

**Governance and Policy in Tourism – to whom does tourism policy respond?**

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**Abstract** (preconference version)

Analytically, tourism policy making can be subdivided into policy inputs, the policy process and policy outputs (Airey & Chong, 2011; Jenkins, 1978). This is an exploratory study that focuses on the input side and draws on existing research into the role of the various stakeholders and paradigms in influencing tourism policy. Its aim is to identify members and notions of the policy community and their relative importance and to compare across three countries (Australia, Austria, South Tyrol-Italy). The research question asks “what determines to whom tourism policy responds” and looks for commonalities as well as differences in answering this question among the set of the three investigated cases. Methodologically the study uses textual analysis of previously collected qualitative interviews. In detail, it analyses all these interviews with the GABEK method (Pechlaner & Volgger, 2012).

Findings indicate that in all three cases, tourism policy responds to several types of voices, because it depends on these voices for receiving votes, money, information and implementation opportunities. These voices could be classified as: ideological voices, political voices, thematic voices, implementation driven voices, levelled voices, coordinated and cohesive voices, well-connected individual voices and knowledgeable voices.

However, in the analysis also appear several differences among the three cases. They differ in the extent to which tourism has a powerful voice in policy making, in whether public or market voices dominate in tourism policy and whether the voices are centralized or decentralized voices. They also differ in the extent they consider residents’ voices on the one hand and guests’ voices on the other, local voices and global voices as well as DMO voices and business voices.

Although it is in order to point out some limitations in the comparability of the three cases, interesting indications can be found. A major conclusion is that the voice of tourism in policy differs among the analyzed countries and regions. The room for tourism policy making is limited by the necessity to respond to voices from inside and outside the policy system. The type and relative weight of these voices varies. Hence, it appears absolutely crucial to consider tourism policy together with these voices to which it needs to respond, i.e. together with the whole governance context in which it is embedded.

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Jenkins, W. I. (1978). *Policy analysis: a political and organisational perspective*. London: Martin Robertson.

Pechlaner, H & Volgger, M. (2012). How to promote cooperation in the hospitality industry: Generating practitioner-relevant knowledge using the GABEK qualitative research strategy. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 24(6), 925-945.

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