

TOURISM POLICY-MAKING IN
THE CONTEXT OF CONTESTED
WICKED PROBLEMS

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ADVANCES IN CULTURE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY
RESEARCH VOLUME 17A

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

EDITED BY

CHRISTOF PFORR

Curtin University, Australia

MARKUS PILLMAYER

Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany

MARION JOPPE

University of Guelph, Canada

NICOLAI SCHERLE

*University of Applied Sciences for Economics and
Management (FOM), Germany*

AND

HARALD PECHLANER

Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Christof Pforr is Discipline Leader (Tourism, Hospitality and Events) with the School of Management & Marketing, Faculty of Business & Law, Curtin University, Western Australia. Prior to joining Curtin University in 2003, he held academic positions at three other Australia universities and has been a Visiting Professor at universities in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australia. His past and current research is inter- and multidisciplinary. In essence, his activities have concentrated on four interconnected research areas, sustainability, tourism public policy, destination governance and special interest tourism, all fields he has frequently published in. He has contributed to more than 150 publications (including 11 books) and numerous national and international research projects.

Markus Pillmayer has been Professor of Destination Management and Destination Development at the Department of Tourism at Munich University of Applied Sciences since 2019. He was previously Professor of International Destination Management at the Deggendorf Institute of Technology. As a geographer, his research interests include internationalisation, regional and location research in tourism geography, tourism policy, health, New Work and sustainability. He is a member of the Working Group on Tourism Research within the German Geographical Society and a member of the German Association for Tourism Research where he sits on the board. Furthermore, he is a member of the Global Hospitality Research Alliance and a member of the only Hightech Agenda research group at Munich University of Applied Sciences on the topic of New Work.

Marion Joppe is a Distinguished Professor Emerita in the School of Hospitality, Food and Tourism Management, University of Guelph, Canada. She specialises in destination planning, development and marketing and the experiences upon which destinations are built. She has extensive private and public sector experience, having worked for financial institutions, tour operators, consulting groups and government, prior to joining academia. She has used her expertise as a board or working committee member of a wide range of national and provincial level industry and government organisations and has been recognised by the Travel and Tourism Research Association International with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Nicolai Scherle has been Professor of Intercultural Management and Diversity at the FOM University in Munich since 2017. Between 2012 and 2017, the geographer held a Professorship for Tourism Management and Intercultural Communication at the BiTS University in Iserlohn. His main research interests

are in the areas of cultural-geographical regional research (economic and tourism geography with a special focus on aspects related to sustainability), entrepreneurship, intercultural communication and diversity. He is a member of the Academy of Management, the intercultural competence network FORAREA and the Royal Geographical Society.

Harald Pechlaner is Head of the Center for Advanced Studies at Eurac Research, Italy, Chair of Tourism and Founding Dean of the School of Transformation and Sustainability at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. His research area concerns the sustainable destination development and selected questions about global governance combined with economics and politics. Since 2014, he has been Adjunct Research Professor at Curtin University, Perth, Australia and President of Aiest (Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme), the oldest tourism experts' association based at St. Gallen University.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

David Beirman is an Adjunct Fellow in Management and Tourism at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia. He has been involved both as a tourism practitioner and as a researcher and educator since 1981. Professionally he was a Travel Consultant, Corporate Account Manager, HR Manager and In-Service Training Manager for Jetset Tours. He was a Marketing Manager for a wholesale tour operator *Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre* and Destination Manager for both national and transnational tourism organisations in the Eastern Mediterranean. From 2009 to 2022, he was Senior Lecturer in Tourism at UTS. He has written three major books, including *Tourism Crises and Destination Recovery* (2022) and almost 100 other publications. His specialist field of research is tourism risk, crisis and recovery and has he been a keynote speaker on the topics at conference worldwide and has been interviewed by media on news item related to his research specialties. He lives and works in regional New South Wales.

