

TOURISM POLICY-MAKING IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTESTED WICKED PROBLEMS

Sustainability Paradox, Climate
Emergency and COVID-19

Edited by

Christof Pforr, Markus Pillmayer,
Marion Joppe, Nicolai Scherle and
Harald Pechlaner

ADVANCES IN CULTURE, TOURISM
AND HOSPITALITY RESEARCH

VOLUME 17A

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RESEARCH VOLUME 17A

**TOURISM POLICY-MAKING IN
THE CONTEXT OF CONTESTED
WICKED PROBLEMS:
SUSTAINABILITY PARADOX,
CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND
COVID-19**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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FOREWORD

The team of editors of this 17th volume in the *Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research (ACTHR)*, Christof Pforr, Markus Pillmayer, Marion Joppe, Nicolai Scherle and Harald Pechlaner, provide a thought-provoking compendium of profound policy challenges in tourism. This volume (17A and 17B) illustrates in a compelling manner that a significant proportion of the public policymaking in tourism can be characterised as ‘wicked’; problems are complex and potential solutions are affected by trade-offs and paradoxes.

The volume is divided into three parts.

The first part is conceptually focussed and presents the theoretical underpinnings of tourism policymaking in the context of contested wicked problems. In the opening chapter, Christof Pforr, Markus Pillmayer, Marion Joppe, Nicolai Scherle and Harald Pechlaner, trace the history of the academic debate on wicked problems to its beginnings 50 years ago. These apt reflections on the definition of ‘wickedness’ provide the foundation for subsequent empirical investigations of wicked policy challenges. In Chapter 2, Rachel Dodds and Richard Butler establish a second pillar on which this volume rests: sustainable tourism development. They skilfully highlight how tourism policymaking and sustainability interact in a truly wicked manner. Chapter 3 is written by one of the thought leaders in the political science discourse on wicked problems, Brian W. Head. It is a wonderful feature of this volume that such a foundational voice contributed with his sharp analysis. Among numerous noteworthy remarks, he reminds us that conflicting values and/or disagreement on what the problem is or whether a problem even exists sit at the core of many wicked problems.

The second part is the empirical main body of this volume and includes 23 chapters on wicked policy challenges in tourism: ranging from climate change to mega events, from Indigenous rights to the COVID-19 pandemic, from aviation to Airbnb, and from UNESCO World Heritage to tourism labour. These chapters delight by offering a broad international coverage through case studies from Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and Australia/Oceania. These core contributions reflect on policy and governance dynamics and how they interplay with tourism typologies, flows and issues. The empirical chapters often use multilevel and multidimensional lenses to interpret agency options and structural constraints for individuals, organisations and destinations. Addressing either the supply or the demand side of tourism, these chapters investigate wicked policy problems linked to tourist experiences, stakeholder engagement and citizens’ involvement in a wide range of tourist destinations, including vulnerable and transnational contexts. Issues of inequality, discrimination and neglect are presented to increase awareness and stimulate debate. Finding solutions to these issues is not straightforward. Nevertheless, and despite all the contradictions,

paradoxes and complexities inherent to wicked problems, these chapters attempt to identify effective policy approaches.

The last part presents reflections, discussions and conclusions emerging from the theoretical explorations and empirical investigations included in the core chapters of the volume. Harald Pechlaner and Julian Philipp dissect the interface between tourism and politics and present a new integrative tourism policy framework. Marion Joppe, Christian Laesser and Shaun Mann devise a decision framework for policy interventions. The five editors – Christof Pforr, Markus Pillmayer, Marion Joppe, Nicolai Scherle and Harald Pechlaner – conclude with a reflection on using the volume’s contributions to foster transformational processes for tourism, including adaptive political leadership that sees tourism as a suitable area to achieve an integration of governments’ social, cultural and ecological objectives.

This book is an important and overdue impulse to discuss the policy-making dynamics and the responsibilities around tackling some of the most pressing challenges in tourism, and beyond. We sometimes daydream of evidence-based decision-making. But without gaining a deeper understanding of what happens in the ‘policy-black box’ we will not be able to understand how and why we may or may not be able to solve some of the fundamental issues whose careful management is so critical to the wellbeing of present and future generations. In sum, this volume offers valuable insights into the underlying dimensions of wicked problems in tourism and, even more importantly, outlines opportunities to facilitate novel governance and policy approaches.

As the ACTHR Series Editors, we commend and thank the editors, Christof Pforr, Markus Pillmayer, Marion Joppe, Nicolai Scherle and Harald Pechlaner, for curating such a rich, diverse and relevant volume. We also congratulate all this volume’s chapter authors for their valuable contribution to this book series.

Michael Volgger, Curtin University, Australia
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PREFACE

Governments around the world are faced with the challenge of managing a multitude of highly complex, uncertain and divergent, in other words, wicked problems. Sustainability, for instance, which is one of the themes that weaves through this book, constitutes such a wicked challenge. Necessitating the re-thinking of development to integrate environmental, economic and social goals, its principles have been firmly entrenched in many government policies; however, effective policy implementation has remained a distant reach, even after more than three decades of sustainability discourse. This exemplifies the inherent complexities and often paradoxical nature of wicked problems and the challenges they pose for contemporary policy-making systems that this book addresses.

Further, despite growing academic discourse on the political dimensions of tourism since the mid-1990s, literature on tourism as public policy is still scarce. An increasing focus on tourism policy issues by the political-administrative system as well as by the tourism industry demands, however, much greater scientific attention on the political nature of tourism development, especially studies devoted to its policy process. With our book, we contribute to this call for more academic discourse by offering a contemporary and interdisciplinary perspective on tourism public policy to aid the description, analysis and explanation of wicked and interconnected policy problems that confront many governments. Contemporary problem-solving capabilities and the ability of governments to address complex challenges are critically analysed. With contributions from international experts, the book covers a wide range of wicked tourism policy issues, including the climate emergency, tourism mobility, Indigenous disadvantage, the COVID-19 pandemic and the platform economy, showing first insights into transition pathways towards tourism sustainability.

The adopted wicked lens offers a suitable framework to steer our discourses throughout the volume and has yielded some interesting analytical insights. The presentation of case studies from regional and country-specific locations around the world is one of the great strengths of this text, making it relevant to academics, students as well as policymakers and practitioners alike.

We hope you enjoy our book and see it as an impetus to further progress research in this area.

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November 2023