INTERNATIONAL TOURISM POLICY AND PLANNING

Examples of exam questions and answers

1. **Examine the view that market failures that prevent the tourism industry from operating in an effective manner influence public sector investment in tourism.**

As many other industries, tourism effects the environment that nurtures it. The impacts of tourism can be both positive and negative and can be purely environmental, socio-cultural or economical (Page & Connell, 2009). The current economical philosophy is to control world markets including tourism, through the supply and demand of products or in other words, through increasing profit. This is also defined as a free market economy. A free market economy increases the risk of market failures, a risk that the tourism industry is extra vulnerable to, due to its dependence on the characteristics of the surrounding environment to survive (Stabler et al, 2010). In the case market failure, this essay will argue that the tourism industry needs government investment to be able to manage market failures and to operate effectively.

In order to examine the effects of market failure on the tourism industry and the justification for government investment in the event of a market failure, it is necessary to define the term market failure. Callan and Thomas (2009) states that for the market to be efficient it is given assumptions about pricing, product definitions, cost conditions and entry barriers however if any of these are exploited, the market will be unable to function efficiently, Moreover, “the result will be any of a number of inefficient market conditions, collectively termed market failures”. Cooper at el (2008) defines market failure as following; “the inability of a market system to truly reflect the social costs and/or benefits associated with transactions”. As mentioned, a free market economy is private businesses seeking high demands with strategies based on short term goals to gain profit and increase revenue. This results in businesses neglecting the long term effects such as the social and environmental costs of the transaction. This it-self will eventually lead to market failure (Hall, 2008).

The amount of examples of market failure is many. It can relate to the environment, and the over-consumption of goods such as nature and natural resources. If a tourism business uses a free good, such as a plot of land and aspires to use this natural resource for profits and revenue, the business will try to maximise the numbers of tourists travelling there and minimise the economic costs (Cooper et al, 2008). However, according to Page & Connell (2009) the overuse of these natural resources will in the end destroy the attraction itself**.** Additionally, due to the seasonal character of tourism the lack of tourists during some parts of the year can be vital for some visitor attractions (Page & Connell, 2009) and “in such cases, the market fails to find efficient solution to the distribution” and there will be a failure in the market (Cooper et al, 2008 p. 684).

Page (2009) states that when there is a market failure in the tourism industry, it is argued that due to the vast impacts of the industry it is up to the government to intervene. In contrast to the short-term goals of maximising revenues and profits of the private sector and its focus on the individual’s best interest, the public sector has the interest of the masses in mind when making strategic decisions. The government can intervene in tourism in several ways. The kind of intervention depends on the stage of tourism development (developed or developing), the systems of a country for example the constitutional (unitary or federal), economic and socio-cultural (mixed or central economy) as well as the political philosophy. In a developing country where the dependence of tourism is high, such as in Singapore the intervention of government will be high. Tourism is a significant part of the countries economy but cannot operate properly without high government investment due to still being a developing country i.e. it has poor infrastructure and high risk of tourism impacts such as the already mentioned deprivation of the natural environment but also the abuse of labour.

To conclude, there is a conflict in opinions in regards to the tourism industry in whether the market should run freely based on tourism business activity or if the government should intervene where there is a market failure. Since tourism is the major source of income in many countries, especially LDC, there is a major risk in the market failing. If private tourism businesses have all the control the risk of for example over using natural tourism resources is higher, since private businesses strive to increase profits. This is often done through high volumes which puts a strain on the natural environment. If the government has more control over these areas in tourism and can intervene and invest in proper infrastructure or protection of natural resources, these market failures will decrease.

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1. **Compare and contrast at least three approaches to tourism planning, as outlined by Hall (2008) with reference to both emerging and mature destinations.**

According to Dror (1973 p. 220 in Hall, 2008 p. 8) “planning is the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, directed at achieving goals by preferable means”. As stated by Hall (2008) planning is a process with different levels and sublevels. In tourism it is a complex process involving areas such as bargaining, compromise, politics and many other elements. There are many types of planning and different approaches that has been evolving through time. This essay will concentrate on comparing and contrasting three out of five types of approaches to tourism planning; Boosterism, Community oriented approach and Sustainable Tourism planning. By referencing to emerging and mature destinations, this comparison will show that planning is extremely complex and depends on the many factors of the tourism industry.

