Rethinking Collaboration and Partnership: A Public Policy Perspective

C. Michael Hall
Centre for Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

Issues of coordination, collaboration and partnership are now at the forefront of much tourism research on finding new solutions to resource management and destination development problems. However, despite the value of such attention in possibly improving destination management and the development of more sustainable forms of tourism, the concepts have remained relatively poorly critically analysed from a public policy perspective. The paper argues that the emphasis associated with network concepts is related to the changing role of the state in Western society and the attempt to find market or semi-market solutions to resource and production problems. However, the paper argues with reference to examples from various Western countries, and Australia in particular, that caution needs to be applied in the utilisation of these concepts because of the implications that they may have for notions of governance and the public interest. In addition, the paper argues that the predominance of narrow corporatist notions of collaboration and partnership in network structures may serve to undermine the development of the social capital required for sustainable development.

The tendency to privatise and commercialise functions that were once performed by government which has been almost universal in Western nations since the late 1970s has had substantially affected the nature of many national governments' involvement in the tourism industry (Pearce, 1992; Hall & Jenkins, 1995a, b; Elliot, 1997; Hall, 2000). According to Davis *et al*. (1993: 24) three principal economic reasons for this trend can be identified: 'governments are interested in reducing the dependency of public enterprises on public budgets, in reducing public debt by selling state assets, and in raising technical efficiencies by commercialisation'. However, the economic reasons are themselves shrouded in political rationales that relate to broader philosophical perspectives which have most often been associated with a 'New Right', corporatist or neo-conservative economic agenda which in various countries was labelled as 'Reaganism' (USA), 'Thatcherism' (UK) or 'Rogernomics' (New Zealand).

In such a political and economic climate the role of government in tourism has undergone a dramatic shift from a traditional public administration model which sought to implement government policy for a perceived public good, to a corporatist model which emphasises efficiency, investment returns, the role of the market, and relations with stakeholders, usually defined as industry. Corporatism, here, is used in the sense of a dominant ideology in Western society which claims rationality as its central quality and which emphasises a notion of individualism in terms of self-interest rather than the legitimacy of the individual citizen acting in the democratic interest of the public good (see Saul, 1995). However, in many policy areas, including tourism, the changed role of the state and the individual's relation to the state provides a major policy quandary. On the one hand there is the demand for less government interference in the market

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and to allow industries to develop and trade without government subsidy or assistance while, on the other, industry interest groups seek to have government policy developed in their favour, including the maintenance of government funding for promotion as in the case of the tourism industry (e.g. see Craik, 1990, 1991a). This policy issue has generally been resolved through the restructuring of national and regional tourist organisations (a) to reduce their planning, policy and development roles and increase their marketing and promotion functions; and (b) to engage in a greater range of partnerships, network and collaborative relationships with stakeholders. Such a situation has been described by Milward (1996) as the hollowing out of the state in which the role of the state has been transformed from one of hierarchical control to one in which governing is dispersed among a number of separate, non-government entities. This has therefore led to increased emphasis on governance through network structures as a '*new* process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the *new* method by which society is governed' (Rhodes, 1997: 43).

The implications of the restructuring of governments involvement in tourism has been documented in Australia (e.g. Craik, 1991b; Hall, 1995), New Zealand (e.g. Pearce, 1990, 1992); Canada (e.g. Hall & Jenkins, 1995a; Lovelock, 1999) and the United States (e.g. Bonham & Mak, 1996). For example, in the United States the federal government's role in tourism has come under intensive review, in part because of the perceived need to gain greater private-sector funding. In some states the role of tourism organisations has also changed dramatically. For example, in Colorado the state's tourism offices were abolished by voters, while Oregon and Virginia have privatised their state offices in the desire to gain greater levels of private sector funding (Bonhan & Mak, 1996). Similarly, in Australia and Canada, state tourism offices have been corporatised with greater emphasis being given to the establishment of partnerships with industry in joint marketing and promotional campaigns (Hall & Jenkins, 1995a).