Richard Butler, trained as a Geographer at Nottingham (BA) and Glasgow (PhD) Universities, he has held positions in universities in UK, Canada, Netherlands and Italy and been a Consultant for UNWTO and several national and regional agencies as well as the private sector. A Founding Member and Past President of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism, he was awarded the UNWTO Ulysses Medal for ‘excellence in the creation and dissemination of knowledge’ in 2016. His research interests have been in destination development, the impacts of tourism and islands and remote areas. In recent years, he has focussed specifically on the topics of tourism and Indigenous peoples and also overtourism in a range of destinations. He has published 30 books and many articles and chapters on tourism, and moved to the Pacific coast of Canada in 2019.

Rachel Dodds is passionate about sustainable tourism and ensuring the industry thrives rather than just survives. She works both in academia and industry – as a Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University and also the Director of Sustaining Tourism, a consultancy. Having lived and worked on four continents, she has widely travelled. Her research interests lie in destination development, tourism impacts, islands, stakeholder inclusion and management. She has written three books focussing on overtourism and sustainable tourism.

Brian W. Head is Professor of Public Policy at the University of Queensland. He was also recently the Director of the Centre for Policy Futures. Before 2008, he held senior roles in government agencies and the not-for-profit (NFP) sector. He has published many books and over 100 articles on evidence-based policy,

wicked problems, social issues, environmental policy and how to build bridges between academia and other sectors. He teaches in the Master's programme in Public Policy and Governance and provides keynote presentations in Australia and internationally. His most recent book is *Wicked Problems in Public Policy* (2022, Palgrave, open access: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-94580-0>).

Christian Kahl studied at the Friedrich–Schiller University in Jena, Germany. He earned his Master's in Education Science, Sociology and Psychology and his PhD in Philosophy. He joined the Erasmus exchange programme and studied for a year at Essex University Colchester, UK. His PhD Thesis discovered the boarding school teacher education and training for highly gifted children in Thuringia, Germany. Since 2007, he is living and working in various Asian countries, where he has worked at Les Roches in Shanghai, China, Taylor's University Subang Jaya, Malaysia, Almaty Management University Almaty and currently at Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU), Beijing, China. At BJTU, he holds an Associate Professor position at the School of Economics and Management. Over the last 15 years, his teaching and interests have connected education with management. His focus lies on cross-cultural management and human resource management, where he is researching on Higher Education Development.

Eugenia Kgomotso Mereothle is a Lecturer and Work Integrated Learning Coordinator in the School of Tourism Management, Mahikeng Campus of the North-West University in South Africa. She possesses a Master's degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management, and is currently busy with a PhD in Tourism Management and supervising honours students. Her research interests are airline marketing, passenger profiling, tourism carbon footprint and aviation carbon emissions. She obtained an outstanding research paper award, 'Profiling the Passengers of a Domestic Airline in South Africa'. In *Proceedings of the 2016 International Conference on Hospitality, Leisure, Sports, and Tourism in Kyoto, Japan*. Prior to her appointment as a lecturer, she worked for the Airline Industry for 17 years in the following various positions: Customer Service Agent, Passenger Handling Agent, Revenue Controller, and Revenue Analyst. She has made a noticeable footprint in community engagement. Her highlights include capacity building of tourism educators in the North-West Province, South Africa.

C. Michael Hall, PhD, is Ahurei Professor at University of Canterbury, New Zealand; Eminent Scholar, Kyung Hee University; Guest Professor, Lund University Campus, Helsingborg, Sweden; Visiting Professor, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden; Taylor's University, Malaysia; and Visiting Professor and Docent, University of Oulu, Finland. He is the Co-editor of *Current Issues in Tourism* and Field Editor of *Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism*. His research interests include tourism, regional development, global environmental change, food, sustainability and world heritage.