Boosterism and mass tourism is often used in the same sentence. As the name suggests, the idea of the Boosterism approach is to “boost” the destination. In the 1980’s the growth of tourism destinations were important and the government’s role was to boost destinations through competition between businesses. This planning approach highlights the importance of demand and uses methods such as promotion, public relations, advertising, and growth targets to increase the volume of tourists. There is no thought to the negative impacts high volumes of tourists on the destination and the planning in managing them efficiently, due to that tourism is seen as only having positive impacts on the destination. This planning approach was not only used in the 1980’s, but it still exists. For instance, mega-events such as the Olympics are often used in both emerging and mature destinations to boost tourism and revenues (Hall, 2008). For example, according to Skift (2013) in the London Olympics 2012 there was a multimillion promotional campaign to initiate the start of the Olympics. Additionally, according to Page (2008) the government in Hawaii evicted 300 native residents in order to build new tourism developments on Honolulu beach.

In contrast to Boosterism, which has no consideration of the negative social impacts of the community, only that the hosts/residents should be good to tourists, the community orientated approach that has its focus on the community. The development of the destination should gain both residents and tourists, and residents should be involved in the planning process. The methods used for this approach is community development, awareness and education, surveys and social impact assessment. Compared to Boosterism there are no promotional activity or growth targets, and there is little attention to demand. Instead there is a focus social carrying capacity; ensuring volume is kept manageable in order for the community to stay undamaged. There are many existing implementation problems with this planning approach. The negative effects of tourism on the community were often seen in emerging markets (Hall, 2008). For example the community approach to planning was practiced in Dashur, Egypt, by training the local community in tourism development and SME development. Additionally there was a lot of effort in making the destination suitable as a tourist destination and at the same time keeping the negative effects low (UNTWO, 2013). There was little international promotion due to the risk of negative impacts on the community and maybe that was the reason the volume of visitor remains low in Dashur (Burmon, 2013).

The above approach has only one focus and that is the community. Boosterism also only has one focus and that is to boost the destination with no thought of the negative impacts on the tangible environment or its residents. General tourism planning needs to combine the spatial planning and economic planning as well as the community planning to guarantee a feasible tourism destination. This is the framework and the basis for sustainable tourism planning. As tourism is fragmented and has many different stakeholders with different agendas, and is affected by political philosophies and external factors there are many obstacles in the implementation of a sustainable planning approach. Methods used to achieve this are increasing the awareness of the producer, consumer and the community, through education and sustainable product development. Additionally, there is a need for coordination and collaboration between stakeholders as well as the creation of common goals and the practice of understanding and relationship building of everyone involved in the planning process. There should be a destination focal point in the planning to assure conservation of tourism resources in order to preserve the experience of the tourist at the destination (Hall, 2008). In South Pembrokeshire, Wales a project was launched with the purpose of developing tourism growth based on local nature and cultural resources but also on “limited growth for resource protection”. In Australia a resort complex was planned in Flinders Range National Park, based on two key strategic goals; a pleased tourist/visitor as well as managing visitor impacts. The planners strongly believed that one did not exclude the other (Gunn, 2002, p 83). Additionally, there is the case of the island of Yap where tourism has been low scale and slow and managed locally, resulting in strong protection of the local resources (Gunn, 2002, p 82).

To conclude, tourism planning is a complex process with many obstacles. Due to having many different stakeholders with different desires, there has been and still are many approaches to the tourism planning process. These approaches have developed through time as tourism has evolved. Boosterism, with focus on promotion and boosting the destination, pays no consideration to the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, economy or community. This is shown today in mega events such as the Olympics and the eviction of residents at potential tourism destinations. The community orientated approach to planning has little thought to the promotion of a destination and demand is of less importance. It values the welfare and tourism development and education of the community and believes the control over tourism should lie within the community, just as in Dashur, Egypt. The failed implementation showed that there is many areas in the planning process which were overseen. Learning from the negatives and the positives of the above approaches is the sustainable tourism planning approach, believing in integrating spatial, economic and community into one planning process, through coordination, collaboration between stakeholders and increased regulation.

