Policies in the advanced capitalist economies increasingly are addressing key dimensions of clusters in terms of their contribution to tourism production and consumption. This presents issues in terms of regulation, including planning and development, encouraging cooperation, network formation, diffusion of innovations and balancing cooperation and competition. The impacts of tourism policies on tourism production, and in particular the role of the cluster concept in shaping these policies, are examined. The findings throw light on the debate over the role of cluster policies in tourism production in general and the impact of spatial proximity and thematic similarity between visitor attractions on the locational decision making process for new attractions and facilities at tourism destinations. An examination of issues related to translating the cluster concept from theory into practice reveals different approaches to understanding tourism planning and policy making. Sustained commitment to neoliberal policy directions before the 1980s, whereby commercial forces shaped tourism spaces, can explain the emergence of tourism clusters as deliberate or accidental, with winners and losers through a critical, social constructionist approach to capture the relational complexities of tourism planning and policy making in the study area (Dredge and Jenkins, the introduction of the book). However, this chapter also reveals formal and informal policies, which reflect increasing involvement in reflexive processes of identifying existing or emerging vulnerabilities. Their influence represents public interest, social justice, transparency and accountability beyond neo-liberal forces. This chapter presents how these contradicting forces play out in the decisions and actions of the actors and agencies involved, and in the structures and practices of tourism planning and policy making. It provides an opportunity to look beyond the cluster theory underlying the development of tourism clusters and provides a better understanding of the challenges of tourism planning, policy making and governance in translating clustering policies into practice in tourism.

This case study focuses on the relatively understudied attraction sector in two tourism clusters in the UK with low and high levels of agglomeration of visitor attractions respectively. The chapter begins by exploring the literature on the cluster concept and clustering policies in tourism, followed by the methodology and a critical review of current tourism development policies in the study areas. It then explores the popularity of the cluster concept amongst tourism protagonists and what it means to attraction operators. The next section continues through individual ‘stories’ reflecting the ways policies are implemented and shape tourism clusters. The case study provides an insight into the reasons for the locations of some of the visitor attractions in the study areas and illustrates the nature of the planning decision making processes. It also reveals how formal and informal policies influence the development planning process.

ABSTRACT

Why cluster? Text and sub-text in the engagement of tourism development policies with the cluster concept


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Policies in the advanced capitalist economies increasingly are addressing key dimensions of clusters in terms of their contribution to tourism production and consumption. This presents issues in terms of regulation, including planning and development, encouraging cooperation, network formation, diffusion of innovations and balancing cooperation and competition. The impacts of tourism policies on tourism production, and in particular the role of the cluster concept in shaping these policies, are examined. The findings throw light on the debate over the role of cluster policies in tourism production in general and the impact of spatial proximity and thematic similarity between visitor attractions on the locational decision making process for new attractions and facilities at tourism destinations. An examination of issues related to translating the cluster concept from theory into practice reveals different approaches to understanding tourism planning and policy making. Sustained commitment to neoliberal policy directions before the 1980s, whereby commercial forces shaped tourism spaces, can explain the emergence of tourism clusters as deliberate or accidental, with winners and losers through a critical, social constructionist approach to capture the relational complexities of tourism planning and policy making in the study area (Dredge and Jenkins, the introduction of the book). However, this chapter also reveals formal and informal policies, which reflect increasing involvement in reflexive processes of identifying existing or emerging vulnerabilities. Their influence represents public interest, social justice, transparency and accountability beyond neo-liberal forces. This chapter presents how these contradicting forces play out in the decisions and actions of the actors and agencies involved, and in the structures and practices of tourism planning and policy making. It provides an opportunity to look beyond the cluster theory underlying the development of tourism clusters and provides a better understanding of the challenges of tourism planning, policy making and governance in translating clustering policies into practice in tourism.

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Development of cluster structures is a priority for the knowledge and information economy development and an important prerequisite for effective strategic partner-ship of logistically and geographically related entities of the economic system. The results of determining the participants’ interaction intensity in the tourism cluster are presented, and the effectiveness of the cluster system development based on a set of economic, social and environmental criteria is evaluated. Keywords. tourism, tourist activity actor, integration, integration process, cluster, tourism cluster, cluster development. of cluster management policies at the regional lev- agement and the justification that the main stimu-. el, etc., and has limited argumentation. lus for integration is the ability to achieve strategic. The tourism clusters analysis is adapted to the characteristics of tourism activity as it is based on the analysis of agglomerations, functional complementary, cooperative relationships and competition among actors. Otherwise, the traditional cluster analysis is not clear when the objective is to evaluate local impacts concerning competitiveness, sustainability and social justice. In the third part, the effectiveness of tourism clusters in the local development perspective will be examined. 2. concepts for clusters. A definition of the cluster concept, which is generally agreed upon seems that does not exist. Picture 1. A model of tourist cluster The main concept of cluster is tourist resources that play the central role in tourism development, because they are mostly the main reason and motive for people to participate in the tourist tours. In the law of Russian Federation “On the basics of tourism activity in Russian Federation” tourist resources are interpreted as “natural, historical, socio-cultural objects of tourist observation and other objects satisfying tourists’ needs and developing their physical strengths. Definition of the types and specifics of resources determines the demand for the tourism products and by this – for the building and supporting the whole tourism infrastructure. Identifying tourist clusters gives an opportunity to define necessary cluster elements.