Naushad Mohamed holds a PhD relating to Destination Marketing and Islamic Tourism from Heriot-Watt University, Scotland, UK. He has also presented his research on destination Maldives in academic conferences and published in academic journals. He holds a Master of Commerce degree from Macquarie University, Australia and a Bachelor of Business Education from University of Wollongong, Australia. He is currently appointed as Deputy Minister at Ministry of Tourism. In his current post, he is mainly involved in policy formulation and research. His notable contributions include acting as Lead Supervisor for the Fifth Tourism Master Plan of Maldives (2023–2027). During his tenure at the ministry, he has worked on tourism strategy and community development projects with international organisations such as Asian Development Bank, UNWTO, UNDP, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Pacific Asia Travel Association. He has wide experience in teaching marketing and management subjects for undergraduate and post-graduate courses at Maldives National University, Heriot-Watt University, UK as well as higher education institutions in Maldives. He has delivered corporate training programmes for both public and private sector organisations. He is also the President and Founder of Clique College, a higher education institution in Maldives, since 2001.

Nina Mostegl, MRM (Planning), holds a PhD from BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, and works at the Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing in the Department of Energy and Climate Protection. She advises and manages the Smart City Initiative of the city of Salzburg and is responsible in this context for the development, coordination and implementation of projects to achieve the energy and climate targets. Further, she coordinates the Austrian Smart City Network and the IEA Cities Technology Collaboration Programme, which aim to translate research-based results into climate policies.

Ulrike Pröbstl-Haider is a Full Professor at the Institute for Landscape development, recreation and conservation planning at BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna, since 2003. She studied landscape planning at the Technical University in Munich (TUM), finished her PhD at the Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich in 1988 and her habilitation at the TUM in 2000. Her current research addresses landscape development, recreation and tourism planning. A special focus of her recent research is decision-making under conditions of climate change, applying choice experiments and related decision support tools. She is editor of a book on tourism and climate change addressing the situation in Austria, and the book *Winter Tourism*, illustrating the challenges of winter tourism word wide.

Jarkko Saarinen is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Oulu, Finland, and Distinguished Visiting Professor (Sustainability Management) at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. He also serves as Visiting Professor (Sustainable Destination Development) at the Uppsala University, Sweden. His research interests include regional and local development, sustainability in

tourism, tourism and climate change, resilience studies, tourism-community relations and nature conservation studies. His recent publications include co-authored and co-edited books: *Climate Change and Tourism in Southern Africa* (2022, Routledge); *Southern African Perspectives in Sustainable Tourism Management* (2022, Springer); *Tourism, Change and the Global South* (2021, Routledge); and *Resilient Destinations* (2019, Routledge).

Anna Scuttari is Associate Professor at the IULM University in Milan (Italy). She holds a Doctoral degree in Economics from the University of Eichstätt, Germany. Previously, she has been a Professor for Empirical Research in Tourism at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany and a Senior Researcher at Eurac Research, Italy. Her main research interests include destination management and governance, sustainability in tourism, tourism transport and gender studies in tourism.

Siamak Seyfi is an Assistant Professor at the Geography Research Unit of the University of Oulu, Finland. Using a multi-/interdisciplinary approach and informed by diverse disciplinary perspectives, his research interests focus on tourism mobilities, critical tourism, political consumerism, sustainability, resilience, as well as qualitative sociological/ethnographic research methods in tourism. He has published in leading tourism journals and serves on the editorial boards of several leading journals in the field of tourism. He has co-authored *Tourism, Sanctions and Boycotts* (2020, Routledge) and co-edited *Contemporary Muslim Travel Cultures* (2022, Routledge); *Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa* (2020, Routledge); *Gen Z, Tourism, and Sustainable Consumption* (2023, Routledge) and *Tourism in Iran: Challenges, Development, and Issues* (2018, Routledge).

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
Serena Volo, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

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.

Christof Pforr, Perth, Australia
Markus Pillmayer, Munich, Germany
Marion Joppe, Guelph, Canada
Nicolai Scherle, Munich, Germany
Harald Pechlaner, Bolzano-Bozen, Italy,
November 2023