The growing emphasis by government tourism organisations on partnership arrangements with the private sector is also related to developments in management theory. For example, strategic planning now places substantial emphasis on relations with stakeholders as part of the planning process while the emergence of theories of collaboration (e.g. Gray, 1985, 1989; Wood & Gray, 1991) and network development (e.g. Powell, 1990; Freeman, 1991; Cooke & Morgan, 1993) highlights the importance of the links to be made between stakeholders in processes of mediation, promotion and regional development. For example, in Australia the Federal Government has invested substantial funds into promoting business network development between businesses in a number of sectors including tourism (e.g. AusIndustry 1996), while network development is an important common element in many European Union regional development programmes such as LEADER (e.g. Zarza, 1996).

Awareness of the need for tourist organisations to create links with stakeholders is, of course, not new. The community tourism approach of Murphy (1985, 1988) emphasised the importance of involving the community in destination management because of their role as key stakeholders, although in actuality this often meant working with industry and community-based groups in a destination context rather than through wider public participation mechanisms. The difficulty in implementing community based tourism strategies is reflective of

wider difficulties with respect to effective destination management and tourism planning (Davidson & Maitland, 1997), namely the diffuse nature of tourism phenomenon within economy and society and the problem this creates with respect to coordination and management.

The partially industrialised nature of tourism means that tourism, like the environment, should be regarded as a meta-problem which represent highly interconnected planning and policy 'messes' (Ackoff, 1974) which cut across fields of expertise and administrative boundaries and, seemingly, become connected with almost everything else. Tourism, therefore 'is merely an acute instance of the central problem of society' (Hall, 1992: 249) of creating a sense of the whole which can then be effectively planned and managed. Nevertheless, planning for tourism is still regarded as important because its effects are so substantial and potentially long standing. Indeed, concern with making tourism, along with all development, sustainable has provided even greater imperative for developing relevant tourism planning frameworks (Hall 2000). Yet despite use by tourism researchers of the evolving network paradigm in management literature (e.g. Selin, 1993, 1998; Selin & Chavez, 1994; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Buhalis & Cooper, 1998) there has been, given the central role of government in tourism promotion and development, surprisingly little reference to the public policy literature which analyses what has been, until recently, a 'neglected' aspect of contemporary administration and policy-making (O'Toole, 1997).

The present paper utilises the developing literature on network thinking in Public Policy to critically assess the roles of public-sector collaboration and partnership in tourism in relation to ideas of governance, participation and the contribution it may make to developing the social capital of sustainability. It does so with emphasis on the role of government in tourism in Western nations and in Australia in particular.

Notions of collaboration, coordination and partnership are separate, though closely related, ideas within the emerging network paradigm. Networks refer to the development of linkages between actors (organisations and individuals) where linkages become more formalised towards maintaining mutual interests. The nature of such linkages exists on a continuum ranging from 'loose' linkages to coalitions and more lasting structural arrangements and relationships. Mandell (1999) identifies a continuum of such collaborative efforts as follows:

- linkages or interactive contacts between two or more actors;
- intermittent coordination or mutual adjustment of the policies and procedures of two or more actors to accomplish some objective;
- *ad hoc* or temporary task force activity among actors to accomplish a purpose or purposes;
- permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more actors through a formal arrangement (e.g. a council or partnership) to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes;
- a coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope and all actions occur within the participant actors themselves or involve the mutually sequential or simultaneous activity of the participant actors; and

- A collective or network structure where there is a broad mission and joint and strategically interdependent action. Such structural arrangements take on broad tasks that reach beyond the simultaneous actions of independently operating actors.

However, as Mandell (1999: 8) cautions:

> because we as professionals are eager to achieve results, we often look for prescriptions or answers as to how to solve ongoing dilemmas ...it is tempting for both academics and practitioners to try to develop a model of success that will fit this complex world. In this regard, the concepts of networks and network structures can easily become the next in line for those in the field to 'latch onto' and use wholesale. Although it may be tempting to do so, this 'one size fits all' type of modelling does not take into consideration the myriad of factors and events that must be understood before these concepts can be of much use in the 'real world'.

It is in the light of this cautionary statement that this article now turns.

