as well as through direct participation in the planning processes.

### **Where Are We Going?**

The province of British Columbia is doing rather well compared to other regions of the country. In 2007, it ranked first in the country in environmental quality and health outcomes, third in the standard of living, fourth in the number of jobs, sixth in social conditions and eighth in economic growth (British Columbia Progress Board 2008). The current provincial government is known to support business growth and economic development in order to improve the province's economic competitiveness (Ministry of Economic Development 2007). This 'pro-business' and 'pro-development' alignment has inevitably pushed communities large and small to adopt some kind of development strategy. For the District of Ucluelet having perhaps the last remaining stretch of coastline on Vancouver Island that was available 'for sale' meant that development was simply unavoidable. Memories of the time when major financial institutions refused to open branches in the area (as it was considered a 'high risk' undertaking), major employers were retrenching staff and the population was decreasing, were still fresh in minds of its residents. If the District wanted to survive, it needed development; the question was – what kind of development.

If there was one thing Ucluetians agreed on, it was the fear of going the route of 'globally trendy' destinations of Whistler and Tofino (both located in the same province of British Columbia). Comparison with Tofino, a few miles down the road, was inevitable, as both towns have experienced the same shift in their logging and fishing economic base. Unlike Ucluelet, however, Tofino did not quietly watch its jobs disappear but rather eagerly embarked on the bandwagon of tourism and what Hanna (2005) called 'the economy of protest'. The two rivals – a blue-collar working community and the 'artsy', upscale community of environmental activists, were also deeply divided in their vision of future development. While Tofino was making an extreme headway in rebuilding its economy around tourism, Ucluelet was observing its neighbour's mistakes and pitfalls (the community of Tofino running out of water in the summer of 2006), pondering upon the opportunities to utilize its natural resources as a tourism attraction in a sustainable fashion.<sup>3</sup>

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3 As this is being written, the District of Tofino is again facing an impending water shortage (Douziech 2009).



Pitfalls of Tofino became anecdotal among Ucluetians and were often used as a point of reference for Ucluelet. Quoting Susan, having Tofino so close by was a privilege as it allowed the District to learn from the mistakes of poor planning – ‘not approving development for the right reason, getting nothing from developers, allowing development to go rampant and stirring a lot of animosity between tourists and local residents by bringing in seasonal residents and displacing long-term community members’.

Agreement over Tofino aside, there were perhaps as many views on the future of Ucluelet as there were residents. While recognizing that change was inevitable and that the community needed ‘to try to control it to a certain degree and not have change lead us, but have us lead a change’ (Brandon), views diverged on what exactly that entailed. Both the Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands provided the residents with an opportunity to voice their views and hence galvanized a large part of the community to get involved. The most vocal groups were those advocating ‘development at any cost’ and those who did not want any development at all; both stood firm on their ground and supported their views with reasonable arguments. Those ‘pro-development’ often referred to the case of private land. As Sean pointed out, the issue of development was not a question of ‘if’, but a question of ‘when’. Jared further elaborated:

One of the main principles of owning land in Canada is that you have a right to be able to do something with it, and it cannot be taken away from you ... What the [OCP] does ... it sets basic rules for how we see our community, and if you can make your application fit in the right place, we cannot deny it, and if we do, we end up in a court of law ... People who don’t want anything to happen, can’t understand that ...

On the other hand, there were those Elizabeth called ‘the old guard’; Justin characterized them as ‘the last one in, close the door’. Many thought they were too entrenched in the ‘old ways’ and could not understand that the District was going to change with or without their approval. As Sean pointed out:

They are mostly old time residents, generational stuff ... They don’t want [Ucluelet] to change ... And I can appreciate that, but it’s just not realistic ... There’s pressure being applied everywhere, land values are going through the roof everywhere ... They just need a dose of reality, and a lot of times that’s hard to come by, when you are emotionally invested one way or the other ...

Among those advocating no development was the Ucluelet Community Development Task Force – a local special interest group whose role in the process was disputed by a number of respondents. Several of those who had worked in close contact with the Task Force agreed that:

The Task Force started active and proactive, but now turned to reactive ... complaining about development and the environment ... [They are] under 10 people now, and their anti-development views pushed the others away ...

Some called them ‘CAVES’ – Citizens Against Virtually Everything, others – ‘agitators’ bringing negativity into the process. Regardless of the strong opinions about the Task Force and other vocal interest groups (among them real estate agents and environmental groups), it was apparent that there was a sense of respect for the differences. This was largely attributed to the genuine efforts of the District to get everyone on board and talking to each other, to go above and beyond conventional public engagement methods in order to ‘tap into’ the community and get the ‘silent majority’ to speak up. In addition, it was obvious that the community knew very well what leverage they had over the developers, and supported the local planner in his efforts to maximize community benefits while minimizing environmental, social and economic impacts. It appeared that Ucluetians knew what their power source was and what mechanisms were available to put it to use.

### **Who Gains and Who Loses, and by Which Mechanisms of Power?**

The power dynamics during planning and policy making processes in Ucluelet were quite complex. As key players pushed their own agendas and power struggles continuously reshaped the processes, the answer to ‘who gains?’ and ‘who loses?’ was going to determine the future of the District and therefore was of critical importance to the residents. As the question in focus was mainly of land use, the District (including the Town Council and the District planner) knew they had the final say in decisions concerning the region’s unique natural resource base. On the other hand, Weyerhaeuser (as the land owner) knew they had the rights to develop the land, as long as it made sure the proposed development would follow the guidelines set forth in the OCP. At the same time, they also realized that in order to succeed they had to work with the community and were therefore willing to negotiate the type and scale of development the District and the community would feel most comfortable with.

The relationship between community power and knowledge was especially apparent in Ucluelet. The residents knew what their power source was, largely because they had knowledge of it. It was not uncommon to hear one speak about LEED standards<sup>4</sup> or Smart Growth principles as if they were common knowledge. Empowerment of the community was mainly attributed to the efforts of the District planner. Without a doubt, he had the respect of all parties involved. As Sara shared:

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4 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Canada Green Building Rating System, is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings that combines elements of Smart Growth, urbanism and green building.

I commend him left, right and centre ... He has got a really tough job working with his personal value system where he would want to see things go a certain way, but he also has to look for the money that's coming into our budget ... That's a difficult balance for him to find ... By pushing your personal values out there – LEED program, Smart Growth and others – you are bringing knowledge basis to the citizens, and the message you are sending out makes them comfortable ...

The District planner was also recognized for his passion, knowledge and care for the community. In Elizabeth's words:

He is one of the best planners I've ever met ... very passionate about what he does, he knows the community and doesn't want to make it sloppy, but progressive ... He researches and knows how to use the leverage ... The process was a lot easier because he was there able to give guidance ...

At the same time, it was apparent that it was not the planner alone who was regarded as one of the town's 'champions'. The mayor and the five councillors were at the forefront of major changes the community has gone through. Sara described the Town Council as 'green', 'proactive', 'futuristic' and 'transformational':

Our local government is very proactive, futuristic and advanced ... If you can bring to light a model community, you've got a really good community to work with ... It's not a community where one person is dictating what is going to happen ... This town has a very transformational leadership ...

This was not always the case though. Back in times of economic decline, the council was quite reserved about the new Smart Growth, sustainable and environmental policies that were viewed as those 'scaring the developers away'. It took a certain amount of risk to require the first developer to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment and implement some of the rather demanding OCP policies. As the developer agreed and the process progressed smoothly, the council gained courage to continue along the same lines, while pushing the boundary a little further every time.

While the District planner and the Town Council were working on setting the policy framework to guide developers, Weyerhaeuser as a developer was examining how to develop the lands in order to maximize its bottom line. The company however knew very well how important it was to get the community on board – after all, it closely watched what previously happened to the Amadon Group. Speaking (again) of the Amadon plan, Thomas pointed out:

If you took the equivalent to Amadon's plan and Weyerhaeuser's plan, you would say, 'Oh, that's very similar', which it is ... I mean, there are only so many things you can do – you can have some hotels, some tourist-related

housing, some locals-related housing, you can have some retail, and it's the matter of how you mix it up ...

This reference to Amadon is especially interesting – as more and more respondents spoke about it, it became apparent that in addition to the negativity towards the actual plan, it was not the developer they did not approve, but rather its attitude and the process. Having learned from Amadon's mistakes, Weyerhaeuser decided to go 'the extra mile', hired local visionaries, planners and facilitators to run workshops, Vancouver Island University students to solicit public comments, brought in scientists and environmental consultants and organized a number of public open houses to gather community input. While some thought this was done in order to pursue the 'bottom line' of making a profit, others saw its actions as respectful of the community. As Mark noted:

They were very successful in finding out what the community wanted on those lands ... They wanted to leave a positive legacy in Ucluelet, and they did a real good job in putting in single-family, multi-family, condos, affordable housing, hotels, residential ... a myriad of different uses ...

Negotiations between Weyerhaeuser and the District were lengthy and not without disagreements. As both parties tried to push their agendas through, concessions had to be made as to what the community would get from the proposed development. Indeed, while some actions of the developer were labelled as 'voluntary', they were in fact a result of lengthy and contested negotiations. At the end, to satisfy OCP stipulations and ensure rezoning of the lands, Weyerhaeuser agreed to dedicate 22.5 hectares of its property as parkland, transferred about 4.1 hectares of fee simple land to the District, agreed to construct a section of the Wild Pacific Trail at its expense, contributed over CA\$2.5 million for various community projects, and agreed not to market or sell any single-family dwelling lots to the general public, until it had been made exclusively available to Ucluelet residents. The District, on the other hand, demonstrated how an innovative policy framework established in its OCP (or a creative way to utilize already existing policies) provided important leverage and ensured an economically viable project for the community.

### **Is this Development Desirable?**

While the Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands laid the groundwork for future development, they did not provide a guarantee of a 'smooth sailing' for potential developers. Those interested in developing the land would have to complete environmental and archeological impact assessments, provide development plans, subdivision applications, as well as obtain development and building permits (Drews 2005). As this is being written, a number of projects are already under way or being completed – among them

recently opened Black Rock Resort, residential estate lots, as well as the proposed Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course.

Passing judgement on whether this development is desirable for the District of Ucluelet is largely a matter of who is doing it. For those calling Ucluelet their home ‘good’ development meant improved economy, new employment, educational and recreational opportunities, enhanced infrastructure, safety and other determinants of the quality of life. For business owners and real estate agents ‘desirable’ development was the one allowing them to make a profit, for those on a fixed income – the one not causing a sharp increase in estate prices, and for families – the one providing them with a safe place to live and raise their children. In general, most of the residents wanted a close-knit community with a strong social capital, environmentally and economically healthy. As Jared explained:

We have to look in the future and make sure that citizens who live here, whoever they are, have an opportunity to make a living here ... and if it’s not logging, they have to come up with something else ...

That ‘something else’, as the reader might have correctly guessed, is tourism. Even though the District has been seeing over a million visitors a year, Ucluelet has not yet reached its ‘saturation’ stage of tourism development. At the same time, tourism impacts on the community have been very visible and at times worrying. As Sean pointed out, whether tourism was a blessing or a curse was a ‘matter of perspective’. For years following the economic downturn, tourism indeed was the main industry helping the town to ‘keep heads above water’. Moreover, for a destination like Ucluelet tourism was a logical choice: moderate climate along with a combination of the old-growth temperate rainforest and the ocean had created a unique combination of natural attractions, catching attention of tourists from all over the world. Visitors came here to hike the Wild Pacific Trail, watch whales and other wildlife, surf, watch ocean storm waves and meet local residents. Local residents in turn used the tourism potential of their community to bring about long needed infrastructure improvements and fund community development projects. While developers perceived some of the OCP policies as ‘planning tricks’, the community was on board. As Lucas pointed out:

Now that we have been ‘discovered’ and tourism is here, it has become a blessing for the town ... We wouldn’t have built some of the amenities that we have now without tourism being a major factor; it’s been healthy for the town ... We have learned from the mistakes of others to make it better for our town and control it to a degree ... [And you know], when you build amenities like that, who benefits most? – your community ...

To further exploit its tourism potential, Ucluelet has been working on a ‘resort municipality’ designation. Along with 13 other communities in British Columbia that have tourism as their major industry, the District was recently designated as a

‘resort municipality’. The status allows it to introduce an additional 3 per cent hotel tax and use part of the revenues towards tourism infrastructure improvements. As Lindsay explained:

Those funds must be spent on infrastructure that increases your tourism economy, but for us anything that benefits our community, is also increasing our tourism economy ... Like Trail extensions, beautification projects – they make it a better place to live, but also create a tourism infrastructure ...

While developing a tourism core, the District was not so naïve as to think that tourism only would save the town. Watching Tofino down the road, the town quickly realized that it did not want to become a ‘one-horse town’, but rather wanted to diversify – to develop what David characterized as a ‘three-legged stool of diversity – forestry, fishery and tourism’. Today, this vision for the District means eco- and adventure tourism, some forestry, fishing, beam cutters, metal work and arts, among others.

While this provided guidance for the future, at present the community felt somewhat uneasy about the direction the town had been going. With the constant change, some of the respondents were unsure of where they would find themselves in a few years down the road, while others acknowledged that overall things were better now and at least there was a sense of direction to development. A fear of tourism ‘being a monster and killing a community’ was not very strong as there were clear and visible efforts of the District and its planning department to take control of the situation.

Even though some were worried about potential environmental and economic impacts of tourism, it was mostly the social impacts that were of greatest concern, more specifically fears of losing community cohesiveness, community spirit, the town’s personality, community integrity and the quality of life. All of those were of great importance to Ucluetians; if there was one issue that united everyone, that was the issue of social capital. Parties that would find themselves on the opposite sides on most other community issues, joined together in their care for the community. Some spoke of uncertainty and sighed, while others were optimistic and believed that the OCP policies would not allow tourism development in Ucluelet to go rampant. Everyone hoped that despite the large influx of tourists, their community would preserve its spirit and find the way to protect itself from unwanted consequences of development; most of the respondents believed their District was savvy enough to take development under control.

### **What Should be Done?**

As any public planning and policy making process, Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands weren’t without critics. The criticism, however,

was of the final decisions and process outcomes as opposed to the process itself. Speaking of the OCP process, Lance explained:

As textbook planning goes, the process has been pretty open and public and transparent ... Now, the decisions that were made – not everyone agrees with them, but that’s our society, that’s the way it is ... I think the process is still valid, but decisions that were made are contested by a large number of people ... [You know,] anyone who doesn’t like the decisions is going to complain about the process ... but I don’t see how the process could have been more open or transparent ...

Similar thoughts were expressed about the later Weyerhaeuser rezoning process. In Sean’s words:

I think the public had full opportunity all the way along, I don’t think anybody can say that they didn’t have input ... They might say they weren’t listened to, because they didn’t see their agendas translated into the final product ... But [otherwise] it was a good, open, lengthy process ...

Transparency, length and breadth of both processes placed high demands on the District planner, but at the end it was well worth it. Regardless of the outcomes, those with the first-hand experience in development of the OCP and Weyerhaeuser Master Development Agreement concurred that the District went above and beyond conventional methods of public engagement in order to bring the community on board to collectively decide on its future vision. While it was up to the residents to speak up, it was up to the District to ensure that there was an ongoing dialogue and flow of information. For the District planner, remaining impartial while juggling multiple roles and wearing different hats was extremely important. The biggest challenge and perhaps the main success lay in his ability to empower the community by constantly ‘feeding’ the residents with knowledge that would help them understand intricacies of policy making. At the end, when it came to making decisions on Alternative Design Standards or Smart Growth, residents knew exactly what they were and had their minds made up whether they were in support of these policy initiatives. For a small community confronted with changes that were beyond local capacities to significantly influence, the case of Ucluelet clearly exhibits the critical role and power of knowledge, as well as innovative ways to use it to one’s advantage.

As to the question of what should be done – it was apparent that the District knew the answer – not to stop, not to slow down, but to keep on learning, improving and innovating. For Ucluelet that meant establishing the first Wiki-OCP online mechanism to get even more residents involved in its consequent OCP review, exploring provincial and federal funding opportunities for additional community development projects and currently reviewing the pros and cons of introducing an electric car in the District.



A word of caution here. The story of Ucluelet and its planning and policy making processes should not be construed as victory of a small community over vicious and evil developer. On the contrary, it is a story of a process of inclusion and education, a story that illustrates that not all developers are vicious and that one can work with them on reaching consensus that would leave all parties feeling comfortable with the decisions made. It is a story of a dialogue and an example of how the dialogic mode of communication is truly crucial in a democratic society. As Flyvbjerg (2002: 19) pointed out, ‘dialogue, not necessarily detached and without combat, but with respect for other parties and a willingness to listen is a prerequisite for informed democratic decision making’. The case of Ucluelet shows that while democratic planning and policy making is neither fast nor easy, it is a possibility that planners and policy makers should explore.

### **From Planning to Policy: An Innovative Approach**

As we are concluding our story, it is the right time to explain what was so innovative about planning and policy making in Ucluelet that brought this small community national and international recognition. First let us backtrack to the theoretical framework of deliberative democracy introduced earlier. Using the ‘building blocks’ of successful deliberation outlined by Hartz-Karp (2005), both the Official Community Planning and rezoning of Weyerhaeuser lands exhibited a high degree of representativeness of their participants, ensured that they understood what the issues were and what options were available, considered differing viewpoints and values, worked on reaching consensus and ultimately influenced both policy and policy making. In other words, even though one might argue that both processes could have been improved, they attempted to achieve the ideal of deliberative democratic decision making. Indeed for a small community with a planning staff of ‘one’, that was quite remarkable.

Creativity of the OCP process lay mostly in the ways it attempted to engage the residents in a visioning exercise by providing a broad range of avenues for public engagement – from notice boards in grocery stores and street banners, to newspaper and television advertising, coffee house meetings, family picnics, local festivals and events, as well as traditional open houses. Length and breadth of public deliberation ensured broad resident support of the policies incorporated in the final document. Policies deserving specific attention include density bonusing (density exchanged for parkland or amenity), provision of staff and affordable housing in conjunction with multiple family residential development, resort condominiums and hotel units, public access to/and construction of the Wild Pacific Trail, protection of valuable ecological areas as open space, trails and parks, provision of a sustainable alternative to rural sprawl housing, protecting community character by using unique design techniques and use of innovative techniques such as Smart Growth, Alternative Design Standards, riparian greenspace buffers, shared access



properties, opportunities and constraints modelling, conservation design and others (Mazzoni, with Richards and Crowley 2006).

Creating avenues for broad and informed public participation and fostering partnerships and collaboration among various stakeholders opened up a broad range of opportunities for Ucluelet and helped secure some of the widely praised benefits of participatory and collaborative tourism planning initiatives. Among them – increased accountability to the public, an opportunity to make balanced and better-informed decisions and properly address community concerns, initiating the process of social learning, securing legitimacy of decisions made, increasing chances to overcome power imbalances through collaboration and initiating a process of community building and development (for further review of these, see Grybovych 2008).

It is the authors' deep belief that there exists no blueprint for good policy under any particular circumstances; what 'works' in one community might not apply in a different context. At the same time we believe that lessons learned from communities that have undergone long and at times tortuous planning and policy making processes while developing their tourism products can serve as a model for other small communities and should facilitate reflection and provide a range of open possibilities for practicing planners in their efforts to design democratic planning and policy making processes. As the story of Ucluelet illustrates, there is but one step from planning to policy, and success of the former directly impacts the latter. The policy document in its turn provides the framework for all subsequent planning activities and thus closes the circle.

Since the Weyerhaeuser process things have changed in Ucluelet. The recent global economic downturn has not gone unnoticed: many of the larger tourism development projects have been put on hold, and others have seen foreclosures initiated on some of the highly leveraged properties. At the same time, the District is in a quite unique 'bubble' where speculative buying is combined with normal market pressures, allowing the development industry to be more flexible and weather slower absorption rates. Today a new lending market is also emerging in the area, with new, more cautious investment dollars coming from alternate sources.

Even though the impacts of the recent world economic decline have not been severe in Ucluelet, the residents continue to watch developers and anxiously look into the future – some with optimism, others with scepticism. Some vividly recall details of the planning processes and power battles, but also proudly speak of their community with the sense of security provided by the policy framework they helped design. Others look ahead with pessimism and await more controversies to follow, this time concerning vacation rentals. The 'CAVES' group remains active and ensures no important decisions are made without their input. What they all know is that several years down the road their community will be a very different place. Let us hope that this change will be for the better.

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## Chapter 6

# Development on Kangaroo Island: The Controversy Over Southern Ocean Lodge

Freya Higgins-Desbiolles

### **Introduction**

This case study explores the policy context and planning approval process for the Southern Ocean Lodge (SOL) resort development on Kangaroo Island (KI) in the 2000s. SOL has described itself as ‘Australia’s first true luxury wilderness lodge, promoting exciting new standards in Australian experiential travel’ (brochure ‘company profile’). Despite these lofty claims, this development sparked major controversy in the KI community, was opposed by the KI Council and was approved under the South Australian state government’s major developments process. The analysis of these events offers interesting insights into the planning approval processes for tourism developments in communities concerned with controlling their future and protecting valued environments.

Kangaroo Island is an iconic tourism resource for both the state and the nation. Its natural beauty and abundant wildlife attract tourists from Australia and the world. The Kangaroo Island community is aware of its unique environment and actively pressed for the sustainable development of tourism in line with community needs and goals. As a result, the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM) was developed, which represents ‘a unique example of a “community”-driven, visitor management system’ (Jack n.d.).

However, despite having such a unique community-driven approach to tourism planning, KI has seen its fair share of development conflicts. More recently, a development proposed for Hanson Bay on the western end of KI, SOL generated significant controversy and opposition. As a result, the planning approval process was shifted from local government to the South Australian state government. This chapter analyses the dynamics of the conflict and employs a social construction approach to explain how events occurred as they did.

### **Methodology**

This project evolved from an observation of tourism development dynamics on Kangaroo Island. This empirical case study, focused on micro-level events, is meant to shed light on macro-level dynamics. As Yin claimed, ‘a case study is an



empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (1994: 13). Tourism planning is best understood by examining real-life experiences grounded in detailed accounts of contexts.

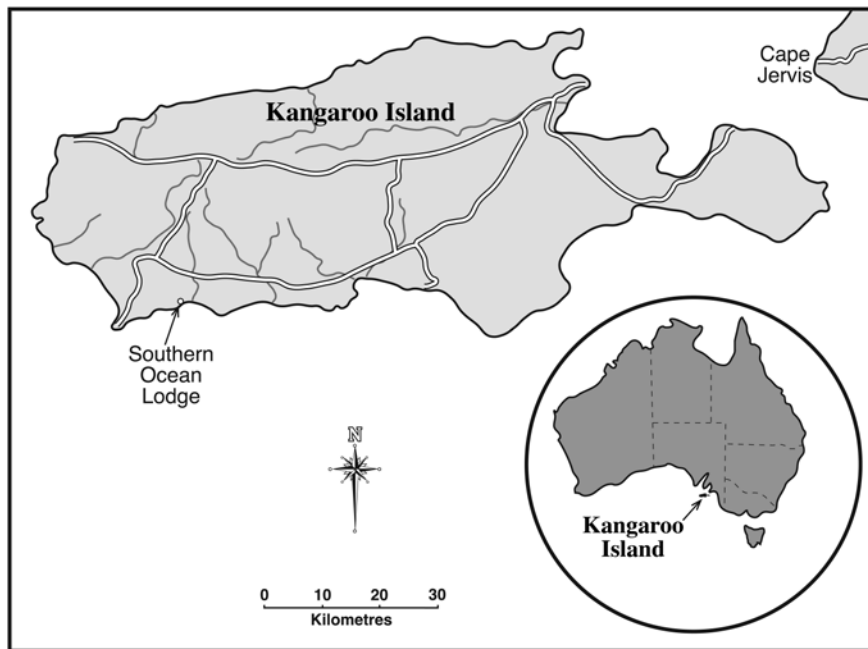
Yin also advocated sound case study methodology to avoid criticism of it being 'soft research' prone to researcher bias and sloppy technique (1994: 9–13). This project used sound case study technique to corroborate narratives and triangulate the data by reviewing documentary evidence, conducting interviews and using a reflexive research technique. Primary documents include: government policies and plans; development application materials; public, government agency and non-government agency submissions to the planning approval process; government documents obtained through freedom of information requests and letters to the editor written when the development proposal was under consideration. In 2009 more than 25 focused interviews were conducted with stakeholders, including the developer, community members both in favour of the development and against it, representatives of government agencies that contributed to the planning approval process, former members of KI Council, politicians, KI tourism operators, environmentalists and experts who participated in these events. It must be mentioned that the KI Council prohibited interviewing of any of its current staff and councillors, claiming that the people sought for interview had had 'very little to do with the decisions on this matter. It was a major project status and hence was not ultimately Council's decision' (email from from Carmel Noon, CEO of KI Council 17 February 2009). Former members of KI Council have disputed this interpretation, thereby indicating the political sensitivity of this research project.

This chapter offers a narration of events that shed light on the tensions and dynamics of contemporary tourism development in an era of pro-growth dynamics set in a context of increasing awareness of human impacts on the natural environment.

## **Background**

Kangaroo Island lies off the mainland of South Australia. It is 155 kilometres long and up to 55 kilometres wide (Figure 6.1) and retains almost 50 per cent of its original native vegetation, half of which is protected in national and conservation parks. The permanent population consists of some 4,400 people; with a significant and increasing number of non-resident landowners. In 2003, 150,915 people visited KI, 26 per cent of whom were international visitors (Jack and Duka, n.d.). The current visitor to resident ratio is approximately 40 to 1 (Toni Duka pers. comm. 16 September 2008).

KI diversified into tourism following the 1989–90 crash in wool prices. The development of tourism occurred when the island's agricultural sector was declining and there was concern about retaining young people in the community. Nowadays KI is a tourist icon due to its wildlife and its natural environment.



**Figure 6.1** Map of Kangaroo Island

Following the introduction of a fast ferry service to KI in 1994, the number of day-trippers to KI has increased. These developments and the subsequent rise in visitor numbers concerned both the community and planners. As Miller and Twining-Ward stated:

It became evident that without clear observation and understanding of the motivations and changes brought about by the tourism industry, visitor impacts both on the environment and community, coupled with economic worries and emigrations of youth could easily take their toll on the future sustainability of the island (2005: 203).

In the mid-1990s, following the development of a Tourism Policy and Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for KI, KI planners developed their own 'broader and more integrated' tourism planning tool which became known as the TOMM (Miller and Twining-Ward 2005: 204). The designers of the TOMM opted for establishing parameters of 'optimal uses' of resources (Jack n.d.). Proponents of the TOMM argue that it sets out optimal conditions which 'cover the broad spectrum of the economic, market opportunity, ecological, experiential and socio-cultural factors and as such, reflect the entire tourism system, and so [stands in contrast to other models] ... which focus on one specific aspect of a tourism system [the ecological]' (Jack n.d.).

TOMM surveys provide one particularly helpful indicator of the local community's relationship to tourism development on KI. This is the measurement criterion in the socio-cultural section that gauges how much 'residents feel they can influence tourism related decisions' with the optimal range set at 70 to 100 per cent of residents responding positively. In 2000–01 and 2001–02 only 39 per cent of respondents responded positively. The next census in 2004–05 had only 55.8 per cent responding positively (Duka 2005: 14).<sup>1</sup> Analysis of the data led Duka to suggest that:

Kangaroo Island residents are less likely to accept some environmental cost in exchange for economic and population growth on the Island, that most do not feel that they have sufficient opportunity to have input into local tourism related decisions and that tourism development is not fully occurring in line with community values for the Island (2005: 21).<sup>2</sup>

It is clearly difficult to meet the needs of all stakeholders in tourism. Conflicts and tensions are natural where demands for economic growth clash with a finite environment and communities with diverse social needs. In particular, it is easy to see how communities might resist the growth of tourism in the interest of community wellbeing, whereas the tourism industry and its proponents encourage the growth of tourism. An examination of the controversy that erupted over the proposed development of SOL in 2005 in KI's coastal landscape zone on the southwest of the island is a helpful case study of such dynamics.

## **The Proposed Development**

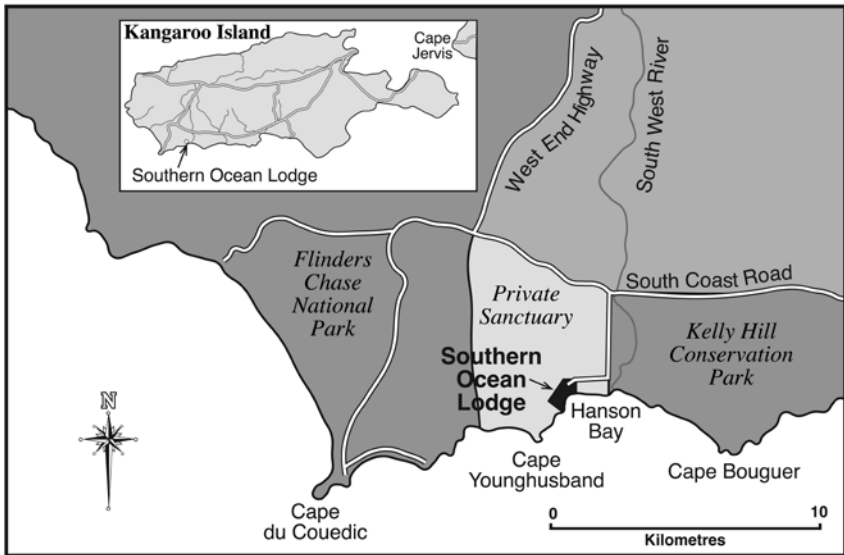
The backdrop for the proposed development was James Baillie's visit to KI in the late 1990s when he was Managing Director of P&O Resorts. 'The SA Government wanted a "Silky Oak Lodge" on Kangaroo Island, which was one of our properties in North Queensland at the time and they invited us down and to have a look around' (Baillie pers. comm. 29 May 2009). The places he was shown were mainly farming properties on the north coast of the island, which lacked 'the wow factor' he considered as essential:

If you're trying to encourage people to come to a destination, they need to stay somewhere that has the wow factor because that's the only way you can make the development sustainable. You have to be able to charge [premium] prices and

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1 This is the latest annual report currently available from the TOMM website.

2 The decline in positive response to this question continued in the 2006–7 period with under 50 per cent stating they feel they can influence tourism-related decisions. See: [http://www.tomm.info/media/contentresources/docs/Indicator%20Report\\_Socio%20Cultural%20\\_InfluenceTourism\\_Apr07.pdf](http://www.tomm.info/media/contentresources/docs/Indicator%20Report_Socio%20Cultural%20_InfluenceTourism_Apr07.pdf).



**Figure 6.2** Site map of the proposed Southern Ocean Lodge Development

Source: SOL developer James Baillie

to maintain a certain yield and that's the only way you can make a development sustainable (James Baillie pers. comm. 29 May 2009).

However, nothing materialised from these overtures. P&O sold its resorts, Baillie left the company in 2001, bought some of the former P&O resort portfolio and started his own company, Baillie Lodges, with his wife, Hayley, daughter of well-known entrepreneur Dick Smith. On another visit to KI in October 2002, the Baillies viewed the Hanson Bay Sanctuary, a 3,485 hectare property of intact bush land. They embarked on a two-year process of negotiations with its American owner that resulted in the purchase of 102 hectares of the sanctuary. They planned to add this property to their 'portfolio of very special luxury lodges in which we combined two things: my love of design and hotels with Hayley's love of the environment' (James Baillie pers. comm. 29 May 2009).<sup>3</sup>

The \$10 million development proposal for SOL included 25 accommodation suites and associated facilities including a main lodge, spa retreat and staff village created on one hectare of cleared land (Planning SA 2005). The site was flanked by Flinders Chase National Park to the west and the Kelly Hill Caves Conservation Park and Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area to the east (Figure 6.2). The

3 The SOL currently offers luxury accommodation with a minimum two-night stay starting at \$900 per person per night twin share and \$1,350 single. This price includes accommodation, meals, drinks and some touring experiences.

development area was situated in the Coastal Landscape Zone on the western end of the Island between two conservation zones.

James and Hayley Baillie were quoted as saying:

Southern Ocean Lodge will become an icon for South Australia and we hope it's something SA can hang its hat on as a marketing asset the envy of other States. We believe it will increase visitation to Kangaroo Island and tap into a market that has previously been under-utilized, providing enormous benefits to this community ('Luxury lodge for south coast' 2004).

The Baillies promoted the development based on their industry credentials: he with his history with P&O Resorts and she as the daughter of Dick Smith with her experience on cruise expeditions. Dick Smith's 'backing' in the venture appears to have been a significant positive in favour of the development (letter from Bill Spurr, CEO of the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), to the Minister of Tourism 6 August 2003).<sup>4</sup> Baillie began conversations with both KI Council staff and SATC at this time seeking assistance with infrastructure for this remote area of KI. CEO of the SATC, Bill Spurr, looked favourably on the proposal and KI Council staff were described as 'generally supportive' (letter from Bill Spurr to the Minister of Tourism 6 August 2003).

The SOL development proposal was described as being a 'major new development proposal which would provide a premium nature-based tourism experience for Kangaroo Island' (MDP 2005). Award-winning, locally born architect Max Pritchard was engaged to design the development which he promised would be a 'model development in South Australia ... [with] nothing like it in existence anywhere in the State' ('Full steam ahead for \$10m "Lodge"' 2005: 1–2). It was originally estimated that the development would represent a capital investment of \$10 million and once in operation would sustain 20 jobs (MDP 2005).

It is important to view this proposed development against the provisions of the KI Development Plan. The sections of the Plan focused on tourism development and the coastal landscape zone set the context for a development of the type proposed. The Plan states: 'tourist developments should not be located within areas of conservation value, indigenous cultural value, high landscape quality or significant scenic beauty' and these 'should not require substantial modification to the landform, particularly in visually prominent locations' and when 'outside townships should ... not result in the clearance of valuable native vegetation' (KI Development Plan 2009: 59). The site selected for SOL was situated in the Coastal Landscape Zone, which specifies non-complying tourism development would exceed 25 'tourist accommodation units' and be within 100 metres of the high-tide mark. The SOL proposal stayed just within the limits of these provisions.

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<sup>4</sup> This document was accessed as a result of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

However, with seven staff accommodation facilities included in the plan, debate on whether the proposal was compliant was inevitable.

It is also important to note the results of a 2004 resident survey entitled ‘mapping the future of Kangaroo Island’ by Brown and Hale (2005) that found:

When asked about developing visitor accommodation ‘in a limited number of coastal strategic locations provided they are attractively situated, small to medium scale, and achieve excellence in environmental design and management’, about 62 per cent of respondents believe this is a good idea while 33 per cent believe it is a bad idea. Given the highly favourable wording of this question toward coastal development, it is significant that one-third of residents still oppose any future tourism development in the coastal zones. *Any tourism development in the coastal zone, even if supported by the majority of KI residents, will likely meet significant opposition* (emphasis added, Brown and Hale 2005: 3).

Brown and Hale also found that just over half of respondents ‘expressed low or very low confidence with the development review process to approve development projects in the island’s best interest’ (2005: 3). These observations foreshadowed the contentious climate that would engulf the SOL development proposal.

### **The Planning Approval Process**

Baillie Lodges planned to submit a development application to the Kangaroo Island Council’s Development Assessment Panel by the end of 2004 (‘Luxury lodge for south coast’ 2004: 1–2). Baillie did a preliminary presentation to Council at the Ozone Hotel in Kingscote. When asked how his presentation was received, Baillie replied:

There were certainly questions ... I think Council then was possibly stacked with people that didn’t really understand this type of development or were perhaps scared that it was going to be something vastly different; a lot of people thought it was going to be a terrible thing like Hamilton Island on KI. They didn’t really understand what a wilderness lodge is or could be. Also I think we were probably perceived to be outsiders as well. I do remember a couple of councillors there were certainly quite openly against the development (James Baillie pers. comm. 29 May 2009).

One of the Councillors, Bill Richards, indicated he was enthusiastic about the proposal but wanted it located in another place such as Vivonne Bay, closer to infrastructure and facilities (pers. comm. 16 May 2009). Richards indicated that the KI Council was divided between those who could be characterised as pro-development and those who were much more cautious about the location and type of development in KI’s natural environment. Although the developers never made a formal application

to Council between the end of 2004 and June 2005, the development was hotly debated by councillors (Craig Wickham pers. comm. 26 May 2009).

Max Pritchard, the architect for the project, engaged Bev Overton of Environmental Realist Consultancy to do a botanical survey of the site in preparation for the development application. Although not asked to do so, Overton pointed out several concerns she had with the proposed site, including whether the development complied with the KI Development Plan when staff accommodation was added. She was also concerned about the increased fragility of the dune system from clearance of native vegetation; bushfire risk; impacts on hooded plovers; spread of weeds and soil-borne fungi; safety; sewerage; water supply; and electricity provision (unpublished report 2 December 2004). She was asked to rewrite sections of her report omitting such comments as those on compliance with the KI Development Plan.<sup>5</sup> She submitted an amended report on 7 January 2005.

In late 2004 Paul Weymouth, Manager of the Policy and Planning Group of SATC, began working closely with Baillie as part of his role of ‘working with industry representatives to assist with their development applications’ (pers. comm. 12 August 2009) or as SATC’s key objectives stated, ‘[to] remove unnecessary barriers to existing and new tourism development’ (SATC n.d.).<sup>6</sup>

Numerous interdepartmental meetings were convened to consider the implications of the development proposal. On 14 February 2005, SATC representatives, including Weymouth, met with representatives of the SA Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH), Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) and Office for Infrastructure Development (OFID) to consider the compatibility of the proposed development with the KI Development Plan and the KI Biodiversity Plan, focusing on issues such as biodiversity, coast, infrastructure, tourism, crown lands and the required conditions if the development was supported in principle (meeting agenda Tobias Hills, Office of Sustainability, DEH).<sup>7</sup> Up to this point, it appears from these documents that the development proposal might still have proceeded through the KI Council’s planning approval process, and DEH was concerned about being prepared to make a formal representation on the development proposal considering that ‘appeal rights are established by making such a representation’.

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5 Her personal view on the development proposal was that it was a good concept but sited in the wrong place (Bev Overton pers. comm. 26 May 2009).

6 Weymouth helped Baillie Lodges with ‘case management assistance’ to obtain development approval for SOL. SATC obviously viewed this as instrumental in achieving approval in late 2006 as it stated ‘following SATC case management on behalf of the proponent, the development received approval in 2006’ (SATC 2007: 28). Baillie stated ‘the government has given it [the development proposal] major development status; it has to go through a process but we have great support, the SA Tourism Commission is very enthusiastic’ (Clifton 2005).

7 This document was accessed as a result of a FOI request.



Another meeting followed on 21 February at which representatives of these same agencies met, joined by a representative of Department of Transport and Urban Planning (DTUP), to consider these issues in greater detail. An interesting concern that was addressed was that these agencies were engaging with the proponent of the development (at this meeting represented by SATC) outside the formal application process. Disadvantages of this approach included a possible negative perception of bias in favour of the development, while the advantages included ‘resolution and mitigation of issues prior to [the] Development Application [being lodged]’, noting that such informal discussions occur ‘without prejudice to [any] response during formal process’ (notes of meeting, Tobias Hills, Office of Sustainability, DEH, 21 February 2005).<sup>8</sup> One can imagine it would be representatives of DEH who expressed concern about the ‘issue of precedence aris[ing] mainly from concern about pressures on few remaining areas of intact natural habitats’ and asking whether the development proposal complies with the KI Development Plan ‘if ancillary units earmarked for staff housing are added to the number of tourist accommodation units proposed’ (notes of meeting, Tobias Hills, Office of Sustainability, DEH, 21 February 2005). Despite these and other concerns raised in this meeting, the recommendations proposed that:

- The proposal be supported in principle on expectations of a net public interest benefit.
- The proponent be encouraged to proceed with the required investigations to assess and address the issues identified above before proceeding with a formal development application.
- The proponent be encouraged to pursue a development that could serve as a case study of best practice in ecologically sustainable tourism development.
- Support be given through the provision of information and clarifying agency requirements (notes of meeting, Tobias Hills, Office of Sustainability, DEH, 21 February 2005).

SATC stated at this meeting that it would make a ‘scoping submission to the Native Vegetation Council (NVC) on 7 March 2005’. Extrapolating from these meeting documents, one can see the voicing of agency views and perspectives that are congruent with their agency’s *raison d’être*. While the meeting could have opted to oppose the development, it gave it conditional support instead. Former Democrats Member of Legislative Council (MLC) Sandra Kanck argues that this was due to undue pressure in favour of the development by SATC (pers. comm. 20 May 2009). This is discussed more fully in the analysis that follows.

However, while these events were unfolding, opposition was growing because of the positioning of the development in a pristine area of the island. In fact, KI

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8 This document was accessed as a result of an FOI request.



Eco-Action Group was so concerned about rumours of the proposed development that it contacted Democrats MLC Sandra Kanck in late 2003. On 25 June 2004, Kanck asked the government what it knew of the proposed development and whether 'the minister, or her department, was involved in any negotiations with the developers'. The Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development said he would refer the question to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. This reply was not provided until 8 November 2005, some 17 months later. In this reply it was clear that the SATC was meeting with the developers and other government agencies 'to assist in realising the development' (reply to Hon. Sandra Kanck by Hon. P. Holloway, Legislative Council).

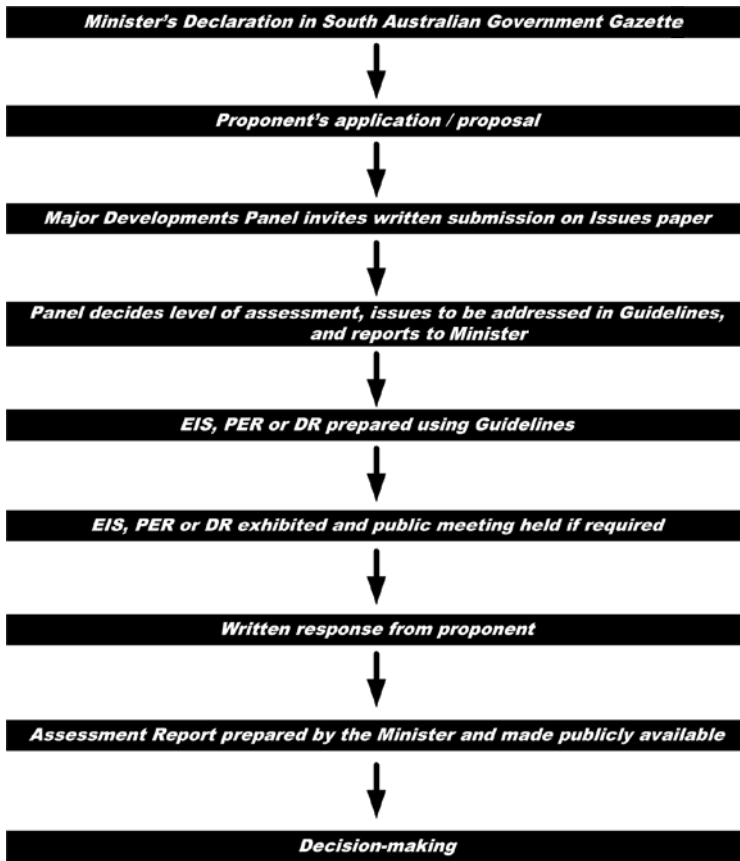
By late March 2005, SATC representatives were arguing in an email to the DTUP that because the constraints set by the Native Vegetation Act 1991 would prevent the development proposal from being approved by KI Council, major development status was crucial. Additional arguments for SOL to be declared a major development included: '[it] is by far the biggest tourism development in dollar value terms on the Island (not scale); it is of the highest strategic significance to tourism; and it involves a complex set of assessment issues' (email from David Crinion of SATC to Bronwyn Halliday of DTUP 31 March 2005).<sup>9</sup>

Section 46 of the SA Development Act 1993 (major developments or projects) allows the Minister for Urban Planning and Development to declare a development proposal a major development if 'he or she believes such a declaration is appropriate or necessary for proper assessment of the proposed development, and where the proposal is considered to be of major economic, social or environmental importance' (Planning SA n.d.). In an effort to demonstrate the economic significance of the proposal, the SATC commissioned Syneca Consulting to draft a report on the 'Economic Impact of the Southern Ocean Lodge' in March 2005, which then became the basis of statistics quoted by SA government ministers. This report calculated the direct and indirect economic effects of the development, including an anticipated \$7.65 million a year for Kangaroo Island, \$1.15 million a year for mainland SA and some 35.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs for KI and 42.1 FTE jobs for SA (Syneca Consulting 2005: 1).

In June 2005, the Minister for Urban Development and Planning declared SOL a major development. As a result, the proposal was removed from the local development approval process and placed under the state government's development approval process under Section 46 of the Development Act. Many in the KI community and on the KI Council felt that this was an unfair denial of their voice (Bill Richards pers. comm. 16 May 2009). The Minister for Urban Development and Planning was asked about the development in the 29 June 2005 Legislative Council and he claimed the proposal was worthy of consideration because it met the criteria of the 'Responsible Nature-based Tourism Strategy' co-developed by SATC and DEH, but the major development process would require a 'rigorous process of environmental assessment' of the development proposal (Holloway

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9 This document was accessed as a result of an FOI request.



**Figure 6.3 Major development or projects – Assessment processes and decision making**

2005). In fact, frequent mention was made that the sensitive environmental issues associated with the proposed development necessitated the major development process with its potential environmental impact assessment that local council processes do not require ('Democrats call for KI coastal plan' 2005). Once the Minister declares a proposal a major development, the development proposal is referred to the independent statutory authority, the Development Assessment Commission (DAC). For a diagram showing the full assessment process for major developments in South Australia, see Figure 6.3.

The Major Developments Panel (MDP), under Section 46 of the Development Act, released an Issues Paper to inform the public about what it considered to be the significant issues relating to the SOL development and to invite public input into the planning process (MDP 2005). The Issues Paper recommended the developers address such issues as: the need for the development; environmental

impacts; energy and resource use; waste and pollution; impacts on wilderness values of the region; economic impacts; impacts on communities; management of risks such as bushfires; demands on infrastructure; the effects of construction and operation of the facility; and the compatibility of the proposal with planning and environmental legislation and policies (MDP 2005).

Once the Issues Paper was released on 13 September 2005 the public was invited to contribute written submissions over a four-week period on the adequacy of the issues identified by the MDP in the Issues Paper and to raise any other issues of relevance to the development (MDP 2005). Submissions came from government agencies such as SATC, the Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED), the Coast Protection Board, the NVC and DEH among others. Of these SATC was the only one clearly in favour of the development, while all of the 11 others had queries and concerns. The public made some 50 submissions, the vast majority raising major concerns over the proposal, with seven explicitly against the proposal and only one in favour.

Questions continued about the role of SATC in the planning process and it was clear different agencies of government held differing positions on the proposal. On 11 November 2005 Democrats representative Ian Gilfillan asked the government: 'The observation that the SATC has sought collaboration and support from other relevant state government agencies to assist in realising this development, does this confirm that the government supports the proposal?' and the reply given by Paul Holloway included 'The Hanson Bay development (the proposed Southern Ocean Lodge) is certainly being supported by the Tourism Commission. Other agencies of government, such as DEH, EPA, and others, have their own view in relation to this matter' (Gilfillan 2005).

Continuing the major developments process, the MDP then used the contents of the Issues Paper and the public submissions to develop a written set of assessment guidelines for the developers, setting the level of assessment required for the proposal. The three possible levels of assessment that can be required by the DAC are:

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – required for the most complex proposals, where there is a wide range of issues to be investigated in depth.
- Public Environmental Report (PER) – sometimes referred to as a targeted EIS, required where the issues surrounding the proposal need investigation in depth but are narrower in scope and relatively well known.
- Development Report (DR) – the least complex level of assessment, which relies principally on existing information (Planning SA 2007).

In January 2006, the DAC determined a PER level of assessment was appropriate for the development proposal and released the Guidelines to the proponent setting out what issues the PER assessment should address. The choice of a PER over an EIS assessment process was a major source of controversy in the assessment

process as the vast majority of submissions responding to the Issues Paper called for an EIS level of assessment for the proposed development.

Once the level of assessment is established and the Guidelines issued to the developer, the role of the MDP is concluded. The Minister for Planning takes responsibility for completing the process and assessing the proposal under the provisions of the Development Act.

In January 2006, the KI Council voiced 'its first protest over the proposed SOL development' and passed a resolution informing the state government that a PER level of environmental assessment for the proposal was insufficient and a full EIS was necessary ('Council protest on lodge' 2006). Planning SA responded that a PER was sufficient because 'the proposal and its associated activities are relatively "limited in scale" and that a wide range of issues did not require significant investigation' ('Council slams "cop out" response' 2006). One of the councillors on KI Council was noted as stating that the 'State Government had taken the project out of the Council's hands by declaring it a Major Development' and that 'he spoke for a large number of people who were not necessarily against the proposed six-star development, just the site they had chosen' ('Council protest on lodge' 2006). It is ironic that the project was declared to be a major development project to avoid the scrutiny of the local planning process, but was then determined to be sufficiently limited in scale to avoid the rigours of a full EIS process.

The South Coast Action Group (SCAG) drafted a community petition to the premier and ministers to stop the SOL development because it is 'inconsistent with the KI Development plan, will destroy pristine wilderness ... and will have a deleterious environmental, social and economic impact on KI'.<sup>10</sup> However, this petition was not officially submitted to government, but rather given to the premier's chief of staff because it did not conform to the strict rules on time for petitions to run. Vickery claims one-half of the voting population of KI signed this petition (pers. comm. 15 July 2009). Additionally, Eco-Action and SCAG petitioned the SA Conservation Council, the state peak body for conservation groups, to support their position in opposition to the SOL development in the proposed location, which it did (Fraser Vickery pers. comm. 15 July 2009).

In the run-up to the March state elections of 2006, the SA Democrats opposed the SOL development proposal as part of their environmental policy platform. They criticised the role of the SATC in supporting the proposal and urged 'the government to take appropriate legal action against those who recently destroyed native vegetation to bulldoze a road in [to the SOL] area' and stated opposition to 'Government money being spent in support of the project, as proposed by Baillie Lodges' (SA Democrats 2006).

In April 2006 the proponent of the development released the PER for six weeks of public comment. A public meeting was held at the KI Yacht Club in Kingscote on 19 April to discuss the proposal, the PER and the assessment

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10 Unpublished petition in author's possession.

process. Some 250 people attended. Baillie and representatives of Planning SA and SATC responded to questions from the public. According to Michael Pengilly, Member of Parliament for Finniss (which includes KI),<sup>11</sup> most at the meeting were in favour of the proposal, while attendee Fraser Vickery said some 200 were opposed (Vickery 2006b). Of the some 20 members of the public who spoke during the meeting, only one person spoke out in favour of the proposal: businessman Roger Williams who said that the investment and the planning of SOL made it a proposal worthy of support (Williams pers. comm. 26 May 2009).

At council meeting on 10 May 2006, KI Council Building Inspector Paul Eames, who was charged with drafting the Council's submission to the PER process, recommended supporting the development proposal. Instead, a motion was moved that 'Council not support the proposed major development by SOL in its present proposed location'. This was passed four votes in favour with one vote against (Council minutes 10 May 2006). Mayor Jayne Bates castigated the councillors saying it was not a Council decision to make (Black 2006a).

A total of 223 submissions were received from the public on the developer's PER, with 11 of these from government agencies and the Council. As the developer's Response Report states:

10 were in full support of the proposal, nine raised issues or made comment on the proposal but were not opposed, 11 were in favour of the proposal if it were in a different location on Kangaroo Island and 193 were opposed to the proposal (SOL 2006).

The government submission from DEH raised at least 47 points for the developer to address, while the NVC, Planning SA and the Country Fire Service (CFS) raised issues from their agencies' viewpoints. KI Council's submission said it did not support the siting of the development. Supporting the proposal were SATC and DTED. The member of parliament, Michael Pengilly, was quoted as saying that the developer's response document 'could not be disputed or faulted' and that 'sources have revealed that there are State Government Departments that oppose the development for reasons that seem philosophical and not sensible' (Black 2006b: 3).

In addition to these formal submissions, community attitudes were aired in the Letters to the Editor section of *The Islander*.<sup>12</sup> For instance, Councillor Scott McDonald, writing to *The Islander*, commented that 'the Southern Ocean

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<sup>11</sup> Pengilly was formerly mayor of KI when the SOL development was first mooted.

<sup>12</sup> Of the some 40 relevant letters to the editor between 2005 and 2008, some 38 expressed significant concerns, one expressed full support and one came from the developer, James Baillie. The one in full support stated: 'I, unlike others, would like to see development come to Kangaroo Island ... do we want our Island to become a retirement village? Not once has a hooded plover ever offered me a job, yet development has. If we

Lodge development is not only the “thin end of the wedge”; it is a watershed deciding the future of KI’ (McDonald 2006: 4).

Despite this level of community opposition to the proposed development at Hanson Bay and the concerns voiced by key government agencies such as the DEH and the NVC during the PER consultation process, the project was approved by the governor, subject to conditions, on 19 October 2006 following the recommendation of the minister in his Assessment Report. The Minister for Urban Development and Planning stated:

This Assessment Report concludes that the Southern Ocean Lodge proposal will have a detrimental environmental impact. However, it acknowledges that this impact could be considered acceptable for three reasons:

1. The Native Vegetation Act mandates a Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) contribution which compensates for the environmental impact.
2. The environmental impacts can be minimised through appropriate management and compliance with conditions.
3. There are economic and social benefits from the project, which are balanced against the environmental impact (Planning SA 2006a: 75).

## Discussion

This discussion of this case study will focus on three issues of relevance to general tourism policy, planning and development: the role of SATC in the planning approval process, the use of the major developments process, and environmental issues.

### *Role of SATC as Champion of SOL in the Planning Approval Process*

As noted earlier, the SATC played a major role in pushing this development proposal through the planning process. To understand SATC’s role, the context needs to be understood. SA is a state whose economic growth rate is falling behind the national average and which has a particular concern with job creation to retain its young people. The SA Strategic Plan has, as its first objective, ‘growing prosperity’ and seeks ‘high economic growth because it leads to higher rates of job creation and higher living standards’ (Government of SA n.d.). It claims ‘Adelaide has been rated as one of the best places in the world in which to do business, and the challenge for the future is to maintain and improve that position’ (Government of SA n.d.). Securing investment is the key to this strategy. It set a target for ‘performance in the public sector – government

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keep on opposing every development put forward, eventually developers will not come’ (Boyd 2005: 4). For the developer’s letter to the editor, see Baillie (2005: 16).

decision-making' to 'become, by 2010, the best-performing jurisdiction in Australia in timeliness and transparency of decisions which impact the business community' (Government of SA n.d.). The target for tourism in this strategic plan is to 'increase visitor expenditure in South Australia tourism industry from \$3.7 billion in 2002 to \$6.3 billion by 2014' (Government of SA n.d.).

The role played by the SATC is best understood with reference to its charter and plans, as set out in the South Australian Tourism Commission Act 1993. This Act states: 'The object of the Act is to establish a statutory corporation to assist in securing economic and social benefits for the people of South Australia through the promotion of South Australia as a tourism destination; and the further development and improvement of the State's tourism industry'.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, SATC's Corporate Plan 2005–07 mission statement asserts that: 'SATC develops and promotes the best SA has to offer visitors' and that it will 'take the role of navigator, facilitator and at times developer, ensuring iconic product and infrastructure development' (SATC 2005).

Against this background, SATC emerges as a statutory corporation that is driven by economic indicators and corporate objectives. With its limited budgetary capacities, SATC needed the augmented marketing capacities that the SOL development would give both KI and SA. Such a strategy was key to achieving the monetary targets it set itself of \$6.3 billion by 2014.

In its submission to the MDP on the Issues Paper in October 2005, SATC's CEO Bill Spurr argued 'Southern Ocean Lodge aligns directly with South Australia's strategic directions for tourism. In particular, the development is consistent with objectives and strategies contained in the: South Australian Tourism Plan 2003–2008, Responsible Nature-based Tourism Strategy, SA Tourism Export Strategy, Removing the barriers to tourism investment in regional SA'. Additional arguments supporting the proposed development included:

- The development of SOL will send positive signals to investors and could prove a catalyst for further tourism investment in regional SA.
- SOL will have a positive impact on consumer perceptions of the State and KI, help strengthen brand, increase marketing critical mass, improve demand levels and improve visitor yield.
- SOL is expected to make a considerable and ongoing investment in local staff training (letter 12 October 2005).

For these reasons, Spurr concluded that SOL offered significant economic and social benefits. This was anticipated in the SA Tourism Export Strategy of 2004: 'Southern Ocean Lodge is a strategic economic development project of critical importance to South Australia's tourism industry'. In its SA Strategic Plan: Tourism Implementation Action Plan, SATC stated:

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13 Available at: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/sa/consol\\_act/satca1993432/s3.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/sa/consol_act/satca1993432/s3.html).



This development will be a watershed for SA. It has all the right credentials: consistent with the State's tourism strategy; respected and proven developer/operator; right environmental ethic; high yield product; will lift brand image; consistent with Development Plan (considered on merit); and has access to finance (which is rare). In light of these extraordinary factors, *if this proposal is not approved, the message it will send to the investment community will set the State back considerably in terms of being seen as a place to do business in tourism. This will seriously jeopardize SATC's capacity to accelerate progress on achieving the target* [emphasis added] (SATC 2006: 23).

In another section of this document focused on the 'critical success factor' of a 'positive policy framework', the SATC specifies a strategy to implement its 'Sustainable Tourism Package', which it describes as 'an aligned series of initiatives to achieve sustainable tourism development', but it found:

The Native Vegetation Regulations are a major impediment to achieving the target of at least three nature retreat style accommodation developments by 2009 (Source: Responsible Nature based Tourism Strategy). There is no avenue to consider tourism development (except through the Major Development exemption, which is a time consuming and expensive process – and hence disincentive for medium scale development) (SATC 2006: 24).

As will be discussed in the following section, the Native Vegetation Act was created to protect remaining areas of environmental integrity, but here we see the SATC saying that the Act is a barrier to tourism development. It is ironic that SATC claims that sustainable tourism development requires undermining key SA environmental legislation.

With its emphasis on economic imperatives, SATC has also been accused of working against community interests. For instance, the South Coast Action Group (SCAG) of KI responded to this concerted support for the development against what it saw as the KI community interest: 'it concerns us greatly that the Commission [SATC] shows little regard to the siting of the development, in overriding the KI Development Plan and compromising the integrity of pristine coastal wilderness on Kangaroo Island – the very thing our visitors enjoy' (Chris Baxter for SCAG in a submission to the Minister of Urban Development and Planning 15 April 2006).

In the 2006–07 and 2007–08 budget cycles, the SATC allocated \$1 million for infrastructure for the SOL (pers. comm. Mark Blyth SATC 2008). Some observers objected to this assistance, asking why should the developers be supported when the reason the SOL development proposal was championed was because of the developers' investment capacity. It could be seen as a case of public funds being used against community (taxpayer) wishes to fund a private developer's business.



After the opening of the Lodge, Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith was quoted as saying ‘attracting world-class tourism developments such as SOL to South Australia is an important step towards achieving our target of boosting tourist expenditure to \$6.3 billion by the end of 2014’ (SATC 2008). She also said ‘The State Government is committed to assisting the growth of the tourism industry, and has worked with SOL developers, Baillie Lodges, to make sure this world-class accommodation ... went ahead in the most sustainable way possible’ (SATC 2008).

In contrast, the Democrats Platform Paper of 2006 stated: ‘We are appalled by the role that Tourism SA [SATC] has played in lobbying within government for support for the proposal to go ahead and reject Government secrecy that has been part of the project to date’ (South Australian Democrats 2006: 12).

### *Major Development Process: Fast Track for Development?*

There are differing views on the use of SA’s major development process for projects such as the SOL. Some see it as a fast track and a rubber stamp, as it can be used to avoid the appeals that the local council process would allow, and it ensures that a development will be appeal-free. However, others argue it involves a more rigorous assessment and is by no means a rubber stamp.

In SA, the major developments process is ‘currently the only trigger for formal environmental impact assessment under our planning laws’ (Mark Parnell, pers. comm. 9 June 2009). However, the concern is that in facilitating development, governments may assert political control to avoid local opposition. Greens member of the SA Legislative Council, Mark Parnell, commented on the SA Development Act: ‘critical parts of the planning system have been used to favour big business with back door access to quick and easy decisions at the expense of local residents, and against the original intent of the Act ... “major development” status ha[s] allowed special “fast track” access to favoured developers by the Rann government’ (Parnell 2006). Democrat MLC Sandra Kanck referred to a ‘development at any cost mentality’ evident in the events that unfolded with SOL (press release 30 June 2005). It is pertinent to note that of the 24 projects assessed under the SA Major Developments process between 2003 and 2009, only one has been refused (Planning SA 2009).

Clearly one of the sources of dissatisfaction with the SOL approval process was the fact that it was not submitted to the local KI Council for local decision-making. A former KI council mayor and current presiding member of the KI Natural Resources Management Board stated, ‘My initial reaction [to the SOL development proposal] was disappointment because it didn’t actually go through the planning process here’ (Janice Kelly pers. comm. 13 May 2009).

In contrast, some interviewees such as former Chair of Tourism KI thought SOL development would be good for KI and moving it to major development status ‘took the emotion out of it’ (Paul Brown pers. comm. 1 June 2009). Another interviewee who served on Council thought that the Council did not have the

resources to address such a development application and noted that there was a backlog of applications (Craig Wickham pers. comm. 26 May 2009).

