



A framework for conflict analysis in spatial planning for tourism



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ABSTRACT

The perspectives of diverse stakeholders on spatial planning and tourism development, on one hand, and natural values conservation, on the other, often lead to conflicts. An in-depth analysis of the sources of conflict is crucial for developing the appropriate strategies to manage them. This paper specifically addresses the current conflicts between tourism development and land use planning and natural values management. For this purpose, a case study was carried out on the *Troia-Melides* Coast (Portugal), a coastal area rich in natural values and currently under pressure from real estate and tourist developers. Interviews were carried out with 26 key-stakeholders. Based on the theoretical framework of Moore's model, a broad and integrated overview of these conflicts is presented. Conflicts are categorized as follows: institutional organization, public policies and legislation, power, others structural constraints (e.g. time and resources), information and stakeholders' interests, values and relationship.

1. Introduction

The relevance of studying conflict in the land use planning context is undeniable: “planning is inescapably about conflict: exploring conflicts in planning, and learning to work effectively with conflict can be the basis for a strong planning paradigm” (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 61–62). By defining four core ideas on planning (spatial, sustainable, integrative and inclusive), the Royal Town Planning Institute clarifies that “planning is value-driven, i.e. concerned with identifying, understanding and mediating conflicting sets of values. It is also action-oriented, driven by the twin activities of mediating space and making of place” (RTPI - Royal Town Planning Institute, 2001, p. 2). This paper focuses on a key planning perspective defined by RTPI (2001) by specifically addressing the relationship between tourism development and spatial planning: the identification and understanding of the conflicts at stake is a crucial planning task.

It is considered that an overall view of the sources of conflict is paramount to the understanding of the context in which the conflict unfolds, and thus, for the definition of a mediated planning process that aims to reconcile tourism development with spatial planning. However, it is noted that there is a lack of studies and empirical evidence related to conflict analysis in tourism planning.

The literature references on tourism planning conflicts are associated with the various stakeholder groups' interests in tourism development (Markwick, 2000; Ritchie, 1999), with collaborative

approaches, particularly regarding divergent interests and power imbalances among diverse stakeholders (e.g. Dredge, 2006a; Lee, Riley, & Hampton, 2010; Yang, Ryan, & Zhang, 2013) and with the study of public interest in mediating tourism development conflicts (Dredge, 2010). Nevertheless, the analysis of the sources of conflict applied to tourism planning, as an essential procedure in the preparation for the conflict management process, is hardly mentioned in tourism literature (brief reference as “pre-existing conditions” analysis, by Yang et al., 2013). Herein lies the main contribution of this paper to literature concerning tourism planning conflicts and conflict analysis: the development of an integrated and overarching perspective of the sources of conflict between tourism development and land use planning and natural resource management – tourism versus territory conflicts. In this context, a coastal area was chosen as the object of analysis because it is subject to a strong urban-tourist pressure and, simultaneously, it has a high natural value, partially integrated into the *Natura2000* network, therefore leading to the emergence of conflicts: the *Troia-Melides* Coast (*Alentejo* Coast, Portugal). This coastal strip extends throughout 40 km and has a width of 5 km. The relevance of this case study lies in the fact that the conflict has escalated from an “emerging conflict” to a “manifest conflict” stage (Ury, 2000). According to Ferrão (2005: 14) “The coastal area is, more than any other area, a complex territory. The conflicts between the safeguard perspective and the development perspective are focused there”. The identification of tourism versus territory conflicts is based on the 26

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stakeholders' perspectives regarding the problems experienced in reconciling tourism development and spatial planning on this coast. These 26 interviewees include Public Administration Entities (Natural and Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Spatial Planning entities), Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) and Tourist industry developers.

The approach chosen to identify the sources of conflict between tourism and territory, both in the Literature review section and in the Results and the Discussion and Conclusions sections, is based on the theoretical framework of Moore's model (Moore, 2003). Eight conflict categories are identified: A. Institutional organization; B. Public policies and legislation; C. Power; D. Other structural constraints; E. Stakeholders interests F. Stakeholders values; G. Information; and, H. Stakeholder relationship.

2. Literature review

2.1. The analysis framework for the sources of conflict

2.1.1. Conflict analysis relevance

According to Wilmot and Hocker (2010) and Schmid (1998), conflict exists whenever the parts are interdependent (the objectives of one condition the objectives of the other(s)) and when they become aware of the existence of conflicting objectives and interests. These conflicts arise from specific situations: shortage of resources (when there are inequalities regarding the access to resources or to its distribution); power control; in the participation in the decision-making process; and, different values (cultural, social and political).