Coordination, Collaboration and Integration in Tourism Planning

One of the key intellectual sources for the development of approaches to sustainable tourism (e.g. Inskeep, 1991; Wight, 1993, 1998) are the developments in resource management and environmental planning which have focused on integrated forms of resource planning (e.g. Lang, 1986; Mitchell, 1989). Integrated approaches towards *tourism planning* are neither *top-down*, 'where goals at each level in the organisation [or spatial area] are determined based on the goals at the next higher level' (Heath & Wall, 1992: 69), nor *bottom-up*, where the goals of individual units are aggregated together. Instead, integrated tourism planning may be regarded as an *interactive* or *collaborative* approach which requires participation and interaction between the various levels of an organisation or unit of governance and between the responsible organisation and the stakeholders in the planning process to realise horizontal and vertical partnerships within the planning process (Hall & McArthur, 1998).

The need for coordination has become one of the great truisms of tourism planning and policy. For example, Lickorish *et al*. (1991: vi) argued that:

> There is a serious weakness in the machinery of government dealing with tourism in its coordination, and cooperation with operators either state or privately owned. Government policies or lack of them suggest an obsolescence in public administration devoted to tourism ... Political will is often lacking. 'Co-ordination' usually refers to the problem of relating units or decisions so that they fit in with one another, are not at cross-purposes, and operate in ways that are reasonably consistent and coherent. (Spann, 1979: 411)

Coordination for tourism occurs both horizontally, e.g. between different government agencies which may have responsibilities for various tourism-related activities at the same level of governance (i.e., national parks, tourism promotion, transport), and vertically, e.g. between different levels of government (local, regional, provincial, national) within an administrative and

policy system. Two different types of coordination are covered under Spann's definition: administrative coordination and policy coordination. The need for administrative coordination can be said to occur when there has been agreement on aims, objectives and policies between the parties that have to be coordinated but the mechanism for coordination is undecided or there are inconsistencies in implementation. The necessity of policy coordination arises when there is conflict over the objectives of the policy that has to be coordinated and implemented. The two types of coordination may sometimes be hard to distinguish as coordination will nearly always mean that one policy or decision will be dominant over others. Furthermore, perhaps the need for coordination only becomes paramount when it is not occurring. Most coordination occurs in a very loose fashion that does not require formal arrangement. In addition, some conflict can also be productive in the formulation of new ideas or strategies for dealing with problems (Hall & McArthur, 1998). Nevertheless, coordination is a political activity and as a result of this coordination can prove extremely difficult, especially when, as in the tourism industry, there are a large number of parties involved in the decision-making process.

Coordination therefore tends to refer to formal institutionalised relationships among existing networks of organisations, interests and/or individuals, while cooperation is 'characterized by informal trade-offs and by attempts to establish reciprocity in the absence of rules' (Mulford & Rogers, 1982: 13). Often, the problem of developing coordinated approaches towards tourism planning and policy problems, such as the metaproblem of sustainability, is identified in organisational terms, e.g. the creation of new organisations or the allocation of new responsibilities to existing ones. However, such as response does not by itself solve the problem of bringing various stakeholders and interests together which is an issue of establishing collaborative processes. Instead, by recognising the level of interdependence that exists within the tourism system (Hall, 2000), it may be possible for 'separate, partisan interests to discover a common or public interest' (Friedmann, 1973: 350). For example, moves towards the implementation of an 'ecosystem management' approach among United States government natural resource management agencies has opened up new ways of thinking about heritage management. According to the United States National Park Service (NPS) (1994: nd):

> Ecosystem management is an awareness that resources and processes do not exist in isolation. Rather, living things exist in complex, interconnected systems within a broad landscape. These interconnected communities of living things, including humans, together with the dynamic physical environment are termed ecosystems. The interconnected nature of ecosystems necessitates that NPS managers shift from a primarily park- or resource-specific approach to a wider systems and process approach to management.

An ecosystem management approach is essentially collaborative and requires the development of partnerships with stakeholders.

> The NPS has complementary roles as a direct resource steward and as advisor to others through education and assistance programs. Both roles

> require active partnerships. Partnerships encompass two elements: formal partnership assistance programs such as heritage partnership programs ... and field-level partnerships, which are not necessarily served by a formal program. Ecosystem management is best understood as shared responsibility, and the NPS should collaborate, communicate, cooperate, and coordinate with partners. Partnerships should be pursued with all major players in each specific ecosystem, including other federal agencies, state and local governments, tribal entities, private interests, advocacy and interest groups, university and research groups, and the general public. Partners include critics. The NPS should actively develop ecosystem goals and work to achieve goals through consensus-building approaches. All stakeholders in a given ecosystem should participate in goal-setting and strategic planning to achieve the goals and should share accountability and benefits. Partnership efforts should begin at the local level, with ample public meetings and participation-building efforts. Trust, openness, cooperation, and accountability takes time to develop, and the NPS should attempt to establish equity among partners. (National Park Service, 1994: n.p.)