Despite these differing views on the use of the major development process, it is clear from the foregoing discussion that it was partly utilised to avoid the local political tensions. The irony is that the SOL proposal was declared too big for KI Council with its well-articulated plans and TOMM management model derived from extensive community consultations, and yet was sufficiently limited to not require an EIS. Such a situation gives the perception that the development proposal was being facilitated to a successful outcome, rather than being rigorously assessed, in an effort to secure the state government's targets for tourism.

### *Environmental Trade-offs*

That the area under development is one of spectacular and rare natural beauty is undisputed. Indeed Baillie noted that when he first investigated the site in 2002 he mistakenly assumed it must be part of the national park: 'I still remember saying to Hayley: wow this would be the most amazing spot for a lodge if it wasn't national park, because I just assumed that's where it was' (James Baillie pers. comm. 29 May 2009). As Bill Hadrill of the DEH described the site:

It was and remains one of the most intact sections of natural environment on Kangaroo Island. The site sits directly between Flinders Chase National Park and Kelly Hills Conservation Park in a fantastic corridor between those areas and one of the most intact sections of the coastline (pers. comm. 25 May 2009).

It was the very quality of this pristine natural habitat that was the issue, as the former Chair of the NVC noted: 'the SOL application advocated clearance in an absolutely pristine area and this was the biggest problem, because the Native Vegetation (NV) Act had no capacity to authorise clearance of pristine native vegetation. That is exactly the vegetation we were set up to protect' (John Roger pers. comm. 29 May 2009). It was widely recognised that the Baillies had credentials in developing environmentally sensitive resorts but the issue was with their choice of this pristine location.

According to the Acting Executive Officer of the NVC:

The agency and myself, in the role of the Acting Executive Officer, provided consistent advice to the proponents that an application to clear native vegetation lodged under Section 28 of the NV Act would be very difficult for the NVC to approve in recognition that the native vegetation on site would in all likelihood be considered to be 'intact' as defined by the NV Act. The Act prevents the NVC from granting consent to the clearance of substantially intact native vegetation. The Native Vegetation Regulations 2003 provide a mechanism for the clearance of intact native vegetation in specific circumstances (Craig Whisson pers. comm. 12 June 2009).

The only way to avoid the prohibition of clearance of intact strata of native vegetation that the NV Act stipulated was to have the proposed development declared a major development so that Regulation 5(1)(c) could be invoked allowing ‘clearance associated with a Major Project’ (Craig Whisson pers. comm. 12 June 2009). Once the development was declared a major development:

The NVC’s official involvement was to provide comment on the PER document prepared consistent with the declaration of the development as a Major Project under Section 48 of the Development Act 1993. The NVC needed to be assured that any clearance of native vegetation for a development approved by the Governor would be: ‘... undertaken in accordance with a management plan that has been approved by the Council that results in a significant environmental benefit (SEB)’ ... (Craig Whisson pers. comm. 12 June 2009).<sup>14</sup>

Craig Whisson described the process and outcomes regarding the establishment of the SEB in accordance with the provisions of section 21(6) of the NV Act:

The outcome was negotiated between the NVC and the proponent following the site inspection by the NVC and a meeting with the proponent. The SEB involved the protection of the balance of the vegetation on the land owned by the developer being safeguarded under the terms of a Heritage Agreement, and the establishment of a fund to finance conservation projects on Kangaroo Island (pers. comm. 12 June 2009).

The SEB resulted in the establishment of an environment fund called the SOL Development Fund which promised to deliver between \$20,000 to \$50,000 (partly funded by visitor tariffs) per annum over the life of a ten-year agreement for KI environmental projects. A Board made up of representatives of DEH, KI Natural Resources Management, NVC and SOL manages the Fund. According to Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith, ‘the Environment Fund is a great example of the mutually beneficial alliance that can be achieved between tourism and conservation’. Baillie was likewise quoted as stating that the agreement set a ‘new benchmark for public/private collaboration in SA and demonstrates how tourism could benefit conservation’ (‘KI to benefit from Environment Fund’ 2007). This is ironic considering a pristine site was allowed to be cleared and the fund was only developed as a result of the legislative requirements of the NV Act to provide

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14 Former Chair of the NVC John Roger addressed this process: ‘Cabinet took the application of the Act away as a requirement; they [the developers] did not need to comply with the Native Vegetation Act. But what they did have to comply with was the environmental impact and we [the NVC] tried to assess that and tried to find a way where the community and the environment would benefit from the clearance’ (pers. comm. 29 May 2009).

an SEB in exchange for permission to clear. SOL certainly took advantage of the green marketing potential of this fund.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, it should be noted that it was clear as early as the mid-1990s that ‘ecotourism and nature based tourism pose a number of potential threats to the island’s biodiversity values’ (Lynch 1996). Nonetheless, David Crinion of SATC stated ‘SATC regards SOL to be an excellent model of new private development contributing benefits to the natural environment – a characteristic of eco-tourism. This is consistent with SATC and DEH’s Responsible Nature-based Tourism Strategy. *It is particularly important as a model in light of the increasing needs and diminishing public resources for environmental management*’ (pers. comm. 9 June 2009, emphasis added).

The DEH found itself in similar circumstances to the NVC, playing its prescribed role in the policy process:

The department certainly provided comments in relation to the likely impact of the clearance of native vegetation required for the construction of the development. Our comments were objective, based on what would be the direct loss of native vegetation and what impact that might have on particularly our threatened species, our flora and fauna and impact on the landscape (Bill Hadrill pers. comm. 25 May 2009).

It is also significant that the development proposal triggered the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* as a ‘controlled action’ because it had potential impact on nationally threatened species. However, rather than running its own assessment process, the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage accredited the process of the PER. On 20 December 2006 the development received approval to proceed under the EPBC Act.

Whatever environmental concerns DEH and NVC may have had about SOL, the professional practice of the public service requires a neutral approach in all interactions:

It’s really important to note that whatever the decision made [about the development], the best outcome ongoing into the future is for an organisation such as DEH to work with SOL. You know, once the approval was provided, we could have quite easily turned our backs on it and said ‘We don’t agree’ or ‘We don’t approve of the approvals process – we’re walking away and not having anything to do with it’; far from that. The best thing for us to do is to work with SOL and we continued to work with SOL through the construction phase ... that was the change in mindset that we took and that has stood both

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15 While some proponents of the development emphasised that only 1 hectare would be cleared for the development, in reality the supporting infrastructure including the staff village, roads, boardwalks and bushfire management requirements meant that the extent of clearance was effectively much greater than the earlier estimate.

us and SOL well in continuing to work with them (Bill Haddrill pers. comm. 25 May 2009).

Asked about his views on the significance of the development approval, Former Chair of the NVC John Rogers stated:

When you look at KI as a whole, there is only a relatively small percentage of native vegetation that remains; I believe it is only around 10 per cent. That is one of the real problems with this part of SA ... The level that you need to retain native species habitat for flora and fauna is a minimum of 10 per cent. So we cannot keep encroaching on pristine areas with this 'death by a thousand cuts' and that is what it is; that's what the NV Act has been set up for. The Act allows for development but it does not allow for further incursion into pristine areas. Because that has already happened; our forefathers already did it and now we are dealing with the remnants (pers. comm. 29 May 2009).

According to ecotourism operator and environmentalist Fraser Vickery, the notion that a developer could economically compensate for such vegetation clearance is unacceptable:

You cannot replace intact stratum that has been cleared by paying money into a fund or revegetating an open paddock, because basically that vegetation [intact stratum] has been untouched pretty much for thousands of years, except for fire and natural processes. So you are actually intervening and destroying something that is priceless; you cannot put a price on pristine habitats on a place like KI (pers. comm. 15 July 2009).

As noted, there were alternative sites available to the developers and opposition would have been greatly reduced if such a site had been selected. As Rogers noted:

There were sites right next door that were [environmentally] degraded to which we [the NVC] would have given total consent. The problem was they wanted to pick a particular plot because it was the most pristine and had the biggest views. But there was a place right next door that had just about the same views though it was degraded and only a matter of kilometres away from where they finally built SOL (John Rogers pers. comm. 29 May 2009).

Assessing the position of bodies such as the DEH and NVC, it is clear that agencies focused on environmental protection are compelled to accept limits to their capacities in a time of tighter budgetary constraints. In the battle to influence policy decisions, their voices carry less weight than those of other

public servants in departments focused on trade and tourism in an era when economic logic holds sway.<sup>16</sup>

### *Analysis*

Conventional wisdom is that sustainability is achieved by striking the proper balance between the interdependent systems of society, economy and ecology.

However, one of the key social constructions of tourism policy in recent decades is the widely held belief that tourism policy is best formed by creating policy environments that empower the private sector and reduce government regulations and obstacles to development. This is a key feature of contemporary neoliberalism. According to Stilwell, neoliberalism's 'core belief is that giving freer reign [sic] to market forces will produce more efficient economic outcomes' (2002: 21). Stilwell claimed that the outcomes of neoliberalism have 'reoriented' governments:

The economic activities of government are not reduced, only reoriented towards directly serving the interests of business ... The policies certainly create winners and losers whatever their effectiveness in relation to the dynamism of the economy as a whole (2002: 22).

As a result, the relationship between the market, society and the environment swings out of balance, resulting in an overemphasis on tourism industry priorities and demands for ever-increasing economic growth in the tourism domain.

The outcomes of such an ideology can be seen in the SOL saga. The KI community is clearly concerned about the impacts of economic development on the community and the natural assets of KI, and has committed to years of extensive consultation to create a vision of a shared future through development and tourism planning, and the creation of a world's best practice tourism management model. Despite this unusually proactive position, TOMM resident surveys have indicated the community shares scepticism about the community's ability to influence tourism-related decisions, which can only have been reinforced by the SOL experience.

The SOL development proposal clearly did not align with the KI Development Plan. The KI Council, as the most effective representative of the KI community, was arguably the best agency to assess the proposal under the provisions of the Plan. However, the major developments process subverted this.

This path was taken because the NV legislation would have stopped the SOL development. But if ecological sustainability is the goal of sustainable tourism

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16 Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett recently gave a speech in Brisbane where he warned that efforts to save some endangered species in Australia may have to be abandoned due to limited funds. See: <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2009/s2659857.htm>.

development, then the NV legislation should have blocked the development because, in its proposed location, it cleared a substantial portion of intact, pristine habitat. To comply with the NV Act, the developers could have been pressured to secure an acceptable location that did not result in vegetation clearance. However, rather than follow this path, the major developments process was taken on the advice of the SATC, and thus the provisions of the NV Act were overruled. In one fell swoop community and environmental interests were overridden.

The role of the SATC as champion of the development was pivotal, as it saw the SOL development as a key for achieving its primary goal of \$6.3 million tourist expenditure by 2014. While rhetorically wielding the language of sustainability, the SATC's actions demonstrated the predominance of economic imperatives in the neoliberal environment of tourism policy making.

The pro-development bias fostered by neoliberalism is perhaps evident in the fine line followed in the development approval process for SOL, as the government declared SOL sufficiently significant to require major development status, but sufficiently limited to not require the full rigours of an EIS assessment. This sense of a pro-development bias is reinforced by the notion that environmental concerns can be traded in the interest of securing economic goals. As Urban Development and Planning Minister Paul Holloway stated: 'I acknowledge that the proposed development will have an environmental impact, however, on balance this impact is acceptable because of the significant tourism and employment benefits likely to be generated by the resort' (Planning SA 2006b).<sup>17</sup>

The SOL planning approval process demonstrates that triple-bottom-line sustainability will remain an unrealisable ideal while neoliberalism prevails, as the voices of industry with their economic imperatives trump the concerns of local communities and ecological interests.

## **Conclusion**

The tensions between tourism development, environmental conservation and community wellbeing lie at the heart of the tourism policy and planning process. The story of the planning approval process for the SOL development indicates the real obstacles facing local communities such as KI who wish to control development and protect their remaining environmental assets.

Despite having spent the 1990s in extensive community consultations to secure an agreed development plan, a tourism strategy and a world's best practice tourism management model, the KI community found itself sidelined by the major developments process and its protests going unheeded. Likewise bodies charged with protecting the remaining areas of ecological integrity in SA were

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<sup>17</sup> Vickery retorted in a letter to the editor that this was absolute nonsense: 'clearly, the benefit is to Baillie Lodges and not to Kangaroo Island' (2006a: 4). He also suggested Minister Holloway did not understand the government's own policy on sustainability.



clearly pressured in the policy dialogues to accept environmental trade-offs in order to not be marginalised as anti-development ideologues. The disproportionate influence that SATC had in the policy dialogues on the development proposal and the concomitant timidity of the NVC and the DEH illustrate the predominance of business interests over ecological concerns in today's neoliberal policy environments.

It is clear that, in such circumstances, despite the widespread rhetoric supporting triple-bottom line sustainability, sustainability will remain elusive in the cut and thrust of everyday tourism policy, planning and decision-making.

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## Chapter 7

# Neoliberal Urban Entrepreneurial Agendas, Dunedin Stadium and the Rugby World Cup: Or ‘If You Don’t Have a Stadium, You Don’t Have a Future’

C. Michael Hall and Sandra Wilson

### Introduction

Neoliberalism is ‘hegemonic as a mode of discourse’ (Harvey 2005: 3). It influences not only the broad understanding of political economy and the relationship between state and market but has also transformed understandings of what constitutes ‘public good’. Although such changes are global in scope they are evidenced in the practices, processes, discourses and events that occur at the local scale.

The role of the local state has been especially transformed under neoliberalism. Many areas of social provision, including that of community leisure and sport, have been subject to deregulation, privatisation and state withdrawal, while simultaneously, the provision and subsidy of sporting events by the local state for private commercial benefit has increased (e.g. Sam and Scherer 2008, Hutton 2008, Smith and Himmelfarb 2007, Hall 2006, Horne and Manzenreiter 2006, Schimmel 2006).

This chapter discusses such issues in relation to the hosting of the 2011 Rugby World Cup (RWC) in New Zealand with particular reference to a case study of stadium development in Dunedin, a city of just over 100,000 people in the South Island of the country. The authors were residents of Dunedin at the time the new stadium was proposed, with Wilson being a University of Otago student and Hall a ratepayer, university employee and member of the University Senate. From the latter’s perspective the close relationship between university management, city council and local elites appeared more important in terms of university decision making than the opinions of the several university experts in sport and economic development with respect to the economic logic of the stadium proposal.

In developing the chapter a range of primary and secondary material has been drawn upon, as well as the authors’ own experiences from living in Dunedin. Some of the opinions and information gained with respect to the story of planning and decision-making in the case of the stadium development unfortunately cannot be used because of inability to corroborate, informant desire for anonymity, and/

or material is not in the public domain. As is the case in many planning studies that examine the relationships between policy actors and decision-making, the possibility of legal action, the commercial-in-confidence nature of data, or the potential identification of informants, may mean that the best policy stories are often left untold.

The chapter highlights the manner in which dimensions of sport-related competitiveness are used to reinforce neoliberal agendas. However, the Dunedin case only serves to continue the ‘suspension of disbelief’ that often categorises local state consideration of the funding and support of event-related stadia development.

### **The Hosting of Mega Sports Events**

Sporting mega-events have become integral to many local and national development strategies (Malecki 2004, Roche 1992, Hall 1992, 2006). The reasons why governments and the private sector are usually positive towards the hosting of such events lie in both the perceived economic benefits from attendance and construction but also the contribution of such events to place marketing. Indeed, the role of the perceived media benefits of hosting events is often crucial for justifying the investment of state funds into event-related stadia and infrastructure development and associated activities. In business terminology mega-events are therefore regarded as ‘loss-leaders’ that will otherwise generate benefits for the host economy. Although it is important to recognise that the loss, in the form of public debt, is usually borne by the state and hence taxpayer with the direct benefits being accrued by the private sector as part of a strategy of providing a so-called ‘public good’.

Nevertheless, while the role of hosting events as a perceived means of enhancing regional competitiveness seemingly increases, so also does the literature that questions their long-term contribution to socio-economic development (e.g. Andranovich, Burbank and Heying 2002, Crompton 1995, Hall 1992, 2004, 2006, Noll and Zimbalist 1997, Roche 1992, Whitson and Horne 2006). In addition, although mega-events are seen primarily in economic terms by government, sports promotion agencies and the private sector, they frequently have significant social consequences as a result of community disruption, localised inflation and changes in the property and rental market (Jones 2001).

The need to develop or redevelop local resources and upgrade infrastructure for sporting events is often critical in assessing the hosting of an event and its economic and social contribution. However, the relative value of mega-event legacies for the hosts is problematic unless there is long-term sustainable use of event infrastructure (Jones 2001). In New Zealand the improvement of sports stadia is central to the hosting agreements of the successful 2011 Rugby World Cup bid that was made by the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) with the full political and financial support of the New Zealand government. Yet the costs

of such developments are not just borne by NZRU or the national government, but also by the wider community whether it is in the form of increased taxes or opportunity costs. The next section discusses the hosting of the 2010 RWC before examining the Dunedin stadium development.

### **The 2011 Rugby World Cup**

Rugby is an important element of New Zealand's identity (Laidlaw 1999). Nevertheless, since the game turned professional in 1995, rugby in New Zealand has gone through radical changes which have resulted in the corporatization and commercialization of the code at a senior level, the development of new domestic and international competitions in conjunction with global media interests, and the construction of sports venues in which rugby is the dominant code (Higham and Hall 2003).

In November 2005 the governing body for international rugby the International Rugby Board (IRB) accepted New Zealand's bid to host the Rugby World Cup 2011 ahead of a proposal from Japan. 'New Zealand's Bid was built around the theme that the Tournament would be hosted in New Zealand's "Stadium of Four Million" and that it would be an "ALL RUGBY" experience for all involved' (IRB 2008). As is often the case with mega-events, the success of the bid was lauded as a symbolic 'victory' for national competitiveness. The national rugby team, the All Blacks is an important element of branding New Zealand, with the hosting of the RWC regarded as significant for the reaffirmation of the country as the 'homeland' of rugby (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2007). Moreover, the event is also regarded as an important symbol of contemporary political-economy. For example, the then Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Winnie Laban, connected the successful bid to the value of public-private partnerships:

A good example of how the State, the market, and civil society can work well together was seen when the New Zealand Rugby Union won the hosting rights for the Rugby World Cup. A sporting association – the New Zealand Rugby Union – with solid business links with sponsors and support from the Government, in the form of the Prime Minister, carried the day. We have learnt in the past that the market by itself does not build a good society, and the State cannot, either. We need the State, the market, and civil society working well together in order to build the economic and social development of our nation and to build a strong, inclusive nation (Laban 2005: 317).

While on the same day during parliamentary question time the then Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon Trevor Mallard, noted that the bid had received bipartisan support from the major political parties in responding to a question as to 'What will be the benefits to New Zealand of hosting the Rugby World Cup 2011?'

Hosting the Rugby World Cup will be positive, not only for New Zealand rugby but also because the tournament will deliver significant economic benefits and tourism spin-offs. It is estimated that it will attract around 60,000 extra visitors to New Zealand, will generate an extra \$400 million for the economy, and result in an extra tax take exceeding \$90 million ... In addition to the extra visitors we expect to visit New Zealand, television-viewing numbers for the last world cup were 3.4 billion. That will be a fantastic opportunity to showcase New Zealand (Mallard 2005: 302).

The IRB promotes the RWC as the third largest global sporting event behind the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup (Deloitte 2006). The RWC will be held over seven weekends in September and October 2011. In 2006 the NZRU commissioned economic consultants Horwath Asia Pacific Limited to assess the economic impact of hosting the 2011 RWC (Deloitte 2006). Based on the precedents set at the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia and allowing for growth, the Horwath Report estimated that the 2011 RWC will generate more than NZ\$1.15 billion in total economic activity, contributing NZ\$507 million to New Zealand's GDP. It is predicted to result in NZ\$476 million of total direct additional expenditure within New Zealand (NZ\$262 million of this going to the Auckland economy) and provide the New Zealand government an additional NZ\$112 million in tax revenue (Rugby New Zealand 2006). Horwath Asia Pacific Limited estimate the RWC 2011 will attract approximately 66,000 international supporters, 2,500 international media and 2,500 corporate guests (Deloitte 2006).

The RWC is administered by Rugby World Cup Limited, a subsidiary of the IRB, which is responsible for 95 per cent of all money distributed by the IRB worldwide for development. As part of the bid requirements and subsequent Host Union Agreement with the New Zealand Rugby Union, a government-underwritten provision to deliver a minimum guarantee to the IRB has been provided. The actual tournament is organised by Rugby New Zealand Limited (RNZ) a joint company of the NZRU and the New Zealand government. Any profits from the RNZ will be shared on a 50/50 basis between the NZRU and the New Zealand government, while any losses will be met by a one-third/two-third split between the NZRU and the New Zealand Government respectively (IRB 2008).

The commercial structure for the tournament retains the broadcasting, sponsorship and merchandising rights for the IRB, and limits the host union's (NZRU) revenue stream to ticket sales (Deloitte 2006). There are 48 matches in 13 different venues for the RWC, with the semi-finals and final held at Eden Park, Auckland (IRB 2009). The fact that the revenue stream for RNZ is determined by ticket sales clearly placed pressure on those cities that sought to bid to host games to provide as large a venue as possible in order to be selected. As Martin Snedden, Chief Executive of RNZ noted in commenting on the allocation of quarter-final matches, 'The tension is between the "stadium of four million" people and the financial model' with ground capacity being extremely significant for returns. According to Snedden the tournament was estimated to cost NZ\$310 million to

run, with ticket sales forecast to return NZ\$280 million, resulting in a NZ\$30 million loss, which is guaranteed in conjunction with the national government (*The Press* 2008b).

In preparation for the RWC there are major redevelopments of stadia in Christchurch, Auckland and Dunedin as well as developments in a number of smaller regional centres including Invercargill, Napier, Palmerston North and Whangarei. Eden Park, situated in Auckland, is undergoing a NZ\$240 million redevelopment to expand capacity to 60,000 people for which the New Zealand government is providing a grant of NZ\$190 million, the Eden Park Trust Board at least NZ\$12 million, the NZ Rugby Union NZ\$10 million, and the ASB Community Trust NZ\$6.5 million. The Auckland City Council has confirmed NZ\$22 million towards a range of transport and infrastructure improvements surrounding Eden Park (Auckland City Council 2009). The remaining funding required has yet to be secured. The AMI stadium in Christchurch is also being redeveloped at an estimated cost of NZ\$60 million. Early financial projections conducted by AMI stadium state that with the support of the private sector and stadium partners they are able to fund approximately NZ\$40 million. The remaining NZ\$20 million is likely to be contributed by the Christchurch City Council (AMI Stadium n.d.). Dunedin is also in the process of developing its sports stadium.

### **The Dunedin Stadium Development**

Dunedin is a regional centre located on the south-eastern coast of the South Island in New Zealand. Dunedin city has a population of just over 110,000 and the wider Otago region almost 194,000. New Zealand's successful bid for the RWC catalysed action in Otago regarding the future of their existing sports stadium, Carisbrook. Carisbrook Stadium was developed in 1874 and has been the home to Otago's regional rugby team and has hosted many international sporting events (Carisbrook Stadium Trust [CST] n.d. a). However, the stadium is increasingly seen as having inadequate facilities to host international sporting fixtures, including top-tier rugby tests, for which the city might bid. Therefore for Dunedin to be considered as a venue for as many games as possible of the RWC Carisbrook needed to be either significantly upgraded or replaced (CST n.d. a).

In March 2004, the Dunedin City Council (DCC) established the Carisbrook Working Party to investigate options for the upgrading or redevelopment of Carisbrook. After carrying out preliminary research and plans it was then suggested that an independent trust be established to manage the project and take ownership of Carisbrook. This led to the establishment of the Carisbrook Stadium Trust (CST) in August 2006, the Chairman of which is prominent Dunedin businessman Malcolm Farry (Critic 2007). The CST proposed the development of a new multipurpose stadium rather than upgrading the existing Carisbrook, as this was the only 'long-term solution' (CST n.d. b). Initial responses from the DCC focused on the NZ\$188 million cost of the new stadium and the possible



location, with land acquisition seemingly problematic (Critic 2007). There were options presented that would have cost considerably less to develop. Redeveloping the existing Stadium was expected to cost between NZ\$29.3 million and NZ\$69 million depending on the option chosen and a new stadium without a roof was expected to cost approximately NZ\$131 million (CST 2007a). However, by October 2006 the Preliminary Feasibility Report presented by the CST suggested that a new multipurpose stadium was feasible and warranted further investigation. Following the presentation of the February 2007 Master and Feasibility Report to the DCC a vote was made to progress with the 'preferred' multipurpose stadium option in association with the Otago University (CST n.d. b).

The new Dunedin Stadium is situated at Awatea Street, located to the north-east of the centre of Dunedin. The site is located adjacent to the existing eastern end of the University of Otago and in close proximity to the Otago Polytechnic. Logan Park, another sporting venue, is across the road from the site and the harbour edge flanks close to the south (Anderson Lloyd 2007, CST 2007a). In order to accommodate the development State Highway 88 is being relocated to the south side of the stadium (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). The CST (2007a) states the stadium will be a high-class public assembly facility configured around a rectangular sports field, with a roof covering the stands and pitch area. Although designed as a multipurpose venue capable of hosting a range of cultural and sporting events it would not host cricket because it has a rectangular sport field; matches instead being held at Logan Park. The stadium will accommodate approximately 20,000 in a minimum permanent capacity with the flexibility to achieve approximately 30,000 utilising 5,000 temporary seats and 5,000 standing with a primary structural design life of 50 years (CST 2007a).

The new stadium is being built in collaboration with the University of Otago, in order to provide a precinct that will be utilised daily (CST 2007a). Dunedin is a university town with students making up a significant proportion of the population. As Dunedin's main business the university contributes greatly to the city's economy and it is argued that the collaboration would allow the university to expand, providing possible capacity for a new gymnasium, a foundation studies department, possible child-care facilities, research spaces and a café used by students and members of the public. In April 2009 the University of Otago's Council was informed that the university will pay a total of \$5.602 million for the land next to the stadium. The amount of its final contribution was to be agreed once the exact area of land the university required and its value were determined (Rudd 2009).

Malcolm Farry, who has also been a part-time lecturer at the university, states that the stadium will 'future-proof' the university ensuring the university continues to grow and remain competitive (Critic 2007). Strong links between the CST and the university are also evidenced by the membership of John Ward, who is also pro-chancellor of the university, as a trustee. The CST has made the assumption that having a 'world-class' stadium on the University of Otago's campus would attract or retain 500 to 1,000 students a year in Dunedin. Even though there is no

tradition in New Zealand of college sports along the lines of the American model. The university has estimated that it has a total economic impact of NZ\$63,000 per student on the Dunedin economy, thus the CST suggests that if the stadium is constructed it will provide an additional NZ\$30 million to NZ\$60 million a year to the Dunedin economy from the university (Skegg 2007).

The involvement of the university in the stadium development has been controversial. Dr Michael Sam, a lecturer in the School of Physical Education at the university, suggests that while it is plausible that students may choose a university because of its facilities, these are not solely part of the stadium proposal. Sam notes that significant sporting attractions were already part of the university and DCC's strategy for the redevelopment of Logan Park. He then goes on to argue that perhaps the city and the university would be better to create a trust to distribute scholarships to entice students to Dunedin, a less costly alternative to the stadium (Sam 2007). A then recently resigned Dunedin City Councillor, Leah McBey, also questioned the university's involvement; suggesting students have the right to ask why it would pay for the stadium instead of cutting fees (McBey 2007). Despite these disputes surrounding the university's involvement Otago university's vice chancellor, David Skegg, also a long-term resident of the city, confirmed his support of the CST's proposal (CST 2007a).

The stadium construction is part of Dunedin City's broader tourism and economic development strategies. The location of the stadium is meant to provide Dunedin an opportunity to redevelop the site (CST 2007a), which is currently occupied by light industrial buildings. The CST (2007a) also state that stadia located in these types of locations have been catalysts for the regeneration of surrounding areas, an argument that is also connected with the DCC's vision for the area. The DCC (2005) comment that the harbour-side basin offers opportunities for residential and commercial uses such as recreation and tourism as well as for increased public access and their goal is to encourage new development in the harbour area. However, the selection of the harbour-side site has been questioned as the land is reclaimed, making it subject to flooding and tidal surges (Jamieson 2007). In response, the CST states that 'there are no limiting physical constraints on the site. In particular flood risk, inclusive of climate change, has been assessed and can be satisfied' (CST 2007c: 2).

The CST closely link the building of the stadium and the hosting of the RWC 2011 to Dunedin's urban regeneration and reimagining strategies (Hall 2007). The CST state the media exposure from a mega-event being held at the stadium, such as the RWC 2011, will promote Dunedin throughout the world (CST n.d. c). They imply it will attract new residents to Dunedin as well as increasing tourism and attracting new business developments (CST n.d. c). The RWC 2011 is also promoted as a means for economic development and contributing to business vitality. Despite such enthusiasm the DCC have not made any public predictions as to the economic benefit that the RWC 2011 will bring to Dunedin, other than the contributions it will make to the proposed stadium cash flow. Furthermore, it is not yet certain whether the new stadium will even be ready in time for the RWC

with Carisbrook still listed as the Dunedin venue in IRB schedules for the event at the time of writing (IRB 2009).

Horwath HTL (2007) prepared the financial feasibility projections for the CST. They state the optimistic scenario shows the stadium making NZ\$536,000 average per year from 2011 to 2025, the pessimistic scenario suggest an NZ\$108,000 average per year. The CST suggested that the stadium would benefit the region by NZ\$24 million annually (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). It was correctly assumed that if Dunedin builds the stadium it will be allocated matches in the RWC 2011 and that this will bring economic impacts. According to the IRB (2009) Rugby World Cup draw Dunedin will host three rugby world cup pool matches, which are currently allocated to be played at Carisbrook with the door left open for the new stadium to take over if completed in time. Martin Snedden, Rugby NZ 2011 chief executive, stated: 'Our view is if they can get there in time, if it's ready operationally, then that would be great. If it doesn't quite make it we know we've got Carisbrook. We're in that lucky position we're covered either way' (Hinton 2009).

The stadium is expected to cost NZ\$188 million, with the DCC contributing NZ\$85 million and an additional NZ\$6.4 million for major maintenance items, totalling NZ\$91.4 million. The Otago Regional Council (ORC) will fund NZ\$37.5 million and the University of Otago and the Community Trust of Otago are expected to contribute NZ\$10 million each. The university's investment will contribute to land costs, infrastructure services and a share of synergistic construction costs and design fees, although it will not be a direct investment in the stadium. The private sector is expected to contribute NZ\$45.5 million, from the purchase of lounge memberships, corporate suites, open club reserves, naming rights and other funding items (CST 2007b). The ORC recommended to partly fund the proposed stadium in June 2008 although this was based on a number of conditions, beginning with:

- a. If, and only if, on or before 2 February 2009 the Carisbrook Stadium Trust, as agent for the Dunedin City Council, can provide the Otago Regional Council with documentary evidence of a bona-fide and viable construction tender for the proposed stadium for a guaranteed maximum price of not more than \$165.4 million inclusive of all construction-related consultants fees.
- b. Final design standards will be to at least the standards detailed in brief to the design team as described in the Progress Report dated 17 March 2008 from the Carisbrook Stadium Trust.

The final level of corporate funding and university commitment will depend on the outcome of the ORC's decision making process. The DCC conditionally committed NZ\$91.4 million to the stadium on 17 March 2008. A late amendment was introduced five hours before the decision by the DCC Finance and Strategy Committee, which charged the council's rates and funding working party with

finding NZ\$20 million in savings to the ratepayers' contribution to the capital cost of the stadium (*The Press* 2008a). The NZ\$20 million saving would reduce the ratepayers' burden, from NZ\$66 a year to NZ\$37 a year, on an average house worth NZ\$289,000. The DCC intends to borrow its share, servicing the debt with a mixture of rates and Council-owned company dividends (DCC 2007a). The Council believes it is appropriate to use debt to fund long-term assets as it spreads the cost across those generations who will use and benefit from them (DCC 2007b). In 2007 it was stated that the DCC's plans to take out loans could lead to the ratepayers paying an additional NZ\$74 million in interest charges through 20 years, dependent on interest rates (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). As may be expected, there is still considerable debate as to whether the ratepayer should be covering a substantial amount of the costs towards developing the new stadium.

Concern that the NZRU and Otago Rugby Football Union (ORFU) are not contributing to the new stadium was highlighted by Lee Vandervis, a Dunedin City Councillor (Critic 2007). Although it will be multipurpose, the main tenant and hirer of the stadium will be the ORFU (CST 2007b). The ORFU revealed in October 2004 that it was almost NZ\$6 million in debt and that it could not contribute to the stadium (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). The ORFU, the current owner of Carisbrook, is likely to eventually sell Carisbrook and contribute the funds raised, this is expected to be NZ\$3 million (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). The NZRU and the New Zealand government were seemingly uninterested in contributing funds to the new stadium. This was especially controversial when the Government and the NZRU are contributing NZ\$190 million and NZ\$10 million, respectively, to the redevelopment of Eden Park, Auckland. Then Sport and Recreation Minister Trevor Mallard stated that it is up to local communities and rugby unions to pay for upgrades (Loughrey 2005). However, following a change in government at the November 2008 general election, the Finance Minister Bill English confirmed in April 2009 that the government will provide NZ\$15 million towards the planned stadium in Dunedin with 'no strings attached' (Loughrey and Mackenzie 2009).

Originally there were two principal citizen groups leading the discussion on the stadium in Dunedin, the Dunedin Ratepayer and Household Association (RHA) who are opposed to the stadium, and 'Our Stadium' who are advocates of the CST and the new stadium. However, a new opposition group was formed in July 2008: 'Stop the Stadium' who do not believe the new stadium is in the best interests of Dunedin (Loughrey 2008a). The Dunedin RHA have criticised the new stadium as being unnecessary, unwanted, unaffordable and have dubbed it as 'Farry's Folly' (Rudd 2007). They are primarily against the DCC funding the stadium through rates; chairman Syd Adie states, 'People like the idea of a stadium but they don't want to pay for it on their rates' (One News 2007). In 2005 both the DCC and the ORC were presented with a petition from the Dunedin RHA with 6,025 names calling for a binding ratepayers referendum to be held before public money was committed (Loughrey 2006). A protest was later organised in May 2007 by Adie, demanding ratepayer money not to be used to fund the proposed stadium (MacKnight and Lewis 2007). The Dunedin RHA supporters have questioned

the information provided by the CST and the viability of the new stadium. Many doubt that the stadium would provide an economic benefit for Dunedin predicting varying levels of debt (Rudd 2007, MacKnight and Lewis 2007). Many think that Dunedin and Otago's population is too small to support a new stadium and that low-income earners and the elderly will be burdened with the cost (Rudd 2007), concerns also shared by Stop the Stadium.

Stop the Stadium, led by President Bev Butler, do not think that the majority of Otago citizens are in favour of the proposed stadium and do not see the public receiving all the information that they should in order to assess the risks involved. Stop the Stadium attempted to encourage the Dunedin City and Otago Regional Councils to take the various 'exit points' available to them and withdraw their support and funding provided to the stadium (Loughrey 2008a). Stop the Stadium organised a protest march, with 1,300 participants, in January 2009 followed by a 'rates revolt' encouraging members to withhold council rates as a protest against council stadium funding (Morris 2009). In February 2009 the group lodged a letter of appeal to the Environmental Court seeking to prevent the harbour-side arterial route project, without which the stadium would be jeopardised; the appeal was then withdrawn due to the costs involved (Porteous 2009). In April 2009 Stop the Stadium filed a High Court injunction bid to halt the project, on the grounds that the Council's stadium proposal had changed significantly since it went through the consultation process. However, the increase of NZ\$10 million in the cost of the project and the reduction of NZ\$3 million in the Community Trust's contribution was not considered to amount to a significant change to council plans, so the bid was unsuccessful. The Justice also stated that he was aware that any delay on the project would jeopardise the chances of the stadium being open in time for the 2011 RWC (Loughrey 2009a). The group then took its case to the Court of Appeal, but this too was rejected (*The Otago Daily Times* 2009). However, opposition to the stadium proposal also prompted supporters to rally.

Our Stadium is a 'supporters club' intent on 'mobilising positive public opinion' for the Dunedin stadium project (MacKnight and Porteous 2007: 1) that is also regarded as a 'development partner and stakeholder' by the CST. They are headed by former Dunedin Mayor Sir Clifford Skeggs and backed by a group of businesspeople, lawyers, media representatives and sportspeople (Loughrey 2007). Dunedin City Councillor Lee Vandervis, has described them as 'a rich old boys' club' (Loughrey 2007: 1) implying that they are able to be of influence due to their corporate relationships and wealth within Dunedin. Skeggs states 'Big projects often get captured by a noisy minority who claim to speak for everybody. They don't. Our job is to unite the positive people in the region and their voices will make the local authorities decision to say YES a much easier task' (quoted in Our Stadium n.d. a). The growth coalition characteristics of Our Stadium are illustrated by Skeggs: 'The reality is if you don't have a stadium, you don't have a future in Dunedin' (MacKnight and Porteous 2007: 2). Our Stadium promote the new stadium as being an attraction for students, as being affordable and generating around 600 new jobs; the claims Our Stadium make often reflect those made by

the CST although the benefits they state the stadium will project have often been disputed in the regional media. In March 2008 Our Stadium secretary Tim Calder stated his organisation was changing its role from a support group to a group that will help the CST plan for the future of the facility. Our Stadium has taken an active role in seeking individuals and companies interested in investing in the stadium; aiming to 'show that business supports this [project]' (Loughrey 2008a).

Our Stadium and the CST promote the stadium as providing employment during the construction and after it has been built (Our Stadium n.d. a, Loughrey 2007). Farry estimates that the total value added impact for Dunedin of construction to be NZ\$116.8 million. However, construction costs do not represent a benefit to the economy, as the money used for construction already exists in the local economy. There will also be 'leakages' in a specialised project like the new stadium as Dunedin has a smaller pool of industries to provide materials and services (Sam 2007). There is also debate as to the employment generated once the new stadium has been built given that the jobs generated are likely to simply replace those lost at Carisbrook. When asked about the effect on ratepayers of having to pay for the stadium, especially those of limited means, Skeggs said he is sympathetic 'But we've got to be realistic if we want Dunedin to prosper' (Loughrey 2007: 1). Interestingly, Our Stadium stated on their website that the new stadium does not necessarily need to increase rates. They would prefer to see projects re-prioritised by the DCC (Our Stadium n.d. b). Both groups claim to represent the interests of Dunedin residents.

Public consultation was undertaken to judge support for the new stadium in Dunedin. Two separate firms were commissioned to undertake research, Colmar Brunton by the CST and Research First by the DCC and the ORC; both produced their findings in May 2007. Colmar Brunton's (2007: 2) report indicated 'that the people of Otago and Southland will be better served by a new stadium', and concluded that 72 per cent of residents and 95 per cent of corporates support or strongly support the new stadium. Research First undertook a mail and a telephone survey to better understand the attitudes of Dunedin and Otago ratepayers and residents towards the opportunity to develop a new Carisbrook Stadium (Davidson 2007). The results in both of the Research First surveys reveal a slight preference for a new stadium; the raw data from the telephone survey indicated 51.9 per cent support the stadium and 44.6 per cent opposed, and the mail survey showed 52.5 per cent support and 45.2 per cent opposed (Davidson 2007).

The methodology used in the Colmar Brunton survey commissioned by the CST is questionable with the ordering of the questions and the questions themselves displaying potential response bias. However, the validity of the Colmar Brunton report was never publicly disputed and has been used by the CST as evidence of public support. Importantly, the Research First surveys contained questions relating to the DCC's funding of the stadium. The surveys found that Dunedin's population is divided whether the DCC should support the stadium. However, both surveys show that while the community is divided, it is not in



favour of support to the level of NZ\$91.4 million (Davidson 2007, see also Sam and Scherer 2006).

Another significant debate is whether the stadium will be able to be built for NZ\$188 million (Newstalk ZB 2006). The CST assured the DCC that they will not go over the budget (CST 2007b). However, when asked in 2006 if the stadium cost could increase, Farry stated that nobody could make that guarantee (Loughrey 2006). A review by consultants Davis Langdon warned the DCC about exclusions in the trust's costings, including but not limited to: kitchens, bars, restaurants, broadcasting facilities, turnstiles and scoreboards (Witherow 2009). The national roading authority had also stated that it would not pay for the relocation of State Highway (SH) 88 to the south side of the stadium (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). The NZ\$1.5 million cost of relocating the highway was not included in the CST budget for the stadium although later in 2008 it was announced that the DCC and the Regional Land Transport Committee would now cover this. According to DCC transportation planning manager, Don Hill the SH88 project had been included in the council's transportation strategy in July 2006 but when the stadium was proposed it was necessary to realign what had been planned (Loughrey 2008b). There is also clearly considerable pressure to complete the stadium on time for the RWC 2011. The land acquisition in 2008 proved to be complex, taking longer than originally anticipated. Although Farry denied that this delay was affecting their schedule, he did acknowledge that 'completing [the stadium] in time for the Rugby World Cup is a major challenge' (Sports Digital Media 2008). As of the end of September 2008 the CST had spent NZ\$42 million of the NZ\$165.4 million cost of building the stadium (Loughrey 2009b).

In July 2009 the new stadium became branded as the Forsyth Barr Stadium at University Plaza (Forsyth Barr Stadium in short) in official media in acknowledgements of the naming rights being sold to a local financial services company (Forsyth Barr 2009). According to Forsyth Barr chairman Eion Edgar, who is a former chancellor of the University of Otago and member of the CST Trust, 'the criticisms thrown into the path of the stadium are the same seen any time a new project as big as the new stadium is planned, but that they are usually forgotten after completion ... So we tend to take the view that they'll eventually see the light, and you can see that light shining in the aurora of our new logo'.

There are questions as to whether Dunedin's citizens will be able to support and benefit from events held at a new stadium. Horwath HTL (2007) stated that Dunedin's relatively small population and relatively low income levels and the low population in the surrounding regions may impact on the area's ability to support events. Dunedin Centre manager Debra Simes and city architect Robert Tongue doubt that many promoters would want to stage a performance in the new stadium as the 2,000-seat Town Hall was already often too large a venue to fill (Rudd 2007). It is also questionable whether the venue will be used to its 30,000 capacity, or even close, when Carisbrook since 2004 had achieved an average crowd of 13,700 to rugby matches (Horwath HTL 2007). There are also

no guarantees that the new stadium will attract top-level sport and music events, including rugby tests. Farry says he expects Dunedin to get category 'A' rugby tests despite NZRU's unofficial minimum-seating requirement for A-grade tests being 35,000 (*Otago Daily Times* 2008). As well as not meeting these requirements it is not only the state of Dunedin's stadium that caused the NZRU to be reluctant in allocating Dunedin matches in the past. In 2004 the NZRU stated that Dunedin is unlikely to be allocated a Bledisloe Cup or Lions test because of the lack of hotel accommodation in the city (*Otago Daily Times* 2008), which building a new stadium alone will not rectify.

The hosting of rugby and other events in New Zealand is also increasingly competitive; New Zealand has more test-capable grounds than the number of test matches that are hosted in any one year (Horwath HTL 2007). In addition, Dunedin's possible competitive advantage and its ability to attract events are affected by developments at other New Zealand stadia. Given that other stadia are also undergoing considerable redevelopments the new Dunedin stadium, albeit with a covered roof, raises major questions as to whether stadium development is little more than a zero-sum game.

### **The Neoliberal Discourse of Competitiveness and Stadia Development**

The Dunedin City Council looks to the RWC 2011 and a new stadium to stimulate development and economic activity as part of its regional competitiveness strategy. However, 'there is little evidence about the medium to long-term economic effects of sports event led economic regeneration strategies ... In particular, there is a lack of available data on the *regenerative impact* of sports investments on local communities' (Coalter, Alston and Taylor 2000: 6). The pro-stadium discourse of the CST and Our Stadium highlights the competitive imperatives of stadia development and the hosting of mega-events. These approaches have been described by Malecki (2004) as part of imitative low-road strategies of regional development as opposed to knowledge-based high-road approaches. Such low-road strategies are bound up with property-oriented growth coalitions that focus on the packaging of place brands and the gaining of media attention. With respect to urban place competition, for example, investment in infrastructure is 'similar from city to city' with respect to meetings and conventions, sports, events, entertainment and shopping because they are aimed at the same markets with few cities being able to 'forgo competition in each of these sectors' (Judd 2003: 14). As Harvey's (1989: 12) review of urban entrepreneurialism identified: 'Many of the innovations and investments designed to make particular cities more attractive as cultural and consumer centres have quickly been imitated elsewhere, thus rendering any competitive advantage within a system of cities ... ephemeral ... Local coalitions have no option, given the coercive laws of competition, except to keep ahead of the game ...'.

The fusion of urban entrepreneurialism with the neo-liberal political agenda has provided the ideological justification for place-competitive reimagining strategies



including the hosting of mega-events and stadia development (Peck and Tickell 2002). In Dunedin, as elsewhere, neoliberal discourse has served to structure ideas about, and the objectives set for, community development, definitions of the public good and interest, and definitions of citizenship (Hall 2006, Bristow 2005). The desire to host sports mega-events and the requirements of having to develop new or upgrade sports facilities and city infrastructure as part of a belief in their virtues for place competitiveness has meant that cities face the possibility of having to provide larger subsidies and finance projects that deliver fewer public benefits (Hall 2006). Even Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993: 15), who provide the standard business studies text on place marketing, acknowledges that the increasing place competition for investment has the marks of a 'zero-sum game or worse, a negative-sum game, in that the winner ultimately becomes the loser'. Yet such is the strength of the neoliberal discourse of competitiveness and the 'necessity' to become a place in which capital and people 'stick' that the desirability to host sports mega-events by urban growth coalitions seems likely to remain unconstrained. Indeed, all this begs the question of how entrepreneurial is regional or urban entrepreneurialism.

It can be argued that it would be of more benefit to Dunedin in the long-term if they were to invest in areas that can provide them with a more sustainable source of place differentiation. Or, as Hall (2004) argues, that the greatest long-term benefits may come from investment in education, health and communications technology, areas more likely to have greater long-term benefits for urban economic and social wellbeing than stadia investment. Such issues of opportunity cost are to a great extent neglected by stakeholders such as the DCC, ORC, and the Community Trust. However, the success of disputing the benefits of a sport stadium in Dunedin is doubtful, especially within the taken-for-granted context that sport is good for you and the neoliberal logic that the public funding of private benefits will be good for the community as a whole (Hall 2004, 2006).

The discourses surrounding the stadium do not occur in abstract; they affect the construction and representation of place as well as the definition of urban policy. They also represent the role of interests in shaping policy (Bristow 2005). This case study has indicated the nature of some of those interests particularly with respect to the interplay between local politicians, interest groups and a university in promoting new stadia development. Undoubtedly, there is a genuine local desire to arrest the increasing economic, political and sporting peripherality of what was once New Zealand's leading industrial centre. Sport and sports stadia are therefore concrete symbols of place competitiveness. However, as this chapter has suggested, whether this strategy can work, and whether it can be leveraged by a single mega-event, the 2011 RWC is highly problematic.

As noted at the start of the chapter the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism is not just global, it is also located at various scales including the national and the local. The national government's financial support for what is an essentially commercial sporting interest to host the event is replicated at the local level throughout the country as different centres seek to host World Cup Events. Stadia development as a form of regional development is essentially a zero-sum game in the long-term.

Yet such is the strength of neoliberal discourses of competitiveness that alternative strategies are often not fully examined, particularly as they often stress more of the public interest as opposed to the private. Unfortunately, the inherent attractiveness of the neoliberal contest for regional competitiveness combined with the symbolic importance of having a new stadium is not only a powerful discourse but also has the support of a significant coalition of interests. Even if the stadium was not ready in time for the WRC the direction of development for Dunedin has still been set.

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## Chapter 8

# Local Government Entrepreneurship in Tourism Development: The Case of the Hurunui District, New Zealand

Michael C. Shone

### Introduction

This chapter utilizes a case study of the Hurunui District, New Zealand, to examine the role of tourism development in regional areas. By utilizing a neo-Foucauldian view of power and politics, this chapter seeks to clarify the relationship between local government and tourism development in a turbulent context of rapid and fundamental change in public policy ideology. The past 25 years has seen a radical restructuring of local–central relations in New Zealand. A significant outcome of this restructuring has been a dramatic shift in the roles and responsibilities of local government within their constituencies. This restructuring has been informed largely by a changing public policy landscape, in which the historical social democratic pattern of Keynesian welfarism was supplanted in 1984 by a policy framework influenced by the principles of neoliberalism. The economic management ideology behind this framework has led to transcendental economic, political and social restructuring.

More recently, an advanced style of neoliberalism has emerged in which governments, arguably in an attempt to reconnect with communities, have refocused the basic unit of economic and social development at the local and regional levels. The overall effect of this restructuring is commonly represented in the academic literature in terms of a shift from local government to local *governance* (Jones 1998, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). Governance eschews the divide between the state and the market in favour of a repertoire of alliances, networks and partnerships (Keating 2002). This shift to governance is identified as a fundamental feature of the more recent international policy reform discourse, and thus signals a more active role for the state at the local level (Shone and Memon 2008). For local government, the most significant impact with respect to agency roles can be seen as a move from the traditional ‘roads, rates and rubbish’ role to speculative investment in the social and economic development of their regions (Bush 1995). It is under these conditions that local government involvement in tourism development is framed.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, an overview of the structure and institutions of government in New Zealand is provided in order to contextualize the politics and governance of the nation state. Following this, a review of the academic literature on the potential for tourism to contribute to regional development is undertaken. It is from this scholarship that government support and encouragement for tourism in regional areas can be best understood. Neo-Foucauldian conceptualizations of regioness are then introduced in order to frame the changing relationship between local government and community stakeholders within a context of power and politics. It is from this vantage that the case study exemplar of the Hurunui District is then presented.

### **Contextualizing Government in New Zealand**

The politics and governance of New Zealand takes place within a framework of a parliamentary democratic constitutional monarchy. The basic system is closely patterned on that of the Westminster system; the most significant differences being the creation in 1950 of a unicameral parliamentary legislature, and the introduction in 1996 of a proportional representation electoral system based on the German model of mixed member proportionality (MMP). The nation state of New Zealand is unitary in character insofar as the authority of central government whose powers are conferred upon them by parliament creates sub-national jurisdictions. Local government is one of two branches of government in New Zealand, the other being central government, and comprises a two-tier system of territorial local authorities (i.e. district and city councils) and regional councils. Regional councils are responsible for issues relating to resource management, biosecurity control, flood control, civil defense and regional land transport. Territorial local authorities (henceforth referred to in this chapter as local government), however, are responsible more broadly for community wellbeing and development and are required to make decisions and set directions for promoting the social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of their communities. Importantly, while local government is a creature of the state, it is autonomous and accountable to communities (McKinlay Douglas Ltd 2006).

Over the past 20 years, New Zealand's local government sector has undergone a period of structural reform. In common with other Western democracies (Wollmann 2000), the principles behind the reforms of local government were heavily influenced by the same imperatives at work elsewhere in the public sector: rational economic actor models of public choice theory (Memon and Thomas 2006) and New Public Management (Shone and Memon 2008). A significant outcome of this reform process occurred in 1989 with the dramatic reduction in the number of local authorities, through territorial amalgamation, and the creation of a two-tier structure of local government as noted above. Further changes were undertaken in 2002, in which 'for the first time in New Zealand history, Parliament unshackled local authorities by granting them powers of general competence to

enable them to decide what functions they will undertake in order to respond to community needs and aspirations' (Memon and Thomas 2006: 136). The effect of this unshackling has been to essentially roll out the state at the local level, and to provide a legislative mandate which encourages local government to pursue development-related activities deemed both appropriate and acceptable by their communities. In New Zealand, the growth potential of tourism has resulted in the sector, arguably more than any other, being actively supported and encouraged by government as a tool for regional development (Shone 2008, 2009).

The following section thus interrogates the academic literature on tourism and regional development. It also provides a conceptualization of regioness as framed by neo-Foucauldian perspectives of peripherality and marginality, in which neoliberal governmentalities are seen as having dramatically altered the manner in which government is both enabled and empowered at the local level.

### **Literature Review: Tourism and the Regional Development Imperative**

Internationally, the rhetoric of tourism development is 'preached like a mantra' (Müller and Jansson 2007: 3) and it has become something of a truism to say that tourism is regarded by governments as a significant tool for regional development (Hall 2007). Tourism has a number of features which makes it attractive for the implementation of regional development agendas; it builds on the natural environment and cultural heritage attractions of many regional areas. Moreover, it is the most decentralised of the sunrise industries (Beer, Maude and Pritchard 2003), with the sector's recent growth trajectory signalling an ongoing potential to contribute to the advancement of regional development agendas. The tourism sector's potential as a catalyst for regional development is, of course, long established, with Christaller (1963: 95) noting:

There is a branch of the economy that avoids central places and the agglomerations of industry. This is tourism. Tourism is drawn to the periphery of settlement districts as it searches for a position on the highest mountains, in the loneliest woods, along the remotest beaches.

Tourism is also labour intensive and can create jobs not only directly serving tourists but also in a range of related service, construction and manufacturing industries. In addition, it helps to diversify local economies and support the existing infrastructure, and can pay for the development of new infrastructure which, in turn, may help the establishment of other industries. Given these features, tourism is one facet of rural community development strategies which is growing rapid support as a viable and attractive method for generating economic growth, and as a means of 'promoting regional development and ameliorating regional inequalities' (Jackson 2006: 695). This view appears to be emblematic of tourism's present day treatment by government as a growth pole for regional communities

and economies. At a broader public policy level, authors such as Harvey (1989), Marchak (1991) and Todd (1996) describe the solidification of economics, growth and development within the arena of regional polity. This particular discourse has also come to dominate the arena of local economic development (Shone 2008, 2009). As Benington and Geddes's assessment of local economic development strategies throughout the 1980s contends:

A feature of market-led neoliberal economic strategy during the 1980s has been a shift away from policies of support for declining industries to explicit or hidden support for growth sectors ... In relation to local economic development, this orientation has been reflected in the restructuring of many local economies previously dependent on primary or manufacturing industries (1992: 456).

This theme is continued by Hopkins (1998), who notes that post-industrial restructuring has compelled sites to exploit and promote local tourist attractions in an attempt to minimise, halt or reverse economic decline induced by collapse or contraction in more conventional primary- or secondary-based sectors. In the New Zealand context, Kearsley (1998) investigated the changing context for tourism development and highlighted the history of economic challenges facing the country. These challenges, from the beginning of economic restructuring in the late 1970s to the removal of agricultural subsidies in the 1980s, prompted the observation that for many small communities it seemed that only tourism was left as a viable course of employment and community income. More recent examinations of tourism, public policy and regional development in the UK (e.g. Stevenson, Airey and Miller 2008), Canada (e.g. Mair 2006) and Australia (e.g. Dredge and Jenkins 2009), for example, serve to confirm the universal nature of this phenomenon. Thus, tourism must be seen as a contested component of these greater forces of rural change, in which the sector has been used by governments as a tool to offset declines in other sectors of regional economies (Shone 2008, 2009).

Clearly then, tourism is viewed favourably by many governments as a suitable mechanism by which to stimulate economic activity in regional locations. Indeed, the role and potential of tourism activity to act as a growth pole around which other industry sectors can be developed is well established in the academic scholarship (e.g. Gunn 1994, Jenkins, Hall and Troughton 1998). What the literature is less clear about, however, is how the tourism development trajectories of regional locations are impacted when the public sector, in addition to its dual enablement and management roles (Simmons and Fairweather 2005), also assumes the role of tourism industry entrepreneur. The effect of this pluralism is to create a unique relationship of regulation and ownership of tourism resources, in which the conventional public-private sector differentiation of roles and responsibilities is usurped by a more complex and dynamic manifestation of politics and power at the local level. It is this transformation in the relationship between the public sector, in this case local government, and tourism development in regional locations which this chapter seeks to clarify.

### *Neo-Foucauldian Conceptualizations of the Region*

It is important to note at this point that the term *region* has a wide range of meanings within the academic literature, with each definition of the term relating to the specific scale and parameters imposed by the context of its use. It is also important to acknowledge that regions exist in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan settings, and is therefore not given exclusively to mean *rural*. Rather, the term has greater synergies with the concept of peripherality (Graham and Healey 1999, Mansfield and Milner 1999). This concept, in turn, is closely related to ideas of marginality, which is a condition of disadvantage that may arise from unfavourable environmental, cultural, social, economic and political factors. Thus, to be peripheral is to be marginalised, to lack power and influence, and it therefore carries social, political and economic implications. A consequence of this marginality is that 'government may be required to play a greater role in promoting economic development in the periphery than in the core' (Botterill et al. 2000: 10). In addition, these areas tend to lack effective political and economic control over major decisions affecting their wellbeing; they are particularly susceptible to the impacts of globalisation and restructuring through the removal of tariffs and other free trade regimes (Jenkins, Hall and Troughton 1998).

The politico-economic disadvantage typically associated with such considerations of regionness resonates with neo-Foucauldian perspectives on power and politics, with the underlying central-local tensions being both amplified and alleviated by the prevailing public policy discourses of sustainable communities and regional development. More recently, this relationship has been informed by a Third Way, governance-based approach to regional polity that has dramatically altered the manner in which government is both enabled and empowered at the local level. From a neo-Foucauldian perspective, this governance-based approach can be seen as a product of the influence of neoliberal governmentalities (Rose 1996). Current debates on governmentality are derived from a key strand of Foucault's later work, where his longstanding concern with the exercise of power in advanced liberal societies evolved into a specific focus on questions of government (Foucault 1991, MacKinnon 2000, 2002). From this perspective, political programmes are defined in terms of the underlying rationalities that shape their development (O'Malley, Weir and Shearing 1997, MacKinnon 2000). This approach has been developed further by tracing a shift from the welfarism of the social democratic pattern to advanced neoliberalism and examining how the latter frames interventions in particular policy fields (e.g. Rose 1996, 1999). The associated shift from local government to local governance, however, raises questions regarding the dynamics of local-central relations, operations of multi-agency partnerships, the changing relationships between key interest groups, the formation of economic strategies, and the scope for community involvement and local empowerment (MacKinnon 2002).

These questions are of relevance to the consideration of the case study exemplar, as the unique relationship of ownership and regulation of tourism resources by local government has served to both modify and, arguably, disguise power relations in the Hurunui. It is in the light of this discussion that this paper now turns to examine the changing relationship between local government and tourism development in the Hurunui District, New Zealand.

## **Case Study Exemplar: Local Government and Tourism Development in the Hurunui District**

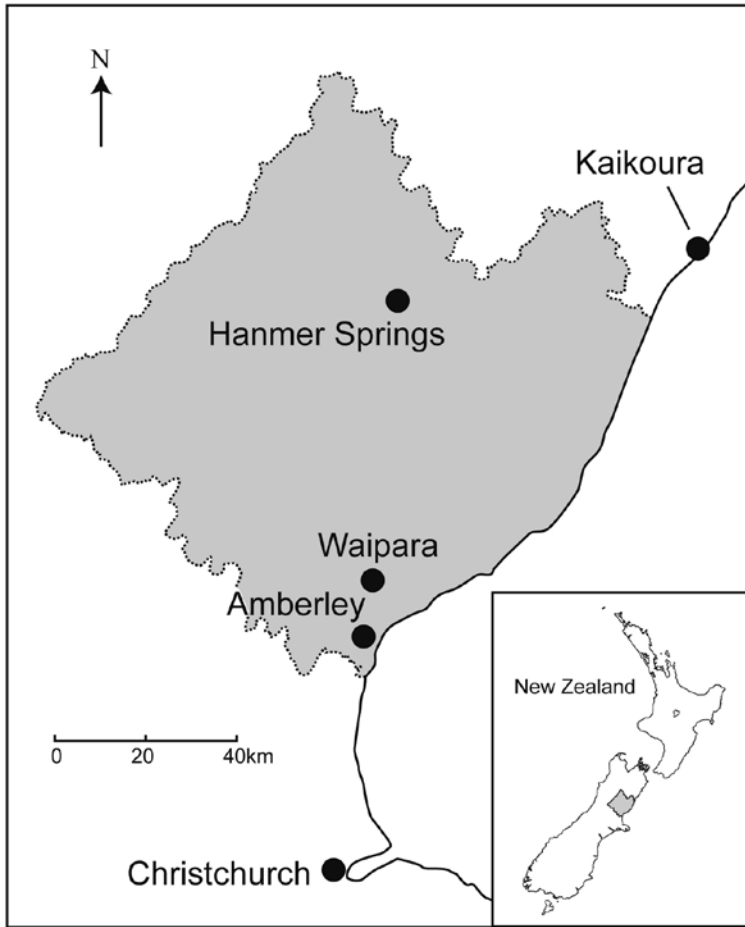
### *Research Methods*

This case study utilizes qualitative data drawn from semi-structured interviews with local government, tourism industry and community stakeholder representatives in the Hurunui District during the period August 2008 to June 2009. This has been complemented with the use of secondary sources of information, such as feature articles and letters to the editor in local newspapers, district council planning documents and papers, and ratepayer submissions to council.

