
Book review

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Tourism Public Policy and the Strategic Management of Failure

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Alloway

2003

268 pp.

ISBN: 0-08-044200-5 (hardback)

€85

Included in series: *Advances in Tourism Research*

Review DOI 10.1108/09513550410554814

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The *Tourism Public Policy and the Strategic Management of Failure* book deals with tourism public policy as part of regional development. The author, being an industry person who recently completed his doctoral research, is bringing a wealth of practical experience which he blends with a number of theoretical frameworks for assessing the effectiveness of the Scottish public policy.

The book is divided into two distinctive parts. In the first part, it provides a fairly comprehensive review of global tourism policies and identifies a number of key resources that will enable the reader to explore further this fascinating area. It covers a number of tourism industry aspects in the twenty-first century, as well as tourism and public policy approaches and theories. The book also investigates how the globalisation of tourism influences public policy and is engaged with the global volatility resulting from a number of critical issues, including: global competition, economic, and environmental issues combined with the continued threat of terrorism, and instability in the Middle East. In addition, a number of extenuating circumstances during this period, including the foot and mouth epidemic, the terrorist atrocities in the USA, Indonesia, and Kenya, the massive downturn in the stock market which has impacted negatively on consumer confidence, SARS and war in Iraq. The consequences of those events dramatically reduced North American tourism trade to Europe, whilst economic recession in main economic markets also affected tourism arrivals and expenditure. Hence, most destinations around the world, had to deal with significant and unique challenges that have necessitated governments assessing and redefining their tourism public policies. The book then focuses on the development, structure, and public policy of tourism in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Republic of Ireland.

On the second part the book investigates tourism in Scotland and provides a detailed account of the Scottish tourism development, structure, and approaches to public policy. The author explains in detail the impact of devolution for Scottish tourism and reviews the initiatives, consultations and strategies that evolved during

The International Journal of Public
Sector Management
Vol. 17 No. 6, 2004
pp. 553-554
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0951-3558

the first Scottish parliament, for the period 1999-2003. The book argues that despite the restoration of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and the devolution of tourism and economic development powers from Westminster to Edinburgh, a number of interrelated and critical powers, such as fiscal and employment policies which impacted greatly on tourism, were still reserved to Westminster and hence the Scottish Parliament had only limited tools to determine their tourism policy.

More importantly the book then concentrates on the strategic management of failure of Scottish tourism. The author asserts that "Scottish tourism's failure during the 1990s to realise the commercial potential or to challenge competitor destinations resulted in a fiscal gap between current income and potential income of 20 per cent or £1 billion per annum" (p. 154). Although this claim is not substantiated by the research presented in the book and the methodology used to arrive to this figure is not explained, the author provides a wide range of qualitative factors that he believes that contribute to failure. In fact not dissimilar factors can be attributed to many public administrations around the world.

The strengths of the book are that it offers an insight into the tourism policy frameworks and encourages readers to seek the original literature sources. It also provides a comprehensive overview and account of the issues related to the policy of the Scottish tourism as well as the impact of the devolution for Scottish tourism, especially for the 1999-2003 period. The documentation of the extenuating circumstances is also significant for the study of tourism. Hence the book provides a contemporary account of tourism public policy within the challenges that emerge in the global market. Therefore it would be useful for both advanced (final year and postgraduate) tourism students and researchers. Tourism practitioners of both the private and public sectors will also find the book of good use. This will be particularly the case for people interested in tourism, regional development and politics in Scotland.

However, the title of the book is misleading and fails to provide a clear indication of the Scottish focus. In addition, as the book is published in hardback only it will be less accessible to its target markets, and realistically many readers will have to use a library copy.

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