

# COOPERATIVE RESORTS: AN ANALYSIS OF CREATIVE INTEGRATION STRATEGIES IN COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS



**Michael Volgger**  
School of Management and Marketing,  
Curtin University, Australia

**Marcus Herntreid**  
European Campus Rottal-Inn,  
Deggendorf Institute of Technology,  
Germany

**Harald Pechlaner**  
Chair of Tourism, Catholic University  
of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany

**Sabine Pichler**  
Eurac Research, Institute for  
Regional Development and  
Location Management, Italy

**What are 'cooperative resorts' and what can trigger their appearance? What impact can they have on broader community destination networks?**

## CONTEXT

Hotel resorts development is often associated with stand-alone, large-scale tourist operations. However, a strong regimentation of quantitative hotel growth can complicate such hotel resort development, as for example in the region of South Tyrol, Italy. As an alternative, 'cooperative resorts' were created, which include the integration of spatially divided and legally autonomous hotels within community destinations. This study explores whether next to highly criticised enclave types of resorts also more embedded cooperative resorts exist, which might deserve a different and more nuanced evaluation.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 'Cooperative resorts' consist of premises that are spatially close to each other so that guests have an opportunity to utilise the different amenities during their stay in an integrated manner.
- 'Cooperative resorts' achieve higher levels of integration in community destination networks than other (accommodation) providers.
- In contrast to 'enclave hotel resorts', 'cooperative resorts' tend to be actively involved in the development of the broader tourism destination network, while also exerting notable pressure on it. Cooperative resorts may even adopt a 'leading firm' attitude and use their power to transfer their own corporate outlook onto the destination and its stakeholders.
- Unlike 'enclave hotel resorts' which are often greenfield developments designed from scratch, cooperative resorts were developed as a creative entrepreneurial solution to improve the market position of *existing* accommodation businesses.
- Integration dynamics are context-dependent: they are responses to a given historical, legal and market-contexts.
- 2 forces highly influence the embeddedness of the cooperative resort in the destination network: mutual interdependence and power (im-)balances.
- Governance of inequality is crucial for ensuring the cohesion of community destination networks in case of appearing cooperative resorts. Tensions may arise between the principles of equal treatment in tourism associations and more 'meritocratic' approaches that award the best in class.

## METHODOLOGY

- Exploratory analysis of 2 cooperative resorts located within 2 destinations in South Tyrol, in the Italian Alps (Olang/Valdaora + Naturns/Naturno)
- 5 qualitative (semi-structured and open-ended) interviews, including the directors of the tourism associations, one director from each 'cooperative resort', and one mayor

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- More embedded hotel resort developments than the often-criticised enclave hotel resorts exist.
- Cooperative resort development can support innovation, product development and marketing on the destination level, and thus can help to unleash destination leadership.
- Governance of inequality is a key challenge in tourism destinations in order to avoid destructive and dissolving forces.

For more information please contact: [Michael.volgger@curtin.edu.au](mailto:Michael.volgger@curtin.edu.au) or [trc@curtin.edu.au](mailto:trc@curtin.edu.au)