### *Background*

The Hurunui District is situated in the North Canterbury region of New Zealand's South Island (see Figure 8.1). This district is rural in character, being both sparsely populated (pop. 10,476) and occupying a relatively large land area (8,646 square kilometres). While the social histories of the area reach back over 130 years, the Hurunui District itself is a relatively new incarnation, having only been gazetted in 1989. This occurred via a process of territorial amalgamation – undertaken as part of a broader process of local government reform – and resulted in the creation of a new territorial local authority: the Hurunui District Council. The district area itself is divided into five municipal wards, with the administrative capital located at the southern end of the district in the township of Amberley (pop. 1,305). This, in turn, is situated approximately 45 kilometres to the north of Christchurch city; the principal centre of commerce and largest urban centre in the South Island. The geographical proximity of the Hurunui to Christchurch not only affords rural producers ease of access to national and international markets, but it also provides a significant source of visitor flows to, and through, the district.

The scale of tourism in the Hurunui is significant when considered against the district's relatively small resident population base, with a total of 928,300 visits (88 per cent domestic) and 617,200 visitor nights (83 per cent domestic) made to the district in 2007. The total value of visitor expenditures for this period was estimated to be NZ\$93.3 million (Ministry of Tourism 2008). The core focus of the Hurunui District's tourism product is centred on the alpine spa village of Hanmer Springs (pop. 746). Dominating the village, and situated



**Figure 8.1** Location map of the Hurunui District, New Zealand

at its centre, are the thermal pools for which Hanmer Springs is named and known (see Figure 8.2). This tourism resource – developed and operated as the Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa (HSTPS) – was vested by the Crown in the Hurunui District Council and gazetted as a recreational reserve in 1990. Approximately 550,000 visitors pass through the HSTPS turnstiles each year, generating an operating surplus for the thermal pools of NZ\$3.1 million over the period 2005–2008. Moreover, it is anticipated that the financial return to the district council, in terms of operating surpluses from the HSTPS, will total NZ\$27 million across a ten-year forecast period 2009–2019 (Hurunui District Council 2009).





**Figure 8.2 Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa**

*Source:* Michael Shone

The HSTPS thus provides a substantial revenue stream to the district council and financial contribution to be used toward the funding of other reserves within the district. Due to the importance of the pools to the district economy, the Hurunui District Council has established a special committee to oversee the management and business operation of the complex. It is through the unique relationship of ownership and regulation that local government involvement in tourism development in the Hurunui District must be considered.

### *Tourism as a Response to Politico-economic Change*

The Hurunui District area, as was the case for many rural areas in New Zealand, experienced a period of significant upheaval in the primary sector during the late 1980s and 1990s. This upheaval was the result of a process of wide-ranging state sector reforms and concomitant government policies directed toward, among other things, the removal of farming subsidies and trade tariffs. Although this more market approach by central government was typical of a growing trend internationally towards a neoliberal economic perspective, it nonetheless represented a significant threat to the ongoing profitability of the district's economy. According to the council's former Chief Executive:

The rural obituaries were already being written for the smaller townships within the district during this time of change, and the feeling within rural areas was that they had been forgotten, or even worse, abandoned by central government (pers. comm., 12 August 2008).

As a consequence of these reforms, the district economy was compelled to diversify and broaden its base in order to offset the potential losses from a declining rural sector. For a district that had historically derived its income from primary production, a major shift in thinking was necessary to recognise the potentially valuable role that tourism could play in the Hurunui economy. This potential role was not lost on the political cartoon satirists of the day, as Figure 8.3 aptly shows.



**Figure 8.3 Political cartoon satire – ‘Stuffed Farmers’**

Source: Reproduced with kind permission of Garrick Tremain

The Hurunui District Council, realising that tourism could provide employment and income for local residents while also supporting established local businesses, took the lead in encouraging tourism development (Lovell-Smith 2000). According to the mayor of the Hurunui District during this time of economic instability and political reform, tourism was seen as a way of revitalising the district in the early 1990s:

Farming was in the doldrums, schools were struggling to stay open and services such as banks were packing up and leaving town. I was looking at ways of keeping school leavers in the district and putting a bit of heart in communities (Bristow 2005: 21).

One of the first initiatives taken by the district council was to establish a visitor information centre at Hanmer Springs, which opened in 1991. This was followed by a newspaper advertising campaign promoting the North Canterbury Triangle touring route, of which the emergent Hurunui tourism product was the dominant feature. More formal promotion of the district began in May 1992 with the formation of the Hurunui District Promotions Association, and in the following year an interim Tourism Board was elected to plan for the future promotion of the district. A significant change in the district council's treatment of tourism occurred in 1995, with the commissioning of a tourism and visitor strategy for the Hurunui District. As noted by the former Chief Executive of the Hurunui District Council:

Council members were of the view that tourism might offer a potential for regenerating the Hurunui. The Hurunui was clearly vulnerable to the ups and downs of farming cycles, and it was important to diversify in order to soften the impacts of those economic cycles. Diversification was seen as an opportunity for looking at a range of interventions, of which tourism was seen at that time as providing the greatest opportunity (pers. comm., 12 August 2008).

A major outcome of the tourism and visitor strategy was the district council's recognition that the future required the strengthening of trans-territorial linkages, and the view was taken that the council shouldn't limit itself by the political boundary of the district area. Potential was seen for product triangulation between the wine and food attractions of Waipara, the alpine spa attractions of Hanmer Springs (both positioned within the Hurunui) and the marine-based attractions of the neighbouring Kaikoura District. After a period of discussions with the Kaikoura District Council, the tourism promotions alliance was formalised and the North Canterbury Triangle touring route re-branded as the Alpine Pacific Triangle touring route. While the addition of this trans-territorial alliance helped to solidify a broader North Canterbury tourism product, arguably the most significant outcome of the tourism and visitor strategy was the eventual establishment in 1999 of the present day Hurunui District tourism promotions agency and management structure (known by the moniker 'Alpine Pacific Tourism' – APT).

The challenge for the Hurunui District Council in creating this tourism structure was centred principally on issues of funding. This issue was also impacted by the need to provide a suitable level of infrastructure, services and amenities in order to adequately service the visitor industry. Importantly for a small local authority grappling with rural decline, such services are typically provided to visitors free of charge but are not free of cost. The issue of how and from whom that cost is recovered thus assumes increased significance in times of economic hardship,

as was the case for the Hurunui. The following comments made by the district council's former Chief Executive reflect this position:

We were a cash strapped council, and there was an immediate backlash from ratepayers, who viewed tourism as not part of council's core business ... Much of the community – especially the farming community – viewed council's intervention in tourism with disapproval (pers. comm., 12 August 2008).

According to a senior planner in the district council, there has been ongoing debate within the district about whether or not council should even be in the business of tourism, and indeed a number of past councillors have been elected to office with an assumed mandate to stop this involvement. The district council, for its part, has argued that it is already involved in the tourism industry, and that the key question for the community to consider is whether or not it should *remain* a stakeholder. Given the district council's position as owner and operator of the HSTPS, and when considered in the context of economic diversification and rural decline, the decision was made by the council to further entrench its role in tourism promotions and development. This stance proved to be highly inflammatory for local ratepayers, many of whom view local government involvement in tourism as tangible evidence of council resources being used to favour one part of the district over another. As noted above, this is particularly so, given the Hurunui District Council's ownership of the dominant tourism attraction in the district: the thermal pools in Hanmer Springs. The remarks of the Hurunui District mayor capture the depth of this feeling:

The animosity that was created, I cannot describe. It was immense. In the middle of that, in the year 1999, the council announces it's creating this new tourism structure called a Tourism Board and appointing a General Manager, and it's funding it from the general rate. So the early days of this tourism funding model did anything but galvanise the district. It actually drove it further apart and absolutely drove a wedge into this district (pers. comm., 6 August 2008).

In 2002, as a response to a growing concern among local ratepayers (i.e. local government taxpayers) regarding the sourcing of funding for district tourism promotions activities from the general rate, the district council announced its intention to revise the tourism funding model. To this end, a discussion document was released and a process of public consultation undertaken in which an equity-based tourist rate tax specifically targeting tourism operators and associated service industries was proposed. As noted above in the comments of the mayor of the Hurunui District, prior to this time all promotional activities undertaken by the council (through the work of APT) were funded out of the unilateral general rate levied against all district ratepayers (i.e. property owners and business operators).

Arguably the main catalyst for the proposed changes to the tourism funding model was precipitated by an increasingly fractious relationship between the district council and the rural sector. The origins of this disquiet, while centred principally on the increasing ability of the council to impose various caveats on farming land-use practices, were nonetheless amplified by a desire for a fairer system of tourism funding. The need for a more equitable approach to district tourism promotions was acknowledged in the discussion document released by the council, which noted:

Everyone in our district benefits in some way from increases in tourism. Most obviously are the spin-offs of extra money flowing through the district, including increased employment opportunities. Other benefits are more subtle, such as having an increasing number and variety of hospitality, retail and service providers ... Certain businesses have a lot to gain by the promotion of the district. The council is considering a targeted rate for these businesses that would reflect this higher level of benefit (Hurunui District Council 2002).

While the talk of a targeted rating system helped to placate an increasingly irate rural sector – whose comparatively heavy rates burden had hitherto served to provide a disproportionate subsidy of tourism – the proposed targeted rating structure was met with vocal opposition from within the district's tourism industry itself. The following comments provided by one such tourism industry stakeholder in the Hurunui are representative of this opposition:

It is intended by council to collect this tax directly from all business operators, including part-time holiday homes. While almost everyone would agree that funding is needed to upgrade both the sewerage and water systems in Hanmer Springs township, the council should look in one of their ratepayer funded mirrors ... and realise that their very own Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa are the highest users of ratepayer funded council services. It would be fair to assume that the vast majority of visitors to Hanmer Springs are customers of the Hurunui District Council via the Thermal Pools ... What happened to user pays? (Letters to the editor, *Hurunui News*, 19 May 2003: 10).

This industry stakeholder continues:

The council has completely missed the point. It has conceded that the targeted tourism tax is to promote the Hurunui District, of which the council's very own Thermal Pools – being the district's key touristy destination – will be the main beneficiary. How much money do they need to run a successful business? ... Do major tourism operators in our neighbouring regions strike a tax on other businesses to help pay for their own promotion, because of some perceived benefit that may or may not trickle down? [Rhetorical].

Despite these concerns voiced by opponents of the amended tourism rating model, and after an extended period of public consultation, the targeted tourism rate was incorporated into council regulations in July 2003. In defending its position, the former CEO of the district council reminded tourism stakeholders that the revised funding model was a response to calls from within the wider district community questioning the fairness of the former funding model:

The issue that has caused greatest concern among general ratepayers in recent years is: 'who should pay for this activity?' Many people have told the council that the current funding arrangement [from the general rate] is unfair and that council should target those that benefit the most (pers. comm., 12 August 2008).

Putting the question of funding equity aside, however, the root of ratepayer disquiet centres on public sector involvement in what is ostensibly a private sector activity. That is, the business of tourism. For general ratepayers within the community, the concern is for the use of council resources for activities not considered to be core business. For sections of the district's tourism industry, the concern is for the efficacy of local government ability to impose itself upon the marketplace, and to master market disciplines. As remarked by one community stakeholder:

The point is, council is saying: 'we want your money to promote tourism because we are better at it than you'. Well, I for one would rather spend my own money, thank you very much. The Hurunui District Council should stick to its core activities like roading, water and sewerage, and not engage in business unless they are able to run it without financial help like the rest of us (Letters to the editor, *Hurunui News*, 19 May 2003: 10).

The tenor of these comments indicates the existence of contested understandings with respect to public sector roles and responsibilities in tourism development in the Hurunui. In addition, community stakeholders clearly question the ability of the council to separate its managerial responsibilities for the wider district area with its entrepreneurial aspirations in Hanmer Springs. The district council's involvement in tourism generally, and direct investment in the HSTPS specifically, is regarded within the community as a conflict of interest and reflecting a position of undue commercial privilege. At the heart of stakeholder unease is the perceived special treatment given to Hanmer Springs as a consequence of the district council's financial interest in the HSTPS. By the council's own admission the HSTPS, being the apex tourism asset in the Hurunui, has certainly benefitted greatly from the promotional activities undertaken by the district promotions agency.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that such treatment of the district's premier and most profitable tourism resource follows a certain economic logic, with the high marketing profile of the village and thermal pools serving to anchor the wider district tourism product. The centrality of this tourism resource to the



wider district and regional area is well recognised, with Lovell-Smith (2000) noting that without the dynamism of the thermal pools, Hanmer Springs as an area, Hurunui as a district, and Canterbury as a region, would lose a substantial point of difference. However, while the ongoing promotion of Hanmer Springs and the HSTPS is critical to the successful development of the Hurunui tourism product, it need not be the case that little attention should be given by the district's promotions agency to other aspects of the local tourism industry. The words of an industry representative succinctly capture the crux of this sentiment:

Currently, in terms of promoting tourism in the Hurunui, it seems that all roads inevitably lead to Hanmer Springs. But it doesn't have to always be the case. The Hurunui has a wide range of tourism attractions to offer potential visitors, yet the focus of the council's tourism promotions seems to be firmly fixed on Hanmer Springs. The council should also be encouraging visitors to spend more time in other parts of the district. But it just doesn't seem to happen, because ultimately the power to make it happen rests at the council chambers in Amberley. But then, the power has always been in Amberley (pers. comm., 2 June 2009).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The role and potential of tourism as a contributor to regional growth and development is well established in the academic literature. As noted earlier in this chapter, this role is often framed in the context of a politico-economic response to structural changes in regional economies. In the New Zealand context, these structural changes speak to a dramatic shift in local–central relations that has, since 1984, seen the prominent role of central government under the hitherto social democratic pattern supplanted by an expanded role for local government under a neoliberal public policy framework. This policy shift was accompanied by a significant restructuring of sub-national government in 1989, and further reinforced through a revision of local government roles and responsibilities in 2002. The overall effect of this restructuring has been a shift from a period of relatively centralised regulation and administrative control to a broader governance-oriented role for local government. Perhaps more significantly, this shift has also seen local government assume an increasingly entrepreneurial role in the social and economic development of their constituencies. In the case of the Hurunui District, this shifting focus has been manifested as the active support and direct investment in tourism development.

While the connection between public policy shifts and regional or local change is not a new topic of investigation, the significance of the exemplar presented in this chapter lies in the pluralistic roles played by local government in the district's tourism sector. Conventionally, local government responsibilities for tourism are centred on the dual and often conflicting roles of enablement and impact



management. These roles are typically empowered by statute and operationalised through a variety of regulatory controls and planning mechanisms available to local authorities (e.g. land-use zoning regulations, asset management plans, long-term community plans, infrastructure and economic development plans). While tourism enablement and management are certainly significant components of local government tourism involvement in the Hurunui District, the tourism-related roles and responsibilities of the Hurunui District Council are further embedded as the owner/operator of the district's apex tourism resource: the Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa. Thus, local government in the Hurunui District is not only an arbiter and benefactor of tourism development, but is also a significant beneficiary of direct involvement and entrepreneurship in the tourism industry. This apparent position of conflict raises a number of questions relating to the appropriateness of public sector involvement in what is ostensibly a private sector activity, and of the ability of local government to adequately separate its managerial responsibilities from its entrepreneurial aspirations.

In the case study exemplar, tourism planning and management outcomes are conceptualised as being shaped by the power relations between competing interests; namely, the district council, the tourism industry, and local community stakeholders. Importantly, the process under which tourism policy is formulated in destination areas is conditioned by the public policy context within which it is placed. Outcomes from this process can thus be conceptualised as products of stakeholder interactions and shaped largely by the political and institutional framework in which they operate. From a neo-Foucauldian perspective, the neoliberal governmentalities associated with the shift to local governance have undoubtedly served to increase the ability of the local Hurunui community stakeholders to direct the nature and scale of tourism development within the district. However, the neoliberal-inspired rolling back of the central state, and concomitant rolling out of the regional/local state that so characterises the ideological shift of public policy to local governance, has also acted to extend the regulatory and administrative reach of local authorities over the tourism sector. In the case of the Hurunui, this shift appears to have also resulted in contested understandings about the legitimacy and appropriate role of local government entrepreneurship in private sector activities such as tourism.

In New Zealand, local government is required by legislative mandate to maintain an appropriately balanced and impartial role as both a promoter and mediator of social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing within their territorial boundaries. In the view of local stakeholders, however, the impartiality of the Hurunui District Council appears to have been compromised by its position as principal beneficiary of ongoing tourism growth and development in Hanmer Springs. Indeed, the high level of local government involvement and direct investment in the Hurunui tourism industry is seen by some stakeholders as evidence of the local council utilising a position of commercial advantage to promote development in one part of the district at the expense of the rest of the district area. This viewpoint is further reinforced for local community stakeholders

by the use of district council resources, most especially ratepayer-derived financial contributions, to undertake selected tourism-related activities. It is a situation, at least in the eyes of some stakeholder groups, of the Hurunui tourism industry receiving disproportionate advantage from the use of public resources, and of private sector interests receiving subsidy from the public purse. In essence, the Hurunui District Council's roles and responsibilities for the wider district area are interpreted by sections of the community as having been coloured by the special treatment given to the tourism sector generally, and Hanmer Springs specifically. From the local government perspective, however, district council involvement in tourism is characterised as having been motivated by a genuine desire to promote the social and economic development of all of the Hurunui District. The pluralistic roles undertaken by the district council to achieve that end are, in the eyes of council managers, performed with the utmost care-of-duty, diligence and organisational transparency.

Clearly, different stakeholder groups hold contrary interpretations of the roles and responsibilities of local government in tourism development in the Hurunui District. This divergence of opinion reveals areas of potential fracture between local government and their constituent communities. The unique relationship of local government and tourism development, where power relations are manifested as regulation and ownership of tourism resources, suggests that special attention needs to be paid to how power is patterned or funnelled into a small clique of people. In the case of the Hurunui District, the pluralism of local government roles and increased regulatory empowerment has combined to not only modify stakeholder power relations, but arguably also to disguise power relations between the state and the local community. As with many case studies of this ilk, the peculiar and idiosyncratic nature of location-specific settings can make it difficult to extend to generalities. However, the unifying theme apparent throughout much of the academic literature is the dominant role of public policy in shaping the context under which tourism development is framed in regional locations. Thus, while the research described in this chapter is firmly bedded in the tourism experiences of the Hurunui District it does, nonetheless, have relevance in a wider setting of local authority policy development in a turbulent context of rapid and fundamental change.

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# Chapter 9

## ‘Huelva, the Light’: Enlightening the Process of Branding and Place Identity Development

Alfonso Vargas Sánchez and Dianne Dredge

### Introduction

Knowledge and information transform societies (Boheme and Stehr 1986, Druker 1994). In post-industrial societies, knowledge is increasingly seen as a key driver of economic development replacing the traditional reliance on natural resources; knowledge has reduced reliance on manual labour, improved efficiencies and created wealth (Knorr Cetina 2007). Within the field of tourism, knowledge of both markets and products, and the interconnections between the two, are said to enhance strategic decision-making and improve tourism outcomes. The aim of this chapter is to tell the story of how knowledge is constructed, shared and embedded in tourism planning and development processes and branding strategies that promote tourism in the Province of Huelva, Spain. The Province of Huelva is located on the west coast of the Autonomous Region of Andalucía (see Figure 9.1). With an economy traditionally based on agriculture, fishing, mining and chemical industries, the economic diversification and decentralisation strategies adopted by the government of Andalucía in the latter part of the twentieth century resulted in tourism being identified as a key plank in economic revitalisation efforts. ‘Huelva, the Light’ emerged as a powerful brand from within this context.

The story told in this chapter provides an alternative path to understanding processes of branding and place identity development. That is, in typical stories of branding and brand development, researchers start from a certain ontological frame generally associated with business and marketing studies, describing the process of brand development for the purpose of sharing knowledge with like-minded or interested stakeholders operating in similar life worlds. This chapter transcends these ontological frames and the operational worlds of branding and marketing, to explore how ‘Huelva, the Light’ came to be as a social, political and economic idea via a process of knowledge building, information dissemination and policy leadership. In this sense, this case study is much more than a story of branding; it involves consideration of how knowledge is used and how leadership is exercised in destination planning and policy making.





**Figure 9.1** Location of Huelva, Spain

### **Knowledge Production in Tourism Planning and Policy**

Interest in how knowledge is created and used has caught the attention of philosophers for centuries. That societies transform in different ways as a result of how knowledge is used (and abused) is widely acknowledged (Druker 1994). The emergence of the concept of the ‘knowledge society’ in the latter part of the twentieth century and recognition of the social, economic and political impacts of knowledge particularly in relation to adaptation and transformation of economies, has reignited contemporary interest in understanding how knowledge leads to innovation (Boheme and Stehr 1986). Understanding how scientific knowledge penetrates and transforms social and economic relations has become an increasingly important line of inquiry. A full appreciation of the development of the sociology of knowledge in the late twentieth century and its impacts on economic restructuring and transformation is outside the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to note that within these discourses, the importance of theoretical knowledge has been emphasised, the application of which is thought to provide the basis for innovation and economic growth (Bell 1976, Blackler 1995).

During the twentieth century, and under the influence of postmodern, post foundational and critical theorists, the idea of a unitary body of theoretical knowledge gave way to a more nuanced appreciation of the different types, forms and origins of knowledge (Bevir 2000). One important idea emerging out of these wide-ranging discussions is that knowledge cannot exist outside the community that produces it and gives it value. As a result, since the 1970s much of the research examining the role and influence of knowledge, how it is constituted and embedded has focused on the structure and operation of scientific networks and the epistemic communities that produce and reinforce knowledge production (Knorr Cetina 2007). With this increased critical engagement around questions of how knowledge is produced and consumed, a distinction between knowledge and information has been made. Knowledge refers to the creation of understanding whereas information denotes the organisation and flow of knowledge, which is shaped by the way individuals value and communicate that knowledge (Nonaka 1994).

In a tourism planning and destination development context, there is a need to understand the social construction of knowledge about that destination, and the different ways of knowing and communicating this knowledge so that storylines and messages about the locality can be managed effectively (Marzano and Scott 2009). To illustrate, where knowledge and understandings held by a local community about the destination differ from those produced by tourism operators and managers, conflict between visitors, the tourism industry and the host community can result. Finding compatibility between the production of knowledge about tourism products and services, and ultimately what visitors consume, is no easy task because knowledge exists in different forms.

Various frameworks and typologies of knowledge are described within the literature (e.g. Blackler 1995). The distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge is widely cited. *Explicit knowledge* is knowledge that can be expressed and transmitted in words and numbers. Visitation statistics and planning strategies are examples in the tourism planning context. *Tacit knowledge* is less easy to isolate, existing in the personal qualities, experiences and life worlds of individuals, often emerging from a coalescence of cognitive and technical knowledge. Recent studies into the socialisation of knowledge reveal that knowledge is generated in dynamic, looped processes. Both explicit and tacit knowledge are dynamic, created at individual and collective levels through the communications and actions of individuals operating within and outside formal information sharing arrangements. Building upon the explicit/tacit distinction, Collins (1993) identifies five different types of knowledge:

- Embodied knowledge – knowledge that is based on conceptual skills and cognitive abilities which are synthesised.
- Embodied knowledge – knowledge that is action-oriented, practical and problem solving.
- Encultured knowledge – knowledge that is achieved through shared understandings, socially constructed and open to negotiation.

- Embedded knowledge – knowledge that resides in systematic processes, procedures and routines of how to do something.
- Encoded knowledge – knowledge that is transferred through symbols, signs, reports and other formats that reduce and decontextualise information.

In destination planning and management, there are significant challenges associated with ensuring there is consistency between the knowledge about the tourism product on offer, and how this knowledge is used in marketing and branding activities. Tourism organisations develop embrained, embodied, encultured and embedded knowledge that will be encoded in reports, ministerial communications and marketing campaigns. Moreover, the tacit knowledge of host communities can inform the development of knowledge about tourism products and add an innovative dimension to product development, marketing and branding. How this information is integrated and used to inform actions depends upon leadership and the capacity of individuals.

The seminal work by Thomas Kuhn on the structure of scientific revolutions lends itself to the idea that there are epistemic cultures through which knowledge has given meaning (Kuhn 1970). These epistemic communities represented the ‘aggregate machinery of knowing’ but how they worked remained a mystery (Knorr Cetina 2007). Since the 1970s, sociologists of knowledge and anthropologists of science have risen to the challenge, focusing on unpacking the processes of knowledge building, opinion formation, acceptance and the embedding of knowledge in the everyday worlds (e.g. Latour 1987). From this, it has become increasingly evident that early forms of knowledge (e.g. explicit and tacit) were simplistic constructs and that studying the discursive and contextual characteristics and cultures of knowing would reveal much about how knowledge is developed and propagated (Knorr Cetina 2007).

Attention has only recently turned to investigate how and why knowledge is generated and disseminated in tourism studies (e.g. Belhassen and Caton 2009, Hall 2004, Hollinshead 2004, Tribe 2004, 2006). Most of this research has tended to focus on the macro knowledge context, including explorations of the evolution of tourism studies, and its impact and relationship with other fields of knowledge. There have also been investigations of the way multi-scalar networks of tourism scholars have formed and operated to frame research (Echtner and Jamal 1997, Keast et al. 2004, Jamal and Kim 2005, Tribe 2005, Coles, Hall and Duval 2006). Apart from the valuable contributions of the above cited researchers, there have been few reflective accounts dealing with how knowledge is constructed at intermediate and local scales and within the practices and everyday lives of actors and organisations that operate in the tourism milieu. Better understandings about how knowledge is generated, valued and communicated in tourism planning, policy development, branding and marketing can provide insights that could improve the efficacy of such activities. This chapter, therefore, addresses this gap by exploring how knowledge was produced in a case study of ‘Huelva, the Light’, Spain.

## **Approach**

The aim of this chapter is to explore how ‘Huelva, the Light’ emerged as a social, political and economic idea via a process of knowledge building and information dissemination. The approach adopted in this chapter is sympathetic to assertions by post-structural and postmodern scholars who argue that knowledge is a social product and it cannot be understood outside the context in which it is generated (Bevir 2000). Having said that, the interdisciplinarity of tourism as an area of research and practice means that the context of knowing transcends both disciplinary and professional boundaries, it is influenced by interpretations of the past, and knowledge and perceptions of the future. It is also discursively produced across different spatial scales by actors and agencies operating at different levels. As a result, the ideas, knowledge and actions that came to contribute to the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ is as much context-sensitive as it is dependent upon key individuals, leadership and the opportunities for the development of embraced, embodied, encultured, embedded and encoded knowledge.

Mindful of the potential to limit understandings of the rich discursive environment in which tourism knowledge is produced by adopting a rigid research approach, the authors were presented with several decision points, and the choices made at each point could potentially change the nature of the story herein. How then should this story be told? What evidence should be used? How can the story presented be meaningful and elucidate concepts, ideas and frameworks that inform researchers and practitioners alike? Indeed if knowledge is based on observation, combined with experience, and then communicated, it is important to begin by clarifying the ontological characteristics of the researchers. One of the authors (Vargas Sánchez) had an insider view having been involved in processes of knowledge building and decision-making about Huelva’s destination planning and marketing. For him, this was an action research project and he had contributed the full range of knowledges identified above. The role of the other author (Dredge) was to help tell the story of the destination planning and branding process also drawing from the full range of knowledges identified above. As an outsider, her contribution in all five areas was drawn from a different perspective, but nevertheless an important one in the framing of this story. Together the perspectives that the authors bring to this story represent the collective choices made based on their own observations, experiences, intellectual traditions and eccentricities. Different types of data are used, including participant observation, secondary data such as published statistics, personal communications and primary data collected from market surveys. Through this process the two researchers built a set of observations about how knowledge was built and disseminated in this case of tourism planning.

What results is an approach that approximates method assemblage. According to Law (2004), method assemblage responds to the need for research to employ a variety of methods and approaches to research messy problems and not to be limited by the qualitative/quantitative divisions, expert/lay knowledge distinctions

or the ontological preferences that characterise the social sciences, and in this case, tourism studies. It rejects the idea that how knowledge in tourism planning and policy is created can be understood via the application of one determinate process or method. Rather a mixed methods approach using various sources of data from different perspectives is used to formulate the story of how the idea and knowledge behind the brand 'Huelva, the Light' was developed and implemented. The approach adopts a process whereby the authors were constantly redesigning and reintegrating theoretical understandings into the story as a result of reflections upon both qualitative (principally participant observation, personal communications and archival research) and quantitative (e.g. results of surveys and secondary data analysis).

### **'Huelva, the Light': Branding and Destination Identity**

#### *Location and Context*

Before exploring the development of the brand 'Huelva, the Light' it is important to place the Province of Huelva within its wider context, and to identify the historical challenges that shape this particular episode of tourism planning and brand development. The strong sustained growth of mass tourism in Spain from the 1950s has been attributed to a range of factors including:

- Political and institutional changes that led to the dismantling of Franco's protectionist policies and the emergence of decentralisation, which, from the 1980s, gave the autonomous communities (regions) greater powers to promote economic development including tourism.
- Favourable exchange rates with European countries that led to high levels of investment in tourism infrastructure, transport and communications technologies.
- Seductive and exotic perceptions of Spain.
- Attractive climate and outstanding natural resources, particularly in coastal areas (Ivars Baidel 2004).

Together, these factors have been responsible for strong and sustained tourism growth in Spain, from 4.1 million international arrivals in 1950 to 57.3 million in 2008 (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2009). This growth has consistently placed Spain within the top three countries in terms of both international visitor arrivals and tourism receipts for some decades. However, this tourism growth has been geographically uneven with five autonomous regions (Andalucía, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Calalonia and Madrid) receiving the majority of international visitors (Alvares, Hoti and McAleer 2007). Aside from the Spanish capital, Madrid, much of this tourism growth has tended to exploit coastal resources with destinations such as the Balearic Islands, Canary Island,

Costa del Sol (Andalucía) and the Costa Brava (Catalonia) characterised by rapid coastal development, property speculation, boosterist economic policies and *laissez faire* planning (Ivars Baidal 2003).

By the early 1990s, aging infrastructure, overcrowding, overdevelopment, inadequate infrastructure and lack of product diversity, especially in coastal areas, started to appear. There were clear signs that tourism was maturing, markets were diversifying and there was growing demand for a depth and breadth of tourism product beyond mass coastal tourism. Moreover, a recession in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the worldwide resurgence of interest in regional diversification, clustering and competitiveness as strategies to achieve economic development prompted a more strategic but nevertheless economic (boosterist) approach to tourism policy (Ivars Baidal 2003).

The Autonomous Region of Andalucía is a microcosm of these wider trends, displaying geographically uneven tourism development within its eight provinces and recording considerable fluctuations in tourism activity over the last four decades as a result of shifts in international market demands (Otero 1999). In particular, the environmental impacts of uncontrolled tourism in Andalucía's littoral areas have been the subject of much discussion (e.g. Barke and Towner 2004, Malvares García and Pollard 2003). Foreign companies eager to maximise profit by increasing the size of developments to promote economies of scale and keep prices low combined with a disregard for planning controls have been identified as major causes of overdevelopment. By the early 1990s, and influenced by growing national and international discourses about sustainable tourism, a decline in visitation, and shifting marketing demands, the Autonomous Government of Andalucía instituted a number of changes that sought to address mounting concerns about uncontrolled coastal development. These included laws to improve coastal protection, and open space provision in urban and coastal areas, and a series of environmental protection plans were prepared (Barke and Towner 2004). At the same time, the restructuring of European agriculture and the reduction in protectionist policies resulted in initiatives that stimulated economic diversification in rural areas. These initiatives included efforts to strengthen rural, agricultural and nature-based tourism products and opportunities (Marchena Gomez 1994). However, Malvárez García and Pollard (2003) point out that the pro-economic development and coastal focus remained strong with much development redirected into residential forms of tourist development, targeting amenity migration and second-home markets. The markets for these developments continue to demand high quality coastal locations.

Within this context, the Province of Huelva (pop. 512,366 in 2008) is the western-most province in the Autonomous Region of Andalucía. Its capital, the city of Huelva (pop. 148,027 in 2008), sits on the Gulf of Cadiz, equidistant between the international airports of Faro (Portugal) and Seville (Spain) (see Figure 9.1). Huelva is known for the mines of the Anglo-Saxon mining company, Rio Tinto, reported to be some of the oldest in the world, having originally been the subject of Greek, Carthaginian and Roman interest. Rio Tinto developed

large-scale mining operations in the area from the 1870s, which in turn fed the Province's modern economic development through to the middle of the twentieth century.

Commencing around the middle of the twentieth century, Spain, like much of the industrial world, has undergone a process of de-industrialisation and economic restructuring that has brought periods of stagnation and high unemployment (Lieberman 1995). The Province of Huelva, being dominated by agriculture, fishing, mining and associated industries – such as chemical industries – and having high levels of unskilled migrant workers in the primary industries sector, has been presented with considerable social and economic challenges as a result of de-industrialisation. Whilst tourism has also been subject to significant pressures due to shifts in market demands and overdevelopment in some areas, it was nonetheless seen as a tool for economic development and diversification (Lieberman 1995). By the 1990s tourism residential development, hotel resorts, golf courses, marinas, shopping centres and housing complex developments grew rapidly along the coastline. These developments represent a shift away from the mass tourism of the 1960s and 1970s, which traded on mass markets and low pricing structures. In its place, the so-called 'quality tourism' paradigm targeted higher yield markets such as European second homeowners. Huelva, however, was one of the last Provinces of Andalucía to attract tourism development.

The causes of the delay in tourism development were attributed to the lack of strategic planning, the dominance of industrial development, poor transport infrastructure in outlying locations and the perceived inaccessibility of the Province, the existence of large areas of marshland (once considered 'wasteland' but now valued and protected) and, in general, the absence of important coastal population centres (Márquez Domínguez 2008: 184). These factors contributed to the situation that, even at the beginning of the 1990s, the coastline of Huelva was characterised by unregulated tourism products and second residences dispersed with well preserved, natural environments. The Province's deficit in various infrastructures had left an area of extraordinary natural heritage almost virgin, as shown by the fact that approximately 30 per cent of its surface area is under protected land tenure (e.g. nature reserves and national parks) and 70 per cent of the surface area of the Province (10,148 square kilometres) is covered by forest. Traditionally seen as a weakness in strategic terms, it was thought that the Province's underdevelopment could be converted into a strength if environmental attractions and experiences could be promoted (Patronato Provincial de Turismo de Huelva 2003). This situation, together with the crisis in mass tourism elsewhere in the region, stimulated the development of hotels and other upmarket services in Huelva (see Table 9.1). This led to a situation where tourism became supply-led; markets were slow to develop and occupancy rates were low. Political pressure began to build on the Provincial Tourism Board to develop stronger marketing and branding activities that would help grow tourism.



**Table 9.1 Indicators of tourism growth in the Province of Huelva**

Tourism Offer	1986		2008	
	No. of Estab.	Capacity (No.)	No. of Estab.	Capacity (No.)
Hotel 5 stars	–	–	3	840
Hotel 4 stars	1	201	26	13.488
Hotel 3 stars	7	1,185	11	1.206
Hotel 2 stars	9	498	37	1.935
Hotel 1 star	7	308	10	451
<b>Total Hotels</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>17,920</b>
Hotel-Apartment 5 stars	–	–	–	–
Hotel-Apartment 4 stars	–	–	4	2.219
Hotel-Apartment 3 stars	2	1,634	8	1.691
Hotel-Apartment 2 stars	–	–	1	33
Hotel-Apartment 1 star	–	–	1	34
<b>Total Hotels-Apartments</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3,977</b>
Apartments 4 keys	–	–	–	–
Apartments 3 keys	–	–	8	2,411
Apartments 2 keys	2	616	24	1,731
Apartments 1 key	1	144	6	248
<b>Total Apartments</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>4,390</b>
<b>Camping grounds</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15,930</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22,980</b>
Restaurants 5 forks	–	–	–	–
Restaurants 4 forks	1	178	–	–
Restaurants 3 forks	2	116	2	140
Restaurants 2 forks	117	8,607	222	24.870
Restaurants 1 fork	194	8.688	539	36.289
<b>Total Restaurants</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>17.589</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>61.299</b>
Cafes 2 cups	4	214	4	283
Cafes 1 cup	25	1,622	64	3,555
<b>Total Cafes</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>3,838</b>
<b>Travel Agencies</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Patronato Provincial de Turismo

### **Institutional Context: The Birth of a Brand**

The Provincial Tourism Board (Patronato Provincial de Turismo), created in 1983, is the local tourism organisation in charge of tourist promotion.<sup>1</sup> It is funded predominantly from the public purse, and it represents businesses, various local

1 The vision statement for the Provincial Tourism Board is ‘The development of the integral communication strategy of the destination “HUELVA, THE LIGHT”, through the permanent use of the cooperative method in its operative actions, and the search for the involvement of the local community of Huelva, ultimately the beneficiaries of the Tourism Board’s efforts’ (<http://www.turismohuelva.org>).

councils within the Province, unions and other entities. In 2002 a Strategic Plan for Tourist Development in the Province of Huelva (Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Turístico de la Provincia de Huelva) was developed. The general objective of the Plan was to 'promote and consolidate the tourism sector in Huelva as the principal pillar of socio-economic development in the Province' (Patronato Provincial de Turismo de Huelva 2003).

In 2004 a new manager arrived at the Provincial Tourist Board of Huelva, Mr Javier Blanco. He arrived from the Basque Country in Northern Spain. Coming from a legal background (he belonged to the body of Legal Advisers to the Basque Government), he had gained a wealth of experience in tourism during the years he was the Basque Government Vice-Councillor for Tourism (1992–1998). Mr Blanco had a strong commitment to cooperation and partnerships in building tourism. Upon arrival, Mr Blanco discovered a province without its own identity, without a brand to position itself on the national and international tourism map. Municipalities within the region undertook initiatives in the absence of any co-ordinating vision, and there was little cohesion within promotional activities. Moreover, the Province of Huelva is characterised by a diversity of ecosystems, landscapes and tourist resources but lacked identity when compared to the well established 'Costa del Sol' (Coast of the Sun) in the Province of Málaga to the east.

'Costa de la Luz' (Coast of the Light) was the name given to that section of the coastline that extended from Portugal in the west, along the Atlantic coastline of the Provinces of Cádiz and Huelva to the mouth of the Guadiana River (see Figure 9.1). The tourist product along this coastline was embryonic, but offered 'quality tourism opportunities' distinct from the 'Costa del Sol'. The challenge that confronted Javier Blanco was to diversify this offering by incorporating a greater variety of products, services and experiences that would benefit both coastal and hinterland communities. Moreover, the creation of a brand that would develop tourism, in all its diversity, was perceived by Mr Blanco to be essential (pers. comm. Javier Blanco).

The first task for the researchers (headed by Alfonso Vargas Sánchez, one of the authors) was to better understand the macro context and trends that would influence how Huelva could be positioned into the future. Researchers from the Department of Business Administration and Marketing at the University of Huelva identified the following macro-trends:

- Distribution channels are changing. Packaged tourist products were in decline and have been for some time. Visitors now design their own trips, directly contacting tourist operators and businesses to book hotels, transport companies, car rental agencies and so on.
- The Internet has changed purchase patterns. Technological development has facilitated the change in distribution channels and put consumers in direct contact with suppliers. Producers involved in diverse aspects of tourism are now required to have an Internet presence to remain competitive.

- Tourists are increasingly informed, and as a result, more demanding. Access to product information via the Internet and word-of-mouth communications via virtual social networks (tourism 2.0) are revolutionising the sector.
- Tourists are less faithful to brands and are less likely to make repeat purchases. As a result, building client loyalty is increasingly difficult. Destinations have to continually reinvent themselves to attract repeat visitation. Visitor satisfaction does not necessarily mean visitor loyalty.
- Tourists are becoming more sophisticated. Markets are diversifying and tourists are becoming more and more heterogeneous. Traditional approaches to market segmentation have given way to micro-segmentation and personalised product offerings.
- The search for authenticity, which is defined from a consumer perspective, is increasingly difficult to deliver but remains a core feature of visitor expectations.
- Value-for-money remains a key factor in consumer decision-making. Budget products and low-cost airline companies are growing strongly, which has in turn enabled less spending on transport and more on destination products.
- Tourists are not looking for just a destination or product; they are searching for a memorable experience. Experience tourism is growing and will continue to do so.
- The so-called 'complementary offer' of leisure is increasingly important in consumer decision-making.
- Global uncertainty means that security is a factor increasingly valued by tourists. The expectation of a safe and secure destination will be increasingly valued.

Following the macro analysis, the second task was to carry out a study of the behaviour and level of satisfaction of tourists visiting the Province of Huelva. A market survey was carried out in July and August 2004 (peak season) focusing on tourists staying in commercial accommodation in the Province. The object was to obtain primary data that would supplement understandings of local tourism that could be obtained from official statistics.

Focused on building destination identity for the Province, Javier Blanco recognised that the light was an attribute traditionally associated with Huelva even though, from a tourist perspective, this association was only with the coast. In seeking to build a stronger association between the Light and the Province of Huelva, its diversity, landscapes and communities, he understood very clearly that the association had to be built on credible evidence and community support. The University of Huelva, with its strong focus on research and regional engagement, provided the vehicle for establishing a credible link between Huelva and the light. So began the collaboration with researchers at the University of Huelva and the Provincial Tourism Office.

In the process of preparing the questionnaire for the above visitor survey, previous questionnaires were examined. When preparing the list of attributes

to determine motivations for travel and the level of tourist satisfaction (e.g. accommodation, restaurants and leisure facilities) it was noted that despite the historical ‘Costa de la Luz’ branding for the coastline, there had never been any questions asked about the light:

Alfonso, why don’t we include in the list the Light of Huelva? Perhaps those of you from here don’t appreciate it very much, but for me, as someone who comes from the north, I am fascinated by the light you have here, the sunrises, the sunsets, the amount and the quality of the light (pers. comm. Javier Blanco).

Researchers in the Department of Business Administration and Marketing at the University of Huelva undertook initial studies across the whole Province to ascertain whether the light was a recognised feature of the region. The results were astonishing. Over the period 2004 to 2008 the light of Huelva was consistently one of the attributes most highly valued (see Table 9.2).

The results of this survey confirmed Javier Blanco’s intuition, something he had observed as an outsider, and as someone used to a colder and more overcast northern climate: the light was a highly significant attribute for visitors. Others within the region and working within the tourism arena for many years had taken for granted the value of the light. As a result, the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ (*‘Huelva, la Luz’*) was born. This was not a break with the past. It consolidated the value of the light, which had, after all, been intrinsic to the existing branding ‘Costa de la Luz’. It also allowed the light to become the link between coast and hinterland areas. Moreover, preliminary studies undertaken by university researchers showed

**Table 9.2 Visitor satisfaction 2004–2008**

Satisfaction (1=not important to 10=very important)	2004 Average (Rank)	2005 Average (Rank)	2006 Average (Rank)	2007 Average (Rank)	2008 Average (Rank)	2004–2008 Average (Rank)
<i>The light of Huelva</i>	7.94 (1°)	8.37 (3°)	8.21 (3°)	8.57 (2°)	9.02 (1°)	8.42 (2°)
Landscapes and nature	7.92 (2°)	8.04 (4°)	8.04 (4°)	8.53 (3°)	8.63 (3°)	8.23 (5°)
Service and treatment received	7.92 (3°)	8.45 (2°)	8.01 (5°)	8.36 (5°)	8.48 (4°)	8.24 (4°)
Natural features of the beach	7.90 (4°)	7.95 (6°)	8.52 (2°)	8.63 (1°)	8.38 (5°)	8.28 (3°)
Accommodation	7.60 (5°)	8.01 (5°)	7.89 (6°)	8.34 (6°)	8.28 (6°)	8.02 (6°)
Tranquillity	—	8.77 (1°)	8.52 (1°)	8.44 (4°)	8.78 (2°)	8.63 (1°)
Overall satisfaction	7.15	7.65	7.38	7.93	7.86	7.59

Source: Vargas Sánchez, A. and Albendin Moya, J.J. (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)

the potential of the branding concept: it was an intangible carrier of strong values associated with healthy lifestyles, leisure, arts, culture and nature. It had the potential to provide the missing leverage to help penetrate diverse tourist sectors thus supporting the Province's tourist development.

An additional study was completed, this time externally, examining Huelva's image from outside the destination. The study was carried out at FITUR, the International Tourism Fair of Madrid (Vargas Sánchez and Albendín 2005). In summarising the results of the survey to Mr Blanco, Vargas Sánchez explained the value of the light:

You see Javier, with regard to its [Huelva's] cognitive image the most evocative attributes are its natural characteristics of light, weather and sun, with nature and landscape. And as for its emotional image, Huelva is primarily perceived as a happy destination, undoubtedly influenced by its light. The findings are consistent, displaying a rather consolidated image (pers. comm. Alfonso Vargas Sánchez).

## **Development of the Brand**

In an increasingly competitive global tourism environment, the challenges for the emerging tourist destination of Huelva were considerable. There is a need to differentiate the destination, to offer something different and identifiable (Font 1997, Buhalis 2000, Pike 2005). This is where the brand becomes critical. A brand should be capable of placing the destination on the tourist map, capable of transmitting a message that makes it stand out in the mind of the recipient, to open pathways into various market sectors, to diversify and reduce the effects of seasonality (Evans et al. 1995, Chacko 1996, Therkelsen, 2003, Blain et al. 2005).

'Huelva, the Light' was a young brand that, in addition to drawing on a traditional attribute linked, although not exclusively, to the Province, it was also based on something that visitors particularly valued. However, positioning and adding prestige to a brand in such highly competitive tourist markets was a task that was neither easy nor fast. It required concentrated effort and a long-term plan of action. Perseverance and support (economic, commercial and political) were key elements that Javier Blanco sought to develop. In this phase of the brand's development, it was necessary, in Blanco's opinion, to define and put in action an innovative, original initiative unparalleled to anything seen elsewhere. As a result, another significant milestone in the development of the brand and the planning of the destination came about: the formation in 2006, under the auspices of the Provincial Tourism board, of a mixed and multidisciplinary working group made up of members with technical expertise in the Board itself and academics at the University of Huelva, called the 'Group of the Light' (*'Grupo de la Luz'*).

## **The Group of the Light: Giving Meaning to the Brand**

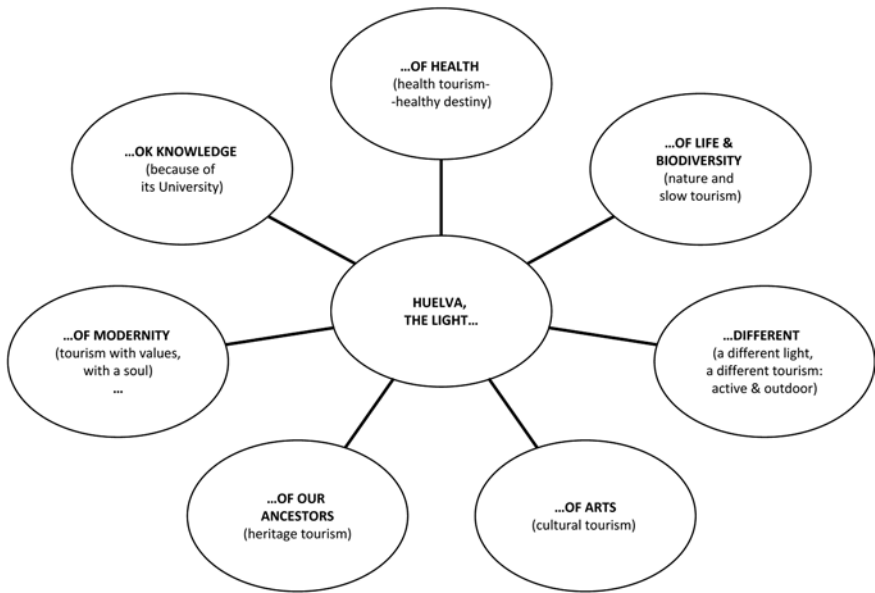
According to Pike (2009), brands and branding are entangled in the geographies of places; brands have spatial associations, they produce and project place meanings and they differentiate space. In this case study, the geographical attributes of Huelva in the south of Spain are closely associated with the weather conditions that produce fewer cloudy days and higher UV radiation. Not surprisingly, the light has a geographical association with the region and the ‘Costa de la Luz’ in particular. Whilst the branding of ‘Costa de la Luz’ may have differentiated the coast in times past, consumers are becoming more sophisticated, more reflective and aware of the products they consume. As a result, branding practices have become more complex and multi-layered in an effort to construct and project place meanings to more discerning markets (Pike 2009). In this case study Javier Blanco was well aware of the link between the geographical location of Huelva and the climatic attributes that gave rise to the Light. His intuition also told him that whilst visitors experienced the destination through the prism of their own emotional and psychological characteristics, visitors’ experience of the Light, and the way in which the Light differentiates the products and experiences available in the region, was important to a positive visitor experience.

For Javier Blanco, three key challenges emerged. The first challenge for the branding process was to identify and construct meanings of the light that contemporary tourism consumers would relate to and value; meanings that would have a positive influence on visitor experiences. The second challenge was to promote the development of brand equity – to establish and develop linkages between the resources and assets associated with the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’, in order to add value to tourism in the region. The development of brand equity relies heavily on whether consumers see added value in the light, which in turn influences consumer purchase decisions about travel, accommodation, sightseeing activities, leisure choices and so on. The third challenge was to communicate the value of the light in such a way that it engendered consumer trust and was supported by the community. These three challenges provided the cornerstone for all efforts of the ‘Group of the Light’.

The ‘Group of the Light’ was made up of researchers from diverse fields such as health, biology, physics, geography, history, creative arts, marketing and business strategy. The interdisciplinary nature of the project, together with the lack of previous involvement in tourism as a field of application for researchers in most of these fields,<sup>2</sup> required a clear scheme or guiding vision to connect the diverse research initiatives and contribute to brand development. The steering committee of the Group (Javier Blanco and Alfonso Vargas Sánchez) understood that the

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2 As an anecdote, the first time the head of the physics team was contacted to be part of this group, he asked: ‘Tourism? Do you know that my area of expertise is physics? ... nothing to do with tourism ...?’.



**Figure 9.2** University of Huelva's 'Group of the Light' research themes

branding strategy and its commercialisation needed to link research findings with both product development and marketing strategies. As a result, the group's contribution was to focus on defining the content of the messages that would define Huelva as a destination and all the possibilities this brand 'Huelva, the Light' could evoke. Figure 9.2 shows the lines of investigation that developed, and that continue to provide inspiration for current research. Convened under Javier Blanco's leadership, the multidisciplinary team began working on an integrated project aiming to fortify the tourist brand with contributions from scientific, technical and artistic research.

In Figure 9.2, the research reveals several themes with respect to the light: Huelva the light of health; of life and biodiversity; as a destination with a light of a different quality (for its physical characteristics); as the light of art (in its diverse manifestations); as a light that takes us back to antiquity of its ancient ancestors; and as a light of modernity that projects values, being a land of peace, social harmony and progress. These framings of the light as a feature of the destination penetrate diverse tourist markets in such a way that Huelva could project itself strongly in health tourism (as a destination made healthy by its light, family ambience, relaxed pace tourism); in nature tourism (due to its ecosystems, landscapes, flora and fauna shaped by its light); in active outdoor tourism (which the light makes possible all year round); in cultural tourism (for



**Table 9.3 Summary of research by the Group of the Light**

<b>Field of study</b>	<b>Summary of research results</b>
Marketing and strategy	All the research from each field of study (below) is managed and 'translated' for marketing purposes.
Health	The positive effects of the light on health, in particular, to combat depression, irritability and 'maladies of the soul' (influencing state of mind); the health benefits for children (helps to synthesise vitamin D) and for adults (it is necessary for calcium absorption); its effect on fertility; and also the connection between exposure to natural light and a decrease in the incidence of Alzheimer's disease, a greater impact on cortical activity in the brain, a better quality of sleep and fewer sleep disorders, along with a reduction in jet lag suffered.
Environment (Biology)	The relationship between the light and life and biodiversity; light as a fundamental ecological factor, shaping ecosystems in the province.
Physics, climate, meteorology	The quality of the Light of Huelva, that makes it different objectively, due to the annual number of hours of sun, the number of cloudy days in a year, the number of days with visibility problems, the amount of aerosols or particles suspended in the air (clarity), the number of days with the presence of particles of Saharan dust, etc. Data from the National Meteorological Institute (1971–2000) confirms that the light on the coast of Huelva is ranked highest nationally in the number of clear days for the ten-month period from February to November, and the average number of clear days is the highest in Spain, showing the highest number of hours of sun nationally, between April and September.
Arts and culture	How painting, among other forms of artistic expression, has been capable of vigorously capturing the themes of the light of Huelva. One need only take as an example the famous painting by Joaquín Sorolla 'La pesca del atún en Ayamonte' (1919).
History	The way the light takes us back to antiquity, to its history. A fine example of this relationship is the megalithic monuments across the geography of the province (over 200), dating back to the third century A.C., interpreted as astronomical observatories, with a strong solar symbolism.

*Source:* 'Group of the Light' unpublished reports

its historic and artistic heritage, also closely linked to the light) and with the 'soul' of the light, made possible by the tolerance, openness and solidarity of its people.

The strategic objective of the Group of the Light was to study the light from each of the various disciplines in order to strengthen and develop the sense and meaning of 'Huelva, the Light' as a tourist brand. The Group sought to develop the potential of the brand to enhance commercialisation and to contribute to the evolution of the Light and its embedding in the tourist products of Huelva. The group worked closely with the Provincial Tourism Board, with experts charged

with promoting the brand. On the one hand, this collaboration guaranteed the release and interpretation of the research results directly to tourist agents in the Province. On the other, this approach strengthened the brand and tourist marketing content around 'Huelva, the Light', and improved the credibility of the marketing. In essence, this approach defined the pathway of the Provincial Tourism Board towards achieving greater market differentiation. Table 9.3 summarises concrete examples of research undertaken by the group.

### **Incorporating Knowledge into Branding and Identity Development**

Building a brand image depends on an infinite number of factors, the majority of which are derived from the particular psychology of each consumer. In essence, destination image is completely subjective (Valls 1992), so good branding requires both a deep understanding of how individuals make purchase decisions, and creative thinking about how the light may be used, implicitly and explicitly, to influence consumer choices. To this end, the activities of the Group of the Light were structured in two stages. First, there was a need to identify those market segments with existing and future growth potential, and upon which the brand 'Huelva, the Light' could be based. These included health tourism, nature tourism and cultural tourism. The identification of these segments and their characteristics would reveal messages that would support the positioning of Huelva as a destination differentiated by its light and the environmental, artistic, cultural and health values associated with it. The second stage was to test these possible messages on tourists (current and potential), and to verify their suitability in terms of tourist expectations, motivations and buying criteria. In short, the idea was to develop the knowledge behind the brand. The brand was to have the ability to generate excitement, to stir emotions, strike a sympathetic chord through the real life experience made possible by the light and to arouse a desire to visit. It was also a brand able to add value to the tourist destination, because the idea of the light helps to transmit sensations, experiences and attractive values for a holiday destination.

A number of activities that have taken place have demonstrated the link between the research activities of the group and the development of place identity and branding. The group actively participated in the development and communication of these initiatives. In 2006, an important event took place that demonstrates the relationship between research and the practice of branding and place making. 'Encuentro de la Luz' took place in the small alpine village of Viganella, in the Italian region of Piamonte. In Viganella, the high mountains block out the sunlight during the harsh winter months between November and February. In this event, Huelva gave Viganella 'the Light' by constructing a mirror some 40 square metres and strategically placing it in the mountains above the village. The mirror revolved slowly to reflect the sun's rays on 250 square metres

of the town square from 11 November to 2 February 2006. Javier Blanco strongly supported the initiative, emphasising the importance of national and international media coverage (Provincial Tourism Board of Huelva 2006).<sup>3</sup>

In 2006 another initiative was launched, the 'Route of the Light' (*La Ruta de la Luz: Por los Caminos de la Provincia de Huelva*), a proposal for travellers who want to discover Huelva with a different eye, and who want to know and feel it through independent exploration. In 2007 the inaugural photography contest 'Huelva, the Light' was run with the aim of capturing the light through the art of photography. A large number of resident and non-resident, amateur and professional photographers took part in the competition which was underpinned by two important aims: (1) to capture images of the Province that could be used for marketing and promotional activities, and (2) to promote awareness of the 'Huelva, the Light' marketing campaign amongst the local community, and to create a positive connection between the light, community wellbeing and tourism in the province.

The 'Group of the Light' also contributed to the development of the so-called *Pastillas de la Luz* (Pills of the Light), which resulted in their commercial launch in 2008. Whilst developed as a gimmick, these sweets were created with the intention of tangibly capturing the intangible, so that anyone visiting could take the light of Huelva with them, in the form of strawberry flavoured sweets<sup>4</sup> with which to remember the sweetest moments of their stay in the Province. The box of pills claims:

When affected by tiredness, without motivation and little interest in life, when you need to take a break from your work and get in touch with the world, the Light of Huelva is the best remedy. With the Light of Huelva you can live without fear of the dark, overcome fatigue and illuminate your best moments.

The box for the 'Pills of Light' also comes with an instruction leaflet, just as if they were prescription pills, that explains in a *light-hearted* way the therapeutic properties of the light of Huelva. According to this information, the pills treat 'seasonal affective disorder (SAD)' and are branded with both the Provincial Tourism Board of Huelva and the University of Huelva logos.

### **Impacts on the Visibility and Awareness of 'Huelva, the Light'**

The communication of activities undertaken has allowed, little by little, for the new brand to gain visibility and acceptance, both among tourists and the local

3 More details at: <http://www.turismohuelva.org/viganella.php?sec=30&cat=6>.

4 Huelva is the main producer of strawberries in Europe with a climate (and light) that lends itself to a longer season and a larger fruit than other strawberry-producing regions.

**Table 9.4** Evaluation of the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’

Brand attributes	SUMMER 2007	SUMMER 2008
	(Av. based on scale 1–10)	(Av. Based on scale 1–10)
1. I like the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ for this tourist destination.	7.44	7.89
2. The brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ reflects the characteristics of this destination.	7.33	7.86
3. The brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ suggests to me health tourism.	7.20	6.85
4. The brand ‘Huelva the Light’ suggests to me nature-based tourism.	7.03	6.49
5. The brand ‘Huelva the Light’ suggests to me cultural tourism.	6.67	5.75
6. The brand ‘Huelva the Light’ suggests to me active tourism.	7.13	6.05

*Source:* Vargas Sánchez, A. and Albendín Moya, J.J. (2007, 2008)

community itself. In evidence, 19.1 per cent of those surveyed in the 2008 visitor survey recognised the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ (Vargas Sánchez and Albendín Moya 2008). This result is almost triple that of the previous year. Moreover, 16.8 per cent confirmed that they had known this before their visit. Knowledge of the brand was lower amongst foreign tourists than domestic visitors, reflecting the challenge ahead for marketing the brand.

Table 9.4 shows the results of visitor surveys in 2007 and 2008 that sought to evaluate the success of the brand ‘Huelva, the Light’ (i.e. visitors in the destination). The results reveal that the brand resounds least with cultural tourism, and the profile with the best recognition is health tourism. It is necessary to keep this in mind when directing strategies for penetrating certain segments of the tourist market, showing health tourism as the profile most compatible with the brand image, followed by nature tourism. It should also be underlined that the first two items in Table 9.4 have increased over the period 2007–08.

In addition to exploring the potential of the Light in actual and potential visitor markets, in 2006 and 2008 the Tourist Board entrusted the University of Huelva to explore host community attitudes to tourism in the Province. The last study (Vargas Sánchez et al. 2006/2008) found:

... that a majority of residents now like the brand ‘Huelva the Light’ as opposed to two years ago, 58.6 per cent of those surveyed either agree or completely agree with the brand ... while in 2006 43.4 per cent were in agreement with the slogan launched by the Tourist Board.

**Table 9.5** Types of knowledge constructed, generated, mediated and communicated

Type of knowledge	Specific knowledge manifested in the case
<b>Embrained knowledge</b> – conceptual skills – cognitive abilities – critical thinking	Theoretical knowledge of branding and marketing, destination planning and management Previous practical experiences of the actors (both insiders and outsiders) and the critical understandings derived from these Tourism profile generated from the analysis of published data
<b>Embodied knowledge</b> – action-oriented – practical problem solving	Understandings about how to go about the branding development process (i.e. background research and data requirements, importance of collaboration, political process, etc.)
<b>Encultured knowledge</b> – appreciation of cultural values, beliefs, ideas – socially constructed knowledge	Blanco's cultural awareness of the importance and impact of the light on the destination, its people and how it contributes to the tourism offer Exchange of encultured knowledge – making tacit knowledge of the light explicit (i.e. the outsider, Javier Blanco, drew the light to the attention to the 'insiders' (i.e. researchers and the Patronato de Tourism) Blanco's understanding of political interests and landscapes of power in undertaking the branding exercise Sharing and exchange of knowledge across disciplines amongst the university's 'Group of the Light'
<b>Embedded knowledge</b> – processes – routines – procedures	Data collection and analysis techniques – i.e. development, implementation and analysis of visitor surveys, secondary data analysis Collaborative processes – how to setting up collaborative public–university partnerships Public sector processes – for funding and executing tasks
<b>Encoded knowledge</b> – reports – symbols – actions – events	Reports Marketing campaigns Development of touring routes Special events (e.g. Viganella, Pastillas de la Luz [Pills of the Light])

These two years have also seen an increase in the percentage of residents supporting the brand 'Huelva, the Light' as adequately reflecting the characteristics of the destination. In 2008 resident support had risen to 52.1 per cent while in 2006 only 39.1 per cent agreed that the tourist promotion of the Province of Huelva gave a true reflection of its image.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this chapter was to tell the story of how branding knowledge is constructed, shared and embedded in tourism planning and development processes for the Province of Huelva, Spain. The case study illustrates the complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional forms of knowledge that contribute to understanding a destination's image, its tourism offer and market characteristics. Table 9.5 summarises the different types of knowledge evident within the process of developing the 'Huelva, the Light' brand. However, this knowledge is not static; this knowledge was (and continues to be) constantly updated, discussed, revised and re-engineered to improve understandings about the light itself. From this knowledge, information and new ways of understanding the light can help to refine and improve branding efforts. Importantly, this information also contributes to the professional, personal and political development of those involved who inevitably build a better, more informed understanding about tourism product on offer.