Conflict analysis is usually mentioned in literature regarding: consensus building (Suskind & Thomas-Larmer, 1999); alternative disputes resolution (Suskind & Cruikshank, 1987); negotiation and mediation techniques (Moore, 2003), and specifically applying to natural resources management (FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2000, 2005; FOC - Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2005); and finally, in conflict management study and theory (Fisher et al., 2000; Wehr, 1979; Wilmot & Hocker, 2010). Prehistory analysis of antagonism among stakeholders is also mentioned in collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Authors like FAO (2005), Fisher et al. (2000), Suskind and Thomas-Larmer (1999), Wehr (1979) and Wilmot and Hocker (2010), have specifically tackled land and resource use conflicts, and suggest that the most appropriate approach in managing a conflict is its prior analysis. According to these authors, conflict analysis allows: clarification and prioritisation of the issues that need to be tackled; identification of the conflict impacts and causes in order to identify the most appropriate strategies; understanding the stakeholders' interests, needs, concerns and viewpoints regarding conflict; assessment of the nature of the relationships among stakeholders, including their willingness and capacity for negotiation with other stakeholders; awareness of the conflict and of the necessary information for its resolution; assessment of the ability of the existing institutions to manage the conflict; assessment of the scope of powers that stakeholders should have to tackle current and future conflicts; and understanding the connection between land use and resource use conflicts and their social, political and economic contexts. Despite specific objections to the development of conflict analysis processes, such as being considered a waste of time and the interests at stake and the structural limitations already being evident, the relevance of this analysis is rooted in its contribution to the definition of the most suitable process for each specific situation (FAO, 2005; Suskind & Thomas-Larmer, 1999).

2.1.2. Typology of the sources of conflict

When it comes to identifying sources of conflict, there are several approaches to take into consideration. The definition of conflict suggested by Wilmot and Hocker (2010) has underlined some of its sources: conflicting interests, shortage of resources and rivalries caused

by competing interests between individuals or groups of individuals. However, other authors divide the sources of conflict into three groups: political, economical or cultural (Merrill, 2008) or political, economic and social causes (Deutsch, 2006; FAO, 2005). For example, Deutsch (2006: 14–15) identifies two major groups of causes: psychological and social-political-economical. The psychological causes refer to the person's perceptions, values, ideologies, motivations, beliefs, etc. that stem from his/her experiences. This way of approaching the sources of conflict contrasts with the social-political-economical approach, which refers to the social, political and economic factors that could be at the basis of the conflict and objectively identifying the different economic and political interests. Another approach, which is frequently adopted in organizational theories (Cunha, Rego, Cunha, & Cardoso, 2007, p. 519), is based on the triptych composed by "resource conflicts" (which lie on the access and distribution of scarce resources), "intellective" (conflicts arising from different perspectives about facts and data) and "evaluative" (differences in tastes, inclinations and set of values therefore irreconcilable).

When conflict arises in the management of natural resources, some studies (FAO, 2000, 2005; FOC, 2005) identify the potential causes of conflict based on the "Circle of Conflict" developed by Christopher Moore in the 1980's (Moore, 2003). The causes of conflict identified in Moore's model (Moore, 2003) are not different from the other approaches presented above, however, they are very clearly structured into five different types – values, relationship, data, structural matters and interests (Fig. 1 and Table 1).

Based on the knowledge of the causes of conflict, Moore (2003) proposes a set of tasks to perform in conflict management (Table 1).

Based on the analysis of the five causes of conflict categories defined by Moore, the theoretical background on tourism vs. territory sources of conflict is presented in the following subsections.

2.2. Sources of conflict in tourism planning

2.2.1. Structural matters

In their analysis of the interaction between stakeholders in tourism development and management in coastal areas, Caffyn and Jobbins (2003) conclude that a government with a centralising (top-down) command and control structure is unable to govern the complex dynamics of coastal zones adequately. The authors identify the exclusion of important stakeholders and the predominance of non-transparent decision-making processes as the main problems of this approach. The issues of bureaucracy, command and control structures, the inexistence of inter-agency coordination and the lack of participation, transparency and accountability, frequently addressed in the literature (e.g. Dredge, 2006a, 2006b; Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Ruhanen, 2013; Valente, Dredge, & Lohmann, 2015; Wong, Mistilis, & Dwyer, 2011), are considered structural matters. Another structural problem is the networked policy-making power and influence. Power inequalities are also frequently mentioned in tourism policy literature (e.g. Dredge, 2006a, 2006b; Dredge, 2010; Elliott, 1997; Lovelock, 2002; Stevenson, Airey, & Miller, 2008). Focusing on the public interest in tourism development, Dredge (2010) highlighted the prevalence of "decisions based on the preferences of the 'governing elite', which are often powerful developer groups" (Dredge, 2010: 105). Analysing the contribution of some conflicting organizations, excluded from planning processes, towards sustainable tourism, Lovelock (2002) highlights the fact that for conflict to arise, these stakeholders have to be empowered and they have that power precisely because they are not involved in collaborative processes. In addition to these two issues – institutional framework and power – Carter and Nunes da Silva (2001), FAO (2000, 2005), Ferreira (2007) and Mourato (2011) also identify "structural matters" related to public policies and legislation (sectoral vision and the lack of monitoring and assessment of policies and programs) and other general structural constraints involving the lack of human and financial resources, as well as the skills to anticipate and manage

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