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1. **Critically assess the view that, while all stakeholders in tourism should have an input to the tourism development decision-making process, in reality leadership is the key criteria (and this normally comes from powerful vested interests).**

According to Hall and Jenkins (1995) the government is “the focus of demands articulated through a variety of structures and channels including significant individuals, institutions, and the media.” These individuals, institutions and media can also be referred to as stakeholders or interest groups. These various groups has different desires when it comes to policy and decision making in tourism, and in how they want the industry to function. Since there are so many interests, it is a problem in satisfying everyone’s needs. Through grouping together organisations will have more chance of influencing the decision making in tourism. “Individuals can assert a certain degree of influence in the policy making process, therefore blocs of interests or interest groups are a major component in the determination of policy settings” (Hall and Jenkins, 1995, p 47). This essay will assess the view that though all stakeholders in tourism should have a say in the decision-making, organisations with powerful vested interests are have more influence on government, and will automatically have more authority to have an input in the tourism development decision-making process. Examples to support this argument will be provided.

As stated by Hall and Jenkins (1995) policy is “whatever governments decides to do or not to do” in regards to economic, social and cultural factors of society. It is a formalised process involving public agencies to form decisions and actions to solve issues in society. Tourism policy is the same as regular policy, however with focus on the tourism industry. Tourism stakeholders can influence the policymaking process so that it in line with their interests. According to Hall (2008) “stakeholders are the groups and individuals with an interest in the planning problem, issue or outcome, that are directly influenced by the actions or inactions taken to solve the problem or issue”. In tourism there are various kinds of stakeholders who have an interest in how tourism industry activity should be developed and maintained. Tourism stakeholders are the public sector (all levels of government), private sector (tourism businesses, associations and suppliers), voluntary sector (conservation and environmental groups), the community (local residents), pressure groups (workers and human rights and wildlife and environmental protectors), media and tourists.

Hall (2000) stated that since there are so many stakeholders there are also various conflicting interests in how policy should be shaped in their favour. In order for this issue to be solved national and regional tourism organisations has to get involved in a various partnerships, network and collaborative relationships with stakeholders. Partnership can be defined as “regular, cross-sectoral interactions between parties based on at least some agreed rules or norms, intended to address a common issue, or achieve a specific policy goal or goals” (Lane and Bramwell 2000, p 1). Coordination and partnership between horizontal levels of interaction and vertical levels of interaction in the tourism industry does have an immense effect on policy and decision-making process.

Networks are linkages that are developed between organisations or individuals formed on a basis of mutual interest. When formalised, these networks are defined as interest groups. Interest groups are very much involved in the policy making process and can be a producer group (British Hospitality Association) non-producer groups (Tourism Concern) and single interest groups, which are groups that form on the basis of a specific issue and when it’s been solved or declared unachievable they disappear. By grouping together, stakeholders have more chance of influence the decision and policy making in the tourism industry (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). However, in interest groups there will always be members that will very active and others that will not. Additionally, there will also be some with more resources, which will lead to them having more power to influence in policy and decision-making due to having a stronger involvement in government issues such as employment, prices, inflation, production and growth. Power to influence the decision-making process will unequal, which defeats the purpose of partnerships and collaboration, which as mentioned before exists to give all stakeholders a stronger voice and the ability to influence the policy activity of the tourism industry (Hall, 2000). For example, according to Anastasiadou (2008) producer groups in England has been discovered to have neo-pluralist relationships with the government which means that “policy is formulated through the exchange of sufficient power-dependent resources between government and interest groups” (Anastasiadou 2008, p 33).

In conclusion, the tourism industry in many ways is fragmented due to the various kinds of stakeholders. These stakeholders all want a say in the tourism decision-making process and its activity. To be able to have a say in government policy development, individual stakeholders and organisations group together creating networks, which when formalised becomes interest groups. These interest groups will have enough power to lobby policy making in the government and be able to create partnership and collaboration between each other. However, since some interest groups have more resources and big influence on important government issues such as national employment and income they are more attractive to governments and will have more power in the decision-making process. This results in an unequal divide of power since the government and certain tourism interest groups can share resources created from policy making. Not all stakeholders have a say in the decision-making process, only the interest groups that have the power to change the industry as seen beneficial to the government, which at times makes partnerships and collaboration a faulty process in need of amendment.