This chapter has sought to better understand the social construction of knowledge in this case of tourism planning and policy. Two observations from this case study are noted. First, this case study illustrates the importance of the context in which the branding knowledge was socially constructed. Whilst certain external conditions provided an opportunity ripe for a branding exercise (e.g. broader trends such as the decline of mass tourism, negative publicity of the impacts of overdevelopment and the direction for the Autonomous Government of Andalucía to promote other forms of tourism), a range of internal 'enabling conditions' were also present. These enabling conditions included the arrival of Javier Blanco, someone possessing both leadership skills and the capacity to develop the range of knowledges (e.g. embrained, embodied, encultured, embedded and encoded) necessary to bring the branding exercise to fruition. Other enabling conditions included the presence of a supportive local university, the presence of a suitably qualified and knowledgeable champion (Alfonso Vargas Sánchez) within the university and a team of researchers with the capacity to explore transdisciplinary questions about the light of Huelva.

Second, these findings support Knorr Cetina's (2007) observations about the importance of networks and epistemic communities that produce and reinforce knowledge. In this case, the community of actors that contributed to generating knowledge about the light of Huelva did not emanate from one discipline, or a singular worldview. However, shared commitment and curiosity about the light provided a strong glue that bound both the political actors (Javier Blanco and his team in the Provincial Tourism Organisation) and the researchers in a common pursuit.

Finally, this case study provides some useful insights into the practice. Firstly, different types of knowledge reside in different stakeholders within a destination, and it is therefore important to identify, acknowledge and build collaborative structures to enhance the contributions that each can make. Second, opportunities to leverage different types of knowledge off each other, to communicate, discuss,

revise and re-engineer knowledge, are important in not only for the substantive issue at hand, for example, branding exercise, but also for professional and personal growth and fulfilment of participants. Third, knowledge resides in people; leadership is an important factor in identifying and leveraging this knowledge. However, further research would help to elucidate the role of leadership in destination knowledge formation and use. Marzano and Scott (2009) have explored power in destination branding, but we believe this line of enquiry could be further enhanced by examining leadership and collaboration.

## Epilogue

In September 2008 Javier Blanco was promoted to the World Tourism Organisation as Executive Director of the Permanent Secretariat of Affiliated Members (previously in 2005 he was designated by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce as a member of the ‘Spanish Tourism Board’). Our many thanks to Sr Blanco for his support in publishing this story.

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# Chapter 10

## The Mekong Tourism Dilemma: Converging Forces, Contesting Values

Polladach Theerapappisit

### Introduction

One of the major difficulties in implementing a community-based approach to tourism planning is the political nature of the planning process (Hall 2000). The complex and stratified nature of many communities has been recognised in studies concerned with local participation in tourism planning in developed countries, but there is still a need to theorise the nature of power, conflict, development and political agency in the context of tourism planning in less developed countries and to consider whether or not there are any similarities and differences. Western scholars generally assume that the community will have a high degree of participation and control over decision-making processes in a community-based planning approach (e.g. Haywood 1988, Arnstein 1969). However, the level of participation may be in the form of tokenism or manipulation, in which decisions or, just as importantly, the directions of decisions, have already been prescribed by government (Hall 2000) or international aid agencies.

Indeed, the notions of local governance and community-based decision-making expressed in such models will need to involve examination of how tourism shapes the economy, society and local political structure of destination communities (Richter 2008, Bianchi 2003). In some circumstances the planning and decision-making processes concerning tourism development, as well as the political structure of local governance, may provide little or no opportunity for local people to reject externally funded infrastructure development plans (Richter 2008, Parnwell 2001). This is usually the case, especially in the less-developed world, where poor people and/or minority ethnic groups have little voice, busy, as they generally are with their day-to-day subsistence in an agricultural society.

This chapter presents local views with folk wisdom and collective experiences from remote villages on development policies and community participation through tourism planning processes in various ethnic communities in the Mekong Region, and in one particular border region in Northern Thailand – the tourism gateway to Myanmar and Laos along the Mekong River. One of the key research methodologies explored in this chapter is the crucial role of storytelling by locals in generating fuller understanding of community attitudes. It investigates how ethnic communities perceive the problems and benefits of local participation in

the tourism planning process, and how inhabitants perceive the various impacts of tourism development.

In particular, problems associated with tourism development in terms of its impacts on ethnic communities including their ways of life, as understood by the local residents involved, are identified. The results suggest that impacts are in part a result of both insufficient and ineffective participation by local residents in tourism planning and development, and that an 'alternative' ethical approach to the overall planning framework is required. This framework needs to be different from 'western' or 'northern' approaches including the 'green paradigm' (Knill 1991). The narratives of the local people in the study areas including their perceptions as well as individual stories and histories are crucial in developing a participatory framework for any tourism planning and policy.

### **Converging Forces: Economic Development Pressures to the Mekong**

In 1992, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries entered into a program of subregional economic cooperation, designed to enhance economic relations among the various member countries (ADB 2008). This program has contributed to the development of infrastructure to enable further development and sharing of the common resource base, and to promote the free flow of goods and people in the subregion (ADB 2008). However, the subregion is predominantly agricultural, especially in remote areas of the Mekong River Basin<sup>1</sup> (Hill 2002). Another feature is that the area of mainland south-east Asia and south-western China is one of the most ethnically complex regions in the world (Aasen 1998). This means that, while it is of great appeal to tourists, tourism developments could have various impacts on the various ethnic communities living in this area.<sup>2</sup>

Tourism in the GMS is expanding at an enormous rate, with visitor arrivals being forecast to be almost 30 million people by 2018 (PCI and TEAM 1998). In 2007, GMS tourism resources attracted about 27 million international tourists representing nearly 3 per cent of the 898 million global tourists travelling between countries (ADB 2008). This significant expansion in tourism development has meant that destination communities in the area have faced problems of determining how they can minimise actual and potential adverse impacts associated with tourism development, whilst improving their quality of life and conserving local resources.

The objective of the GMS tourism program is to foster development of tourism in the GMS by stimulating demand from appropriate high-yielding tourist markets

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1 The Mekong River, the largest river in South-East Asia (Hill 2002), rises in Tibet and flows from south-western China to Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

2 The ethnic groups in this subregion are, for example, tribal people living in the mountainous areas, such as the Karen, Hmong, Lahu, Mien, Akha and Lisu.

(ADB 2008). This has been implemented through a series of joint marketing initiatives, such as the Mekong Tourist Map, and by a publicity campaign entitled the 'Jewels of the Mekong', which promotes the region's natural, historical and cultural attractions (PATA 1996). It is notable that a significant number of Westerners are interested in Buddhism, which is the dominant religion in this region, particularly Thailand, with regular sights and mentions in various sources of the media. The continuing strong influence of Buddhist principles and culture in this subregion has been demonstrated by the images of Buddhist sites and activities such as temples, stupas and monks' activities. Sometimes, these images are related to its philosophy of peace and happiness in the wellness industry, such as meditation practices as often seen in advertising materials promoted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

There are not only contrasting and possibly conflicting goals towards sustainable tourism outcomes, but also a wide range of interpretations of how these goals should be defined in relation to ethnic communities in the GMS. How to appropriately recognise people's rights and values and the importance of cooperation and collaboration amongst stakeholders are issues that must be considered by policy makers and people living in these local communities affected by tourism development outcomes.

For the GMS governments themselves, the main driving force behind economic cooperation with respect to tourism development has been a desire to increase national income by increasing the number of tourists. The ADB mid-term review of the GMS Strategic Projects for Implementation in 2006–2010 reports on 29 projects listed in the tourism sector strategy (ADB 2005). The budgets estimated for the categories of marketing and infrastructure development projects totalled US\$245 million, while human resource development, heritage conservation, social impact management, pro-poor tourism and public–private partnership programs altogether were estimated to reach a total cost of US\$55 million. Despite many years of continuing investments from the ADB in common human resource development activities for improving capacities in the GMS tourism sector, the current asymmetric distribution of benefits and costs in the sector remains a challenge including the setting up of a mechanism that allows for fair distribution of costs across countries (ADB 2008). The question is thus whether the lower budget in enhancing social and environmental capital would be effectively sufficient for conserving all important local resources and necessary human skills training. The improvements of social and environmental capital should not be compromised with the priority in implementations, particularly where developments are being invested in remote communities of the region.

The unified approach to promoting tourism in the GMS must also be questioned. The regional context is being shaped by a wide range of historical and contemporary forces (Diokno and Chinh 2006). Partly as a consequence of relative peace, but owing also to various other global and regional drivers, there is an increasing transnational regionalism, with a surge in regional connections that are led either by the state, business or civil society (Kaosa-ard and Dore 2003).



Nevertheless, countries in the GMS have experienced varying rates of growth and the relative lack of political stability in some member countries may slow down the progress and full benefits of GMS economic cooperation (Krongkaew 2004). This means that different forms of tourism development will be sometimes more and sometimes less suitable for different countries and societies and their development needs and objectives (Sharpley and Telfer 2002). The concept of 'the Mekong' as a region requires critical analysis because many fundamental questions remain about what it connotes, in terms of its complex entity and various roles, and not just its geographical elements, but also its cultural and social dimensions (Diokno and Chinh 2006). Above all, the people who live in the area, with their distinct identities, culture and a history that has alternated between peace and conflict, must be fully engaged with planning and development processes.

The differing rates of growth, and therefore needs, are generally ignored, since most government policies in the subregion have focused on large-scale economic development programs, such as physical infrastructure, business opportunities and marketing (ADB 2008, NESDB 1999, TISTR 1999). For example, a high-priority investment budget for proposed road and railway projects has been allocated for promoting transportation networks. Similarly, the Mekong River navigation project aims to improve international trade and tourism by widening the navigation channel of the river (Pinyorat 2003). While these large-scale projects could be the catalyst for creating smaller projects and economic growth in general, the question is where and how governments should intervene in such high-impact infrastructure developments and services.

What is more, of the six countries in the GMS, only Thailand has had long exposure to international market forces (ADB 2008, PCI and TEAM 1998). The other five countries are at various economic stages, from socialistic command economies to market economies, and therefore the mindset of their political leaders, and policy implementation in each of these countries with regard to future domestic development and international cooperation and investment, is not uniform (Diokno and Chinh 2006). A further regional problem may be the ADB's lack of transparency in policy making for GMS development. Cornford and Simon (2001) point out that the ADB's meetings are open only to donor countries, and that it conducts country level operations where it is rare that anything but token public input and participation occurs.

In the GMS subregion, there are intergovernmental agencies to expand the role of tourism initiatives, such as the annual Mekong Tourism Forums and co-marketing regional campaigns and tour programmes (TAT n.d.). The most northern province of Thailand, Chiang Rai, was selected by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) as one of the five subregional tourism 'jewels' of the GMS countries for further promotion of tourism marketing as a 'Five Chiangs' project (TISTR 1999). Chiang Rai was forecasted to grow in tourist numbers from 1.1 million people in 2001 to 2.4 million by 2018 (PCI and TEAM 1998), and was designated as the first priority destination for GMS tourism development (TISTR 1999).

Based on a literature review and the preliminary findings of an initial archival analysis, document review, interviews and participant observation, two contrasting cases with differing planning approaches in Chiang Rai Province were selected. One case displayed a top-down planning approach proposing tourism developments from the international organisations, the government and the tourism industry. The other case displayed a bottom-up approach with tourism development initiated by local communities and the non-government organisation.

### *The Top-down Approach Case*

Had-Bai village, a unique Tai-Lue ethnic weaving community along the Mekong River, is represented for this case because it is the only Thai village chosen by the TAT for the GMS village-based tourism project proposed in the ADB report (PCI and TEAM 1998). It is in Chiang Khong District and was settled in approximately 1945. During the field study, it had 309 households, totalling 1,285 people. The primary source of income for the community is agriculture. The sale of Tai-Lue weaving products adds to household earnings. The natural and agricultural landscape surrounding the village creates a pleasant setting. There are walking trails that connect the community to other nearby villages. Had-Bai's location on the Mekong River adds to the beauty of the community. Traditional Tai-Lue weaving is currently the main tourist attraction in the community. There are three private shops that sell woven fabrics and other products including long skirts, shirts and small bags together with a newer community centre that displays and sells those products at the time of a follow-up field visit in 2006. Most of the weaving is done during the non-agricultural season (February to July).

The warmth and friendliness of the villagers provides an accommodating, pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. With only five family names within the village, family closeness is also valued adding a certain charm to the community and with family ties going back for generations. There are several significant tourism attractions in the region such as the Golden Triangle, Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong, which is the gateway to Lao PDR. Because Had-Bai is located along the Mekong River between these sites, it can potentially benefit from the growth in regional tourism. Many village residents would like to see further tourism development in their community by increasing income through the sale of food, beverages and traditional Tai-Lue textiles. TAT and District Office allocated a budget for future development of tourism infrastructure and services such as a port, roads, streetscapes and a local museum.

### *The Bottom-up Approach Case*

Jalae Village and surrounding villages in Mae Yao sub-district embody a 'bottom-up' policy approach to tourism planning, initiated by local people in co-operation with a non-government organisation (NGO) – the Mirror Cultural Arts Centre (MCAC). It is an initiative project deriving from a local community

with a different perspective on tourism development. The MCAC, as a local non-profit organisation, started by introducing social activities in 1991 using drama and camping as the main activities to promote learning among children and the community. At present, the MCAC has started a number of community development projects in Mae Yao sub-district, Muang district in Chiang Rai province. This area comprises 14 villages in the mountainous surroundings, with 50 clusters of households. Within these 12,000 hill-tribe people, there are Akha, Lahu and Karen. Local people in Jalae village needed and had a willingness to develop the project of village-based tourism with support in administrative and management skills from staff at the MCAC.

This case study area is linked to the frontier between Myanmar and Thailand and has been the route of drug trafficking. As hill-tribe people used to smoke opium as a part of their culture, drugs have been accepted easily and propagated widely (Lewis and Lewis 1998). The dangerous drugs include heroin and amphetamines. There is a distance between hill-tribe people and government officers both geographically and culturally (McCaskill 1997). From initial observations and informal talk with local people in this case study area, the villagers find government regulations complicated, and there is also corruption in the system. These conditions lead to other problems such as the right to own land and also to a drug problem (McCaskill 1997). It is therefore questionable if tourism initiatives could be an alternative community development outcome to resolve the planning challenge while these current socio-economic and political disadvantages persist.

### **Conflicting Values: Problems and Benefits in Tourism Development**

Goals for community-based tourism and desirable participatory planning outcomes require the direct support and active involvement of host communities (see Beeton 2006, Hall 2000, Richards and Hall 2000, Pearce 1995). This is because positive tourism experiences can be possible only with the goodwill and cooperation of local people, who are an integral part of the tourism product (Murphy 1985). However, research on resident attitudes indicates that opinions on tourism and associated development can vary greatly due to a variety of causes (Jamal and Getz 1995).

Problems can range from simple misleading communication to complex issues of local conflicts and external intervention. Lack of ownership, capital, skills, knowledge and resources all constrain the ability of communities to fully control their participation in tourism development (Scheyvens 2003). Community members may lack interest because a tourism development may be presented in too abstract terms, encouraging people to be disengaged, although they may be more willing to become involved if presented with purposeful and specific opportunities (Selman 2004). Based on the interviews with local people and participant observations, it seems that internal conflicts, apart from a general unwillingness to participate,

might arise, for example, from commitment to daily agricultural work or conflicting work schedules and the demands of the family's businesses.

In many cases, local participation in tourism planning is not necessarily a simple decision-making process involving only local residents living within a community. When there is external control, community cohesion and cooperation can be eroded, and practices such as unproductive competition and individualism may develop in place of a traditional emphasis on group welfare (Theerapappisit 2008). For example, the influential top-level government officials who own various scales of tourism businesses could lead to corruption in power balance and thus demoralisation for those local businesses competing with the same or similar tourism products and/or services (Richter 2008, Diokno and Chinh 2006). Therefore, as Theerapappisit (2008) suggests, the processes for achieving possible alternative collaborative approaches to resolving or minimising conflicts between interest groups can take time especially in finding appropriate (non-western) ethical planning frameworks for the GMS.

In the Mekong region, tourism development is too heavily driven and controlled by commercial interests in environmentally and culturally sensitive areas (Parnwell 2001). The ADB's GMS tourism strategy centres on the exploitation of the subregion's 'untapped' rich cultural heritage and diverse natural geography by both creating and tapping into niche ecotourism and adventure tourism markets dominated by discerning and relatively high-spending travellers (Parnwell 2001). In addition, the literature identifies the following relevant significant issues:

1. The need to balance the needs and wants of consuming tourists with the desires and vulnerabilities of people who act as hosts, when choosing strategies and tactics for tourism development (Pleumarom 2002, Walle 1998).
2. The problem of 'scale' is fundamental to the successful application of the principles of sustainable development (e.g. Sharpley and Telfer 2002, Hall and Lew 1998). It has been suggested that the linkage between tourism and geography, in the sense of place, scale and spatial circumstance, should be considered in guiding planning and decision making for community-based tourism development (Richard and Hall 2000, Hall and Lew 1998).
3. There are a variety of different goals and objectives with respect to the development and management of sensitive tourism attractions (Ashworth 1997). There are many actual and potential conflicts of values and interests in differing policy objectives amongst the various key tourism stakeholders such as international organisations, central/local governments, private sector businesses, NGOs, social/religious organisations and 'host' communities (see case studies in Richter 2008).

The main research questions are two-fold: first, what are the perceptions of ethnic communities about tourism development and how do their stories relate to tourism development impacts? Second, is there a role for storytelling by target groups of

the community in revealing underlying attitudes and concerns of local residents about tourism development? In particular, does this human capital resource shed light on attitudes under differing planning policy approaches?

*Exploring the Dilemmas on the Ground: Views on Impacts and Participation*

Fieldwork<sup>3</sup> was conducted during 2000–2006 using a combination of research methods in order to determine the various views of different groups of local people. This included analysis of policy documents, interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions and a questionnaire in the two case study villages. The main benefit from this integrated, mixed methods approach is to gain comprehensive views based upon different sources of data collection. The following lists are the main approaches used to collect data respectively:

1. Semi-formulated questionnaires with local residents in the area to explore local needs for tourism, by means of random surveys in each case study. This also assisted in modifying some questions to be asked in the focus groups.
2. Focus group meetings with local representatives in each interest group including the head of each section in village committees, women, youth and elder groups. The results led to specific in-depth questions to be followed up with particular informants.
3. In-depth interviews with key policy makers and various tourism stakeholders' representatives after getting key insight data from the focus groups.
4. Participant observation and informal interviews with local residents, related government officials as well as visitors in the study villages. This method can be done at any chosen appropriate times, places and events. It is here that the technique of encouraging storytelling was found to be likely to yield the most information.

The comparative sample size of local respondents is shown in Table 10.1. The sample size for the interviews, focus groups and questionnaire depended on the availability of participants in each case study area. A random sampling approach was used to gather data from a cross-section of the local populations. A snowball sampling technique was used to select respondents who would have at least some knowledge about relevant tourism development projects in the villages and who had previously participated in community activities. The focus group meetings covered a range of issues, with the three significant categories being the local identification of existing tourism resources, the perception of

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3 Human Ethical Application for this research had been approved by the University of Melbourne in 1999. As part of that application the research was required to de-identify individual persons so far as practicable in the reporting of data and this has been done.

**Table 10.1 Data comparison of the two case studies**

Case study	Village names	Total households	Number of questionnaire respondents	Participants in focus group meetings
Top-down	Had-Bai	309	79 (26 %)	36
Bottom-up	Jalae	59	41 (70 %)	35

existing positive and negative impacts in developing tourism practices, and the needs for future tourism development. The number in each case study depended upon the availability and willingness of people to take part. However, in both cases there was a mix of genders and age groups.

For the in-depth interview in both case studies, the 17 interviewees included four groups:

1. Central Government Officials (five persons).
2. Local Government Officials (five persons).
3. Local NGOs (two persons).
4. Local Private Sector (five persons).

In addition to these ‘policy maker’ interviews, there were a number of informal interviews with village heads and committees as well as children who participated in the picture-making storytelling. The approximate numbers of informal interviews in Had-Bai and Jalae villages cannot be precisely recorded given differences of perceptions as to whether or not a conversation and interaction with a local person constituted an ‘interview’ or not. But subject to that, the numbers were approximately 30 in Had-Bai and 35 in Jalae, in the latter case counting both interviews with the MCAC personnel and with local villagers.

These informal talks and observations were an effort to gather information and storytelling at the individual level that could not be obtained through more formal discussions. For example, talking with local residents while going about their daily activities was often useful to gain understanding and insights into the full picture of local community life and interactions. There were also a number of times with ‘off the record’ talks after formal in-depth interviews were concluded when sensitive issues were mentioned. Such informal interactions were also used to help identify respondents for the questionnaire beyond the structured questions asked. Once people felt comfortable they started to freely voice their thoughts in response to the questions asked, which ranged from both very direct to more indirect questions. Data was recorded by taking notes, if not recorded, as soon as possible on site.

Open-ended data was content analysed under the four main themes of economic, environmental, sociocultural and personal concerns. Patterns of meaning identified through content analysis are only descriptive, not explanatory, in nature as it can only describe the content and/or structure of the

communication, not answer why it is in the form it is (Krippendorff 1980). It can, however, identify and compare issues that can then be explored in more depth using other methods. In this study, two professionally trained recent graduates in urban design and engineering examined the source data and coded the materials using the researcher's coding categories in order to test the reliability of the researcher's original coding.

The result was an average 80 per cent inter-rating reliability (i.e. agreement between the initial coding and the test coding). The agreement ranged from 71 per cent to 92 per cent with the most mistakes in coding (6–12 per cent) in 'environmental' aspects in both cases. This result is understandable as there are built environments related to tourism activities that can overlap with economic aspects and cultural environments that can overlap with sociocultural aspects. Although this small percentage of errors is considered in this research as not affecting the validity of the overall results, there is a need to seriously consider this concern in similar future studies.

A survey questionnaire was also conducted. The aim of the survey questionnaire was to understand the factors associated with local participation in planning processes within the context of existing tourism development policy approaches. The semi-structured survey dealt with the various issues related to local participation, in particular the extent to which it has been found to be meaningful through storytelling by local informants in the open-ended questions. In both case studies, the researcher lived in each village for one-month and afterwards kept in touch with key informants via email and by other forms of communication including a return visit in 2006. It is also clear from the review that the perceptions of local residents in ethnic destination communities vary considerably, and that there is always the possibility of conflict, as shown in the reviews of case studies presented in the following section.

Content analysis method was again used to analyse the data. Three main types of data were collected: written policies, attitudes of tourism policy makers and perceptions of local ethnic communities. Data was categorised into four main aspects. The first three aspects were initially suggested by Smith (2001), Jamieson (2001) and other authors, while the personal aspects were derived from the concepts suggested by Payutto (1995) and Wilson (1991). The four main aspects were:

1. Economic aspects. Issues relating to concerns about the sources of development funding for tourism activities, facilities and services, economic development outcomes relative to the tourism industry such as employment or income generated from tourism development/investment programs and business opportunities.
2. Environmental aspects: Issues/concerns relating to ecological systems, including physical/constructed/natural environments and infrastructure, land, landscape, streetscape, parks, green/open space, recreation areas, human settlements, traffic, air, noise, waste and water.



3. Sociocultural aspects (at societal/community level): Issues/concerns relating to local communities such as their senses of cultural identity and diversity, indigenous culture, customs, traditions, festivals, social or communication networks, social justice, civil society, community empowerment and political influences/relationships.
4. Personal aspects (at individual level): Issues/concerns relating to individual knowledge/wisdom, personal feelings, willingness to participate and ethical principles/mindsets.

The research also incorporated one key technique in which storytelling through picture drawing and in oral explanation of the picture gleaned significant insights to local culture and value. The role of storytelling was fundamental to this part of the research. The contents of pictures drawn by children in the villages are based on their interpretations, and the researcher then took into account their oral presentations discussing what and why they drew such images. Major and minor elements represented in each picture were analysed according to scale, composition of elements, human figures depicted, and the lines and colours used. Concepts derived from each child's expression were also content analysed to help understand features not readily apparent by looking at the paintings themselves. Images in the pictures that contained tourist facilities, activities and services were categorised under economic aspects. Elements of the natural and built environment, such as mountains, rivers, rice fields, houses and village scenery, were categorised under environmental concerns. Cultural resources, such as cloth weaving, Buddhist temples, and social traditions/customs were coded into socio-cultural aspects. There were also some elements that seem to express intangible values such as love, friendship and sense of place or community that were coded under the 'personal aspects' category.

### **Findings of Conflicting Views: Stories about the Problems and Benefits**

Apart from the empirical methods mentioned above which focused on storytelling, secondary data in the form of reports, local newspapers, travel brochures, postcards and public relations materials were obtained from several sources, including national, regional and local governmental agencies. Photography was used to document local tourism attractions, facilities and activities and to record development impacts during events. Local newspapers in both the Thai and English languages provided the most up-to-date information and stories on current relevant issues.

#### *Top-down Policy Approach: Had-Bai Village*

The results from interviews with various groups of local residents showed that they did not understand the potential negative impacts of tourism development

This piece of my weaving took about three months to finish because of its detailed unique patterns. The shop owner agreed to pay me 700 Baht per piece for my labour because she gave me the raw material to weave. I do not know how much she would charge for the sale price. What I know is I got a total wage of only around 200 Baht for each month and she promised to give me the rest when she had sufficient money. I had to remind her many times to be able to get the total amount agreed for my actual work. I also tried to ask for an extra 50 Baht every few years because of my time spent on weaving and the consequent effects on my health. Unfortunately, she refused and told me that she could not afford to pay more otherwise it would affect the sale price which is already high and may also affect the number of orders from her customers. She also demanded that I not ask any more for wage increases, otherwise she would give the order to someone else.



The researcher was sold a similar piece of weaving made by this old lady with a sale price of 2,500 Baht. That similar item was promoted by the shop owner as being of the highest quality and woven by the person who had received an award from Queen Sirikit for her weaving. The shop owner also claimed that the item was a 'unique' example of the Tai-Lue pattern and extremely difficult to weave, with a long backlist of orders. All these claims seemed designed to hide the true identity of the actual creator and to minimise her return on providing the cloth.

### **Figure 10.1 Interview with the oldest weaver at Had-Bai village**

*Source:* Fieldwork in December 2000

on the natural environment and the social structures of their community. As the TAT with no consistent local consultation process initiated this project, there are lessons to be learnt through the tourism practices in Had-Bai. For example, the crucial points that emerged were the potential loss of local wisdom of the unique pattern of Tai-Lue weaving in future generations, tension among the local weaving shops, and conflicts of interest among different groups in the public and private sectors, caused by the attitude changes of local residents.

An interview with a 62-year-old woman (see Figure 10.1), who is the most respected and skilled weaver in the village, recognised by the Queen's award at a national textile product competition, revealed that she received only one-quarter of the total sales price from the shop owner. Unfortunately, recognition of the award was to the shop owner, not for the weaver. The weaving patterns were spontaneously created from her own memory and her wisdom of Tai-Lue culture,

such as the abstract figures of animals seen in the villages created onto the cloth with unique patterns.

With this unique weaving style, Had-Bai village has become a popular source of Tai-Lue textile products. Although this lady did not mind the award recognition, she complained about her income compared to her effort as described in Figure 10.1. Some villagers mentioned that this particular shop owner sometimes asked Laotian people on the opposite side of the river to provide less expensive woven products and misleadingly told the customers that they had been produced in Had-Bai village. It was also observed that there were conflicts between the three shops in the village that compete with each other in selling textiles. For example, one shop would cut their prices or give a commission to the tour guides based on the actual purchase price paid by the tourists. Questions about social conflicts, the authenticity of tourism products and ethical issues were discussed by two shop owners but were not openly talked about by the general community because most people wished to retain strong and affable relations between themselves.

An additional finding from participant observation of tourism activities in the village and surrounding areas is that village-based tourism management is a delicate and complex process. While it can yield significant benefits in terms of skill development, improved quality of life and diversification of the local economy, when it is improperly managed community environmental, cultural and social integrity may be degraded in terms of physical waste and disturbed social fabric. The questionnaires surveyed with Had-Bai residents show that more than 90 per cent of them either agree or strongly agree that there is a need for more local consultation in tourism projects developed within the village. Since local participation has not been actively practised in this top-down study village, the principles of participatory planning at the local level should provide a structure for addressing these challenges, which appear to already have been applied in the bottom-up study village. It is thus important that the community is well informed and residents can give their voices to reflect the complexities of what tourism development impacts might affect their everyday life.

From the results of interviews, some community members saw tourism as an opportunity to encourage their children to learn English. Others felt that tourism has been a chance to share their culture. An issue that needs to be confronted is how income created by the tourism industry can be shared fairly to reduce poverty and make a healthier community. The principles of participatory planning at the local level should provide a structure for addressing these challenges. Weaver and Lawton (2010) and Mowforth and Munt (2003) suggest that people may need an intermediate body, such as a local NGO, to help them understand issues of global impact and how they might address these issues. Inadequate English language training was often mentioned by school principals as a significant barrier to delivering high quality tourist experiences because only a few students in the village could communicate in English – the common language used by foreign tourists. Most English lessons focused on grammar, reading and vocabulary rather than writing and conversation skills. Local women expressed an interest in learning

spoken English and diversification of their weaving skills as the best ways to sell more products. Unfortunately, there were no public authorities offering such training in the village.

### *Bottom-up Policy Approach: Jalae Village*

From interviewing and living with the team of the assisting NGO-MCAC, it was learned that their strategies for Jalae village are to build up a strong community and to create an environment that fosters growth and learning for local residents rather than to promote village-based tourism at the initial stage. This will be done through various activities with children such as the Youth Leaders Program for building quality tour guides, to implant the seeds of constructive and positive learning for the young generations to care more for the community environments and to develop a long-term vision.

Another project related to tourism activities is to invite the visitors to be exposed to living conditions of host communities and become involved in the learning processes of children development activities. It has been quite a successful project in terms of the numbers of people involved, around 20 volunteers each month, of people with various backgrounds. In addition, several volunteers have been recruited from overseas (e.g. Japan, Singapore and Europe) for specific community development projects. Learning activities include playing, creating arts, talking, swimming, experiencing rice farming, gardening, cloth weaving, tour guiding, cleaning the surroundings, cooking, eating and living together. It should be noted that the strength of the MCAC has been the use of the Internet through the website [www.bannok.com](http://www.bannok.com), as a media source for activity promotion, raising awareness and funding for rural development. As a result, the tourism operation could be run by the MCAC. Host villagers earned 25 times more than what they previously got from external tour operators (see Table 10.2).

Over the last 30 years, the currents of change have led to a collapse of the indigenous cultures of people living in highland/mountainous areas. From initial

**Table 10.2 Income comparison between tour operators and the MCAC**

Income items	Income paid to host villagers (Baht)	
	Paid by external tour operators*	Paid by MCAC**
Accommodation (home-stay owner)		50 x 2 = 100
Housekeeping tasks	20 x 2 = 40	300
Cooking (two meals per day)		50 x 6 = 300
Local guide	—	150 x 2 = 300
Total income	40	1,000 (77% of tour cost)

Source: \* Fieldwork in January 20 \*\* Email communication in January 2003

Note: AU\$1 = Thai Baht 28 approx.

participant observation, their traditional lifestyle has been disrupted because young people prefer to dress like lowland people. They are shy to wear indigenous dress. Traditional musical instruments have disappeared. Cultural traditions have been affected to varying degrees depending on the extent of local people coming into contact with Thai people in the major cities and/or being involved with foreign visitors and tourists. According to field observations and interviews, these impacts may have led to a critical loss of self-confidence and pride and created serious cultural disorientation.

The storytelling by elderly people of their life experiences in the village confirmed that there was an attitudinal change amongst young tribal people over the last 30 years leading to decreasing pride in their indigenous culture and loss of self-confidence. Young people no longer wear indigenous dress except at special village festivals or for ceremonies. Traditional musical instruments have also disappeared because Christian missionaries told them that they should not perform their own rituals and ceremonies of which the instruments were an integral part. From this storytelling, it emerged that the pattern of traditional lifestyle had been disrupted by modern media influences such as television programs, movies, music, magazines and the Internet. It was pointed out that these external influences might be resulting in hill-tribe teenagers feeling disconnected from their own physical and cultural environments and their religions and traditional rituals.

One of the reasons for cultural crisis found in the field is that local representatives of all ages concentrated upon the local contexts of natural and cultural attractions in their villages as economic assets for the future of tourism. These perceptions are in contradiction with the planning approaches desired by top-level policy makers, namely to develop tourism resources with measurable economic outcomes rather than focusing on 'processes' and 'contents' in preserving or conserving local heritage resources. According to the results of focus groups, interviews and participant observations in the field, personal aspects reflect the importance of a long-term planning framework for future generations such as multidisciplinary education and skills training in the areas of good governance in local participation and communication.

In order to build strong and healthy families and supportive social environments, the MCAC team developed a policy of working together with the village committees and local representatives to build strategies for community planning and tourism development. Diverse styles of local handicrafts were promoted at local shops and via a website ([www.ebannok.com](http://www.ebannok.com)). These styles included cloth weaving of tribal-style bags, hill-tribe shirts, skirts, home decorations, necklaces and clay whistles. Based on the record of the MCAC, skills such as these could generate income for hill-tribe women who made those handicraft products and were not taking drugs, or were trying to give them up.

The distribution of profits was organised according to a coding system to identify the villagers who produced particular products. Each producer would get a 30 per cent share of the sale price after passing a quality control procedure and a further 40 per cent of the total sale price when products were sold. Thirty

per cent of the profit was used for administrative and operational costs. Villagers also organised a system of rotation of host houses for tourists to ensure equal distribution.

It was found that a main impact on tourism was the relocation of Jalae village from state-owned highland forest preservation land to a lowland plain area as a result of the Thailand Community Forest Bill in 1999.<sup>4</sup> This is because the new location has basic problems needing future attention such as lack of shade from trees and loss of unique traditional-style houses. In addition, the new location needed a garbage collection system, and informative signage and town maps. The MCAC team fought for increased budgets from both local government agencies and overseas aid organisations at the same time as promoting community development and environmental conservation programs.

Despite evidences of cultural degradation in the local villages as mentioned above, there have been some cultural improvements partly due to tourism. Women were observed to have a higher degree of influence than men in maintaining traditional costumes and cultural performances at village festivals and ceremonies.

There is a hill-tribe youth network composed of 14 village representatives in all 14 villages of the Mae Yao sub-district, some of whom used to be drug addicts. They had been trained in computer skills and given English and Thai lessons by lowland Thai youths at the MCAC. The main goals of these activities were to develop leadership skills, to encourage active roles as tour guides, to build relationships between these groups and to eliminate cultural misconceptions. In order to build a sense of pride for the local communities, the making of traditional handicrafts, such as weaving and bamboo work, was encouraged. Children often spontaneously exchanged their ideas, knowledge and experiences at a home-stay and with tourist trekkers.

### *Discussion and Interpretations of Conflicts in the Local Context*

There is often a large gap between the tourism development goals desired by policy makers and those of local residents in the villages. The major finding was that policy priorities desired by government officials were to develop tourism resources with measurable economic 'outcomes' rather than focusing on 'processes' and 'contents' in preserving or conserving local heritage resources. On the contrary,

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4 The Community Forestry Bill of 1999 was passed to rehabilitate degraded reserved forest lands, especially in national parks, and people were no longer permitted to live in state-owned preservation areas. Thailand's laws governing national parks, which were enacted in the early 1960s, assumed that human use and nature preservation were incompatible, and are therefore particularly strict on habitat protection. However, their enforcement has often been applied against local villagers seeking to use the resources to which they previously had access rather than against rich and influential entrepreneurs (Jantakad and Gilmour 1999).



local residents expressed their views with a more 'holistic' approach to the villages covering mixed stories of economic, environmental, sociocultural and personal concerns through the processes of planning and development.

The overall findings from the 'bottom-up' approach suggest somewhat stronger support for the role of intermediate agents (i.e. MCAC as an intermediate NGO) in tourism planning and more positive impacts of tourism development than was apparent in the case of the 'top-down' approach in Had-Bai village. Common to both case studies, though to different degrees, was firstly the emphasis of villagers on conserving landscape and cultural integrity, while wishing for future modern development and, secondly, a lack of consistent support from local government structures in developing efficient learning processes aimed at meaningful community involvement in the tourism planning process.

The findings of this research show that conflicts of interest are a fundamental problem in the tourism planning process. There is obviously a need to alleviate these conflicts of interest, and varying forms and degrees of 'tokenism' with regard to local people's participation in the planning process. The causes of this problem appear to be two-fold: the absence of an established system of local participation in the planning process and hence of local input, and a related lack of understanding by planners of the need to actively train and inform local people for participation, to genuinely empower them, rather than just pay lip-service to the notion and thereby to practise tokenism. Had-Bai villagers clearly want economic development and are in favour of some modern developments (for example, a cultural centre and a port), but they also want a voice, and they recognise that they need the training to have that voice. The dangers are a loss of social cohesion because of unequal distribution of the economic gains of tourism, and a loss of traditional values unless there is local participation, particularly a voice for women. Women are, ironically, the producers of the Tai-Lue weaving, the product that assists in the tourist appeal of the place.

The situation was different in the bottom-up case of Jalae village and its surrounding villages. There the only real conflicts were between the NGO and the local drug mafia, and with those tour operators and other commercial interests who found themselves losing profits as a result of the community-based development initiatives. There are still very complex social issues and problems of human rights in the area, and they may affect the tourism project. But if the government does pay more attention to these issues the tourism project could be beneficial. The social problems in the area, and in many other hill-tribe places, are beyond the power of the local communities to deal with.

The results in the focus groups could be limited by the fact that the most voiceless in the community (e.g. women and youth) would not fully participate with spontaneous expressions. As it happened, the women in Had-Bai village (top-down) were more represented (40 per cent) since they were the weavers and responsible for the main product for the tourists. The young people were strongly represented (about 10 per cent) in Jalae village (bottom-up), where the NGO made



a point of involving them in the planning, particularly in the web-based marketing project.

A great deal of the most revealing information and storytelling was in fact obtained in informal interviews, both with key players in the villages (leaders, NGOs) and ordinary villagers, and by participating in and observing the activities of the various villages. For example, a foreign volunteer working in Jalae village pointed out during the casual talk that while the villagers perceived that hill-tribe festivals and events might be what most visitors expect to experience in the village, the visitors themselves would prefer to engage with local villagers in genuine traditional ways of life and not necessarily being offered staged performances available just for them. With this expectation in mind, it can create two-way learning experiences for hosts and guests rather than just the one-way presentations offered by the host communities. While Cohen (2004) found that the women in a unique ethnic village could become a standard attraction for tourist excursions, he raises the issue of hill-tribe people mostly playing a passive role in otherwise contrived situations created and managed by outsiders against their will. This is clearly most likely to occur where there is no local involvement in tourism development planning.

In addition to research techniques communicating with men and women in the villages, the stories from projective picture making show that underlying aspirations of the villagers could be clearly revealed through the eyes of the children. These village kids can reflect what they would dream about their villages through various elements of cultural environments in the pictures. They were only informal talks at the end of painting sessions when they told their versions of stories, both unconsciously and consciously, and when the researcher indirectly asked about concepts and rationales of those elements, compositions and colours in the pictures.

It is argued here that there are many more elements of value-laden terms such as degrees of human integrity, attitude, spirit, ethics, friendship, happiness, sense of place or comfort, aesthetics and so on, that are unmeasurable in terms of numeric values, but are essentially normative fundamentals for discussion among multi-level stakeholders. This perception is best established by careful listening and documenting the local narratives of those involved in tourism activities and by checking so far as possible their objective veracity. They could effectively determine the trade-off systems towards or away from development progress. Moral and integrated approaches to development might help reconcile the conflicts (e.g. Wilson 1991, Payutto 1995), as evidenced in applications of the MCAC's projects in the case of the bottom-up approach (see examples on its website: [www.mirrorartgroup.org/web/projects/index.htm](http://www.mirrorartgroup.org/web/projects/index.htm)).

Smith and Duffy (2003) argue that if tourism is all about the egoistic satisfaction of those paying for the privilege, ethics should play a part. The root of the modern critique of tourism is to see the relationship between people and nature as brittle. At the same time, a debate has developed about the human culture – natural environment interaction between the tourism experience. One side of this debate

encourages a concept of 'New Moral Tourism' (Butcher 2003). Sofield (2003) also supports the presence of equity principles and social justice in balancing power relations, and thus the introduction of ethical considerations (what is 'right', what is 'wrong', what is 'good', what is 'bad').

One of the main questions derived from this research is how to resolve the conflicts of interests through a participatory planning process. Should local people in the host communities get actively involved in the political contexts? Although many researchers (e.g. Nuryanti 1997, WTO 1993, Coccossis and Nijkamp 1995, Hall and Lew 1998) have discussed various aspects of sustainable tourism development, most of the criteria that have been suggested for implementing the concept are limited. Their focus has been on economic, environmental and institutional factors. There has been not nearly so much attention paid to political and ethical factors requiring in-depth analysis of narratives behind the scenes. Despite this, because of the diversity of values within communities, including the GMS countries, what is appropriate to achieve sustainable tourism development must be determined equitably, and this means that a relevant system of guiding ethical principles must be consciously brought to bear in the expansion of this industry. The quotation below manifests an emerging sense of cultural crisis towards tourism development in the Mekong countries.

To what extent can tourism be encouraged and developed without destroying the very essence of what tourists have come to experience and see? The host communities should not have their culture and unique environment totally submerged in the trivia of western civilisation, or even under some of the worst aspects of modern Asian lifestyles ... (PATA 2000: 10).

To assist in avoiding the potential problems of conflict, dislocation and cultural and environmental degradation identified earlier, the implementation of sustainable tourism development depends on achieving the optimum level of support of the people affected by tourism through power relations involving their governments, their social institutions and their private activities (e.g. Pleumarom 2002, Roseland 2000, Ryan 2002, Stabler 1997). The research findings summarised earlier confirmed the general points that to minimise conflicts of interests and to ensure real local participation in tourism planning and development processes, *ethics* is the crucial 'input' factor affecting people's responses to how tourism practices should be developed.

In relation to such concerns, the issue of ethics and its crucial role in planning tourism in the light of the complexities of the 'sustainability' concept has been increasingly addressed in the literature (Fennell and Malloy 2007, Dredge and Jenkins 2007, Fennell 2006, Jamal 2004, Smith and Duffy 2003, Mowforth and Munt 2003 and Hall 2000), but a review of literature on tourism and ethics has yielded little in the way of non-Western ethical decision-making systems. For this reason the author has been pursuing the prospect of the application of Buddhist ethics as a planning tool to minimise conflicts in the Mekong region

(Theerapappisit 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009). It is a proposal that is worthy of further investigation, particularly in the context of the Mekong region (Fennell and Malloy 2007, Fennell 2006), since most people in this part of the world would have an understanding from their common Buddhist traditions that human conflict and self-interest is the human norm that can be overcome by employing shared values of Buddhist ethics (Loy 2003, Silva 2002, 1998, Tucker and Williams 1997). Basic moral codes of Buddhism represent a common ground of core values for people in this subregion who are involved in the processes towards sustainable development.

Tourism planners and practitioners may have to explore a new development ethic particularly directed towards fair or 'just' tourism (Fennell and Przeclawski 2003, Sharpley and Telfer 2002, Sharpley 2000, Hultsman 1995). Wasi (1994) described the strong link between the concept of sustainable development and Buddhist ethics as intrinsic harmony between humankind and the Law of Nature (*Dharma* in Buddhist discourse). Figure 10.2 shows an alternative Buddhist model towards Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) applied from Wasi's holistic model of integration between physical, social and mental aspects.

Despite there being diverse religious/spiritual values in the region including animism for hill-tribe communities, Keown (2001a and b) suggested that only Buddhism can see man as a being with both a spiritual and a material side to his

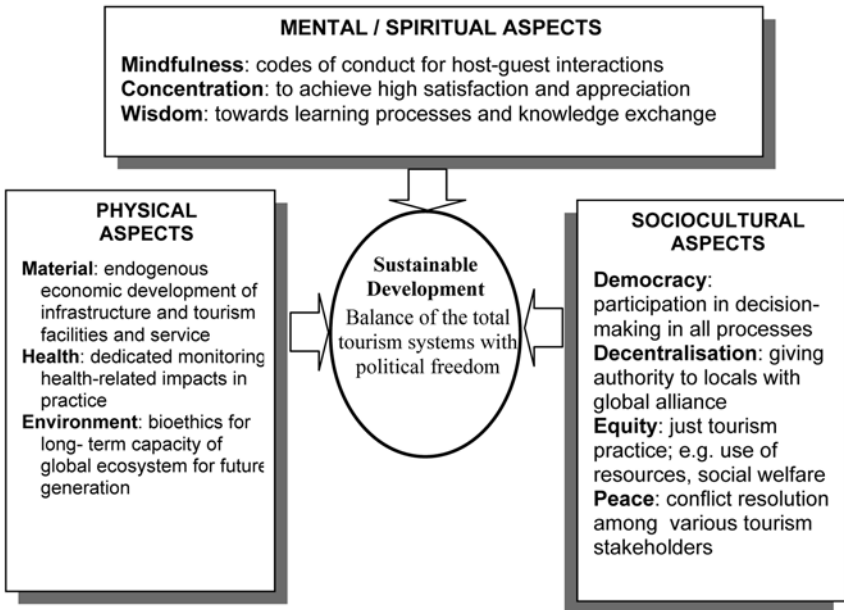


Figure 10.2 Buddhist conceptual model of sustainable tourism development

nature. In trying to bring about balance of the whole system of local resources, there must always be communication with local people to ensure awareness in all three aspects of physical, sociocultural and mental/spiritual dimensions (see Figure 10.2). The future changes of tourism development in Mekong communities can then possibly become more equitable, fair and participatory, leading to sustainable and desirable outcomes.

Mekong culture can be gleaned from the thousands of Buddhist pagodas and monasteries that stretch from the snow-covered heights of the Tibetan Plateau to the vast tropical rice fields in villages downstream, hence the Mekong being called the 'River of Buddhism' (Diokno and Chinh 2006). Buddhism has arguably exerted the strongest overarching influence over many centuries on the cultures of the peoples of the Mekong, regardless of whether they are Thai, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, Burmese or Chinese (Diokno and Chinh 2006). In the field, most pictures drawn by children at Had-Bai Village, when asked about its village identity, were focused on the Mekong River with agricultural scenery, Tai-Lue weaving culture and traditional costumes as well as images of the Buddhist temple and/or stupa. These images have strong links to cultural traditions, especially evidential when they orally presented their ideas from the pictures.

This research of two case studies shows the significance of the first-hand stories voiced from diverse groups of local residents, including women and children. These different ways of storytelling can bring about a much greater understanding of local contexts including history and traditional ways of life. In this way, issues in local identity can be discussed as a means towards better future planning, particularly in tourism in which the unique identity with meaningful stories of the communities visited are needed as a part of its attraction.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter concludes that insufficient and ineffective participation in tourism planning and conflicts of interest among tourism stakeholders, in particular between policy makers and local residents, are deeply embedded as problems in the case study areas of ethnic communities in Northern Thailand. Obstacles at the planning stage could result in detrimental effects on the community and there must be a continuous exchange of all information between all parties to navigate the uncertainties and ambiguities of policy problems (e.g. Dredge and Jenkins 2007, Sharpley and Telfer 2002, Watt, Higgins and Kendrick 2000). These problems need to be addressed with a new ethical framework in tourism planning and development for Thailand, and indeed for the subregion. Tourism in the Mekong riparian nations will not be a positive force unless the multi-level bodies have the wisdom to embrace or incorporate the values of local ethnic communities.

According to the research findings in both case studies, it is vital that all stakeholders at the local level should be involved at the beginning stage of development plans. This concept of participatory tourism planning needs to be

initially developed from the grassroots to global levels by incorporating local wisdom/knowledge, culture and needs through alternative future scenarios of global tourism impacts/transformation. Continuity of pride in host communities, as a result of community participation, should help maintain a sense of community and 'cultural diversity' in tourist destinations.

Most importantly, proper training, consistent education systems and efficient communication networks are needed for the local host communities to enhance a better understanding of which of their diverse heritage resources could be developed into tourism attractions and how to plan and manage with development impacts towards future desirable outcomes. These studies of different policy approaches indicate emerging ethical problems that similar potential areas of community-based tourism will need to face in the Mekong region. Buddhist ethics may serve as a developmental code of conduct to bring disparate groups together with less conflict (Theerapappisit 2008).

The Mekong region is more than the Mekong River, and more than the Mekong basin (Kaosa-ard and Dore 2003). Tourism planning professionals have to determine their roles in preventing situations that could create the causes of conflicts over different groups of tourism development stakeholders. Sociocultural mobilisation at the local level with the objective of balancing various problems and benefits for 'common interests' should be an obligation for all relevant stakeholders in tourism planning (Theerapappisit 2003). More importantly, balance must be consistent throughout the future development processes. It essentially requires the right blend of local wisdom, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, commitments, and political and social ethics to mitigate what could become a more serious cultural and moral crisis of the Mekong region in the near future.

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## Chapter 11

# A Participatory Approach to Planning Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS): A Case Study from Northeast Iceland

John S. Hull and Edward H. Huijbens

### Introduction

Tourism is recognized by government policy makers as a tool for supporting regional development (Hall, Muller and Saarinen 2009, Hull and Blanchard 2008, Dredge and Jenkins 2007). For many regions in the Northern Periphery, the challenges of regional development include a lack of effective political and economic control, increased transportation and communication costs, high economic leakage, out-migration, poor information flows and a lack of innovation. Tourism is acknowledged as having the potential to provide alternative development options that offer new business and employment opportunities, as well as income and investment, to assist these regions in adjusting to the effects of global economic and social restructuring (Hall and Boyd 2005, Botterill, Owen, Emanuel, Foster and Gale 2000, Brown and Hall 2000).

Over the last three decades, increasing globalisation has led to a shift in many Western societies towards planning and policy development, promoting a new form of regionalism. This new regionalism incorporates less centralized, top-down policies and adopts more decentralized and inclusive approaches focused on collaboration among businesses, government and other interests to achieve positive outcomes to enhance quality of life (Dredge and Jenkins 2007, Smyth, Reddel and Jones 2005, Thompson and Pforr 2005). The result has been greater emphasis on market solutions and successful innovation and less reliance on government to solve economic and social problems associated with development (Hall et al. 2009, Lindvall and Rothstein 2006).

Successful innovation takes place in social, cultural, economic, institutional and regulatory environments through a knowledge transfer process (Hjalager, Huijbens, Bjork, Nordin, Flagestad and Knutsson 2008). Lundvall (2005: 13) argues that 'firms, knowledge institutions, and people do seldom innovate alone and innovation emanates from cumulative processes of interactive learning and searching'. In the context of tourism, the increasing growth of the industry requires that regions innovate continuously to maintain their competitiveness in a global industry that has had an average growth rate of 6 per cent over the last five

years (UNWTO 2008). This requires systems that support collaborative action to promote the development, diffusion and use of new ideas and technologies, as well as marketable products and processes to foster more sustainable forms of tourism (Aarsaether 2006).

The purpose of this chapter is to document the efforts of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) in Northeast Iceland to promote tourism innovation through a participatory approach to strategic planning using geographic information systems (PAGIS) as part of their mandate to define a five-year vision for sustainable tourism:

The principal idea of PAGIS is to integrate local knowledge, such as values, emotions and perceptions of a place that have been gathered in participatory mapping exercises, into GIS. This local knowledge includes the narratives of local people and reflects the diverse range of opinions of particular places in the community (Hasse and Milne 2005: 277).

The section following this introduction will summarize the recent literature on tourism planning and innovation in peripheral regions in the Arctic with specific emphasis on the increasing importance of community consultation, collaboration, networks and clusters as a means to sustain the geographical character of a destination. The third section then presents the methodological approach in the context of the strategic planning process for tourism over the last three years. The fourth section will then provide a summary of policies at the macro-level that provide a context for understanding the state of tourism in Iceland and the national programs linked to regional growth agreements that are supporting tourism planning in the country. The fifth section will then provide a micro-level analysis to understand the role of key stakeholders in driving the strategic planning process and the importance of partnership and cooperation that has helped to identify new product and service opportunities for the region. Finally the outcomes of the strategic planning process will be evaluated in the context of the present characteristics of Nordic tourism innovation systems to evaluate the effectiveness of capacity building in fostering more sustainable forms of tourism in Northeast Iceland.

### **Planning and Innovation in Peripheral Regions**

Tourism policy makers argue that there are few strong theories to guide the sustainable development and management of tourism in peripheral regions (Cooper and Hall 2008, Hall and Boyd 2005, Hall and Jenkins 1998). With the recent growth of the Nordic tourism market (Hall and Page 2006, Hall, Müller and Saarinen 2009), new services and products are emerging through collaborative and interactive processes aimed at enhancing destination competitiveness, economic success and employment opportunities through innovation (Hjalager et al. 2008).

These processes are an outgrowth of the sustainability approach to tourism planning that emerged from the sustainable development paradigm of the 1980s (Cooper and Hall 2008, Hall 2008). This approach argues that:

... sustainability is an integrative approach that brings together socio-cultural, environmental and economic planning methods. This situation requires careful management and new sets of planning skills that allow for multi-disciplinary problem setting as well as new sets of institutional arrangements (Cooper and Hall 2008: 202).

This approach is often part of the mandate of regional planning and development agencies (Cooper and Hall 2008).

Since the 1990s, there has been a theoretical shift in tourism planning and policy making influenced by: the growing awareness of planners as brokers of change; the role of planners as individuals who bring critical understanding to a complex and dynamic industry; and the identification and participation of multiple publics in community planning and consultation (Dredge and Jenkins 2007, Murphy and Murphy 2004). This shift has impacted sustainable planning strategies requiring that they be more integrated, cooperative and strategic in bringing stakeholders together for effective analysis, development of clear goals and objectives, evaluation, monitoring and implementation (Cooper and Hall 2008). This collective approach to solving problems is aimed at building social capital and community capacity to foster more sustainable forms of tourism development (Murphy and Murphy 2004). Building community capacity is identified as a critical element for successful tourism development in peripheral regions (Moscardo 2008).

Putnam (2000) argues that community capacity for effective governance is directly related to the strength of its social capital – the web of cooperative relationships built on trust. In an increasingly globalized world, there is a need for collaboration across networks to find solutions to difficult complex problems over the long-term (Weber, Lovrich and Gaffney 2007, Dredge and Jenkins 2007, Hudson 2004).

Social capital's principles of teamwork and networking build competitive advantages for tourism destinations which often results in the formation of clusters. Clusters are industrial concentrations that incorporate organisational and social features to support an integrated approach to destination marketing, product development, research, training and services (Murphy and Murphy 2004, Jackson and Murphy 2002, Porter 1998). An integrated planning approach assists in distributing benefits and costs more equitably, improving relations and understanding between stakeholders, clarifying goals and objectives, and improving evaluation and monitoring that results in greater acceptance of and support for an exchange of ideas and innovation (Cooper and Hall 2008, Hall 2008, Dredge and Jenkins 2007). It is within this theoretical context that the case of Northeast Iceland is based.



## **Methodology and Work Schedule**

The research team assigned to write the five-year strategic tourism plan for Northeast Iceland adopted a case study approach using mixed methods. Strategic planning supports planning and policy processes. It is based on a vision that combines understanding of past, current and future circumstances and that anticipates the interests and agendas of various actors (Dredge and Jenkins 2007). Regional studies are often designed as individual case studies with the objective of describing and interpreting a specific situation or forces underlying a regional change process. In addition, case studies attempt to answer the how and why questions about a contemporary set of events and have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Yin 2003, Jennings 2001). A case study approach is also advantageous when conducting in-depth research, when the research is grounded in a social setting, when there are opportunities for participants to verify the accuracy of the evidence, and when using multiple methods to assess a given phenomenon to validate findings (Cresswell and Cresswell 2005).

The research was conducted as part of a five-phase work schedule that provided numerous opportunities for input and feedback from local residents (see Table 11.1).

In the first phase commencing in 2007, the contract agreement was finalized between the research team and the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA. At the first meeting, the work responsibilities of the team and agency staff were assigned, and an initial public awareness and media campaign was launched on radio, on the agency website, and in the local newspapers to heighten awareness of the project regionally and nationally.

In the second phase a resource inventory was conducted in cooperation with local residents, university experts, and local businesses to analyze the current state of affairs of tourism in the region. Identification of resource assets with targeted members of the community assisted in the data gathering and in offering a multidisciplinary approach to tourism management (Jafari 1990, Murphy and Murphy 2004). A compilation of resource assets and needs is a critical first step in developing new tourism products (Fennell 2002). These data were then mapped

**Table 11.1 Work schedule in five phases**

- 
1. Launching project.
  2. Conduct primary and secondary research. Map assets and services. Draft state of affairs document.
  3. Consult with stakeholders. Conduct focus group sessions and in-depth interviews.
  4. Compile, synthesize, and analyze information. Provide agency feedback.
  5. Draft strategic tourism plan. Conduct public consultations and presentations.
- 

*Source:* Hull et al. 2008a

using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to present a visual representation of tourism resources in the area (see Figure 11.1).

Primary data was collected on the natural and cultural heritage of the region. In addition, a visitor survey provided important demographic and psychographic information on tourists that included data on origin, gender, age, mode of

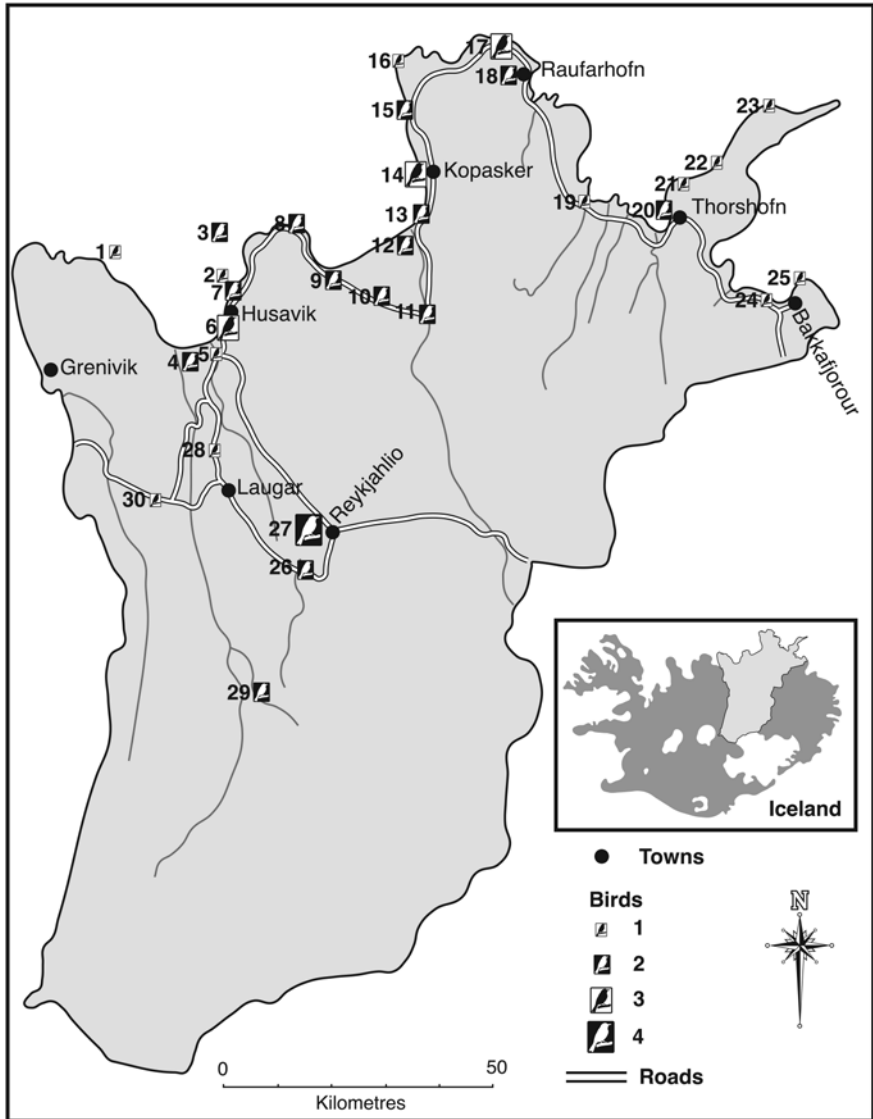


Figure 11.1 Birdwatching map of Northeast Iceland

transport, frequency of and length of stay, activities of interest, pre-trip planning tools, accommodation choice and levels of satisfaction. Secondary data from government documents, tourism reports, web-based research, books, journals, newspapers and promotional materials assisted in summarizing the natural and socio-economic environment, socio-economic conditions, transport and access, history of tourism planning as well as the current market demand, and existing products and services of the area. Over 60 maps were generated based on the gathered data to establish a baseline for tourism planning that were compiled into a State of Affairs document presented to the RDA and local population (Hull, Patterson, Huijbens and Milne 2008a). The purpose of the mapping exercise was to assist in the documentation of sites and services to understand the social and physical setting within which the production of tourism services are occurring and as a means to inform critical thinking and decision-making (Murphy and Murphy 2004, Hanna and Del Casino 2003, Urry 1990) as part of Phase 3 of the work schedule (see Table 11.1).