The ecosystem management approach has also been influential in Canada where, in the western provinces, Parks Canada has started to develop 'ecosystem secretariats' in which there is usually one person who is actively involved in and monitoring regional activities relevant to the organisation (Lovelock, 1999). However, in the case of both the United States and Canada it should be noted that there is a strong suspicion among staff that such measures are a way of further cutting staff and resource funds (National Park Service, 1994; Lovelock, 1999).

Coordination and Sustainability

As the ecosystem management approach in the United States demonstrates, the development of coordinated or integrative frameworks undoubtedly has substantial implications for agencies which are designed to fulfil the goals of sustainable development. Sustainable development has a primary objective of providing lasting and secure livelihoods which minimise resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) extended this basic objective to include concerns of equity; the needs of economically marginal populations; and the idea of technological and social limitations on the ability of the environment to meet present and future needs. The concern for equity, in terms of both intra- and inter-generational equity, in sustainable development means that not only should we be concerned with the maintainance of 'environmental capital' (Jacobs, 1991) but also the maintenance and enhancement of social capital (Healey, 1997), in terms of the rich set of social networks and relationships that exist in places, through appropriate policies and programmes of social equality and political participation (Blowers, 1997). Such an approach has considerable implications for the structure of tourism planning and policy-making. To fulfil the sustainable goal of equity, decision-making processes will need to be more inclusive of the full range of values, opinions and interests that surround tourism developments and tourism's overall contribu-

tion to development, and provide a clearer space for public argument and debate (Smyth, 1994). As Evans (1997: 8) argued,

> if environmental planning for sustainability ... is to be anywhere near effective, the political processes of public debate and controversy, both formal and informal, will need to play a much more significant role than has hitherto been the case.

In an ideal collaborative or interactive approach towards tourism planning the emphasis is on planning with as wide a set of stakeholders as possible thereby attempting to meet the public interest rather than planning for a narrow set of industry stakeholders or private interests as under a corporatist perspective (Healey, 1997; Hall, 2000). A public collaborative approach also seeks to mediate the community base of tourism destination products by recognising that the opinions, perspectives, and recommendations of non-industry stakeholders are just as legitimate as those of the planner or the 'expert' or of industry. Such an approach may well be more time-consuming than a top-down approach but the results of such a process will have a far greater likelihood of being implemented because stakeholders will likely have a greater degree of ownership of the plan and of the process. Furthermore, such a process may well establish greater cooperation or collaboration between various stakeholders in supporting the goals and objectives of tourism organisations, and also create a basis for responding more effectively to and for change (Hall & McArthur, 1998). Nevertheless, while collaboration clearly has potential to contribute to the development of more sustainable forms of tourism in that they can create social capital, it has to be emphasised that the goal of partnership as emphasised by a number of Western governments which have restructured their involvement in tourism in recent years, need not be the same as an inclusive collaborative approach (Lovelock, 1999).

In the case of the United Kingdom, for example, many of the partnerships established between government and business in the 1980s and early 1990s as part of urban and regional development programmes have been heavily criticised for their narrow stakeholder and institutional base. Goodwin (1993: 161) argued that in order to ensure that urban leisure and tourism development projects were carried out, 'local authorities have had planning and development powers removed and handed to an unelected institution. Effectively, an appointed agency is, in each case, replacing the powers of local government in order to carry out a market-led regeneration of each inner city'. Harvey (1989: 7) recognised that:

> the new entrepreneurialism of the smaller state has, as its centrepiece, the notion of a "public–private partnership" in which a traditional local boosterism is integrated with the use of local government powers to try [to] attract external sources of funding, new direct investments, or new employment sources.

In this case, partnership does not include all members of a community, those who do not have enough money, are not of the right lifestyle, or simply do not have sufficient power, are ignored. For example, in referring to Derwentside in the United Kingdom, Sadler (1993: 190) argued:

> The kind of policy which had been adopted – and which was proving increasingly ineffective even in terms of its own stated objectives … rested not so much on a basis of rational choice, but rather was a simple reflection of the narrow political and intellectual scope for alternatives. This restricted area did not come about purely or simply by chance, but had been deliberately encouraged and fostered.