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1. **Discuss the view that tourism destinations require planning and formal organisational structures, such as a destination management organisation (DMO), in order to operate efficiently and sustainably.**

According to Page and Connell (2009) there is an increased interest in the tourism industry to plan for tourism development in order for tourism to be sustainable. There are new concepts on how businesses and destinations can develop and grow in a sustainable manner. However, since tourism is a fragmented industry with many stakeholders the question that arises is who will plan and take leadership. Some argue that there is a need for organisations such as a destination management organisation to coordinate stakeholders and create common strategies in order for a destination to grow sustainably and effectively. Others argue that the DMO’s role has changed in some destinations and the reason for its existence is currently only to promote and market the destination, not to manage it. This essay will discuss the view that destinations need planning and organisations such as a DMO for tourism to develop and grow sustainably and effectively.

Tourism planning has developed and changed due to that the problems of tourism and its impacts have changed. It can be natural disasters, a shift in political philosophy, and environmental change that has influenced the tourism planning of destinations. Different approaches to planning have been implemented to meet and solve these occurring issues and the latest approach to planning is sustainable tourism planning (Hall, 2008). Page (2009) explains it as follows “the arguments developed on sustainability are that we need to use resources in such a manner that they can be enjoyed today but also conserved and managed for future generations” (Page 2009, p 439). According to Hall (2008) the boosterim approach is a form of non-planning and leads to a poorly developed and managed destination and serious impacts on the destination. Inskeep (1991) argued that organisational structures, including government agencies such as DMO’s, private sector interest groups such as the Tourism Alliance in the UK with the addition to local and regional government bodies are all necessary elements in the planning for sustainable and efficient tourism development. These organisational structures will follow and utilise planning frameworks provided by the central government as well as legislation and regulation. Tourism planning needs to be controlled and apply integrated approaches to tourism development and tourism management for the tourism industry and its elements to live in symbiosis to decrease the fragmented nature of the industry (Inskeep, 1991). In order for all levels of a nation (national to local, rural to urban) to gain from tourism, there needs to be an organised development and management process as well as a common strategy striving towards a common goal put into place.

Moreover, the definition of a DMO needs to be established before any further discussion. According to World Tourism Organisation (2004 in MacLellan 2010) a Destination Management Organisation can be implemented at different levels of the destination. It can be national (National Tourism Organisation), it can be regional (Regional Tourism Organisation) and it can be local (Local Tourism Organisation). These are all DMO’s. DMO’s are often funded by both state and private organisations and is working closely with the ministry of tourism. It is responsible for marketing and managing a destination nationally, regionally and locally (MacLellan 2010).

Even though these organisations exist to ease the planning and development process of tourism, several issues still remains, especially as these organisations main task is to promote the destination, not to manage it. Different levels of a destination have different goals and objectives of what they want out of tourism and how that shall be achieved as well as tourism stakeholders will have their input. As mentioned before, these organisations are not all that is needed in order for a destination to operate sustainably and efficiently. This is exemplified in Scotland and in the strategies put in place by Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Culture and the DMO VisitScotland named the Scottish Tourism Framework for Action 2002-2005 created to integrate the many businesses involved in Scottish Tourism, additionally to create a common framework for action and a common nationwide tourism goal. This strategy involved improving the oversees arrivals to Scotland, by developing five key areas for action “the effective use of information technology, better marketing, higher standards of quality, higher standards of service and the development of the skills base of tourism employees” (Page 2009 p. 444). It sets out actions based on the five key areas for non-tourism and tourism businesses such as private and public agencies, DMO’s, the Forestry Commission, Historic Scotland, Scottish Enterprise Network, museums to follow. The Next Decade: a Framework for Tourism Change 2006-2015 was also developed in order to “grow revenue from Scottish tourism by 50%, equivalent to a volume of growth of 2% a year” (Page 2009, p. 449), based on 16 targets involving public sector and private businesses (Page, 2009). Currently, VisitScotland together with Tourism Alliance has created a strategy named Tourism 2020, and are also creating a plan (Tourism development plan for Scotland: devlivering the visitor economy) together with national agencies and bodies (VisitScotland, 2013).