During Phase 3, the Iceland Tourism Research Centre staff conducted a series of seven focus group sessions attended by 46 local residents to solicit feedback regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing tourism development in the region using a sustainable tourism framework developed by Inskip (1988 and 1991). This framework required that the following dimensions be considered: tourism attractions and activities, accommodation; other tourism services; institutional elements; other infrastructure; and transport. These dimensions were to be examined in terms of both international and domestic market characteristics and the interests of the local community.

Members of the consulting team worked with the RDA to generate a list of key stakeholders to participate in the focus group sessions. Key stakeholders were contacted by phone and email. At the focus group sessions, facilitators presented the mapping results from the State of Affairs document as part of a PowerPoint presentation. Participants were then asked to comment on the accuracy of the data summarized on the maps. The maps also provided a basis for conducting a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of tourism in the region to solicit feedback for writing the strategic plan. Information from the focus group sessions was then compiled into meeting minutes.

The purpose of the focus groups was to listen to the views and local knowledge of stakeholders directly involved in the industry (Bramwell and Lane 2000) and to gather their recommendations on the future direction for tourism. Once the focus groups were completed, a Masters student from the University of Iceland conducted follow-up in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 key stakeholders to verify the results of the public consultations and to further identify key opportunities and needs for the tourism industry (Hull et al. 2008b). Key stakeholders randomly selected from throughout the region were asked for their opinions on the present regional marketing and product development efforts, levels of public financial assistance, availability of education and training opportunities, quality of access and infrastructure, and the effects of

**Table 11.2 Objectives of the strategic plan**

- 
- Generate increased visitation and expenditures
  - Increase length of stay
  - Create jobs for local residents
  - Generate economic activity through product development
  - Stimulate investment
  - Provide quality products and services linked to the region's unique selling points
  - Optimize marketing opportunities targeted at niche markets
  - Preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the region
- 

Source: Hull et al. 2008b

government regulations on the tourism industry. Members from the RDA team then summarized and translated the interviews using an Excel spreadsheet to analyse and integrate the results into the strategic planning process.

In Phase 4, the information from the visitor surveys, focus groups, and the in-depth interviews, along with the information from the State of Affairs document served as a basis for writing the Strategic Tourism Plan focused on identifying the present gaps, weaknesses and challenges for the tourism industry in the region and to prioritize the goals and objectives of the strategic plan (Murphy and Murphy 2004). A presentation to the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA Board of Directors provided the opportunity to solicit recommendations and feedback in preparation for drafting the strategy document and to finalize the objectives of the plan that are summarized in Table 11.2.

In order to achieve these outcomes, an overall vision for tourism was drafted for the region to build consensus, and to provide a direction and insight into the desired results based on the principles of geotourism – tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the wellbeing of its residents (National Geographic Society 2009, Hull et al. 2008b, McKercher 1998) (see Table 11.3). By adopting *National Geographic's* definition of geotourism, the region's tourism stakeholders hoped that the link would provide the region with opportunities: to gain international recognition, assistance and legitimacy for tourism planning; to initiate a process of adopting *National Geographic's* sustainable tourism charter; and also to provide access to an important international target market group.

The resulting vision for tourism in Northeast Iceland is:

Northeast Iceland will develop in the coming five years a tourism industry focused on its strengths – natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreational opportunities – to offer a series of quality, theme-based products targeted at appropriate niche markets. Promotion and marketing will use networking with the travel trade and media along with optimized web-based marketing to build a new brand for the region that will embrace the concept of geotourism.

Development will proceed through public/private partnerships where theme-based packages are organized into clusters of activities to promote visitation throughout the entire region. Adopting sustainable practices that protect the natural and cultural heritage and way of life in the region is a priority (Hull et al. 2008b).

This vision was supported by a strategic planning approach integrating complementary and coordinated programs for marketing and promotion, product development, support services and sectors, education and training, and access and infrastructure development acknowledging that all must occur simultaneously to help build a quality product throughout the region to support and reinforce the sustainable tourism framework (Hull et al. 2008b, Inskeep 1991).

The strategy supports the notion that a successful tourism destination involves clustering the many interrelated components of the sector and that building a sustainable industry starts with well-thought-out planning and a clear vision supported by local residents. The next section summarizes the national context that is supporting new local governance for tourism planning and policy formulation in Northeast Iceland.

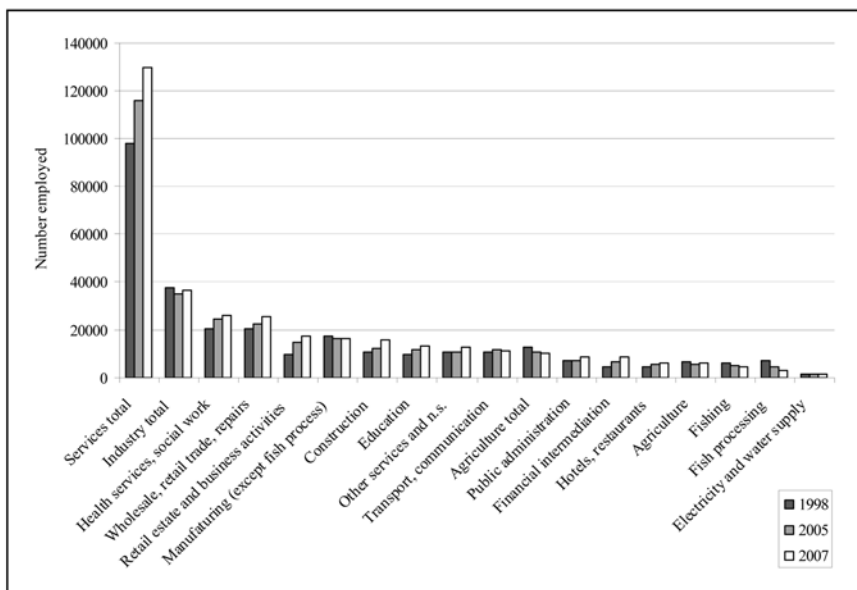
## **Macro-level Policies: Economy, Growth Agreements and Clusters**

### *Icelandic Economy*

In January 2009, Iceland's economy collapsed as a result of the global credit crisis when the three country's banks defaulted on \$62 billion in foreign debt, dwarfing the country's GDP of \$14 billion (Amadeo 2009). As household debt doubled and inflation climbed to 14 per cent, the prime minister announced that it is time for Icelanders to fall back on the resources of land and sea (Forelle 2008).

Historically Iceland has been dependent on the fishing industry. This reliance continues with the industry providing almost 70 per cent export income, however, it only employs around 6 per cent of the workforce. Over the past decade, the economy has diversified into the service and manufacturing industries (see Figure 11.2). Services and areas related to information technology and life sciences are the fastest-growing sectors of economy. Iceland also has a strong industrial sector accounting for 21 per cent of its GDP (Icelandic Government Information Centre 2009).

Iceland's services sector accounts for approximately two-thirds of GDP, and has been rapidly increasing since the 1990s, particularly in the areas of tourism, software production, and biotechnology. Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in Iceland (Jóhannesson, Huijbens and Sharpley 2010). In 2006 total tourist receipts were measured at 47 billion ISK, contributing 5.1 per cent to the



**Figure 11.2** Iceland's employment by sector

nation's GDP and providing 12.7 per cent of the country's income from foreign sources, and employing 6,900. Tourism receipts from international visitors in 2005, estimated at 40 billion ISK, represent a 31 per cent increase from the year 2000 making it one of the largest foreign currency earners for the Icelandic economy (Icelandic Government Information Centre 2009).

Visitation to Iceland has increased by an average annual rate of 7.2 per cent over the last decade. In 2005, there were a total of 369,500 visitors to Iceland with over 95 per cent arriving by air through Keflavik Airport; 8,100 through the Seydisfjordur seaport; and 5,000 through other airports and seaports. An additional 56,000 guests arrived in Iceland by cruise ship<sup>1</sup> (ITB 2005).

International tourist arrival statistics from 2005 indicate that the largest geographic markets for Iceland originate from Nordic Nations (95,007), the United Kingdom (58,217), the USA/Canada (57,697), Germany (38,981) and France (20,621). Over 50 per cent of visitors receive their information on Iceland from the Internet with approximately 32 per cent obtaining information from brochures and guidebooks (ITB 2005).

High season extends from June to September with occupancy rates at approximately 65 per cent during the four months. The average stay of visitors is 10.4 nights in the summer and five nights in winter with the majority of overnight stays in Reykjavik, the South, and the North in high season (ITB 2005).

1 The most recent departure survey of visitors to Iceland was conducted in 2005.

A profile of overseas travellers to Iceland from 2005 focused on gender, age, occupation and income revealed that there is slightly more men than women visiting (54 to 45 per cent) with the average age of visitors at approximately 42 years. Occupational status data indicated that the majority of visitors are professionally trained (36 per cent), in managerial positions (18 per cent), or in the teaching or medical care fields (13 per cent). Household income levels tended to be average or above average to the general population in the respondent's own country.

International respondents revealed that the majority of people travel independently (60 per cent), on holiday (80 per cent) and to enjoy the unique nature of Iceland (65 per cent). Other reasons for visiting include culture/history (25 per cent), low airfares (15 per cent), and visiting friends and relatives (12 per cent) (Sæþórsdóttir 2010). When in Iceland, the main leisure activities include nature observation (72 per cent), swimming (60 per cent), and shopping (55 per cent) (ITB 2005).

With the depreciation of Icelandic króna in the last six months of 2009, the tourism sector has been identified as an important growth sector as visitation to the island increases as a result of the favourable exchange rates (Jóhannesson and Huijbens 2010). The Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism (MIET) and the Icelandic Regional Development Institute (IRDI), through regional growth agreements are promoting cluster development outside the capital region of Reykjavík. Regional development agencies such as the Þingeyjarsýsla Regional Development Agency have taken advantage of this program to promote and develop tourism (ITB 2009, Forelle 2008).

### *Regional Growth Policies in Iceland*

Over the last three decades, growth policies in Iceland have focused on rural regions outside of Reykjavík and have advocated a cluster approach to regional development to stem out-migration and diversify regional economies. In the 1970s, the central government initiated nationwide regional growth policies, primarily sector-based with two of these revolving around developing freezing plants and boosting agriculture. The third, and most notable one, was on developing stern trawler fisheries. In them, and through actions taken based upon them, all regions were to develop 'in the same way'. Public funds were diverted into all these efforts, the last especially. The result of this investment led to a short period of net out-migration from the capital region during the mid-1970s. But this was a mere temporary halt in the continual in-migration to the capital region, which soon picked up pace again in the early 1980s (Jóhannesson and Huijbens 2010).

In 1992, the first comprehensive nationwide regional development policy was initiated through the IRDI, the Byggðastofnun, with a directive from the prime minister. The policy plan, however, only included a discussion and analysis of service areas around the country. From 2002–05, the cluster discussion gained momentum again with the Akureyri region in northern Iceland being selected by



the MIET as a growth centre. In the spring of 2004, clusters in four specific fields were established – education and research, health, tourism and food innovation. This was the first growth agreement in Iceland negotiated with one of the eight regional development agencies. Soon the Innovation Centre of Iceland, under the auspices of the MIET, was promoting regional growth agreement policies in the rural regions of Iceland (Jóhannesson and Huijbens 2010). A Regional Development Plan 2006–09 (Thors 2006) was developed with three central tenets:

- To ensure that regional centers are strengthened and at the same time find ways to support regions with reduced population sizes.
- To enable regions to adjust to rapid changes in society.
- To strengthen the economy, education, culture and social equality in regions outside the metropolitan area.

At the same time as the Regional Development Plan was being written, a new Tourism Act was passed in 2005 (ITB 2009) to support the Icelandic Tourism Board's mandate to embrace sustainability as its central driving force with the guiding principles of:

- Icelandic culture.
- Environmental protection.
- Professionalism.
- Safeguarding of consumer interests.

Additionally under this Act, a ten-year Tourism Strategy 2006–15 (ITB 2009) was developed and approved by the Alþingi. There are three main pillars to the strategy:

- Nature.
- Culture.
- Professionalism.

The Tourism Strategy (ITB 2009) was based on achieving four goals:

- The operating conditions created for the tourism industry shall be comparable to those reigning in Iceland's competitor countries.
- Iceland shall be in the forefront of environment-friendly tourism.
- The build-up of national parks shall be followed up with the promotion of tourism that integrates outdoor activities and nature conservation.
- The responsibility of travellers and tourism companies with regard to environmental affairs shall be increased.

The eight objectives of the plan are outlined in Table 11.3.

**Table 11.3 Iceland Strategic Tourism Plan objectives 2006–2015**

- Generate increased visitation and expenditures
- Increase length of stay
- Create jobs for local residents
- Generate economic activity through product development
- Stimulate investment
- Provide quality products and services linked to the region's unique selling points
- Optimize marketing opportunities targeted at niche markets
- Preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

*Source:* Hull et al. 2008b

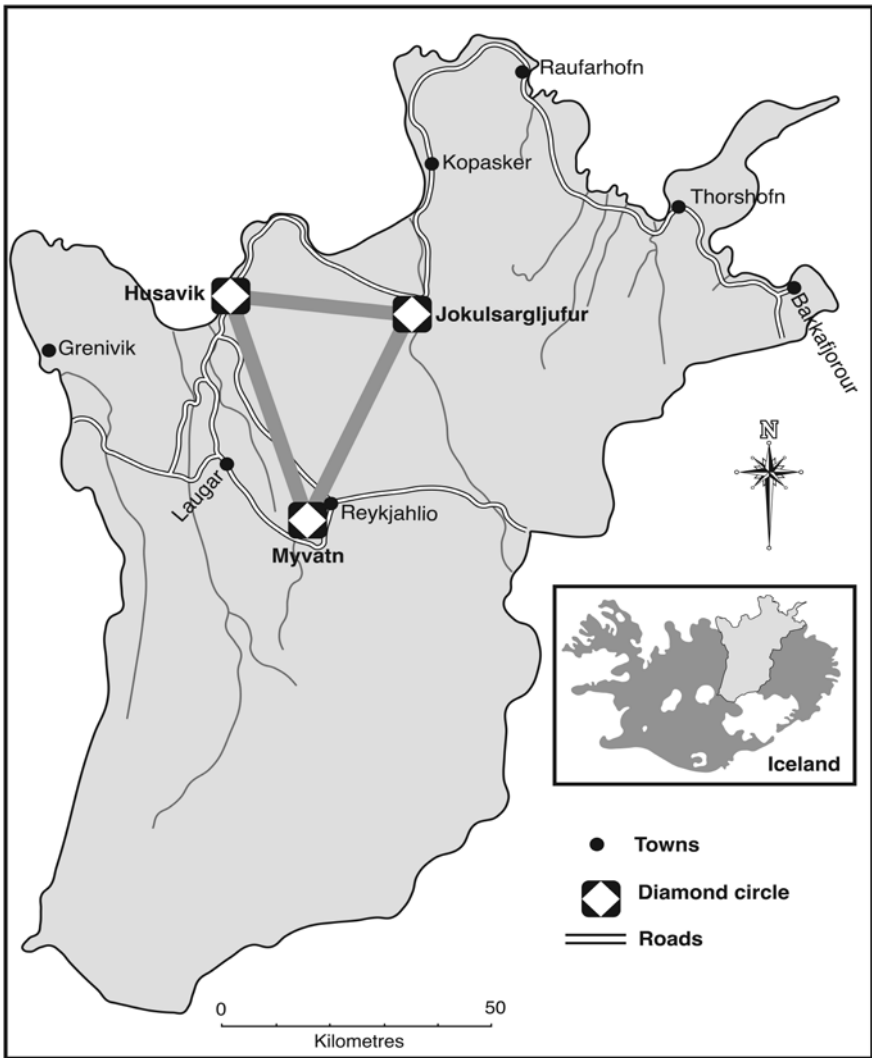
In 2008, the MIET signed a three-year growth agreement with the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA in Northeast Iceland. This agreement has funded research on living conditions, local food and a series of tourism projects including the strategic tourism plan, in an effort to grow the tourism sector in the region (Reynisson 2009).

### **Micro-level Policies: Visitor Profile and Strategic Planning**

Þingeyjarsýsla in Northeast Iceland is Iceland's largest administrative district with a land area of approximately 18,439 square kilometres. There is a population of 5,000 people within the Þingeyjarsýsla district – 2,400 of these from the town of Húsavík (Statistics Iceland 2008). As a region, the study area contains seven municipalities – Aðaldælahreppur, Þingeyjarsveit, Langanesbyggð, Norðurþing, Grýtubakkahreppur, Skútustaðahreppur and Svalbarðshreppur – which are divided into five tourism regions (Atthing 2009).

In 2005, domestic visitors to Northeast Iceland totalled approximately 100,000 with approximately 39,000 visitors staying an average of 4.4 nights. The demographic profile of the Icelandic visitors indicates slightly more male than female visitors. In terms of age, there is a fairly even distribution across most age groups. The majority of domestic tourists originate from North Iceland (most likely Akureyri, the largest city in the North just outside the study area) and East Iceland. In general, there are more day-trippers than overnight visitors (Gudmundsson 2008).

In the summer of 2007 approximately 116,000 foreign tourists (not including cruise ships) visited Þingeyjarsýsla region, with 81,000 staying overnight for a total of 190,000 total overnight stays, averaging 1.5 nights. The ratio of male to female suggests most travellers are couples. The region also welcomes a slightly older age of visitor that travels in groups. The majority of international travellers



**Figure 11.3** The Diamond Circle attractions

are overnight guests with a significant number of overnight visitors from Southern Europe, Benelux and Central Europe (Gudmundsson 2008).

The most popular destinations for foreign visitors include the anchor attractions at Lake Mývatn (90,000), Dettifoss (73,000) and Húsavík (71,000) often referred to as The Diamond Circle (see Figure 11.3). Visitor surveys identify the best features of Northeast Iceland as the nature/landscape (43 per cent), whale watching (15 per cent) and Lake Mývatn (11 per cent). Weather (36 per cent),

bad roads (16 per cent) and high prices (11 per cent) account for three of the top weaknesses of the region (Gudmundsson 2008).

For many peripheral regions undergoing economic restructuring, such as Þingeyjarsýsla, there are efforts underway to define new visions for development that are linked to enjoying the pristine nature of these areas by providing a diversity of recreational opportunities. As a result, public investment is targeted at developing infrastructure for tourism to increase accessibility and to provide people from urban centres a place to relax and recreate (Muller and Jansson 2007, Turner and Ash 1975, Christaller 1966). The next section outlines the strategic planning efforts of Northeast Iceland over the last three decades to illustrate the importance of tourism development to the region and the participation of local stakeholders in the planning process.

### *Strategic Planning*

Regional tourism planning in Northeast Iceland can be divided into three main time periods: Early Programming (1980–2001), Project-based Development (2002–2006) and Collaborative Planning (2007 to present) (Jóhannesson 2009).

#### *Early Programming*

During the late twentieth century, tourism was of secondary importance in Northeast Iceland with fishing and farming the mainstays of the local economy. During this period, attractions in Húsavík and Mývatn were organised. The first whale watching trips were offered in Húsavík as part of summer wildlife viewing offerings and a number of companies such as the Hotel Húsavík offered limited winter packages and programs, mainly for domestic markets. In Lake Mývatn, hotel and restaurant services were developed by private entrepreneurs (Jóhannesson 2009).

### **Project-based Development**

From 2002 to 2006, tourism increased in importance as traditional resource-based sectors declined as a result of deindustrialisation. This period reflects rapid growth in international visitation with the expansion of the whale watching industry, the opening of Mývatn Nature Baths and the growth of Northeast Iceland as the second most visited destination in Iceland after the Capital Region. New marketing efforts led by the North Iceland Marketing Association and the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA led to new websites and branding focused on the Pearls of Nature, the Diamond Circle and Visitnortheast Iceland (Atthing 2009).

During this four-year period the RDA became involved in a number of international tourism projects that focused on winter tourism, coastal culture, local foods and tourism innovation (GEBRIS 2009, Hull and Palsson 2009, NORCE

2009, Snow Magic 2009). Infrastructure development for tourism also grew with the expansion of visitor services and infrastructure linked to the National Park (roads, interpretation centre), the Yule Lads in Mývatn (Winter Advent Festival), and the port at Húsavík (harbour-front expansion). Support services (accommodation, transportation, restaurants/cafes, art and crafts, etc.) and new products and experiences emphasized offering higher quality services to respond to the demands of the marketplace.

### **Collaborative Planning**

In 2007, the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA commissioned a five-year strategic plan to provide an overall framework for continuing the project-based development from 2002–06. The tourism plan was meant to provide a more coordinated and collaborative approach to development based on an inventory of resources, public consultations, education and training, and a defined vision with goals and objectives. The plan was also to act as an organising force for the industry to maximize investment in market-ready products to keep the region competitive in the international marketplace and promote more sustainable forms of development (Jóhannesson 2009).

The results from the focus groups and in-depth interviews reveal that local residents stated that the strengths of Northeast Iceland as a tourism destination are the nature (or natural qualities of the region), Húsavík (whale watching), the National Park, and Lake Mývatn. One accommodation provider commented:

Above all its the nature, the region as such, we have beautiful nature here ... the mightiest waterfall in Europe and Lake Mývatn, which is world-class when it comes to nature, birdlife and geology ... then there has been much development in whale watching in Húsavík. These are our strongest points here to build on (participant comment #10).

The weaknesses included the road conditions, poor transportation, and the connections to East Iceland. The lack of access and local government inaction to address the issue was identified as the ‘classic’ response that is limiting tourism development in the area, especially to the National Park, as mentioned by one tour operator:

Lack of access, bad transportation in many places, with especially short-term access to main attractions such as Dettifoss and the National Park ... In general there is poor access to the National Park, and attempts to capitalize on it to increase value for tourism businesses have shown little results. In my mind, the parks 30-year history is a tragic tale ... not very much done to improve access ... and it has not stood up to the expectations of people in the tourism industry (participant comment #31).

Opportunities focused on the need for new product development and packaging, better services, and the need for greater cooperation in planning between the public and private sectors (Hull et al. 2008b). One museum manager mentioned the need for new products:

I think we have a unique area ... the Arctic part of Iceland, and it has a lot of development potential if marketed right for people who seek solitude and tranquility. Proximity to the Arctic Circle gives us opportunity to take people across it and experience it ... and then we have this tundra which is so special. We need more road signage and information ... another good option is self-guiding brochures with information about the history, geology and flora in each location, using maps to create more of an experience ... and more guiding around the area. The story of Garðarr Svavarsson (first settler to Iceland) makes Húsavík an interesting place and it becomes more of an experience to have someone who knows and tells the history ... we need educational opportunities for tourists ... (participant comment #71).

One tour operator also emphasized the need for improved access and co-operative marketing strategies:

I think the future of tourism is bright if we can get easier access to foreign tourists. The south [of Iceland] is way ahead of us due to transportation issues. As far as recreation is concerned we need to market it in cooperation with the agencies that are bringing tourists into the country. I've also said that the marketing offices should be located where the market is, abroad for the foreign market and here for the domestic market (participant comment #68).

Local responses reflect global trends in tourism requiring that rural and peripheral destinations need to be more responsive to an increasingly demanding consumer who is seeking greater accessibility in terms of cheaper air transport and improved infrastructure, a clean environment, quality and variety in product development, and more experience based adventure, nature and culture tourism activities (Hall and Page 2006). As a result many destinations are adopting forward-looking policies that preserve the natural environment, and historic, heritage and cultural sites to protect the resources upon which tourism depends (Edgell 2006). The vision for Northeast Iceland, with its emphasis on *National Geographic's* definition of geotourism, supports a philosophy of sustainable tourism that is aimed at preserving the character of Northeast Iceland aimed at attracting a market that is interested in experiencing the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

At present, marketing efforts are focused on improving web-based strategies through the use of Web 2.0 technologies and building co-operative partnerships. The agency is finalising the launch of a new website and has joined in partnership with the Icelandic Tourism Board, North Iceland Marketing Association, Ice Trade and Markthing – the local marketing agency in Húsavík – on new print

collateral as well as travel trade and media programs. A new brand for the region – the edge of the Arctic – is serving as an organising force for new products and packages that highlight the fact that geographically Northeast Iceland is adjacent to the Arctic Circle. In addition, over 40 local residents from public and private agencies have formed eight theme-based cluster groups with the support of agency staff to create new activities, programs and packages linked to birdwatching, spa/wellness, geotourism, culture and museums, local foods, handicrafts, winter, and maritime events.

Partnerships with the Northeast Nature Research Centre, the Húsavík Academic Centre, the University Centre of Húsavík and the National Park are all helping to support collaborative planning efforts that support continuous learning through a dynamic and interactive, process-based framework (Bramwell and Lane 2000). Education and training programs are being offered to raise the level of professionalism in the industry and to provide hands-on training to the theme-based cluster groups. Workshops in birdwatching, marine tourism, geotourism, local foods, museums, spa/wellness, port readiness, customer service and packaging are supporting local efforts. Infrastructure development is also moving forward with the upgrading of roads in the National Park to the Dettifoss waterfall and to the remote Langanes Peninsula in the east. There are also port upgrades at Húsavík Harbour. As the Regional Development officer recently commented:

Northeast Iceland has a strategic role to play in the future development of tourism in Iceland. As one of the top destinations outside of Reykjavík, it is critical that the momentum from present tourism development efforts continue to take advantage of the region's many unique selling points to develop market-ready products and experiences linked to the natural scenery, wildlife viewing, spa, and the cultural heritage of the region (Jóhannesson 2009).

## **Conclusions**

The Strategic Plan for Northeast Iceland prescribes a vision for tourism over the next five years. It is meant to guide future direction, activities, programs and actions through the use of a sustainable tourism framework. The research team administering the three-year planning process has inventoried and mapped the assets of the region, incorporated the opinions and recommendations of public and private tourism agencies, identified a long-term vision and short-term measures to enhance competitiveness, and proposed recommendations to preserve the natural and cultural assets that are the basis of the industry. Through the collaborative planning process, there is growing public and private interest in organizing new products and services aimed at enhancing the tourism industry in the region.

A recent study of Nordic tourism innovation systems (Hjalager et al. 2008) identifies that a successful innovation system should incorporate the following characteristics: a multitude of actors from a diversity of personal backgrounds,



knowledge and connections; the participation of visionary actors to facilitate growth; a willingness to share resources and knowledge; keen competition and cooperation; the participation of the public sector in facilitating practices; as well as increasing global and cross-sectoral outreach. In evaluating the tourism planning process of the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA, the majority of these characteristics are present in the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan. There are representatives from public and private agencies who have come together to form joint partnerships, local residents are driving a number of the new theme-based tourism clusters, education and training opportunities are enhancing knowledge sharing, and there is cooperation amongst residents to move the process forward. The Icelandic Tourist Board, the Icelandic Regional Innovation Centre, and Ice Trade, in addition to university participation, is assisting in the implementing the strategy and there are new links forming between tourism and the agriculture, maritime, and cultural sectors in the region (GEBRIS 2009, Hull and Palsson 2009, NORCE 2009).

At a recent meeting with the staff of the Icelandic Tourist Board, the question was raised as to what the greatest challenge is facing the present project. Quite clearly it is the implementation and evaluation of the plan. The success of the process will be measured by the ability of the Þingeyjarsýsla RDA and local residents to continue to mobilize local energy and enthusiasm to carry out the goals and objectives as outlined in the plan. This will require continued financial and human resources that strengthen regional cooperation and community capacity. In addition to cooperation being crucial to the success of tourism in peripheral regions (Hall 2007, Jansson and Muller 2007, Saarinen 2007, Zillinger 2007), there is also a need for a more comprehensive approach to tourism development, as part of an integrated, holistic strategy (Richards and Hall 2000) that is marketable, environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and culturally acceptable.

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# Chapter 12

## Factors Affecting Collaboration in Destination Marketing: The Development of www.purenz.com

Sushma Bhat and Simon Milne

### **Introduction**

Countries compete intensely to attract foreign tourists and spend billions of dollars on national tourism administration and marketing. The World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) (2006) estimated that government travel and tourism operating expenditures in 2006 reached US\$300.2 billion or 3.8 per cent of total government expenditure. Despite recent recessionary pressures, some governments, including the New Zealand national government, have increased their relative spend on tourism destination marketing (Tourism New Zealand [TNZ] 2009).

This chapter tells the story of the development of the NZ official tourism website – [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com). The story begins by revealing a relative paucity of research in the important area of interorganisational collaboration in tourism destination marketing (Fyall and Garrod 2005). Research into the [purenz](http://www.purenz.com) case is used to explore the dynamics of collaboration in destination marketing and to seek answers to the question: what factors facilitate and support collaboration among stakeholders in destination marketing?

The chapter begins with a brief review of the literature on inter-organisational collaboration. The methodology used in this research is then discussed. The case study, the development of the [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) website, is outlined followed by a discussion of the factors that emerge as affecting collaboration in destination marketing. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for destination marketing management and further academic research.

### **Inter-organizational Collaboration in Tourism**

Interorganisational research (IOR) usually uses one of three units of analysis: the organisation, the interorganisational dyad, or the interorganisational network (Dredge and Jenkins 2003, Pearce 1992, Selin and Beason 1991). Applying existing organizational theory to collaborative phenomena requires a shifting of focus from the individual firm to a domain. Astley and Fombrun (1983) use collectives in plant

and animal communities to suggest four types of organisational groupings. Within the tourism domain, all four of these groupings can be found. The 'agglomerate' collective describes a network of organisations of the same species (or industry sectors) competing for the same resources with little direct contact with each other. This is fairly characteristic of the entertainment and attractions sector of tourism. The 'confederate' collective also comprises of same species organisations but these organisations directly associate to work towards joint ends, which is a common pattern in the airline and hotel sectors. The 'conjugate' collective has different species that come together because of complementary functions. The number of buyer–seller networks in the tourism industry may be termed 'conjugate' collectives.

Astley and Fombrun's (1983) fourth grouping is termed 'organic' wherein the collective membership is from different species but they do not interact directly. They are interdependent because of their membership in an 'overarching system of relationships'. The overall tourism domain is likely to have (in most countries) the characteristics of an 'organic' collective, that is it has a number of distinct species (industry sectors) that are interdependent because of the overarching nature of tourism and yet may not necessarily interact directly. Collaboration in tourism occurs within an existing 'set of interconnected nodes' which is how Castells (2000: 501) defines a network.

Wood and Gray (1991: 48) state, 'Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain'. Key elements of Wood and Gray's definition of collaboration are relevant in the tourism context. Stakeholders are autonomous with independent decision-making powers, but what brings them together are common issues and concerns about a particular domain, which in this case are specific decisions or actions relating to tourism. The shared rules, norms and structures would usually be agreed to explicitly as part of the interactive process, but these can sometimes be implicit. A review of some common collaborative activity in tourism suggests that collaborations can vary considerably in their complexity and form. Variation occurs in the number of organizations involved; the type of structure or form; the scope or spatial coverage of the collaboration; the collaboration's life span; and the extent and type of resources that are pooled (Fyall and Garrod 2005, Palmer and Bejou 1995).

Within the management sciences, there are two main views on why organisations develop relations (Jamal and Getz 1995). First, exchange theory suggests that organisations voluntarily interact to achieve mutual organisational goals. Second, resource dependency theory proposes that organisations are forced to interact as they seek to acquire and compete for scarce resources. Increasingly organisational complexity studies and relational approaches to the study of organisations allow for the simultaneous presence of these two views in an organisation's decision making (Bramwell and Meyer 2007, Bramwell and Pomfret 2007, Dredge 2010, Selin and Beason 1991).

Collaboration "adds value" by building on the store of knowledge, insights and capabilities of stakeholders in the destination' (Bramwell and Sharman



1999: 393). Blumberg (2001) suggests the benefits of inter-organisational collaboration include economies of scale, combining resources and spreading of risk. Bramwell and Sharman (1999) suggest that the potential benefits of collaboration in tourism include avoiding the cost of future opposition and conflicts with stakeholders. Collaborating also improves consideration of the wider impacts of tourism by organisations and individuals and can lead to more sustainable policy, planning and management outcomes. Nevertheless, collaboration has its drawbacks including: the complexity and time consuming nature of decision making with diverse participants; the potential for private use of confidential information; possibly a reduced effort in joint tasks by some parties and/or an opportunistic exit from the relationship by one party (Bramwell and Lane 2000) and less individual control over resources (Blumberg 2001).

A number of studies (Bjork and Virtanen 2003, Jamal and Getz 1995, Mutch 1996, Roberts and Simpson 2000, Selin and Beason 1991, Waddock and Bannister 1991) have focused on identifying the factors which are critical to successful partnerships. There is no consensus on all of the factors but agreement exists on the following:

- Recognition of interdependence by all members of the collaboration.
- Benefits of collaboration are clear for individual participants.
- Inclusion of key stakeholders.
- Appointment of a legitimate convener to facilitate collaboration.
- Formulation of joint vision, aims and objectives.
- Balance of power between stakeholders.
- Trust and geographical proximity.

A number of tourism researchers use case study methodology to better understand collaboration (Dredge 2006a, Jamal and Getz 2000, Lawrence 2007, Mutch 1996, Roberts and Simpson 2000). Generally, the case studies have a sustainability and destination development focus. A common limitation of these cases is that tourism planning and development have not necessarily been integrated with destination marketing. As Ritchie and Crouch (2003: 189) observe, 'in the traditional tourism world the destination planning and development function is often not viewed as an integral part of the marketing function'. Buhalis (2000) and others contend that marketing should be used as a strategic tool *alongside* planning and management and not just as a sales or promotional tool.

## Research Method

Stake's (1995) distinction between intrinsic and instrumental case research is relevant to this case study. In the former (intrinsic), the case itself is the focus whereas in the latter (instrumental) the case is used to understand something else.

This research focuses on inter-organisational collaboration in the destination marketing context. This requires a case that can reflect the complexity of the tourism industry and yet be a manageable microcosm of the same. The case selected is the development of the official website – [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) – TNZ, the national tourism organization (NTO). Although the technical development of the purenz website was anticipated as having intrinsic value for some, it is important to emphasise that the creation and development of this website is used as an instrument to provide insight into the process of collaboration in a destination marketing project.

Case study research should be based on multiple sources of evidence (Eisenhardt 1989, 1991, Yin 1994). This study uses three of the sources of evidence for triangulation suggested by Yin (1994, 2003) – interviews, documents and physical artefacts (in the sense of the actual website). Initial secondary research was undertaken through official documents and websites. The former included TNZ's publicity material; media releases and annual reports (1999–2005); the NZ Ministry of Tourism's 'The Tourism Strategy 2010' launched in 2001; and New Zealand public press coverage of tourism 1998 to 2006. Events in 1998 led to major changes in the NZ tourism sector's leadership. Important changes then followed, for example, in how NZ was marketed overseas, which included the initial launch of the [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) website. The site development continued in the following years and was well established by 2006.

Four aspects (home page, general content, features, and the extent of interactivity) of the purenz.com website were analysed (Bhat 2002). Each of these four areas had a list of specific criteria for evaluating the site. The website was revisited regularly with a record kept of the major changes made between 1999 and 2006. The interview process began with three informal pilot interviews. Two of the interviewees were closely involved with the development of [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com). The third interviewee was not involved with the development of the website but had an in-depth knowledge of marketing issues in the NZ tourism industry. These interviews were useful in:

- Confirming that the case selected was appropriate in representing a microcosm of the dynamics of collaboration in the destination marketing context.
- Confirming that the research focus was of relevance and importance to the New Zealand tourism industry.
- Signalling that the form and process of collaboration in this case did not conform to the earlier literature.
- Guiding the design of the semi-structured interview protocol for further interviews.

A 'snowball' sampling technique was then used to select a sample of industry members from large and small companies from all tourism sectors involved in the process of making the portal a reality and/or affected by the development of the

www.purenz.com website. Each participant was asked to refer the researcher to other participants who were involved in the process of designing the NZ portal. Some were also asked if they knew of other organisations in their sector that were not involved and might be willing to participate in this research. The researcher did not attempt to ensure statistical representativeness of any particular group. As Dubois and Gadde's (2002: 10) state:

The main concern in this kind of sampling is to arrive at an appropriate matching between reality and theoretical constructs. Sampling thus becomes more of a continuous process than a separate stage in the study.

The basis for selecting who was to be interviewed changed during the process of data collection and analysis. For example, at one point, it became clear that there were actually very few people outside of the NTO who had direct involvement in the development of the official website and that there were other NTO staff who needed to be interviewed to get a clearer picture of the development process. After 35 interviews a point of saturation was reached where it was considered by the researcher that little additional insight was to be gained from additional interviews (see Eisenhardt 1989).

The interviewees represented a variety of organisations from different sectors of the industry and included participants from both the public and private sectors: the NTO (7); tourism support services (6); tour operators (6); airlines (4); attractions (3); government (3); industry associations (3); transport (2); and accommodation (1). Some of the interviewees had multiple roles. TNZ Board members and a few interviewees who were directly involved in or affected by the development of www.purenz.com have since changed jobs. In these cases, the interviewees have been categorised into the tourism sectors with which they have or had a primary role. With the exception of four, the interviewees were all CEOs or part of the senior management in their organisations. If this was not the case, then the interviewees were part of a large organisation where they had a direct role which related to or was affected by destination marketing. This was important as the questions being asked were mostly of relevance to people who have worked at the strategic level.

Out of a total of 50 people approached by the researchers to participate in this research, 35 agreed to be interviewed. Considering that most of the interviewees were either busy CEOs or senior management, the response rate (70 per cent) was excellent and perhaps an indicator that the research was of interest/importance to the participants. The response from the NTO, tour operators, support services and industry associations was the strongest whereas it was more difficult to get participants from the airline and accommodation sectors.

An initial semi-structured interview protocol was prepared beginning with the background of the individual and the firm and moving on to their understanding and views on the process of collaboration and development of the purenz site. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. The research draws on the stories of

the interviewees – stories that reflect on the evolution of the purenz site and how these shifts were linked to broader contextual events.

All interviews were taped and a full transcription was completed (with the exception of three where there were minor problems with the recording). The number of transcribed pages per interview ranged between 12 and 78 with an average of 32.6 pages. The initial pilot interviews took place at the end of 2003. The semi-structured interviews were conducted between September 2004 and June 2006. A copy of these interview transcriptions was sent to each interviewee for their confirmation (Bhat 2008).

A systematic combining approach grounded in abductive logic (Dubois and Gadde 2002) was used to analyse the data. ‘Systematic combining is a process where theoretical framework, empirical fieldwork, and case analysis evolve simultaneously ...’ (Dubois and Gadde 2002: 556). Within the two ends of inductive or deductive approaches to research, systematic combining is closer to the inductive grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) approach which requires that theory be systematically generated from data. As the objective in this case study is theory development rather than theory generation, there is a greater reliance, compared to grounded theory, on knowledge of existing theory to guide the research from the beginning. The original theoretical framework is successively modified based on unanticipated findings and subsequent theoretical insights generated from studying collaboration in this particular context.

### *The Development of www.purenz.com*

New Zealand has had a NTO, in various forms and with varying names, since 1901. Over time, the NTO has been responsible for the development of tourism product, overseas and domestic promotion of tourism, sales and booking of tourism services, tourism research and the ownership of various tourism-related services (Collier 2003, Pearce 1992, Zahra and Ryan 2005). TNZ’s main focus now is on overseas marketing of New Zealand as a tourism destination.

TNZ, while funded by the government, has evolved into a more corporate structure governed by a board whose members are largely from the NZ tourism private sector and are appointed by the Minister of Tourism. The TNZ Executive structure is based on seven departments: Consumer Marketing, International Public Relations, Communications, Corporate Services, Operations, Tourism Development, and Corporate Strategy and Planning (Tourism New Zealand 2009). TNZ has three offices based in NZ and 12 international offices.

In addition to TNZ, New Zealand has a number of organisations involved in tourism promotion and management at various levels (Table 12.1). The main tourism organisation is the Ministry of Tourism, which provides policy advice to the government and is also responsible for tourism research and statistics. In addition, there are 29 Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) that are funded by their local governments.

**Table 12.1 Key organisations in the New Zealand tourism industry**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role within the tourism industry</b>
Ministry of Tourism	Government policy relating to tourism
Tourism New Zealand (TNZ )	The NTO responsible for international marketing
Tourism Industry Association (TIA)	Umbrella membership organisation which represents operators from all tourism sectors and has an advocacy role on their behalf
Inbound Tour Operators Council (ITOC)	Deals with key aspects of delivery and packaging of the tourism product
Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs )	Promote their region Keep ITOC/ TNZ informed of regional and product developments Offer trade and media support

*Source:* Adapted from Bhat (2008: 137)

At the end of the 1990s, a decision was taken by the NTO to move from a multi-domestic marketing approach to a global branding and positioning strategy based around the niche market of the ‘interactive’ traveller (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott 2003). TNZ launched its ‘100% Pure NZ’ global campaign in key markets (Australia, Japan, USA, UK, Germany, Singapore and Taiwan) between July 1999 and February 2000 to coincide with seasonal promotional opportunities (Morgan et al. 2003, Piggott 2003). Advertising used mainly TV and magazines and the creative strategy focused on New Zealand’s diverse landscapes, people, and tourism activities. The creation of the purenz website was a part of this strategy. The ‘100% pure’ global advertising campaign was designed to generate awareness and interest overseas in visiting New Zealand, with consumers then being directed to the website for more information on the destination. The site was intended to be a cost efficient tool for providing more in-depth information on New Zealand as a tourism destination in a fashion consistent with the new positioning strategy.

The technical development of the site was outsourced to a professional web design firm, Shift Ltd and the NTO decided on the design and features of the website in collaboration with Shift. The initial site was launched at the end of 1999 (Stage 1), and in 2002 there was a major redevelopment of the site content and design (Stage 2). Since then, the site has continued to be modified and developed further. The purenz website is considered by most research participants to be a success in terms of: the numbers of visitors to the site; online user survey satisfaction levels; the number of awards that it has won; and its perceived contribution to the growth in international visitor arrivals from 2000 onwards. Four interviewees felt that the site could have achieved more. Their reasons for not rating the site as an unqualified success included initial problems with categorisation and navigation and the limitations of the original objectives with no effort to convert customers from interest to purchase. One interviewee highlighted the lack of connection between the promotional promise and the

need to focus more within the site on ensuring the delivery of the promise. One tour operator focused on the limited representation on the site for overseas and New Zealand tour operators.

The role that collaboration played in the first stage of the development of the purenz website was limited. There was evidence of coordination between NTO departments and supplier agencies to ensure consistency with the overall 100% pure brand strategy but the input of a wider network of tourism stakeholders was not sought. According to one interviewee who provided support services to the NTO in the early years, there was:

... not too much consultation in development of the site precisely because it was controversial ... there were entrenched views ... politics ... TNZ had a clear view of what had to be done and got on with it.

At the time that the website development began, the tourism network was highly fragmented and politicised (Bhat and Milne 2008). Traditionally, the Minister of Tourism is expected to focus on policy and have no direct input or control of NTO operations. The more direct interventionist role assumed by the then Minister of Tourism (Murray McCully) brought 'a great deal of unsettlement' (Piggott 2001). In 1999, the NTO 'lost its Chairman and other members, its Chief Executive, its advertising agency and its Minister, a new order was needed'. The changes that followed included the NTO acquiring its current name of Tourism New Zealand (TNZ), a new Board Chairman (Peter Allport) and a new CEO (George Hickton).

The NZ network has a large number of vastly different stakeholders in terms of size, nature of business, public and private ownership and geographical spread (Collier 2003). It is estimated that over 80 per cent of tourism firms are small- and medium-sized enterprises employing fewer than five people (Tourism Strategy Group 2001). The value that these SME stakeholders could add to this technical and innovative project was seen by the NTO as minimal as there were very few organizations that had any experience with Internet marketing at this time. An interviewee, who was one of the few initially consulted about the development of the website, describes how the need for collaboration became clear as the website was developed:

I think they got it wrong initially – they thought they had to do something very generic just to push New Zealand ... First of all the consumer wasn't wanting that ... But the industry didn't want that either, although at the time I don't think they cared, but then ... they realized that you can't do it alone, it is a partnership ... they have to work with the industry, so they shifted it to more of a link type ... when they started ... they got on the band wagon just like everybody else, you know... we must have a website. And they had some money to throw at it and away they went. Then they started to realize that it's not a stand alone, it's a tool, integrated with the rest of marketing ...

Also at the end of the 1990s, the relationships between the leaders of central organisations within the NZ tourism network were strained and the leadership of the NTO in destination marketing was being challenged by other industry associations (Bhat and Milne 2008). As one private sector interviewee described it:

... at that stage, Tourism New Zealand was very suspicious of the Tourism Industry Association ... Tourism New Zealand saw themselves as the custodian of the industry and the Tourism Industry Association were set up to represent the ... operators and it's effectively a lobby body ... and so the relationship between the two was quite fractious so Tourism New Zealand very sternly took a lead on this.

TNZ was given a very short period by its political masters in which to launch the whole '100% pure' global campaign which included the development of the purenz website. A key leader of the development of the '100% pure' campaign and the purenz website noted that 'the whole campaign was constructed in the period February through April ...' 1999. TNZ was given a large enough budget to be able to develop and launch the advertising campaign and the website on its own. At the same time, there were major changes in the leadership of TNZ in 1999. The new leaders were experienced marketing professionals but new to the tourism industry. The interviews reveal that these NTO leaders saw the development of the website as a tactical destination promotion project and its strategic significance and impact on other tourism stakeholders was only realised at a later stage possibly around 2002.

By 2002 there was more two-way interaction between TNZ and other industry members. A large number of those interviewed from TNZ focused on how the level of collaboration had increased over time:

I think there was no co-operation in the first phase ... in the second phase the co-operation was when it was allowed to be a part of it. And now I think there's very firmly a philosophy that ... at a senior level, there's regular interaction with the industry, there's regular feedback.

After the initial development, the need for product and service suppliers to register on the website database emerged. At this stage, intensive efforts were made by TNZ to communicate the website strategy in order to get tourism operators to register on its database. In this process of interaction, TNZ management demonstrated flexibility in terms of taking on board feedback from stakeholders and gradually incorporating this into the continuing development of the website. In 2003, [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) represented the most comprehensive range of tourism activities in NZ with approximately 6,500 businesses (7,000 in early 2007) out of an estimated 16,000 or 17,000 industry players.



## **Factors Affecting Collaboration in Destination Marketing**

Most of the factors identified by this study as affecting collaboration in the destination marketing context have a clear overlap with those emerging from earlier studies (Bjork and Virtanen 2003, Gulati 1998, Jamal and Getz 1995, Mutch 1996, Selin and Beason 1991, Waddock and Bannister 1991). These include: shared vision/strategy; the clarity of central organizations' roles and responsibilities; communication with all stakeholders and professional leadership with people skills. Perhaps unique to the destination marketing context, is how the factor 'recognition of interdependence' by all members of the collaboration manifests itself as a need for a shared understanding of the scope and integrated nature of destination marketing management. This research also shows that the understanding and expectations of collaboration in destination marketing are not necessarily the same for all stakeholders. This has implications for the management of the cooperative process in the destination marketing contexts, which are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

### *Shared Vision/Strategy*

A shared vision or cohesion within the tourism industry emerged as an important facilitator of collaboration in NZ destination marketing. In this case the shared vision emerged through a separate nine-month development process of the Tourism Strategy 2010, which was launched in May 2001. The Strategy 2010 documented the 'shared vision' of the leaders of the NZ tourism industry about what type of tourism was desired and some broad principles to guide how this growth could be achieved. The overall direction for the NZ tourism network presented by the Tourism Strategy was for, 'A sustainable yield driven strategy based on growing tourism demand and financial returns while enhancing the quality of the visitor experience and New Zealanders' quality of life' (Tourism Strategy Group 2010 2010: ii).

The key principles that were stated as running through this strategy are:

- Sustainability – sustainable development is seen as critical to ensure the benefits of tourism will not be short-lived
- Yield-driven – this required that more emphasis be placed on both growing visitor numbers and spend per visitor
- Maori participation – Maori will play a key role in tourism and will increasingly benefit from the same
- Public/private commitment – more effective public and private sector partnerships consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi (Tourism Strategy Group 2001).

The NTO leadership participated in the formulation of the strategy and the findings of this study suggest that the Strategy influenced the NTO's subsequent approach to

stakeholder feedback and its decisions on the ongoing development of the '100% pure' campaign and the purenz website. One TNZ Board member noted:

... since the strategy's been put in place, what that has done is it has given us a clear sense of priorities which have been by and large, bought into by the industry ...

### *Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities*

Ladkin and Bertramini (2002) found clarity of organisational roles and responsibilities to be important in their Cusco, Peru collaborative tourism planning case study. Dredge (2006a, 2006b) found this factor to be equally important in her analysis of the problems associated with public-private policy collaboration at Lake Macquarie in Australia and again in the Redlands Tourism case.

The NZ tourism industry has a large number of businesses who, in turn, have multiple sector and industry associations to represent their interests. There are also a number of centrally funded government organisations, as well as locally funded regional organisations, involved in tourism. In this case, as one interviewee put it, when the development of the new global strategy began, there were, 'Lots of groups doing a lot of talking and not a lot of action ... lack of clarity of roles'. Prior to 1999, there seems to have been considerable confusion and discord created by the tussle between TIA (Tourism Industry Association) and TNZ as to who would take the leadership in destination marketing. With the 1999 change in NTO leadership and the later success of the '100% pure campaign', TNZ re-established its leadership in this area. With so many players having a stake in destination marketing, the clarity of roles and responsibilities of each organisation has an effect on inter-organisational collaboration in this context as well as the tourism planning and policy area.

### *Communication with all Stakeholders*

In line with previous studies (Bjork and Virtanen 2003, Selin and Myers 1998), this research also found that communication is a key factor in successful collaborations. Once the need for industry buy-in was recognised, TNZ launched an intense communications effort aimed at the industry through a wide array of network communication channels to get industry operators to register on their website database. These channels included road shows, seminars, trade shows and events besides the use of written communication in industry publications such as the *Tourism News* and e-mail. Interviewee comments highlight how organisations like industry associations and RTOs were used as intermediaries for further grassroots communication. An NTO manager suggested that these organisations had considerable communication support from key industry associations and players such as the NZ Tourism Industry Association and Inbound Tour Operators Council. An industry association leader recalls, 'They

also relied on intermediaries like the RTO's to provide the mechanisms for that, the venues ... to draw the audience and to also sell it on their behalf because TNZ, being very Wellington-focused, in New Zealand, don't have close contact with the industry on an ongoing basis'.

Very good participation was achieved as organisations saw the benefits of additional exposure for their products/services and this additional exposure involved no costs for the participants.

### *Leadership*

Leadership is a factor that was identified by interviewees as important in facilitating collaboration. In the words of one private sector TNZ Board member:

I think the strength of it was the leadership. The reason why I say that is because ... Ian McFarlane was driving the marketing side of it with George Hickton as CEO ... they had a focus on a path going forward and the whole Tourism New Zealand organization were all basically made to feel a huge part of the ownership of the decision-making ... of the organization going forward ...

Interviewees used the word leadership to refer to the senior management of the NTO. The characteristics of leaders identified by research participants as important in this destination marketing context were professional expertise, team working skills, and flexibility. In this case the TNZ management was new to the industry and experienced marketing professionals from other industries brought a fresh perspective and new ideas on how to promote the NZ destination overseas. The fact that these managers were new to the industry also meant that they took some time to understand the network interdependencies and in turn the network took longer to accept their leadership. In the opinion of the CEO of a major transport company, the biggest hindrance to collaboration in the early stages was, 'the time it took Tourism New Zealand to find its place in the industry after '97 and the time it took for those key personnel to become comfortable in that place'.

### *Shared Understanding of the Term 'Destination Marketing'*

The new NTO leaders initially saw their role as one of overseas destination promotion and the development of the purenz website began as a tactical project to provide a cost effective, electronic brochure, to support the '100% pure' campaign. Most of the research participants interpreted the term destination marketing as referring to functional destination promotion activities. When responding to questions related to collaboration in destination marketing, most respondents' focused only on the promotion function of marketing. For example, an industry association spokesperson noted: 'I think with any ... advertising campaign, you try and keep, I guess, a few surprises up your sleeve. I mean, you go away and you develop it ...'.

How the term destination marketing is interpreted has implications for the scope of activities of the NTO as the key organisation responsible for marketing the destination. If, for example, the NTO is only responsible for overseas promotion then its performance can be measured in terms of an increase in audience awareness/attitudes and, indirectly, growth in visitor numbers. If the NTO is responsible for achieving sustainable destination marketing objectives, the NTO's role broadens and requires a more strategic focus. In the latter scenario, the need for inter-organisational collaboration and also the need for integration of destination marketing and management become more readily apparent.

### *Managing Diverse Expectations of Collaboration in Destination Marketing*

The understanding of collaboration, and what it involves, differed among stakeholders. TNZ employees see the NTO as responsible for taking the leadership in destination marketing and define collaboration as the rest of the industry organisations aligning their efforts to the TNZ strategy. A senior TNZ executive felt that collaboration in the industry was 'Taking on board the national strategy and building on it'. A TNZ manager at the operations level suggested again that the industry needs to understand the NTO's goals and strategies so that they can align their product to support these strategies.

The General Manager of a RTO focused on 'alignment' with the NTO as well. He seemed to take it for granted the TNZ would take the lead and that 'we [the RTO] align with them to get leverage'. The more passive stakeholders expected the NTO to take leadership in designing destination marketing strategies that will benefit the industry operators while keeping them informed of their activities. In the words of one interviewee:

... I mean, you don't often work with [TNZ] as much ... to explain this ... I mean, Tourism New Zealand go out there and put a TV campaign in the States, then, ... the Bed & Breakfast in Taihape isn't working with them, they are in spirit though because, you know, they've been involved in the process, they understand why it's happening, they understand who the target audience is, so they're supportive of it. So therefore, yes, you're working with them, but it's in a very detached way ...

These passive stakeholders from within the industry responded positively to the intensive communication efforts of TNZ because their response involved no costs to them while delivering some clear benefit. This was in line with these stakeholders' understanding and expectations of collaboration in destination marketing.

In contrast, more proactive stakeholders' expectations of collaboration are that they will be consulted in setting destination marketing objectives, planning strategies and contribute resources to achieve joint objectives. These stakeholders also responded to calls for registration on the website database but the evidence indicated that they could have contributed more in other ways in terms of aligning

themselves with the TNZ ‘100% pure’ strategy. The following comments are from the head of an industry association:

Maybe you could say the weaknesses were ... perhaps a lack of a sense of ownership initially and I think that was because people weren’t sure about how to work with that ... so there weren’t necessarily ... clear channels of engagement ...

Some participants suggested that the low level of stakeholder involvement in the development process meant that the launch in 1999 initially received less ‘buy-in’ and ownership from industry members than it could have. It is possible that this less than optimum support from key stakeholders resulted from their different understandings and expectations of collaboration in destination marketing. The different objectives and perspectives of key stakeholders come through clearly in the following example:

... and the big thing was that Air New Zealand used to say, ‘You should be doing this with us, we do so much destination marketing’ and Ian said ... and I’ve never forgotten this, he said, ‘People in the world don’t walk into a travel agent and say, “where’s Air New Zealand flying today?”... they go into a travel agent and say, “I’m thinking about going to New Zealand, now how do I get there?”’ ... So really, what Ian was saying was that, ‘Look, you work with us, not that ... we finance what you want to do’. Absolutely and if we’ve got a campaign that’s going out, if we’re doing television advertising in the UK for example, why don’t you put your ads on television at the same time in the same ad break.

[Interviewer] ... and did they?

No [laughing]. No because they couldn’t get past this, ‘Hey, well we want to give you some money and put our identity on the end of your ads’ and then it all gets into, ‘We want this logo there and that airplane up there’ and it’s just too hard.

This research suggests that an assumption cannot be made that all stakeholders have uniform understandings and expectations of collaboration in the destination marketing context.

### **Network Effects on Collaboration in NZ Destination Marketing**

In most partnerships, the literature suggests that considerable effort has to be put into laying the foundations for inter-organizational collaboration (Augustyn and Knowles 2000, Doz 1996, Jamal and Getz 1995, Selin and Chavez 1995). For example, laying the foundations for collaboration involves selecting the right partners and educating organisational representatives on the values and behaviours

of other partner organisations. What this case study reveals is that much of this can become unnecessary in the destination marketing context because of the existing tourism network structure.

TNZ's organisational constraints and the tourism industry context in 1999 had an impact on the NTO initially placing a minimal emphasis on cooperative processes/mechanisms. TNZ was able to proceed in this unilateral fashion largely because of its funding from the NZ government. At the same time, the minimal level of industry input that TNZ did need was achieved through the existing network structure of the industry. The NZ tourism industry already had a variety of linkages and communication channels for reaching its wide membership including: sector associations, trade forums, scheduled road shows and publications. In addition, other central organisations within the network already recognized the workflow and resource interdependencies within the industry and understood the importance of collaboration in destination marketing. These central organisations came to the support of TNZ in its efforts to reach and persuade tourism product providers to register on their database.

This study suggests that the existing national tourism network structure, and the level of existing shared understanding of the interdependencies among its members, can reduce the time and effort involved in laying the foundations for inter-organisational collaboration in destination marketing. The initial base for collaboration can be provided by the network structure of the industry. There will also be certain shared understandings and existing linkages within the network which can be leveraged when collaboration in destination marketing is required.

## **Conclusion**

This brief story of the development of [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com) provides some answers to the question: what factors facilitate collaboration among stakeholders in the destination marketing context? The factors which emerge as affecting inter-organisational collaboration include: shared vision/strategy; clarity of roles and responsibilities; and, communication with stakeholders and leadership. These factors have several commonalities with findings from other research into tourism collaboration (Bjork and Virtanen 2003, Jamal and Getz 1995, Mutch 1996, Selin and Beason 1991).

In addition, the well-established network nature of the New Zealand tourism industry reduced the usual effort required to lay the foundations for inter-organizational collaboration. This supports the findings of research conducted in other national settings (Augustyn and Knowles 2000, Jamal and Getz 1995, Selin and Chavez 1995).

The work we have presented here supports the contention that a network is not static and that its characteristics evolve (Halinen, Salmi and Havila 1999, Madhavan, Koka and Prescott 1998, Milne, Mason and Hasse 2004; Scott, Baggio and Cooper 2008). Virtual networks (based around Internet) are not necessarily

bounded by spatial limits – instead they are influenced by issues such as access to technology infrastructure. The growing role of the Internet is shaping visitor behaviour and industry performance. This will see the emergence of growing numbers of linkages focused on web-based platforms. Like any networks (whether ICT-focused or not) there are issues of fragility and power relationships to be dealt with in future research (Marzano 2008). Does the focus on the web create a more level playing field – or do large interests continue to dominate? Does the focus on local content, the desire for the visitor to interact with the host communities place local government and SMEs in more privileged positions *vis-à-vis* network influence/formation?

Two new factors affecting collaboration emerge from this research in the destination marketing context. First, this study finds that stakeholders have different understandings and expectations of collaboration in the destination marketing management process. The role of cooperation in tourism is often treated as a normative concept (Tosun 2000) or a desired ideology (Taylor 1995). Although cooperation in destination marketing is sought from organisations, the organisations are represented by people whose understanding and expectation of the cooperative process and its outcomes can differ. These differing expectations cannot be ignored and must be taken into account. Unless these expectations are understood and met, the desired levels of cooperation will not be achieved.

The second new factor affecting collaboration is whether stakeholders have a shared understanding of the term ‘destination marketing’. In most tourism industries, the national tourism organisation has a pivotal role to play in the overseas marketing of the country. The majority of NTOs are not producers or operators (Middleton 1988). NTOs generally do not sell products directly to visitors; are not directly responsible for the quality of the services delivered; and represent only a proportion of the tourism marketing activity on behalf of their country. Historically, the principal marketing role of NTOs has been in creating and communicating destination images and messages to potential visitors using the promotion tools of advertising and public relations (Fyall and Garrod 2005, Ritchie and Crouch 2003). Product-specific marketing is usually seen as the responsibility of individual operators. Views on the position of NTOs in the tourism industry vary with some stakeholders focusing on the organisation’s development or operational role, others on its market facilitator task and still others on its overseas promotion function. Support, and indeed a willingness to collaborate on specific destination marketing projects initiated by the NTO, is likely to be affected by the perception of stakeholders as to whether the project is legitimately a part of the NTO’s ‘destination marketing’ role.

