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# Tourism Planning and Management

## Introduction

The first chapter in the final section of the book considers planning and management issues in relation to the geography of tourism. This chapter initially discusses the nature of planning and management in general terms. It then focuses on tourism planning and management, and considers the relationship between tourism planning, policy and management. It ends with a discussion of destination planning and management.

## Urban planning

The physical planning of the layout of urban areas dates back over 2,000 years to the Greek era (Gunn, 1988), but modern Western-style planning is linked to town planning in the United Kingdom which originated about 200 years ago (Gunn, 1988; Williams, 1998) and emerged when the population became increasingly urbanized. Planning was to a great extent a response to the perceived 'evils' of urban living. These evils consisted of poor quality housing, which was overcrowded, poor drainage and sanitation, as well as inadequate roads. All of these factors contributed to appalling living conditions for many people. Those involved in planning for utopian cities to replace the rapidly built unplanned creations of 18th century Britain, however, were still concerned primarily with the physical appearance of cities.

In the early 20th century, almost all urban planning in Britain was linked to a number of central government planning acts, and from the 1930s onwards, there was additionally a focus on rural areas with a succession of Town and Country Planning Acts (Mason, 2013a). In federal countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, it has been the governments of individual states which have usually created specific laws and regulations restricting the places where particular activities can take place, and in New Zealand the planning system which affects land use activities, including tourism, is set within the Resource Management Act of 1991 (Mason 2013a).

In many European countries, particularly France and Spain, land use planning is officially centralized, although local and regional authorities in France have

a good deal of power, whilst in Spain regional authorities such as in Andalusia and, in particular, Catalonia also have a large amount of power. In Germany, the history of planning has some similarities to the British situation with much concern about urban planning, but also in other ways not dissimilar to the USA, as the individual federal states have much power in relation to planning.

If early attempts at planning were to create order in response to social and environmental degradation, this is still an important rationale for planning today. As Williams (1998) suggested, without planning there is the risk that an activity will be unregulated, formless or haphazard, and likely to lead to a range of negative economic, social and environmental impacts, and as Gunn (1988) argued, the absence of planning may result in serious malfunctions and inefficiencies.

In 18th and 19th century Europe, much planning was reactive in relation to, for example the problems of housing and overcrowding, but by the late 20th century it was far more proactive and future oriented (Gunn, 1988) and remains so today. Although modern planning originated largely in Europe and North America, some form of official planning now takes place almost everywhere, in both developed and developing countries.

## The nature of planning

Planning is a difficult term to define, mainly because it is used in a variety of contexts. For example, it can be used in connection with individuals, groups, organisations and governments. It can be used in relation to different geographical settings, such as urban and rural, as well as being applied at different scales from local, through regional up to national. A plan can mean little more than partially thought-through ideas that are barely articulated, or a carefully considered document.

Hall (1992: 1) suggested that part of the problem with the concept of planning is that “although people realise that planning has a more general meaning, they tend to remember the idea of the plan as a physical representation or design.” This focus on the plan as a physical design has probably contributed to the failure to recognize the processes that have led to the creation of the actual physical plan. However, if planning is considered to be mainly a process, rather than conceiving of it as a product, there is the danger that it is thought of as being rather vague and abstract (Gunn, 1988). Nevertheless, it is the process part of planning that is particularly important. McCabe *et al.* (2000:235) emphasise that planning is a process when they suggested:

*A plan ... enables us to identify where we are going and how to get there – in other words it should clarify the path that is to be taken and the outcomes, or end results. It also draws attention to the stages on the way and ... helps to set and establish priorities that can assist in the scheduling of activities.*

According to Williams (1998), planning is, (or should be), a process:

- for anticipating and ordering change: that is forward looking;
- that seeks optimal solutions:
- designed to increase and ideally maximize possible development benefits
- and that will produce predictable outcomes.

In discussing the processes involved in planning, Williams (1998) suggests that the aim of modern planning, is to seek optimal solutions to perceived problems, and it is designed to increase and, hopefully, maximize development benefits, which will produce predictable outcomes. Williams (1998:126) claimed planning 'is an ordered sequence of operations and actions that are designed to realise one single goal or a set of interrelated goals'.

One of the key elements of the process of planning is decision-making (Veal, 1994; Hall, 2000). As Veal (1994:3) stated: 'planning can be seen as the process of deciding'. Hall (2000:7) suggested that this process is not straightforward, as it involves 'bargaining, negotiation, compromise, coercion, values, choice and politics'. Hall (2000) also stated that decision-making is part of a continuum that follows directly from planning and this, in turn, is followed by action. Gunn (1988) believed that action was a very important part of planning and employed the ideas of Lang (1985) to differentiate between conventional planning and strategic planning. Lang (1985) suggested that conventional planning has only vague goals, is reactive rather than proactive, periodic rather than consistent, separates the planning from the implementation stage, and fails to consider the values of those individuals and organisations involved. Strategic planning, however, according to Lang is action-oriented, focused, ongoing, pro-active, and does consider the values of those involved.

Wilkinson (1997) supports the notion that a plan is very much about process and indicates the important geographical dimension when suggesting that a plan provides the rationale for and details of how implementation will take place within a country or region, and sets this within a wider economic and social context. He also indicated that planning involves not only the formulation of plans and their implementation, but also their monitoring and review.

A key element of both the rationale for, and the process of, planning is that it is future-orientated. As Chadwick (1971:24) suggested 'planning is a process, a process of human thought and action based upon that thought – in point of fact, forethought, thought for the future, nothing more or less than this is planning'.

## **Planning and policy**

In general parlance, planning and policy are closely related terms. Wilkinson (1997) linked the two terms when stating planning is a course of action, while policy is the implementation of the planned course of action. Policy is very often created by, and emanates from, public bodies or organisations. Creating public

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