In examining issues of collaboration and partnership in relation to sustainable tourism it therefore becomes vital that the range of stakeholders involved in such arrangements is examined so as to ensure that it is as inclusive of the public interest as possible. Unfortunately, the validity of partnership arrangements between the public and private sectors in tourism has only received a limited amount of analysis (e.g. Hayes, 1981; Craik, 1990; Dombrink & Thompson, 1990; Pelissero *et al*. 1991; Lovelock, 1999). Nevertheless, these studies, along with the review by Hall and Jenkins (1995b) of the role of interest groups in the tourism policy making process, strongly suggest that business groups tend to dominate the policy process to the exclusion or detriment of other interests.

The Role of Interest Groups in Collaborative Arrangements

The role of interest groups is crucial to any discussion of collaboration in tourism. The term 'interest group' tends to be used interchangeably with the terms 'pressure group', 'lobby group', 'special interest group' or 'organised interests'. According to Hall and Jenkins (1995b), an interest group is defined as any association or organisation which makes a claim, either directly or indirectly, on government so as to influence public policy without itself being willing to exercise the formal powers of government (Matthews, 1980). Although individuals are clearly significant in tourism development, planning and policy, network and collaborative approaches have tended to focus on the organisational dimensions of development. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, the well developed literature on interest groups and organisational relationships with respect to policy formulation has been little considered in the discussion on the benefits of collaborative approaches to tourism (see Hall & Jenkins, 1995b for a brief discussion of some of this literature). Therefore, this article argues that such an approach may be of tremendous benefit to understanding the limits of collaboration, particularly within the scope of public–private arrangements and its wider contribution to the creation of effective social capital for sustainability. Within many discussions of the establishment of networks and partnership arrangements, including those in tourism and place promotion (e.g. Kotler *et al*. 1993), policy networks are typically portrayed as interdependent, coequal, patterned relationships (Klijn, 1996). However, different policy actors occupy different positions and can carry different weight within networks. Some sit in positions with extensive opportunity contexts, filling 'structural holes' (Nohria, 1992: 10), while others may be reluctant participants or may not even be able to participate at all. Organisations and actors also differ with respect to resource dependencies (Rhodes, 1981), leading to differences in their relative power to influence policy processes. As Clegg and Hardy (1996: 678) remind us, 'We cannot ignore that power can be hidden behind the facade of "trust" and the rhetoric of "collabora-

tion", and used to promote vested interest through the manipulation of and capitulation by weaker partners'.

The Australian Situation

Despite the rapid growth of public interest, consumer, environmental and community-based organisations in Western countries since the early 1960s, 'the pressure system is tilted heavily in favour of the well-off especially business' (Schlozman, 1984: 1029). Business performance affects employment, prices, inflation, production, growth and the material standard of living, which are all items increasingly utilised by government at all levels to measure success. Indeed, in the increasingly corporatised world of government success indicators for government have almost come to be synonymous with those of the private sector (Saul, 1995). Therefore, government leadership will be strongly influenced by business leadership in order to achieve certain public policy goals. In one of the few studies of the influence of the tourism industry on government policy, Craik (1990: 29) observed that 'the private sector claims that because it takes risks, it should shape policy'. Nevertheless, as she went on to note, 'the fostering of the private sector by government inevitably leads to charges of clientelism, the coincidence between policy outcomes and the interests of key lobbyists'. Craik (1990) clearly demonstrated that the key industry association was able to influence government policy deliberations in a manner which met their specific interests. Indeed, such is the extent of the relationship between Tourism Council Australia (the key tourism industry body in Australia) and the Australian Tourist Commission (the national marketing organisation) that their head offices even share the same office building in Sydney. Such a situation can be described as a subgovernment.

The notion of subgovernment connotes a stable triangular alliance of policy specialists, including the 'triangle' of legislative committees, executive agencies, and interest groups, including other interests and actors (Cigler, 1991). If a stable relationship exists between the members of the triangle then it means that the subgovernment is relatively impervious to outside influences on policy formulation and implementation – as in the case of Craik's (1990; 1991a) analysis of tourism policy in Australia. Hall and Jenkins (1995b) argued that in many countries and regions' tourism policy-making has historically resembled the subgovernment model, given the close relationship that exists between peak industry bodies and business interests and tourism agencies. Indeed, the goals of the two may sometimes be regarded as synonymous. Yet, such a situation clearly has profound implications for the possibility of effecting sustainable tourism policies, especially when sustainability also assumes greater equity to resources and the decision-making process.