Before decisions regarding new collaborative initiatives in destination marketing are made there needs to be an analysis of the current tourism network. This process needs to evaluate the extent to which a shared vision/strategy already exists in the tourism network. It needs to assess the clarity of central organizations’ roles and responsibilities and the current levels of communication with all stakeholders. The evaluation needs to review the extent to which the current destination marketing



leadership has the expected professional expertise, flexibility and team working skills. In addition, the network analysis needs to assess to what extent there is a shared understanding of the terms 'destination marketing' as well as 'collaboration' in the existing tourism network.

This initial network appraisal will indicate the action required to have the necessary factors in place to facilitate inter-organisational collaboration in a particular destination marketing context. The actions required can be identified by asking several questions. What (still) needs to be done to build a shared vision/strategy; to clarify the roles/responsibilities of the key organisations in the tourism industry; to ensure efficient/effective communication with stakeholders and to further build expected leadership qualities? In addition there are the questions of how to ensure a shared understanding of the term 'destination marketing' as well as manage the different expectations of collaborators.

Fyall and Leask (2006) suggest that collaboration is the key issue which encapsulates the challenges facing destination marketers in the future. This case study shows the value of detailed case-based analysis of destination marketing collaboration. Although the story is only an example drawn from a small country in the South Pacific, it does highlight issues and themes that are a challenge for destinations around the world.

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# Chapter 13

## An Integrated Approach to Tourism Planning in a Developing Nation: A Case Study from Beloi (Timor-Leste)

Leo X.C. Dutra, Robert J. Haworth and Manuela B. Taboada

### Introduction

In this chapter we present a case study set in Beloi, a fishing village located on Ataúro Island, 30 kilometres across the sea from Dili, capital of Timor-Leste (East-Timor). We explore the tensions between tourism development, food security and marine conservation in a developing country context. In order to better understand the relationships between the social, ecological and economic issues that arise in tourism planning we use an approach and associated methodology based on storytelling, complexity theory and concept mapping. Through testing scenarios with this approach, we seek to evaluate which trade-offs are acceptable to local people in return for the hoped-for economic boost from increased tourist visitation and associated developments.

Sustainable tourism development strategies should incorporate local and national expectations (Beeton 2006, Burns and Novelli 2007, Chafe and Honey 2004, Environment Australia 2002, Pigram and Wahab 1997, White 2004). For developing countries they should preferably contribute to Gross National Income (GNI) on the macro-scale, and ameliorate food insecurity and environmental conditions on the micro-scale as flow-on benefits from developing local supply industries. According to the framework suggested in the Local Agenda 21 (Environment Australia 2002), local communities should seek a long-term sustainability action plan that can be periodically reviewed. Local Agenda 21 recommends associating the successful implementation of the action plan with the involvement of local authorities and communities in order to better integrate local and national environmental, economic and social goals. This line of thinking could be extended by reference to Gunn (1993), who evaluates the success of tourism not only on its economic and other usually reported benefits but also on the wellbeing of the community that hosts the tourists. Critical to ensuring that local people's and their communities' voices are heard, is finding approaches and methods that will source and document these voices.

Storytelling can help unveil what locals expect from tourism development and planning. Through residents' stories we learnt how Beloi people go about

their daily lives, how they interact socially and politically, and how they think an increase in tourism may impact on life in the village. Through this research we also learnt a lot about what locals value and respect. As a result, we are better able to help them document their concerns and issues and to initiate plans for a future they consider acceptable.

This chapter describes a reflexive methodology that uses storytelling as a way to focus on tourism planning and policies for the wellbeing of the people it will most affect. We first sketch the historical, environmental and economic settings of Beloi. We then describe the theoretical framework and methods applied in the research and the results from analysis of local interviews, which incorporate the stories told by locals. Finally, we discuss the study's findings in relation to the value of storytelling in helping build the possible scenarios of tourism development, and the influence these stories may have on weaving together a future of the village.

### **The Context for Tourism Promotion in Timor-Leste**

Timor-Leste (Figure 13.1), one of the newest countries in the world (May 2002), is also one of the poorest. In contrast to the fertile volcanic landscapes of the main Indonesian islands, Timor and associated islands are composed of uplifted



**Figure 13.1** Location map of Timor-Leste and Atauro Island

limestone, producing mainly infertile soils (Santos 1967). Food insecurity is widespread due to low crop yields, lack of income, intermittent drought, underdeveloped markets, and civil unrest. Over one-third of the country's population regularly experiences food shortages (World Food Programme 2006). Thus, Timor-Leste is highly dependent on international assistance, which represents half of its GNI (United Nations Development Programme 2005).

Timor-Leste has long been occupied by foreign powers, first Portugal, then Indonesia, since the sixteenth century. The former ruled from 1515 to 1975 when Timor-Leste declared independence and a short civil war took place between pro-Portuguese and the independence movement believed to have communist tendencies. The Indonesian Army invaded Timor-Leste in December 1975. Indonesia ultimately took full control of the province in July 1976, beginning a quarter century of rule during which an estimated 200,000 (over one-third of the 1975 population) would die from violence or starvation (Hamilton 2006). The Indonesian forces met with significant resistance, spearheaded by the *Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente* (FRETILIN; Revolutionary Front of Independent Timor-Leste), which had emerged in the mid-1970s as one of the primary opposition parties to Portuguese rule. In 1999 the East Timorese people voted for independence, but before the complete withdrawal of troops, the Indonesian Army systematically destroyed or crippled most of the country's infrastructure. From 1999 to 2002 the UN Transitional Administration of East-Timor (UNTAET) administered the country (Dutra et al. 2008).

Tourism is an industry that could help promote the natural and cultural assets of Timor-Leste. Natural features include some of the best coral reefs of the world (Stafford-Mills 2006), mountains that reach heights of 3,000m, as well as a rich historical profile that includes elements of indigenous, Portuguese and Indonesian cultures, World War II battlefields between Australian and Japanese troops as well as diverse and ancient indigenous groups that produce authentic arts and crafts. If properly managed, tourism can generate positive economic impacts, such as employment and foreign exchange inflows (Beeton 2006, Bosselman et al. 1999, Ramchander 2007, Robinson 1999) so much in need in Timor-Leste. However, tourism may also promote unwanted consequences, such as environmental degradation through construction of infrastructure (e.g. airports, hotels and roads), overfishing to provide for tourists, unequal distribution of wealth among locals, and changes to local traditions and lifestyle. These factors may undermine the very features on which tourism flourishes (Dann 1997, Hough 1990). Even the economic benefits expected from tourism may not impact the host community as anticipated (Connell and Rugendyke 2008b). Tourism relies a lot on intermediaries, such as travel agencies and airlines, who are often the main beneficiaries. They are among those with the ability to shift tourism in directions that favour particular companies, places and groups. People from remote places and developing countries are often left with little control over the industry from which they hope to benefit (Rugendyke and Connell 2008, Connell and Rugendyke 2008a).



In summary, great care is needed when promoting and developing tourism in developing countries and indeed in places encompassing fragile ecosystems and cultures, such as in Beloi. If tourism promotion and development is sensitive to Timor-Leste's history, culture and geography, more equitable allocation and distribution of benefits and impacts are likely to be achieved.

### *The Village of Beloi*

Beloi is located in Ataúro Island facing Dili (capital of Timor-Leste) 30 kilometres away, four hours by the regular weekly ferry and 30 minutes by speedboat. Ataúro Island is made up of uplifted ancient coral reef formations reaching over 1,000m (*Manu coco*) (Chappell and Veeh 1978). The higher lands are more suitable for agriculture than the coast, therefore coastal villages are more dependent on fisheries.

The village of Beloi has a population of 350 out of Ataúro Island's total of 7,863 with younger age groups in the majority. The people are traditional subsistence farmers and fishers. According to CARMO (2002), they are evenly divided in their religious allegiance between Portuguese-derived Catholicism and a more recent Indonesian-derived Protestantism (the majority in Beloi), both lightly superimposed on an indigenous religion preserved in local beliefs and practices that cement an underlying unity among the villagers.

Both Christian groups are conservative. This helps maintain the traditional arrangements of a sexual division of labour, respect for the old and permanent land and sea tenures. Traditionally, locals always cover their bodies (especially women) and expect tourists to behave similarly, not unnecessarily exposing bare flesh. Not all tourists respect and agree with these habits and sometimes locals need to ask them to dress accordingly (Dutra 2009).

Despite the apparent conservatism, Beloi appears to be in the forefront of what little change there has been on the island. The fact that the two religious denominations live in harmony and both are able to accommodate traditional practices indicates that there is a culture, albeit somewhat hidden, of negotiation and compromise. This was seen as an indicator of positive prospects for accepting the social changes associated with tourism, though it is also a warning that such changes must be sensitively integrated where possible with existing traditions.

Beloi has a barter economy with little use of cash. The villagers divide into four socio-economic groups. These are:

- Eighty-five per cent working in subsistence gardening and fisheries, including students who help their families.
- Nine per cent of the population who sell their products in the Dili and the nearby Alor Island (Indonesia) markets (fishermen and livestock farmers). These people live above the subsistence level.
- Five per cent who work in the tourism and hospitality sector (guides, lodge owners, transport owners, and arts and crafts workers).
- One per cent are knowledge sector workers (priests and teachers).

Family ties ameliorate some of the income disparity. The 15 per cent of relatively well-off workers mostly in tourism, hospitality and agribusiness provide some support to the other 85 per cent of the population when they are not able to harvest enough food.

Inhabitants from the highlands trade with Beloi villagers. The main products negotiated are dried fish and octopus, as well as coconut oil from the coast in exchange for vegetables (including bananas, mangoes, avocados, chillies) from the mountains. Every Saturday, the two groups meet at the local market in Beloi, where the produce exchange takes place and industrialised goods from Díli arrive in the ferry. The market is also an essential social event in the village.

The lack of economic/subsistence alternatives puts excessive pressure on reef fisheries resources (Dutra 2009). Coral reefs are easily accessible and one can swim or use a dugout canoe to reach them. As a result, the coral reefs surrounding the village tend to be over-fished, further contributing to malnourishment in the community, as the reef fish are presently insufficient to comfortably support all the village residents (Dutra et al. 2008).

In Beloi, prior to the Indonesian occupation in 1975, fisheries resources were managed by traditional practices that involved the establishment of *tabu* areas (McWilliam 2002) from which stocks could be replenished. The Indonesian military occupation (1975–1999) introduced destructive practices, such as blast fishing, over-ruling local management and strategies to pursue economic targets set from Jakarta. The result was impoverishment of local fisheries to the extreme disadvantage of the local community.

Tourism has been identified as an economic option since the 1990s, particularly after the Beloi Beach Hotel was completed. This proved to be an ill-conceived project, and among other failings it had no input from local people. The hotel was initiated by Jakarta bureaucrats and did not consider the lack of basic infrastructure (power and water) necessary for the four-star accommodation-level envisaged. Another reason for the closure of the Hotel was the SE Asian financial crisis of 1998 (Wheeler 2004).

In contrast, seemingly more appropriate models in Vila and Beloi (see Figure 13.1) are more aligned with local people and conditions, aimed at the Aid/United Nations workers' market – that is, adventure, cultural and nature-based tourism. These are set on the beach with simple cabin accommodation emphasising responsible social and ecological ethics and development.

The number of tourists visiting Beloi – around 120 during the first six months of operation of Nema's Lodge – is still low and causes little impact on the everyday life of the villagers. However, should the political situation in Timor-Leste become more stable, it is likely that these numbers will grow rapidly, and thus studies such as this are now timely. The local context urgently requires a theoretical framework that allows for the integration of local views and expectations with the country's development policies.

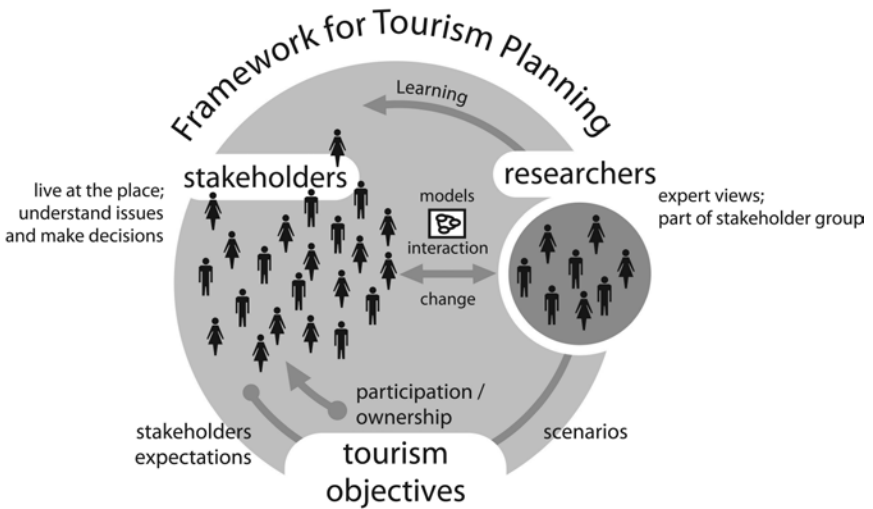
## **Theoretical Framework**

Tourism is an industry that involves multiple sectors and depends on the combination of many industries to provide the facilities and services for the experiences expected by travellers (Bosselman et al. 1999, Burns and Novelli 2007, Jafari 2000, Robinson 1999, Shaw and Williams 2004). Tourism also relies on an elaborate integration of the physical (coral reefs, rainforests, deserts), social (lifestyles, culture) and economic (skilled jobs and employment) aspects of the host community and the region. The latter is particularly topical in Timor-Leste due to low adult literacy rates (60 per cent, United Nations Development Programme 2005) as education is the only means to generate the human capital to build tourism capacity in the country (Thurow 1997).

Tourism planning in developed and developing states inevitably must deal with politics, including conflicts, alliances and negotiations between individuals and groups involved in policy and decision-making processes (Perez 2006). Recently, tourism researchers have focused on the understanding of tourism as a complex system, where the focus is on how these features relate to each other (Beeton 2006, Jafari 2000, Leiper 2000, 2004, Marzano 2006, van der Duim 2007). Complexity theory and systems thinking guide us to look at the whole and its relationships to the parts of an issue (Bammer 2006, Dörner 1996) and attempt to facilitate communication between various disciplines and to integrate knowledge from multiple parties (e.g. scientists, lay people, and managers).

Participatory methods, such as storytelling, recognise that all interested parties have an equal contribution to make in understanding and making decisions about societal issues (Bammer 2006). Using stories in our theoretical framework means that we acknowledge that participants think differently about similar issues, such as tourism and its impacts on the village, and these different understandings improve our knowledge about the issue. Storytelling also provides the means to capture both the features involved in tourism planning as well as how they relate to each other. For our work, storytelling was not used as a form of one-way flow of information. The researchers engaged with the participants through telling their own stories, facilitating the exchange and flow of information. In the course of this deep engagement, an image of the problem and of the solution emerges gradually among the participants from their stories, a product of ongoing judgement, subjected to critical feedback (Dutra 2009).

Complexity theory, systems thinking and storytelling provide well-founded theoretical and methodological foundations to systematically explore the issues related to tourism and its effects on the wellbeing of the population of developing nations. Our theoretical and methodological framework allows parties to be exposed to and learn from each other's different points of view and sets of interactions (Boulding 1956).



**Figure 13.2** Application of the theoretical framework in the case study

## Methods

Figure 13.2 summarises how we applied the theoretical framework in Beloi. Residents, managers and researchers in the stakeholder group were our primary focus. All opinions were included equally in the models constructed in the research in order to register participants' ideas using, for instance, pencil and paper models, such as concept mapping; and/or computer simulations, such as the system dynamic model. Both models are described below.

Participants (including researchers) were guided to make their underlying assumptions explicit in order to construct the models. This interaction is likely to promote learning about the effects of tourism in the village. As participants tell their stories to inform the models, they reflect on their actions and on tourism possibilities – for example: how can tourism be organised and shaped to improve wellbeing in the village? What activity can I do in order to participate in the tourism industry? How many tourists can the village accommodate? How much more would we need to fish to sustain all these extra people in the village? These possibilities are then tested via 'what-if' scenarios in the system dynamics model to inform decision-makers on likely consequences of tourism in the village. One of the main advantages of this process is that participants construct the vision themselves. They therefore own the proposed solutions and thus are more likely to implement decisions (Black et al. 2003, Cole-Edelstein 2004, Environment Australia 2002, Meppem and Gill 1998, O'Loughlin et al. 2006, Scott and Gough 2003, Van der Lee 2000).

*The Storytelling Process*

The researchers spent two weeks in Beloi in order to interact with the locals, present the concept of the research, listen to stories and collect some scientific data. It was decided to talk to villagers while they went about their daily tasks, where possible helping them in order to avoid an artificial environment, and also to experience at first-hand the environmental and social constraints. During the time spent on the island, one of the researchers, Leo XC Dutra (male), a marine scientist, exchanged ideas with the interviewees – mostly the local fishermen – in a clear fashion without using technical jargon, resulting in both parties more clearly understanding each other. He took part in activities such as fishing and engaged with locals during scientific surveys to assess the status of the coral reefs in Beloi and presented the results verbally, asking and answering questions in the process. Similarly, Manuela Taboada (female), the other field researcher, interacted mostly with local women, sharing and learning some of their traditional activities, while listening to their stories and views of their place and future.

This informal ‘immersive’ kind of approach was not only pleasant for the researchers as tourists themselves, but also necessary. First, locals were very reserved in explicitly telling their stories, as they still carry the marks of 25 years of resistance against the Indonesian Army. During this period a great number of villagers were involved in the resistance movement where they were very secretive about their thoughts and activities, given the risks of being arrested, beaten or even killed by the Indonesian Army. Secondly, in understanding the interdependent components of the village, immersion provides an insider’s point of view by considering the contexts and situations in which the interview took place (i.e. negotiated accomplishment interview method; see Fontana and Frey 2005).

Fifteen people volunteered to be interviewed during this study. The respondents represented most of the economic sectors of the village and were chosen because of their occupation and/or interest in participating in the process. The sample group comprised ten men and five women from seven occupations, who volunteered to participate in the research. Inevitably, we tended to interview the more educated or worldly-wise locals, but this bias was partly countered by the social setting of much of the interviewing, which often allowed others to make casual comments and observations that were included in our final summaries. It is important to note that interviewers (LXC Dutra and MB Taboada) are Brazilians (outsiders) but share a common language (Portuguese) with some of the participants. When Portuguese could not be used, an interpreter made the Portuguese-Tetum or Portuguese-Manroni translation during the interviews.

The researchers initiated most of the conversations with a general subject, such as the abundance or seasonality of a particular fish, or what participants thought about tourism. This normally led to more specific topics, such as what participants expect from the visitors. All questions and reporting were in accordance with ethical guidelines set by the University of New England, Armidale, Australia. Table 13.1 shows a breakdown of the respondents according to sex and main

**Table 13.1 Respondents according to sex and main occupation**

	Subsistence Fishers	Business Person	Business Person /Fisher	Arts and Crafts	Student	Religious	Service
Male	2	1	3	0	4	1	0
Female	0	2	0	1	0	0	1

occupation. With such an approach, community issues were discussed informally, in line with the local decentralised governance system, with a view to encouraging maximum mutual understanding between interviewers and respondents. Some of the stories are presented in the next section.

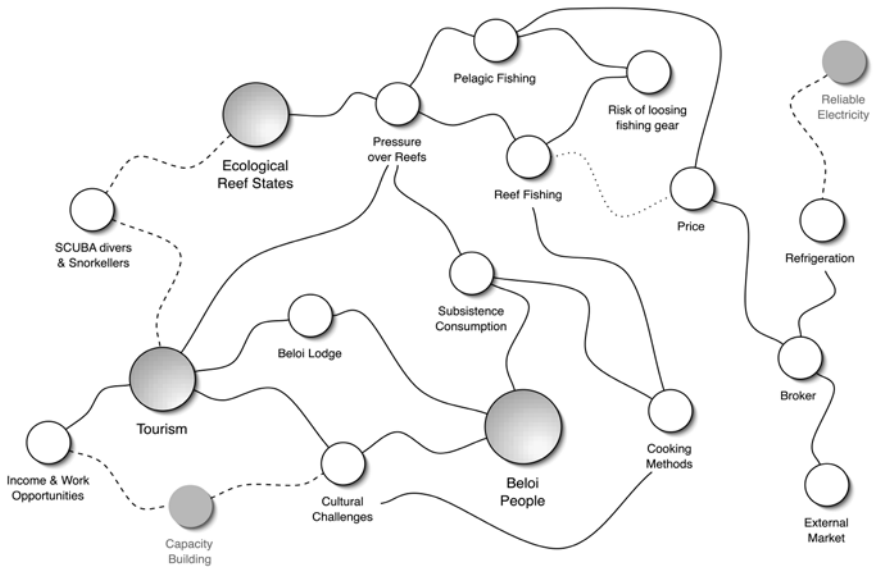
In order to maintain informal conversations, the interviews were not taped or transcribed word by word, and sometimes the situation did not even allow for notes to be taken. Thus, the information collected was registered later in a conceptual map based on one previously designed by the owners of the lodge, which reflected their understanding of the relationships between the village and tourism. One of the lodge owners was an influential person in the community (she passed away in 2006 soon after the fieldwork was completed). At the time of the research the lodge was the most significant tourism enterprise in the village. Information derived from interviews, observations and texts were gradually integrated into this initial map. The process of integrating information from texts resulted in looking at cause/linkage/effect relationships.

#### *From the Concept Map to a Systems Dynamics Model*

After returning to Australia, we synthesised the information collected about the village into a concept map derived from the storytelling process. This helped us link the stories from the island participants. The concept map represents our understanding of how individuals perceive relationships between the elements of the system. The outcome of the concept map is a picture that can signal to policy makers and locals alike the matters discussed by the parties, as well as allowing even the less-literate members of the community to follow discussion outcomes.

The final concept map is presented in Figure 13.3. Solid lines indicate the relationship among variables. Dotted lines indicate stronger influences than the relationships represented with solid lines. For instance, the broker pays higher prices (dotted line) for reef fish (groper and snapper) than for pelagic fish (tuna, mackerel) (solid line). Dashed lines indicate relationships that have the potential to occur but are not yet happening.

It should be noted that concept maps are models used for inductive thinking; they represent only one point in time. But, a concept map is not static. It changes as the community itself transforms and as internal relationships and interactions evolve. In addition, scientific knowledge can change, as more becomes known about the system (Özesmi and Özesmi 2004). The concept map allowed the



**Figure 13.3** Concept map of the Beloi system drawn by researchers from the data collected

researchers to collect data necessary to build a quantitative computer-based systems dynamics model, which can generate possible scenarios for tourism development in the island.

System dynamics is an iterative methodology informed by complexity theory for studying and managing feedback systems through system visualisation and quantification. The modeller develops hypotheses explaining the causes of a problem, which like all hypotheses, simplify the forces that lie behind a system's behaviour in order to present real-world processes in ways they can be manipulated. The model represents the behaviour seen in the real world and devises and tests alternatives to see to what extent they may alleviate the problem. This allows interested parties to learn and to design or redesign their guidance policies through different scenarios (Luna-Reyes and Anderson 2003, Ruth and Lindholm 2002, System Dynamics Society 2006)

Planning problems are represented in dynamic causal flow diagrams that show organisational relationships as a sequence of levels and rates. Levels represent accumulations of resources (e.g. number of tourists). Rates include all activities within a system (e.g. tourism growth). Once a system is represented in this way, it may be transcribed into a simulation routine for analysis using software such as iThink/Stella. We built a descriptive model with a mix of real and hypothetical data (when real data was not available) that shows trends



and relative orders of magnitude of changes in system components, rather than precise numeric values (Ruth and Lindholm 2002). This approach can be successfully employed to analyse overarching, dynamic systems in an inductive way.

The Beloi system dynamics model is divided into three sections: the village, tourism, and the coral reefs. The village section contains basic socio-economic information on income (from fisheries, aid and tourism) and population figures based on census data. The tourism section contains data on visitor numbers and expenditures in the village. The coral reef section is derived from Lotka-Volterra predator-prey equations (Lotka 1925, Volterra 1926) for fish and coral populations linked to impacts from tourists. Inputs and outputs of all sectors are linked. Model results are presented as time series graphics of state variables over a 30-year period. We tested the following scenarios to illustrate our approach:

- No tourism.
- Low Tourist Growth: increase in tourism rate of 2 per cent a year.
- Strong Tourist Growth: increase in tourism rate of 20 per cent a year.

## Results

### *Some Stories about the Daily Lives of Beloi People*

The interviews helped the parties involved in the research to share their understandings about their neighbourhood and to propose solutions to issues pertaining to the village. Some of the stories were also told/understood incidentally, while having a conversation after lunch or walking on the beach. In the next paragraphs we describe, in an anecdotal way, some facts and experiences that helped us better understand how everyday life works in Beloi.

### *Spear Fishing at Night*

After lunch on the 4 January 2006 an elder fisherman (~60 years old), who has been interacting with the researchers since day one, invited LXC Dutra to spearfish at dawn. The fisher spoke the local language and Tétum so a translator made the invitation in Portuguese. They went out fishing on a small dugout canoe to the reefs closest to Beloi. Even though one couldn't understand the other through spoken language some communication was established. For instance, it was possible to understand that the trip would be short, and that we would tow the canoe while snorkelling. After 90 minutes in the water, the result was one single small (20 cm disc) stingray, even though a greater number of large fish would be expected to be seen at night. Next day, through a translator the fisher explained that there were not many fish in the reefs anymore, even at night.

*Brazilian Beans in Beloi*

It had been four days since the last fish was caught around Beloi due to a combination of low fish stocks, bad weather and bad luck. This meant that the protein intake of residents was coming mainly from dried fish and octopus (and the stocks in the village were already very low). LXC Dutra and MB Taboada, both Brazilians, told the story of a typical Brazilian stew made with beans and dried beef. They suggested dried fish could be used in the dish even though they have never tried to do so. Some dried octopus and fish were bought and the Brazilian ‘feijoada’ was cooked and all who tried enjoyed it. We learnt how dependent the population of Beloi is on the coral reef fisheries.

*The Miracle of the 300 Fish*

At the end of the fourth day without any fish in Beloi, LXC Dutra was invited to help with the gill net at the beach the following morning. Early in the morning LXC Dutra was waiting for the fishers in the wrong place, but saw them when the fishers went out into the sea to position the gill net. When LXC Dutra arrived at the correct meeting place the fishers were hauling in the net and LXC Dutra helped in the end. Surprisingly about 300 bonito were caught that morning. Each person who assisted with the net received a share of the catch (LXC Dutra inclusive). Later on, the owner of the boat and net divided the fish with his family (about half of the village had some kind of blood tie with him) and the rest was sold to a middleman from Díli. We learnt that family ties are very strong and in every situation resources would be divided among the extended family.

*Buying Arts and Crafts*

MB Taboada saw the beautiful straw baskets used by the locals to carry firewood and other heavy utensils around the village. She asked the lodge owners if it would be possible to buy them. The local lodge owner then invited MB Taboada and two other tourists to visit one of the women who makes the straw baskets to see her work. When the group arrived at the craftswoman’s house she was taking a shower outside the house (there are no bathrooms inside houses in Beloi). Afterwards, the craftswoman came to receive the tourists who asked if she had some of the baskets for sale. She did not have any, and she was not ready for the tourist orders that day, so an order was made, to be delivered in two days. As the other two tourists were leaving the next day they could not buy the baskets. This showed that even though villagers are expecting to benefit from tourism, they are probably not yet sufficiently organised to offer local products, arts and crafts commercially. An idea suggested was to showcase some arts and crafts in the lodge.

*A Huge Trevalli*

A fisher was towing a fishing line in his dugout canoe when a huge trevalli was caught. The fish was promptly bought by the lodge owners who prepared it for their guests. We asked why pelagic fish were not offered in the lodge and the answer was that fishers do not actively target pelagic species because the middlemen in Dili would pay US\$3.00 for any large fish (>40 cm) such as trevalli and US\$1.00 for three small fish such as butterflyfish. The risk of losing the gear (hooks and fishing line) fishing outside the reefs is high and due to the low prices paid for large fish, fishers wouldn't take the risk. As a consequence, more and more pressure is put on the coral reefs. Another issue that contributes to low prices of large fish is the lack of reliable fish storage facility in Beloi; most of the ice is supplied by the brokers in Dili, who pay better prices for small reef fish than for larger pelagic species.

*Local Expectations Regarding Tourism*

When asked about the consequences of having more tourists in the village, fishers perceived that tourism would increase fishing pressure over the reefs, as there would be more people to be fed in Beloi. They proposed, however, that this pressure could be alleviated through shifting fish targets, from reef fish to pelagic species in the outer ocean. They indicated that the advantages from this practice are two-fold: the lodge manager pays better prices for large pelagic fish than middlemen in Dili, benefiting fishers, and pelagic fishing shifts fish targets from the reefs to open waters, thus diminishing fishing pressure over the reefs. However, changing fish targets requires money to invest in new fishing apparatus. The hope is that cash flow from tourism will allow this; the only alternative source is hard-to-obtain aid money.

Locals expect tourism to have a positive impact on their livelihood because it has the potential to diversify businesses in the village. Fishermen expect the lodge to pay better prices for the fish, the women expect more work opportunities, mainly through preparation of arts and crafts, and some locals mentioned that tourism is likely to create future work opportunities for their children and encourage them to remain in the village (although it was not clear what kind of work villagers were expecting to be associated with tourism).

*Perceived Constraints and Opportunities*

Tourism so far has provided limited but important income and work opportunities for the community: a local fisher occasionally transports tourists from Dili to Beloi in his boat; the lodge buys fish straight from the fishers rather than from middlemen, increasing fishers' direct profit; there is one hinterland walking guide who takes tourists trekking; two fishers-turned-builders assemble and maintain the traditional-style bungalows adopted by the lodge; and a group of about five women produce traditional arts and crafts (weaving, basketry). However, tourism also was

thought to cause some undesirable impacts on the local customs. For instance, locals do not want tourists to be at the beach wearing bikinis or without a shirt. Although tourists at Nema's Lodge are made aware of these cultural differences, sometimes they ignore them.

Another point discussed during the work was the implementation of a community-based dive centre in the village. scuba divers from all over the world visit Beloi as Timor-Leste is already recognised as a world-class diving spot. For instance, 'The Australasian Scubadiver', a scuba dive magazine, claimed that the reefs around Ataúro Island are among the best in the world (Stafford-Mills 2006). However, most of the scuba divers visiting Ataúro's reefs utilise dive centre facilities in Dili due to the lack of comparable facilities in Beloi. Commonly, SCUBA-divers come only for one-day visits, with little financial return to Beloi or any other village on the island. An alternative discussed during this work was to train local dive masters to safely guide tourists and to build a community-based dive centre with support from Nema's Lodge.

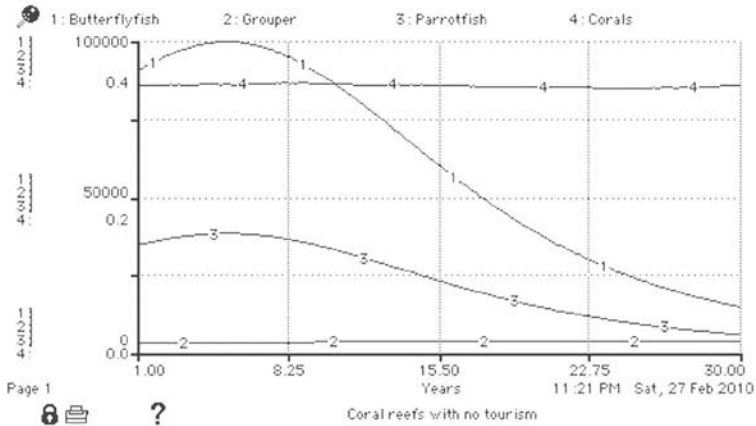
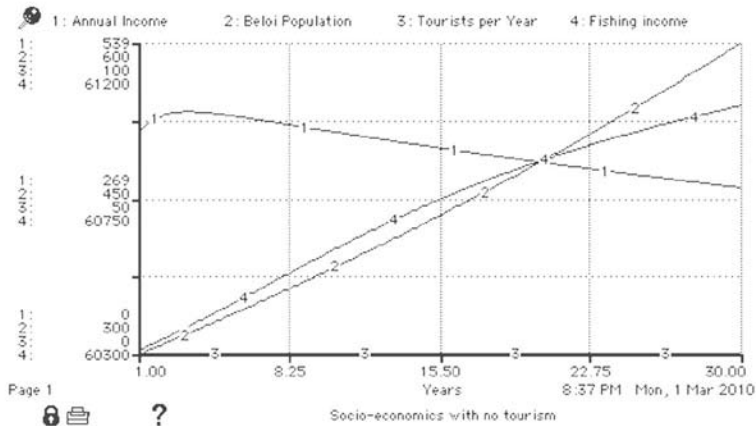
## **The System Dynamics Scenario Simulations**

### *Scenario 1: No Tourism*

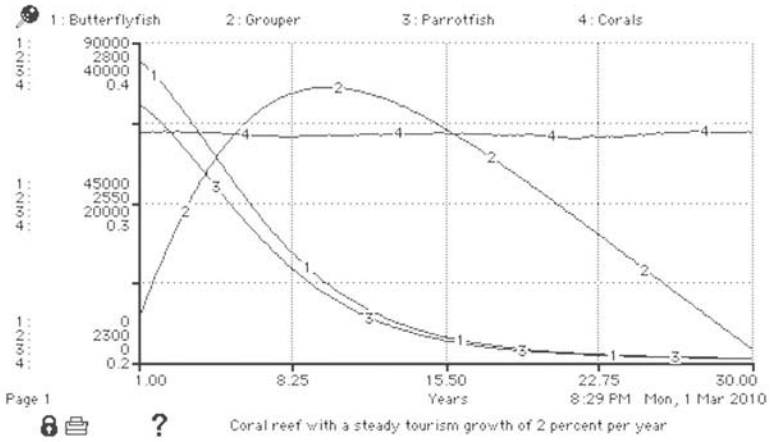
Model results from Scenario 1 (Figure 13.4) indicate that corals would be little affected by current fishing techniques. However, due to food shortages and a growing population, fish would be continuously exploited resulting in an overall reduction in the stocks. Groper stocks are likely to be less affected. The fishing pressure on this large species is less than on smaller species as brokers pay more for diminutive specimens, such as parrotfish and butterflyfish. Income would decline in the long-term due to limited economic activities and a growing population. This adds extra pressure on fishing as the main economic/subsistence activity in the village.

### *Scenario 2: Increase in Tourism Rate of 2 Per Cent Per Year*

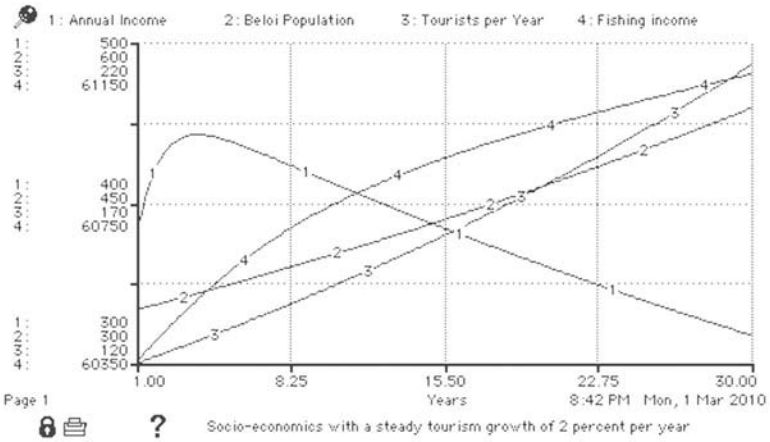
The analysis of Scenario 2 (Figure 13.5) suggests that tourism may boost Beloi's economy in the early stages of growth due to increases in, and diversification of, work opportunities. However, the relatively low number of visitors limits cash inflow, suggesting that a smaller number of visitors is unlikely to sustain long-term economic growth in the village. Nevertheless, model results also suggest that the overall economic benefit from a relatively small number of tourists is important to the village. A limited number of visitors would cause little impact on the corals, but still put some pressure on fishing, negatively affecting fish stocks. Figure 13.5 shows that the economic benefits from a low tourist growth would come about by diversification of economic activities. However, this scenario

**A****B**

**Figure 13.4** Dynamic system model results for scenario 1. A) Coral reef indicators; B) Socio-economic indicators. Butterflyfish, Grouper and Parrotfish in number of individuals; Corals in percentage, Income in US\$ per year; Beloi Population and Tourists in number of individuals per year

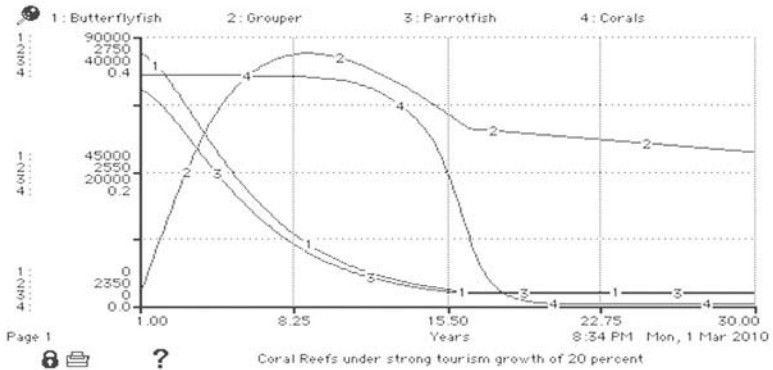


**A**

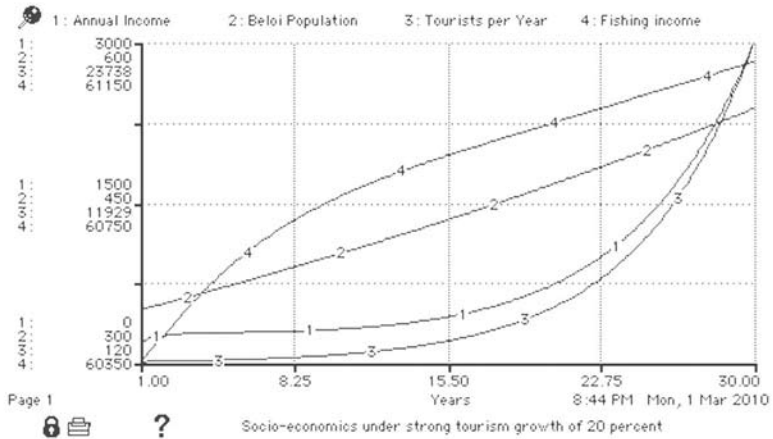


**B**

**Figure 13.5 Dynamic system model results for Scenario 2. A) Coral reef indicators; B) Socio-economic indicators. Butterflyfish, Grouper and Parrotfish in annual number of individuals; Corals in percentage, Income in US\$ per year; Beloi Population and Tourists in annual number of individuals**



**A**



**B**

**Figure 13.6 Dynamic system model results for Scenario 3. A) Coral reef indicators; B) Socio-economic indicators. Butterflyfish, Grouper and Parrotfish in annual number of individuals; Corals in percentage, Income in US\$ per year; Beloi Population and Tourists in annual number of individuals**



demonstrates that damage to the environment (coral reef) is almost inevitable as visitation increases.

*Scenario 3: Strong Tourism Growth, Increase in Tourism Rate of 20 Per Cent Per Year*

Scenario Test 3 (Figure 13.6) shows that higher economic gains associated with a sharp increase in tourism growth are expected at the expense of a steep decline in corals and fish associated with the need to fish to provide for tourists and locals. Moreover, increased numbers of visitors would cause coral breakage through trampling, resulting in destruction of the reef framework, with ongoing effects to fish and other organisms that depend on the reefs to survive and reproduce. As a result there would be a strong decline in coral reef indicators associated with the strong economic gains from tourism.

## **Discussion**

*The Contributions of Storytelling to Tourism Planning*

The main advantage of the storytelling methodology used in this work is that the stories told can be incorporated into planning, and the concept maps can be used to summarise these stories exposed within Beloi. Storytelling also made clearer the needs and expectations from participants. The use of scenarios as part of the system dynamics model helps understand how the different sectors of Beloi would be affected by different numbers of tourists in the village. The approach and methodology allowed knowledge to be integrated and expectations to be compared to actual realisations in the future.

*The Role of Our Methodology for Policy Prescription*

Often traditional communities do not participate in tourism planning marketed to their localities, thus making cultural and economic shocks more likely. The present approach can flag future problems and bring them to the attention of the locals and other stakeholders, but dealing with the impact of future issues and problems must depend on the political skills and values and interests of the parties involved. However, our framework provides the means for locals to discuss, at a relatively equal level with outsiders, other experts and government agencies, what can be fostered or avoided when promoting tourism in their village.

Nonetheless, our research highlights the danger of knowledge inequality between locals and the outside world. The obvious remedy is to improve the knowledge base. By using the negotiated accomplishment interview method (Fontana and Frey 2005), our work encouraged both locals and outsiders to clearly explain their thoughts and ideas about certain issues, the first step in preparing the

villagers to be politically effective in debates over resource issues. For example, one of the researchers, a trained ecologist, discussed with the locals issues related to coral reef and island uplift in a manner that was comprehensible to all. Locals did comprehend these concepts through their own worldview. In fact, they explained the formation of the island based on their tradition, which has aspects in common with the scientific concepts of island uplift. Naturally, the opinions were not necessarily accepted by all, but they were respected and taken into account.

### *Identifying the Limits of Tourism to Improve the Wellbeing of Beloi People*

Another application of our methodology is as an engagement tool to discuss issues at local, regional and national levels. Often, only small groups benefit from tourism and this has been the case in Beloi. The family that owns the lodge are the direct financial beneficiaries of tourism. Although the attitude of the lodge owners is to promote local businesses (arts and crafts, transport and guides) and to employ local labour, the efforts to improve the wellbeing of the whole community are still limited (as shown in the SD model results) due to lack of capacity. Thus, there is a need to build capacity within the village so locals can further benefit from tourism. The ones with skills are currently the ones benefiting: fishermen who use their boats to transport tourists, a local guide who takes tourists around the village, as well as arts and crafts workers who sell their products directly to the tourists. There is a well-defined need to build capacity in other areas that could be applied to tourism. But first, the state should invest in education, especially technical education. Only with both technical and general education can social and economic capacities be built in a locally sustainable way for the long-term. The East Timorese government has been investing heavily in literacy and basic education, but there is still much to be done.

In the case of Beloi, basic education can lead to more effectively training locals as tourist guides for snorkelling and scuba diving, for producing and selling local products such as coconut oil, and weaving with local products such as coconut fibre. Even more important is refining fishing techniques to harvest pelagic species, thus reducing reef fishing pressure, and improving fish storage capacity in the village. This technical training needs to be combined with literacy, basic education, management and hospitality training, in order to extract maximum benefit for the locals from tourism.

The above issues were all raised during the interviews with locals and depicted in the concept map. However, implementing what was discussed depends on further dialogue between locals, industry, and governmental and non-governmental agencies to build capacity and to plan for their future. That said, only a low influx of tourists is likely in the near future, thus inadvertently guarding the village from too many outsiders. The uncertain and often violent political situation in Timor-Leste combined with the deficiency of infrastructure (lack of roads, interruption of ferry services) restricts the number of visitors to Beloi. While limiting the scope for

tourism it perhaps allows time to experiment in getting the numbers and the 'style' of tourism right: currently, tourism is sustainable because numbers are low.

If the political situation does become more predictable and investments in infrastructure turn into reality, there is no reason why tourism should not grow in the country, as advocated in the East-Timorese Government Investment Plan. If that happens, the method tested in this research displays a useful way of dealing with place sensitivity, and the integration of scientific and lay knowledge in support of ethical, responsible and sustainable tourism. From conversations with villagers, it is apparent that some individuals or groups are already investigating livelihood alternatives, such as:

1. Improvement of coconut oil production.
2. Arts and crafts.
3. Initiation of commercial links with restaurants in Dili to sell fish.
4. Training local guides to conduct tours in the rainforest and on the coral reefs.

The East-Timorese government already acknowledges the need for ethical, sustainable and responsible tourism development, which considers locals, their culture and their environment. However, following recognition, these strategic issues need to gain official attention and this particular path may be extremely complex. Tourism seems to provide an innovative pathway but it needs careful examination in order to develop it according to local wishes and expectations. Done carelessly there is the risk of not providing the jobs and cash inflow, or alleviating poverty, which will most certainly further decrease the wellbeing of the population.

## **Conclusions**

Because of our work, some Beloi villagers are more aware of the cultural challenges they will face if tourist numbers grow and of the limitations the environment may pose to tourist and population growth in the village. Tourism has become a necessary part of the Beloi village system and it is important to engage all involved in promoting tourism and hosting tourists (local residents, businesspeople, planners and managers) in order to gain mutual understanding about the adverse impacts tourism may bring to the environment and to the wellbeing of residents. This is particularly topical due to the 25 years of Indonesian Army occupation. During this period members from the same community (or even from the same family) took part in different sides of the conflict. The results of the conflict nowadays are general suspicion, distrust and secretiveness about their thoughts and activities when talking to outsiders.

In addition to the negative effects from the military occupation, there are more than 30 languages divided in a similar number of ethnical groups in Timor-Leste.

The diverse cultural and language barriers add further difficulties for planners and natural resources managers (often from Dili) willing to engage with communities throughout the country. Giving time to the storytelling process is appropriate to help planners, resource managers and residents to blend in and gain mutual trust and understanding about the local and national issues. For example, planners and managers can better understand the nature of food shortage problems in Beloi and locals can understand the implications of broader national policies to promote tourism in the village. Our research shows that storytelling is effective in overcoming these challenges, as all involved (outsiders and locals) are able to share opinions and points of view. The storytelling approach can help interested parties with different socio-economic backgrounds in Timor-Leste to bring forth needs and expectations regarding tourism, as well as limitations, and the goods and services necessary to pursue such activity.

The Beloi case study demonstrates theories and methods that incorporate complexity theory, systems thinking and storytelling. Planners, natural resources managers, academics and practitioners can use our framework to deal with the tension between economic development, human wellbeing and nature conservation. Our approach can help decision-makers to identify practices and policies that deliver more equitable and sustainable outcomes through a framework where feedback loops between socio-economic and ecological issues are explicit. This is an important contribution to knowledge of tourism planning and policy theory and practice.

This study contains several possibilities for future research, both theoretical and empirical. The application of our methodology in Beloi released valuable local information pertaining to the wellbeing of Beloi villagers. It was effective in elucidating what locals think about tourism and how they see the impacts it might have on their village. An interesting path of research would be to use our approach to design role-play games where interested parties could 'feel and see' the challenges involved in planning, managing, and living in a community such as Beloi. This would make our methodological framework a more equal forum for collaboration between the parties. Further theoretical work that requires additional research is the exploration of different modelling techniques, such as agent-based modelling and loop analysis that can deliver different patterns of systems emergence. The exploration of modelling techniques can also contemplate using different levels of complexity captured in the model in terms of adding insights in relation to policy control that would come from additional stories captured from a wider range of participants, such as fish brokers, staff from government agencies and other business-people from Dili who benefit from tourism in Beloi.

Our main conclusion is that in the light of the storytelling process and results from the modelling exercise we can say that the question of tourism development in Beloi is one of finding the right balance of livelihood for the community. If pursued with care, tourism can help improve the quality of life of people living in Beloi.

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# Chapter 14

## How the Use of Power Impacts on the Relationship between Protected Area Managers and Tour Operators

Aggie Wegner and Jim Macbeth

### **Introduction**

This story is about protected area managers and commercial tour operators and how they interact with each other in the Shark Bay World Heritage area in Western Australia. The focus of this case study is to illustrate the role power plays between these two parties with both offering nature-based tourism activities in the area. This story is the respondents' story, as portrayed by them, and is formed around their views, perceptions and opinions.

Working together in a meaningful and collaborative way has emerged over the last two decades as a key component when solutions or improvements in a working environment between different stakeholders are sought. As such, the tourism industry with its linkages to different industry sectors is just one such example. Australia's protected areas are considered special places with the people living here being proud of their natural and cultural assets. Our protected areas, which are thought of as natural assets, attract many visitors from all over the world who are interested in visiting them and experiencing their beauty (Carlsen and Wood 2004, Worboys, Lockwood and De Lacy 2005). Many nature-based tourism activities in Australia take place in protected areas, including national parks, conservation reserves, marine parks, and world heritage areas such as Shark Bay (Buckley and Sommer 2001). Nature-based tourism, particularly in protected areas, has experienced a strong growth in Australia as well as worldwide over the past few years (Buckley 2000, Cole 2001, Eagles, McCool and Haynes 2002, Newsome, Moore and Dowling 2002).

Offering nature-based tourism experiences relies upon two fundamental constituents: appropriate levels of environmental quality and suitable levels of consumer services (Eagles 2002). With increasing tourist numbers the challenge for protected area managers becomes one of managing tourism in protected areas in ways that protect and maintain the values that attracted tourists in the first place. The growing demand for nature-based tourism opportunities is leading to increased pressure on the environment, and has led to a shift in responsibility and roles of protected area managers to become providers of recreational services

with associated implications, in addition to their function of conserving the area (Buckley and Sommer 2001).

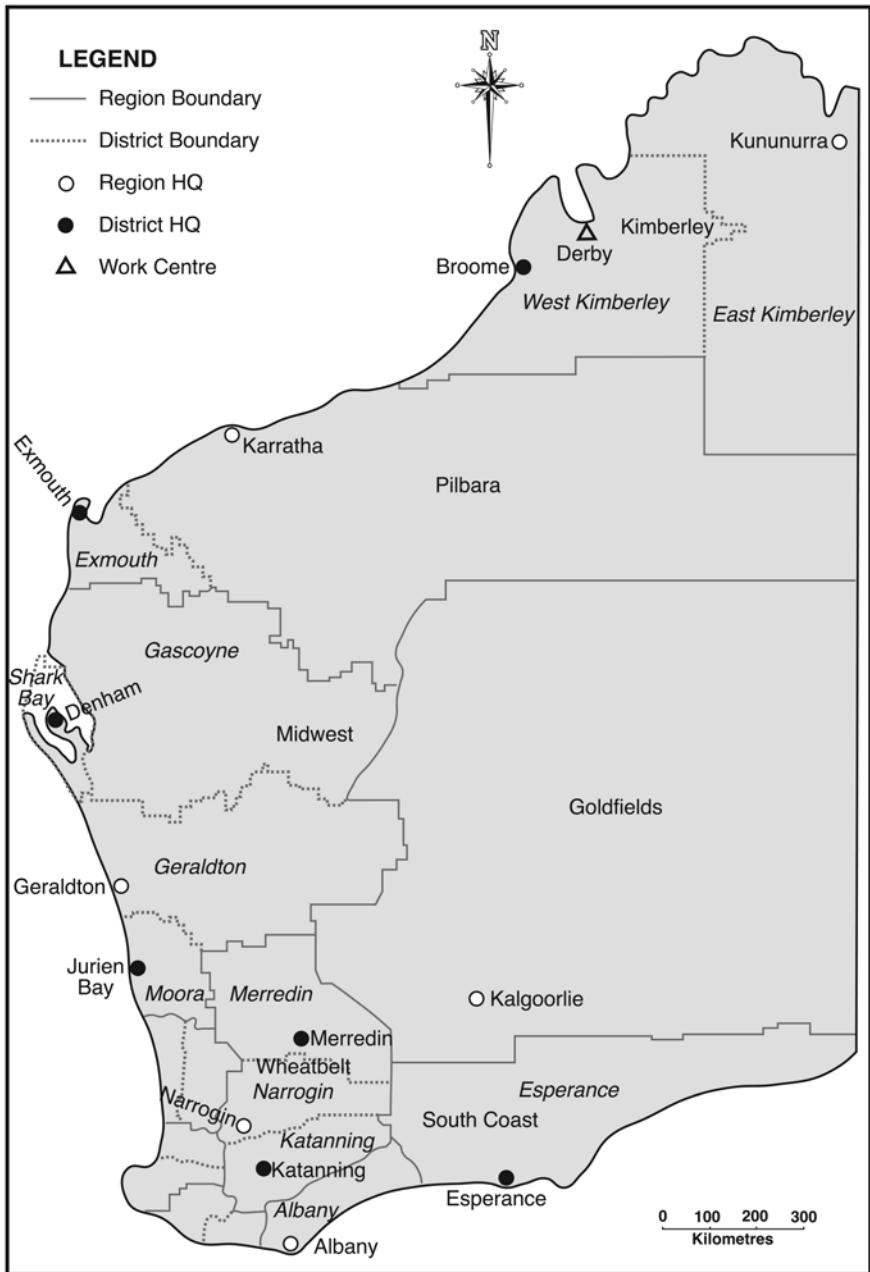
Many agencies in charge of protected areas have staff trained in sciences who have no or only limited experience and knowledge of tourism management and understanding of visitors' wants and needs. Traditionally, managers' role involved monitoring, classifying and protecting species, maintaining facilities, as well as managing visitors (Wearing and Bowden 1999). Managers have expressed concerns that an increase in tourism within protected areas (individual travellers as well as a growing number of commercial tour operators) may endanger conservation aspects of these areas for which they are responsible (Bramwell and Lane 2000, Buckley and Sommer 2001, Cole 2001, DITR 2003, Eagles et al. 2002, Wegner, Moore and Macbeth 2007, Worboys et al. 2005).

An increase in visitors combined with associated budgetary demands requires balancing conservation with recreation (Buckley 2000, Cole 2001, McCool and Stankey 2001). A recent media release by the Australian Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts addressing the values of World Heritage places in Australia, states 'It shows even our lesser known places like ... Shark Bay make a considerable economic contribution to regional and local economies' (Hon. Peter Garrett 2009). However, managing protected areas is recognised as being essentially a social process, involving communication amongst stakeholders and working with people to achieve objectives and goals (Worboys et al. 2005). As such, working successfully and effectively in providing a satisfying tourism experience in protected areas depends on how well protected area managers and operators are able to work together.

Even though it is recognised that collaboration is of importance (Buckley, Witting and Guest 2001, DITR 2003, Eagles et al. 2002) constraints on, and difficulties to successful collaboration between partners can be present in various forms. Previous research that has examined operators' attitudes towards licensing has identified collaboration difficulties between managers and operators. The operators identified a lack of communication as the key problem. Insufficiency or lack of communication impacts directly on the working arrangements and relationships of managers and operators. To fully understand the factors influencing the working arrangements between protected area managers and commercial tour operators it is vital to move beyond our understanding of communication as the limiting factor, and instead to refocus on their relationships in order to explore their respective positions.

## **The Locale**

The story and how it unfolds is set in the remote location of Shark Bay, an area in the Midwest of Western Australia (see Figure 14.1). The Shark Bay area is approximately 850 kilometres north of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. It encompasses a range of natural environments that are attractive for nature-based tourism experiences.



**Figure 14.1** The Shark Bay area as part of the midwest region of Western Australia

The Shark Bay area was inscribed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) World Heritage listing in 1991 for its Natural Beauty, Biological Diversity, Ecological Processes, and Earth's History – all four of the natural categories (Department of Environment and Conservation [DEC] 2009). Additionally, the area is comprised of over 1,500 kilometres coastline with three large islands and an abundance of marine and plant life.

The Shire of Shark Bay comprises only a handful (under 1,000) of people living there on a permanent basis. The only township in the Shark Bay area is Denham, 128 kilometres west of the turn-off on the North West Coastal Highway going all the way from north of Perth to Broome, or it is accessible by boat or aircraft. The main industries in the region are tourism, fishing and pastoralism with a great reliance on tourism. Tourism in the Shark Bay area concentrates at the Francoise Peron National Park as well as the wider Marine Park which comprises approximately 70 per cent of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area (DEC 2009). Best known tourism attractions in Shark Bay are the wild dolphins in Monkey Mia, the lagoons, particularly Big Lagoon, the four wheel drive tracks and beauty of Francoise Peron National Park, the stromatolites of Hamelin Bay, Shell Beach, as well as the sea grass beds and associated marine species such as dugongs, turtles, and dolphins to name a few. The remoteness of the area is often considered to be an attraction in itself. With tourism being so prominent in Shark Bay and delivering tourism experiences to visitors on a commercial basis the issue becomes one of balancing conservation with recreation. As such, it is important to know what the key players, in this instance tour operators and protected area managers, think with respect to each other and how they actually work together.

### **Acquiring the Information**

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory case study research approach and was conducted in mid-2000. The approach is suited to situations that benefit from an empathic understanding of societal phenomena and includes human dimensions of behaviour and subjective aspects of their experiences (Neuman 2000). To be able to analyse and understand the data – the building blocks of quotes, and the interaction between the respondents – it is important to grasp the meaning of what was said. Applying this approach means working with beliefs, particularly the respondents' beliefs that underlie what they say and mean.

This is the story of 15 protected area managers and seven commercial tour operators from Shark Bay. The respondents, protected area managers and commercial tour operators, were selected via purposive sampling with the aim to select information-rich respondents with extensive experience in managing, or working in, protected areas. The aim of using this sampling process was to gain a deeper understanding of the selected groups. To obtain meaningful information, as well as allowing for full representativeness of the respondents' perspectives, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted. Respondents included managers

working in various capacities: rangers, senior field staff, middle managers, policy makers and branch managers. The operators which participated as part of this project ranged from small owner/operator businesses to large companies; tours ranged from local area servicing to national operating tours, as well as operators offering a variety of tours. The types of tours the participating operators run ranges from seniors' tours, coach tours in 48-seater buses offering sightseeing, to specialised tours such as boat cruises, four wheel drive tag-along tours and adventure tours.

Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to their expectations of each other and perceptions regarding their working arrangements. None of the questions referred specifically to their working relationships. They were invited to talk about their work, their expectations of 'good' managers/operators, but also their views of current barriers to working together. Their views were recorded and analysed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues influencing their relationships.

The process of inductive content analysis was used to analyse the collected data. The interviewees' responses were coded relying on pattern coding across interviews and across groups to describe and illustrate emergent themes. Themes were then grouped into categories. Interview extracts, mostly direct quotations are used to tell the story and give the respondents voice.

### **The Issues and Events on a Local Level**

Providing tourism products in protected areas is a combined effort of various stakeholders; this chapter specifically examines the working relationships between protected area managers and commercial tour operators in the Shark Bay area. How well they work together influences the quality of the product, the satisfaction of visitors, and contributes to the protection of the natural resource base upon which the industry depends.

A rise in visitation to protected areas means inevitably an increased number of encounters between protected area managers and commercial tour operators in these areas. These encounters are frequently not 'straight forward' because the managers' and operators' presence in the park is for different purposes, which often appear to be in conflict. Operators, for example, use the park as part of their product in delivering an experience to their customers whereas the managers' primary objective is the conservation of the area. Managers are concerned that tourism becomes a higher priority than conservation.

The conflict between managers and operators does sometimes take the form of resisting each other and resisting working collaboratively with each other. Their difficulties may be based on managers' resistance to the increased dependence on income through tourism (Eagles et al. 2002), whereby operators resistance towards working amicably with each other is based on the concept that nature is



free, universally owned, and visiting protected areas should be free of charge. The following quote by an operator in the Shark Bay area illustrates this point:

One of the biggest issues up here [Shark Bay area] is that people who are in charge of the protected areas don't want anyone else to see them. In fact they hate us [operators] and the tourists. They [conservation agency] just want the money we pay them, we pay a licence fee plus a per head entry fee every time we come to the park (operator a).

According to some operators not only the group of operators felt having lost the privilege of access, instead the whole local community had the impression that the privilege of using 'their' park and a particular area which was closed off was taken from them because in their view the conservation agency 'grabbed it'. Most of the local operators thought that there exists a clear rift between the local community, of which they are a part, and the managers, who are based in the community. As a result of the perceived divide between the operators and the managers responsible for the management of the protected area and living in the town, it was evident that the local operators congregated and created an 'us versus them' scenario. Below quotes are such examples:

Everything here worked so much better before the agency moved in. They [protected area managers] should just go or we kick them out ... They don't mingle in town because they are so afraid. They split the town in half (operator b).

There is the perception in the local community, because they are the ones who are affected, that the agency has come along, grabbed it [a specific area], locked it up and denied access. The local community suffers, they lose out as part of their recreational activities. This puts the managers off-side with the community. The rangers will tell you they can't give access to some people and not others, therefore lock all up (operator c).

As the first quote (operator b) illustrates, the interviewed operator believes that the group of local operators is in the position to 'kick out the conservation agency'. In voicing this belief or assumption the operator displays the group's overestimation of their combined powers as well as a sense of uniformity.

The second quote (operator c) illustrates the operator's lack of understanding why access is denied to one area within the national park. The group of local operators was angry with the managers in the area, because they perceived the managers were interfering with what they considered as their right with regard to protected areas (e.g. free access). Prior to the area's recognition as a protected area with World Heritage status, members of the community as well as commercial operators had unrestricted access and perceived freedom to utilise the resource to their liking. The quote furthermore illustrates the notion of 'we always did it why can't we keep doing it', which is an indication of the group's closed-mindedness

in their unwillingness and reluctance to understand why change occurred and accept it.