To conclude, there are different ways for tourism destinations to be planned and managed. Some argue that for a tourism destination to be efficient and sustainable there is a need for planning and formal organisational structures. Organisational structures in a destination are necessary to be able to control and properly manage and unite the destination to strive towards a common goal as this common goal will positively affect the experience of the visitor. Scottish tourism government authorities created a national strategy and a framework for tourism stakeholders to use as a tool when developing and managing tourism ventures. If there was no such planning or organisational structure, it would lead to a very unsustainable destination with short controlled by businesses with short term goals to gain higher profits through high volumes of visitors.

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1. **To what extent is it possible to appraise the relative effectiveness of international tourism organisations in tourism? Illustrate your answer with reference to the structure and roles of international organisations in tourism.**

International Tourism Organisations are born out of the global trait of the tourism industry. These organisations are important for the development and management of tourism local destinations and create a way for member countries to have a say in international tourism development. It is widely known that travel has grown and the reasons for travel have changed. Due to the invention of the jet engine and the growth of the airline industry the possibility and availability to travel has increased (Cooper et al. 2005). People now have the option to travel all around the world, and there has been an increase in international travel. The geographical development of destination has expanded and long haul travel is now ordinary commodity (Page and Connell, 2009). Tourism does not only affect the tourists but also the relations between countries and the economic and social development and wellbeing of their societies. This has resulted in the need for international governance to regulate and manage the transnational flows of tourists. This essay will examine the extent it is possible to appraise the relative effectiveness of International Tourism Organisations in tourism. By using UNWTO and their policy Global Code of Ethics as an example it will be proven that International Tourism Organisations can be un-effective due to fluctuating interest of national governments, international law and lack of measurements.

According to Hall (2008) the policies created by International Tourism Organizations’ can often be a top down approach, with outcomes on local level. Since there is many members of these organizations the measurement of effectiveness of these policies can be lost in the multitude of countries implementing them. According to Davidson and Maitland (1997) the effectiveness of international tourism organizations will always be relative to national governments and their acceptance to the advice of international tourism organizations. Additionally it will also be dependent on international law and the measurement of the effectiveness of the law. As an example, the World Tourism Organisation is one of the most influential international organisations in tourism. The organisation is a part of the UN, but was founded before the UN and before Second World War. In was acknowledged in 2003 as the leading international tourism organisation. UNWTO has its headquarters in Spain, Madrid and has 150 member countries and more than 300 affiliate members. The role of UNWTO is to internationally promote and develop tourism products in developing countries and to contribute towards an economic development on the basis of peace, understanding, human rights, and freedom for all. One of the ways UNWTO carries out its role as an international tourism organisation is through the development of policy. The organisation generates policies that reflects and promotes a sustainable tourism practice at international level (Hall, 2008).

An example of a policy is the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism that was put into place to influence communities, tourists, the travel industry and governments to instigate 10 codes of ethics. These 10 principles serves to keep negative impacts at tourism destination level low, whilst maximizing the environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits to the destination, on a soft law basis (UNWTO, 2012). These policies are often implemented on the basis of international law; “One of the most important components of institutional arrangements for tourism at the international level is that of international law” (Hall, 2008). International law can either be hard, which is defined as firm or binding rules, or it can be soft which means that members are encouraged to follow the policy however the law does not bind them to do so (Hall, 2008). However, as stated in the report Implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism the implementation of the Code of Ethics has led to 49 member countries reassigning elements of the policy into national hard law (UNWTO, 2005). Unfortunately, there is no research conducted on how effective the reassigned elements of the policy into hard laws were on the increased benefits of the destination. This shows that UNWTO do not measure how effective this policy were on increasing environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits, which reflects on the effectiveness of the organization itself.

To conclude, due to the global nature of tourism a need for International Tourism Organisations were developed in order to join countries together to create common policies to protect and promote destinations in tourism. However, the effectiveness of these organisations depends on the ability and willingness of national government to listen to the advice given to them. International Tourism Organisation can create policies, which are often a soft law, for instance UNWTO Code of Ethics. National governments then have the choice to transfer this soft law into a hard law, which is what happened to 49 countries implementing the Code of Ethics. However, even though national governments listened to their advice there is still the question of measurement and how effective the law was on the destination when it was implemented. International Tourism Organisation is very dependent on national governments to be able to influence tourism, and even if it does influence governments the effectiveness of its influence is difficult to measure.

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