In the case of Australia, all the state and national tourist organisations presently espouse greater 'coordination', 'collaboration', and/or 'partnership' with industry in their key policy documents such as Annual Reports and Strategic Plans. For example, the Queensland Travel and Tourism Corporation's (QTTC) mission statement is 'To enhance the marketing of Queensland's destinations in partnership with industry' (QTTC, 1997a: 2). In 1997 the Queensland Government development a framework for the future of tourism in Queensland which

'aims to create a commercially attractive operating element for the tourism industry' (QTTC, 1997b: 3). The QTTC will implement in conjunction with the private sector, 'particularly in relation to effective marketing and distribution of Queensland tourist product, and the provision of expert advice on planning and development issues' (QTTC, 1997c: 3).

Under its *Statement of Corporate Intent 1997–1999*, Tourism Tasmania's mission is 'to promote Tasmania as a premier tourism destination through strategic marketing and sustainable development in partnership with industry, in order to maximise economic and social benefits for all Tasmanians' (Tourism Tasmania, 1997: 41). The strategic directions for Tourism Tasmania are expressed in its core corporate objectives as:

> *Marketing* – influence target markets to travel to Tasmania;
>
> *Development* – facilitate development of export ready product and infrastructure to meet identified market opportunities;
>
> *Distribution* – ensure effective distribution of Tasmanian tourism products;
>
> *Coordination* – maximise existing and new partnerships with stakeholders to ensure Tasmania is marketed and developed as a premier visitor destination utilising the available resources to the maximum benefit;
>
> *Management* – ensure that Tourism Tasmania manages its business by balancing resources with priorities. (Tourism Tasmania, 1997: 41)

Similarly, according to the then South Australian Minister of Tourism, Mike Rann (1993: 1), the decision to replace a traditional government department, Tourism South Australia, with a Tourism Commission in 1993 was 'more than cosmetic. The change to a more private sector styled statutory corporation with a strong focus on tourism marketing, will have clear benefits for our tourism industry'. The private sector, commercial orientation of the SATC is also seen in the Minister's comments regarding the Commission's direction:

> The direction, administration and operation of the new Tourism Commission will be clearly and firmly in the hands of those with private sector expertise operating in partnership with the South Australian Government. This will provide the opportunity for a much greater sense of 'ownership' of the Commission's marketing and promotional direction by the tourism industry in our State, with all parties making a contribution and all being accountable. This partnership should promote greater shared commitment to tourism growth, rather than alibis and excuses or wasteful territorialism. (Rann, 1993: 1)

Such orientations may have substantial consequences for sustainable tourism. For example, the major objective of the *South Australian Tourism Plan 1987–89* was to achieve sustainable growth in the economic value of tourism in South Australia. The overall aim of the plan was to ensure a coordinated approach by government and industry to the maximisation of the State's tourism potential (South Australian Tourism Development Board, 1987a, b). The emphasis on sustainability had grown further by the time of the development of the 1991–93 tourism plan to the point where the State's tourism mission to the end of the

century had been defined as 'achieve sustainable growth in the net value of tourism activity to South Australia' (Tourism South Australia, 1991: 13). Although it is important to note that Tourism South Australia recognised 'the mission of the Government and the tourism industry is essentially economic, but via the concept of qualitative growth it embraces social and environmental concerns'. Nevertheless, despite such a far-reaching approach to the overall integration of planning and marketing within the context of tourism development, this planning direction was not maintained within the restructuring of State government involvement in tourism as previously noted and the policy agenda of the State Liberal Government in the 1990s, with the Strategy for 1996–2001 aiming to:

- establish a strong marketing position and a distinctive brand;
- strengthen South Australia's appeal as a holiday destinations;
- make the tourism industry stronger (including regional tourism);
- ensure tourism is sustainable;
- identify initiatives that achieve simultaneous economic and community benefits; and
- forge partnerships between all relevant stakeholders. (South Australian Tourism Commission, 1996: 10)