Similarly to the group formed by operators in that locale, managers also formed a group based on their experiences and beliefs. The group of managers in the district consider the local operators as stubborn, resentful and antagonistic when asked what they thought of them. Several managers in that locale outlined a specific example how some of the local operators spoke about the conservation agency. According to these managers the group of local operators openly displayed their dislike and resentment towards the agency. Corresponding statements provided by managers (see below quote) describe their impressions of several operators voicing their strong negative opinion about the agency and the conflict they have with managers:

I even know of operators up here who quite openly discuss the conflict with their customers in terms of bad-mouthing the agency and things like that. It has a negative effect on everyone, not just for us [conservation agency]. You can't hide the fact that there is conflict I guess but you certainly don't make a big thing of it, or you put it into perspective but I guess that's why there is conflict, there is a lack of putting it into perspective (manager a).

The quote illustrates how some of the operators use their power and the opportunity to slander the managers and the agency through discourse. This manager perceived the operator's openly displayed resistance as animosity with the intention of instilling resentment towards the agency in their customers. From the agency's perspective, this behaviour has negative impacts on the agency's profile, particularly when visitors tell these stories to others. Furthermore, the operator's behaviour had an immediate effect within the local community. They often boasted amongst their peers about what they have done, namely communicating to their customers their conflicts with managers in the area.

The conflict between managers and operators goes frequently beyond the individuals directly involved. One manager spoke about an incident that involved the whole family:

For example, at Shire meetings they [operators] bad mouth the agency. They form their little groups and tell everyone what we [managers] did to them, for example if we tell them that dogs are not allowed at the beach in Monkey Mia they carry on that we police them. It gets pretty bad; we had staff members who asked to be transferred to other regions because they have had enough. Like for one of our guys, his wife got abused when she went shopping and he was afraid that it filters through to his kids in the local school [manager b]

According to the manager who reported this incident, the tension and perceived animosity became so bad that the manager requested a transfer through the agency and the family moved away.

## **What Does it all Mean?**

It is important to recognise that this is not an 'either/or' scenario; that of either conservation or tourism. Implicitly, tourism in protected areas can have positive effects, such as providing a mechanism to generate income, raise public awareness of the area, offer education and information as well as a range of values (Putney 2003). However, it also has negative effects; for example, the degradation of resources, disturbance of wildlife, habitat destruction and potential loss of biodiversity. Recognising this dichotomy is not as obvious as it might seem, when considering the positions and views managers and operators hold. Managers and operators working in protected areas have similar values with regard to protected areas, for both the conservation of these areas is of significance (Wegner et al. 2007). For operators it is very important to sustain the resource (the protected area) and limit impacts from their tours as their livelihood depends on maintaining the area without negative impacts, as to do so may jeopardise their future income. In contrast, managers and the conservation agency frequently rely on the income generated to subsidise work programs as well as managing for conservation (Buckley 2000).

In the context of the working relationships between managers and operators it is important to recognise that individuals are frequently guided, in part at least, by their personal values and beliefs. Their employment situation and associated policy context will influence to what degree they practice their personal values in their working environment. Individuals, naturally, sometimes have slightly different values than those in the policy context of their work, even though they may generally agree with underlying policy values. Furthermore, organisational dynamics influence the level of collaboration and relationship between managers and operators. Organisational dynamics and how individuals use these dynamics in working with each other influence their level of collaboration (Togridou, Hovardas, and Pantis 2006).

People working together for a period of time begin to share common experiences, values, loyalties and work-related knowledge, which have the capacity to form the basis of mutually held expectations of how issues need to be dealt with. They tend to seek approval, want to be recognised and respected, and often feel this status can occur through becoming part of a specific group or a newly formed group (Cohen 1997). The development of new groups often evolves through individuals who have similar views, beliefs or interests, often based on the functions, geography, loyalties, and experience of individuals, or whole units, within an organisation and therefore associated with the individuals identifying themselves as part of such groupings (Cohen 1997). The emergence of 'group standards' a shared frame of reference, is considered as the development of a new group. Becoming part of a group can involve individuals inevitably constructing a new reality for themselves and sharing prevailing ideologies with other group members.

New groups often enjoy a consciousness of 'otherness' by being different. Their members are identified as being a minority of the dominant society based on their

smaller numbers, or by their sometimes different or controversial views and values (Jary and Jary 2000, Thornton 1997). Group members, and as such the 'group' as a whole, work at two levels: firstly, they promote certain ideologies, attitudes, ideas and beliefs that members of that group are supposed to hold and, secondly, they specify certain behaviours and practices (Vanclay and Lawrence 1995). Belonging to a new group is not prescriptive and allows for diversity. People can be part of different groups at different stages of their lives, and many experience difficulties in fulfilling the group's expectations, particularly when they are part of different groups that are in some way in conflict. Members of a particular group tend to adopt a particular identity in addition to certain sets of behaviour, attitudes and values, and it is expected that group members will comply and adopt these (Vanclay and Lawrence 1995).

The continued input into and serviceability by group members into the group's belief and value system provides for the viability of solutions as viewed by its members and therefore gives rise to group solidarity and compliance. Compliance of members within a group is often achieved through peer pressure, as part of the enforcement of members' expectations (Vanclay and Lawrence 1995) and 'groupthink' (Janis 1982). Peer pressure explains why individuals may act in certain ways, which might not be in accordance with more widely accepted behaviour (Vanclay and Lawrence 1995).

The phenomenon of groupthink has been identified in previous studies, which suggested that being part of a group encourages group thinking amongst its members (Flippen 1999, Janis 1982, Morgan 1997, Twright and Lyden 1989). The original theory of groupthink was introduced by Janis in 1972 and further expanded by him in 1982 (Flippen 1999). A range of characteristics are apparent in groupthink: stereotyping, conformity, complacency, perception of invulnerability, 'we' feeling, being judgemental, group dynamics, peer pressure, reluctance to admit personal doubts and views, homogenisation of viewpoints and shared illusions/images/visions (Janis 1982). Decisions made by group members based on groupthink can be very subjective, biased and prejudiced, as individuals have difficulties perceiving and considering evidence, feedback or other information that is contradictory to their own beliefs. Groupthink is recognised as being a process rather than an outcome, it evolves and changes, it can occur in almost any type of group, and it can happen in work teams in a work environment on a day-to-day basis when decisions are made (Flippen 1999, Manz and Sims 1982).

Since the groupthink model's conceptualisation it was used extensively, widely cited, but also critiqued (Turner and Pratkanis 1998). Some authors identified some shortcomings of the model. To name a few, the lack of empirical testing of the model (Aldag and Fuller 1993, Baron n.d.), conflicting views of the measure of cohesion (Brown 2000, Hogg and Hains 1998), as well as groupthink antecedent conditions were highlighted as not groupthink specific (Baron n.d.). For example, the concept of cohesion based on individuals' social attraction and identification as part of a group could not be identified as belonging exclusively to groups displaying groupthink when conducted in a laboratory study (Hogg and

Hains 1998). Taking all these concerns and critiques into account, the use and reference of groupthink in this context is not based in pure psychology rather as a means to help understand the characteristics displayed by the groups (protected area managers and operators in Shark Bay) in question.

The formation and rise of new groups in conjunction with groupthink is closely linked to power in that the group's development is frequently based on a perceived powerlessness by an individual or one of the parties (Clegg 1989). The characteristics of groupthink combined with power are useful in explaining the relationships between managers and operators. Interactions and discourse are instrumental for successful collaboration and good relations; however, they may also lead to failure. Discourse in relation to power has multiple layers; firstly by what is verbalised, but secondly by what is not verbalised and stays hidden, with its associated meanings and the linkages between them. Thirdly, discursive elements which appear similar or even identical may have diametrically opposing meanings when considered within the context of one's position, where the same statement can have inherently different outcomes as the meaning is often not disclosed (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Interactions and discourses are guided and driven by one's values and motives and are therefore regularly used as part of one's strategy to achieve a goal through the exercise of power. Power is most commonly exercised through discourse, particularly when viewing power as a dynamic relation, through its very nature of being shifting and opportunistic (Carabine 2001). Although not visibly at first, managers and operators alike showed how their behaviour and actions are based on resistance and also dominance power, which was exercised partly through discourse. The relationship between individuals or groups is recognised as a meshing of power, as the exercise of power and perceived powerlessness (Lukes 2005).

Power is an underlying dynamic force in both the politics of protected areas and the operation of those areas. Our interest here lies with the latter, the power relations between managers and operators that is the operational power dynamics. Their social interactions within their given policy and organisational environment are complex and involve a flow of power. To understand the implications managers' and operators' use of power has to their working relationships it is important to review the notion of power. Power can be understood and described as fluid, shifting, and dynamic (Few 2001, Flyvbjerg 2001, Foucault 1986, Ross, Buchy and Proctor 2002). Power as found in relationships does not necessarily remain with the same individual and/or group because of its 'fluidness' and therefore the power relationship can easily become unstable (Hindess 1996).

Conceptualising power as a dynamic relation recognises that power is not centralised and cannot be possessed; instead, power is dynamic and used and applied as part of strategies, processes or discourse and as such can be found everywhere (Flyvbjerg 2001, Foucault 1979, 2000, Thrift 2000). This understanding of power was put forward by Foucault (Flyvbjerg 2001) who stated that '[p]ower is exercised rather than possessed' (Foucault 1979: 26).

Considering power as dynamic, circling, shifting and moving between people and/or groups, is recognising that power is decentralised. Power and its application and use depends on circumstances and each specific situation. The key point is that the act of exercising power is what makes it recognisable as power. Understanding power as dynamic relation, power being exercised and not possessed, means understanding that power cannot be a structure nor can it take the form of an institution (Wearing and McDonald 2002). Power is always present in interactions and relations between individuals and groups. Another school of thought advocated by Lukes (1974) and Bachrach and Baratz (1962) considers power as possession. Superficially, it appears to be clear that the power lies with the conservation agency; legally managers have the authority to manage protected areas in the states and territories in Australia. However, when considering power it is not sufficient to discuss what power is (possession or dynamic relation), rather how power 'works' and is used.

When considering power as a dynamic relation but also as a possession, there are two main modes of how power can be exercised: (1) domination, or (2) resistance (Few 2001, Sharp, Rougledge, Philo, and Paddison 2000). The way in which power is exercised is often not sufficient to be able to judge how power is used; it is also critical to know how someone else perceives an action and a person's behaviour.

Power, as in dominance power, can be used in an attempt to control or dominate others. The person or group who applies this form of power has the ability to impose his/her own will and manipulate the other. A characteristic of dominance power is that it limits and constrains the choices of others (Lukes 2005). Dominance power is frequently associated with possession, based on individuals or groups exercising and therefore 'possessing' the power.

Resistance power on the other hand is the power the 'powerless' exercise to resist against domination (Few 2001, Sharp et al. 2000). Exercising resistance power can take various forms, such as through discourse, activism, specifically set up situations and actions, and spontaneous undertakings by individuals or groups.

Through the exercise of informal power, dominance of one set of values (for organisational groups and individuals) is gained over the other (Hall 1994). Power within a tourism context has been recognised as being '[a]t the heart of the interplay of values, interests and tourism policy' (Hall 2007: 264). Taking this knowledge into consideration it was necessary to unpack the working relationships between managers and operators in the light of power. How power is used and exercised and the tactics individuals apply as part of the working arrangements between these players has not been extensively researched (Coles and Scherle 2007, Hall 2007). However, it is important to uncover their relationships through the understanding of power as managers and operators inevitably encounter and meet each other in protected areas Australia, or for that matter worldwide.

Considering the concept of power with its implications for the working relationships between managers and operators the findings of this research suggest

that their use of power is the primary constraint between them in their working relationships. The group of local operators in the region actively used resistance power generated by their 'use' of togetherness in their group. These operators share a strong feeling of belonging together in their 'fight' and resistance against the conservation agency and individual managers. This group strongly displayed group characteristics: overestimations, closed-mindedness and uniformity, as part of their resistance against government legislation they are required to follow which gets manifested in their relations with managers.

For example, operators perceived managers as unwilling to work together and share decision-making power. Through growing affiliations to their 'group' and groupthink, the operators repositioned themselves to the stage where they exercised resistance in their dealings with managers. They exercised resistance power in order to work towards their own goals. In contrast, operators perceived managers exercising power beyond their authoritative responsibilities. In identifying this important difference, this story highlights the influence that groups with a strong sense of building alliances and groupthink can have on efforts to work together. For example, members of a group may seek to actively hinder collaboration, which in turn creates conflicts and/or animosity. An understanding of these dynamics provides means of addressing these issues in order to move forward and improve existing working relationships.

The findings of this research lead to the conclusion that resistance, as exercised by the group of local operators in Shark Bay, is based on the cooperation by all or most members of the group and is openly displayed and exercised. Therefore, when looking at the resistance power of more than one individual, it is important to consider it in relation to the existence of groups displaying groupthink characteristics, as it then becomes apparent that exercising resistance power is a strategy used by groups. How both use power negatively has impacted on their working relationship because managers and operators used and exercised power as a means to deal with one another. The strong influence power has on managers' and operators' collaborative efforts could be easily observed in their interactions and frequently commented on by the respondents themselves.

Having illustrated the conflicts between managers and operators in Shark Bay which are based on their use and perceptions of power 'plays', it should be noted that conflicts do not always have negative outcomes and that they can lead to greater flexibility and a broadened perspective of partners. Given that the Foucauldian notion of power is based on dynamic relationships it can be expected that managers will fight against operators' resistance. To overcome resistance and dominating powers it is important to accept each other's position and role. Acquiring a level of acceptance can provide opportunities to work together, particularly providing a platform to participate, consult and collaborate (De Araujo and Bramwell 2002). This story has illustrated, importantly, power (who exercised power and how power is exercised) strongly influences how individuals and members of groups interact with each other and either are able or unable to work together.



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# Chapter 15

## The Introduction of Tourism Destination Management Organisations in Hungary: Top-Down Meets Bottom-Up

Alan Clarke and Ágnes Raffay

This chapter examines the process through which Tourism Destination Management Organisations (Turisztikai desztináció menedzsmnt szervezet [DMOs]) were established in Hungary from 2005 to 2009. DMOs have become an integral part of the national tourism strategy and are seen by the Secretariat for Tourism within the Ministry of Local Authorities as the vehicle for sustainable tourism development throughout the country (Lőrincz et al. 2007). This is the first time in Hungary that funds have been allocated for a major development of DMOs, where destination areas must compete for the recognition to be allowed to operate and to secure funding. This case study focuses on the development of the DMO in Veszprém, an historic



Figure 15.1 Map of Hungary

city in the Central Transdanubia Region of Hungary, a popular destination with both domestic and foreign tourists. Figure 15.1 shows the location of the city within Hungary: close to the capital Budapest (approximately 90 minutes drive), as well as being 15 minutes drive away from the second most popular tourism destination in Hungary, Lake Balaton – the largest freshwater lake in Europe.

DMOs have been widely promoted as an effective strategy for strengthening tourism. One of the crucial research issues identified by Svensson et al. (2005: 33) concerns the inclusiveness of partnership arrangements, who participates, in what roles and who controls access to the partnership. Furthermore, coherence is necessary within DMO partnerships for them to be successful; coherence increases credibility by projecting a common outlook and helps to mobilise resources to implement the agreed agenda. Concerns about transferring power and responsibility to other agencies can prove very difficult to overcome. In the case study, the subject of this chapter, there was a transfer of power and authority from a previously established voluntary partnership to a statutory DMO. Hungary has been governed by a centralised system, where local discretion has flourished within the confines of clearly defined central policies. The recognition of numerous problems arising in tourism development due to the lack of co-ordination and cohesion among the vast number of players in the tourism industry has brought with it the need for finding ways of bringing the ‘interested parties’ together to address the issues of complexity, coordination and adaptation (Bramwell and Pomfret 2007). In tourism, actors can be grouped into the following two broad categories: (1) interested parties – all those who gain their income directly or indirectly from tourism and those who ensure the quality of the tourism product with their active participation in the provision; and (2) affected parties – all those who do not benefit from tourism financially but have to endure the impacts of tourism (Üdülöhelyi igazgatóságok a Balaton régióban – Tanulmány 2004). Tourism development at local and regional levels aims to widen the range of interested actors and minimise the impacts on affected parties as much as possible. Partnership programmes can be designed to increase the number of actors that can be seen to be capable and legitimate players in processes of tourism development. The emergence of private sector led partnerships has been a major feature of the new Hungarian regime that has emerged since the shaking off of communism. Attempts to marry market forces with state provision have proved less than successful in a number of areas, from health to power supplies, but in tourism there are possibilities to bring the public and the private sector together to work more effectively to advance the interests of tourist destinations and the country more generally.

### **Perspectives on Collaboration and Partnerships**

Collaboration and partnership building has emerged as a major area of concern in the tourism literature (e.g. see Bramwell and Lane 1999, Bramwell and Sharman 1999). The inclusion of chapter 13 (on Partnerships and Collaboration) in Mason’s

book (2008) on impacts, planning and management is evidence of this move into the more mainstream concerns of tourism. Mason (2008) makes the point that many different terms are used to describe the arrangements that can be found in tourism – coalitions, forums, alliances, task forces – but collaboration is particularly favoured by the academic researchers, whilst practitioner circles use the term partnership. This captures the authors' position; we are academics concerned with the theoretical dimensions of collaboration but we are also participants in the story, and are centrally concerned with partnerships!

Collaborative planning in tourist destinations usually involves direct dialogue among participating stakeholders, including the public sector planners, and this has the potential to lead to negotiation, shared decision-making and consensus-building about planning goals and actions (Bramwell and Sharman 1999). Although Stevenson, Airey and Miller (2008) observe that tourism exists on the margins of local authority policy making, they note that it is intricately connected to other areas and cannot be separated easily. Jamal and Getz (1995: 188) define collaborative planning in tourism as a 'process of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stakeholders ... to resolve planning problems ... and/or to manage issues related to the planning and development'. Wahab and Pigram (1998: 283) suggest that sustainable tourism requires that 'the planning, development and operation of tourism should be cross-sectional and integrated, involving various government departments, public and private sector companies, community groups and experts, thus providing the widest possible safeguards for success'. This depicts an ideal situation, which is often far from reality. De Araujo and Bramwell (2000: 274) are more realistic, acknowledging that 'participation in tourism planning in destinations can be limited to collating public opinion as an input into public sector planning, and this can be a one-way consultation process when there is little direct dialogue between the stakeholders and planners'. D'Angella and Go (2009) in their studies of Barcelona and Vienna demonstrate the significant role that inclusivity plays and the importance of social relations within and around a DMO.

Similar observations have been made by those studying networks in tourism (Dredge 2006a and b). However, much of the work on clusters, micro-clusters and networks (Michael 2007, Scott et al. 2008) merely identifies and maps nodes within these relationships without trying to explore the dynamic and multiple realities constructed within the situation (Bramwell and Meyer 2007). The tourism industry is characterised by a plethora of actors, with different interests and values. It is therefore, an enormous challenge to persuade these individuals and organisations to sit down together and work towards mutually accepted solutions.

One of the key issues in Gray's collaboration theory (1989) is the identification of all the relevant stakeholders. Currie et al. (2008) have recently revisited this in the context of feasibility studies. The identification of stakeholders and representation are equally important in tourism collaboration. 'It is very difficult to make overall statements about whether the range of the stakeholders involved in the planning process was representative of the stakeholders affected by a project' (Medeiros de



Araujo and Bramwell 2000: 292). Once players have been identified, Ladkin and Bertramini (2002: 75) suggest that:

[O]ne of the most important challenges is building trust between the actors and a recognition that there is a shared problem ... a joint formulation of aims and objectives on the plan for tourism development should be undertaken at the outset. It is the willingness to strive for a 'common good' that is an essential precondition to the development of a collaborative approach.

Gray (1989) remains a seminal text and underpins many of the arguments that are still at the heart of the contemporary analyses of collaboration. Gray argues that there are certain situations where collaboration offers a better framework for tackling the problem than other methods of decision-making. The following are examples of cases when collaboration could be considered as the ideal method:

- Several stakeholders have a vested interest in the problems and are interdependent.
- These stakeholders are not necessarily identified *a priori* or organized in any systematic way.
- There may be a disparity of power and/or resources for dealing with the problems among the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders may have different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problems.
- Differing perspectives on the problems often lead to adversarial relationships among stakeholders (1989: 10).

Leadership has also been identified as playing a critical role in developing partnerships, as a strong leader will act as a catalyst to bring different interests together, 'a strong-willed, enthusiastic person who ... would not take no for an answer' (Selin and Chavez 1995: 849). This echoes Gray's comment, 'A special breed of leaders is also needed if more systematic use of collaboration is to occur' (Gray 1989: 279).

### **Collaborative Capacity**

Reviewing contributions from Ladkin and Bertramini (2002), Simpson (2001), Bramwell and Sharman (1999) and Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell (200), a range of benefits that can flow from successful collaborations can be identified. Collaboration reduces the likelihood of adversarial conflict by promoting efficiency, equity and harmony. Those involved in collaboration may feel a greater ownership of the process and therefore afford the outcomes greater legitimacy. Collaboration also adds value by building the store of knowledge, insights, and capabilities amongst those involved. The object of collaboration is to produce a performance

**Table 15.1 Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Reduced costs of reconciling conflicts (Yuksel et al. 1999)	Additional cost (Marien and Pizam 1997)
Pooling resources (Bramwell and Lane 1999)	Problems in identifying legitimate stakeholders (Reed 1997)
Adheres to the concept of democracy and Agenda 21 thus legitimising activity (WTTC 1996)	Limited capacity of stakeholders to participate (Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell 1999)
Increases equitable outcomes (Hall 2000)	Raise expectations unrealistically (Gray 1989)
Uses local knowledge and builds capabilities (Healey 1997)	Silent majority may not be heard (Tosun 2000)

*Source:* Adapted from Aas et al. (2005: 30–32)

that is better in economic, community and/or sustainable terms than would have been likely without the collaboration. The idea is that collaboration allows for individuals and organisations to maximise their abilities in ways that pursuing their own self-focused agendas would not permit. This increase in capacity is seen as benefiting all those involved in the process as the actions of the whole become greater than the sum of the individual parts. Table 15.1 summarises these and other advantages and disadvantages of collaboration drawn from the literature.

Social, cultural and political conditions will impact on the development of collaboration. Tosun (2000) referred to these barriers to participation as being operational, structural and cultural limits to community participation. Therefore it has to be recognised that collaboration will be affected by the setting.

The notion of equity is important to collaboration theory; collaboration is thought to increase equity as involvement mitigates power differentials. However, simply establishing the collaboration does not necessarily overturn the existing distribution of power or alter the resource flows. Sainaghi (2006) suggested that this could be addressed through a dynamic model of destination management. Using the ideas of competitive destinations (Ritchie and Crouch 2000), Sainaghi (2006) argues that there are two dimensions to destination collaboration: (1) the primary local product systems; and (2) the support processes that provide the glue for the tourism development to come together. It is also important to remember that there is competition amongst stakeholders for scarce resources (March and Wilkinson 2009) and that these conflicts also have to be resolved (Clarke and Raffay 2008).

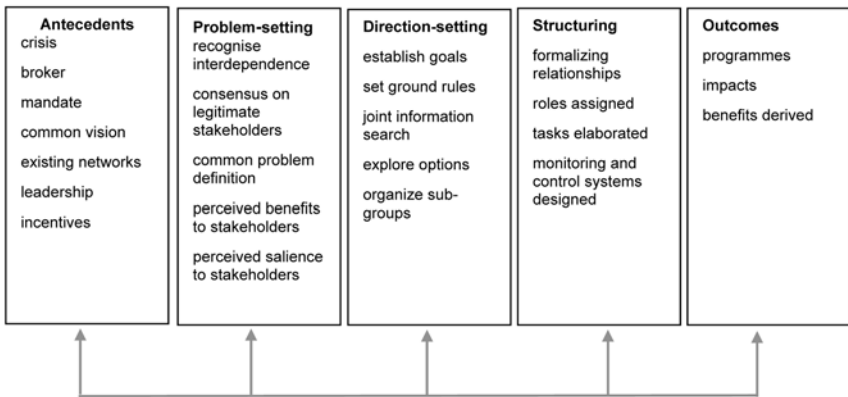
Maximising capacities creates the basis for collaborative advantage. Huxham (1993: 22) defines collaborative advantage as ‘the creation of synergy between collaborating organisations’. He compares the concept with that of competitive advantage (see Porter 1985), claiming that the comparison raises the awareness of collaborative activities and also legitimises those activities. He notes that in the case of competitive advantage:

[T]he competitive environment is assumed to exist; the issue is about how to gain the advantage. In the case of collaborative advantage, however, the environment is assumed *not* to exist, or at least not to exist in a fully effective form. The issue here, therefore, is about how to create an effective collaborative environment (Huxham 1993: 22).

Bornhorst et al. (2009) also highlight the capacity to create an effective collaborative environment in their study of DMO success factors.

Selin and Chavez (1995) see partnerships as ideal collaborative arrangements. Partnership in their case is understood (based on Gray's [1985] definition) as the 'voluntary pooling of resources (labour, money, information, etc.) between two or more parties to accomplish collaborative goals' (1995: 845). Selin and Chavez refer to a continuum of possible partnership arrangements with only brief interactions at one end to a highly structured collaborative organisation at the other. Their 'Evolutionary Model of Tourism Partnerships' utilises Gray's theory to the extent of using Gray's own words in the model. The similarities suggest that partnership and collaboration are to be used as identical categories in Selin and Chavez's work.

Figure 15.2 presents a simple evolutionary model of partnership development that can be easily challenged. We believe that the dynamics of partnership building could be better captured by a series of loops that move from box to box and return to previous boxes, not just as feedback loops but also as reconstitutive revisiting of the elements in those boxes. This figure is useful in that it visualises the crucial elements involved in the building of successful partnerships. However it does not address issues of inclusiveness or the power relations within and outside partnerships; these factors should be read into the model if it is to be used to examine partnership building in practice.



**Figure 15.2** An evolutionary model of tourism partnerships

Source: Adapted from Selin and Chavez (1995: 848)

## **Approach and Methodology**

This study adopts a social constructionist perspective, as a means of gaining an understanding of the views of the various stakeholders involved in tourism development processes. Until recently, policy making has taken a rational approach (Pforr 2005), which often fails to explore or explain change. We support Bramwell and Meyer (2007) when they call for a holistic approach that captures both context and power. As Stevenson et al. (2008: 734) observe, thick descriptions can 'include investigation into the irrational and less tangible aspects of policy making'. It is important to recognise that there are multiple and subjective interpretations amongst stakeholders (Dredge 2010). In this research we adopted a grounded theory approach but not in the classic sense (Glaser and Strauss 1968), as we do not believe that researchers can enter the field without some pre-constructed knowledges of the research arena. We therefore operated with an 'informed grounded theory' approach, which acknowledges but seeks to test the pre-existing versions of the topic from our own experience, previous studies and the literature with the views emerging from the participants. We do not believe that the storytellers can be left out of the story.

The data used to explore the development of the DMO in Veszprém was derived from interviews with key informants and participant observation undertaken between March 2005 and July 2009. Initially individuals were selected for interview because their roles appeared in the tourism stakeholder literatures on collaboration and tourism partnerships and/or were present in the tourism developments in the city from the public, private and voluntary sectors. In order to capture the dynamic nature of stakeholder relations in the city and the participants' own constructions of these events, a snowball technique was also used wherein informants could identify other potential interviewees whom they saw as key players in the city's tourism. Prior to the research, the researchers knew some of the participants and their suggestions opened new doors and new relationships. Okumus et al. (2007) have written about the ways of gaining access to organisations but in this case study there was never a problem and little sense of gatekeepers restricting access to knowledgeable participants. If the formal channels seemed blocked there were other informal, personalised ways to approach a potential participant. In this setting the notion of cold calling is almost inconceivable.

The interviews were semi-structured with interview questions covering the same ground but not necessarily in the same order. Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations from offices to coffee bars, from the mayor's parlour to a participant's kitchen and lasted between one hour and one hour and 45 minutes. All the interviews concluded with a question asking the participant to reflect on other areas that they thought would have been covered during the interview but which they felt had not been sufficiently covered.

The interviews were recorded and responses were organised into themes based on the use of key words and phrases used by participants. The data were then analysed in theme-specific matrixes, highlighting emerging patterns and

allowing for the comparability of the responses from the stakeholders with different backgrounds.

Participant observation has been carried out by the researchers since 2005. The researchers have observed the establishment of the Veszprém Tourism Association (VTA), which as we will show can be considered the preliminary stage (antecedent) of the development of the Veszprém DMO. We believe that studying these moments, what Healey (2005) terms 'episodes of governance', allows a deeper understanding of the patterns of relations within the processes of development through the elaboration of the micropractices. Within the literature on participant observation, there is concern about how far the researchers should make their presence clear to those being observed. In this case there was no possibility of undertaking covert research. The researchers were both well known to the participants. The Raffay family are well known throughout Veszprém; and Ágnes had worked in tourism in the city for both Tourinform and the city council before taking up a position at the university. The arrival of Alan, a British professor of tourism was a major talking point and so, even if there had been any attempt to maintain anonymity, it was never going to be possible in the small society of Veszprém tourism. All participants were made aware that the researchers were following the development of the DMO with a view to writing academic publications.

Participant observation involved attending the VTA meetings, meetings of the Cultural Committee of the local authority (it became known as the Committee for Culture, Tourism and Religion), and events organised by the hosts of the DMO bidding process, the Central Transdanubia Regional Development Agency and the Central Transdanubia Regional Tourism Committee. (The organisations responsible for the allocation of the funds available for the DMOs hosted several events providing information and support for the potential applicants).

Alongside the participant observation in the formal arena, observations also included informal relationships in the city. Given the small size of Veszprém (pop. 60,000), exchanges were encountered in diverse contexts: at social gatherings, outside kindergarten, sports events and festivals. These encounters can be described in Spradley's term (1979: 58) as 'friendly conversations'. These are valuable counterpoints to the official meetings as individuals can have different roles and relationships away from the meetings and demonstrate openness not evident at meetings. Often it would be one of the 'observed' asking us what we thought we were doing and how the research was going. On other occasions there would be conversations not directly related to the DMO process but connected to the individual's own offer within the tourism portfolio. Within these informal contexts comments were often made that clearly related to the changes being proposed within the city.

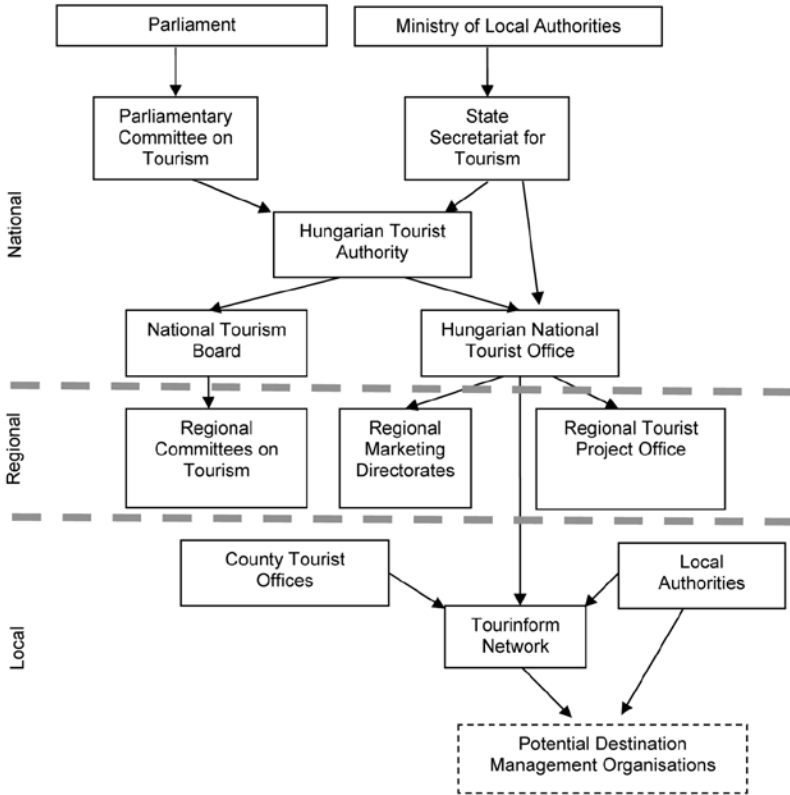
The researchers took notes of our observations and we collected observations from others. We shared our observations with each other and built a composite account of what we thought we had seen. We also took opportunities to feed these observations back to other participants to do a 'reality check', or in this case, a 'multiple realities check'.

## **The Development of the DMO in Veszprém**

In order to understand the complexity of the proposal to establish DMOs, we first explore the existing institutional arrangements for tourism in Hungary. There are still very strong remnants of centralised state structures from the previous, Communist regime. This leads to a complex and often bureaucratic system, where the centre establishes strategic frameworks and targets with which the regions and destinations have to comply. Figure 15.3 shows key relationships between the various bodies and agencies with a role in tourism. This figure, while perhaps simplistic, focuses on the major direction of the flows of deliberative practices, power, influence, resource allocation and decision making within the governmental system. The bottom right of Figure 15.3 demonstrates where the potential DMOs fit into the organisation of tourism in Hungary. At the destination level both the local authority and the Tourinform offices will have a key role in the future DMOs, as there is no project funding available for any DMOs that are set up without the participation of the local authority or the tourist information centre. Equally, to secure funding, private sector businesses and at least one civil organisation have to be members of the new tourism body.

The need for collaboration was apparent in Veszprém for several years before the establishment of the tourism association. There had been numerous attempts to establish a forum with the earlier initiatives coming from the public sector with some private sector support (some businesses backed the idea). These proposals initially were limited to creating room for communication between the various actors within the tourism industry, but were mindful that they could later develop into a partnership with somewhat more ambitious objectives than simply communication. However, when initial enthusiasm faded these attempts always failed. Some of the interviews conducted before the establishment of the VTA brought up the issue. One participant, a restaurant owner, was rather sceptical about attempts to bring the various actors together: 'There's no point in organising tourism forums until the people invited can actually have their voices heard'. Another participant acknowledged that although there are some key individuals who are trying to develop and promote tourism in the city, a city-level action is beyond any individual's or a few individuals' capacities (Clarke and Raffay 2007). As one of the city's members of parliament, who works in the Secretariat for Tourism, mentioned: 'The enthusiasm of one or two people is not enough to achieve major aims'. One of the private sector participants raised his doubts about the various politicians' commitment to tourism: 'As you will see, before the local elections all the candidates put tourism development in their manifesto, and forget most of their promises soon after the elections'.

Collaborative capacity has become an important issue. Traditionally, developing capacity has been seen as widening the range of individuals and organisations that have the skills and knowledge to participate meaningfully in the project. This functional sense of capacity has to be reinforced with the capacity to recognise and be recognised in the discursive politics that inform and determine the context of the



**Figure 15.3 Public sector tourism bodies in Hungary (The Veszprém Tourism Association (VTA))**

collaboration. Therefore, alongside the range of skills involved in urban tourism, a deeper understanding of the construction of positions within the discourses is necessary for researchers and practitioners. Nevertheless, the partnership idea kept cropping up repeatedly, with the difference being that more recently it was the private sector expressing their wish to find ways to develop co-operation and/or collaboration. One interesting comment came from the owner of a reputable hotel in Veszprém, where he suggested that the city could be made more attractive by lighting-up attractions at night and he volunteered to contribute to the costs of doing so. 'If the local authority arranges the illumination of the Viaduct I'll contribute to the costs with the amount of 100,000 Forints per year'. (As it has not happened yet we cannot comment on how much of the costs that amount would cover.) The VTA partnership started to materialise primarily on the basis of personal links between owners and managers of tourism businesses, who thought extending relationships that had proved worthwhile in the past could benefit tourism in Veszprém, and in



turn, their businesses. Most probably, they had also realised that individually they were too small to make a difference. Hence they were looking to join forces to make developments possible that would have positive impacts on their ventures. 'We are too small fish in the city but if all the small fish swim in the same direction then more people would take notice of us'.

The concrete invitation to start the discussions came from a young and energetic entrepreneur (not – yet – disillusioned by the failure of the previous attempts) who owns and runs one of the city centre hotels and is the founding father and organiser of one of the most prestigious cultural events in the city. Initially, he approached businesses where he had informal links with the owners 'We started talking about it again during our usual weekly tennis match', then as the group widened, he and his 'circle of friends' started talks with other tourism-related businesses. The original criterion for involvement was based on the size or significance of the businesses (e.g. hotels with 40 beds and above were going to be invited). It was assumed that the size of the business was relevant to the long-term commitment of the actors and the effective collaboration between the members.

Early discussions determined that this was an association of the private sector and they moved to block the involvement of the public sector as the local council were seen as a controlling and dampening hand on tourism development in the city. This posed a problem for one of the pivotal agencies in the local tourism offer. Throughout Hungary, you will find Tourinform offices offering tourist information services but they are more than Tourism Information Offices. In Veszprém, they are officially a non-profit organisation run under the auspices of the city council. But they operate at arms length from the direct control of the council and fulfil their marketing function by maintaining positive and open relations with the accommodation and attraction providers. Tourinform had therefore created a unique position within the tourism infrastructures in Veszprém and their manager was very widely respected for her professional approach and skills in negotiating the many pitfalls involved in the development of tourism in the city. They were seen as a bridge between public and private sectors, an acceptable go-between, sharing the discourses of both the public and private sectors and valued by both. As the Manager of Tourinform put it:

I can absolutely sympathise with the complaints of the hotel owners, and I think they know it. But as an employee of the local authority I need to bend the way my bosses want me to. However, I'm sometimes too stubborn to do that, that's probably the Aries talking in me.

Tourinform Veszprém, which already had established links with the tourism service providers, was considered an almost inevitable partner for the association. However, it must be noted that the manager of Tourinform was invited to these direction-setting discussions in her personal capacity, and not as a representative from Tourinform. The awkwardness of the situation heavily impacted and still

impacts on the role of Tourinform who are torn between the intention as well as obligation to help tourism-related businesses and seeing the flaws in the operations of the city council that often appear to set obstacles in the way of the tourism businesses.

The entrepreneur built his informal discussions into a series of more formal gatherings, which subsequently became recognisable as the pre-association meetings. These became more frequent, and with that, the circle of the 'desirable' partners widened. By this phase, all accommodation providers were welcome to participate and several restaurants, some cultural event organisers and attractions were getting invitations. Interestingly, the partners expressed strongly their wish not to invite the city council or any of its members to become members in the VTA, despite one of the key objectives of this body being to start talks with the local council regarding issues directly or indirectly involving tourism. As the future members put it: 'We don't want to turn it into a useless gathering with too many rules and not a lot of action, like the local authority committee's work'. This participant is talking about what in English we call a 'talking shop', but the phrase, as yet, does not exist in Hungarian!

After several meetings, the VTA was formally launched in 2005, with the participation of most hotels (including all the ones that are most popular with tourists), two restaurants, a major tourist attraction (Veszprém Zoo), two cultural programme organisers, Tourinform Veszprém and Ágnes, as a Veszprém citizen with an expressed interest in the development of tourism in the city (and researching the development of the VTA!). Interestingly the Church refused repeated invitations to join the association. The centre of the historic city is dominated by church buildings and their attitudes towards tourism – from deciding when to open their museums and galleries and to what can be offered in and around their buildings – have significant impacts on the development of tourism in the city.

The main objectives of the association were to join forces to improve the tourism offer of the city, by presenting high quality and complex product(s), undertaking joint marketing activities to boost their effectiveness and improving the tourism infrastructure such as signposting. Furthermore, the aim was to form a body that would represent the interests of the members and therefore act as a strong and unified interest group when liaising with the local government.

The aims of the VTA related to ensuring regular and institutionalised coordination between the tourism players, primarily by establishing the appropriate channels of communication and the flow of information relevant for the tourism trade; representing the interests of the tourism sector and, as a consulting partner, becoming involved in the preparation of all tourism-related decisions; seeking funding opportunities to develop and implement projects which are in line with the joint interests of the members and which would contribute to the development of the sector; undertaking marketing activities, in particular presenting the city's tourism potential in brochures and the media as

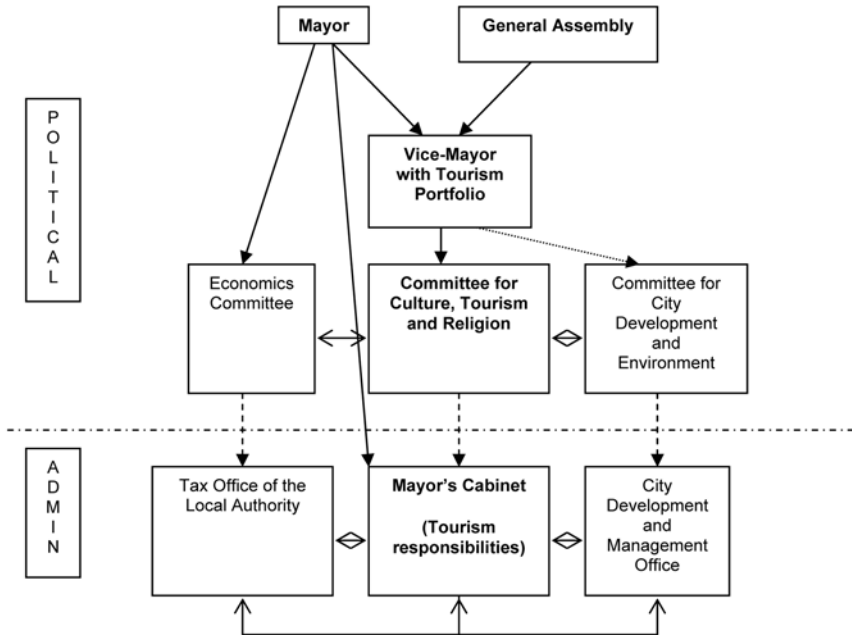
well as on the Internet and co-operating with national and local organisations to foster the development of the tourism offer of Veszprém and its surroundings.

The emphasis on the need for two-way communication between the public and private sectors was based on the impression that the council treated their businesses as 'cash cows', that is to say that the private sector thought the council thought that the various businesses were fine so long as they paid the tourism tax, but their opinion was not needed (and even not welcome) when it came to making decisions directly aimed at or affecting tourism. The VTA's basic proposition was that the private sector ought to be able to see how the tourism tax (which they regard as 'their money') was spent, and as a next step, they would have liked to be involved in decisions as to how to use the tax revenue generated by their businesses. To be able to achieve this, the VTA wanted a place in the relevant committees of the city council, which they hoped would legitimise their involvement. They believed that it was more likely to happen if an organisation representing a group of stakeholders approached the council with this wish. It is easy to spot the contradiction though: the city council was not a desirable partner in the VTA in any shape or form, but the VTA felt that they should be represented in at least one, possibly more, of the committees of the council.

Figure 15.4 presents an overview of the political and administrative units involved with tourism in Veszprém including both the elected and the officer/civil service elements of the public sector arrangements for tourism. Again the arrows are an attempt to demonstrate the major flows of communications and power within the local authority.

In the Hungarian local government system, the mayor holds the predominant power alongside the General Assembly. The mayor, elected directly by the local citizens, is the key decision maker and centre for media attention. The mayor is authorised to make certain political decisions without needing to consult or even to gain the consent of the General Assembly, and in case of equal numbers of votes for and against an issue, the mayor will cast the deciding vote. The members of the General Assembly elect a vice-mayor or vice-mayors (depending on the size of the settlement, and this will usually be based on the proportion of seats the various political parties have won at the local elections), and the General Assembly then assign a portfolio to the posts. The vice-mayors then report to the mayor on the issues relating to their areas. It is also the vice-mayors who work closely with the administrative units of the local authority; in the case of Veszprém this now includes the mayor's Cabinet, which holds responsibility for tourism. However, given the nature of tourism, other offices are also closely involved, such as the City Development and Management Office and even the Tax Office of the Local Authority as the latter collects the tourism tax from the accommodation providers.

To address the funding issue, the local authority organised a meeting to clarify the use of the tourism tax with the participation of the VTA. The meeting was on this occasion hosted by the city council and both the head of the council's tax office and the vice-mayor (with tourism responsibilities) were present. First, the



**Figure 15.4** Overview of political and administrative units in Veszprém

figures of the previous three years were presented to provide the VTA members with a picture of the volume of tourism tax accrued and what it was spent on. Then a discussion followed where the businesses reinforced their wish to have a say in the use of the tax revenue (preferably by becoming involved in the work of the relevant committees), and where the vice-mayor made it clear that this would not happen in the near future for various reasons. His reasons referred to some technical difficulties (the organisational structure and regulations did not allow for changing the committee structures and the decision-making process) as well as to the council's concern that without the tourism tax in the overall budget other areas would suffer (such as funding for schools and other non-income generating public services). A later remark from the vice-mayor gave an interesting twist to the discussions: he hinted that he would be 'more open to find ways of private sector involvement in the budget decisions if the tourism tax revenue was significantly higher than the current level'. It was clear to many that without wishing to state it explicitly, his remark sounded like he doubted the honesty of the businesses when it came to their tax returns. Not surprisingly, the participants of the meeting did not applaud this suggestion, but at least they had a better understanding of what their money was used for.

Even though the question of how the local tourism tax was being spent brought the issue of joint decision making to the surface, the VTA aimed to be part of

all tourism-related decisions in the city. Interestingly, one of the interviewees, the managing director of a key attraction in the city, expressed his doubts as to whether there were any decisions made that related to tourism rather than things just happening without conscious decisions. When he was prompted with a question about his perception about the decision making process(es) in Veszprém, he simply replied with a question: 'Are there any decisions?'

In terms of successful achievements of destination management organisations, the above story would probably not rank very highly even though it was important for the members of the VTA in question. However, another success the VTA has recorded since its establishment was undertaking the first joint marketing action in the form of producing a new city guidebook, which was awarded the prize of Best Tourism Brochure at the Budapest International Tourism and Travel Fair in 2007.

The development of the Veszprém Tourism Association has been rapid since its establishment in 2005. A number of events have strengthened the partnership, and although these were all of varying significance they all contributed to forging a strong collaboration. The association saw a positive change in membership numbers. Word-of-mouth helped to spread the information about the activities and achievements of the VTA, and also it was given enough publicity in the local media to make it sound attractive enough for new members to want to join. However, the number of newcomers was still far from what the VTA would have liked in terms of efficient collaboration (especially as the restaurants were rather underrepresented in the Association).

Another significant event (though on a different scale) that has brought on change was the local elections in October 2006, when a new mayor was elected and the opposition gained majority control in the local council. Veszprém had grown accustomed to the mayor, who had been elected with the first democratic elections in the country and successfully stood for re-election in the three subsequent elections. However, despite not being a member of the party, he had become associated with the governing party of the country who were embroiled in a serious political scandal. Their leader (and prime minister) admitted that they had lied about the state of the economy to get themselves re-elected. Unfortunately this admission, made to what he thought was a closed meeting of the party, was recorded and became public almost immediately. In the local elections almost all the sitting politicians found themselves losing their positions, as there was an overwhelming vote for change. It was so surprising in Veszprém that neither the departing mayor nor the incoming mayor had prepared speeches for the transition of authority. The new mayor has not shown much interest in tourism, except where it threatens his credibility. He famously intervened to stop a development of the new city tourism marketing initiative because it saw the city council and the VTA working together in jointly funding and jointly judging the competition for the new image. The panel included two artists and the organiser of the Poster Festival in Budapest as well as the representatives from the council and VTA. They selected a dramatic and controversial entry shown in Figure 15.5.



**Figure 15.5** Winning poster in the Vesprém poster competition

*Source:* Courtesy of the Vesprém Tourism Association

The statues depicted in Figure 15.5 are found at the top of the historic city and depict István, the first king of Hungary, and Gizella, his queen who was crowned in Vesprém. The manipulation of the image caused huge uproar. After complaints through the local newspaper and the Church, the mayor intervened directly, using his position, and his recently established democratic mandate and his budgetary control, to pull the campaign and substitute it with the design which had finished second (see Figure 15.6a).

However, even this design had to be amended before it was approved for public display – the additions are significant in terms of the destination image, adding a family-friendly set of figures in the foreground (massively out of proportion with the buildings in the background) and two of the stars from the zoo, the biggest tourist attraction in the city (see Figure 15.6b). The monkeys now have a world-class facility in the zoo and the rhinoceros – Pablo – had recently arrived as the celebrity of the savannah exhibit. It is not an accurate representation of the town but it is a positive representation of what the city values about itself. Please note the addition of the green trees behind the monkey in the bottom right hand corner, reinforcing the city's sense of environmentally friendly development and the proximity of the Bakony hills. The twin spires of the cathedral have also been added, once again implicitly recognising the power of the church within the city and within the tourist offer of the city.

This demonstration of power served to remind all the stakeholders of the reality of their relationships – the emerging frameworks had not challenged the traditional position of the city council and as the major funder its power of veto still remained. The language of partnership may have been established but the discursive constructs had not shifted the micropractices of the operational realities underpinning the decision-making processes (Cheong and Miller 2000).





**Figure 15.6** Second prize winner in Veszprém poster competition (Top image (a) second prize winning poster; Bottom image (b) second prize poster after modifications)

*Source:* Courtesy of the Veszprém Tourism Association

However, the new vice-mayor responsible for tourism has proved to be open and committed to tourism development in the city. As the interviews and participant observations revealed, he had quickly gained respect from the representatives of the tourism industry as he was generally seen to be supportive of ideas and initiatives linked directly or indirectly to tourism regardless of where they originated.

The new local authority set up and the new vice-mayor provided an opportunity for the VTA to reconsider whether it would create a closer (working) relationship with the local authority. As a result, the relevant members of the local council (vice-mayor, Head of City Development and Tourism Committee) were invited to all the meetings of the Tourism Association, and the VTA was also invited to be present at the committee meetings. On occasions the committee meetings were held jointly with the VTA meetings, hosted by members of the VTA.



When the first news of the possible funding for Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) came out, the talks between the VTA and the local authority started to turn to a series of discussions about establishing a DMO with the participation of the local authority and the VTA. It is arguable whether we can refer to this as a bottom-up approach as without the incentive coming from the top of the administrative hierarchy, the local authority and the VTA would probably still be two separate entities characterised by occasional co-operation rather than long-term collaboration.

Due to the set of strict conditions defined for the application, the long process of preparation of the local DMO started towards the end of 2007. The funding available for the establishment of DMOs was linked to different bidding processes across the country. In the Central Transdanubia region that Veszprém is part of, the Regional Development Agency overseeing the bidding processes and allocation of funds in its region, decided to turn it into a two-stage process. The first round was the 'registration stage', where the potential partnerships could demonstrate that they fulfilled all the conditions. These conditions included criteria such as the minimum number of guest nights spent in the destination; the proportion of the tourism businesses that had to be part of the DMO; all three sectors (public, private, voluntary) had to be members of the DMO; the financial contribution of the members, etc. (It must be noted that the necessary minimum number of guest nights per year was defined by the relevant RDAs based on statistical data from the previous years, as a way of recognising the destinations with real potential for tourism, i.e. they did not wish to fund partnerships that they did not deem viable in the long run.) In this case, fewer areas submitted bids than had been anticipated because the processes enforced were seen as too daunting. The documents were so complicated that many were given to consultants. For those still in the running this means that the rewards are higher as the pot of funding has remained the same, but will be shared between fewer DMOs.

Even though it does not bear direct relevance for Veszprém, one rather interesting issue must be mentioned as an example of using top-down tourism policy in a process where the bottom-up approach is necessary. During the bidding process, in every DMO-related document and at every event the emphasis was on explaining the key features of successful destination management organisations – including the need for the initiatives to come from the potential members of the partnership. However, at two of the information and support providing events, the RDA allocating the fund was almost urging two destinations that were not eligible to apply to form a DMO together to be able to submit a bid. The destinations were in relative geographic proximity to each other but had rather different characters and a significantly different tourism offer, so neither of the two parties saw any potential in collaboration other than being able to qualify for government money. Another example of a similar approach suggested that two settlements of a larger lake tourism destination formed separate DMOs and submitted two applications in order

to receive twice the sum they would be eligible for as one DMO. This was the point where we thought that the split in the destination recommended by the RDA posed a real threat in terms of depriving the (tourism) community of an otherwise coherent destination.

Going back to our main storyline, Veszprém exceeded the minimum number of guest nights but had to make sure that all the other conditions were fulfilled. The question of all three sectors being represented was answered by the suggestion that two of the city's major attractions, both independent but partly owned and financed by the local authority, were nominated to represent the businesses. These are the Veszprém Zoo and the new Veszprém Arena, opened in 2008. The VTA became the third member of the partnership, representing the voluntary sector, even though the majority of the members are tourism businesses.

The issue of funding was crucial both from the point of view of the bid and from the long-term viability of the DMO. As part of the tender the recommended structure of funding suggested that the local authority's contribution was 70 per cent, the private sector's was 20 per cent and the voluntary sector's contribution was 10 per cent. At the time of the registration, the VTA's membership fees did not cover the 10 per cent of the estimated costs of the future DMO (calculations were based on the current funding practice of Tourinform Veszprém, covering the costs of running the Tourism Information Centre and all the marketing activities). Therefore, the board of the VTA recognised the need to generate higher revenues but also realised that simply increasing membership fees would still not provide sufficient funds. The solution suggested a 20 per cent increase of membership fees and the launch of a campaign to recruit new members to the association.

Although the VTA had always sought to increase the number of members, the real push came from the government initiative to support the establishment of DMOs. Due to the intensive campaign to win new members for the organisation, the membership of the VTA almost doubled during the six months of the bidding process (from 17 active members to 27). Also the membership began to reflect the structure of the tourism offer of the city. How this develops into the future will depend on how the leader of the partnership adjusts to a very different formal role within the DMO. Moreover, if he reacts negatively to the minority role he will now occupy on the Board of the DMO, dynamic leadership will need to come from elsewhere.

### **Veszprém Not for Profit Tourism Association (Veszprém DMO)**

The application for the DMO funds was successful in the first phase of the bidding process and Veszprém was recommended to form the organisation in the required legal framework as only the established DMOs would be eligible to receive the actual funding (at the registration phase, the local authority acted

as the lead partner). In February 2009, the Veszprém Not for Profit Tourism Association was legally established. The new set-up has to change the role of the VTA as it is now only one of the four owners of the DMO. However, the Board of the DMO consists of the representatives of the four owners with one vote each to ensure the fairness of decision-making (Veszprém Turisztikai Non-profit Kft Alapító Okirata 2009).

The second stage of the bidding process was supposed to start at the beginning of 2009. However, as with other funding allocation schemes in Hungary, it was delayed. The amount available for the individual DMOs has been worked into the appropriate budget headings for tourism development in the 2009–2010 period and therefore any delay in the process means potential financial difficulties for the new organisation and its partners, where one might expect difficulties anyway until the mechanisms become routine. With the establishment of the DMO, the members have become legally bound to the collaboration agreement, but could see the dangers of it falling apart even before it could start operating properly due to the lack of funds. As the initiative had only partly come from a destination level, with the real incentive coming from the government level, this early delay led some members to express their concerns about the viability of the new partnership.

As we write the final version of this chapter, the actual call for funds has been made. The four-month delay has tested the faith of the members in the new form of collaboration, but may also have forged a stronger partnership due to the shared threat. The timeframe of the application does not enable us to give an insight into the operation of the new organisation but we hope there is enough to be learned from the process even without seeing the outcomes. We have seen a strong local partnership reshaped as a result of a national government initiative. We have witnessed the changes that have been undertaken in order to be in a position to be awarded the government funding and we have seen how positions of power have been constructed, asserted and deserted in order for the DMO to be moved forward. We look forward to seeing how this unfolds – this is not the end of the story, it is only the beginning.

## **Conclusions**

What our story tells us is that principles of tourism development are important but that funding opportunities are even more so. We championed the development of the VTA as a positive example of partnership development, motivated by the stakeholders themselves. Then we find that this vibrant organisation has to be subsumed within the prescribed framework of the DMO. This shifts the discursive practices and repositions the power of the stakeholders. The local authority now finds themselves in a position where all their previous claims to power are still there and are, in one sense, reinforced by their 70 per cent shareholding in the DMO. Yet the constitution formally requires 75 per cent of the board to vote for a

proposal. This means that in effect the minority shareholders have a clearer (and perhaps more legitimate) claim on power in the decision-making processes but without any claim to leadership. We will continue to monitor how these discourses are used and refused in the development of the tourism offer in the city. We see this as an extension of Bramwell and Meyer's arguments and a challenge to those who see stakeholders in a consensual framework. This cannot be taken for granted and the discursive politics have to be worked to ensure that there is a common view of the future of tourism in the city.

Our study clearly demonstrates the ability of top-down policies to impact on successful bottom-up developments. Not that we are suggesting that the funding offered to the DMOs will be detrimental but we are highlighting that the relationships within the city will be challenged and changed by the formation of the DMO in this specific form and by the securing of the funding for the development of the DMO, its infrastructure and training in the city. There has already been a noticeable shift in stakeholder relationships and the positions of power have changed, as have the grounds for contestation.

Our narrative is grounded in one historic city in Hungary, but the analysis of discursive practices may deepen the understanding of developments in other locations. The claims and contestations of power are significant in the city as they are tied to local circumstances but the modelling of such constructions will help to inform the analysis of other places. Power is always there, but it is also always involved in the processes of challenge, reinforcement and reconstruction.

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## Chapter 16

# Why Cluster? Text and Sub-text in the Engagement of Tourism Development Policies with the Cluster Concept

Adi Weidenfeld, Allan M. Williams and Richard W. Butler

### Introduction

Economic policies in advanced capitalist economies are increasingly engaging with clusters as a strategy for increasing competitiveness (Novelli, Schmitz and Spencer 2006). As a concept, clustering, as applied in economic and industrial policies, has passed from the status of innovative theorisation, through the stage of fashionability to late maturity and critical reflection (Maskell and Malmberg 2007). But the application of clusters in the tourism sector has come late in these policy discourses. This chapter explores engagement with and resistance to the concept of clusters within tourism policy and practice, drawing on a case study of tourism attraction clusters and policy making in Cornwall, England.

This chapter tells the story of how the opaqueness of tourism clusters has contributed to contested meanings, to the difficulties of embodying the cluster concept in policies, and in implementing notions of clusters via development approval processes. The interpretation and implementation of tourism clusters is influenced by two factors: the formal manifestation of 'clusters' as in written policy and the 'informal' way in which the notion of 'clusters' is given meaning in policies and operationalised in practice; this is what we term the difference between 'text' and 'sub-text'.

An examination of issues related to translating the cluster concept from theory into practice reveals different approaches to understanding tourism planning and policy making. Sustained commitment to neoliberal policy directions emerged in competing forms in the more developed economies at different times from the late 1970s and the 1980s (see Chapters 1 to 3). In essence this involved a rolling back of the frontiers of the state, through deregulation and public sector cutbacks, so that private capital took a leading role in driving economic development (Hudson and Williams 1999). This is the context in which the emergence of tourism clusters is seen as deliberate or accidental, with winners and losers. The cluster concept draws on a critical, social constructionist approach, which refers to the product of human choices (bottom-up), rather than dictated by laws and

regulations. It helps to explain the complexities of tourism planning and policy making, especially under neoliberalism.

However, there remain significant gaps between the rhetoric and reality of neoliberalism. Governments have demonstrated uneven involvement in and support of tourism, making it difficult to make generalised claims about the influence of neoliberal management on tourism. However, in many developed economies, tourism is one policy area that has generally been characterised by a decline in direct government involvement and increased adoption of facilitator and/or enabler roles. At the same time, governments have encouraged industry to develop clusters and networks as a means of improving market competitiveness, awareness and strength. This approach has been woven into formal and informal policies, but there has also been an increasing reflexivity amongst the key actors. That is, stakeholders have increased flexibility to interpret and give meaning to various policies.

This chapter explores how these contradictory forces play out in the decisions and actions of the actors and agencies involved, and in the structures and practices of tourism planning and policy making. The chapter provides an opportunity to examine how cluster theory has been translated and given meaning in tourism, and it enhances our understanding of the challenges of translating clustering policies into practice. This chapter focuses on the relatively understudied attraction sector in two tourism clusters in Cornwall with low and high levels of agglomeration of visitor attractions respectively. In doing so, it explores differences in how clusters have evolved, and how tourism stakeholders engage with cluster development.

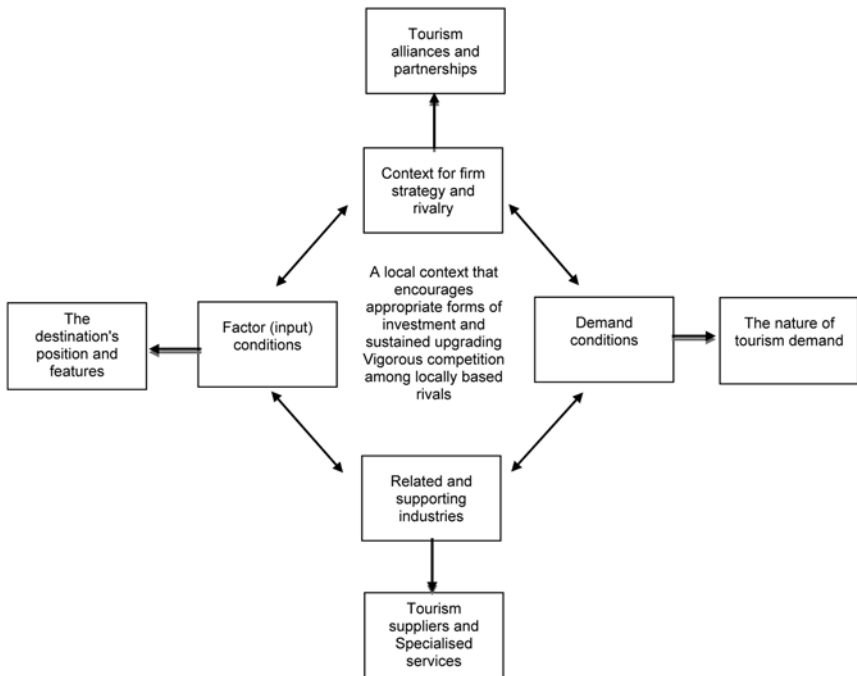
The chapter begins by exploring the literature on the cluster concept and clustering policies in tourism, followed by the methodology and a critical review of current tourism development policies in the study areas. It then explores the engagement with the cluster concept amongst tourism stakeholders and how this is understood and operationalised by attraction operators. The next section continues through individual 'stories' reflecting the ways policies are implemented and shape tourism clusters. The case study provides an insight into the reasons for the locations of some of the visitor attractions in the study areas and illustrates the nature of the planning decision making processes in the context of spatial clustering in theory and practice. This exploration also reveals how formal and informal policies, related to clustering, including cooperation, competition and enhancing knowledge transfer and diffusion of innovations between tourism firms, influence the development planning process, which we refer to as the text and sub-text of our story about clusters and tourism policies in Cornwall.

### **Tourism Clusters: From Theory into Practice**

The spatial cluster model has been applied predominantly to manufacturing industries such as automotive engineering rather than to services or to tourism in particular. However, it is increasingly being applied to tourism. In this chapter

we adopt Jackson and Murphy's (2006) cluster approach, which sees the outcome of agglomeration of tourism businesses in a tourism space as an industrial cluster (Porter 1990, 1998). According to Porter (1990 cited in Ketels 2003: 3–4) 'clusters are groups of companies and institutions co-located in a specific geographic region linked by interdependencies in providing a related group of products and/or services'. Due to geographic proximity, cluster constituents are said to enjoy the economic benefits of several types of positive and location-specific externalities (Ketels 2003) endowing them with competitive advantages (Nordin 2003). Based on Porter's (1998) cluster theory and its applicability to tourism (Cracolici and Nijkamp 2006, Nordin 2003, Vanhove 2002, 2006), competitiveness in tourism clusters is understood to be determined by three key issues: (1) factor and demand conditions; (2) the context for firms' strategies and rivalries; and (3) related and supporting industries. Adapting this model to the tourism industry with issues related to each of these aspects is illustrated in Figure 16.1.

Factor conditions refer to a destination's relative competitive position in terms of cultural, physical, environmental, economic conditions and motivational factors to attract visitors. Demand conditions refer to the nature of tourism demand



**Figure 16.1 Porter's Diamond Model and its applicability to tourism**

Source: Adapted from Jackson (2006: 699)

for products and services, including tastes and requirements of tourists visiting a destination, and the context for firms' strategies and rivalries that improve the competitive standing of a tourism destination, including mechanisms such as private partnerships and alliances. Related and supporting industries refer to the presence or absence of actors providing cluster members with custom-made high quality inputs, components and specialised services, for example, providers of hotel and restaurants food, good personnel training schools, engineers, and technicians that define a tourism area's competitive position.

The co-location of firms does not guarantee clustering. That is, attractions located in proximity to each other do not automatically enjoy reductions in the average costs to member firms nor do they enjoy economies of scale and of scope (Michael 2007). However, co-location is relevant when considering tourism clusters (Jackson and Murphy 2006), especially where the synergetic relationships of production are comprised of a few sub-products (economies of scope), with each contributing to production of the overall tourism product (Michael 2007). The co-location of restaurants, retail outlets and other services can engender the development of synergetic relationships. For example, a major theme park may sell one ticket that includes entrance fee, a meal in a local restaurant, transport to/from a hotel, and special discounts for buying souvenirs in local shops.

But the definition of a tourism cluster is necessarily contested; it can be used to describe a destination as an array of linked, synergetic products and services or it might denote entities located in close proximity but in competition. While recognising that clusters also stimulate complementarity, the co-location of complementary firms does not guarantee generation of synergies or cost efficiencies amongst them, which can be a result of employing cluster mechanisms (Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams 2009). Cooperation between neighbouring attractions, particularly in marketing (Fyall, Leask and Garrod 2001), results in economies of scale, while there are also issues relating to minimising transportation costs and distance for visitors in terms of mobility between visitor attractions (agglomeration economies).

The 'cluster' concept has been increasingly used and recognised in recent years as an essential element in regional economic development strategies (Burfitt and Macneill 2008, Hall 2004, Leibovitz 2004). Ketels (2003) notes that although cluster theories do not necessarily provide specific guidance for the construction of economic development strategies, they have variously informed, or at least been used to label numerous policies and industry initiatives underpinned by spatial concentration. Although there is little evidence that policy interventions can speed cluster development or increase the effectiveness of existing ones, clusters are increasingly popular with regional development agencies in most European countries (Novelli et al. 2006).

Alongside policy discourses that advocate the role of clusters, there are also counter discourses. Burfitt and Macneill (2008) question the extent to which evidence shows that clusters raise productivity, profitability and innovation, and whether the design of policy initiatives are effective and well targeted. Not

surprisingly, there is also considerable debate about the implications of cluster initiatives and their outcomes in various aspects of their objectives, geographical scale, level of government intervention, approach (e.g. top-down versus bottom-up) and scale of financial intervention (Burfitt and Macneill 2008). Furthermore, the cluster concept is continuously redefined by stakeholders' interests, which are often marginalised in networking and clustering strategies (Dredge 2006). Therefore, taking a more localised approach to policy actions is needed.

Cluster theory has been criticised for having little resemblance to industrial clusters in the 'real world', for being superficial, and for lacking both universality and specificity (Leibovitz 2004, Michael 2007, Novelli et al. 2006). It is also criticised as being complex, vague and poorly defined, particularly in terms of the difficulties in delimiting a cluster geographically. However, 'not all the arguments underlying clusters are compatible with each other' (Newlands 2003: 527). Sometimes the arguments are contradictory, for example, spatial proximity engenders building trust and strong personal relationships between actors but also leaves labour open to poaching and allowing benefits to be easily externalized. In the latter example, agglomeration economies may actually represent a deterrent to investment in the strengthening of social networks and trust (Newlands 2003). Spatial clusters do not guarantee the automatic emergence of positive economic and development benefits (Raco 1999). Spatial clustering may even impede development and progress through mutually reinforcing local or regional routines. These can include long-term agreements and embedding traditional conventions amongst cluster members, which inhibit technological advancement and innovations (Newlands 2003) and lock in an adherence to conventional ideas with less openness to innovations (Boschma 2005). Supporting structures and policy interventions can contribute significantly to the failure or success of clusters (Nordin 2003). However, 'clusters are to some extent accidents of history, reflecting the impact of past choices ... rather than a sensible planning outcome, but their development is also influenced by the appearance and growth of reinforcing institutions' (Newlands 2003: 525).

Tourism clusters, in the context of industrial groupings, reveal significant variations in the composition of economic relations between firms in the public policies to which they are subject, in the nature of demand and supply and the ongoing processes of change. Change can occur as a result of agglomeration processes, such as development of new firms, which increases their density and influences the levels of competitive and collaborative relationships amongst them. Nordin (2003) suggests that government interventions or frameworks need to be tailored to local circumstances. The following three aspects are identified in the literature as key issues in cluster processes and policies (Figure 16.2): (1) forming networks and collaboration (e.g. Hall, Lynch, Michael and Mitchell 2007); (2) balancing cooperation and competition; and (3) facilitating knowledge transfer and innovations (Michael 2007). These issues emanate from the cluster concept and underlie setting up policy guidelines. Although these issues are separately discussed in this chapter, we acknowledge that they may be interrelated and overlap.

### *Forming Networks and Collaboration*

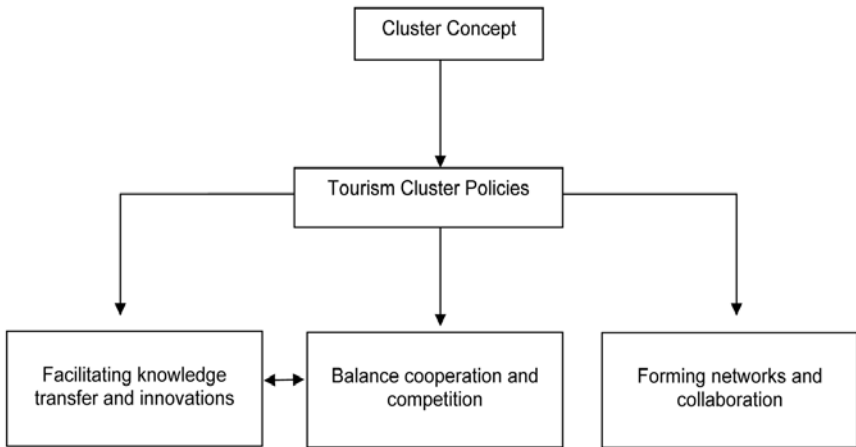
Networks provide ‘the social oil that allows the economic engine of a cluster formation to operate’ (Hall et al. 2007: 144). In practice, regional and local policy-makers focus on supporting public-private collaborations and promoting collective learning processes, including the encouragement of networks and partnerships between large companies, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), trade associations, universities and research institutes, further education colleges, training providers and promotional and economic development agencies (Jackson 2006). There are, however, multiple ways to translate Porter’s (1990, 1998) cluster concept into close associations between firm networking and public-private partnerships, including a ‘top-down’ approach, a ‘bottom-up’ approach as well as ‘initiatives ranging from policies for supporting small-scale business networks without a particular sectoral focus to large-scale programmes targeting a specific, geographically limited industry’.

### *Balancing Cooperation and Competition*

The balance between competition and cooperation within clusters is an important determinant of the direction of public policy, especially the balance between the tendency to cluster to create economies of scale. Competition between potential clustering firms, rather than a cooperative business environment, might lead new entrants to try to capture the benefit of externalities for themselves. Such conditions will benefit the initiating firms, but may deter complementary entrants from joining the cluster, hindering its regional growth (Michael 2007). Instead, co-competition (cooperative competition) should guide tourism cluster firms to compete more effectively with those outside the cluster while benefiting from the cluster’s externalities (Michael 2007).

### *Enhancing Innovation Mechanisms*

Encouraging co-opetition in tourism while maintaining a viable competitive environment is interrelated to facilitating knowledge transfer and diffusion of innovations amongst tourism enterprises (Figure 16.2). Co-opetition is essential for the innovations that drive renewal or replacement of existing economic structures. Innovations are the essential motor of growth of market economies, but this often requires state interventions, for example to speed up the restructuring of small businesses (Keller 2006). Tourism clusters are considered a fertile ‘breeding’ ground for innovation, particularly if the clusters are characterised by unique selling prepositions (USPs), which endow them with competitive advantage that distinguishes and differentiates them from other clusters. However, clusters in general, including tourism clusters with USPs, often lack a solid grounding in research and development and practices to ‘automate’ and make innovation a



**Figure 16.2** Tourism cluster policies

matter of routine. In these circumstances, the state can intervene to disseminate knowledge about clusters, promote research and development and train labour (Keller 2006).

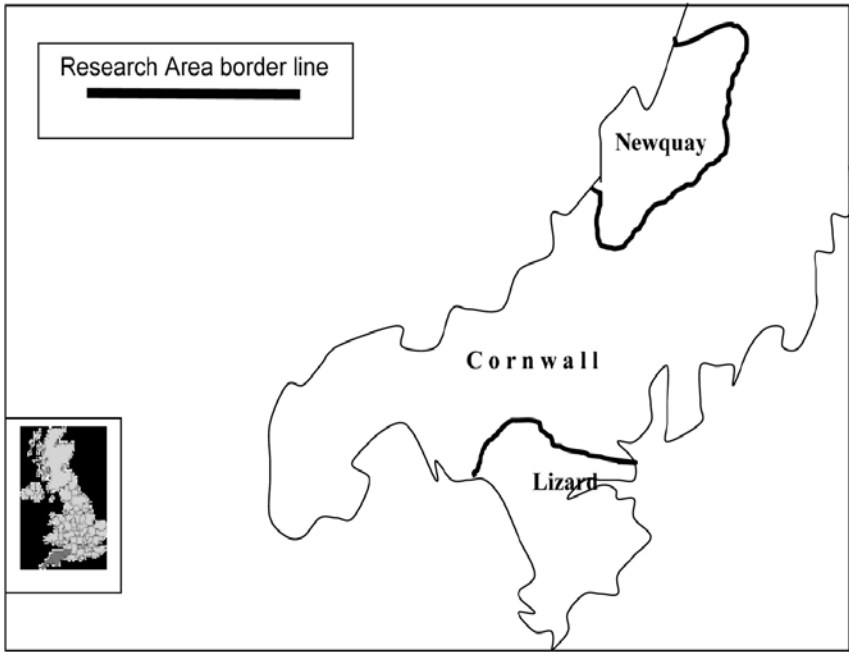
### Research Approach

In the following section, the case study context, research approach and methods are outlined. Given that a key focus of the research was to explore differences between the conceptualisation and in-situ meaning of clusters, a comparative case study was considered the ideal approach. The attraction sector was selected for this study because it is relatively under-researched and is a key component of the tourism experience product (e.g. Fyall, Leask and Garrod 2002, Middleton and Clarke 2001, Swarbrooke 2001, Watson and McCracken 2002.). Given that the relationships between different levels of spatial concentration between tourism businesses can explain the concept and meanings of tourism clusters, it was decided to study two contrasting clusters (in terms of levels of density of tourism businesses) in England, where cluster policy has been developed and delivered primarily at the regional level (Burfit and Macneill 2008).

#### *Case Study Context*

The Newquay and the Lizard Peninsula are broadly similar in size (c.230 square kilometres) and are situated within Cornwall in the south-west of England (Figure 16.3). They were selected because their economic structures and spatial





**Figure 16.3** The boundaries of the research areas Newquay and the Lizard Peninsula

densities (i.e. conditions for spatial proximity) potentially offer two contrasting understandings of clusters and tourism policies.

The Lizard Peninsula is dominated by a large area of central moorland, incised wooded valleys and a coastal environment of coves, beaches and cliffs. Lizard Point is a geographical feature of national significance being the southernmost point in Britain (Kerrier District Council 2002). Its main attractions are its relatively undeveloped coast and a mix of attractions (heritage and garden attractions and a theme/fun park). In contrast, the Newquay area contains a higher number of tourist attractions at a higher density than 'the Lizard' (Table 16.1). The average minimum travel distance and time by road between any two of attractions is significantly shorter in Newquay (20 minutes and 7.1 miles) than on the Lizard (37 minutes, 9.33 miles) (based on Automobile Association data 2008).<sup>1</sup> The Newquay cluster also has better accessibility to private and public transport than the Lizard Peninsula. Newquay brands itself as the capital of water sports and surfing; its main attractions include beaches, and rural and maritime landscapes (Restormel Borough Council 2005).

<sup>1</sup> The Automobile Association ('AA'). Available at: [www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com) (accessed: 2 January 2008).

**Table 16.1 Tourism attributes of attractions in Newquay area and the Lizard Peninsula**

Tourism Attribute	Newquay area						The Lizard Peninsula					
Number of visitor attractions	13						10					
Product type	Ad	Am	G	H	T	W	Ad	Am	G	H	T	W
Number	2	4	0	1	0	6	0	3	4	2	2	1
Density between attractions	20 minutes, 7.1 miles						37 minutes, 9.33 miles					

*Note:*

Ad – Adventure (e.g. beach activities)

H – Heritage (e.g. museum)

Am – Amusement (e.g. fun/theme park)

T – Thematic (technological display)

G – Gardens

W – Wildlife

### *Data Collection*

The case study adopted a mixed method approach including the collection of background published data and semi-structured interviews with nine policy-makers (e.g. public officials, councillors, local tourism organisation representatives) and 23 tourism attraction operators. Consistent with previous studies (Hajdaš Dončić, Horvat and Smid 2007, Jackson 2006, Jackson and Murphy 2006, Novelli et al. 2006), evidence from primary and secondary data sources (e.g. tourism association websites, tourism leaflets, advertisements, guidebooks and interviews with nine key informants) provided the data for selecting the clusters, and for delineating their boundaries. Stories of how stakeholders engaged with the concept of clustering were obtained through in-depth interviews. A sample of nine key informants was selected including representatives of local tourism organisations and local government bodies, such as regional development agencies, local and regional authorities, which either directly or indirectly influence tourism and the development and implementation of tourism policies in the study areas. The sample included two regional/local tourism-planning officers, two councillors, two heads of tourism associations, and three tourism professionals, who were influential figures in the Cornish tourism industry.

Participants were selected based on their position, expertise, and knowledge, which was more targeted and appropriate than sampling techniques. A snowball sampling procedure was also implemented by asking the initial respondents to suggest potential councillors and policy makers, who are associated with tourism, to be interviewed (Finn, Elliot-White and Walton 2000). All key informants agreed to participate in the research, although an interview with one councillor had to be substituted with another after the subject acknowledged a lack of involvement in tourism development policies. Informants were asked to define a tourism cluster, to determine its size, and discuss whether they considered this had meaning to an attraction operator. The interviews explored how popular and meaningful the term ‘cluster’ was for key informants and attraction managers;

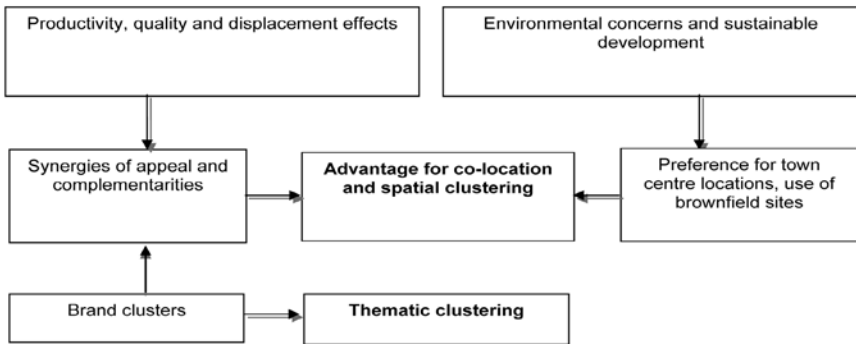
whether and how tourism policies and guidelines were influenced by the idea of clustering; and whether locational decision making was influenced by aspects of clustering including cooperation, competition and knowledge transfer between attractions.

In addition, 23 attraction managers were interviewed to develop understandings about the reasons for the locations of their attractions, the nature of relationships between other attractions in terms of spatial proximity, thematic similarity and cluster dimensions (e.g. cooperation, competition and knowledge transfer). Interviews in the two tourism clusters were undertaken between February and October 2006. The duration of the interviews was between 45 minutes to 90 minutes.

For the purpose of this study, a business was considered to be a tourism attraction if it was a permanently established excursion destination that charged admission for the purpose of sightseeing and attracted mostly tourists (non-residents), or allowed access for entertainment, interest, or education, rather than being *primarily* a retail outlet or a venue for theatrical, film or sporting performances (StarUK 2008). Public, private and voluntary sector attractions were included as long as they charged entrance fees. SMEs were taken to be businesses with between ten to 499 employees. All attractions in Newquay and the Lizard matched the definition of SMEs and were included in the study, and the only exclusions were on the grounds of the precise nature of the business (e.g. a tourist shop presenting itself as an attraction). Each of the ten attraction managers in the Lizard cluster agreed to be interviewed. In the Newquay cluster, three attractions did not agree to be interviewed, resulting in a sample of 13 out of 16 attractions. All interviews were taped and all relevant sections transcribed, and subjects were asked to give permission for direct quotation in any publications resulting from the study. Interviews were transcribed and analysed for content and meaning (e.g. see Ritchie and Spencer 1994, Waitt 2003).

### **Tourism Policies in Cornwall, Newquay and the Lizard**

The aim of this research, as previously stated, was to examine whether tourism-planning policies address tourism cluster issues (e.g. cooperation, competition, and knowledge transfer between attractions). A secondary objective was to explore whether the cluster concept has had, or could have, a role in shaping tourism policies and in influencing the operation of tourist attractions. In reporting the findings, we begin with a review of development and planning policies for the subregion of Cornwall in south-west England (SWT 2002 and SWRDA 2005, Cornwall County Council 2003, 2004, 2005), and those of the local governments to which the territories of Newquay and the Lizard belong (Kerrier District Council 2002, 2005a, 2005b, Restormel Borough Council 2001, 2004, Wright 2000, 2003). Regional and sub-regional tourism planning policies are addressed by both Cornwall County Council and regional agencies, such as the south-west



**Figure 16.4** Spatial and thematic clustering policy aspects of tourism policies in Newquay and the Lizard Peninsula

Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and its executive board, south-west Tourism (SWT). The latter two are the main regional agencies responsible for tourism in the south-west of England, influencing tourism development planning at both regional and the local scales. The review of planning policies reveals three main aspects of clusters: (1) environmental concerns and sustainable development; (2) productivity, quality and displacement effects; and (3) thematic diversity and clustering (Figure 16.4).

Preference for town centre locations and use of brownfield sites (i.e. previously developed land) are influenced by environmental concerns, and sustainable development and productivity, quality and displacement effects determine the levels of synergies of appeal and complementarities between visitor attractions. These factors often result in an overwhelming advantage for co-location and spatial clustering, apart from brand clusters (Figure 16.4). Brand clusters are not necessarily based on co-location of tourism firms but on thematic product similarity, which will be further discussed.

All regional and local authorities in Cornwall address spatial location policies with an overwhelming emphasis on sustainable tourism development, including accessibility to public transport and the use of brownfield sites and other spaces within existing urban areas. Tourism policies do not identify Newquay and the Lizard Peninsula as tourism clusters. However, some policies refer both explicitly and implicitly to co-location and clustering between tourism businesses in general, and visitor attractions in particular. High quality attractions (e.g. iconic attractions) are perceived to have a positive impact on spatial clustering resulting in increasing overall destination appeal (SWT and SWRDA 2005). The development of brownfield sites and building within town centres in order to minimize the loss of green spaces, implicitly involves spatial clustering (Cornwall County Council 2004, Kerrier District Council 2002, 2005a and b, Restormel Borough Council

2001, 2004, Wright 2000, 2003). However, this tells us little about the relational characteristics of clusters.

Cooperation and innovation are mostly addressed by the SWT and SWRDA's (2005) initiative 'Brand Cluster'. This is the only policy initiative relating to forming networks and collaboration and a good example of thematic clustering that encourages joint marketing initiatives and diffusion of innovations amongst similar product attractions and other businesses targeting similar markets. Such thematic cluster initiatives focus on the holiday experience that customers are perceived to want, regardless of the cluster's spatial location. The aim is 'to bring relevant businesses and organisations, including attractions, accommodation facilities, entertainment, food and drink, and retail together across the region to build and shape their particular cluster' (SWT 2002: 2). In this thematic cluster initiative, thematic clusters focus on various forms of tourism and types of holiday such as adventure tourism, business tourism, and traditional seaside tourism. This cluster framework is seen to encourage tourism businesses to collaborate 'through shared market intelligence, identification and development of new initiatives to drive up quality, shared promotion and collaboration on product development and opportunities facing the cluster' (SWT 2002: 2). For example, each cluster will have its own website as its main marketing activity, promoted through a variety of targeted campaigns (SWT 2005).

From this analysis of the existing policy environment, a policy translation gap is observed between the tourism cluster as understood in conceptual terms, and how clusters are articulated and given meaning in recent development planning policies in the study areas. This gap between formal 'written' policies and the views of tourism stakeholders on the cluster concept is in part filled by informal forms of governance, observable in the 'unwritten' policy guidelines influencing the decision planning process. These guidelines include common opinions and principles, which are shared by the majority of stakeholders and decision makers in tourism clusters but are not legally binding.

### **The Cluster Concept and the Role of Formal and 'Unwritten' Policy Guidelines**

The study examined whether there is support for the cluster concept amongst nine policy makers and practitioners, and how the concept of clusters is perceived amongst 23 tourism operators. The nine key informants, who were engaged in developing policy guidelines and/or determining planning applications, provided insights into how they perceived the actual and potential application of clusters. Most of the 23 attraction managers also provided insights into their locational decisions. These findings reveal different interpretations of the cluster concept within policy mechanisms (such local/regional planning committees), whereby policies are set up and interpreted in the form of policy papers (e.g. regional strategy papers and local plans).

*Text: The Cluster Concept*

Most key informants understood the term ‘cluster’ as an organisational structure that provided opportunities for cooperation and partnerships between attractions and other tourism businesses. Some key informants were very familiar with the cluster concept in relation to other industries, but less so tourism. Key informants envisaged co-location and cooperative competition between firms:

A tourism cluster to me works at four levels. The first is people who collaborate on marketing, the next level is to collaborate on business performance, and that’s issues to do with benchmarking against each other, wage rates etc. The third level is to do with solving shared problems and real practical opportunities ... and none of them do the last two, which is to do with skills labour supply, maybe procuring systems together, be it electronic system, if I’m thinking about attractions. The fourth level, I would say about any cluster, is about research and innovation and creativity. I used to come from mainstream economic development ... (key informant, senior officer in a regional agency).

In a way, you have got a group of businesses and a range of activities in a sector, which is related closely to each other. Clusters are a good term, because that does cover a lot of what you have been hinting at, because you are bringing in physical proximity, a degree of uncritical mass and you are also talking about linkages (key informant, planning policy officer).

[A cluster is] a group of businesses, which have co-located ... not because of joint collaboration or the willingness to co-locate, [but] for an outside force, [such as] location, available market, and is really a fight for markets (key informant, senior tourism officer in Cornwall Enterprise).

Cluster size or configuration was also perceived differently; some key informants referred to a cluster as having an optimal geographical size. One (a head of a tourism association), thought ‘cluster’ related to the number of visitors, and another (a senior officer in a regional agency) claimed that optimal size varied depending on ‘the size of the city, it’s the natural networking that takes place in that size of area. So if you take the Lizard, it’s probably the whole Lizard Peninsula. If you take Newquay, it’s going to be within five miles of Newquay’. Another key informant (a head of a tourism alliance), illustrated his answer by pointing to an estimated radius around Newquay or the Lizard:

... if you take Newquay and draw a 10 mile line around Newquay, it encompasses everything you know, that goes out as far as probably, Holywell Bay fun Park, Dairyland, and those in Newquay the Zoo, Aquarium, Tunnels Through Time and you have to go, if you look at it, there is not one that is more than 10 miles from Helston. Helston is in the central point, you take a 10 mile radius.

Four key informants were uncertain about the meaning of the term and understood it as ‘where tourists visit and stay’ or as a synonym for a destination: ‘I think it has to be an area where tourism is a major industry’ (key informant). Only two key informants defined the cluster concept in terms of how attractions operated together. Most of the key informants admitted the concept was unknown to most attraction and tourism business operators: ‘but the majority know very little [about the cluster concept] and I’d be surprised if they’d come across it. It’s a new concept for tourism to work in clusters. It should do’ (key informant). Another key informant, who is also a senior tourism policy officer, voiced a similar opinion:

It is a term you don’t normally associate with tourism attractions. You know what a business cluster is, whether it is IT [Information Technology] or medical or whatever, and there is always symbiotic relationships, and you can see lots of options of clustering working.

A key informant, who was previously a tourism officer, was more critical and doubted whether ‘cluster’ meant anything to an attraction operator:

I think it is very elitist clap shot. What an attraction is looking for at the end of the day, is to get marketing bullocks, what an attraction operator would want is, where is my business coming from? How do I increase my business? That’s what they are looking for, and also am I offering a good product? The thing that people are looking for now is Cornish identity, and what we have got to come from is what does the customer want [customer-oriented approach]?

One key informant (a councillor) was quite sarcastic, implying that the term was another ‘mantra’ to increase chances of getting EU funding:

The world cluster has suddenly become the ‘in’ word. Where is this? Where does it come from? Why are we suddenly starting to call [them] clusters? I have been to Brussels recently, heard the word ‘innovation’. If you want money, that’s what it is all about, getting money if you ‘I-nno-vate ...’ [accentuates the word grotesquely].

The difference in the way key informants (including those who were or still are attraction managers) perceived and interpreted the cluster concept, in the context of tourism, illustrates that it has very little to do with running tourism businesses in general, and tourist attractions in particular. Even though key informants may not recognise the term ‘cluster’, four of them recognised relationships that are typical of clusters such as cooperation and competition, and six respondents recognised Newquay and the Lizard as geographical tourism clusters. An important finding in this regard is that the cluster concept does not appear to affect or shape development and planning policies. It is not surprising, therefore, that ‘clusters’ do not appear in or guide tourism development itself. However, as the



next section reveals, the determination of planning applications was influenced by unwritten guidelines that are related to the principles of cluster policies. This use of the concept provides the sub-text to our story of the way that tourism planning and policy take place.

### **Sub-text: Cluster Policies in Decision Making for Visitor Attractions**

When discussing the tourism policies and guidelines underlying the determination of planning applications, most of the key informants placed an overwhelming focus on practical issues such as environmental impacts, infrastructure availability and sustainability issues. Planning applications are challenged on aspects such as road access: ‘Will it create too much traffic in a certain area?’ ‘Is there suitable sewage capacity’ or ‘Is public transport available and how accessible is the proposed development site?’ (key informants). Other informants noted that:

If you wanted to develop a large attraction on the Lizard, then the first thing it would be is ‘what about the road?’ I mean that would be a major consideration.

Another key informant tried to place the notion of clusters in perspective:

No, I don’t think they are promoting clustering. In theory, you are looking at the whole issue of sustainability. So if somebody can get them from somewhere to somewhere else by public transport without having to drive, especially in rural areas, that would be a bonus.

A key informant, who took part in development control process for new attractions, revealed that planning applications had generally been considered without reference to the presence or absence of neighbouring businesses and attractions, let alone the particular focus of those attractions:

I don’t think of that in attractions, it is not my business; I am a farmer, that’s my background. And I believe in primary industry, we are in the real world. I see that visitors perhaps have things to go to, I understand that. But ... for example, the camel attraction, they needed a planning permission, did they? They didn’t! They just turned up. So all you do you look at them, but you don’t really look at them in relation to others.

This key informant also claimed that disregard for the locations of other attractions was the norm in the planning process, which was primarily influenced by commercial and other reasons associated with the specific conditions of a particular site. Key informants were also unaware of tourism policies addressing the impact of spatial proximity on clustering of visitor attractions and regarded tourism planning applications as being similar to other planning decisions, such as that for

the erection of a new prison. Their quote below concedes that although tourism policies do not refer explicitly to competition with neighbouring attractions in the decision making process, other attractions may object to applications submitted by potential competitors on various grounds, but their underlying motive is fear of increasing competition:

I don't think proximity has ever had any effects on whether planning permission has been granted as such. What you have to remember is that if somebody wants to open a new theme park like Flambards, two miles up the road, Flambards would object strongly. The councillors would have to take notice of such objections.

Similarly, displacement of visitors from one attraction to another was mentioned in the context of co-location and competition: 'the displacement aspect is a key criterion for lots of people considering attractions. Will this truly be a benefit to visitors or will this just displace visitors who would've gone to that attraction to come to this one?' These issues, related to clustering, are ignored by formal policies as alluded to by a key tourism officer in a regional agency, who was asked whether planning policies address clustering: 'No, the policies don't address clustering, it's probably people given advice, like us ... There hopefully will be [clustering related policies] in the new regional spatial strategy but there's nothing at the moment'. Although the majority of key informants did not argue that policies in general address this issue, one of them assumed that they might 'discourage close proximity and clustering of similar businesses ... [and that] complementary attractions are probably encouraged'.

The closer we look at how individual tourism attractions have emerged over time, the more difficult it is to provide a simple account of the relationship between tourism policy and the presence or absence of notions of clustering in policy formation. This is particularly evident when considering accounts of the historical reasons for the locations of attractions on the Lizard cluster:

... just look at the attractions you have on the Lizard. They are all there, not because somebody said 'this is a good place for a tourist attraction', but because something was already there ... The first thing is if you take Goonhilly [a thematic-technology park attraction]. That was put there originally as the ideal place for the dishes. Flambards [a mixture of fun and theme park] was actually started by an ex-commander in the navy, who was able to buy scrap aeroplanes off the navy and put them on a site next to Culdrose. The Seal Sanctuary started because there were pools of sorts and seawater, and people would bring seals in. Even Poldark mine, which we've said was not successful, was there because there was a mineshaft that was actually adaptable to what it did ... (key informant, councillor).

Another key informant described in detail the application process of the Seal Sanctuary:

... the gentleman was saying 'I want a place to put six seals', you know, where we all had doubts what he really wanted and we were quite right, he simply wanted a massive holiday attraction, which he very cleverly worked out and then moved away. Now it is all about environment, looking after sick animals, it wasn't like that when it started. It was a straight forward attempt to make money and worked out to get to that (key informant, councillor).

Similarly, in Newquay, some attractions were found to have been established in other forms, such as a farm or a wildlife sanctuary, and developed into visitor attractions for various reasons, such as commercial opportunities that became viable with the movement from agriculture to tourism, or simply by chance. For example, a wildlife attraction 'was never set up as ... well, it was never set up as a zoo. It was actually set up exactly as a rescue and rehabilitation centre for wild birds preying ...' (key informant, a wildlife attraction manager). Another landowner 'was a big poultry farmer who had one of the biggest egg distribution businesses and then in the 1980s was it ... salmonella ... he also went bankrupt and that's when he set this up ... first of all as a garden centre'. These premises were developed eventually into a wildlife attraction as well.

Here, 'unwritten' or informal clustering policies and its implications for cooperation between attractions in Newquay were identified by a key informant as influential factors on development control process:

... there was a proposal there to build a hotel. And a part of the argument (that the owners of Dairyland [a wildlife attraction] put) was that more people would stay on the site. That was refused and they went to appeal but they lost it. There is also a proposal very near there now to have a ski slope, very close to Dairyland but then again it is just in Carrick. And one of the arguments, which is the people promoting the ski slope, apart from the fact that it was on the main road to Newquay was the proximity to Dairyland and other big attractions, so you would have a cluster developed (key informant).

Another wildlife attraction in Newquay evolved in a similar process:

It was actually a farm and they opened a campsite next door, and they realised to be competitive in Cornwall they needed to offer more than just a campsite, so what they did is open a golf course next door first and it all started fairly two years ago with a car track and it's gradually being built up ever since (key informant and a wildlife attraction manager).

The emergence of another amusement park attraction in Newquay shows a similar tendency to clustering of attractions: 'they [the local authority] were developing

[a garden attraction] that had been there since the 1930s and they were interested in developing tourist facilities so they added [an amusement attraction] to their development'. The advantage of proximity between attractions was also used to advocate the approval of a new tourist attraction next to an existing one. Not only was the impact of spatial proximity and density between attractions appealing to visitors, so to was the impact of thematic similarity:

I think the best one to my mind was the National Maritime Museum, Cornwall, where when that was being developed in the planning permission, it was very much seen as one that can become at the centre of a more attractive offering because you had the small local museum, you had the whole of the waterfront that needed doing, and you had Falmouth itself, living off sailing, and the Maritime Museum would create a hub and a focus for what was a maritime theme. Because you need an icon in the middle of it, so that's probably a very positive and obvious one ... The other one I would actually say is Fistral Blue at Newquay, where they needed to raise the quality and provision of support on the beach for the visitors. Not a classic attraction, but one that is seen as adding to the quality of the product in providing an area where retail could operate from (key informant).

This example illustrates that a combination of spatial proximity, thematic product similarity and complementarity between attractions and other retail outlets was considered advantageous for creating synergies of appeal between attractions. It appears that the supportive arguments in planning applications included complementary relationships and spatial-thematic clustering. A key informant also highlighted the need to consider the element of complementary relationships between attractions: 'What I mean is, you don't want exactly two zoos, but you might be talking about a zoo and then something natural in the local environment'. Unfortunately, '... the policies that are there ... They don't make it explicit enough' (key informant). In practice, it appears that entrepreneurs or investors consider these issues, which are addressed by the planning system, as explained by a head of a tourism association, whose view reflects those of others:

[Locations of other attractions in the vicinity] ... wouldn't get the planning [consideration]. I think the managers or the owners of the attractions would already decide that it wouldn't be the right thing to do. While if somebody across the road wants to build something the same as this, they will go with their point, because they already got them. So I wouldn't have thought that it would come into planning (key informant).

It appears that most clustering issues are viewed as commercial considerations best left to market forces, as argued by an experienced tourism professional and the head of a tourism association: 'The difficulty in England is that planning applications are based on whether you are allowed to build on a certain area

and not on the business needs'. In other words, as in other areas of the United Kingdom planning policy and practice, the strategic and operational issues relating to individual businesses (let alone clusters of businesses) are not formally considered. However, as this study reveals, these commercial considerations often involve considerations of competition, including displacement effects, as well as synergies of appeal and complementarities amongst attractions and between attractions and other businesses. Yet these issues – which are at the core of the cluster concept – are not represented in tourism policies. However, they are identified as informal guidelines used by tourism protagonists, decision makers and investors. Moreover, some of these unwritten guidelines are interrelated, such as synergies and complementarities.

## **Conclusions**

The aim of the chapter was to explore the theoretical and practical application of the concept of clusters by examining engagement with and resistance to the concept of clusters within tourism policy and practice, drawing on a case study of tourism attraction clusters and policy making in Cornwall, England. In particular, it has examined how the opaqueness of tourism clusters has contributed to contested meanings, to difficulties in embodying the cluster concept in policies, and in implementing notions of clusters via development approval processes. The chapter has contributed to the understanding of tourism planning processes, principles and practices by exploring formal tourism policies in two destination clusters that are complemented by several 'stories' of visitor attractions in terms of locational decision-making and some management aspects. A comparative case study of two attraction clusters in Cornwall provided the opportunity to examine how clusters are defined, understood, given meaning and implemented (or not). In particular, the chapter looked at the relationship between the theoretical concept, how it is formally conceptualised in policy and how it is informally given meaning and life.

Similar to other 'stories' in this book, the 'stories' told by the policy documents, the key informants and the tourism attractions owners/managers have unfolded different theoretical positions that provide important insights, and expose readers to the complex and historically dependent way that tourism planning and policy have developed. They reveal the people that influence and shape tourism planning and policy making processes as well as the complicated webs of relationships between key players, gaps and ambiguities between formal and informal tourism planning policies and the locational decision making in practice. Although the stories told here are necessarily relatively short, they provide insights into the policy gaps between theories and practices that are in many ways typical of the policy and planning framework for attractions and other tourism facilities. In this way, they contribute to critical reflection upon the causal relationships between the different actors and planning policies that shape tourism clusters. This chapter

suggests that storytelling in the form of anthology can contribute to revealing translation and implementation gaps between planning theory and practice, and the messiness of individual decision making in the real world that is revealed by considering the sub-text of tourism policies.

At the beginning of this chapter, the overview of academic literature on clusters and regional development established that it is a well-developed concept. Within this literature a shift was observed over the last two decades, from unquestioning acceptance of clusters as a tool for economic development to a more critical stance. Social constructionist research has sought to tease out the difficulties and opportunities associated with clusters, and highlighted that the concept is not 'a golden chalice' for economic development and innovation. In the field of tourism, there has been little attention placed on exploring the concept of clusters, much less the barriers and opportunities to implementation. The research described in this chapter makes a contribution to the literature then by elaborating a particular story of practice – a story wherein a theoretical concept well established in literature is shown to be vague and problematic in the daily lives and actions of both public officials and attraction operators.

This chapter reveals the co-existence of formal (text) and 'unwritten' (sub-text) of policy. The case study findings show that the cluster concept remains a theoretical domain rather than having become incorporated into the professional language of tourism policy makers and developers (Leibovitz 2004, Michael 2007, Novelli et al. 2006). A policy climate dominated by neoliberalism is characterised by selective commercial interests playing a significant role in the planning process and shaping the growth of visitor attractions. It is too early to tell whether the 'crisis of capitalism' which was revealed in the Global Financial Crisis of 2009–10 will lead to either significant changes in regulatory systems in the 'main street' economy as well as the financial sector. It is also unclear whether this crisis will have implications for the development of tourism attractions.

This case study of two tourism clusters found that tourism policies and guidelines did not significantly shape the determination of planning applications in Cornwall. Determination was driven predominantly by sustainability and environmental concerns. Such concerns were given greater weight in development control processes than tourism clusters and related concepts of cooperation, competition, innovations and regional appeal, largely because they were not considered as relevant to public sector planners. Spatial and thematic clustering was found not to be grounded in policy guidelines and regulations, although they were found to affect the selection of sustainable locations for new tourism businesses and attractions. Notwithstanding the gap between text and sub-text that we outlined earlier, competition for and appeal to visitors play a major role in determining many planning decisions. However, while regional/local competition between tourism businesses is important, cooperation, knowledge transfer and innovations were neither explicitly considered nor acknowledged by most of the decision-makers identified in this research.

The study also revealed a disregard in policy guidelines for the specific features of production and consumption in the tourism industry, along with inconsistencies between policy guidelines and the actual practices that underpin the processing of planning applications. The locations of visitor attractions, and the shaping of tourism spaces, do reflect the emergence of tourism clusters but these are driven more by individual private capital interests, than by interventions by decision makers and formal or informal policy guidelines. The policy gap is therefore characterised by two factors: (1) a failure to incorporate clusters in formal policies at the regional and local scales, and (2) a gap between formal policies and unwritten guidelines in determining planning applications for new attractions.

This chapter has also provided an opportunity to enhance our understandings of the challenges of tourism planning, policy making and governance in translating clustering policies into practice. The planning process, resulting in the co-location and clustering of visitor attractions has been explored using a critical, social constructionist approach whereby contradictory forces play out in the decisions and actions of various stakeholders. The study also sought to contribute understandings of the applicability of Porter's (1991, 1998) cluster theory to tourism. Factor and demand conditions, such as thematic clustering and complementarities affecting visitor preferences (Weidenfeld et al. 2009) do play out in the locational decision making process. While issues such as a concern for the spatial proximity of potential competitors were not the focus of this research, they are present in the 'sub-text' of how planning applications for new attractions are dealt with in practice.

Clustering strategies are mostly characterised by a 'bottom-up' approach through informal (sub-text) policies, implemented by both public and private sector stakeholders, who shape the development planning process in the context of local circumstances. This process addresses the issue of how to consider the full range of stakeholders' interests, many of which tend to be marginalised by tourism formal policies in both the clusters (Dredge 2006). The chapter showed that tourism clusters are mostly the outcome of accidental and deliberate actions, facilitated mostly by sub-text policies, that reflect power struggles and commercial interests, typical of the general relational complexities of tourism planning and policy making (Newlands 2003). A key conclusion of the study then is that explicit clustering policies should be pursued not only for their economic logic, but in order to address the range of stakeholder interests, which are often ignored by current planning strategic policies.

Further attention should be given to increasing the awareness of both local and regional authorities and entrepreneurs of the importance of incorporating aspects of collaboration (particularly in marketing) (Fyall et al. 2001), knowledge transfer and diffusion of innovations into locational decision making processes. Finally, while the story told here is of two clusters in Cornwall, this case study has implications for understanding both the general gap between theories and practices, as well as a continuing neglect of fundamental economic concepts which



is distinctive of, although by no means unique to, tourism in the United Kingdom, and perhaps to other developed countries.

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# Chapter 17

## Conclusions

Dianne Dredge and John Jenkins

In the opening to the first chapter of this book we drew a parallel with Axel, the faithful nephew of Professor Leidenbrock, who was overwhelmed by the idea that it is possible to travel to the centre of the Earth. Axel's head was awash with contradictory evidence, his knowledge of geology and rocks on one hand was suggesting it was impossible, and on the other hand, his uncle was offering an entirely plausible explanation of why it was indeed possible. Oh, what to believe! Axel was passing through a threshold of knowledge, opening his mind to new possibilities as implausible as they seemed.

Like Axel, we hope that readers have taken a journey in the chapters of this book, exploring different theoretical concepts, positions and frameworks along the way. The focus of this concluding chapter is to highlight important reflections emerging from the variety of stories of tourism planning and policy in this book, and to consider future directions for the field based on consideration of concepts, theories, models and ideas discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 in particular. Five reflections on the use and value of stories are identified: (1) the importance of reflection and awareness of one's own way of thinking in storytelling; (2) the relationship between theory and the application of theory in stories of practice; (3) the use and manipulation of stories to convey knowledge to achieve certain ends; and (4) the power of stories in helping unravel the complexities of society and environment. This type of critical reflection is important in assessing where the field has come from, where it is now, what it might look like in the future, and what choices we have about where and how the field develops.

### **Reflections on Stories and Storytelling**

This book had a predetermined agenda, set by the editors. Applying a social constructivist perspective we asked authors to examine tourism planning and policy cases through the use of stories just as *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* sought to explore emerging nineteenth century earth sciences using story. Tourism policy and planning is a young field of study (relative to other applied fields of planning and policy such as environment, transport, urban and regional development) and an area awash with theories, concepts, methods, frameworks and approaches drawn from a variety of disciplines and fields of study and without a coherent body of seminal works and widely tested applications of theories and

concepts. In framing their stories, the authors of the chapters contained within this volume made choices about what theories and methods they would employ, and in doing so, they built a collection of theoretically informed stories of tourism planning and policy practice in much the same way that Jules Verne built a plausible explanation for his characters' journey.

The first reflection we highlight is a parallel with Verne's work: the importance of critical reflection and awareness of one's own ways of thinking in storytelling. In *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, Axel's thinking was shaped by his knowledge of existing theories and explanations: 'All the theories of science demonstrate such a feat [a journey to the centre of the Earth] to be impracticable' (Verne 1864/1996: 24). Axel's capacity to think critically and imaginatively about the possibilities was limited by his existing knowledge and ways of thinking. Professor Leindenbrock continually sought to question Axel's boundaries by prompting him with alternative possibilities: 'The theories say that, do they? ... Oh unpleasant theories! How the theories will hinder us, won't they?' (1864/1996: 24). Responding to the Professor's prompts, Axel opened his mind to alternative explanations and overcame the bounded ways of his thinking to reach a new liminality.

The chapter authors in this volume were asked to reflect upon the thresholds of knowledge and liminality in concluding this project. From the most seasoned authors to the early career academics, most acknowledged that their stories had led them beyond the comfortable spaces of familiar theories and concepts, to question their own ways of knowing and understanding, and to share this knowledge with others who can make a difference:

The research in Iceland was an opportunity to understand how the tourism planning process from Canada that I had worked with was communicated and translated across cultures (pers. comm. John Hull, 13 April 2010).

The light bulb moment came when an interviewee described the impacts of incremental developments as 'death by a thousand cuts'. It reinforced to me that the effort in telling this very specific case study does have wider import ... As potential tourism planners, I hope [readers] think about this 'death by a thousand cuts', about what every new tourism development in the more pristine places represents, and that they arrive at meaningful solutions to these problems (pers. comm. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles, 13 April 2010).

The chapters in this book presented various alternative explanations and interrogated different aspects of tourism planning and policy in such a way that it has become increasingly apparent that there is no single explanation, no one approach to understanding issues and events. Attachment to a single view, explanation or solution can impede creative thinking about the possibilities of explaining tourism planning and policy. This demonstrates the importance of grounded theory and qualitative, exploratory research approaches that open

researchers' minds to alternative explanations and new ways of thinking (e.g. see Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson and Collins 2005, Harris, Wilson and Ateljevic 2007, Hollinshead 2004, Hollinshead and Jamal 2007, Jamal and Hollinshead 2001).

The second reflection is inspired by observations made from the case studies about the intimate connection between theory and practical applications of that theory in the process of learning. Throughout Verne's novel the characters confront practical issues and problems by applying theoretical knowledge. The to and fro or ongoing reflection between theory and practical experience helped shape travellers' (and readers') insights and understandings. In this current volume, authors of the various case study chapters applied theoretical frameworks and concepts reflecting on their practical significance and utility to build explanations and knowledge. They explored complex problems at a range of levels – from the micro to the macro and generally within known geographical boundaries or settings.

The third reflection emerges from how story was used by the author Jules Verne to convey knowledge, and our own stories of practice. At a time when rational science was shaping modernity, this and other stories by Jules Verne (e.g. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, 1869; *Around the World in Eighty Days*, 1873) informed and shaped how people thought about emerging sciences such as geology, geomorphology, physics, biology, oceanography and chemistry. Whilst these stories were written as fiction, they helped to popularise emerging scientific discoveries and inspire the curiosity of budding scientists for generations to come. On a continuum that might conceptualise imaginative fiction such as Jules Verne's stories at one end, and non-fiction at the other end, the stories contained within the volume are the product of academic research, and are situated towards the non-fiction end of the continuum. Notwithstanding this dichotomy, we also acknowledge Lyotard's (1979) argument that all research represents story. The representations contained within each chapter, therefore, reflect chapter authors' explanations of events based upon their worldviews and their relationships to the subjects and issues they explore. Research is as much about choice as it is about scientific process. In the same way that Verne used a story to vividly convey scientific knowledge, we have sought to use stories to convey social science insights into tourism planning and policy firmly grounded in the social sciences. This point is well linked to the first parallel noted above.

The fourth reflection emerges from considering the power of stories in helping unravel the complexities of society and environment. The aim of this book was to better understand the complex world in which tourism policy and planning takes place using stories as a way of interpreting events, developing practical knowledge and sharpening our critical insights. The authors themselves later asserted the value of storytelling:

There was a moment when I was doing the first phase of the research, when I was putting together the detailed timeline (more detailed than the final one I included in the paper), when I realised just how complex the process to develop

the tramway was. At the same time I felt that my approach had enabled me to capture that process (pers. comm. Doug Pearce 12 April 2010).

The diversity of case studies, the variety of issues covered and the different theoretical frameworks used illustrate that tourism planning and policy is inspired by a range of disciplines and fields of study. From a modernist perspective, such eclecticism might be considered a weakness because the field of tourism planning and policy might be viewed as fragmented and lacking cohesion. However, the critical, interpretative turn captured by postmodernism suggests that this diversity of approaches, methods, concepts and theories lends itself to deeper understandings of our complex and messy world. It is this latter perspective that inspired the development of this book and the case study stories within.

The value of stories in planning and policy research has been recognised in other fields. According to Healey (2005), much can be revealed from examining stories of urban planning and policy practice. Stories act as filters by helping, for example, to remove unwanted and/or minor issues while collecting, collating and prioritising those of importance. Stories help us construct windows into how and why decisions are made. Analysing these stories is important for us to learn about how and why things happen and how approaches inherited from past experience and practice are grafted onto today's issues (Considine 2005). Flyvbjerg (2001), Sandercock (2003), Stone (1989) and others argue that stories and storytelling practice are powerful catalysts for learning, reflection and change. With these things in mind, we ask the reader to think about storytelling just as they might think about a well-constructed novel or a Shakespearean play in which there are actors, institutions, agendas and settings, constructed around several acts and scenes (or important episodes).

In this book we have targeted what we perceived to be a neglected area of study: the use of stories of tourism planning and policy practice at different scales, over different periods of time, and in different systems of government as a mechanism to explore how tourism planning and policy is made. The framework presented in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.1) captures the various levels of analysis that are required in presenting stories of practice. This framework was originally presented in Dredge and Jenkins (2007). Whilst chapter authors presented their stories using different theories, frameworks and concepts, and focused at different levels (macro, meso or micro) levels of analysis, this general framework remains a valid and highly useful organising approach. That is, although the authors' description of the framework they used to interrogate their stories might be more or less explicit, all stories engaged with wider social processes and ideological influences, the institutional context, the characteristics of actors and agencies, and the nature of policy dialogues to explain tourism planning and policy. The interaction between multiple scales and dimensions of the tourism planning or policy issue creates a rich context in which decisions and actions are made.



## Liminality and the Historical Development of Tourism Planning and Policy

In Chapter 2 the historical development of tourism planning and policy was examined with a view to identifying key influences and drivers of knowledge in the field. In charting these developments, the concepts of thresholds of knowledge and liminality were used to illustrate the various twists and turns, or conceptual gateways that have been passed through, in the development of tourism planning and policy knowledge. In particular, that tourism planning and policy knowledge is socially constructed is central in any attempt to appreciate how knowledge is developed, because it is through social means that ideas and explanations are produced and consumed, accepted or rejected, and dismissed or disseminated.

In this context, then, the thresholds of knowledge in the evolution of tourism planning and policy were discussed and how they relate to broader shifts in the social sciences. Although the salience of postmodernism as a foundation for knowledge and learning has been questioned, there is no denying that the influences of modernism and postmodernism represent two waves of intellectual development that have had important implications for the direction of theoretical development. Under the influence of modernism, theory-building efforts in tourism planning and policy focused on a range of prescriptive and normative traditions to produce tools such as rational comprehensive models of tourism planning and models of how destinations ought to be (e.g. see Gunn 1972, 1988, Inskip 1991, Mill and Morrison 1985). Under postmodernism, however, there has been a shift towards recognising the multiplicity of interests involved in tourism planning and policy, and the importance of understanding how power is used and influence is wielded (e.g. Hall 1994, Hall and Jenkins 1995, Richter 1989). Accordingly, the machinations of policy discourses and processes have become the focus of increased research attention and a shift from *rational* to *relational* planning and policy development has been consolidated (e.g. Bramwell and Lane 2000, Jamal and Getz 2000).

By tracing the development of knowledge within the field, and the shifting focus of tourism planning and policy research since the mid-twentieth century, Chapter 2 identified a number of key themes that underpin this book. These themes have surfaced in various chapters with more or less relevance: the social construction of knowledge in tourism planning and policy; liminality and the concept of thresholds of knowledge; and the importance of reflective, critical appreciation for power and politics in practice.

The literature has moved from discussions of government and public administration to recognise that tourism planning and policy takes place in a range of spaces that extend well beyond traditional bureaucratic notions of policy making. In Chapter 4, through a longitudinal study of the development of the Christchurch tramway, Pearce found that the drivers of the tramway's development 'cannot be convincingly seen as a concerted or even unconscious response to globalisation'; local not global forces, in the form of an enduring coalition of interests operating outside traditional local government processes, drove the process. In quite a different

context, Higgins-Desbiolles (Chapter 6) examined the development approval processes associated with the luxury tourist accommodation, the Great Southern Lodge, Kangaroo Island, Australia. Higgins-Desbiolles found that despite the local council having a pre-existing commitment to sustainable development and a community-driven visitor management framework described as best practice, the development approval process was driven by neoliberal economic development imperatives that made such pre-existing policy commitments unrealisable. An important observation emerging from this case study was that the tourism planning and policy space is a dynamic dialogic space, where previous policy work and existing commitments can disappear and reappear in an instant when powerful economic objectives come into play.

Second, there is increased deliberative capacity of actors and agencies in interpreting and framing policy issues. In Chapter 5, Grybovych, Hafermann and Mazzoni described an innovative, deliberative planning process associated with the release and rezoning of forest lands on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Their account outlined the complex stakeholder environment in which the District planner worked, and the challenges associated with addressing the expectations of the developer and the community:

For the District planner, remaining impartial while juggling multiple roles and wearing different hats was extremely important. The biggest challenge and perhaps the main success lay in his ability to empower the community by constantly 'feeding' the residents with knowledge that would help them understand the intricacies of policy making.

This deliberative approach was also illustrated in the diverse cultural settings, particularly in Chapter 10 (Theerapappisit), Chapter 11 (Hull and Huijbens) and Chapter 13 (Dutra, Haworth and Taboada). The latter authors in particular, lived within the village and did the work of the villagers while undertaking their research. In these chapters the authors explored local sources of knowledge in an effort to build context-specific information inputs and to make recommendations that informed tourism policy and decision-making processes.

In Chapter 2 we observed that the way in which knowledge is claimed, asserted, presented and manipulated by different actors can empower certain agendas and outcomes in tourism planning and policy. It is therefore important to reflect upon the use and misuse of information (often now referred to in ways such as 'putting in spin'), how it is created and disseminated in tourism planning and policy. To illustrate, in Chapter 9, Vargas Sánchez and Dredge examined the development of the 'Huelva the Light' brand and the way that different types of knowledge contributed to empowering the branding process. These authors found that knowledge creation contributing to tourism planning and policy development occurred within and without the destination marketing organisation and that creative and entrepreneurial policy agents could tap into these various sources to strengthen overall direction and efforts.

The acquisition and use of theoretical and applied knowledge and the value and meanings attached to that knowledge significantly affects tourism planning and policy making. The chapter by Weidenfeld, Williams and Butler (Chapter 16) illustrated the gap between policy and practice in the use of the concept of clusters. In this study, the cluster concept was found to remain largely theoretical, existing in policy documents, but had not been incorporated into the professional language or practices of stakeholders. This illustrates that knowledge can make a powerful contribution to policy debates, but when withheld, it can also inhibit thinking in practice. A key conclusion from this study was that clustering had been conceptualised principally for its economic development logic, but a range of other opportunities that deliver on stakeholder interests had not been conveyed. In another Chapter, Bhat and Milne (Chapter 12) discuss collaboration in the development of the *purenz.com* website. Importantly, these authors found that understandings of the term ‘destination marketing’ affected stakeholders’ perceptions about whose role destination marketing was thought to be, and ultimately affected the style and nature of collaboration.

Chapter 2 identified the multiplicity of views, competing agendas and ambiguous objectives as increasingly common attributes of contemporary tourism planning and policy. Many, if not all the chapters in this volume, illustrate the multiplicity of values, competing agendas and divergent goals that characterise tourism planning and policy. The chapter by Shone (Chapter 8) stands out as an example of a single agency, in this case the Hurunui District Council, as having multiple and competing roles in tourism. The chapter helps to illustrate that:

[W]hile tourism is often promoted by central governments as a tool for regional development, the reality is that much of the responsibility and risk for this position falls at the feet of local government. Consequently, local authorities are often faced with the dual and often conflicting tasks of tourism enablement and tourism management. In the Hurunui, these roles have been further complicated by the District Council’s position as owner of the apex tourism business – the Hanmer Springs Thermal Pool and Spa (pers. comm. M. Shone, 12 April 2010).

These tensions between top-down and bottom-up agendas have been identified in other chapters within this volume. The chapter by Clarke and Raffay (Chapter 15) illustrates that the establishment of a Destination Marketing Organisation in *Veszprém*, Hungary, has been plagued by top-down versus bottom-up discursive politics. Similarly, Hall and Wilson (Chapter 7) discuss the case of stadium development in *Dunedin*, New Zealand, observing that neoliberal objectives combined with the symbolic importance of having a new stadium is a powerful discourse and has attracted the support of a significant coalition of interests.

## Conclusions

Through the stories contained within this book, these four observations about contemporary tourism planning and policy have been interpreted and given meaning in particular stories. But what of the future? If there is any possibility of improving tourism planning and policy based on the insights and lessons contained within these stories and the wider body of knowledge within which they are set, we must return to consider the role of government and its relationships with business and community interests, and hence the concept of governance.

The authors in this volume recount stories that are more or less controversial and that exhibit varying levels of conflict and consensus building. Harnessing knowledge in different ways, individually and collectively, they help expose among other things, the distribution of power among actors and agencies, and a range of concepts, theories and models that are central to tourism planning and policy making. By way of example, concepts include the state, government, the public interest, public good, accountability, power, agendas, values, and frames. These concepts that should become a focus of each reader's critical thinking and reflection and quest for depth of knowledge in this field. Reflective readers are thus prompted to move beyond description to explanation and evaluation and to consider very important questions such as: How are agendas formed? How are policies translated into actions? What actually influences who gets resources from government and who does not? Who wins and who loses from a decision or action of government, and why? How and why do actors and agencies develop or avoid relationships and work together or in conflict under different circumstances? How do policy agendas and issues change over time? Is there a blueprint for good policy under any particular circumstances?

It is our view that the field of tourism studies would benefit from more rigorous debate about matters such as the role of the state, the structures, functions and operations of tourism agencies and institutions, fundamental concepts such as the distribution of power in planning and policy making, governance structures and what is good policy making. We should look to whether there is a major disconnect between government policy in tourism – which many of our stories illustrate is predominantly underpinned by economic development, regional competitiveness and investment attraction agendas – and the aspirations of local communities. Our stories also illustrate that 'big government' and constitutional fuzziness with respect to roles and responsibilities are powerful influences on contemporary policy making. The future is difficult to anticipate in this context despite that anticipating future change is a key feature of tourism planning and policy (Dredge and Jenkins 2007). Industry and community groups are increasingly well organised, well resourced and adopt a range of roles in the policy process, but will this be enough? New forms of participation and models of deliberative democracy in the tourism policy arena are needed.

Our stories illustrate that there appears, in many cases, to be an inequitable distribution of power in current tourism policy processes. Whose needs are being

served? Who is supposedly speaking ‘truth’ to power? These are important questions that can only be answered by acquiring deeper knowledge of the processes of tourism policy making and promoting wider scholarly engagement with the nature and directions of social and political change. In this way, explorations of tourism planning and policy making can be more explicit about capitalism, individualism, globalisation, deregulation and privatisation, and economic and socio-political structural change.

The stories have also illustrated the way in which this knowledge in tourism planning and policy has been constructed, framed and disseminated can have powerful implications for practice. This suggests that closer attention needs to be given to reflecting upon the power of knowledge, how it is used, for what purposes, and what might academics and tourism planners and policy practitioners do about it. Reflective practice, both of the self and of others, can yield significant rewards in terms of the tourism outcomes that might be secured, and to one’s own professional career and personal development. Unlocking understandings and improving planning and policy skills requires greater attention to the development of reflective skills, capacities, tools and approaches is an important challenge before us.

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