This last point is critical and also typical of the corporatist approach to tourism in Australia as well as some other Western nations. A sustainable approach to tourism would state that all stakeholders are relevant because of the contribution they bring to the creation of social capital. In contrast, the dominant corporatist approach in Australian tourism tends to emphasise that in the creation of public–private partnerships only some stakeholders, primarily the tourism industry, are relevant. Indeed, an analysis of state tourist organisation annual reports over the last decade indicates that members of governing boards all come from an industry background with nearly all being tourism industry related. At one level such an observation may seem appropriate given the need for coordination between government and industry and, it could be argued, the development of a more business-like approach by government. However, such an approach also precludes the input of a wider range of stakeholders from environmental organisations, from public interest groups, and wider community interests. Thereby, leading to a narrowing of policy advice and therefore tourism policy options which may, in the longer term, actually reduce the capacities of tourism organisations to be responsive to the environment in which they operate (Mandell, 1994).

The Changing Role of Government

Changes in government's role as interest protector has major implications for tourism and sustainability. As Blowers (1997: 36) noted in the case of the United Kingdom, 'the long period of privatisation, deregulation, cuts in public expenditure and attacks on local government have resulted in a "democratic deficit" – a dispersal of power to unelected quangos and business interests – and have led to unsustainable developments'. A critique also reflected in the comments of Haughton and Hunter (1994: 272):

> The unregulated market approach, being relatively amoral, can allow individuals to be immoral. The ethical dimension is important since the market does not provide a sufficient basis for the resolution of the profound moral issues which face us every day; it can play a part in avoiding distorted decision making by individuals and organisations, but alone it cannot reconcile all of the environmental problems facing society.

These comments highlight the need to see partnership and collaboration within the context of the public interest as opposed to the market interest. Incorporation of a wider range of inputs into the policy process would lead to the formation of issue networks as opposed to subgovernments. Issue networks are structures of interaction among participants in a policy area that are marked by their transience and the absence of established centres of control (Heclo, 1978). According to Heclo (1978: 102) the term 'issue network' describes

> a configuration of individuals concerned about a particular aspect of an issue and the term policy community is used more broadly to encompass the collection of issue networks within a jurisdiction. Both describe the voluntary and fluid configuration of people with varying degrees of commitment to a particular cause.

As Hall and Jenkins (1995b) observed, one of the great problems in examining the role of interest groups in the tourism policy-making process is deciding what the appropriate relationship between an interest group and government should be. At what point does tourism industry membership of government advisory committees or of a national, regional or local tourism agency represent a 'closing up' of the policy process to other interest groups rather than an exercise in consultation, coordination, partnership or collaboration? As Deutsch (1970: 56) recognised

> ... this co-operation between groups and bureaucrats can sometimes be a good thing. But it may sometimes be a very bad thing. These groups, used to each other's needs, may become increasingly preoccupied with each other, insensitive to the needs of outsiders, and impervious to new recruitment and to new ideas. Or the members of the various interest group elites may identify more and more with each other and less and less with the interests of the groups they represent.

The relationship between the tourism industry and government tourism agencies clearly raises questions about the extent to which established policy processes lead to outcomes which are in the 'public interest' and which contributee to sustainabilty rather than meeting just narrow sectoral interests. Mucciaroni (1991: 474) noted that 'client politics is typical of policies with diffuse costs and concentrated benefits. An identifiable group benefits from a policy, but the costs are paid by everybody or at least a large part of society'. As Hall and Jenkins (1995b) argued, tourism policy is one such area, particularly in terms of the costs of tourism promotion and marketing. However, the implications of this situation also affect the overall sustainability of tourism and of communities. The present focus by government tourism agencies on partnership and collaboration is laudable. But the linguistic niceties of partnership and collaboration need to be

challenged by focusing on who is involved in tourism planning and policy processes and who is left out. The policy arguments surrounding networks and collaboration need to be examined within broader ideas of 'governance' and an examination of the appropriate role of government and changing relationships and expectations between government and communities. Unless there are attempts to provide equity of access to all stakeholders than collaboration will be one more approach consigned to the lexicon of tourism planning clichés.

Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Dr C. Michael Hall, Centre for Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand (cmhall@commerce.otago.ac.nz).

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